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PART I

Introduction

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Preliminary considerations

On the morning of April 11, 1922, Hans Morgenthau presented a speech in honor of the duke of Coburg, leader of an autonomous duchy within Weimar Germany. This was an honor traditionally conferred on the top-ranked eligible student at the local *gymnasium*. No Jew had ever been selected for this honor; indeed, Morgenthau was the only Jew enrolled at this elite institution. Yet, there was no getting around the fact that Morgenthau merited this distinction and so the duchy allowed him to present the speech. That morning, citizens of Coburg distributed anti-Semitic leaflets including demeaning distortions of his Jewish-sounding name and urging a boycott of the speech. Later, Morgenthau wrote: "Nobody would speak to me . . . And people would spit at me and shout at me. People would shake their fists at me and shout imprecations or anti-Semitic insults, and so forth. It was absolutely terrible, absolutely terrible . . . probably the worst day of my life."[1] During the speech, the duke and other notables held their noses in a show of disgust. After his emigration, Morgenthau's classic *Politics Among Nations* would establish the study of international relations as a distinct field of inquiry in the United States.

Is this an illustration of virulent anti-Semitism that Daniel Goldhagen would argue quickly morphed into "eliminationist"[2] anti-Semitism prior to and during the Holocaust? Or are there other answers that provide a more compelling explanation? Despite a long history of German anti-Semitism,[3] the overtly anti-Semitic political parties experienced a steep decline prior to World War I. By 1912, together they captured less than 1 percent of the vote.[4] We also know that, for most supporters of Nazism during the early 1930s, the principal attraction of the NSDAP (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei, or Nazi Party) was not anti-Semitism, but the perceived need for radical solutions to the country's economic and political chaos. Perceived

[1] Frei 2001, 22. [2] Goldhagen 1996. [3] Hilberg 1985. [4] Melson 1992, 119.

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injustices of the Treaty of Versailles also fed into support for policies of the NSDAP.[5] The April 1, 1933, economic boycott of Jewish-owned businesses sponsored by Hitler's government was particularly unsuccessful.[6] Why, then, the atrocious treatment of Morgenthau, among other Jews, at this time? Answers are to be found in the wider setting of European society at the end of World War I, as will be emphasized in this book.

Purposes of the book

In the broadest sense, this book is about *threat* (the fear of potential loss)[7] and *vulnerability*, two necessary conditions for the occurrence of genocide. The targeted population needs to be perceived as threatening, or at least have a tenuous connection to external threatening agents, whatever the reality of that perception, and the targeted population must be vulnerable to mass murder. At the same time, the potential perpetrators of genocide also must experience some vulnerability to generate their real or fantasized images of threatening civilian populations. Any process that simultaneously increases both threat to the state and its vulnerability, as well as vulnerability of a targeted civilian population, also increases the probability of genocide. It is for this reason, among others, that all of the cases examined here, even those that are ultimately excluded from lengthy consideration, occur during time of war, interstate or civil. Threat management by the state can be understood as a critical function of realpolitik (defined as policies designed to preserve and strengthen the state),[8] while vulnerability of states or potential civilian targets is most frequently signaled by loss. Realpolitik and loss are the twin theoretical foci of this book.

Understanding the dynamics of genocide at the moment of decision is at best incomplete, for models of genocide etiology have been put forward infrequently.[9] Thus far, two basic approaches have been taken to understanding the annihilation of European Jewry, the exemplar of

[5] Abel [1938] 1986; Merkl 1975. [6] Friedländer 1997.
[7] For the impact of external threat on domestic societies, see M. Midlarsky 2000b, 2002, and 2003; see also chapter 5.
[8] Waltz 1979, 117.
[9] Raul Hilberg 1985 (originally published in 1961) put forward perhaps the earliest model of the Holocaust in the form of the sequence: definition–expropriation–concentration–extermination. More recent and comprehensive models of genocide are found in Fein 1979, 1984, 2000; Kuper 1981; and Harff 2003.

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twentieth-century genocides because of its magnitude and the absence of identifiable Jewish provocation. The first is the "intentionalist"[10] that posits an ultimate intention on the part of Hitler and his henchmen to destroy all of Europe's Jews. The second is the "functionalist" argument[11] that points to the coercive build-up (by the Germans) of Jewish populations in unsanitary ghettos, which were not only disease-prone but also required the material support of the occupying German forces, as the root cause. With so many "unwanted" Jews excluded from the economy and the bickering between bureaucratic agencies of the Third Reich as to the ultimate responsibility for their welfare, the decision to liquidate them was made.

Neither of these two explanations, nor others such as Saul Friedländer's most recent emphasis on "redemptive anti-Semitism,"[12] explains the essentially dynamic circumstance of the increasing propensity to murder Jews as World War II progressed. In other words, this book seeks to explore the transition from genocidal behavior – the tendency to massacre *some* people having a particular ethnoreligious identity – to genocide itself wherein the mass murder is systematically extended to include *all* people with that identity.

This distinction is not merely a matter of definitional semantics, for the lives of millions of people were forfeited in the transition from the more limited behavior to the far more extensive one. Massacres[13] can be used to terrorize and cow a hated civilian population, as occurred in the large-scale murder of both Polish and Jewish leaders (Communists, high church and army officials, rabbis, professors) after the invasion of 1939. Indeed, the murder of the Polish leaders occurred prior to that of the Jews because of the greater threat of Polish anti-German agitation given their much larger numbers, yet this murderous behavior is distinct from the later Holocaust both in kind and scale. Or consider the massacre of approximately 200,000 Armenians by the Ottoman authorities in 1894–96. This large-scale massacre is qualitatively distinct from that of the genocide of 1915–16 when as many as 1 million or more Armenians were systematically murdered. One can make similar distinctions between the episodic massacre of Tutsi by Hutu in Rwanda and the genocide of 1994 in which a likely maximum of 800,000 Tutsi were killed.

[10] Dawidowicz 1986; Jäckel 1981; Fleming 1984.
[11] Fraenkel 1941; Neumann 1942; Broszat 1981.
[12] Friedländer 1997.
[13] For comprehensive treatments of massacres, see Levene and Roberts 1999.

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The emphasis on change over time, particularly during a war, might appear to be self-evident, yet major public and scholarly figures have largely ignored it. In addition to the distinction between "intentionalists" and "functionalists," journalists such as Sebastian Haffner, himself a non-Jewish anti-Nazi refugee from Hitler who has been called "the conscience of post-war Germany," argued that over and above everything else, including victory, the principal goal of Nazi Germany was destruction of the Jews.[14] More recently, Omer Bartov, who has emerged in recent years as one of the leading Holocaust historians, also affirmed that, "when all other plans fell through, even when the fronts were collapsing and Germany was about to be invaded, the Jews remained what they had been from the very beginning: Germany's first and *primary* target."[15] As we shall see, the analyses here will belie this presumed constancy of motivation.

Contingency also is one of the major emphases of this book. Genocide, I argue, is a contingent event, one made more probable by the earlier experience of loss and its consequences. In contrast to John Lewis Gaddis, who argues for the absence of patterns in contingent events ("By contingencies, I mean phenomena that do not form patterns. These may include the actions individuals take for reasons known only to themselves: a Hitler on a grandiose scale, for example"),[16] this book demonstrates that patterns of contingency in genocide do occur.

This book, then, attempts to solve two puzzles in the study of genocide. First, how does the pattern of massacre, sometimes random, oft-times organized for specific purposes, become transformed into genocidal policy organized at the state level? Terror is often used to achieve specific purposes. Potentially hostile civilian populations need to be cowed into submission; even on the battlefield, technical changes are sometimes introduced solely in order to induce terror and a consequent demoralization of opposing forces. The fitting of shrieking sirens to the wings of German Stuka dive bombers in World War II is a case in point. And terror is often sufficient to achieve neutralization, even complete submissiveness. Active Czech opposition to the German occupation effectively ceased after the massacre of the male population and internment in concentration camps of the women and children, as well as physical destruction of the town of Lidice near the assassination site of Reinhard Heydrich, protector of Bohemia-Moravia and an architect of the "Final Solution." More generally, as Edward Luttwak notes,

[14] Haffner 1979. [15] Emphasis added; Bartov 2003, 93. [16] Gaddis 2002, 30–31.

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"The reprisal policy of the German forces during World War II was very effective in minimizing the results that guerrillas could achieve, in most places, most of the time."[17] Genocide of the Czech population was unnecessary and did not occur.

European Jewish populations had for centuries trained themselves to be utterly submissive to Christian secular authorities in the expectation, frequently realized, that even severe oppression ultimately would pass, and the Jewish community would survive. Orthodox, especially Hasidic Jewish communities in eastern Poland, Belorussia, and Ukraine were singularly indifferent to the secular authority of the moment. Their lives were intensely spiritual and predominantly concerned with doctrinal Jewish matters. In the face of such manifest indifference or surrender, why institute genocide?

Second, why does genocide persist? One of the oldest recorded genocides, the Melian of the Peloponnesian War, occurred almost 25 millennia ago, while the most recent, the Tutsi, took place within the past decade. And these genocides appear not to have conferred any tactical or strategic advantage on the perpetrator. All of the major instances of the past century, as well as the prototypical Melian case, were committed by the losing side in a major war. Indeed, instead of incremental gain, genocide appears to have incurred substantial losses, as in the Holocaust when German transport and personnel had to be diverted from the principal task of waging war against an increasingly formidable array of opponents. A rational choice decision calculus emphasizing instrumentality appears not to have been decisive in choosing the genocidal option, an argument that will be developed more fully in chapter 4.

The past is unalterable. This painful axiom of invariance sets the stage for attempts to confront and then roll back the dictates of history. Based on some understanding of the past, frequently flawed as in the canard of Jewish responsibility for Germany's defeat in World War I, genocide emerges as a radical solution to the perception of an unacceptable, indeed intolerable, historical circumstance. Genocide is not an inevitable consequence nor is it a frequent one. But when certain sociopolitical conditions coincide, genocide has ensued. The task of this book is to delineate these conditions in three almost universally acknowledged genocides: the Holocaust of 1941–45, the Armenians of 1915–16, and the Tutsi of 1994. By confining the analysis to cases of maximum

[17] Luttwak 1987, 133.

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victimization (in the 66–70 percent range),[18] I also allow for the possibility of ferreting out variables that have the strongest impact on extensive mass killing. The role of the state, realpolitik, and loss will turn out to be crucial. These variables also allow for the possibility of specific policy recommendations – included in the concluding chapter – an outcome frequently denied to the more macro variables typically found in large-N analyses.[19] Later, a politicide – the mass murder of designated enemies of the state based on socioeconomic or political criteria – the Cambodian politicide of 1975–79, will be shown to have a different etiology, stemming from an equally flawed understanding of historical causation.

I choose these instances not only because there is little debate about their status as genocides in contrast to many other potential candidates, but also because much information is available for the analyst to draw upon. This is especially true of the Holocaust. Its sheer magnitude of 6,000,000 dead, and the absence of any identifiable Jewish provocation render it unique and almost endlessly attractive to historians, social scientists, and philosophers who seek to explain the apparently inexplicable. The literature on the Holocaust, therefore, is far more extensive than that found in other cases. Yet explain it we must, because it is too important an event to leave to the mystifiers who contend that it simply cannot be explained in the temporal realm. The Holocaust also has a much wider geographical range of occurrence than do any other genocides including the Armenian and Rwandan. It took place in twenty European countries (including Britain, in the collaboration of local government with the Nazis on the Channel Islands)[20] with varying degrees of collaboration or defiance among their leaders and populations, and over a longer time period. This plethora of data allows for the examination of a wide variation of behaviors among countries and even among the Jewish ghettos in Poland between 1940 and 1944. This behavioral variation, too, is absent in other cases. For these reasons, the Holocaust receives greater emphasis. By studying it in its entirety, we

[18] Fein 2004 lists the Holocaust, the Armenian, and the Tutsi genocides in that category. Only the Herero are also to be found in the category of maximum victimization but, as we shall see in chapter 2, the ambiguous extent of state involvement and combatant status lead to its exclusion.

[19] See, for example, the important association between political upheaval and genocide found in Harff 2003. Political upheaval, of course, allows for a large number of manifestations that lacks the specificity required for policy recommendations.

[20] For an artistic rendering of this collaboration, see Pascal 2000.

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simply learn more from the varieties of behavior found across most of the European continent.

In order to maximize explanation, we must listen to the voices of perpetrators and rescuers alike. Voices of the victims have mostly been stilled by mass murder and the ravages of time, but their rage, sorrow, powerlessness, and, for the survivors, a lifetime of pain, assuaged only intermittently by new families and personal achievements, have been recorded in memoirs and oral histories. Where appropriate, their evidence can help us as well.

This book is about loss in two important senses. First, in the enormous losses of human life, possibility, and culture visited on the world by genocide. The three genocides examined here resulted in the direct deaths of approximately 8,000,000 people; the aftershocks and contagion processes led probably to a minimum of another 4–5 million dead. This number is greater than the number of combat deaths in World War I, with the obvious difference that nearly all of the World War I combat dead were male. Genocides in the twentieth century made no provision for the rescue of women and children.

Entire cultures were lost. The vibrant Yiddish-based culture of East European towns and cities is no more. There are no longer any Armenian communities in eastern Anatolia; their church bells no longer ring for Sunday services. In Rwanda today, only with some effort can one find a Tutsi who was living in Rwanda in 1994. Most Tutsi in Rwanda now are returnees or migrants who arrived after the genocide. The enormity of the losses can perhaps best be appreciated by those who directly experienced them or their relatives or ethnic kin. Yet all of us can at least cognitively understand the monstrous dimensions of these losses.

The second meaning of loss is more analytic, for it provides a basis for understanding the behavior of many of the perpetrators. Indeed, loss is the single common thread that undulates throughout the several theoretical foci that are used here to understand the onset of genocide. Loss is understood as either (1) the transfer of territory, population, authority, or some combination of any of the three to another political entity, or (2) significant casualties in political violence (e.g., war) that either are about to be or have already been incurred.

Why should a political scientist like myself, in addition to personal reasons, seek to study the origins of genocide? After all, genocide is a profoundly human condition involving the deaths, in the aggregate, of millions of people, often by extraordinarily barbaric means. In that, it is

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first and foremost a human tragedy and justifiably it has been treated as such. Yet to understand the etiology of genocide, and that is my principal concern in this book, we must look to the foundations of policy making, namely politics. And these political processes often involve threats to the security of fairly newly established states, specifically the possibility of loss. Germany embarked on its genocidal path in 1941 after only seventy years of independent united existence, a period during which it experienced three incarnations – imperial Germany, the Weimar Republic and the Nazi state – the last, of course, the newest and in certain respects the least established in August 1941 when genocide began in earnest. The state, then, and policies designed to ensure its continuity – a fundamental component of realpolitik defined as success in preserving and strengthening the state[21] – loom large in the following analyses.

Genocide is understood to be the state-sponsored systematic mass murder of innocent and helpless men, women, and children denoted by a particular ethnoreligious identity, having the purpose of eradicating this group from a particular territory. More detailed reasons for this choice will be presented in chapter 2. *Genocidal behavior* is understood to be mass murder short of eradicating the entire group, but including a significant subset of that group in the killing.

In understanding the behavior of perpetrators, explanation will not be restricted to the political realm. Theories will be drawn from social psychology, economics, cognitive science, and other sciences committed to understanding the human condition. And the perpetrators, however well deserved their odious reputations, were primarily human beings. It does no good to label them as monsters and simply forget about them after their consignment to the trash heap of history. Certainly the perpetrators committed monstrous deeds. Yet, we do far better to explain their descent into atrocity as human beings than as some mutated creatures whose behaviors defy understanding. In the latter instance, we will claim no purchase on explanation and possible prevention, whereas in the former we may find some hope for the future. To humanize is to understand, but certainly not to absolve or condone.

As the Israeli poet and Holocaust survivor Dan Pagis wrote in his poem "Testimony":

[21] Waltz 1979, 117.

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No no: they definitely were
human beings: uniforms, boots.
How to explain? They were created
in the image.
I was a shade.
A different creator made me.

And he in his mercy left nothing of me that would die.
And I fled to him, floated up weightless, blue,
forgiving – I would say: apologizing –
smoke to omnipotent smoke
that has no face or image.[22]

The moral stigma will remain whatever our level of understanding, for the barbarities and immensities of human loss lay beyond any absolution, however limited. Notwithstanding their intent, unless perpetrators are genuinely deranged, are psychologically disconnected from their surroundings, or are coerced with deadly force, judgments are based on actions, not motivations.[23] In the final analysis, I pose the question: can we afford to treat the perpetrators as human beings instead of monsters? The answer is simply that we can't afford *not* to. Too much is at stake in the explanation of genocide and perhaps prevention of future mass killings.

The role of theory

If we view genocide as a human perversion, certainly in the moral realm, it is useful to seek answers in the perverse. One hint of the source of such perversion is found in the Message to the Assembly that Dr. Ismar Schorsch, chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, delivered at the 2001 graduation ceremony of the Cantorial and Rabbinical School. Chancellor Schorsch suggested that one of his favorite Hebrew words was "tzimtzum," meaning contraction. To be an effective leader, a rabbi must frequently contract her sphere of influence in order to stimulate creativity in others. Her contraction provides the intellectual/spiritual space for congregants or colleagues to explore their own capabilities, thereby enhancing the creative process.

The identification of contraction with creativity in Schorsch's interpretation contrasts sharply with the effective identification of contraction with destruction in the minds of genocidal leaders. For example, in

[22] Quoted in Bartov 2003, 113. [23] Neiman 2002.

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