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**THE GENOCIDAL MENTALITY:
THE 1994 CASE OF RWANDA**

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This paper analyses the problem of socio-cultural causes of mass violence in contemporary African societies using the example of the 1994 Rwandan genocide. The author tries to identify the basic characteristics of the mentality of the perpetrators of the genocide, their logic and ways to justify their participation. The case of Rwanda shows how the lack of legal consciousness or awareness and a specific «culture of violence», that had deep historical roots, result in the extreme hatred between the two major Rwandan identify communities of Hutus and Tutsis and how the instrumentalization of violence by political leaders and the propaganda of fear and hostility unleashes a chain reaction that is impossible to stop and that leads to total violation of globally accepted standards of human rights ethics and to the most intense genocide in the history of mankind.

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It is a well-known fact that in the Rwandan genocide of 1994 the members of the Hutu ethnic group, which constituted the majority, went on a rampage, massacring nearly one million members of Tutsis ethnic group and over fifty thousands of moderate Hutus. Their participation in the genocide was massive; moreover, they neglected any ethical standards or religious norms, they violated all fundamental human rights. One of the main reasons for this was a specific Rwanda's political and social culture, which had deep roots in the history of the country.

First, it was «a culture of fear». «Rwandan culture is a culture of fear, — Laurent Nkongoli, the vice president of the National Assembly after the genocide, insisted. — I remember what people said: “Just let us pray, then kill us”, or “I don't want to die in the street, I want to die at home”. When you're that resigned and oppressed you're already dead. It shows the genocide was prepared for too long. I detest this fear. These victims of genocide had been psychologically prepared to expect death just for being Tutsi. They were being killed for so long that they were already dead» [Gourevitch, 1998, p. 22]. Second, it was a culture of «deep conformity». «Conformity is deep, — said François-Xavier Nkurunziza, a Hutu lawyer of mixed ethnicity, — very developed here. In Rwanda culture, everyone obeys authority. People revere power, and there isn't enough education. You take a poor, ignorant population, and give them arms, and say: “It's yours. Kill”. They'll obey» [Gourevitch, 1998, p. 23]. And finally, it was a culture of violence, because violence was seen as a possible and even the best way to solve economic, social and political problems.

Rwanda was a predominantly Christian country, more than 90% of its population was composed of professing Christians of many different denominations [Theunis, 1995, p. 293] — especially Catholics (62%) and Protestants (18%) [Des Forges, 1999, p. 43–44], mostly Anglicans (the Episcopal Church). But it were the religious buildings — churches, monasteries, schools — that turned out to be during the genocide, from April to June 1994, the scenes of mass murder of Tutsis. The genocidaires were not afraid to shed blood in the most sacred places. As a result, Rwanda became the country of desolate temples and crippled souls. Michael Skoler, an American radio journalist, described the Rukara parish church in Karubamba (Kibungo prefecture), where over two thousand Tutsi refugees were killed: «As I drove

up to a set of orange brick church buildings, I had to clamp a bandana¹ tightly over my nose and mouth. The stench was unbearable. Outside the church, there are maybe two or three dozens bodies, and in the heat here in Rwanda, many of the bodies are already almost fully decomposed. You can see some skulls, some backbones. There are what seem to be women in brightly colored clothing, as well as children, lying about. <...> There are bodies scattered all over the church. The blood on the floor is so thick it's dried to kind of a muddy brown dust that may be in some places a quarter of an inch thick. Most of the bodies are blackened and decomposing. Some lie on mattresses, some on the floor, some are covered with blankets. By the altar, there are probably about 30 bodies clustered around. One is the body of an infant with parents... There's a suitcase that is open and kind of torn apart in front of the altar. On the floor of the church, you can see baskets, plastic water cans, pales, combs, brushes, sandals, sneakers, tins of food, a bottle of talcum powder. The windows, stained-glass windows on either side, are broken. There are wooden pews that have been thrown against them. Above the whole seen, above the altar, is a small wooden statue of Christ with one hand raised. In one of the church offices in the back, the bodies are piled, one on top of the other, crowded into a room, some still sitting in chairs. Windows broken, the plaster inside is cratered. It looks like, perhaps, bullets came in through the windows» [Skoler, 1994].

In many communes of Rwanda clergy either directly participated in the massacres or winked at them. Ecclesiastical functionaries often attended the meetings of prefectural and communal «security committees» which organized the hunt for Tutsis. Bishop Aaron Ruhumuliza, head of the Free Methodist Church in Gikondo, in the outskirts of Kigali City, on April 9, 1994 allowed a gang of militia to massacre people who sought safety in his own church [Rwanda: The Protestant Churches and the Genocide, 1998, p. 22]. In Murambi commune (south of Byumba prefecture in northeastern Rwanda) on the morning of April 11, 1994 Pierre Mbyariyehe, a local priest and member of the Interahamwe², called all the refugees into the church for confession and then locked them in [The prosecutor v. Jean-Baptiste Gatete, 2011, p. 63], thus helping Jean-Baptiste Gatete, a former burgomaster and militia leader, to

¹ A triangular or square piece of cloth tied around the head or around the neck for protective or decorative purposes.

² Interahamwe («those who stick together») — the extremist Hutu militia of the National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development, former single party of President Juvénal Habyarimana's regime, that carried out genocidal massacres.

organize the slaughter of 3,000–4,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus [The prosecutor v. Jean-Baptiste Gatete, 2011, p. 58–88]. On April 14, 1994 Thaddee Rusingizandekwe, a Professor of History at the Higher Seminary of Nyakibanda and former military chaplain of the Rwandan Armed Forces, personally led the assault on the church of Kibeho in Mubuga commune (in the prefecture of Gikongoro in southwestern Rwanda) [Damien Biniga, 1999, p. 26]. He shot at Tutsi refugees and threw grenades at them [Damien Biniga, 1999, p. 26], and, after their short and weak resistance has been overcome, he ordered to break down the doors of the church and to attack the refugees with pepper gas [Damien Biniga, 1999, p. 28]. Athanase Seromba, a Catholic priest in charge of the parish of Nyange in Kivumu commune (in the prefecture of Kibuye in southwestern Rwanda), played a key role in the slaughter of 3,000 Tutsis who took refuge in his parish church [The prosecutor v. Athanase Seromba, 2006, p. 15–80]. Seromba personally instructed the assailants who attacked the church on April 15, 1994 to kill the intellectuals first [The prosecutor v. Gaspard Kanyarukiga, 2010, p. 92–93]. On April 16 he ordered to destroy the building using the bulldozer, and its roof collapsed, killing more than 2,000 Tutsis gathered inside; the few survivors were killed by the Interahamwe [The prosecutor v. Athanase Seromba, 2006, p. 76–78]. Emmanuel Rukundo, head of the St. Leon Minor Seminary in the Gitarama in Central Rwanda, organized the massacre of Tutsi refugees who were seeking shelter at St. Leon's [The prosecutor v. Emmanuel Rukundo, 2009, p. 30–52]. In mid-May 1994, at the Seminary, Rukundo, armed and escorted by a soldier, took a young Tutsi refugee woman into his room and sexually assaulted her [The prosecutor v. Emmanuel Rukundo, 2009, p. 110–118]. Samuel Musabyimana, a bishop of the Anglican Church in Shyogwe Diocese in Gitarama prefecture, on May 28, 1994 sent a message to the Tutsis who took refuge at the Diocese and its surroundings, encouraging them to abandon their hiding places and promising to help them save from genocide. But those who followed his instructions and came out of hiding were attacked by militias; many of them were either killed or thrown alive into a hole, where they remained until they died [The prosecutor against Samuel Musabyimana, 2009, p. 5]. Wenceslas Munyeshyaka, a Catholic priest in downtown Kigali, who infamously walked around the Holy Family Cathedral with a pistol tucked in his belt, handed hundreds of adults and children who took shelter in the Cathedral over to the Interahamwe, participated in the selection of Tutsi refugees to be murdered, personally killed some of

them and coerced women into having sex with him in exchange for saving their lives [Wallace Kapaya, 2005, p. 4–6]³.

Many Hutu priests were involved in the persecution of their fellow Tutsi clergy members or they abetted the murder of them. Hormisdas Nsengimana, rector of Christ-Roi College (a prestigious Catholic secondary school in Nyanza, Nyabisindu commune, Butare prefecture) and member of the Coalition for the Defence of the Republic (CDR), an extremist Hutu political party (he was referred to as «the CDR priest»), became one of the main organizers of the genocide in the commune: he mobilized the local Interahamwe, provided them with weapons and transport, allowed them to use the College as a meeting point before they set out to kill, incited the Hutu population to exterminate Tutsi civilians, guided and supervised the slaughter and took part in it [Father Hormisdas Nsengimana, 2001, p. 16; The prosecutor v. Hormisdas Nsengimana, 2009, p. 12–203]. But Nsengimana was also complicit in the murder on April 25, 1994 of four Tutsi priest (Innocent Nyangezi, Mathieu Ngirumpatse, Jean-Bosco Yurirwahandi and Callixte Uwitonze), who hid themselves in the orphanage in the neighbouring commune of Ntyazo, about 15 kms from Christ-Roi College. When «the CDR priest» found out their destination, he sent militiamen to kill them; later he refused to allow their bodies to be buried and left them for the dogs and crows [Father Hormisdas Nsengimana, 2001, p. 26–30; Rakiya Omaar, 1998, p. 4].

Some priests actively aided and abetted the genocidaires; they often helped them to round up victims to slaughter. The best example is the tragedy in the Seventh-day Adventist Church complex at Mugenero near Kibuye Town (Gishyita commune) on April 15–16, 1994, which became widely known throughout the world because of the famous book of Philip Gourevitch [Gourevitch, 1998, p. 25–43]. Among many thousands of people⁴ who found shelter in the complex there were seven Adventist Tutsi pastors who tried to cheer and encourage the refugees [Gourevitch, 1998, p. 28]. When on the evening of April 15 Hutu militias circled the compound in pick-up trucks, the pastors realized that they were doomed, and they wrote letters to Charles Sikubwabo, the burgomaster of Gishyita, and to Elizaphan Ntakirutimana, a Hutu and then president of the Seventh-day Adventist church in the Kibuye prefecture, who previously urged Tutsi refugees to gather at the Mugenero

³ See also: Frilet, 1994; Fritscher, 1994.

⁴ There are very different estimates about the number of these refugees – from 1,000 to 12,000 and even to 50,000 [The Prosecutor v. Elizaphan and Gérard Ntakirutimana, 2003, p. 21].

complex [The Prosecutor v. Elizaphan and Gérard Ntakirutimana, p. 23–27; Gourevitch, 1998, p. 26–27]:

«Dear our leader, Pastor Ntakirutimana Elizaphan,

How are you. We wish you to be strong in all these problems we are facing.

We wish to inform you that we have heard that tomorrow we shall die with our families. We therefore request you to intervene on our behalf and talk with the burgomaster. We believe that, with the help of God who entrusted you the leadership of this flock, which is going to be destroyed, your intervention will be highly appreciated, the same way as Jews were saved by Esther.

We should appreciate if you would contact the burgomaster as soon as possible.

We give honour to you» [The Prosecutor v. Elizaphan and Gérard Ntakirutimana, 2003, p. 58; Gourevitch, 1998, p. 42].

A few hours later they got his answer. According to one witness, the pastor replied to them, saying: «A solution has been found for your problem. You must die». Or, according to another, «You must be eliminated. God doesn't want you any more» [Gourevitch, 1998, p. 28]⁵.

On the morning of April 16 a mob of local Interahamwe, demobilized soldiers, merchants and peasants, led by the burgomaster, attacked the Mugenero complex, using traditional weapons; and Elizaphan Ntakirutimana was there [The Prosecutor v. Elizaphan and Gérard Ntakirutimana, 2003, p. 70, 91–92]. But this first attack was repulsed by the refugees. Two hours later, however, the genocidaires, received reinforcements, made a new assault upon the compound, throwing grenades over its walls. Tutsi men in the churchyard tried to defend themselves by throwing stones, but without success. The killers broke into the buildings in which women and children took shelter. The carnage lasted eleven hours. The final death toll was between six and seven thousands [The Prosecutor v. Elizaphan and Gérard Ntakirutimana, 2003, p. 89].

Gertrude Mukangango, the Mother Superior in the Benedictine convent of Sovu (Butare prefecture), ordered to close the gates of the monastery to the Tutsis fleeing the gangs of murderers. However, on April 19 thousands of them forced their way into the convent, driven by desperation; they numbered about 3,500. The Mother Superior refused utterly to give them any help — they didn't receive any food, water, or medication. Calling the terrified refugees «dirt» that should not sully a «sacred place», Mukangango demanded of them

⁵ See also: The Prosecutor v. Elizaphan and Gérard Ntakirutimana, 2003, p. 61.

to leave the convent, and, when they refused, on April 21 she brought armed soldiers to the convent to force the refugees out. Many of the refugees she drove out were killed immediately after they left the convent. The others — more than 7,000 people — took shelter in a nearby health center.

When in the morning of April 23 the mob, including Interahamwe, communal policemen and retired military, attacked the center, Julienne Kizito, known as «Gapyisi» («Animal»), a nun at the same convent, handed out jerrycans of petrol to the assailants who used it to set fire to a garage where over 700 Tutsis has hidden; many of them were burnt alive in her presence [The Prosecutor v. Elizaphan and Gérard Ntakirutimana, 2003, p. 85]. She also distributed the belongings of the refugees to the bandits with whom she collaborated. The massacre lasted from 9:00 to 17:00. More than six thousand Tutsis were murdered. Some Tutsis were ordered to dig a hole to bury the dead bodies, the others still alive jumped into the pit to avoid death from a machete [Radhika Coomaraswamy, 1998, p. 9].

On April 25 and May 6 the Mother Superior, despite the pleas of the Tutsi nuns, handed over their relatives⁶, whom they hid in the cells, as well as the Tutsi employees of the convent to soldiers and militias. The families of the nuns were killed [Rwanda not so innocent, 1995, p. 84–102] by the Interahamwe in front of their eyes⁷. «Those who gave money to the Interahamwe in an attempt to buy their freedom were shot; those who did not were killed with machetes and thrown into the toilets» [Radhika Coomaraswamy, 1998, p. 9].

During the Rwandan genocide, not only Christian churches and convents ceased to be safe havens for its victims. There were no places in Rwanda that provided adequate protection for persecuted people, including hospitals, as demonstrated, for example, by the massacre on 22–23 April 1994 at the National University Hospital of Butare, the second largest city in Rwanda and its intellectual capital, located in the south of the country. «Some of the most horrific massacres, — said Luisa Dillner, — occurred in maternity clinics, where people gathered in the belief that no one would kill mothers and newborn babies» [Dillner, 1994, p. 895]. Philipo Kayitare, a shepherd from Kanzenze in the region of Bugesera (about one hour south of Kigali, the capital), who survived with his little sister the Nyamata church massacre between April 14 and April 19, recalled that immediately after this he tried to conceal himself

⁶ Most of the nuns were Tutsi [Radhika Coomaraswamy, 1998, p. 8].

⁷ See also: Rwandans Cite Nun's Massacre Role, 1997; Olojede, 2004. During the genocide nine out of thirty-six nuns of the convent were killed; after it most of the rest left the convent; only six nuns remained [Olojede, 2004].

in a nearby maternity clinic. «I thought that nobody could possibly come to kill pregnant women and new-born babies, — he said. — Many other people had the same thoughts because when we got there, the place was very crowded. There was no way to get in. So we went to the sorghum fields near the clinic. As we hid, we saw prisoners passing by with hoes. Later we saw a vehicle with dead bodies. This was in the early hours of the morning. Then soldiers passed in the company of interahamwe on the way to the maternity clinic. The interahamwe then started killing, killing and killing at the clinic. When they had finished killing at the clinic, interahamwe started searching the sorghum fields. They found us and brought us to the maternity clinic. They hit me with a big stick across the back. I collapsed. They threw me on top of a pile of corpses and went to look for others in the fields» [Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance, 1995, p. 273]. 10-year-old Jean-Baptiste Ndeze on April 12 during the storming of the Parish church of Rukara (Kibungo prefecture) took refuge with other children in the maternity clinic located near the church. When the Interahamwe attacked the clinic, the adults ran out of there, but «not the children». «Then the attackers entered the maternity clinic, — said Ndeze. — They assembled the children and started to beat us with machetes. They kept hitting us with the machetes. I tried to get up and flee but I could not because the machetes kept coming at me. The attackers left the clinic when they thought everybody was dead» [Rwanda: Who is killing, 1994, p. 18]. When African Rights, a London-based human rights organization, visited the parish of Rukara on 9 May, they found «many corpses both inside the maternity clinic and just outside, including the bloated bodies of many tiny babies. Apart from a few bare beds, everything inside the clinic had been smashed to pieces...» [Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance, 1995, p. 826].

Like many priests and monks, many healthcare professionals came to be involved in the genocide. «There have been many massacres in the world, but what sets Rwanda apart is that they happened in such a short space of time and they were so intimate. Doctors have sometimes participated in human rights abuses, but here it was so apparent», — said Rakiya Omaar, Director of African Rights [Dillner, 1994, p. 895]. Dr Claude-Emil Rwagaconza, a Rwandan, testified: «The extremist doctors were also asking patients for their identity cards before treating them. They refused to treat sick Tutsis. Also, many people were coming to the hospital to hide. The extremist doctors prevented many of these people from hiding in the hospital» [Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance, 1995, p. 940]. According to a report by African Rights, «The percentage of doctors who became “killers par excellence” was very

high. A huge number of the most qualified and experienced doctors in the country, men as well as women — including surgeons, physicians, paediatricians, gynaecologists, anaesthetists, public health specialists and hospital administrators — participated in the murder of their own Tutsi colleagues, patients, the wounded and terrified refugees who had sought shelter in their hospitals, as well as their neighbours and strangers» [Dr Sosthène Munyemana, 1996, p. 3]. «The example set by a large number of the country's best-known doctors was eagerly copied by nurses and medical assistants throughout the country» [Dr Sosthène Munyemana, 1996, p. 4].

Priests participated in the extermination of their flocks, doctors — of their patients, teachers and professors — of their students. Atanase Kafigita, a teacher of Nyagurati (Kibuye prefecture), told to the French military, arrived in his village: «Moi-même, j'ai tué des enfants» [Saint-Exupéry, 1994, p. 3]. When an indignant Colonel Duval asked him: «Monsieur l'instituteur, vous trouvez que c'est normal de tuer des enfants sous prétexte qu'ils sont complices?», the teacher evaded his question by saying: «J'avais 80 enfants en première année à l'école. Aujourd'hui, il en reste 25. Tous les autres, on les a tués ou ils sont en fuite» [Saint-Exupéry, 1994, p. 3].

The actor of the 1994 Rwandan genocide was universal — its perpetrators came from all sectors and strata of society, occupational, gender and age groups. Emmanuel Mutsinzi, a Tutsi survivor of the St Francis Church massacre at Karubamba, 30 miles northeast of Kigali, on April 14, 1994, recalled that among the killers were «teachers at the local school, the town constable, storekeepers and other neighbors» [Skoler, 1994]. Even children didn't stand aside: they participated together with adults in attacks on Christian churches, hospitals, schools and manned checkpoints and roadblocks. Paul Rusesabagina, the «Oskar Schindler of Africa», recounted in his book *An Ordinary Man* that when on May 3, 1994 UNAMIR trucks transporting a group of refugees from the Hotel Mille Collines to the Kanombe international airport were stopped by gangs of militiamen, his «son Roger was approached by a boy he had known from school, a former classmate and friend. “Give me your shoes, you cockroach”, — said the boy. Roger obeyed without protest and gave over his tennis shoes to his old friend, who was now a killer with a machete. They had once played soccer together» [Rusesabagina, Zoellner, 2006, p. 191].

The Rwandan genocide, in fact, became something of a «great national cause», that differed it from other instances of total genocide in the history of mankind, which was usually carried out by an army, special forces or paramilitary groups, with the passive complicity of ordinary citizens. The direct involvement

of the vast majority of Hutus in the slaughter was a key distinguishing feature of the Rwandan genocide. Murder has become the norm, all past institutions, family ties, social loyalties, professional affiliations and religious commitments, all moral codes lost their importance. «The first person I killed was a man, — 16-year-old Justin Mbongata told the *Guardian*. — I killed him with a stick. I beat him. We were chasing them in the bush. I was with some other people. I know the man I killed. He was called Emmanuel. I used to see him around the place. He was a peasant. He had eight children. Some of the children were my age. We used to meet and play sometimes» [Rwandan confessions reveal orchestrated slaughter, 1994, p. 20]. Flora Mukampore, a Tutsi, survived the genocide in Nyarubuye (in Rusumo commune, Kibungo prefecture, located on the Tanzanian border), refuses to understand this: «We used to go to church with them [Hutu] and they taught us together that committing murder is a sin, and God punishes those who kill. We thought that no one would dare come to attack us at the church because the church is a holy place» [BBC Panorama, 2004]. Chrisostome Gatunzi, an aged Hutu of Rusumo commune, watched how the militias, in groups of 20, rounded up local Tutsis, killed them and then threw their bodies in mass graves a few hundred yards from his house: «I witnessed when they hacked them and put them into a pit, — said he. — I knew some of them. I don't know why others want to kill Tutsis. We have lived together for such a long time as neighbors and friends. It's unbelievable seeing your neighbor hacked to death. *These people are saying they want to create a new Rwanda*. How can you do that by killing neighbors and friends?» (italics supplied) [Lorch, June 1994, p. 1].

The mass participation of Hutus in the massacres of Tutsis and Hutu «renegades» was combined with some consistency in the killings. The murderers seemed to perform some sort of mandatory community service. «We were on the floor, — said a survivor of the Nyarubuye parish massacre on April 15–16, 1994. — They [the murderers] started hacking people to death. They would step on us as they were doing it. They killed the young men first and after killing them they started shouting that the dead should be removed, so they could see those hiding underneath. They would get children and throw them. You would see them smashed» [BBC Panorama, 2004]. The murderers felt no empathy for their victims' sufferings. «Each person we cut looked traumatised, — tried to convey his impressions a perpetrator in this slaughter. — They looked like their hearts had been taken away. No one was asking for mercy. They looked like they were already dead. The way I saw people, people whose hands had been amputated, those with no legs, and others with no heads.

I saw everything. People rolling around and screaming in agony with no arms and no legs» [BBC Panorama, 2004].

Often, the killers acted with extreme cruelty and highly sophisticated sadism. Antoine Rwanta, a Hutu, whose parents have been executed by the Interahamwe as the *accomplices of the Inkotanyi* (sobriquet of the rebel Tutsis-led Rwandan Patriotic Front), recounted: «They accused my father of helping the RPF so they came into our house and cut them piece by piece. They [my parents] did not die quickly. The militiamen had cut every part of their bodies — their fingers, their hands, their legs, their head, everywhere. They then left them to bleed to death» [Bedford, 1994]. During the Nyamata church massacre the Interahamwe forced women and children remained alive to jump into a pit latrine. Many victims were murdered in the most cruel and shocking ways. Thus, militias tied a woman named Innocent Mukadori and her child together and then thrust a stick through her genitals until it came out through the head. After that they nailed the child on her with another sharpened stick [Kamau, 1994]. «I've never seen hatred like this in my life, — said Manuel Pinto, a member of the Ugandan Parliament and the head of the clean-up operation (aiming at gathering and burying the bodies of the Rwandan genocide's victims on the shores of Lake Victoria), on May 20, 1994. — There are so many of them [corpses]. Children are skewered on sticks. I saw a woman cut open from the tail bone. They have removed breasts and male genital organs» [Lorch, May 1994, p. 1]. One moment of the new Rwandan reality taken by Annabel Heseltine of the *Sunday Times* — «A small boy sprawls unnaturally beside his mutilated mother. Her breasts have been cut off» [Heseltine, 1994].

Many genocidaires, including high-ranking political officials, did not try to cover up their crimes, but, on the contrary, often boasted of their «heroic deeds» and sought to give them maximum publicity. On June 22, 1994 the Interahamwe caught Assiel Kabanda, a Tutsi and very well-known local trader, on Kazirandimwe Hill in Bisesero region. Mika Muhimana, a municipal councillor in Gishyita commune, Kibuye prefecture, in the presence of Eliezer Niyitegeka, the then Rwandan government's minister of information, and the burgomasters of Gishyita and Gisovu, «cut off Kabanda's head with a machete, and castrate him. Kabanda's skull was pierced through the ears with a spike and carried away by two men, each holding one end of the spike with the skull in the middle. <...> ...Kabanda's head was subsequently displayed at Mika's shop in Gishyita. The genitals were hung on <another> spike until <some people> found them and buried them» [The prosecutor v. Eliézer Niyitegeka, 2003, p. 73].

The «transformation» of Hutu civilians, especially of peasants, into merciless killers, unexpected for many, was witnessed by both the victims of the genocide and its perpetrators. A participant in the Kibeho parish massacre on April 14–15, 1994 recalled: «We really had no pity left. A Tutsi who was not killed by grenades or bullets was finished off with our *massues*⁸ and our machetes. I saw old people, men, both young and old, women and children who looked at us and who begged us to save them. But we had no pity for them. We didn't have pity for a single Tutsi. *I forget that beforehand many of them had been my friends* <...> While looking for a Tutsi boy, in order to kill him, I jumped over corpses with their heads or legs missing. Blood was flowing like water of a river. We killed the Tutsis as though they were snakes, smashing their heads in first. There were so many of them that it took all day to kill them. Not one Tutsi escaped that time» (italics supplied) [Damien Biniga, 1999, p. 28]. «We were singing, crying and shouting with joy, — recalled a perpetrator of the Nyamata church massacre. — The body count made us happy. Some used pestles⁹, but I preferred a machete — swing for the Achilles' tendons first, the upraised arms next, the head last. Out of the 3,000 people who were inside the church, maybe five got away. It took us six and a half hours and we were thorough and systematic. We had one aim and we accomplished it. I was proud. We got beer to drink and food to eat, even beef. ... *I was transformed*. I was happy» (italics supplied) [Nelson, 2004, p. 3]. The participants in the Nyarubuye parish massacre said: «I'd never killed anyone before. All of this came like madness. I'd never had any mental problems before. We planned to kill Tutsis and it was in our mind to kill Tutsis. After all that killing at the church, it felt like we'd done something terrible. I wondered how it got into my mind»; «It was as if we were taken over by Satan. When Satan is using you, you lose your mind. We were not ourselves. Starting with me, I don't think I was normal. You couldn't be normal and start butchering people for no reason. We'd been attacked by the devil»; «It was a time of hatred. Our heads were hot. We were animals. We didn't respect any human rights» [BBC Panorama, 2004].

Often, this «transformation» is explained by external factors. The first of them — a propaganda campaign inciting ethnic hatred, fear and denigration of Tutsi through the extremist media, especially the infamous radio station *Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines* and newspapers such as the Kigali

⁸ Bludgeons.

⁹ A hard tool with a rounded end that is used for pounding or crushing substances in a deep bowl.

magazine *Kangura* («wake up» in Kinyarwanda): «That is why little Hutus who weren't bad became bad, — said Jon Matese, a Tutsi. — They were pushed, they were made afraid that Tutsis were coming to kill them» [McDougall, 1994]. «They [journalists] kept on saying, — recalled a militiaman, — that the rebels, the cockroaches, are now the RPF, and that they are all Tutsis. That is when the hatred started and when you met a Tutsi you would say it's your relatives who are trying to kill us» [BBC Panorama, 2004].

The second factor — the instructions of local authorities. «We asked him [a police officer] why he was killing our families, — told a Benedictine nun of the Catholic convent in Sovu near Butare in southern Rwanda. — Why? He said *the mission he was given* was that no nun should be killed, but all the others must die» (italics supplied) [Olojede, 2004]. «We were told the president had been killed by the cockroaches, — one of the perpetrators of genocide stated. — They said, “The cockroaches are the Tutsis among you and are hiding in nearby bushes. So chase them down and kill them, or they will enslave and kill the Hutus”... All the authorities said the same thing, so I thought it must be true» [Nelson, 2004, p. 3]. «I beat two women and one man to death, — recalled another. — I was forced to beat them to death by the burgomestre and the army. I don't feel well about what I did. I don't sleep properly. I think a lot when I'm sleeping. What I did wasn't good, but because of the government we were forced to do it. <...> What I did ... I did it unconsciously. The councillors showed us how to kill and where to kill» [Rwandan confessions reveal orchestrated slaughter, 1994, p. 20].

Later, many murderers also affirmed that they have joined in the slaughter against their will, out of fear of reprisals from the authorities. «The message from the top was passed down to the local village chiefs, the *conseillers*, — said François-Xavier Sibomana, a 47-year-old peasant farmer from Kibungo. — The *conseillers* had lists of Tutsis who should be killed. They simply organized their constituents. The leaders of the party¹⁰ and the leaders of the militia rounded up all the men in the village. We were told that we had a mission. We were given a list of people to kill. If we met someone on the list, they would be killed [cited by: Berkeley, 2001, p. 3]. <...> I killed because I was forced to. I either had to do it or I would die myself. Many were killed for refusing to kill. <...> We would converge on a person. We killed a number of people, but jointly. <...> I knew some of them. They were neighbours. <...> <My brother-in-law> did not deserve to die. He was an old man. We killed him in

¹⁰ The National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development (MRND).

his house. He was dragged from the bedroom and killed in the sitting room. Emmanuel struck him first. He was the leader of militia. I could not do it myself. For me, I stood by and watched. There was nothing I could do. I made no effort to stop the killers because we were led by the leader of the militia. So nobody would dare to ask to spare the man» [cited by: Berkeley, 2001, p. 1]. «Moi-même, j'ai tué au fusil dix malfaisants, dont deux enfants, — a communal policeman in Nyagurati admitted. — C'était tous des complices. Mon chef m'a envoyé ici pour ça. Il m'a dit que tous les Tutsi étaient mauvais. Avant, on savait qu'il y avait un complot» [Saint-Exupéry, 2009, p. 86]. «I killed three, a man and two women, with a big club, — Samuel Karemera, a 41-year-old farmer and a member of the Interahamwe, told about events which have taken place on April 13, 1994 in Murambi commune (Byumba prefecture). — They were my neighbors. I knew them well» [Smerdon, 1994]. According to him, he did so after receiving the order of burgomaster Jean-Baptiste Gatate, who instructed his subordinates: «Kill all the people who are not MRND and CDR and also kill all the Tutsis» [Smerdon, 1994]. «So, — explained Karemera, — we had to do it or be killed ourselves as traitors or sympathisers with Tutsis» [Smerdon, 1994].

The third factor was pressure from the killer gangs arrived from other communes. In most cases, these «outsiders» used persuasion to change local Hutus' attitudes toward their Tutsi neighbors. On April 18, 1994 a group of retired military, dressed in civilian clothes, came to Nyaruhengeri commune (south of Butare prefecture) to incite Hutu population to launch an attack on Tutsi civilians at the checkpoint near the church of Kansi. At first, the Hutus hesitated, but then they started throwing stones at the Tutsis [Des Forges, 1999, p. 453]. Sometimes, however, the Hutu peasants claimed that the «outsiders» compelled them to participate in massacres by force and terror. Juliana Mucanguaya, a Hutu woman from a village not far from Gahini in northwestern Kibungo and mother of six children, told Michael Skoler that militias from a neighboring area arrived in her sector with weapons and their burgomaster. At first, they took her husband and other Hutu men to help with the killing of Tutsis. Later they also started taking the women and giving them machetes. «Why did you go?» — Skoler asked her. «They were threatening us, — Juliana answered. — They were even beating us. They even killed my kid I was carrying on my back. They were hitting the kid with gun butts, butts of a gun. After killing my child, they forced us to go and reached near a place where they had gathered a group of people [Tutsis], shooting at them, and then they

give us clubs to finish off those who are dying or not yet dead. I was trembling myself from the action. But we were forced to do it» [Skoler, 1994].

However, most such confessions were made by the participants in the Rwandan genocide after it has already ended, and many of them were either in detention, or under threat of criminal prosecution. The assertion that ordinary Hutus massacred Tutsis because they were forced to do so by local authorities or by militia groups came from other communes are undermined by many other testimonies. «The only thing I know, — said one Hutu woman, who was married to a Tutsi, — is that I could see people armed with machetes, with spears and clubs and other weapons, without any soldier behind them, without any burghermeister giving orders. I didn't see anybody who was forced to do it. My father did not participate in killing people or taking other people's cows or looting. And nothing happened to him» [Skoler, 1994].

The perpetrators of genocide attempted to attach the blame for it to the victims or to the rebels of the RPF. «Everything that has happened in Rwanda is the fault of the RPF, — Robert Kajuga, the national president of the Interahamwe, told the *Observer*. — We are just defending ourselves. The international community does not understand. It's a war against the Tutsis because they want to take power, and we Hutus are more numerous. Most Tutsis support the RPF, so they fight and they kill» [Hutu warlord defends child killings, 1994, p. 15]. It was the way of thinking which many genocidaires shared. A communal policeman in Nyagurati tried to convince the French: «Tout ça, c'est la faute des Tutsis. On les a tués parce qu'ils sont complices du FPR. On le sait. C'est pour ça qu'on les tue. Les femmes et les enfants aussi» [Saint-Exupéry, 2009, p. 85].

According to the logic of the perpetrators of genocide, the extermination of the Tutsi ethnic group was nothing but a legitimate act of preventive self-defense of the Hutu community. This is how the same policeman interpreted a typical sequence of events during the Rwandan genocide: at first, gangs of thugs killed Tutsis and burned their houses, and then began to round up the survivors who had fled into the surrounding forest, bush or swamps and who crept into the peasants' fields at night under cover of darkness to find some food: «Avant ... on savait qu'il y avait un complot. On avait remarqué que des groupes de Tutsi se rassemblaient pour tramer des choses mauvaises. On a voulu les empêcher d'attaquer, on a pris les devants» [Saint-Exupéry, 2009, p. 86]. «On en [of the huts of the Tutsis] a incendié au moins deux cents. Il ne fallait pas que les fuyards puissent revenir» [Saint-Exupéry, 2009, p. 85]. «On a chassé tous les Tutsis du village. Mais on n'a pas pu les tuer tous. Ils

se sont rassemblés là-haut, dans la forêt. Tous les soirs, ces malfaiteurs et leurs complices de la rébellion reviennent nous attaquer. Ils n'ont rien à manger et veulent nous prendre de la nourriture. Nous, on se défend» [Saint-Exupéry, 2009, p. 85]. «Ici, chacun a une arme. Avec les villageois, on partait le matin et tous les Tutsis qu'on trouvait, on les tuait» [Saint-Exupéry, 2009, p. 85]. The local teacher echoed the communal policeman: «Tous les soirs, des malfaiteurs descendent des collines pour nous attaquer. Nous, on se défend» [Saint-Exupéry, 2009, p. 85]. «En face, dans la forêt, ils se comportent comme des rebelles. Ils ne pensent qu'à une chose, nous attaquer. Nous, on se défend» [Saint-Exupéry, 2009, p. 86].

«People were operating in an ethical vacuum», — said Andrew Carney of Physicians for Human Rights [Dillner, 1994, p. 895]. They killed in the belief that the physical and total extermination of the Tutsis would solve all the problems of Rwanda. Their hidden credo was «kill and forget», thereby opening as soon as possible a new chapter in Rwanda's history. Chris McGreal, the Africa correspondent of the *Guardian*, who visited Kibuye Town, brilliantly captured the atmosphere of this «new Rwanda»:

«The citizens of Kibuye, neat and clean in their Sunday best, squeezed on to the pews of their only church. Their voices rose in unison to praise life and humanity. Only the smell of death was between them and their God. As the congregation filed in, the stench drew glances at the newly turned earth, rare acknowledgments of a terrible crime. Some had tried to scrub the church clean, but the smell filtered in from the grave at the door and the blood that worked its way deep into the stone crevices. It lingered as a reminder of the extermination of a section of Kibuye's population *that, if the townspeople are to be believed, never occurred*. There is no shortage of evidence of what happened at the church, *only an unwillingness to admit it*. The bullet holes speckling the corrugated iron roof, shattered windows and chipped walls, the bloody hand print of a dying Tutsi, perhaps once a member of the congregation, the thin metal toilet door sliced through by a machette in search of a victim: all testify to the murder of 3,000 Tutsis at the church on a single day in April. <...> As if that were not enough, limbs stick out of the shallow graves sloping from the church. A skull and backbone lie on the soil, probably dragged from the grave and picked clean by dogs. Scattered amid the human remnants are shattered church icons adapted as weapons for futile self-defence against guns and knives. But the smell of rotting flesh is the most overpowering evidence. As it enveloped the congregation, some rubbed their noses, others moved outside. The service made no mention of the massacre at the church and a

nearby stadium, in which almost all the town's 10,000 Tutsis were slaughtered. There was no remembrance of the victims, no plea for forgiveness. *There was only denial and lies.* One woman said it was a lie that anyone had been murdered there. Another worshipper admitted there had been a slaughter, but claimed that rebels had been holed up in the church, protected by the priest. A group of boys pointed to the grave and laughed. One started to talk, but his friends hushed him. Kibuye's silence is its admission of guilt. <...> The woman who said it was all a lie refused to look at a foot protruding from the earth, the skull on the bank or the dried blood on the church walls. She denied there was an unusual smell. Everything is normal. Nothing happened here. Where are her Tutsi neighbours? They went away, she said. All at once? She marched on, into the church to celebrate a religion that condemns murder and lies» (italics supplied) [McGreal, 1994].

By putting forward the idea of a national mission — to purge the country of the «evil» embodied in the Tutsis as category — these people could justify everything, even the murder of children: a practice that was tacitly sanctioned and indeed promoted at the highest levels of administrative decision-making. When on May 3, 1994 Jean Kambanda, head of the so-called Interim government of Rwanda, during his visit to Kibuye Town was personally asked by a doctor to protect the Tutsi children who had survived the massacre by being sheltered at a local hospital, the Prime Minister did not respond, and on the same day these children were killed [The prosecutor versus Jean Kambanda, 1998, p. 12]. It is terrifying that the victimization of Tutsi soaked even in the minds of infants. «My 3-year-old son begged them not to kill him, begging their pardon for being Tutsi and saying that he would no longer be Tutsi», — recalled Lydia Nirara, survivor of the Mugenero Adventist church massacre on April 16, in which she lost eight of her eleven children [Maykuth, 2003, p. 1].

To justify the extermination of Tutsi women and children some high-ranking civilian and military officials who were involved in organizing genocide tried to convince the international community that the victims fought on the side of the RPF. «The RPF hid people, including children, girls and women, in houses and gave them weapons, — said Kajuga. — Then they wanted to attack the roadblocks. We defended ourselves. That's why there were bodies at the roadblocks. Even 11-year-old children came with grenades» [Hutu warlord defends child killings, 1994, p. 15]. However, the ordinary participants went much further: the Tutsis were culpable simply because of their birth, simply because they were Tutsis. Hutu genocidaires saw a future RPF soldier in every Tutsi newborn or even fetus. The Interahamwe who attacked Christian churches,

hospitals and schools and conducted daily roundups of Tutsis often sang a song which stated that Paul Kagame or Fred Rwigema, the RPF commanders who led the guerilla force, had once been babies too. The communal policeman in Nyagurati gave such an explanation of the systematic massacres that Hutu peasants carried out against Tutsi children: «C'est normal: les enfants des complices sont des complices. On les a donc tués» [Saint-Exupery, 2009, p. 85].

The reason for this was simple — ethnic and racial hatred, deeply infected the minds of many Hutus. «Of course we [Hutus] hated them [Tutsis], — said one of the participants in the Nyarubuye massacre. — The plan to kill them was ready. It had been finished. The hatred was deeply imbedded so anyone who saw a Tutsi killed them. That is why we left our homes and went from one area to another» [BBC Panorama, 2004].

According to Innocent Rwililiza who survived the 1994 genocide in the malaria-infested swamps of Bugesera, if the RPF had not won a military victory, the slaughter inevitably would extend to some Hutu groups. «And all the Bugesera would be a desert, because the Hutus had grown so accustomed to killing they would have gone on and started killing each other too» [Hatzfeld, 2000, p. 76]. Mark Fritz of the *Associated Press* aptly defined what was happening in Rwanda as «psychosis» [Fritz, 1994]. «Can a nation in the throes of psychotic slaughter, — asked he, — ever learn to live in something resembling harmony? There are actually cool heads in this vortex of violence, Hutu and Tutsi alike, who are working on it. But like ants trying to build a home in a hurricane, their efforts are overwhelmed by swings of machetes toward bowed heads» [Fritz, 1994].

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В статье рассматривается проблема социокультурных причин массового насилия в современных африканских обществах на примере геноцида 1994 г. в Руанде. Автор пытается выявить основные черты сознания участников геноцида, их логику и способы оправдания своего участия. Пример Руанды показывает, как отсутствие правового сознания и своеобразная «культура насилия», имевшая глубокие исторические корни, порождают глубокую этническую ненависть между двумя основными руандийскими группами населения — тутси и хуту, и как инструментализация насилия политическими лидерами и пропаганда страха и враждебности вызывает цепную реакцию, которую становится невозможно остановить и которая приводит к тотальному нарушению принятых стандартов соблюдения прав человека и к самому интенсивному геноциду в истории человечества.

Ключевые слова: насилие, геноцид, Руанда, хуту, тутси

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