**WHAT'S BEHIND GENOCIDE?: THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF
ETHNICITY AND MASS KILLING**

by
Brianna Phillips

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An Introduction

       "All humanity is one undivided and indivisible family, and each one of us is responsible for the misdeeds of all the others" once said Mahatma Gandhi. Assuming he is correct, since the beginning of our existence, people have committed some truly heinous crimes against the family, and the most horrific of the injustices that the human race is guilty of is the murderous act known as genocide. Though such a crime remained nameless until the mid 1940s, it is a problem that has plagued humanity for thousands of years and has left virtually no continent untouched. However in 1944, the world finally got a concrete way to identify this ghastly act in a book called *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, which examined the laws and decrees which the Axis powers inflicted on the areas of Europe that the Nazis occupied in World War II. The book's author was a lawyer and Polish Jew named Raphael Lemkin, who fled to the United States to escape persecution by the Nazis and spent his life seeking justice for the victims of the Armenian genocide and the Holocaust and lobbying for laws that would prevent such atrocities from ever happening again (Power 21, 38). The word Lemkin coined, which has forever after been attached to some of the most awful events of our time, was genocide, which he constructed from the Greek "geno", meaning "race", and the Latin "cide", meaning "killing" (Power 42). Despite Lemkin's efforts and the United Nations' 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide which came about in large part due to his tireless lobbying, an alarming number of genocides have nevertheless

blighted the twentieth century. Furthermore, still now, at the beginning of the twenty first century, the hopeful phrase "Never Again" sadly remains an unattained dream.

Of the mass killings that occurred during the last century, not all of them conform to the strict definition of genocide with its Greek root "geno" because not all of them have been characterized by the persecution of one race or ethnic group by another. Instead, these incidents can be attributed to the pursuance of an ideology in which there was no clear targeting of a specific ethnicity; rather everyone who did not fit into the ideal society, regardless of race or class, became a victim. So, can these incidents be identified as genocides? According to the majority of the definitions of genocide, the answer to this question would be no because mass killing can only be considered genocide if it is the product of ethnic conflict. However, such a conceptualization of genocide is far too narrow. There are similarities between situations in which the killings are attributed to ethnicity or ideology, which will be addressed at a later point. For the purposes of this paper, I will be using a broader definition of genocide, which will be specified later, under which both the ethnic and ideological cases can comfortably fit.

While ideology is a fairly easy concept to define, it is much more difficult to work with the concept of ethnicity because there are so many different understandings of it. For the purposes of this paper, I will be drawing on social constructivist theories of ethnicity. In contrast to interpretations that are found in the primordialist school of thought, which claim that one's ethnicity is biological and unchanging, the social constructivists claim that a person's ethnic identity is created by dominant groups and thus can be changed over time.

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Since the human population is, for the most part, not made up of individuals bent on murder and brutality against others, especially their own relatives and neighbors, how is it even possible for genocide to occur? What drives the individuals of a country to participate in the murder of their fellow citizens? How much of a role do the actual concepts of ethnicity and ideology have in driving people towards murder? In attempting to find the answers to these questions, I will be conducting a comparative analysis of four cases in which mass killing occurred. To represent genocides which are seen as products of conflicting ethnic identities, the background of the 1994 killing of Tutsis in Rwanda and the atrocities committed against Bosnian Muslims from 1991 to 1995 will be examined. These cases will be compared with the ideological quest of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia from 1975 to 1979 and that pursued by Joseph Stalin during his reign over the Soviet Union, specifically the period from the early 1930s to the late 1940s, each of which resulted in the loss of a substantial percentage of the respective countries' populations due to non-discriminatory killings in the name of a political ideology. The disparities between the regions in which these genocides took place, the duration of time which they lasted, and the pretenses under which they occurred are not only intentional, they are crucial to my analysis. Despite these differences, these incidents are in fact comparable due to the existence of several common variables around which my comparisons and analyses will be formed. Though I will examine the effects of preexisting ethnic tensions and the actual tenets of ideologies, the basis of this thesis will be the claim that those common variables which arise in all four incidents are the main causes of genocide in a country. Basically, in each case, there was a dictatorial leader who sought to maintain his power and saturated his nation with propaganda that relied on

both dehumanization and juxtaposition to achieve this goal. In addition to the presence of such a leader, each country was suffering the effects of a problematic economy at the time of the genocide.

Methodologically, a brief background of the cases and a summary of relevant literature will be presented first. Following this, I will be moving from an examination of the commonalities found in the regimes in power in the countries at the time of their respective genocides. In each case, the respective leader suffered not only from fear of the loss of personal power or the ousting of his party, but also from distrust of his own subordinates and supporters. In order to assuage these fears and maintain his power, the leader will place the blame on the "out group," and, because he has absolute power, embark on a mission to exterminate this group, thus removing the supposed threat.

From this, I will shift the focus more to the actual population of the countries by analyzing how, through people's internalization of propaganda in the form of government-sponsored songs, slogans, publications, and radio, all of which make use of dehumanization or juxtaposition strategies, in-group/out-group conflicting identities are formed in the society, even when none existed beforehand. Additionally, I will claim that an environment of fear and desperation was present in each case which led to a kill or be killed mentality within the population due to a perceived possibility of victimization by the other group. Furthermore, a lack of resistance to the murders taking place is present in each situation because those who wanted to protest or help the victims did so at the peril of losing their own lives.

Next, I will be examining the economics of why people are driven to kill their peers, such as revenge for a period, either historically or immediately preceding the

genocide, of economic superiority and job discrimination in favor the segment that is victimized. People also seek revenge for their own personal reasons, such as loss of land. Lastly, I will present research that shows the presence, in each of the four cases, of a segment of the population that is more prone to killing, mostly made up of young, jobless males that can be easily mobilized for genocidal activities by promises of authority or material gain.

At the completion of my analysis, I will conclude that genocides are not the result of preexisting ethnic conflict or a specific ideology. Instead, the occurrence of genocide depends on the existence of a leader with absolute power, the internalization by the population of the propaganda supported by this leader, and the environment of fear that is created as a result of this. On the economic spectrum, in each case, participants in the genocide were rewarded with material gains, which were extremely appealing in the chaotic economy they existed within, and the satisfaction of revenge, either for personal grievances or a history of their entire group's economic inferiority. Economic instability, along with the appeal of holding authority, also led in each nation to a rise of unemployed, discontent young males, who were instrumental in carrying out genocide. All of the above factors are present in every case presented herein, thus demonstrating that ethnic conflicts or specific ideologies do not ultimately result in the occurrence of genocide. Whether genocidal acts occurred in the USSR in the 1930s and 1940s or in the tiny African nation of Rwanda over half a century later in 1994, they can all be attributed to the same aforementioned causes, despite huge differences in location, population, language, religious beliefs, etc. So, in the effort to predict and prevent genocide, perhaps we must learn to look beyond specific problems between ethnic groups and particular

ideologies.   Rather, we should strive to delve deeper into the broader economic and political situations of the countries that are both prone to genocide and those where such an occurrence is already in progress and, by linking them to past cases that share the same causes, find a solution that will finally put an end to this awful phenomenon.

A Brief Background of the Cases

Bosnia

From 1992 to 1995, the Bosnian War took place in the former Yugoslavia between the newly independent nations of Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Despite notions that conflict has long been unavoidable in the Balkan states, the one event that was crucial to the breakout of war was the death of Marshal Josip Broz Tito in 1980. Without Tito's firm control, the nationalist attitudes that had arisen in the late 1960s were at last able to flourish and the leaders of the republics gained in strength. In the republic of Serbia, one of these empowered politicians, Slobodan Milošević, gained control of the Serbian League of Communists, the ruling party, in September 1987. Milošević's power and his obsession with Serbian nationalism would be one of the key factors in causing the outbreak of war in the Balkans and the extreme violence of the conflict.

Immediately after his ascent to leadership, Milošević "set out to suppress the autonomous provinces (placing them fully under Serbian administration) and to recentralize the system (at the expense of the autonomy of the other republics" (Ramet 25). In March 1991, Milošević and Croatia's President Franjo Tuđman met and decided that Bosnia-Herzegovina must be divided for the Serbs and Croats. The Bosnian Serbs allied with Milošević and proclaimed a separate and independent republic on October 24 of that same year. The referendum for Bosnian independence was held in early 1992.

With the boycott of the Bosnian Serbs, 63.4 % of Bosnia-Herzegovina's population cast their votes, and 99.4% of them voted for an independent republic. Alija Izetbegović, the leader of the Bosnian Muslims and the president of Bosnia-Herzegovina from 1990 to 1996, declared independence, and on March 27, the Bosnian Serbs declared their own independent republic within Bosnia (Ramet 205). Shortly after this declaration, the Bosnian War began on April 5, 1992, when, the day before the official recognition of independent Bosnia-Herzegovina, paramilitary forces from Serbia attacked and murdered Muslim worshippers.

Though violence was committed on all sides, the persecution and killing of Bosnian Muslims is arguably the most shocking facet of the war. Under Milošević, Bosnian Muslims became the victims of a violent deportation and killing campaign which had the aims of "destruction so this avowed enemy race would have no home to which to return, and degradation so the former inhabitants would not stand tall - and thus would not dare again stand - in Serb-held territory" (Power 251). As a result of the efforts of Serbian and Bosnian-Serbian paramilitaries and Serb–run concentration camps, estimates of the number of Bosnian Muslims that lost their lives range from 25,000 to 200,000, with an estimated two million refugees created (Cigar 1995).

Rwanda

The ideology of "Hutu Power" in Rwanda has its beginnings in the late 1950s and early 1960s, with the 1959 Revolution and the subsequent establishment of the First Republic. The revolution of 1959 demolished the power that the Tutsis had been given by Rwanda's former colonizers, the Belgians, through a number of social reforms, most

importantly the abolishment of the practice of using forced Hutu labor to serve the purposes of local Tutsi chiefs and the redistribution of land that had been assigned to Tutsi elites under colonization (Mamdani 134). The phrase "Hutu Nation" had been the rallying cry for the revolution, and it was also the motto behind the First Republic, which was founded in 1962 in conjunction with Rwandan independence. In the First Republic, Tutsis were considered to be outsiders and were banned from the political sphere. The republic ended when, in the midst of rising tensions over both regional power struggles and the government's failing education and employment policies, the army took power on July 5, 1973 in a coup led by Major General Juvénal Habyarimana.

In the Second Republic, President Habyarimana established a new political identity for the Tutsi in which they were no longer outsiders but a minority ethnic group However, the Tutsi still only had limited political and civic rights. As the possibility of Tutsi regaining any real power became more improbable, the Hutu power movement lost more and more support because it seemed unnecessary.   However, Hutu power again became a dangerous mainstream ideology during the civil war of the early 1990s.

The civil war began when the Rwandan Patriotic Front, which had a membership that was primarily Tutsi, led an invasion into Rwanda from their bases in Uganda on October 1, 1990. The RPF sought retribution for the Habyarimana government's failure to democratize Rwanda in any real way and its repressive policies aimed at keeping out Tutsi refugees who had fled Rwanda during the First Republic. The RPF invasion was portrayed by Habyarimana's government as an attempt by Tutsis to regain power, and popular support for his regime rose dramatically almost overnight; hostility toward the RPF and Tutsis in general grew as more and more Hutus were displaced in the areas

controlled by the RPF. A formal end to the war came with the signing of the Arusha

Agreement on August 3, 1993, which laid out a plan for an end to the fighting mainly by

proposing a policy of power sharing between Habyarimana's government and the RPF

until elections could be held (Mamdani 210-14). However, the Arusha Agreement only

resulted in a shaky end to the conflict at best, and all hopes for a lasting peace were shot

down on April 4, 1994 in Kigali with the plane that was carrying President Habyarimana

and the Hutu President of Burundi, Cyprien Ntaryamira.

The genocide in Rwanda against Tutsis and, to a smaller extent, moderate Hutus,

which had been building for years, finally broke out immediately following

Habyarimana's death and quickly spread from Kigali outwards. During the genocide,

which lasted through the third week of May 1994, it is estimated that over 800,000

people, or 5-10% of Rwanda's population, were brutally murdered, mostly through the

use of machetes (Hintjens 241).

Cambodia

In Cambodia, genocide emerged as the result of Pol Pot's desire to implement a

sort of Communist utopian society of peasant farmers in his country. Saloth Sar, who

changed his name to Pol Pot in the mid-1970s, served as the General Secretary of the

Khmer Rouge from 1963 until his death on April 15, 1998. The Khmer Rouge is the

name given to the Cambodian Communists shortly after the creation of the party in the

1950s. In the first decades of its existence, the Khmer Rouge acted largely under the

guidance of the Viet Minh and remained a small group of insurgents hiding out in the

forests along the Vietnam-Cambodia border to avoid repression by the Sihanouk

government. However, after Prince Sihanouk, who gained power in 1953 when

Cambodia became independent from France, was deposed by Lon Nol in 1970, the party

began to gain more and more power. Between 1970 and 1975, the poor joined the Khmer

Rouge by the thousands because the party encouraged them to overcome the hardships

they had endured under Sihanouk and Lon Nol. Helped on by these promises of a better

life, during these five years, "membership in the [Khmer Rouge] expanded from about

four thousand to more than fourteen thousand full and candidate members" (Chandler

242).

On April 17, 1975, the Khmer Rouge took control of the Cambodian capital of

Phnom Penh and deposed the Lon Nol regime. As soon as he came into power, Pol Pot

declared that Cambodia's two thousand year old history was coming to an end and 1975

would now be known as Year Zero. In addition to this declaration, Cambodia was

renamed the Democratic Republic of Kampuchea. Pol Pot vowed to purge his new

society of the "oppressive" forces of capitalism, which included Western culture, city life,

religion, and foreign influences, and in this way return the country to the purity of its past.

As part of Pol Pot's quest for his perfect agrarian society, millions of urban

Cambodians were moved to rural areas where they were forced into slave labor on

collective farms. These collective farms later became known to the world as "the killing

fields" due to the incredible number of deaths that occurred there from disease, overwork,

forced starvation, and outright execution. The horror of Khmer Rouge power was felt all

over the country, and anyone seen as an enemy of the party was a target, regardless of

ethnicity or class, and if they were not transported to labor camps, they were simply shot on the spot or sent to prisons like Tuol Sleng[1] where they were tortured and executed.

The Khmer Rouge's reign finally came to an end when Vietnamese forces invaded Cambodia and gained control of Phnom Penh on January 7, 1979. As a result of Pol Pot's pursuance of his ideal society, of a population of eight million before the Khmer Rouge revolution, the most accurate data estimate that about 1.7 million people lost their lives (Yale CGP). However, casualty figures have been as high as two to three million, or 21% to 31% of the Cambodian population in the beginning of 1975 (Fein 1993, 810-811).

USSR

In 1921, Vladimir Lenin appointed Joseph Stalin to be General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party. From his ascension into the position until his death in 1953, Stalin would retain dictatorial power in the USSR, but he was often involved in power struggles, either real or imagined, between himself and other members of the Party and society. Throughout the 1920s, Stalin and Leon Trotsky were engaged in a bitter struggle over the succession of post-Lenin leadership. Stalin eventually proved victorious in this conflict due both to his superior political tactics and instincts and to coercive measures taken against Trotsky and his supporters. However, his resentment of Trotsky continued and eventually led to the Great Purge of the 1930s, during which Stalin would use the label of "Trotskyite" to justify the persecution of millions of people, both within party circles and the society as a whole.

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[1] Tuol Sleng, also known as S-21, was a former school in Phnom Penh that was used by the Khmer Rouge as a prison camp for political prisoners and their families from 1975 to 1979. Of the nearly 20,000 people who were documented as entering Tuol Sleng, only six are known to have survived (Carvin 1999).

Beginning in 1930, Stalin plunged the USSR into a policy of crash industrialization and collectivization in an effort to modernize Soviet society. This rapid collectivization caused peasant uprisings from the outset, but Stalin refused to abandon his policy. As a result, an incredibly destructive and completely man-made famine began in 1932 which caused millions of deaths, especially in Ukraine. Stalin justified this period of intense starvation by claiming that the population had to suffer in the name of achieving the ultimate goal of improvement of life and more happiness for the multitudes.

In the pursuance of this goal, Stalin also sought to rid the Soviet Union of kulaks, or rich peasants, who were seen as hostile to Socialism. In all honesty, the majority of those branded as kulaks and suffered repression because of this label were not really wealthy at all. During the Stalinist era, "in a typical village, sixteen households (of five to eight persons each) were 'repressed' as kulaks," when in reality, "only five of them [were] economically kulak even by the official definition" (Conquest 46). Regardless of whether or not they fit the definition of kulak, those who were deemed to be of this class were either sent to labor camps, executed, or deported to settlements in remote areas such as Siberia and the Central Asian republics.

In the 1930s, at least 14.5 million peasants died of famine, brutal conditions in work camps, or outright murders. By the end of 1938, purges of Trotskyites had resulted in the arrest of twelve million people, one million of whom were executed with millions more dying under the harsh conditions of prison camps where the death rate ranged from 10% to 30% of the prison camp population a year. In the late 1940s, Soviets returning from imprisonment in German camps were labeled by Stalin as traitors, and millions were executed or died in Stalinist camps. All in all, the lowest credible estimate of

casualties that resulted from Stalin's tyrannical ideological pursuit is twenty million, and

the highest is forty million (Chirot 125-127).

A Review of Relevant Literature

An understanding of the literature in the field of ethnic conflict and genocide is essential to determining the factors leading to genocide. This chapter will provide a summary of the relevant literature concerning definitions of ethnicity and genocide, the role of ideology in the cases examined, and theories of ethnic conflict that will be expanded to apply to genocide specifically.

The definitions of genocide fall into two categories. First are those that define genocide as being committed solely on the basis of ethnicity or the factors that make up a person's ethnic identity, such as race, nationality, and religion. The United Nations definition of genocide, which was established in Article II of the "Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide" in 1948, falls under this category as it states that genocide occurs when a perpetrator seeks to destroy, completely or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group. The United Nations definition is incomplete because it does not include killings based on class or status, which have occurred several times in the past century.

Definitions based only on ethnicity are too narrow because they disregard cases of mass killings that were driven by pursuance of an ideology which, in cases like Cambodia, were just as tragic as ethnically-driven slaughter. Those classifications that broaden the scope of genocide to include killings based on ideology make up the second category of definitions. Definitions of genocide set forth by Harff and Gurr (1988) and Fein (1990) fall within this category. In their article, Harff and Gurr (1988) move beyond

ethnically-based conceptualizations of genocide and create a category of "politicides." They define these as the promotion and execution of policies by the state or its agents which result in the deaths of a substantial portion of a group. In politicides, the authors claim, victims are targeted because of their hierarchical position and/or their opposition to the political regime, as was the case under the regimes of Stalin and Pol Pot. While Harff and Gurr's (1988) definition is more useful than those based strictly on ethnicity, it is still problematic in that it categorizes those incidents in which victims were persecuted based on political ideologies as being separate from genocide. So, a broad definition of genocide that includes ideological killings is still needed, and this is found in the meaning given by Fein (1990), where genocide is defined as "the calculated murder of a segment or all of a group defined as being completely outside the universe of the perpetrator by a government, elite, or crowd of the perpetrator in response to a crisis or opportunity perceived as being caused by the victim," in which a crisis or opportunity can be seen as a result of war, challenges to the perpetrator's power, the threat of internal breakdown or social revolution, etc. As this definition covers both killings that are seen as ethnically and ideologically based, it will be the one which will be utilized for the purposes of this thesis.

As so many different interpretations exist, ethnicity, like genocide, is a difficult concept to define. Some of the more broad definitions of ethnicity include those of Weber (1992), Cohen (1969), Isajiw (1993), and Hutchinson and Smith (1996). Weber's (1922) seminal definition of ethnicity is based upon a belief in common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or due to shared memories of colonization and migration, with groups forming around these common beliefs. Cohen

(1969) and Hutchinson and Smith (1996) continue on this path in that they too define ethnicity as being based upon common ancestry, shared historical memories, and common cultural characteristics such as religion and language. Isajiw (1993) adds to this definition by claiming that ethnicity is also based upon how people see themselves in relation to social systems and how they think others locate them within these systems, which harkens to the theory of constructivism. Based upon these definitions, ethnic groups are informal groups whose members are distinct from the members of other groups and share a common culture or identify themselves with that culture. These definitions of ethnicity and ethnic group provide a good basic understanding of the concepts, but they are lacking in that they focus mainly on the meanings of these terms and identifying the common factors that are seen as defining ethnicity, but they do not sufficiently address the issue of how ethnicity is constructed or how these identities may evolve.

Two categories exist for determining how ethnic identity is constructed. The first consists of those based on the idea of primordialism. In the primordialist theory, which was proposed by Shils (1957) and formalized in the works of Geertz (1963), ethnicity is inherent in human nature and is rooted in biology, and thus is natural and unchanging. Advocates of primordialism like Yinger (1985) further the concept by stating that ethnicity is felt as a primordial sentiment, not something that has been socially constructed, and the emotional attachment that a person feels to his or her "people." Primordialism can be relevant in looking at cases such as Rwanda where there are entrenched differences between ethnic groups, but it is lacking in that it simply says that conflict between ethnic groups is the renewal of historical antagonisms and is inevitable

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because of the essential, unchanging characteristics of members. The theory does not address how the concept of ethnicity is actually used to mobilize for conflict, so it will not be used within this thesis. Instead, analysis will be based on the constructivist theories concerning the formation of ethnicity and causes of ethnic conflict.

According to constructivist theory, which has advocates such as Newbury (1998) and Fearon and Laitin (2000), ethnicity is still not freely chosen, but it is a socially produced, rather than primordial category, and is created by dominant groups and based upon the nature of state power and an individual's placement in the context of the political order. Under constructivist theory, ethnic identities are not rigid and universal, like in the primordialist school of thought, but neither are they completely fluid. A transformation of an individual's or group's ethnic identity is possible but such a change would take many generations because "a person's culture, religion, etc., is not important in determining ethnicity. Rather all that is necessary for an individual to be coded as a member of an ethnic group is that they be immediately descended from members of that group" (Fearon and Laitin 2000, 13). Caselli and Coleman's (2002) approach to constructivist theory claims that the social construction of identities and groups is more based on the economic environment in which people live. They claim that an ethnic group is a coalition of individuals formed with the goal of excluding other members of the population from sharing in the consumption flow from society's assets. Common ethnic traits are used as a tool for creating and reinforcing membership in the coalition. Calvert's (2000) work fits with this idea because he too claims that ethnic identity is created to present an institution for requiring group members to contribute to collective action and making sure that each member follows the prescribed ideals for behavior.

In determining how ethnic violence arises, constructivist literature claims that actions of controlling elites taken to maintain or gain power and individual actions taken for the fulfillment of personal goals such as acquisition of wealth and land or personal revenge are the primary causes (Fearon and Laitin 2000). Caselli and Coleman (2002) present a model for determining the likelihood of ethnic conflict, and conclude that groups with greater distance, in which pronounced differences that mark the ethnic cleavage (physical appearance and language are the most important), are more susceptible to conflict.   If ethnic diversity makes the winning coalition less susceptible to infiltration by members of the losing one, then it can be optimal for the stronger group to initiate a conflict. One way power elites seek to achieve the goal of increasing the distance between groups is through the use of propaganda (Snyder and Ballentine 1996). This propaganda relies on creating a collective fear of the future of the leader's group and the reinvigoration and intensification of historical antagonism, either real or imagined, between groups to divide society (Lake and Rothchild 1996). The works of Gagnon (1994), Denitch (1997), Rogel (1998), Uvin (1999), and Hintjens (1999) provide country specific examples that support the claim that the actions of elites and policies of those in power, including the use of ethnically-charged propaganda, creates the environment that gives rise to ethnic violence. However, the approach that asserts that propaganda plays a major role in bringing about genocide is contradicted by Brubaker and Laitin (1998). They claim that such an approach does not gauge the extent to which propaganda has been internalized. But, findings that show mass killing is least likely to occur in democratic societies and most likely to occur in states led by authoritarian or totalitarian regimes, where such propaganda is used, supports the notion that this propaganda is

internalized to a great extent (Rummel 1994). Rummel's (1994) data also provides

strong support to Fearon and Laitin's (2000) claims about the critical role of political

elites in bringing about ethnic violence.

The constructivist theories of ethnicity on the causes of ethnic conflict relate to

the approaches to the roots of mass killing based on ideology found in Becker (1986),

Fein (1993), and Weitz (2002). According to Becker (1986) and Weitz (2002), who

discuss Cambodia and the Soviet Union, respectively, leaders who fear the extinction of

their regime and their subsequent loss of power emphasize points of their chosen

ideology that promote the removal of corruption in the society. These leaders blame the

possibility of loss of power on both corruption within their own government and those

groups that they see as enemies within the society. These threatening elements must be

eliminated so leaders advocate their removal from society, either by forcible deployment

or death. Weitz (2002) further connects ethnically and ideologically based killings by

asserting that, although Stalin did not follow a racial ideology, a stereotype was

perpetrated that members of certain social classes all shared common traits that would be

passed on to their children, and dehumanizing terms were used to identify these groups,

just as they have been used to denote ethnic groups in other cases. Fein (1993) discusses

the similar typecasting and persecution of people of certain class and social standing that

occurred in Cambodia.

The question still remains of why the common people in countries where

genocide occurs go along with the aims and policies of their leaders and participate in the

genocide. The group of literature that addresses this question for ethnicity-based cases

consists of Fearon and Laitin (1996, 2000), Newbury (1998), Brubaker and Laitin (1998),

Weingast (1998), Calvert (2000), and Caselli and Coleman (2002). Newbury's (1998)

work, which discusses the use of ethnicity in the allocation of material resources,

education, and jobs in Rwanda from the mid 1920's up to the time of the genocide,

supports the idea set forth in Fearon and Laitin (2000) that claims people's participation

in killings is not based solely on ethnic hatred but motivated by other factors such as the

desire to gain wealth and land or for personal revenge.   The work of Fearon and Laitin

(1996) corresponds to this theory because it claims that the low level of information that

is characteristic of interethnic relations in which past conduct of individual members in

the other ethnic group is not known sets the atmosphere for the population of one group

to act upon the grievances that are perceived as being caused by the other because, under

such conditions, individual culprits cannot be identified, so the mindset exists that all

member of the other group should be punished. Staub (1989) provides even more

support for this theory by stating that harsh living conditions, whether they are caused by

economic, social, or political factors, cause heightened tensions that often lead to the

targeting of one group by another, and small incidents that may have occurred prior to a

genocide lead to desensitization which makes it easier for people to kill, both in ethnic

and ideological cases.

Brubaker and Laitin (1998) and Weingast (1998) use a game theoretic approach to

causes of ethnic warfare and why members of a society participate. This theory holds that

ethnic war can emerge even if only vague suggestions of repression exist, or if only a

small, powerful wing of a ruling group has genocidal intentions. Also, according to this

approach, individuals who are told that they are targets for extermination would

rationally take up arms even if the probability of such a thing actually happening is

negligible (Weingast 1998). The relevance of this approach to the ideological cases being examined is supported by various books and scholarly articles, such as Chirot (1994), on the idea that mass killings in Cambodia and the Soviet Union can be attributed to the intentions of the individual in power, along with the kill or be killed mentality that existed in Cambodia and the stereotyping of social groups in the Soviet Union. Calvert (2000) compares electoral politics and ethnically-charged politics and conflict and finds that people's actions largely depend on how they respond to the incentives presented by those in power. For example, those who mistreat out-group members in the way expected by the in-group continue to enjoy the benefits of membership in that group, strengthening the incentive for forming in-group/out-group identities and engaging in violence against the out-group. Hinton (1998) explores the issue of incentives by examining how they affect people's actions in ideological genocides, and states that, in Cambodia, people killed the individuals seen as the enemy to gain honor and please their superiors, and those who killed were considered to be braver and superior to those who did not.

At present, there is still not a sufficient definition of genocide or an understanding of why it happens in some countries and not others. In this thesis, I will attempt to further an understanding of why genocides take place. I will seek to relate the constructivist theory of ethnic conflict, focusing especially on the work of Fearon and Laitin (2000), to ethnically-based genocides to determine the reasons for which they occur. I will also argue that the elites' actions and individuals' quest for personal aims that are set forth in this theory can also be applied to ideological genocides to determine why they happen.

The Role of Leaders in Causing Genocide

Constructivist theories of the causes behind violent ethnic conflict claim that conflict occurs partly because of actions taken by power elites, most often those with absolute power in their countries. These elites look to foment ethnic conflict in order to polarize the divide between their own "in group" and the "out group," and in this way protect or increase the power they hold (Fearon and Laitin 2000). They can do this fairly easily because, in a dictatorial regime, the people do not have any real ability to question a leader's actions and bring about a loss of power. As the following cases will show, this theory on the cause of ethnic conflict in general can be applied to conflict based on ideology as well due to the similarities in the actions taken by the regimes of Cambodia and the USSR and the regimes in Bosnia and Rwanda. In each situation, a leader's fear of extinction of the political system that he supports and ousting of his regime lead him to place the blame for these possibilities on corruption within his nation and government, by an "out group" determined by ethnicity or ideological tenets, which results in action aimed at purification. The fact that the actions of all four of these regimes helped bring about genocide supports the validity of the application of constructivist theory to not just ethnic conflict in general, but genocide in any situation.

The constructivist's argument about the role of power elites in ethnic conflict and the idea that "power kills and absolute power kills absolutely" is supported by statistics that show, as illustrated in Table I, that over the last century democracies have been responsible for the smallest number of casualties, with authoritarian regimes having a

higher number, and totalitarian and communist regimes taking the blame for the most

deaths.

Table I – Estimates for Total Number of People Killed Domestically in the 20th Century

by Each System of Government

Regime Type	Regime Power	Total Killed (000)[2]
Communist*	Highest	101,923
Totalitarian	High	103,194
Authoritarian	Mid	25,730
Democratic	Least	158

- *Communist is a subcategory of Totalitarian
- Data taken from Rudolph J. Rummel, *Power, Genocide, and Mass Murder*, pg. 6.

These findings show that "the more freely a political elite can control the power of the

state apparatus, the more thoroughly it can repress and murder its subjects" (Rummel

1994). The genocides that occurred in Bosnia, Rwanda, Cambodia, and the USSR are in

concurrence with this assertion.

As will become apparent as each case is examined, the leaders all suffered from

the phenomenon known as dictator's dilemma, which arises from the fact that, no matter

how much control is exercised over the citizenry (or perhaps because of the high level of

repression), the dictator can never truly know if he is actually supported by his people, or

simply obeyed out of an immense fear of repression. Basically, a tyrant never knows if

the citizens over which he rules, and even his closest allies for that matter, are truly loyal

to him because the greater his fear of disloyalty, the greater the extent of repression will

be, and the more loyal the subjects will appear to become, even if they despise their

leader, because showing loyalty and support is the only way they are ensured safety

(Wintrobe 20-22). In attempting to cultivate the loyalty and love necessary to keep them

in power, and in the process of suffering from the distrust and suspicion caused by the

dictator's dilemma, each one of the four dictators fanatic need to gain the allegiance of his constituents helped to bring about genocide in their respective countries.

The genocides in the four cases were also a result of diversionary tactics used by each leader in order to maintain power in the face of inter-party opposition that may have otherwise resulted in a loss of the leadership position and external opposition that could have caused the party or regime as a whole to be declared illegitimate and deposed. In each of the four cases, the leaders found an "out-group" to victimize and take the blame for the problems their governments were facing. In Bosnia and Rwanda, the "other" became an ethnic group through the manipulation of the strength of ethnic identity, and by defining people in terms of ethnicity, Milošević and Habyarimana were able to "determine the salience of certain ethnic identities" and put down opposition and consolidate support against the out-group, which allowed them to stay in power (Saideman 23). In Cambodia and the USSR, a similar thing occurred, except in those cases, people's identities were constructed on the basis of an ideology, and the out-group that was victimized was made up of anyone whose actions, status, or occupation ran counter to Pol Pot's or Stalin's conceptions of the ideal society.

Bosnia

At the time the Bosnian War and the genocide that took place within it occurred, Serbia was under the control of the SLC and its leader Slobodan Milošević. From the time he took the position of the presidency in 1987, Milošević continuously resorted to whatever means necessary to maintain and strengthen his position of power, which led to the formation of a totalitarian government. Following the dissolution of Yugoslavia in

1990, Milošević renamed the Serbian League of Communists, and it became the Serbian Socialist Party. Once he and his "new" party took power following the elections of 1990, Milošević sought to crush opposition whenever it presented itself. For example, early in his presidency, in the interest of consolidating his power, Milošević, like Stalin and Pol Pot before him, ousted several of his former friends and political allies who questioned his actions. In fact, throughout his reign, Milošević frequently turned against those who had helped him achieve his goals when he felt that collaboration was no longer to his advantage. Common Serbian citizens were also not allowed to oppose Milošević, for those who dared to do so were brutally put down, as in the March 1991 demonstrations in Belgrade where Milošević, after finding that he could not quell the 500,000 plus protestors alone, resorted to the use of police force and JNA tanks to disperse the crowd (Rogel 96). Taking into account the atmosphere of complete control that Milošević created not just in Serbia but in the Serb populations in other republics, it becomes clear that he had the absolute power necessary to incite the Serbian people into a fanatic nationalism and facilitate the killing of tens of thousands of Bosnian Muslims, all in the interest of maintaining his power base and increasing the territory of Serbia by appearing to be the champion of the cause of Serbian empowerment.

Milošević's quest to appear to be the savior of Serbs, both in Serbia and the other republics, and the vehicle of the return of Serbian dominance in the Balkans began with the publishing of a memorandum by the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1986. This extremely nationalistic document claimed that, throughout history, Serbs had been victimized by other peoples of Yugoslavia and had suffered prejudice during the reign of non-Serb communist rulers, namely Tito, and called for a reunification of Serbs in a

reconstructed, Serbian Communist-ruled Yugoslavia (Pavković 89). Milošević embraced

this idea of a reunified Serbia that would stretch throughout Yugoslavia and took action

to make this proposed state, in which he would rule, a reality by reviving myths of Serb

nationalism and instilling ideas of a long history of ethnic conflict between Serbs and

other ethnic groups, especially Muslims, in the minds of Serbs. One of the first myths

that Milošević brought up was one concerning the battle of Kosovo Polje which took

place in 1389, where the Ottoman Turks fought against and were victorious over the

Serbs. In this battle, according to the Serbian myths, the best of the Serbian nobility

sacrificed their lives in an attempt to uphold their Christian faith and their freedom, and

many folk songs and epics were written to commemorate the martyrs and encourage all

Serbs to avenge this defeat (Pavković 8). The six hundredth anniversary of the battle

came in 1989, and Milošević used this occasion to celebrate nationalist literature of the

1800s that extolled the idea of the "Turk within" in each Slavic Muslim and equated this

Turk identity to that of a "Christ-killer" that prevented the rise of the Serb nation (Sells

28). In this way, he used a nationalist myth to drum up support for his plan of a Greater

Serbia, where all Serbs could live in a strong Serbian state, by portraying them as victims

who deserved to have their own state. By bringing back the hateful literature associated

with the myth, Milošević succeeded in attacking the very identity of the Bosnian Muslims

by stereotyping them all as killers of all things good and holy and a danger to the Serbian

nation. In addition to revitalizing historical myths of victimization by Muslims,

Milošević and other nationalists, such as the Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić, also

preyed upon recent fears of the formation of a Muslim state under the direction of the

leader of the Bosnian Muslims and the president of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Alija

Izetbegović. Like Milošević, Izetbegović came to power following the elections of 1990, and he encouraged the spiritual revitalization of all Muslims and a Muslim takeover of positions of power in Muslim parts of Yugoslavia in an effort to further Islamic values in all spheres of life (Pavković 97). Though Izetbegović did not seek to create an Islamic state, his ideas were viewed by many Serbs as a desire for renewed political and economic dominance by the Muslims, which brought back memories of their times of repression under Ottoman control.   Karadžić continuously justified the killing of Bosnian Muslims by assuring the Serbian people that they were defending not just their homeland, but Europe as a whole, from Islamic fundamentalism and that, should the Muslims be allowed to cohabitate with the Serbs, all Serbs would be forced to abandon their Christian faith and "Serbian women would have to wear the veil" (Cigar 65). With such horrifying notions in their heads, it is not all that difficult to see how Serbs in the JNA, Bosnian Serb soldiers, and regular citizens harbored such hatred for the Bosnian Muslims and were able to murder them so easily.

In actuality, there is no real evidence of a longstanding history of ethnic hatreds in the Balkans, just as there was no real reason to believe that Izetbegović wished to carry out jihad and establish an Islamic state. Milošević and other elites created such a history to garner support for plan to annex parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia to form a Greater Serbia and encourage people to do away with anyone that stood in the way of this plan, specifically the Bosnian Muslims, and to a lesser extent, the Croats living in the desired territory. Before Milošević, Bosnia-Herzegovina was an incredibly tolerant country, so much so that its nickname was "little Yugoslavia," and even in the ethnically diverse areas that saw the worst violence during the genocide, intermarriage rates had

been fairly high and as late as 1990, and polls taken in these areas showed high levels of tolerance (Gagnon 134). By creating strong and intolerant ethnic identities where there were none before and encouraging people to identify themselves as a "Serb" rather than a "Bosnian" for example, Milošević ensured that his fellow Serbs would support him in the battle for power between themselves and their ancient enemies, which was really the battle for power between Milošević and any dissenting faction in his party and the presidents of the other republics of the former Yugoslavia.

Rwanda

Like Milosevic, President Juvénal Habyarimana sought to maintain the support of his power base by encouraging racist ideology in order to unite his supporters, the vast majority of whom were Hutu, against a common enemy, the Tutsis, and deflect attention from divisions within the party. Beginning in 1990, democratization was gaining support in Rwanda and Habyarimana's military dictatorship was facing strong domestic criticism so, in order to hold on to power, Habyarimana returned to the radicalization of ethnicity. This affirmation of Hutu ethnicity was a key component of the ruling elite's strategy of legitimization and control. The idea that the government was the representative of the majority Hutu and the sole defense against the Tutsis' attempts to victimize and enslave the Hutu was promoted to solidify the ruling elite's hold on power. Also similar to Milošević, Habyarimana not only manipulated the concept of ethnicity to maintain the support of the common people; he also turned against many politicians from the previous regime and used the military to keep down dissent for the two decades his military dictatorship was in power. The impossibility of retribution gave Habyarimana

the complete power of a dictator and allowed him to carry out whatever policies he deemed necessary.

Genocide represented a last-ditch effort by the unpopular and autocratic Habyarimana regime to remain in power, and just like Milosevic, the government used techniques of dehumanization and of misinformation to rally support against the group seen to be "the other." The history of the racial inequality that existed during the time of colonization by the Belgians was revitalized and exaggerated in the propaganda put out by the government-owned radio station RTLM and inflammatory newspapers such as *Kangura*, both of which had been established by Habyarimana's wife Agathe, and the extremist ideology of Hutu Power, which had its beginnings in Rwanda's First Republic, was once again exalted. In this propaganda, the memories of the history of Tutsi superiority before Rwanda's independence were brought to the fore. During the Belgian colonial reforms of 1926-36, the Tutsis were deemed to be the superior race. The racially superior Tutsis were the political power in colonial Rwanda and ruled as chiefs and landowners over the Hutu populations, while Hutus were not allowed to hold any positions of power, even over other Hutus. Under the Belgian system, the Hutus became almost like serfs in a feudal system and "to be a Tutsi was to be in power, near power, or simply to be identified with power – just as to be a Hutu was more and more to become a subject" (Mamdani 75). The Habyarimana regime told the people of Rwanda that the Tutsis were looking to regain the power they held in these times, when they had been hard masters and sometimes sold the Hutus over which they ruled to Swahili slave traders, which understandably raised fear in the Hutus and led the vast majority to overlook their dissatisfaction with the Habyarimana government in the interest of simply keeping his

pro-Hutu regime in power so that they would not become the servants of the Tutsi once again.

Habyarimana, with the help of the *akazu*, also used current events, specifically the civil war, in Rwanda in addition to manipulating the history of ethnic division in Rwanda to strengthen his claims that Tutsis were looking to regain power and to present himself as the defender of the Hutu people, just as Milošević did in his quest to stir up hatred for the Bosnian Muslims and revitalize Serb nationalism.[2] In the Rwandan civil war, which was a battle between the Tutsi guerilla forces of the RPF and the forces of the Habyarimana regime, the RPF sought to "liberate" Rwanda from oppression and gain rights for the Tutsis that had been lost following the revolution of 1959.[3] However, this "liberation" was extremely unpopular as only about nine percent of Rwanda's population was Tutsi at the time the civil war began in 1990 (Peterson 269). Furthermore, contrary to the hopes and expectations of the RPF, "local Hutu peasants showed no enthusiasm for being liberated by them [and] they had run away from the area of guerilla operation" (Pruniér 135). During the civil war, Habyarimana abandoned his attempts at reconciliation between Hutus and Tutsis, and his claims of the danger of a resurgence of Tutsi power appeared legitimate to the thousands of Hutus that were displaced and the thousands more that knew of the events and linked them to Habyarimana's and the *akazu's* propaganda.

Admittedly, there is more of a history of ethnic tensions in Rwanda than there is in the Balkans, thus giving Habyarimana more legitimacy in his claims than Milosevic

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[2] The *akazu*, or "little house," was the hard-line inner circle that surrounded the President and was instrumental in facilitating the resurgence of Hutu Power and bringing about the genocide. The *akazu* was led by the First Lady, Madam Agathe Habyarimana (Peterson 271).
[3] The Revolution of 1959 is the event in which pro-Hutu forces took control of the government and replaced Tutsis with Hutus in positions of power and redistributed land holdings to Hutus.

had, but the extent of the animosity between the ethnic groups was still extremely inflated.

In fact, despite the disparities in political and economic status, 1959 was the first time

that systematic political violence had ever been recorded between Hutus and Tutsis. Had

the Habyarimana government and the *akazu* not taken action to rejuvenate and exaggerate

the presence of ethnic conflict, it is doubtful that the genocide would have occurred in

Rwanda in 1994.

Cambodia

As in Bosnia and Rwanda in later years, the Khmer Rouge and its leader Pol Pot,

who held power from 1975 to 1979, were fearful of the death of their regime, which led

them to adopt ideas that blamed their helplessness on corruption within both the party and

the country as a whole, thus demanding purification of the corrupters in order to preserve

the power of the regime. Like the other dictators in this study, Pol Pot sought to purge

the party of all those who he considered disloyal and rid society of any force that might

be in opposition to his government and its ideology. For example, in 1976 Pol Pot and

his close allies began to believe that they were surrounded by enemies, and "plots against

them were being hatched, first in the north around Siem Reap and then in the northwest.

Regional party secretaries were replaced, interrogated, and killed, [and] so were regional

military commanders" (Chandler 1991, 270).

Because his purges were based on ideological disputes, not differences in

ethnicity, no one was safe, and the Khmer Rouge incited the killing of both the majority

Cambodian group and minority groups such as the Chinese and Vietnamese. Anyone

who was seen to be in opposition to the Khmer government was labeled as a non-Khmer,

or one of the "new" people, and as enemies of the people, they had no rights whatsoever. The new population that was created, made up of party-loving peasant farmers, through the elimination of these "new" people was the one that the regime needed to maintain its power. In their attempt to gain popular support and ensure that they would retain power in Cambodia, Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge also manipulated historical myths to fit their own goals, presented themselves as the defenders of the people, and sought to dissolve any sense of identity except for that of membership in the new society.

The use of Cambodia's historical culture to support the Khmer Communist ideology took the form of the revitalization of the myths of the greatness of ancient Cambodian culture and its magnificent achievements, specifically that of Angkor Wat.[4] The Khmer Rouge stressed that Angkor Wat had been built solely by Cambodians without any outside influences or aid, and they attributed the construction of Angkor Wat to the common people who had actually built it, not the masters who had commanded it. Pol Pot inspired the Cambodian people with speeches like the following:

> "Long ago there was Angkor. Angkor was built in the era of slavery. Slaves like us built Angkor under the exploitation of the exploiting classes, so that these royal people could be happy. If our people can make Angkor, they can make anything" (Chandler, 1983, 44).

This rhetoric led people to follow the Khmer Rouge's claim that, to return Cambodia to purity and prosperity, Cambodia had to become completely free of foreign influence and its population would need to be completely rural and free of any exploitative powers either foreign or domestic.

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[4] Angkor Wat, located in Angkor, Cambodia, is the largest of the temple complexes built during the reign of the Khmer kings. It was built under the order of King Suryavaram (1113-1150) and its many galleries, towers, and gates rise up from a rectangular plot of land measuring 5,000 by 4,000 feet (Kleiner 2006, 21).

Much of the blame for all the suffering during the years 1975 to 1979 was placed on foreigners and attributed to their influence in an attempt to keep people loyal to the Khmer Rouge. Of course, Pol Pot portrayed himself and the party as the savior that would release the Cambodian people from this oppression and suffering. The foreigners that fell under the most criticism were the Vietnamese, who wished to "annex Cambodian territory and eliminate the Cambodian race by Vietnamizing it" (Shawcross 387). Moreover, Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge saw the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh as the "great prostitute on the Mekong" and a center for the exploitation of the country's people by foreigners[5] (Chandler 1991, 247). By adhering to the ideology of the Khmer Rouge the people would theoretically be able to oust the foreigners and create a pure and self-sufficient society. The elimination of foreigners and isolationism of Cambodia would be advantageous to Pol Pot not only because it was part of carrying out his ideology, but also because no foreign power would be allowed to challenge his dictatorial rule or overthrow him.

In his quest to reconstruct the identities of the Cambodian people to simply that of peasant farmers devoted to nothing and no one but the Khmer Rouge, Pol Pot followed a policy of social dissolution which sought to dismantle all other types of associations that would aid in shaping one's identity. People all over the country were terrorized as the family, neighborhood groups, villages, and associations were subjected to this policy, the Cambodian word for which is *khchatkhchay os roling*, which translates as "scatter them out of sight" or "scatter them to the last one" (Fein, 1993, 15). This scattering took place through methods such as secret killings and torture, and enforced hunger and labor

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[5] The Mekong River runs through China, Laos, Burma, Vietnam, and Cambodia. From just below Phnom Penh, it flows into the Mekong Delta in Vietnam.

leading to starvation and disease. Ideally, after all traditional, cultural, religious and

social infrastructures and hierarchies had been done away with, a type of new socialist

man would arise in their place, loyal only to the Khmer Rouge and its beliefs in the

subjugation of the individual in favor of the collective good. With the destruction of all

types of groupings, Pol Pot succeeded in virtually eliminating the threats to his power and

legitimacy that he was so fearful of. Furthermore, his new institution of collective farms

provided the Khmer Rouge with a tabula rasa on which this new, party-approved culture

could be imprinted (Quinn 191). Without Pol Pot's fanatic drive to construct a purified

new society, the Cambodian genocide would not have happened, which makes him and

the Khmer Rouge completely responsible for causing the deaths of millions.

USSR

Joseph Stalin undoubtedly set the precedent for the other genocidal dictatorships

that would come after him. Millions died as a result of his purges of disloyal members of

the party and anyone who was found to be antagonistic to his ideology, regardless of guilt,

ethnicity, or class distinction. Throughout his long term as the head of the Soviet Union,

Stalin suffered from constant paranoia over the possibility of betrayal and the subsequent

loss of power that it would bring and strove for recognition of his power from those he

found guilty of such betrayal. Also in the interest of maintaining his tyrannical power

and crushing any possibility of opposition, Stalin constantly placed the blame for the

failures of his government and its policies on others, most often the kulaks, whom he

disposed of. In addition, Stalin was desirous of having the population of the USSR see

him as a heroic figure that saved Soviet society from its backward ways, thus becoming the bringer of modernity and a better life.

Stalin's rage against perceived enemies and the suspicious nature that he had harbored since the very beginning of his rise to power reached dangerous heights in the 1930s. Anyone who did not express their total agreement with his policies was given an enemy label such as "Trotskyite" or "kulak," and was subject to execution, imprisonment, or forcible relocation to the gulags[6] or labor colonies in the outermost areas of Soviet territory. Even those party members who had once been his close friends came under suspicion if they did not sufficiently flatter him and express approval of his policies. In the hugely publicized show trials that accompanied the purges of the 1930s, many of the most well-known old Bolshevik politicians, many of whom held no power at all at the time, were subjected to the full force of Stalin's vengeful wrath, mainly due to grudges he held from earlier years.[7] All who were forced to participate in these show trials were found guilty, and the vast majority of them were executed along with their entire families. Though these show trials undoubtedly fed Stalin's need for revenge by humiliating his old adversaries, they also left him with a small group of extremely loyal subordinates, many of whom were "less educated, new members of the Party, men whose careers were now bound to the continuity and success of socialism," which was really the continued power of Stalin (Chirot 117). Perhaps most importantly, however, the show trials taught the people of the Soviet Union the chilling lesson that anyone found to be a traitor to

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[6] GULAG is an acronym for the branch of Soviet State Security that operated the system of labor camps, detention camps, and prisons. The gulags have also come to represent the actual camps themselves, especially those associated with political prisoners.

[7] Bolsheviks were members of the Marxist Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party, and were given the name after the party split in 1903. In 1917, the Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, carried out the October Revolution in which they gained power in Russia. Afterward, "Bolshevik" became synonymous with "Communist", and in fact, the word "Bolshevik" was not officially dropped from the name of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union until 1952.

Stalin or seen as a threat to his ideology would be eliminated. These show trials, together with the fear caused by the example of the millions of other victims, drove away any possibility of opposition to Stalin and allowed him to maintain absolute power over the USSR for more than twenty years.

Because the majority of the population was not expected to be able to understand the complexities of Communist class theories, Stalin appealed to millions of citizens through propaganda that encouraged the notion of socialism as a superior system that would make the USSR a superior nation. Along with these assertions of the wonders of the socialist system and the successes it would bring, Stalin told the Soviet citizenry that their rise to power was inevitable. Many people got caught up in these ideals and became ardent supporters of not only the ideology that would supposedly bring about this empowerment, but also of Stalin himself, who was seen as the leader who, as a "miraculous and perfect representation of 'class' forces," would lead them into this new era of promised prosperity (Chirot 126).

The practice of collectivization that began in the early 1930s was not only a way for Stalin to pursue his goals of creating a modernized Soviet society in which every individual would strive for the greater good; it was also a way to eliminate millions of peasants who were seen as a dangerous class enemy hostile to socialism and in turn opposed to Stalin's power and policies. The famine that followed the rapid switch to collectivization was a deliberate policy carried out by the Party. In 1931-1932, grain targets were purposely set so high as to be impossible to reach, thus forcing the peasantry to sacrifice nearly all their grain to the government in an effort to meet these quotas.

Conveniently, millions of peasants starved to death, thus further ensuring that there would be no force great enough to challenge Stalin's legitimacy.

Stalin sought to bring what he saw as "backward" ethnicities and nationalities, such as the Ukrainians and the Poles, into the new Soviet, more truthfully Russian, modernizing society and assimilate them into what he believed to be the more advanced Russian culture. In this way, he would improve their lives by integrating them into the collective and allow them to benefit from the betterment of Soviet society. Certainly, this approach and its promise of an improved standard of living gained him some supporters in the other republics of the USSR. But, to his Russian followers, Stalin presented himself in a very different way in his quest to gain popular support. Populations that were seen to lie outside the realm of reform because of their ways of being, such as kulaks and the members of some of the other republics, were categorized into groups similar to ethnic groups in that every member of the group was believed to carry all the traits of that group, and those traits would be passed on to the next generation. With Stalin, there was an absence of racism as people from all classes and ethnicities were victimized, but entire social groups who did not fit into the ideology he supported and were perceived to present animosity to his goals and policies were identified as enemies. These groups were often assigned blame for any failures as Stalin could not show that he had failed personally and expect to maintain his power base. By ridding society of these supposedly harmful elements, Stalin appeared to be the main protector of Soviet, especially Russian, industrialization and whatever prosperity came of it, thus earning the support of a large number of people and ensuring his place at the helm of the USSR.

Like Pol Pot decades later, Stalin's aims of staying in power and carrying out his ideology made him the sole cause of the largest genocide of the twentieth century.

Summary

Milošević, Habyarimana, Stalin, and Pol Pot all pursued very similar activities in their quest to maintain, and ideally increase, their power. None of these leaders ever took the blame for their loss of support. Instead, each turned against politicians in their own ranks that were perceived as a threat based not on ethnicity. Most importantly, each leader placed the blame for his government's and the country's problems on the group that he did not belong to and demanded purification of this group. This even occurred with Pol Pot and Stalin who targeted all those who they felt to be in opposition, regardless of ethnicity. So, obviously, since all the same factors are present in each case, even the ideological ones, the concept of ethnicity cannot be central to genocide.

Propaganda and Rational Choice as Incentives to Kill

Through the internalization of propaganda put out by the political elites, combined with the incentives caused by fear of being ostracized by one's own group, individuals form themselves into new in-groups and out-groups, and the members of the in-group become motivated to take part in genocide against the newly-determined out-group. In each case, the propaganda that was created made use of methods of both dehumanization and juxtaposition to belittle those designated as enemies and turn the rest of the population against them, thus providing incentives to take action against the "dangerous" groups. Dehumanizing propaganda demeans its targets through portraying them as subhuman beings, such as animals, insects, or even just a lower form of humanity, or by stripping the members of the target group of their individuality by depicting the group as simply a mass with a single goal or way of thinking, devoid of individual thought or willpower. This sort of propaganda is effective because it gains strength from stereotypes which may have already been in existence. Specifically, the type of dehumanization that lumps the individuals of the group together and makes them into a solitary creature is quite powerful when the theory that interethnic relations are characterized by low levels of information is taken into account. In such a situation, the past conduct of individual members in the target group is not clearly known, and as a result, members of the in-group can easily accept propaganda that places the blame for any sort of unfavorable actions on the target group as a whole. When individual culprits

cannot be identified and propaganda victimizes the group as a whole, it is more likely that violence will occur and escalate as the need to punish the group as a whole arises (Fearon and Laitin 1996).

In addition to propaganda that relied on strategies of dehumanization, leaders in each case utilized juxtaposition in incendiary publications, radio programs, and the like. Juxtaposition propaganda relies on the notion that the in-group is normal and good, while the targeted out group is just the opposite. Part of the power of this type of propaganda in the formation of new identities is the fact that people will begin to identify themselves not only by what they are, but by what they are not in terms of the relationship between the groups. For example, a person from group A is "good", not necessarily because he or she is a good person, but simply because he or she is not part of group B, the "bad" group. Furthermore, this type of propaganda often puts forth the notion that the mere existence of the "bad" group endangers the normal lifestyle of the "good" group. So, as will be seen in each of the four cases, members of the in-group take action against members of the out-group not only to preserve their status within their group, but also to protect their own personal way of life, which they can clearly only maintain if the out-group is eliminated. Violence happens especially when marginalized members of group A, having internalized the belief that As are superior to Bs, attack Bs to prove to themselves or others that they are definitely As (Fearon and Laitin 2000, 857). To further the theory that such incentives lead to genocide, rational choice calculations, in which people's actions largely depend on how they respond to incentives, is evident in each of the four cases. For example, those who mistreat out-group members in the way expected by the in-group, perhaps in the interests of maintaining the in-group's way of life, continue to

enjoy the benefits of membership in that group. Additionally, to maintain membership in the "good" group, members must contribute to their group's collective action and uphold the prescribed behaviors of that group, for example, the extermination of members of the out-group (Calvert 53-56).

To show further incentives for the members of the various in-groups to participate in genocide, the game theory approach on the causes of ethnic warfare can be applied to each case. This theory holds that ethnic conflict can emerge even if only vague suggestions of repression exist, or if only a small, powerful wing of a ruling group has genocidal intentions because each group has an assessment of the probability that the other group will initiate violence. According to this approach, individuals who are told that they are targets for extermination would rationally take up arms even if the likelihood of such a thing actually happening is negligible, because the group's probability assessment rises above the critical level, thus providing the motivation to become an aggressor rather than a victim (Weingast 165). Though this theory has been constructed in an attempt to explain the outbreak of ethnically-based violence as in Bosnia and Rwanda, it will also work for violence attributed to ideologies as well, as the cases of the USSR under Stalin and Cambodia under Pol Pot will demonstrate.

Bosnia

During the Bosnian War and the campaign against Bosnian Muslims, Milošević relied heavily on propaganda put out through state-sponsored media to alienate the Serbs from the Muslims and emphasize the need for the removal of the Muslims in favor of creating the safe homeland that Serbs were entitled to. Milošević began his efforts to

control Serbian media in the late 1980s, and by 1991 he was in complete control of the largest newspapers and television stations. The medium that he used most widely to distribute his nationalistic propaganda was television, specifically the state-owned network Radio Television of Serbia (RTS), based in the Serbian capital of Belgrade. RTS often aired segments and programs which were aimed at rallying the Serbs against their dangerous Muslim neighbors, and though the majority of this information was false, it had a strong effect on the Serbs and Bosnian Serbs, as did the three state-controlled daily newspapers, especially in more rural areas where people were unable to get information from any of the small independent news agencies that existed in the cities at the time. Due to lack of funding which forced them to broadcast in low wattage or limited printing, independent television stations and the semi-independent newspaper *Borba*, for example, were unable to reach beyond the suburbs of Belgrade (Snyder and Ballentine 27). Because the people there were not exposed to any sources other than those that were state-controlled, the people in the countryside became a stronghold for Milošević and were the most prone to believing his false propaganda, which was based on dehumanization in the form of stripping the Muslims of individuality, and the juxtaposition of the "good" Serbs against the "bad" Muslims.

Milošević's propaganda campaign, unlike that of Hutu extremists, for example, was aimed not so much so at portraying Muslims as animalistic or insect-like; rather it took the form of grouping together the millions of individual Muslims into one common whole with one dangerous motive – to carry out jihad and wipe out the Serbs. Serbian television and radio frequently used phrases such as "Muhajedin fighters" and "fundamentalist warriors of jihad" to describe Muslims, and these phrases became part of

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the everyday vocabulary of Serbs (Armatta 2003). Serbian newspapers also ran jokes that reinforced the negative imagery of the Muslim race as one being. These jokes featured "Mujo," who was the stereotyped representative of all Muslim men and his counterpart, "Hasa" or Fata," who represented all Muslim women (Cigar 72). The false reports and hateful stereotyping of the official Serbian media, which reached all of Serbia, were supplemented in Bosnia with "news" put out by extremists like Radovan Karadžić, the leader of the Bosnian Serbs, which claimed, for example, that Muslims were crucifying Serbian babies, gouging out their eyes, throwing them into the Drina river, and castrating Serbian men (Vuillamy 48-49). Furthermore, the Serbian media ran stories that told of Bosnian Muslims feeding Serb children to animals in the Sarajevo zoo. This sort of misinformation that strengthened claims that each and every Muslim wanted to eliminate Serbs and carry out jihad fed right into the main method of propaganda used by the Serbian media, which was juxtaposition.

In the programs of RTS and articles in the state-controlled newspapers, Muslims were depicted as the dangerous aggressor against the Serbs, who were the good and decent victims. RTS and TV Belgrade frequently broadcasted stories about Serbs being attacked by Muslims, such as one report from Zvornik that alleged Muslims were shelling Serbian homes. In reality, the Muslims in Zvornik did not even have the artillery necessary for the shelling that supposedly took place (Cigar 72). Because of the inaccurate information being beamed into homes all over Serbia through television, "38 percent of Belgrade residents in a July 1992 poll thought that it was Muslim-Croat forces who had recently been shelling the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo, versus only 20 percent who knew it had been the Serbs" (Snyder and Ballentine 28-29). Serbs in Bosnia-

Herzegovina were also subject to this type of propaganda, and felt themselves victimized by their Muslim neighbors as well. One made-up story of the murder of a common farmer's wife by Muslims was spread all over the area of Bihać[8], even though it is likely that she was actually killed by Serb extremists (Burg 175). Even though this story, and the majority of other human interest stories like it were completely false, such propaganda led Serbs to believe that, if even a simple farmer's wife was attacked, they were all poised to become victims. To stay alive and preserve their people and community, the evil Bosnian Muslims would have to be eliminated.

The extremist anti-Muslim propaganda led to the development of ethnic identities like "Muslim" and "Serb" in the former Yugoslavia where, beforehand, people were more likely to identify themselves, for example, as simply "Bosnian." Bosnian Muslims identified themselves with Bosnia and Europe, not really with the Muslim religion and the Arab world. Bosnian Muslims, for the most part, do not follow many of the rigid rules set forth in the Qur'an, such as abstaining from eating pork and unfailingly answering the *adhan*, and they celebrate the same holidays as their Catholic and Orthodox neighbors.[9] Testimonies from Muslim soldiers in the Bosnian Army attest to this lack of a strong religious identity. The first is taken from journalist Ed Vuillamy's interview with Jasmin, a middle-aged deputy commander on the front line in Sarajevo:

> I am forty, and I have never been in a mosque. If there was an Islamic state here, there would be a lot of Muslims eating sausages in it (Vuillamy 64).

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[8] Bihać is located on the banks of the Una River in the northwestern corner of Bosnia-Herzegovina, on the border with Croatia (Bihac.org).
[9] The *adhan* is the Muslim call to prayer, and is typically made from a minaret at a mosque. The *adhan* is made five times a day to summon people to take part in the daily prayer ritual known as *salat*, which is one of the five pillars of Islam.

The second is from Vuillamy's conversation with Emir Tica, a young man who was in

charge of transport for the Bosnian Army in Travnik:

> I never thought of myself as a Muslim. I don't know how to pray, I never went to
> mosque. I'm European like you. I do not want the Arab world to help us; I want
> Europe to help us. But now, I have to think of myself as a Muslim now that we
> are faced with obliteration. I have to understand what is it about me and my
> people they wish to obliterate (Vuillamy 65).

In response to the formation of this new Muslim identity came the creation of a

strong Serb identity, partially because Serbians and Bosnian Serbs had to emphasize the

fact that they were not Muslims to maintain their status in the group and avoid

persecution. During the Bosnian genocide, Serb participation in the atrocities, as awful as

it was, was in fact a rational choice. Obviously, the vast majority of the common Serbian

people were not bloodthirsty nationalist fanatics, but if Serbs refused to participate, they

could be accused of being sympathetic to the Muslims and cast out of their group, thus

losing the safety and privileges accorded to Serbs at the time. One Serb participant in the

genocide claims:

> I could not refuse because the order was that everyone had to do it. And if I
> refused to carry out the order, they (presumably Bosnian Serb paramilitaries)
> would kill me (Cigar 52).

Another Serb who opposed the ethnic cleansing and was taking a walk with Muslim

friends when the Muslims in Prijedor[10] were rounded up was beaten by Serb militiamen

for harboring a friendly attitude towards Muslims (Cigar 102). Accusations of being a

spy for the Muslims were also greatly feared, and one Serb, asked about why he

participated in the killings, recalls:

> My commander said that because I came from Sarajevo and lived with the
> Muslims, I could be suspected as a spy, so I had to prove myself (Cigar 103).

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[10] Prijedor is located in the northwest of Bosnia-Herzegovina and is located in the area that the Serbs
wanted to use to connect Serbia to the Republic of Serbian Krajina.

To prove that they were indeed true and patriotic members of the Serbian nation and avoid the criticism and serious risks, such as being placed in concentration camps along with the Muslims, which came with the refusal to act against the Muslims, common Serbs were forced to follow the murderous commands of Milosevic and other leaders like Karadžić.

Another incentive for Serbs to participate in the genocide was the fear that the Muslims were planning their own genocide against them, and they would be exterminated if they did not act first. These fears were heightened by allegations of revolutionary Arabic texts found in the homes of Bosnian Muslims and charges presented as fact in the state-run media. The newspaper *Politika Ekspress* claimed that the Bosnian government under the Muslim leader Izetbegović "intended to set up an Islamic fortress in the middle of Europe," and the military weekly *Narodna Armija* reported that Muslims "intended to create an Islamic state extending over Bosnia-Herzegovina, southern Serbia, Macedonia, Greece, Bulgaria, and Albania" (Cigar 42-43). Bosnian Serb authorities frequently claimed that Europe had to be defended from Islamic fundamentalism and Serb forces had to take control because the Muslims were allegedly planning to "circumcise all Serb males and kill all boys over the age of three and send the women to harems to produce Islamic soldiers," and the Bosnian Serb media purposely misinterpreted texts of the Qur'an to provide proof that Islam mandated that all non-Muslims be killed (Cigar 66). Despite the fact that the possibility of the ethnic cleansing of Serbs and the creation of an Islamic state was nonexistent, Serbs were motivated to take action against Muslims to prevent such a state from being established because, should such a thing ever come to pass, the Serbs would suffer dire consequences. For

example, one member of a Serb militia believed that his men were ridding the country of

Muslims in order to "protect Serbian children from the Islamic crescent" and keep the

Muslims from getting their homes and taking control of their women (Cigar 82). The

Serbian fear of victimization was strengthened by memories of the massacre of

approximately 300,000 Serbs during World War II at the hands of the Croatian Ustaše,

aided by the Muslims, especially in eastern Bosnia-Herzegovina[11] (Pavković 42-43, Burg

38). Although there is no evidence, apart from memory, that a jihad and the formation of

an Islamic state was going to occur in which Serbs could not exist, Serbs lost trust in the

Muslims and felt the need to preserve their own group, choosing to be the aggressors

rather than the victims.

Rwanda

Unlike the propaganda distributed under the authority of Milošević and Bosnian

Serb leaders, the propaganda promoted by Hutu extremists in the months before the

Rwandan genocide was not distributed by official state-run media like Radio Rwanda.

Rather it came from the Habyarimana regime in a much more covert way, namely

through RTLM and the newspaper *Kangura*, which were started under the direction of

President Habyarimana's wife Agathe and her *akazu*. RTLM was officially a privately-

owned station, but it had full government support. For example, prior to the genocide, the

government distributed free radios around the country in order to allow Rwandans to tune

in to RTLM, and the station was allowed to broadcast on the same frequencies as Radio

Rwanda during the times that the state-owned station was not transmitting (Internews).

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[11] The Ustaše was the Croat fascist group put into power in Croatia in 1941 by the Axis Powers. The Ustaše sought to exterminate all who were opposed to their Roman Catholic religion, such as Serbs, Jews, Gypsies, and communist Croats. They were expelled from power in 1945.

Perhaps the most telling sign that the government fully supported RTLM and its pro-genocidal message is the fact that the station's transmitter was connected directly to the presidential mansion by underground cable (Peterson 272).

Though there were other stations and newspapers at the time, the main ones being Radio Rwanda and *Kanguka*, which were generally critical of the Habyarimana government, they were not nearly as popular with the Rwandan people. Whereas Radio Rwanda's programs and *Kanguka*'s publications were often somewhat dry and bent toward an academic tone, the style of RTLM and *Kangura* was more loose and comical, and because of this, these two held great appeal for the common people of Rwanda, especially RTLM. Whereas Radio Rwanda's programs often featured only one person speaking or a bland interview, RTLM's programs, which did sometimes include more serious interviews for credibility, were usually entertaining and informal and seemed like "a conversation among Rwandans who knew each other well and were relaxing over some banana beer or a bottle of Primus [the local beer] in a bar," which the entire country could listen in on (HRW). RTLM's appeal can also be attributed to its lively, popular (and often extremely pro-Hutu) music, its witty announcers, and the opportunity the station provided for listeners to call in and chat with announcers to share news and opinions. Due to its extremely wide support base, RTLM was able to infiltrate the minds of millions of Rwandans successfully with extremist anti-Tutsi propaganda.

Propaganda in Rwanda mostly took the form of dehumanization, always characterizing the Tutsis as something less than human, such as insects or a disease. By far, the most popular label for the Tutsis in the pro-Hutu propaganda was *inyenzi*, which means "cockroach" in Kinyarwanda. RTLM broadcast many programs calling for the

eradication of *inyenzi*, who, like real cockroaches, were indicative of filth. The *inyenzi*

were also accused of preventing the Rwandan (really Hutu) people from becoming

beautiful and pure and reaching their full potential because "a cockroach cannot give

birth to a butterfly. A cockroach gives birth to another cockroach...The history of Rwanda

shows us clearly that a Tutsi stays always exactly the same, that he has never changed.

The malice, the evil are just as we knew them in the history of our country." (HRW) In

Kangura, which was extremely well liked, even by illiterate Rwandans, because it

provided a large number of pictures, a popular cartoon depicted the editor of the paper,

Hassan Ngeze, lying on a couch being psychoanalyzed and showed another of the

derogatory labels of Tutsis at the time. The cartoon's dialogue read (Peterson 87):

> *Ngeze: I'm sick Doctor!!*
> *Doctor: Your sickness?*
> *Ngeze: The Tutsis…Tutsis…Tutsis!!*

This portrayal of Tutsis as the filth and disease that corrupted Rwandan society led Hutus

to believe that they were the only people pure and good enough to preserve the society,

and to preserve their way of life, the infectious Tutsis had to be eliminated.

Similar to Serbian propaganda in the Balkans, Hutu propaganda used the method

of juxtaposition to portray the Hutus as peaceful, innocent victims while the Tutsis were

violent and power-hungry. Immediately before and during the genocide, political

consciousness-raising meetings were held in the villages with the local leader, usually

aided by a higher government official, telling listeners that the Tutsis were demons, and

for the good of Rwanda, the civilized and morally upright Hutus had to take it upon

themselves to eliminate them (Peterson 94). During the preparation for the genocide,

RTLM and other media sources frequently referred to the Tutsi as the "enemy within,"

implying that they were some sort of foreign group that had permeated the communities of the Hutu, who were seen to be the only true Rwandans. This idea was reinforced by the Hutu Ten Commandments, published in *Kangura* in 1990, which declared that the Tutsi were an enemy of the Hutu people and espoused a doctrine of Hutu purity with a series of ten recommendations, such as refraining from doing business with untrustworthy Tutsis and refusing to take Tutsi wives, that became equated to law by the Hutus.

Rwanda does have more of a history of identification with a group than any of the other cases, but the propaganda and the ensuing genocide forced people to see themselves as "Hutu" or "Tutsi," never simply "Rwandan." Rwandans, or simply Hutus who identified in any way with the Tutsis, were not safe from the genocide; only those whose identification card labeled them as a Hutu and who associated only with other Hutus would be spared. One poignant example of this forced re-identification into a Hutu in-group totally separate from the Tutsi out-group is found in the a former *génocidaire*'s[12] story of the massacre of students in a girls' boarding schools in Gisenyi[13] and Kibuye[14], which was broadcast on Rwandan television in 1997. During both the attacks, the teenaged students were ordered to separate themselves – Hutus from Tutsis. But in both schools, the girls said they were simply Rwandans, so they were beaten and shot indiscriminately (Peterson 352-353). The possibility of being killed along with the Tutsis if one was found to be sympathetic to their plight was one of the reasons people took part

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[12] *Génocidaire* designates anyone who was actively involved in the preparation for the genocide and/or participated in the genocide.
[13] Gisenyi is located in the northwest of Rwanda near Lake Kivu.
[14] Kibuye lies in the western part of Rwanda, also on the shores of Lake Kivu.

in the genocide, and considering that such action saved their lives, it can be seen as a rational choice.

Hutus who opposed the Hutu power ideology, really those who did not appear to agree with it completely, were publicly denounced as traitors and accomplices to the Tutsis, often, like the Tutsis, in lists of names broadcast on RTLM, and were some of the first victims of the genocide. A story from Father Wenceslas, who first provided the Tutsis shelter in his church, only to release their names to the *interahamwe* later, told Rwandan and French interviewers:

> I didn't have a choice. It was necessary to appear pro-militia. If I had a different attitude, we would have all disappeared (Gourevitch 136).

The environment created by the propaganda was one of fear and, combined with the fact that Rwandans had become accustomed to following orders explicitly, due to the complete authority of the Habyarimana regime, created a kill or be killed mentality during the genocide. There could be absolutely no neutrality for anyone who wished to stay alive during the genocide, and as one Hutu resident of Kigali, Rwanda's capital and largest city, explained to a reporter from the *Christian Science Monitor*: "If you stayed at home, you risked being labeled an accomplice" (Mamdani 195).

Like the Serbs, Hutus also held the notion that, if they did not take action and become the primary aggressor, they would become victims of the reassertion of Tutsi control in Rwanda and the genocide of Hutus that would occur in this quest for power. Hutu extremists told farmers that, if they did not defend themselves against the Tutsis, all of whom were supposedly allied with the RPF, the RPF would take their land away from them and return it to the Tutsis from which it had been taken in the revolution of 1959. On RTLM, against backgrounds of lively traditional melody, pro-Hutu singers sang lyrics

like, "Defend your rights and rise up against those who want to oppress you," namely the Tutsis who sought to bring back the colonial feudal system (Mamdani 190). Memories of their slave-like status during that time propelled Hutus' fear that such accusations were true and strengthened the belief that there was a need to defend their current livelihoods and lifestyles. The critical level of probability of a return of Tutsi power was surpassed with the crash of Habyarimana's plane in Kigali on April 6, 1994, and Hutus immediately took action to protect themselves when RTLM blamed the accident on Tutsi rebels, in accordance with Weingast's theory that "when a group's probability assessment is just below the critical threshold probability, any event or new information that increases the probability above the critical level can instantly unleash violence" (Weingast 165).

In addition to claims that the Tutsis were looking to return to power, allegations that the Tutsis were planning a genocide of their own were also favorites among the Hutu propagandists. Already in 1991, the media accused Tutsis of having the desire to "clean up Rwanda by throwing Hutu in the Nyabarongo [River]," and, in 1992, *Kangura* reported that RPF soldiers said that they "had come to clean the country of the filth of Hutu." In mid-1993, Hutu propagandists were asserting, "We know that they (Tutsi) have attacked us with the intention of massacring and exterminating 4.5 million Hutu and especially those who have gone to school." This type of propaganda continued throughout the genocide in 1994, with propagandists and media circulating stories that Tutsi had prepared pits to serve as mass graves for the Hutu (HRW). Claims like this were completely fabricated but, because such allegations were presented as fact and also due to the sheer volume of such stories, Hutus began to see truth in them and took part in

the genocide against the Tutsis partly to protect themselves and their families from such a fate.

Cambodia

Propaganda in the DK mainly took the form of speeches by government officials, posters, and revolutionary songs. Though it is doubtful that the public as a whole had complete understanding of the communist concepts behind the Khmer Rouge's ideas of an agrarian and egalitarian society, they certainly understood the promises of a better life that the propaganda championed, and the idea that there were segments of society that were preventing the emergence of this new and improved way of life. Dehumanizing was used to some extent, but it was mainly the strategy of juxtaposition that the propagandists relied on to send their dangerous revolutionary message.

During the years of Khmer Rouge control, foreigners, especially Westerners, city dwellers, and in general anyone who sympathized with such people or simply did not fit into the ideal agrarian society, was victimized. The dehumanization suffered by these victims was twofold: they were depicted as vermin and diseases, similar to Rwanda and the USSR, and as in each of the other three cases, they were stripped of individual identities. In his rallying speeches, Khieu Samphan likened foreigners and urbanites to parasites that infiltrated and corrupted the society as a whole, and the cities, as their homes, were akin to a blight. As such, they were responsible for the weakness and poor social and economic health of Cambodia and its people.[15] Groups designated to be enemies to the regime were also stripped of individuality and their evil motives, either

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[15] Though Pol Pot was the leader of the Khmer Rouge and held dictatorial power, Khieu Sampan was one of the most powerful members of the Khmer Rouge and served as the president and head of state of Democratic Kampuchea from 1975 to 1979.

real or imagined, became the motives of each and every member of the group. Just as all

city dwellers and non-natives were corrupt and oppressive, the entire population of

Cambodia's eastern zone was accused of sympathizing with the Vietnamese and having

"Cambodian bodies and Vietnamese minds," and tens of thousands of this region's

citizens were massacred indiscriminately during the process of their forced evacuation to

the northwest region (Chandler 1991, 271). The Vietnamese were considered dangerous

by the Khmer Rouge because they were supposedly plotting to claim Cambodia for their

own. Posters, like one seen in Phnom Penh, that promoted this notion simply depicted

the stereotypical Vietnamese man with his characteristic conical hat, and because no

societal or military rank or distinguishing features were shown, every Vietnamese person

fell into the category of land-grabbing colonizers.[16]

Similar to the other three cases, the group that the Khmer Rouge favored to form

their new society was portrayed as the pure, simple victim, while the enemy groups were

seen as tyrannical oppressors and enforcers of a hierarchy that led to the vast social and

economic disparities present in Cambodian society at the time. This mindset was

especially present in revolutionary songs like the national anthem of Democratic

Kampuchea, which translates as:

> Bright red Blood which covers towns and plains
> of Kampuchea, our motherland,
> Sublime Blood of Workers and peasants,
> Sublime Blood of revolutionary men and women fighters!
>
> The Blood changing into unrelenting hatred
> And resolute struggle,
> On April 17th, under the Flag of the Revolution,
> Free from Slavery! (Shawcross 383)

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[16] Reprint of propaganda poster found in Chandler (1991) in the "Illustrations" section following pg. 158.

As the anthem implies, the revolutionary peasants and workers were considered to be a sort of superior race and splendid examples of the wonders of a pure Khmer society. Because of this greatness and superiority, they were entitled to rule Cambodia and be free from the oppression of foreign powers and their urban accomplices that had plagued them for so long. Another popular revolutionary song began with the phrase *Padivat borisut l'oo l'aa*, which translates as "pure, proper, beautiful revolution," and aided in convincing participants in the genocide like Kasien Tejapira that the Khmer Rouge's revolution was "a revolution of the downtrodden, pure, and simple who were rebelling against the old society, or oppression, exploitation, socioeconomic inequalities, and class distinctions" (Chandler 280). The low-level peasants in the Cambodian countryside were going to be the saviors of the native Khmer (Cambodian) people, and refugees who were forcibly removed from the cities could only be saved and given a place in Pol Pot's agrarian society if they were returned to the villages and ruralized (Chirot 280). Because members of the so called "old society" were the enemies of the "new society" that the Khmer Rouge sought to create, new identities of "old" and "white" and "new" and "black" were formed in Cambodia during the years 1975 to 1979.

Before the Khmer Rouge took control in 1975, Cambodia was a society where there were classes, chiefly determined by a hierarchical cultural system, where some people, "big people," were of a higher social status and often held positions of power and prestige, as opposed to the "little people," who were subordinate in the sense that they (voluntarily) accorded more respect to the "big people," similar to the way that children respect their elders. Contrary to their ideals of an egalitarian society, the Khmer Rouge instead created a new kind of hierarchy in Cambodia where people were no longer

classified by the levels of respect due to them, but in a much more dangerous way as supporters and enemies of the regime, or those who deserved to live and those who did not. The supporters of the regime were given the labels of "old" and "black," which linked them to the ancient culture of the Khmer race, and the "old people" (known as *brâcheacon chos*) were given "full rights," as opposed to the people who were evacuated from the cities. The foreigners and urbanites were called "new" and "white" people, which signified that they were not true members of Cambodian society and did not share the history of hard work and perseverance that was attributed to the Khmer. Because of this, the "new people" (*brâcheachon tmey*) were the people without rights, the "depositees," who had to be removed from society, and sometimes, the Khmer Rouge even distinguished these people by forcing them to wear blue and green scarves, which showed the rest of Cambodia that they were the ones to kill (Fein 811, Hinton 111).

Many Cambodians chose to participate in genocidal activities of killing and torture in the "killing fields" or in prisons such as the infamous Tuol Sleng to avoid the danger of appearing disloyal to the regime and being labeled as a member of one of the enemy groups. As Lohr, a Khmer Rouge soldier and staff member at Tuol Sleng, replied when asked why he had killed:

> At the time, my boss was also present. As we walked, he asked me, 'Have you ever dared to kill one of them Lohr?' I responded, 'I never have elder brother.' So he said, 'Like your heart isn't cut off, go get that prisoner and try it at once. Do it one time so I can see.' I told the soldier who was about to execute the prisoner to give me the iron bar and then 'struck the prisoner so they could watch me. I hit him one time with the bar and he fell to the ground. Afterwards, I threw the bar aside and returned to the place where I marked off the names. When my boss asked me to do this, if I didn't do it.....I couldn't refuse (Hinton 95).

Like Lohr, Cambodians all over the country followed the orders and examples of their superiors in the fear that they to would be accused of not being able to "cut off" their

hearts, or abandon their selfish morals and cares in favor of answering only to the party and adopting only its ideals. If it was decided that a person was too attached to the old ways and not completely in favor of the new, they were put on the list of "depositees." So if one wanted to live to see the end of the Khmer Rouge, he or she was compelled to take actions that proved loyalty to the party beyond a shadow of a doubt.

In addition to the fear of acting in any way that was not in full support of the regime, the system of face and honor that is deeply entrenched into the culture of Cambodia, and all Asian countries for that matter, figured heavily in ordinary people's decisions to participate in the killing of their fellow citizens. In basic terms, a person's face is the "sociocentric self-image that is based on the evaluations of others and shifts along an axis of honor and shame," and "reflects one's place in the social order, a position that is predicated on the extent to which others honor, respect, and obey you" (Hinton 101). This custom became extremely dangerous during the years of the Khmer Rouge because to be evaluated positively by their peers and maintain a favorable position in society and avoid the public shame that endangered their survival, Cambodians had to appear to be in full support of the party, from heartily applauding officials at public meetings to denouncing and/or killing the "enemies," who were sometimes friends and even relatives.

As the poster and songs mentioned earlier suggest, the Khmer Rouge often used propaganda that "frequently referred to the 'combative struggle' (*brâyut*) to 'build and defend' (*kâsang neung karpear*) the country," and encouraged the belief that the Vietnamese and other foreign powers were attempting to overrun Cambodia and take it away from the true Khmer people (Hinton 112). Not only would these dangerous powers

take control of the territory, including individuals' homes and land, supposedly they would also force the Khmer people into submission and slavery. Also, the party told the people that all those who were not true Khmers, whether they were ethnic minorities, city dwellers, or simply people who opposed the regime, were bonding together into one force driven to threaten the lives of the Khmer people and demolish, by becoming forces of oppression, the classless utopia that the Khmer Rouge promised to turn into a reality. As a result of this type of propaganda, a sort of paranoia arose throughout the country, and Cambodians became fearful that people who had once been friends or neighbors were now plotting against them. Indeed, their fears were quite justified because, just as in each of the other cases, the mentality that it was better to be the aggressor than the victim developed and people chose to denounce and kill their neighbors before the same thing could be done to them.

USSR

During the twenty plus years of Stalin's reign, a propaganda machine was constantly in motion that was made up of speeches, songs, posters, radio broadcasts, publications, and newspaper articles. This propaganda was so effective due to the sheer amount that was being circulated in society and also because the Stalinist version of events and codes of conduct "was the only one permitted and though many people knew for a fact such information was false, anyone susceptible of indoctrination by terror or by sheer pressure of propaganda fell in with the official line" (Conquest 664). As in all of the cases of genocide in this study, Stalinist propagandists utilized the methods of dehumanization and juxtaposition especially to convey their message.

In the USSR, dehumanization first occurred when it was encouraged that all the individuals of a class or group carried common traits that were passed from one generation to the next. Depending on the group, such traits could be seen as justification for pride and the allocation of power, like in the case of the Russians, or on the opposite end of the spectrum, these traits could be used to rationalize round-ups, forced deportations, and resettlements in horrendous conditions. These unfortunate classes were made up of people labeled as class enemies and enemies of Socialism, like kulaks, the nobility, and the bourgeoisie. There were also enemies of the people, who could be Trotskyites, Laborites, fascists, and anyone else deemed "unsocialist" (Weitz 5). As in each of the other cases, entire social groups were given derogatory labels which denoted them as subhuman and an endangerment to the continuation of socialism and the Soviet society. Similar to Cambodia and Rwanda in later years, people were identified as vermin (*parazity, vrediteli*) and sources of pollution (*zasorenost*) and filth (*griaz*) that were harmful to the "health" of the society and were removed from the population because of this (Weitz 23).

Juxtaposition of the Soviet, and often specifically Russian, nation and peoples against those of the rest of the world was also a powerful tool of Stalinist propaganda. In his Constitution of 1936, Stalin not only asserted the political and cultural superiority of Russia, but also identified enemy nations that threatened the very existence of the Soviet Union. Constant media publications and politicians at rallies emphasized that the Soviet republics were superior to other countries because, instead of devolving into conflict, they were able to embrace their differences and exist in a way that was superior due to its harmonious and accepting nature. Though this was not actually the case, as members of

the Soviet republics were often victimized simply on the basis of their nationality, the motto of "friendship of the peoples" that Stalin and his propaganda machine promoted was an extremely appealing one as it "invoked warm family metaphors to represent the unity, emotional and political, of the Soviet peoples" (Weitz 11). Due to numerous exhibitions where the traditional clothing, dancing, and folklore, for example, of all the Soviet republics were featured, many people did believe that all the republics were indeed one big happy family who had the ability to rise above the fighting that took place between other countries. This juxtaposition also occurred within the USSR with the emphasis on the greatness of Russian people over both the other peoples of the Soviet Union and the other nations of the world. Posters and the like often focused on stories of specific people and events that to stress the idea that, throughout their existence, Russians have fought brave and heroic battles against countless enemies. Though this type of propaganda existed throughout the entirety of Stalin's term of power, it came to a high point during the years of World War II. On November 7, 1941, Stalin declared to the Russian people:

> In this war, may you draw inspiration from the valiant example of our great ancestors – Aleksander Nevskii, Dmitrii Donskoi, Kuz'ma Minin, Dmitrii Pozharskii, Aleksandr Suvarov, and Mikhail Kutuzov[17] (Brandenberger 118).

This declaration and the historical Russian figures it praised appeared on thousands of posters throughout the war years. One 1941 poster featured the Soviet troops with Kutuzov hovering in the background. The monument shown in the illustration says, "To heroic deeds of valor – glory, honor, and remembrance," and beneath the entire image, in huge letters, is Stalin's 1941 phrase (Brandenberger 153). Another poster, also with

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[17] These men are all famous Russian patriots who were responsible for great military victories that protected Russia from foreign aggressors.

Stalin's declaration across the bottom, connected the Soviet Red Army troops of WWII to their heroic ancestors by showing Red Army troops in battle on the foreground with militia from 1612 shadowing them in the background.[18] Pozharskii, who is leading the militia, holds a flag that reads, "Truth is on our side. Fight to the death!" (Brandenberger 155). Postcards that Red Army soldiers sent home during the war reveal that such propaganda had been internalized and people really did believe in the superiority of the Russian nation. Such postcards hold powerful assertions that the "Russian people will not kneel before the German fascists," "the Russian people will eliminate the invaders this time as well," "the Soviet people have risen up as one in the defense of our fatherland," and also allusions to the greatness of Russia's history and people like "our forefathers defended this sacred Russian land for us," and "individual Russians may perish along the way, but the immortal Russian people shall never perish" (Brandenberger 167, 148).

Though propaganda did well for preserving the spirit of the Russian people throughout the hardships of the war years, it primarily caused the development of an atmosphere of extreme fear and repression in the USSR in which terror was the accepted way of administration and obedience and vigilance against those labeled as enemies were the highest virtues. To prove the loyalty to Stalin and the party that was necessary for survival at the time, many people became involved in torturing and denunciations as a way of self-preservation. There was no room for opposition or neutrality as outright enthusiasm was the only guaranteed way to stay alive. All over the USSR, "individuals, silently objecting, [were] faced with vast meetings calling for the death, 'like dogs', of

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[18] In 1612, Polish forces were expelled from Russia, their invasion was stopped, and the country broke away from Polish domination.

opposition" (Conquest 378). Should someone choose not to participate in the extermination of these enemies, they too would be labeled as an enemy of socialism and progress. This paranoia was evident in every specter of society, from politically unimportant individuals to local leaders and even the most powerful Party officials. In order to preserve their position of power and avoid persecution, "every little local Stalin had to secure himself by conducting little local purges" (Chirot 152). The fear of denunciation and punishment was so great that officials would visit outlying parts of the USSR and institute purges on their own to show party loyalty. Even the most powerful officials were subject to punishment. One high-ranking Party official recalls an event from 1937:

> One on occasion, they came to me to me with something they wanted me to sign. It was to the effect that I approved the Party's execution. My wife was pregnant. She cried and begged me to sign, but I couldn't. That day I examined the pros and cons of my own survival. I was convinced that I would be arrested – my turn had now come! I was prepared for it. I abhorred all this blood. I couldn't stand things any longer. But nothing happened. It was, I was told later, my colleagues who saved me indirectly. No one dared to report to the hierarchy that I hadn't signed (Conquest 378).

Despite this individual's position of power, he only survived this challenge against Party orders because no one stepped up and reported him. Many Party members, however, were not so lucky. There are numerous accounts of officials who were unable to think of any enemies of the people among their acquaintances being accused by their inferiors of lacking in revolutionary vigilance. Though it meant going against their superiors, fear drove these people to volunteer information because, oftentimes, if a Russian overheard a phrase or witnessed an action that was contradictory to the party line and failed to report it, it would be he himself who would suffer.

Though there was no propaganda about the planned genocide of the Soviet people, unlike Bosnia or Rwanda, and the claims of the possibility of being invaded and overtaken by outsiders were used mainly to drum up support for Russian troops in WWII, unlike Khmer Rouge threats of imminent colonization, the people of the USSR under Stalin also had the mindset that it was advantageous to them to be an aggressor rather than a victim, even if it meant denouncing one's own family members. By setting class against class, where these did not really exist, dekulakization for example started a war between everyone, and relatives and neighbors chose to denounce each other before they could be accused and victimized, because if arrested, a person would be forced to name accomplices and then endure one of many horrible fates. In addition to this, all their family members and acquaintances automatically became suspect. So to protect themselves and their families, people denounced the families of their neighbors and friends. The special networks created for the purpose of enemy identification and denunciation and made up of members of the general population, known as *seskots*, are a great example of this phenomenon of taking whatever action necessary to ensure personal survival. Many people were drawn into the *seskots* by promises of the release of an arrested family member, and once they were in the organization, it was necessary to always have information to report if one did not want suspicion cast upon them. The problem was, as Stalin's reign of terror dragged on, the fear of punishment kept increasing and people became more and more careful in their speech and actions. So, to ensure that they would remain on the Party's good side, members of the *seskots* were frequently compelled to misinterpret and report more and more harmless acts and words,

and were finally forced to completely invent stories about fellow members of their communities (Conquest 380).

Summary

The use of propaganda and the formation of in-group/out-group identities and the dangerous environment that it leads to lends further support to the idea that ethnic conflict is not a precursor to genocide, nor is a basis of ethnicity necessary for genocide to occur. The ethnically-based cases of Bosnia and Rwanda and the ideologically driven cases of Cambodia and the USSR can all attribute the occurrence of genocide partially to the use of dehumanizing propaganda which portrayed the out-group as animals, diseases, or a single, one-minded mass, and also propaganda which relied on juxtaposing the good and pure in-group against the evil and inferior out-group, whether this out-group was one ethnic group or was composed of members of many different groups. Also in each incident, the victimized group was depicted as being a serious threat to the continued prosperity, and even existence, of the perpetrator group. Finally, in each case, anyone who appeared to be sympathetic to those designated as enemies would be subject to persecution as well.

Economic Vulnerability and Material Incentives

This chapter will deal specifically with participation as a motive of revenge for economic discrimination in the past or simply as a way to gain a little extra land or money (Fearon and Laitin 855, 874). In each of the cases described below, whether they deal with ethnicity or ideology, the genocide took place in an environment of a failing economy, except for the Soviet Union, where the perpetrators could glean material gains by participating and also have their revenge on those who were, or had once been, in situations economically superior to their own.

Out of this economic instability, a final factor arises that is instrumental in bringing about genocide in a country. This is the presence of a segment of the population made up of young, primarily male, thugs. These young men are usually from small towns where they are ill-educated, unemployed, or underemployed. Because of their lack of education they can easily be mobilized by leaders' assertions of ethnic hatreds or ideological campaigns. Additionally, as shall be shown, many of the young men already have criminal backgrounds, which ease their transition to becoming murderers. These young men are eager to participate not only for the thrill and honor that comes with killing for a cause and the sense of belonging which they are oftentimes lacking, but also because of the material gains they will gain as the main perpetrators (Fearon and Laitin 869). In each of the four cases, these young men looking for either material or social advancement are present, and are often the main killers in the respective genocides.

Bosnia

Serbia's economy was in shambles by the time the Bosnian war began, having endured problems beginning in the early part of the twentieth century. During the years of World War 1, Serbia endured large scale destruction of its fledgling industrial plants and railway communications as well as its livestock, which devastated its economy (Pavković 25). Afterwards, the country was able to bounce back but, through the late 1970s and the mid-1980s, the economy of Yugoslavia as a whole experienced large downward movement and the real social product (the Yugoslav equivalent to GDP), investment and productivity all fell sharply. Furthermore, average net personal income per worker fell by 26%, and this led to widespread workers' strikes, with the number of strikes steadily increasing through 1987, "at which point 1570 strikes involving 360,000 workers were recorded, four times as many as in 1985" (Pavković 77-78). So, by the time Milošević was elected as leader of Serbia in 1990, the Serb population was in prime condition to accept his promises of a powerful Greater Serbia and ready to do whatever it took to realize his dream of an economically and politically dominant new state, in which all Serbs would presumably enjoy a high standard of living, akin to that of the world's wealthiest nations.

In fact, the appeal of economic supremacy in Serbia, and for Serbs living in the other republics, can be traced all the way back to the period where the Balkan nations were under the governance of the Ottoman regime. Under Ottoman rule, all Muslims in Yugoslavia held legally privileged status, which made them both politically and economically superior to the followers of religions other than Islam, including the Serbs, the vast majority of whom adhere to Orthodox Christianity through the vehicle of the

Serbian Orthodox Church. In Bosnia, for example, the Christian population, which was in the majority throughout the years of Ottoman rule, formed a class of indentured farmers, while the local leader picked from the minority Muslims held almost complete economic control over the provinces. Christians could not occupy any administrative or judicial posts, which were the jobs of high economic status, and were barred from gaining legal titles to land up until the mid-1800s (Pavković 14-15). During the time of the genocide, the Serbs no doubt remembered this subjugation and felt the need to avenge the hardships of their ancestors. In the 1990s, Bosnian Muslims were again overrepresented among the intellectual elites of the country, and in towns in Bosnian Krajina such as Banja Luka, "most of the doctors, lawyers, schoolteachers, and businessmen tended to be Muslim while the peasants would more probably be Serbs" (Vuillamy 65). In these areas, particularly, Bosnian Serbs were angered by their economically inferior status, which resulted in the main purpose of concentration camps like Omarska and Keraterm, both of which were located near Banja Luka, becoming the elimination of "non-Serbian academics and other intellectuals, religious leaders, key business people and artists – the backbone of Muslim communities" (Honig 76).

Serbs were also incited to participate in the killings of their Muslim neighbors by promises of material gains. For example, one political commercial that appeared frequently during the Bosnian War showed a succession of luxurious images like "sports cars, a fashion model on a catwalk, stereo systems and other consumer lootables, and then the slogan: "FOR THE GOOD LIFE – PARTITION AND SEPARATION" (Vuillamy 52). Of course, this partition and separation would include the extermination of Muslims from the territory, and the various material goods that could be taken from

the unfortunate Muslims were a huge incentive to those Serbs who participated. To those

who removed the Muslims from their homes, either through forced evacuation or murder,

came the things that were left behind, such useful items as land, livestock, houses or

apartments, cars, cash, farm machinery, or appliances. This thieving behavior was

overlooked, and Serbs never feared the possibility of arrest for their crimes. Serbs gained

not only from stealing but also from their Muslim victims' "voluntary" sales of their

belongings in the areas that were being overtaken in the hopes of surviving for a bit

longer. One refugee forced from the city of Trebinje,[19] where an order was given that all

Muslims should evacuate within forty-eight hours, describes one such experience:

> We sold whatever we could in that rush. It was a question of life and death. We
> were unable to defend our homes and property, and people were selling the most
> luxurious cars, cows, horses, television sets, and VCRs for fifty or at most one
> hundred marks. We had to do that in order to pay for our transportation (Cigar 83).

Many of the people who took advantage of these economic opportunities were

young men in their twenties who joined the Serb and Bosnian Serb paramilitaries. These

young men were torn between the degradation of a life of working a low-level job in a

failing economy and the more appealing adventures of the government's ideology and

mission as peddled by the extremist future leaders of the militias. For example, a lot of

the Bosnian Serb soldiers in Sarajevo had, along with the young soldiers in the Bosnian

army, previously worked low-paying factory jobs like those at the Volkswagen factory in

Vogošća[20] (Vuillamy 317). Similarly, many of the young men who crossed over from

Serbia to carry out their killings in Bosnia were "weekend warriors who rampaged across

the border on the weekends with their Kalashnikov rifles, and went back to their poor

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[19] Trebinje is one of the southernmost cities in Bosnia-Herzegovina and is located in the Republika Srpska
(Opstina Trebinje).
[20] Vogošća is a suburb of Sarajevo that is located about six kilometers north of the city center.

paying jobs in Serbia on Monday" (Woodward 248-265). With examples like Arkan, the leader of the notorious Arkan's Tigers militia, who had gone from being a mere ice cream salesman to being an extremely powerful and wealthy man, it is easy to see how a young man from a small town with no real job prospects could be lured by the possibility of becoming rich. Indeed, many of the members of these units of killers did become wealthy by stealing from enemies and participating in smuggling operations to get embargoed goods and weapons from abroad. Once they had the money, these young men and their leaders continued to draw in more people who were tempted by their "glitzy lifestyles characterized by powerful foreign cars, sexy women, big guns, and bravado" (Rogel 51). One young man who was drawn in by the anti-Muslim propaganda and the prospect of wealth offered to militia members who were going to help create a Greater Serbia, where they could make a better life for themselves free of Muslim oppression, was named Borislav Herak, born January 17, 1971. Before the war, Borislav was a Sarajevo textile worker, but in 1993, as the first Serb to stand trial for war crimes, he was charged with 32 murders and 16 rapes, including the murder of 12 of his 16 rape victims. He tells how his commanders and reports on Serbian television convinced him that the Muslims in Bosnia had plans to declare an Islamic republic, and how the commander of his unit had told them it was good for morale to rape Bosnian women. In an interview with John Burns of the *New York Times*, he described how he and three other young Serbs were brought to a farm outside near Sarajevo and a 65-year-old volunteer demonstrated how to wrestle pigs to the ground to cut their throats - a skill he used days later to cut the throats of three Muslims he captured (O'Kane). It is extremely improbable that Borislav wished to be a low-paid textile worker for the rest of his life, and, given the

example of others who had become rich through their actions in the paramilitaries, it is rational that he would make the choice to take part in activities that would lead to a better life for himself.

In addition to those who were in it simply for the material gains, many of the members of the Serb and Bosnian Serb paramilitaries already had a criminal background prior to the genocide. Paramilitaries like Arkan's Tigers and the equally brutal White Eagles, who were the most responsible for the brutalities and murders committed in the interest of ethnic cleansing, drew a large membership from the criminal element in the former Yugoslavia. These criminals were attracted to the possibility of acting outside the law, free of retribution, and flourished during the chaotic war period. A most telling testament to the importance of the presence of a criminal element to forming the militias that were the main perpetrators of the genocide in Bosnia is found in the leader of one of the most infamous of these killing teams, Arkan. Arkan, whose real name is Željko Ražanotović, was extremely active as a criminal all over Western Europe long before the war broke out, and had already accrued a number of international arrest warrants for crimes like armed robbery, car theft, and even murder. He was also the leader of a hardcore, and often violent, group of fans of the Red Star Belgrade soccer team (Vuillamy 87). For people like Arkan, the war offered great opportunities to carry out their illegal activities without fear of being apprehended and punished by the forces of law. Young men who had perhaps only been petty criminals in the pre-war years became the most feared murderers and plunderers of the genocide, and served Milošević's goal of creating and leading a Greater Serbia by terrorizing the ordinary citizens in Bosnia and

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exterminating the Muslims, which was necessary for this vision of a pure and powerful new nation.

Rwanda

The economic causes behind the genocide in Rwanda stem from Rwandan tradition, but the beginning of real economic discrimination came in the period that Rwanda existed as a protectorate of Belgium. The general belief in Rwanda is that historically, Hutus were the cultivators and Tutsi were the herdsmen, which has inherent inequalities as cattle are a much more valuable and profitable asset than produce (Gourevitch 48). Under the Belgian government, this inequality deepened as the Tutsis were seen as ethnically superior to the Hutus and were trained, through the Catholic school system, to take the positions of power in Rwanda. These schools practiced open discrimination in favor of Tutsis, and because of the superior European education they were exposed to, upper class Tutsis held the higher paying administrative and political jobs, while the inferior Hutus, and Tutsis of the lowest class, were forced to forgo their already limited opportunities for job advancement and higher salaries and make a living through what was, essentially, forced labor at the hands of the Tutsi elites (Gourevitch 57). This colonial history was often brought up in pro-Hutu propaganda and, even though Hutus had dominated the Tutsis in both the political and economic spheres since the onset of Rwanda's independence in 1962, served to foment Hutu anger toward their once privileged oppressors, the Tutsis.

Though the majority of Hutus were more economically advantaged than their Tutsi brethren, the entire population of Rwanda was suffering the effects of an economy

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that had gone into sharp decline in the mid-1980s. From 1984 to 1989, average land

holdings in Rwanda had shrunk by 12%, when to start with in 1984, 57% of rural

households were already having to farm less than one hectare of land, while 25% of these

were forced to eke out a living and feed an average family of five with less than half a

hectare of land (Mamdani 197). In 1990, extreme food shortages led to a severe famine

in the south of the country, and farmers' incomes, which had already been cut down in

1986-87, were further decreased. The situation in early 1994 was no better as agricultural

production and food production continued to decline (Hintjens 257-58). When genocide

erupted in April of that year, land conflicts between neighbors grew from petty fights and

crimes to dangerous denunciations and outright murders in the hopes of gaining property

that had been long coveted and whatever possessions could be found on that property.

Both the authorities and the ordinary peasants who participated in the genocide profited

from their murderous ways, not only through the seizure of land and possessions, but also

by being given special honors or promotions if they were especially enthusiastic and

productive in the killing. The promise of land on which to increase their farms and thus

increase their incomes, even if only by a small amount, and the opportunity to perhaps

get a better job was part of the reason that thousands of Rwandans acted against people

who had previously been their friends and neighbors. A Tutsi who survived the genocide

because he had been away at a conference in Uganda, lost his wife and two children, and

remembers that "politicians told the people: kill, and you will get your neighbors' goods

and land" (Mamdani 201). An account from a survivor in Kibuye, where as in many

other places the attack against the Tutsi began with the arrival of a group of *interahamwe*,

also shows how the people's greed for wealth and possessions incited them to support the genocide. In this story:

> The entire community – Tutsi, Hutu, and Twa got together and fought them with stones. The interahamwe retreated, tried again on a second day, and failed again. On the third day, they sent political cadres to approach local Hutu and promised not only that their lives would be spared if they didn't join Tutsi in the fight, but also that they would benefit from the distribution of Tutsi property. The next time the interahamwe attacked, the Tutsi found themselves isolated (Mamdani 220).

Sometimes, as an added incentive to the future killers, the future Tutsi victims' belongings, like radios, furniture, and livestock, were allowed to be claimed in advance. Perhaps the most grotesque way that Hutus could profit from killing a Tutsi was by a practice known as "selling cabbages." The "cabbages" were the severed heads of Tutsis, and Hutus were paid to bring them in to officials like one councilwoman in a Kigali neighborhood who was reported to have offered fifty Rwandan francs for each head (Gourevitch 115). However, Tutsis were not the only ones victimized in the interest of economic gains; Hutus were preyed upon by their fellow countrymen as well. One Hutu man named Nsabemana was one of the many victims of the genocide whose face was deliberately disfigured. In Nsabemana's case, "the slashes were affected by a fellow Hutu because he (Nsabemana) had too much money" (Peterson 324).

In addition to the aforementioned effects, the economic collapse of the 1980s had left tens of thousands of young men simply wasting away in idleness without any prospect of a job. The atmosphere that was created made scores of these young men ripe for recruitment by Hutu-power extremists. These young men, many of whom were only in their teens, were easily persuaded to the killing squad known as the *interahamwe*, meaning "those who attack together," through promises of gaining land, jobs, and other material rewards that would be taken from their Tutsi victims. The internalization of

extreme anti-Tutsi propaganda combined with the fact that at the time of the genocide, Rwanda ranked just 153 out of 173 nations on the United Nation's annual Human Development Index, which ranks countries' livability, made membership in the *interahamwe* very attractive (Peterson 270). An example of one of the thousands of young people who were at the receiving end of propaganda from the RTLM and *Kangura* and these promises of much-needed material wealth is Kiruhara, an illiterate 27 year old peasant, who joined the *interahamwe* in 1992. Before he became a member of the *interahamwe*, Kiruhara had spent his entire life trying to make a living out of the hard work of cultivating sorghum and sweet potatoes on the mountain slopes of Kibunga prefecture in eastern Rwanda (Mamdani 191). Kiruhara's hardships and bleak prospects were common to many youth in Rwanda, and by early 1994, some 30,000 to 50,000 youth who were frustrated with the idea of having an unpromising future and who were desperate to improve their situation were estimated to belong to the *interahamwe* and its various copycat groups (Mamdani 206).

In addition to the possibility of improving their economic situations, Hutu youth were driven to join the *interahamwe* by the appeal of belonging to a youth culture that allowed them to do whatever they wanted, for example drinking, wearing radical fashions, and other such things that parents would not approve of, an idea that would appeal to adolescents anywhere. However, the members of the *interahamwe* took the confidence of such freedom to the next step by determining who would live or die in their society and relishing the power and authority this gave them. As the journalist Peter Gourevitch recalls from time spent in Rwanda during the genocide:

> The interahamwe promoted genocide as a carnival romp. Hutu power youth
> leaders, jetting around on motorcycles and sporting pop hairstyles, dark glasses,

and flamboyantly colored pajama suits and robes, preached ethnic solidarity and defense to increasingly packed rallies, where alcohol usually flowed freely, giant hagiographic portraits of Habyarimana flapped in the breeze, and paramilitary drills were conducted like the latest hot dance moves[21] (Gourevitch 93-94).

A much more grisly account of a young *interahamwe* member is given by Scott Peterson, another journalist reporting from Rwanda during the genocide.

> Another youth, a Hutu, brandished his homemade mace with confidence. All around him were bodies, including those of a pregnant woman and a small child. The rest of his death squad was raiding a nearby house while he stood guard, holding his weapon. The mace was a deliberate affair, spiny with 20 long nails hammered through the thick orb head. In the local Kinyarwanda language, the word for this flesh-ripping tool meant 'no amount of money will save you.' This particular one dripped with blood, as the young killer glanced my way. His eyes were those of any 12 year old. He knew very well what he was doing but he didn't seem to care (Peterson 256).

During his stay in Rwanda in 1994, Peterson also recalls an incident in which the convoy he was traveling with passed through an *interahamwe* checkpoint where a group of young men were drinking beer for breakfast, which was a custom of the *interahamwe*. He remembers how "cold looks of contempt were cast our way, then one of the young killers lunged at [him] with a knife, screaming "You shit!" (Peterson 257). A *Newsweek* correspondent named Josh Hammer, who was in Rwanda on April 13-14, 1994 also had experience with these checkpoints. Though he was not threatened, he remembers how, minutes after he had been let through, he heard "two or three shots" and came back to find that there were "fresh bodies." Also on the day of Hammer's visit, a Red Cross truck carrying injured Tutsis to a hospital was stopped at an *interahamwe* road block, and all the Tutsis were taken out and shot (Gourevitch 117). All these accounts support the fact that the young members of the *interhamwe* had absolutely no regard for authority, except perhaps that of their own members, and proceeded to do whatever they wanted. After the

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[21] Hagiography is "a biography of saints or venerated persons", or simply an "idealizing or idolizing biography" (Merriam-Webster).

genocide had ended and the new government instituted by the RPF had taken power, Gourevitch visited the Gitarma prison, which was known as Rwanda's worst prison, in 1995. While there, he remembers seeing:

> in the children's cell, sixty-three boys, ranging in age from seven to sixteen, sat in rows on the floor, facing a blackboard where an older prisoner – a schoolteacher by profession – was conducting a lesson. They looked like schoolboys anywhere. I asked one why he was in prison. "They say I killed," he said. "I didn't." Other children gave the same reply, with downcast eyes, evasive, as unconvincing as schoolboys anywhere (Gourevitch 248).

This small group of young killers that Gourevitch came into contact with can be seen as encompassing the age range and attitude of the entire *interahamwe*.

Cambodia

Like Bosnia and Rwanda, Cambodia's economic disparities began in the years that it was under the rule of a foreign government, in this case the French. During this period of colonization, a small contingent of foreign officials controlled Cambodia from the cities, and the merchant class, which was fairly well-off, was mainly made up of Chinese who had migrated into the colony (Chirot 214). While French nationals held the most politically and economically advantageous positions, Cambodians were really not present in at all in the colonial bureaucracy, even in its lowest ranks. Instead, it was mainly Vietnamese that were hired for such jobs. So, similar to the other cases, the Cambodians who participated in the genocide had quite a grudge against foreigners and urbanites based upon their economic superiority, and were anxious to overcome their inferior status.

By the time Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge took power in 1975, the Cambodian economy was in ruins due to faulty economic policies from the two previous

governments and the chaotic environment caused by years of civil war. For example, the Cambodian education system that had been instituted under the rule of Prince Sihanouk did not sufficiently train its students for either technical or commercial work. As a result, the poorly trained, semi-educated graduates of Cambodian schools had trouble finding work and lucrative positions, which, like those in urban commerce, continued to go to foreigners (Chirot 216). Because of the upheavals of the civil war which ended when the Khmer Rouge took power, the Cambodian population suffered from an almost total lack of basic infrastructure, especially in the rural areas where the majority of the population lived, which severely limited the possibilities of finding a stable job with a substantial income. As a result, the people in the heart of the country were poor peasants surviving at an extremely low economic level and the peasants around the edges of Cambodia were even more economically backwards. The terrible economic situation made many Cambodians hostile to the city dwellers, who were more affluent, and made them especially resentful of the small number of extremely wealthy urban elite that had existed before the Khmer Rouge took over.

For the thousands of young, impoverished Cambodians who were struggling with the absence of possibilities within their economy, Pol Pot's ideology of an egalitarian society and promises of a better life led to personal conversions, and these young people became instrumental in the genocidal activities of the Khmer Rouge. From the very beginning of the time in power, the Khmer Rouge had relied heavily on very young soldiers, many of whom were no more than twelve or thirteen and had no other home or family besides the Party, to carry out their policies (Chirot 229, Shawcross 391). As the most completely politicized and mobilized segment of society, the *chhlop* (youthful

guerrillas) and adolescent *yothea* (combatants) were the leaders and inspiration for the rest of the population, and their behavior towards those deemed to be hereditary enemies of Cambodia was extremely brutal (Chandler 1991, 257, 301). Encouraged to launch offensives and smash the enemies, enraged young soldiers executed hundreds of "new" in the weeks following the Khmer Rouge's invasion of Phnom Penh, often by using hoes and shovels to smash their enemies' heads (Chandler 1991, 242). During the actual overtaking of Phnom Penh on April 17, 1975, heavily armed young soldiers dressed in black pajamas or olive green Vietnamese-style uniforms, many of whom had probably never seen a city street or lawn before, entered the city. Apparently many of the city dwellers, having no idea of the evacuations that would be forced upon them, were impressed by the seriousness and discipline of these young soldiers, many of whom appeared to be less than fifteen years old and were weighted down with mortars, ammunition and machine guns (Chandler 1991, 250). Being young boys, these soldiers would have been excited about carrying such large weapons and impressed with the power and respect this gave them.

Even before the Khmer Rouge took power over Cambodia, in the areas they had "liberated," they often took 13 and 14 year old Cambodians from their homes and enrolled them in short indoctrination courses. After they had taken these courses, the young villagers would become fierce in their condemnation of anything that was contrary to the Khmer ideology and opposed any authority, such as their parents, that was not of the Party. Absolute loyalty to the regime was attractive to them because it released them from family obligations, and during the years of Khmer Rouge, would give them power and authority that they could not have attained otherwise. This appeal of being free from

responsibility and wielding an extreme amount of power is shown in the comments of two children in 1979 in which they, asked why young people become Communists, responded that "they didn't have to work and could kill people" (Chandler 1991, 243).

USSR

The Soviet situation was different from that of the other nations in that the policies of rapid industrialization pursued under Stalin did improve the economy and better the lives of many Soviets, especially Russians, who were able to avoid the many labels that denoted them as enemies of the regime. However, collectivization marked the end of more free economic policies that had been instituted in the early 1920s because, under Stalin, peasants could no longer keep any surplus, which could be used for their own purposes and profits after they had given the required share to the government. Once collectivization started, peasants were forced to give up their private plots of land and property and were required to sell their produce to the state at extremely low prices. Families that had once been well-off became poor virtually overnight (Conquest 67, Chirot 125). Because people could no longer sell their own produce for profit, they had to find other ways to make a living, and these methods often involved joining denunciation groups or finding employment as staff in labor camps.

With all the new industry that was cropping up, unemployment was virtually nonexistent during the Stalinist years. However, the real wages of workers declined even though workers had to work harder and longer than ever due to the constant party propaganda meant impress on them the need for working hard and observing labor discipline. Stalin's various Five-Year Plans, meant to improve the economy and make the

USSR internationally powerful, were incredibly harsh on industrial workers as the quotas were set for them were nearly impossible to fulfill. Unfortunately, failure to fulfill the quotas, like anything else that seemed anti-socialist, could result in treason charges. By taking a preemptive strike and denouncing others for not meeting their quotas, workers could take the attention away from their own failure to exceed the same quotas, thus keeping their jobs and continuing to be able to afford to buy, for themselves and their families, the various consumer goods that were being mass-produced in the rapidly modernizing and expanding Soviet economy.

Though unemployment was not a reality for them, young people in the USSR became a dangerous force in the genocide for two reasons. First, there were many youth who wanted to be powerful and respected Party members, and would take any action necessary to achieve this goal. During the early years of Stalin's reign in the USSR, he promised that by following his plan of rapid modernization and industrialization, the Soviet Communist Party would be revitalized and returned to its days of revolutionary fervor. This pledge had great appeal for young members of the Party who had missed out on the earlier period of glory (Chirot 146). These young party members often enthusiastically carried out any orders they were given, and sometimes even instituted their own purges, because they wanted the prestige and honor that comes with belonging to something great.

The second dangerous element about the youth in the Stalinist period was the simple fact that many of them had hard, criminal upbringings which rendered them completely devoid of morals and ethics. Because of the tumultuous nature of the upheaval of Russian society in the early part of the twentieth century and the famine of

the early 1920s, a large contingent of orphaned, homeless children, known as

bezprizorniye, appeared. These *bezprizorniye* were forced to assemble into gangs to

survive and eke out a living through any means possible, which often meant stealing and

committing other crimes. By breaking apart millions of families, policies such as

collectivization and dekulakization provided large reinforcements to these young

criminals (Conquest 457). As a result of the harsh childhoods forced upon them, many of

the younger people who were involved in torturing personally enjoyed it and behaved

sadistically. Killing meant nothing to these young delinquents. The new members of the

NKVD that were taken in by Yezhov in 1937 were of this type of youth.[22] They were

well-trained, well-fed, heartless young thugs, who easily accepted the teaching that any

display of human sympathy was an indication of bourgeois feeling and made them a

traitor in the class struggle (Conquest 421). One of these ideal new NKVD members was

a young man named Luminarski. He is described as being:

> distinguished by an abnormal lack of any sort of feeling. He is an orphan who has
> known no loyalties. The director of his orphanage was a cold blooded, inhuman
> bully. Luminarski has no feeling for him more than anyone else, but discovers
> how to manage him by lies, presented as expressions of loyalty to the authorities.
> He learns to inform and denounce. Denunciations he finds, are best based on facts,
> usually irrelevant, but combinable into impressive slander. The next move is to
> make the victims raise indignant details, in which they can easily be caught in
> contradiction. He practices these methods right up the ladder. In the NKVD, he
> rises by intrigue against his equally offensive but less talented colleagues. He
> learns to impress by always fulfilling and over-fulfilling his assignments
> (Conquest 729).

Like Luminarski, young people all over the Soviet Union during the Stalinist

years were brought up in an environment of denunciations and lies, and this behavior

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[22] The NKVD, or the People's Commiseriat for Internal Affairs, handled various affairs for the Soviet
government, but it is best known as being a secret police agency. Nikolai Yezhov was the head of the
NKVD during the years of the Great Purge, 1936-1938. He, like many of the people he prosecuted, was
later arrested on charges of espionage, treason, and a plot to assassinate Stalin, and was executed.

became natural to them and was seen as the best way to move up the ladder of power and respect.

Summary

The final factors to support the claim that genocide occurs for reasons other than ethnic or ideological conflicts stem from economics. In each case, the country was in the midst of a trying economic period, and people participated in the killings to gain material wealth in the form of land, goods, or money. Also in each of the situations, the victims were once the economically superior members of society, and the perpetrators acted against them as a means of exacting revenge for their respective periods of hardship. Lastly, in all the countries examined, a large segment of unemployed, dissatisfied youths, most often male, was present. These young people, frustrated with their poor living situations and the lack of the possibility of a better future, were easily persuaded to participate in genocide with promises of wealth and power, and often were responsible for the most horrific acts.

A Final Thought

It is essential that the causes of genocide be determined if it is to be prevented in the future, and by exploring the similarities in the reasons behind the four incidents of genocide herein, it can be seen that constructivist theory and the complementary theory of rational choice hold true in both cases that rise out of ethnicity and those that have their background in ideology. Statistics show that the existence of a tyrannical regime sets the atmosphere for genocide because, unlike in a democracy, a leader need not fear retribution for his actions, no matter how destructive they may be. Indeed, in each of the cases, the leaders of the nations held absolute power and were able to maintain or even increase this authority by manipulating the issues of ethnicity or tenets of ideology in their respective countries and thus bring about genocide as a way of rooting out enemies, both in their own parties and externally, and as a diversion to take attention away from party or policy weaknesses. To polarize different groups and rally support of their own group, leaders make use of massive amounts of incendiary propaganda. In each case, the propaganda appeared in many different forms and used both dehumanization and juxtaposition of in-group and out-group characteristics to demean those designated to be victims and turn the rest of the population against them by providing evidence that these groups are extremely dangerous. Through the internalization of this propaganda, combined with rational-choice incentives caused by fear of being ostracized by one's one group and identified with the enemy group and the need for self-preservation and

preservation of their own group, individuals of the in-group become motivated to take part in genocide against the newly determined out-group. The need for revenge, based on a history of political and economic superiority of the other group, also provides incentives for participation, as does the prospect of material gains by taking goods and property from the victims. Lastly, the presence of a group of the population that will be more willing to commit violence, unemployed or underemployed young thugs with no prospect of a better future in their normal situation, is needed. These young men are guilty of the most and worst brutalities.

In short, genocide is not simply caused by differing ethnic identities or radical ideologies; other factors, which really have nothing to do with the concepts of ethnicity or ideology, must be considered. The recognition of the similarities in causes shared by each country where genocide has occurred, despite differences in location, culture, time period, etc., is absolutely necessary for the future development of successful policies and other methods of prevention to bring an end to this crime against humanity.

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