

TOO FEW VOICES; TOO MANY DISTRACTIONS; TOO LITTLE UNDERSTANDING:
THE AMERICAN MEDIA DURING THE RWANDAN GENOCIDE OF 1994

by

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ABSTRACT

Too Few Voices; Too Many Distractions; Too Little Understanding: the American Media During the Rwandan Genocide of 1994

Upwards of one million people died during the Genocide, Civil War, and Refugee Crisis in Rwanda and surrounding nations, during one of the fastest Genocides to occur in modern history. Even though the United Nations and its member states had a legal mandate to intervene in cases of Genocide due to the 1948 UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide, the world chose not to. While there were a myriad of reasons for this the media played a part in this situation.

Using the coverage of US print magazine articles, this thesis argues that the media missed the point and the signs of what was happening on the ground due to a fundamental lack of understanding of Rwanda, the African Great Lakes region, and Africa itself. Borrowing concepts of the creation of the “other,” lack of understanding of Africa, imperial language, and first world views of the third world from Edward Said and Curtis A. Keim this master’s thesis shows that there were intellectual disconnects happening within the American press that made intervention nearly impossible. Once the Genocide was nearly complete and a more prosaic refugee crisis started America jumped at the chance to aid the refugees, a large number of them perpetrators of the Genocide, and the media showed reinvigorated interest in Rwanda.

What misconceptions about Rwanda caused the media to miss the point? Did the print media help perpetuate those misconceptions, knowingly or unknowingly? With a death toll from the Genocide alone of roughly 8,000 people per day and the vast majority of them dying within

the first several weeks of the Genocide, many lives may have been saved if Rwanda was made a priority by the media. Instead, while the media reported stories about chthonic hatred, the world was more concerned about a much slower Genocide in Eastern Europe. While attention was focused on other global and national stories, a racist regime intent on exterminating the Tutsi was allowed to stay in power in Rwanda.

For Linda, CEDP, BB, Jolan, and Eddie

For the victims of Genocide throughout the world. While I know that it not enough, it is what I
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INTRODUCTION

The Rwandan Genocide has been the subject of considerable scholarly and popular attention. International relations and United Nations involvement have been addressed. Studies on the role of nongovernmental organizations and churches have also been released. Firsthand accounts from military personnel, survivors, NGO workers, and journalists have been published. Works on international and internal court systems, the role of Rwanda in the region, and the repercussions of the Genocide have also been written. Attention has been paid to media in all forms, be it newspapers, magazines, radio, and broadcast and cable television; Rwandan, American, French, or otherwise. This thesis fills a gap in the literature by focusing on American written media coverage of and the interplay between language and the “othering” of Rwandans.

It should be noted that one of the main thrusts of this work is to show how the language used within the US print media served to lessen, exoticize, and limit understanding of the Genocide. Whether this was intentional or not, the power of language can be seen in the general inaction and hand wringing of Western governments and international organizations. As language is, in its own way, power, language can be used for many purposes. One of the uses of language in this work is to always capitalize Genocide whether the topic is the Rwandan Genocide, any other historical Genocides, or even Genocide as a concept. Something as horrific as the purposeful attempted slaughter of an entire population group for political, military, or cultural reasons should have a name; which it already does. It should have laws banning it. It has that as well, however infrequently those laws are invoked. It should also be a proper noun. All acts of Genocide are by their very nature abominable. Genocide in World War I Turkey is as odious as Genocide in World War II Germany, Stalin’s Soviet Union, the Khmer Rouge’s

Cambodia, World War II Nanking, 1994 Rwanda, or Darfur and Congo in recent years. All of these tragedies should have proper names and this work acts as if they already do.

This thesis will show that the Rwandan Genocide was, while it was occurring, never fully understood by the American media. Rwanda was almost entirely unknown to Americans at the time and even years after the highly successful and critically acclaimed Hollywood blockbuster *Hotel Rwanda* was released it is safe to assume most Americans could not find it on a map. It is a small nation, a poor nation, and a nation that is known for little save the Genocide that thrust in onto the international stage, or perhaps as a nation famous as a habitat of gorillas.¹ America, and Western culture in general, has long envisioned less known parts of the world as exotic, different, unknowable, and less civilized. This coupled with Rwanda's distance geographically, culturally, and historically vis-a-vis America made Rwanda a virtual unknown to most Americans. It did not even have the tenuous cultural connections that Western African nations have with the United States through the slave trade, as Rwanda has always been more tied to East Africa as opposed to West Africa.

Despite international laws banning Genocide, America, along with most of the rest of the world, did nothing to stop the slaughter. With a media that was not knowledgeable about Rwanda it fell back on clichés, poor understanding, and whatever information they could cobble together in a short period of time. Even when the media tried to consult experts that were knowledgeable about Rwanda and the African Great Lakes region they could, and still did, fall back on hackneyed clichés of an exotic and unknowable Africa. Rwanda, the Genocide, the Rwandan Civil War, and the refugee crisis were all covered by the media, but there was a sense of fatalism instead of one of urgency.

¹ Dian Fossey, *Gorillas in the Mist*, (New York: Mariner Books, 2000) and the Hollywood film of the same name.

The main thrust of this work is that in an era of distractions, globally and nationally, the American media, in this case the magazine industry, showed lack of understanding of Rwanda on a fundamental level. This created false impressions that may have affected policy choices during that time about Rwanda, and in a more general sense helped to reinforce issues of the lack of importance of Africa geo-politically. Rwanda was seen as just another sub-Saharan African problem nation where the “natives” could not control themselves. The issues in Rwanda went far beyond ethnicity; they went far beyond political power. They were imported problems from the age of the Scramble for Africa, scientific racism, and the need to set up socio-ethnic divisions.² While these issues were addressed in some of the articles those doing the reporting are still coming from a world in which these outdated ideas have some kind of validity. People in Africa fight because they are less civilized than Westerners. Rwandans fight due to ancient rivalries. Genocide is a natural occurrence in an uncivilized and ultimately backwards nation.

In many ways this was a case of ignorance, willful or otherwise, by most of the players involved in this process. Those that should have been in the know, such as reporters, editors, and government officials (elected or appointed), did not properly appreciate the situation on the ground. The evolving situation was covered in such a way by the American magazine industry as a vicious conflict between warring tribes that have hated each other since before the coming of Europeans. This situation would seem familiar to anyone with even cursory knowledge of Africa due to the way European colonial masters put together the current borders of African countries, often placing multiple ethno-linguistic groups into the same country to be able to play the various groups off of each other. In this aspect, Rwanda followed a different narrative than is

² Arthur Jay Klinghoffer, *The International Dimensions of Genocide in Rwanda*, (New York: New York University Press: 1998), 6-7.

“traditionally” seen in Africa. This narrative of dual slaughter, equating Genocide with less frequent and less deadly atrocities committed by the rebel force opposing the genocidal regime, provided a level of moral relativism.

As these two streams of thought and action dovetailed together a Refugee Crisis emerged. This situation commanded more and more media attention, pulling attention away from the Genocide and perhaps pushing the West towards action regarding the Refugee Crisis where almost no action was taken to stop the Genocide. By the time the gravity of the situation was understood the Genocide was ended, not by the international community but instead by the rebel RPF. The United Nations and its constituent members were able to avoid their legal responsibility to stop Genocide and became more concerned with feeding and clothing a refugee population that had many perpetrators of Genocide within it than it was with stopping their crimes or seeking to punish those perpetrators.

While neither the notion of a dual Genocide or of separate tribes with completely disparate identities were true, these ideas influenced the reporting, and that reporting helped rationalize the foreign policy choices. Rwanda has not been at any point since before European contact a nation of divided tribes. There were ethnic differences, but those differences were not ones of language or even culture. Different ethnic groups had long filled different roles within the society. Combine that with a racially, or ethnically, charged governmental agenda and the difficulties of coming to terms with modernity and there was a powder keg but it was one of ethnic strife, not one of primordial hatred.³ In a situation where chthonic hatreds were at their core Genocide could not be stopped, but the later refugee crisis was something that Western guilt

³ Gerard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 5-23.

could sink its teeth into by reviving the oft referenced, hackneyed, and ultimately false “white man’s burden.”⁴

Reporters did not understand the situation when the Rwandan Civil War restarted after a lengthy lull and the Genocide started in earnest at the same time. This lack of understanding is rooted in the same timeframe as the issues that divided the Rwandan population. Scientific racism not only had to make the Tutsi superior because Europeans found a quasi-feudal civilization upon their arrival in Rwanda, but Europeans also had to justify their placing themselves above all Rwandans.⁵ This colonial legacy shows through in the reporting. As Rwanda was a colony somehow Rwandans were inferior and, thus, “othered.” Going as far back as the early years of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, Europeans started making intimations about racial superiority as they could not do otherwise. They had to justify their stranglehold on the power within the European African relationship.⁶ While there were certainly Africans that were more powerful than those that became slaves, they were eventually subjugated as well.

This context becomes even more convoluted, when after centuries of redirecting other African slave trading routes towards Europe and her colonies, Europeans suddenly decided that the evil that was the slave trade had to stop. By going from the African as slave motif fully into the African as savage that must be Christianized, saved from himself, and hopefully Westernized, modernized, and remade into the only image that matters, an European one, the image of Africans in the Western mind goes from that of someone that is a child that deserves to

⁴ J.D. Fage, *A History of Africa*, Fourth Edition, (New York: Routledge 2001).

⁵ Gerard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 5-23.

⁶ Curtis Keim, *Mistaking Africa: Curiosities and Inventions of the American Mind*, (Boulder, CO and Oxford: Westview Press, 1999), 30-1.

be a slave to that of a child that must become more European for the good of himself and the world. And, of course, this task fell to the European himself.⁷

This, combined with a nation whose main importance before the Genocide was that of a unique case study of how some foreign group obviously brought advanced ideas into Rwanda, and there are many important links in the chain of removing agency and humanity from Rwandans. First they are Africans, already savages and inferior to Western minds. Then add that even among African nations Rwanda was low on the power, economic, and social importance scales.⁸ Then you add in the notion that the Tutsi, who were once perceived as obviously superior are now not only not in power but many of them are exiled and suddenly there is the perfect storm of “othering,” paternalism, and reasons to ignore a political and economic backwater.

From this setting emerged a media that seemed barely concerned with Rwanda, let alone with getting the story right, an international community with “more pressing issues,” and a situation that could easily be ignored as the whole situation could be portrayed as savage things that happen in savage lands that are inhabited by savages. Once the media started going in this direction it was easy for the American people to ignore Rwanda until they were forced to look again once the bodies of those executed in the Genocide were not the only bodies lying on ground in the Great Lakes region of Africa.

Why the Genocide Occurred

The reasons for the Rwandan Genocide are many. They were ingrained in history, as many in the West would argue, but much of that “history” was a lie imposed on a nation that was

⁷ Ibid, 31-8.

⁸ Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 25.

already racially, socially, and linguistically integrated well before the coming of Europeans. Rwanda did not need a lingua franca, it already had Kinyarwanda.⁹ It did not need a common culture, as it already had one. While there were divisions of class, or perhaps caste, these distinctions meant little. Europeans had to divide them to use the divide and conquer method that worked so well in other colonial areas.¹⁰ With the international community forcing the Arusha Accords on a largely xenophobic Hutu government President Habyarimana was in many ways backed into a corner. If one believes the theory that his supporters were the ones that assassinated him, or arranged it, then they likely did so to stop Arusha from being implemented.¹¹

The economic component to the Genocide is one of falling global coffee prices and a regime that relied on international support just to keep Rwanda going. Without international aid, regime collapse was imminent but the aid being tied to a change in government was tantamount to the same thing. Habyarimana and his backers had already done too much to be able to expect massive popular support in free elections.¹²

These issues, when combined with the threat of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and the many years of cultural conditioning accomplished by the colonial masters set up a divide between ethnic groups that essentially allowed for, if not encouraged, virulent racism. This racism was able to be turned by popular culture outlets such as *Radio et Television Libre des Milles Collines* (RTL) and local leaders into a fever pitch. Illegally obtained weapons and the

⁹ Odette Nyiramongi, *Kinyarwanda - The Language of Rwanda: Language Guide for Travelers*, (Charleston, SC: BookSurge Publishing, 2009).

¹⁰ Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 5-23.

¹¹ Klinghoffer, *The International Dimensions of the Rwandan Genocide*, 42.

¹² *Ibid*, 24, 29.

training of militias finished the readying of the masses. All that was left was giving the go order.¹³

Theoretical Background

Language is important. It matters. It controls how we view the world and what is and is not possible within it. Within this framework how we look at others becomes tantamount to how we interact with them. If someone is viewed as less advanced due to their faith, religion, creed, ethnicity, gender, or place of origin then on some level they are worth less as a person to the person that has a, or many, more advanced traits.

At its core, *Orientalism*, by Edward Said, is a tome about Western cultural chauvinism and condescension. This work, often cited for various reasons about Western imperialism and the cultural, academic, and governmental/bureaucratic mindsets that allowed it to work, and allows it to continue to work, within to dominate other cultures. Said is most specifically dealing with the Middle East from the western reaches of North Africa to the border of India. He also deals with India and China as well as other parts of the Far East. Said discusses methods with which the Oriental world was and is described as exotic, backwards, craven, uncivilized in comparison to the West, and prone to despotism. The Orient is also gendered female and is described as such, in a very traditional and misogynist sense, as being receptive, weak, and prone to emotional outbursts and a lack of control of said emotions.

All of this fits in the ways in which the West looked and looks at what is euphemistically referred to as the “developing world,” those parts of the world that suffered under European colonialism and/or hegemony (itself a Western term dating back to the beginnings of Orientalist thought at a time when the West had little hope of avoiding dominance by the Orient, the Greek

¹³ There is a timeline of Rwanda and the Rwandan Genocide in the appendix.

City State period of Classical Greek history), and are just now coming out of that period of mismanagement of resources and lack of agency, among myriad other problems. These developing nations are now having to contend with the effects of earlier European efforts to draw borders that forced consolidation and splitting up of different ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural groups at the whim of map makers and politicians that often never saw the places or met the people they were drawing lines across.

That these parts of the world have turned from being occupied physically and exploited financially while being misunderstood, exoticized, and marginalized to now being left alone physically (often to the point of abandonment even when begging for help), while still being financially exploited, misunderstood and exoticized is less than surprising. Colonialism moves to post-colonialism moves to neo-colonialism and cultural imperialism. The strong seek to dominate the weak and have little understanding of why the weak are weak and why the strong bear some responsibility for that. Orientalism and its cousins, exoticism and the various forms of colonialism, have never gone away. They have merely shifted their focus and practices over the years.¹⁴

Said makes an even stronger point about this in another one of his works, *Culture and Imperialism*. He discusses a dialectic in which the experiences of someone, say an African, that is very different from the viewer, a Westerner, the notion that only another African can understand things about those experiences. While on some level this notion could be understood as being “open minded” in the common parlance it also turns the person that can only understand being “an Africa,” “a woman,” “a Tutsi,” or “a Christian” into the “other.” What is often forgotten in this type of situation is that a lot of what has divided peoples is imperialism. As the

¹⁴ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1994).

West rose to power it began to see those of lesser technological and economic status as inferior. The very acts of conquest and expansion created a cultural gap, and a certain cultural chauvinism that did not go away once colonialism in the traditional sense did. Europe gained much from the Industrial Revolution and the Enlightenment. These two movements allowed made European dominance of the rest of the world easier.

As Europeans expanded into Africa and Asia they were confronted with people lacking their technological advantages, people that in many cases they subjugated. This started turning Africans and others that fell under the yoke of European colonialism into savages in the minds of many Europeans. These new colonial subjects were not only seen as savages but as roadblocks to progress. And, of course, the more that Europe conquered the more this sense of European entitlement over others grew. European disdain for those they conquered also grew. All of these factors reinforced each other to make it so that not only were Europeans “othering” the rest of the world, but they were also setting themselves apart and on a higher level culturally and intellectually. Once this happened, European ideas of native backwardness become a part of the common discourse and that common discourse did not go away with decolonization.

Returning to the idea that only people that have experienced something can understand it, this is also giving power to notions of culture that are inherently, and to extreme extents, factors of history. By making the experiences of the viewed that is not like the viewer, the traveler, the person making a judgment is “othering” the person being viewed.¹⁵

In setting up this dialectic, in which “the African experience” cannot be known, a certain amount of mysticism is being added to the equation. If something is unknowable it is also ephemeral, and therefore mystical. This is akin to kowtowing to the vagaries of history, culture,

¹⁵ Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 31-2.

development, and other factors far beyond the control of either the Westerner viewing the African or the African himself artificial walls are being constructed.¹⁶ When this construction is one in which Africa was first a source of gold, then slaves, then raw materials to be consumed and land and peoples to be conquered and “civilized” this can become much more sinister. The African is not only the other, and not only unknowable, but he is also inferior as the early modern, modern, and post modern experiences of the West with Africa involve vastly uneven power and development levels. This strengthens the mysticism of “othering” Africans while also allowing, and even encouraging, paternalistic notions.

Mistaking Africa takes a more direct approach, and unlike *Orientalism* is a work about Africa, particularly below the Sahara. The main thrust of Curtis Keim’s work is that America does not understand Africa and instead of seeking to understand it, it uses imagery of lions and other wild beast living next to humans, a continent where everyone is more concerned with their tribal allegiances than their country, modernity, politics, and economics. A land in which exoticism and living ancestors of modern man walk, talk, work, play, live, and die in completely foreign, wild, and uncivilized ways.¹⁷

Both Said and Keim discuss concepts of covert and overt racism in different ways. The notion that not all racism is intentional is an easy enough idea to understand. At its root covert, unintentional racism is shaped as much by a lack of understanding as it is by hate. Misinformation, the lack of information - in whole or in part- and old stereotypes can contribute to views on people, places, and situations that are unknown to someone. If a war is presented as in some way part of an ancient hatred that goes back centuries, or even before the written history

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Keim, *Mistaking Africa*.

of an area it can have a lasting effect. If people are portrayed as tribal in American culture they are being shown to be pre-modern in some way. Their concerns are not those of normal, modern people from the first world. People from tribal societies are concerned with lineage, blood, distant familial relations more than they are concerned with politics, work, or the welfare of their nation.

Cultural chauvinism is a powerful force. The notion within a society that its customs, lifestyle, standard of living, common/shared morality, et al, are superior to another is something that happens to a greater or lesser extent within all societies throughout recorded history and beyond. The foreigner, the other, the immigrant, ideas and customs that are different can all be frightening on some visceral level. The way we describe the foreign and the different is through language. Language is, by its very nature, imperfect. Dictionary definitions of words are not the only ones used in the common parlance. Words are often fraught with meanings beyond those static definitions. Words like tribalism, and phrases like “ancient hatred” convey a feeling of inability for the modern world to affect change as these things are chthonic, unknowable, lacking in reason, and carrying on almost a life of their own.

On Civilizing Missions and the Word Tribal

The repeated use of the word tribal within Africa is a long established pattern of western writing, be it governmental, academic, personal, or otherwise. There are multiple levels meaning involved in the use of this word, both implied and open. While the use of this word is not always as problematic as it will be shown to be in the Rwanda case, and at times it is accurate, but it still has powerful undertones that make its use questionable coming from Westerners. Coming from native groups, in this case Africa, it carries its own connotations and biases. The word tribal,

coming from a westerner becomes one of power relations. Europeans are divided into ethnicities and nationalities. In other parts of the world peoples are divided into tribes. Among those groups that are often divided as such in the western mind Africa and the natives of the Americas are prominent. The Cherokee are often referred to as a tribe, as are the Seminole, Navajo, and the dozens of other groups. When someone says they are Native American, or even have some Native heritage, they are often asked, “what tribe?” Groups that had territories, their own language, and culture, and dealt with their neighbors as independent groups could be considered a nationality. By labeling them a tribe instead the Western mind seeks a place above them on the hierarchy of societies, a hierarchy that is often perceived in a linear fashion.

Another facet of the use of the word tribal is that of showing a civilizing mission. Whether in Africa, the Americas, or other places around the world the drive to civilize, Westernize, Christianize, and in other ways remake the world in the image of Europe and the United States have long been a force within the unequal dealings between the West and the developing world. In many ways pointing out the tribal nature of Africans, in particular, was an excuse to bring order to chaos. Due to the artificial creation of African states during the scramble for Africa, languages were imposed from above by the colonial masters. European languages became the common language for most African states. Rwanda and Burundi were exceptions to this rule, and while they had to be “civilized,” they already had what amounted to national languages.¹⁸ It was an excuse for conquest and exploitation of resources and native labor. The cases of Rwanda and Burundi were very dissimilar from the “normal African narrative.”¹⁹ Both areas had established kingdoms and a common linguistic-cultural

¹⁸ J.D. Fage, *A History of Africa*, Fourth Edition, (London: Routledge, 2002), 413-5

¹⁹ Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 1, 5-23.

organization in place. While there were outliers within both areas, and beyond the borders that were eventually drawn, the vast majority of these territories were ruled by established kingdoms, with normalized and functional clientship relations that governed by a complicated but understood set of rules and laws. This is to say that what became the modern states Rwanda and Burundi were at worst feudal societies with overarching culture, or, perhaps more realistically, nascent nation states before the arrival of Europeans in the area.²⁰

Returning to the tribal narrative, not only is using tribe in regards to Hutu, Tutsi, or Twa misleading at best, it does not account for the more “normal African narrative.” Even if one concedes the notion that the groups in Nigeria are tribes²¹ now that they are under a common government the more accurate term would be ethnic groups. Debating that semantic point notwithstanding the very tribal, or more accurately diverse, nature of places like Nigeria allowed for an excuse for conquest, as well as allowing for a certain ease of conquest and an ease of pitting subject groups against each other. The Nigeria case is informative in that it was a more traditional form of European conquest of Africa. Disparate groups with separate languages, cultures, and religious beliefs thrown together by a colonial master that could play them off of each other. A single subject population with long established ties of kinship, language, and culture would be much more difficult to rule over. Divided ethnicities allowed for Europeans to use the word tribal in prerogative connotations while turning one native population upon another.

²⁰ Ibid, 5-23.

²¹ This study does not seek to make this concession. Nigeria is not really a nation state in the European sense. While there are multiethnic states throughout the history of Europe Nigeria would not easily fit within the model of a nation state, which is a state that is controlled by an overarching ethnic-linguistic identity. The formation of such states took centuries and involved no small amount of conflict both internally and externally. A perfect example is France which went from a small portion of land centered around the Paris area to an area that encompassed its current borders absorbing along the way Languedoc (which had a related language to the French of the Kingdom of France which became modern French), and areas that had historic and cultural ties to both Scandinavia and England in the Normandy region, as well as absorbing other areas. This absorption of territories and peoples and imposition of a common language and culture neither happened overnight nor was it without difficulty.

When these groups fought against the British colonial masters in Nigeria they were defying superior European culture and faith. When they fought against each other they were savage tribes that needed to be civilized. When those groups that worked for or with the British fought against other native groups the narrative of some groups being more civilized than others could, and did, emerge. Tribalism was used as an excuse for all. The ills of tribalism had to be combated at any cost. Western culture, government, and faith needed to be imposed as much as possible to allow Africans a chance to emerge from their chthonic ways. Atrocities committed against Africans by colonial masters were more understandable due to the “illogical” nature of tribal societies and the need to civilize and modernize.²²

The use of this term allows for many things. From colonization and domination to exploitation and ignoring the plight of those that are described as tribal the implication is a less advanced society. Tribalism implies a way of living from before mass literacy, organized states, settlements, and society itself. If one is from a tribe their life can be seen to be worth less than the life of someone from the civilized world. If one is living an archaic way of life they are more likely to be at risk of various forms of early demise. All of these images can be brought forth from the word tribal, those and many more. As such it is not only a term of Western domination but it can also be a term of implied racism, cultural chauvinism, and “othering.” The use by any Westerner of the term tribal may not be as obviously vile as overt racist epithets but it has a similar implication. Not only is the modern or post modern world supposed to be beyond such concerns but it also shows an amount of backwardness in those termed tribal.

The amount of media attention garnered by other stories, whether the celebrity driven OJ Simpson case and Cobain suicide, the post Cold War fallout in the former Yugoslavia, free

²² J.D. Fage, *A History of Africa*, 413-5.

elections in South Africa, or the disaster in Haiti the media trajectory of the Rwandan Genocide follows that of other types of disasters covered by the American press. Thomas Einsensee and David Stromberg's study of media coverage of natural disasters provides a clear jumping off point for looking at how media coverage helps to shape international humanitarian relief. It also shows that "it requires 40 times as many killed in an African disaster to achieve the same expected media coverage as for a disaster in Eastern Europe of similar type and magnitude."²³ This study reflects death tolls involving natural disasters and how location of the natural disasters affected coverage. Considering the lower death toll numbers for Genocide in Bosnia and the longer duration, approximately 100,000 dead over a multiyear campaign of extermination in Bosnia, between 1992 and 1998²⁴, or 150,000 if the 1991-1995 Genocide in Croatia are combined with the numbers from Bosnia, versus 800,000 dead in Rwanda in approximately one hundred days, these ideas seem to be similar whether looking at natural disasters or Genocide. Africa, especially those parts of Africa bereft of noted strategic or economic importance to the United States, is simply not as important as Eastern Europe. Bosnia received a similar amount of coverage to Rwanda during the period that this study covers even though the death toll was much smaller and the pace of both the Yugoslavian Civil War and the Genocide in Bosnia were glacial in comparison. There were even several similarities in the usage of the word "tribal" between media coverage of Rwanda and Bosnia.²⁵

Returning to the aforementioned study, it postulates that in the context of disasters in diverse geographical areas that even when all the disasters are covered by the media there will be

²³ Thomas Einsensee and David Stromberg, "News Floods, News Droughts, American Disaster Relief," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Volume 122, Issue 2 (Oxford, Oxford University Press: 2007), 3. Viewed at <http://people.su.se/~dstro/wpdisasters.pdf>. Last accessed 8/29/2013

²⁴ <http://genocidewatch.org/genocide/genocidespoliticides.html> last accessed on 8/15/2013.

²⁵ *Time*, *Newsweek*, *US News and World Report*, *The New Yorker* and various other publications, April through August, 1994.

a lower level of general concern for the African disaster. This is equated with a level of “bias” in the terms of the authors, or more specifically that the media’s lower level of coverage and concern brings on and helps to perpetuate lower level of relief funds for African victims of disaster. This also makes it less likely that policy makers within governmental and private/NGO circles would be forced into action or for that matter would be able to achieve something were they so inclined.²⁶ Einsensee and Stromburg go on to show that European and Latin American disasters are covered three times as often as African and Pacific disasters. They further state that Africa’s type of disasters (droughts, famines, and the like), are less likely to be covered due to frequency.²⁷ Taking this idea forward, Africa has been incredibly prone to civil war involving ethnic conflict in the later part of the twentieth century. Conflicts in Somalia, Rwanda, Ethiopia-Eretria, Nigeria, Liberia, et al, have made it seem, especially to outside observers, as if Africa is the flashpoint for the oft discussed “failed state” phenomenon.

Methods and Scope

This study is as much about language, power relations, the media, cultural chauvinism, and misunderstanding of the other as it is about the Rwandan Genocide, if not more so. While looking at the number of stories about the Rwandan Genocide, Civil War and the refugee crisis in comparison to things like the collapsing former Yugoslavia, the Haiti humanitarian crisis, and the O.J. Simpson trial this thesis will also look at and dissect language looking for ways in which the media not only misrepresented the case on the ground but did so from a Western point of view coming from a sense of superiority, cultural chauvinism, exoticism, and racism. Any of

²⁶ Einsensee and Stromberg, “News Floods, News Droughts, American Disaster Relief,” 14.

²⁷ Ibid, 29-30

these things can be intentional or not, including racism, and this is not an effort at castigation for its own sake but an effort to find reasons for American inertia.

The historiographical section of this work seeks to show as many facets of the scholarly and non-scholarly debate as possible. It also pays particular attention to any mentions of the American media. This study strives to show a wide cross current of ideas about what happened in 1994 and should succeed in this goal.

The magazines covered in this thesis are predominantly mainstream publications like *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *US News and World Report*. While scholars, media critics, and others have addressed these types of sources before the systematic method of at least mentioning each bit of coverage and meticulously analyzing most of it on paper should provide a new and needed perspective on how media involvement, or lack thereof, played a part in US inaction. Other magazines of a more specialized nature are also addressed but this effort cannot be described as covering all printed news media from the time, or for that matter all news magazines.

Efforts are made to show that the media being off the mark and using “othering” language were not only not gaining the proper information but were allowing the international community off of the hook for their inaction and providing cover, however unknowingly, for that inactivity.

Placement within the Historiography

The Rwanda Crisis addresses the topic of the media when dealing with the Genocide as an issue largely dealing with an eventual flood of print coverage but not enough television coverage to make the events seem real to the outside world. He argues that without video of the killings taking place the Western world could not believe the level of depravity and human

suffering that was occurring.²⁸ While his primary concern is not the media Prunier shows that media involvement was not sufficient to force major international action during the Genocide. That action occurred much later and likely saved more perpetrators of Genocide than anyone is comfortable with.

Prunier also looks at how America handled the situation and discusses how the Clinton Administration purposefully avoided using the word Genocide in an effort to not be forced into action due to the UN Convention on Genocide. He also states the policies of America and other powers to limit the scope of the UN peacekeeping mission that was already on the ground had the effect of further emboldening those actively slaughtering Tutsi and moderate Hutu during the Genocide.²⁹ He goes much further in his later work on the Congo Wars stating that America's lack of attention span and desire to fix a problem and move on with no commitment while having tunnel vision on other problems is at the core of American inaction during the Rwandan Genocide and both Congo Wars.³⁰

Klinghoffer looks at American media coverage of the Genocide and shows an inherent contradiction in *New York Times* pieces in which that paper admits that what was happening in Rwanda was Genocide but also stating that America had no reason to intervene at all.³¹ He also takes time to address such topics relating to the Clinton Administration such as avoiding saying the world Genocide, and that former President Carter felt that at least some of the inaction was due to US racism.³²

²⁸ Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 274.

²⁹ Ibid, 274-5.

³⁰ Gerard Prunier, *Africa's World War: Congo, the Rwandan Genocide, and the Making of a Continental Catastrophe*, (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), xxxv-xxxvi.

³¹ Klinghoffer, *The International Dimensions of the Rwandan Genocide*, 98-100.

³² Ibid, 158-9.

Mel McNulty's article on war reporting during the Rwandan Genocide shows great similarities to the ideas brought forth by Keim in *Mistaking Africa*. He talks about reporting that was "characterized by misinterpretation resulting from oversimplification and the related, racist tendency to label all conflict in Africa as 'tribalism,' by means of which a unique set of political circumstances is ethnicized and thus explained away."³³ McNulty goes further in stating that the media had it wrong in Rwanda before the Genocide and continued to have it wrong during and after the deaths of 800,000 people. Among the things they got wrong was buying into the notion of an ethnic conflict without a political component, believing and pushing the tribalism myth, failure to report the findings of NGOs and the head of UNAMIR that something was amiss and that weapons were being stockpiled, complicity in France's own complicity with the Habyarimana regime and the interim government by not talking about French ties to those administrations, and forcing international aid during the refugee crisis but not doing so during the Genocide itself.³⁴

Another important article, by Melissa Wall, looking at the Genocide and how American media covered it finds that the top five themes of coverage included "irrational tribalism," Rwandans as "barbaric" or "helpless and pathetic," the violence is so beyond understanding that it must be compared to mythological/supernatural/biblical events, "natural disasters or diseases," the countries surrounding Rwanda are just as violent so they cannot help, and the lone possible hope is "the West."³⁵ While Melissa Wall has hit the mark on several of these topics she has

³³ Mel McNulty, "Media Ethnicization and the International Response to War and Genocide in Rwanda," in eds. Tim Allen & Jean Seaton, *Media of Conflict: War Reporting and Representations of Ethnic Violence*, (New York: Zed Books, 1999), 275.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 282-4.

³⁵ Melissa Wall, "An Analysis of New Magazine Coverage of the Rwanda Crisis in the United States," in ed. Allan Thompson *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide*, (London: Pluto Press, 2007), 265.

seemingly missed it as well. This study has looked at those same magazines and many others and while there may be some calls for Western intervention they are virtually buried under the weight of “irrational tribal violence” and a lack of understanding of the situation on the ground. Many of the calls for Western intervention that were made in print magazines come off as yet another facet of paternalism mixed with depicting Africans as incapable of fixing their own problems. It is also telling that those that stopped the Genocide were the same “pathetic and helpless” Tutsi who came out of one of those neighboring countries.

This thesis fits within the parameters of the aforementioned works. What is different in this work is the systematic efforts taken combined with attention to, and influence from, the theoretical works of Said and Keim. By looking at media reports as othering, this thesis strives to bring not only more attention to this topic but a more theoretically grounded framework.

The simple, indeed core, answers to these questions is that the coverage was racially charged because America has never understood Africa and their perceptions of Africa are clouded by the historical legacies of things like slavery, the African Diaspora, and the European scramble for, and carving up of, Africa. How the coverage was racist was in that Rwandans were portrayed in a very similar way to the excuses that the West has used to justify everything from slavery to the colonization of Africa. Rwandans were portrayed, victim and killer, as people lacking agency or volition. Instead they were savages engaged in blood feuds that were primordial, pre-modern, lacking of any logical reason, and driven by hatred that was not only of the blood but in the blood itself, a veritable DNA strand of hatred in both Hutu and Tutsi.

As to whether or not this allowed the US government to get away with their chosen policy of ignoring and forestalling intervention; there are many answers. The US was forced to intervene when the refugee crisis was front page news, saving killers and innocent victims alike.

The US government was able to ignore the few NGO voices calling out for intervention as well as those within their own ranks doing the same thing during the Genocide. While proving that if the media had been closer to correct with regards to the situation on the ground and less racist and paternalist with their coverage would be difficult; it is hard to argue with the fact that the US did snap to attention once there were people in need of water, food, and medicine instead of those needing to not be chopped to death by machetes.

Chapter Layout

Chapter one will lay out not only the historical background of the Rwandan Genocide; it also includes a brief primer on Genocide in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, as well as a look at some of the more major themes in the historiography. A more in depth historical background than what was provided in this introduction is needed as this historical event was incredibly complicated and multifaceted. The primer on other Genocides seeks to allow the reader to understand the Rwandan Genocide in a more full, if somewhat scant, historical context and provide an understanding of one of the scourges of the modern era. The larger historiography can also be looked at somewhat as a primer. The proliferation of books on the Rwandan Genocide has made understanding the greater movements within the historiography more difficult. Please note that while the works of some, such as the theoretical foundations of this work by Said and Keim as well as studies specifically relating to the American media, will not be further addressed within the larger historiographical section works of others mentioned in this introduction are.

Much attention has been paid in the historiography to various factors such as how the Genocide was planned and implemented, survivor accounts, international factors ranging from

the involvement of France, the United States, the United Nations, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), the role of the Church in the Genocide, and many other factors. While there have been studies of American involvement and media involvement at various levels (international, internal Rwandan media, and US media) there has not been enough attention paid to the interplay between American media and US policy during the Genocide. Additionally the role of racism in American foreign policy is also something that has been touched upon by various authors but not fully addressed.

This historiographical section will be broken down into many smaller parts. The discussion will open with theoretical texts that have helped inform and shape this project. From there, there will be a move towards those sources that provide general historical background of the Rwandan Genocide. Many of these works are among the most cited and most often discussed works on the Rwandan Genocide. There will then be attention paid to other sources that are of particular importance to this work, including works on American activities before, during and after the Genocide, the media coverage of the Genocide, and the other international players in the region during this time frame, including France, the UN, NGOs, et cetera.

Following these sections of the historiography will be a discussion of other works on Rwanda, primary and secondary sources, that do not fall within any of the main thrusts of this topic but need to be at least touched upon, and, if possible, contextualized for this work. These topics will include firsthand accounts not related to the international community (including accounts of survivors, eyewitnesses, and perpetrators of the Genocide), the Church, generalized works coming from a Rwandan or regional perspective, criminal/legal works on the prosecution of accused perpetrators, and other disparate topics. While none of these topics have direct impact upon this study of the Rwandan Genocide and the American government and media or

how it impacted the reaction of the rest of the international community all of these works deserve at least cursory mention. It can be easy to forget when working on a very specialized project such as this that there is a larger body of writing, scholarly or otherwise, that exists beyond narrow parameters. Ignoring this type of work under normal circumstances can leave gaps in knowledge. When looking at a topic as difficult to address as Genocide there are as many moral problems as there are academic ones on this path.

Chapter two looks at the media articles on the Rwandan Genocide. They are addressed as if they are primary sources. It starts with more traditional and popular publications such as *Time* before moving onto more specialized magazines designed for more selected audiences. The list of magazines addressed is in no way intended to be exhaustive, as a study of this type with more sources could easily double or triple in length quickly.

Chapter three will sum up the major issues of this work and reframe the arguments of the previous chapters.

Coverage of the Rwandan Genocide, and its connected tragedies, relied upon age old Western ideals of racial superiority and African backwardness. They made a refugee crisis more important than a Genocide. They allowed racism, however covert and unintentional, to deprive a nation of assistance while at the same time helping to prop up and give legitimacy to a government of thugs. This legitimacy has worsened the situation to such levels that two other wars have been fought due to the Rwandan Genocide and the Rwandan Civil War never being fully and satisfactorily resolved.³⁶

³⁶ Prunier, *Africa's World War*.

CHAPTER ONE: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE RWANDAN GENOCIDE

A Brief History of Genocide in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries

In the twentieth century, and into the twenty-first, Genocide has become something of an epidemic and a stain upon the fabric of the supposed civility of the modern world. In what was likely the first Genocide of the twentieth century Germans in German Southwestern Africa entered into a protracted conflict with, and counter rebellion against, the Herero people of the area. What eventually emerged from an initial rebellion and conflict was a program of forced migration and displacement across arid lands in which there was not enough water for all of the Herero to survive.³⁷

The next Genocide actually led to, or tied into, two other Genocides that are less often discussed. The Armenian Genocide came out of similar scientific racism type ideas that led to the Holocaust, the Hamatic hypothesis that was used to divide Africa and indirectly caused the Rwandan Genocide, and also colored and was colored by ideas of Social Darwinism. Prior to the Great War, Pan Turan societies were popping up in Hungary, Turkey, and other areas with large populations of people ethnically tied to Turkic and Finno-Ugrian (or Uralic) language groups. The basic idea was that there was an origin point of both of these language groups and that that place was a mystical and prehistoric land referred to as Turan. From Turan, for whatever reason, the groups that became everyone from the Ottoman Turks and their linguisto-ethnic cousins to Finns, natives of the Ural mountains, and Magyr Hungarians emerged and spread across Asia and Europe. After the fall of the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire the new power was

³⁷ David Maybury-Lewis, “*Genocide against Indigenous Peoples*,” in Alexander Laban Hinton, ed., *Annihilating Difference: The Anthropology of Genocide*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA 2002), pg 48

the Committee for Union and Progress (CUP), also referred to as the Young Turks.³⁸ The Young Turks took an interesting path to achieve secular political power, while its goals were ethno-political, it couched its efforts in religious unity. While pursuing a goal of uniting Turkey with the various Turkic nationalities in Central Asia and reclaiming Turan its words to other Muslim was of Pan Islam, not Pan Turan.

The Armenians became a target for various reasons. The majority of the Armenian population of the world was situated in the historic Armenian region straddling the border of the empires of Turkey and Imperial Russia within the Caucasus. Russia and Turkey were long enemies and were on different sides of the Great War. Turkish authorities believed that the Russians planed to make use of Armenians in the Turkish Armenian as agents of rebellion.³⁹ Additionally with the slow speed collapse of the formerly great Ottoman Empire there were many Islamic peoples fleeing the now freed, majority Christian, and hostile to Muslims of any ethnic extraction as agents of the former Ottoman colonial masters' nation states. These Muslim refugees had to be housed somewhere and a great many of them were housed in Historic Armenian regions, where the Armenians were often the majority local population. Muslim refugees seeing Armenian Christians in an Islamic empire not only as a majority ethnic group, but as an economically powerful one, created internal tensions.⁴⁰ These tensions were utilized by the Young Turks to single out the Armenians. There was also another fact of simple geography. A shrinking Turkey that was turning east for its future politically, militarily,

³⁸ Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America's Response*, (New York: Harper Collins, 2003), pg 166-172, 355.

³⁹ Vahakn N. Dadrian, *Warrant for Genocide: Key Elements of Turko-Armenian Conflict*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishing, 2003), 57-58.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 112-3. For more reading on the Armenian Genocide see Edited by Richard G. Hovannisian, *The Armenian Genocide in Perspective*, (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2001) and Robert Melson, *Revolution and Genocide: On the Origins of the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

economically, and culturally had a major roadblock. Not only was Turkish Armenia between Turkey and Turan/Central Asia, but so was Russian Armenia.

All of these historical factors are compelling but essentially, as with most Genocides, this was a combination of racism, scapegoating, and power seeking behavior. Finding a way to redirect not only newly arrived citizens from former colonial territories but also the semi nomadic Kurdish populations, while allowing for a scapegoat to unify the disparate ethnic groups and still further the goal of Central Asiatic expansion. While Turkey ended up on the losing side of the war they were able to eliminate 1 million, or more, Armenians.⁴¹ A combination of execution by firing squad, torture, forced migration without adequate supplies or shelter, drowning, and other methods were used to perpetrate this Genocide. Stemming from this time and era there were also assaults on the Pontic Greek population within Turkey and the Arameans/Syriac that some have described as Genocide while others refer to them simply as slaughter or the perpetrator coined term used so often during the collapse of Yugoslavia, ethnic cleansing.⁴² It should also be noted that as recently as May 2010 that Sweden recognized all of these Genocides as such legally.⁴³

Moving into the 1930s a Politicide or Classicide was perpetrated in the geographically and politically isolated Soviet Ukraine. Characterized as the other by the Soviet party apparatus as *Kulaks* (rich farmers) Ukrainian farmers were forced to collectivize their land and production and while growing enough food to feed the majority of the Soviet Union, and even allow for the

⁴¹ Samantha Power, "Raising the Cost of Genocide," in eds. Nicolaus Mills and Kira Brunner, *The New Killing Fields: Massacre and the Politics of Intervention*, 246.

⁴² Sebastian de Courtois, *The Forgotten Genocide: Eastern Christians, the Last Arameans*, (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2004. Translated by Vincent Aurora, for Aramean/Syriac Genocide. For the assault on the Pontic Greeks see George Horton, *The Blight of Asia*, (London: Sterndale Classics, 2003), and Jack David Eller, *From Culture to Ethnicity to Conflict: An Anthropological Perspective on International Ethnic Conflict*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 243, for ethnic cleansing.

⁴³ <http://www.thelocal.se/25468/20100311/#.UUUgYxc4u3g> last accessed 3/5/2013.

USSR to sell grains on the world market, these so called *Kulaks* were allowed to starve while feeding a burgeoning empire. The Soviet Union effectively cast all Ukrainian farmers as enemies of the state and the party, which were largely one in the same. The supposed Kulaks were dehumanized in the minds of those perpetrators of lower power levels and socially recreated as an enemy other, capitalist reactionaries fighting against the proletarian revolution. As such it became easier for their executioners to kill them, whether the Kulaks were slowly killed by starvation or more rapidly dispatched by other means.⁴⁴

The end of the 1930s saw another effort at Genocide on numerous levels with the Japanese expansion into greater Asia. The start of the Asiatic, and earlier, part of World War II Japan not only killed tens of thousands of people during the Rape of Nanking but it also sought a more indirect path to Genocide, cultural domination, cultural imperialism, and breaking the enemy with the comfort women phenomenon.⁴⁵ These two combined phenomenon have ramifications that are still felt today, and occasionally still a political hot button in Asia, but are much less discussed both in academic circles and by the general population than the Holocaust.

The 1940s saw the most famous of Genocides, the Holocaust, based again on Social - Darwinism/Scientific Racism combined with a quasi-mystical history of the perpetrators. So called Aryan history/ethnicity was contrasted against the contemporaneous situation in Germany, that of a defeated nation paying the victors reparations. The Jewish people of Europe were the most visible of targets during this time but some of the first groups to be targeted were those with physical and mental disabilities and the Rhineland Blacks, a group of children of mixed ancestry, part German and part African, typically the African side coming from colonial subjects of

⁴⁴ Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 117-143

⁴⁵ Neil J. Kressel, *Mass Hate: The Global Rise of Genocide and Terror*, (New York: Westview Press, 2002), 3, 36

France. Other groups targeted included homosexuals, Freemasons, Jehovah's Witnesses, those of leftist political leanings, and the Romani (more commonly known as Gypsies, which is considered by many to be a racist term). In total well over 10 million people, and perhaps twice that many people, were killed in the Holocaust in the name of a racially pure and dominant Germany.⁴⁶ With so many targets looked at as "others," many foreign and many domestic the Holocaust's closest comparison would be the various simultaneous Genocides perpetrated by the Ottoman Turks on Armenians, Greeks, and other Eastern Christians during the time of the Great War. Little more need be said about the Holocaust as it is one of the more understood topics of history within America, if not also one of the most written about topics in the English language.⁴⁷

The 1950s brought another politically motivated internal Genocide, at least in the minds of some, the Great Leap Forward. Similar in scope to the Liquidation of the Kulaks the famines resulting from this effort to rapidly industrialize the world's most populous nation created massive internal upheaval and turmoil. This combined with party directed violence and government mismanagement led to the deaths of tens of millions of people. This party and class solidarity driven movement, with its requisite need for loyalty to the state-party apparatus might not have been as directed as some Genocides but it was certainly one of most deadly examples in terms of sheer numbers.⁴⁸

The 1960s are somewhat more controversial as some would call various conflicts within Africa as well as the Vietnam War genocidal conflicts. In the 1970s, the Cambodian

⁴⁶ Ben Kiernan, *Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur* (Harrisonburg, VA: Yale University Press, 2007), 439-441

⁴⁷ Norman G. Finkelstein, *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering*, (London and New York: Verso, 2000), 11-2, 28,

⁴⁸ Frank Dikotter, *Mao's Great Famine: The History of China's Most Devastating Catastrophe, 1958-1962*, (New York: Walker & Company, 2011). There are many other great books on this topic, not listed for the sake of brevity.

Autogenocide, saw internal persecution and in many cases execution of intellectuals, those of the former upper classes, and those not of Khmer ethnicity. Victims were labeled enemies of the state, agents of foreign/counter revolutionary forces, and against the party and the revolution by the agrarian communist Khmer Rouge. The Khmer Rouge's hatred of literacy and education saw its ultimate form in the use of schools as prison camps and extermination sites. Well over 1 million people died as a result of this Genocide.⁴⁹

The 1980s were much calmer, though some scholars and activists have argued for various conflicts being genocidal in nature. The 1990s saw a return of Genocide in force with not only the Rwandan Genocide but also large scale ethnic conflict in the collapsing Yugoslavia, the end of the genocidal efforts in East Timor, and the start of the Congo Wars. The collapse of Yugoslavia with its multipart, multi-front nature has always been difficult to understand, even for scholars. The main atrocities that are to be considered as far as Genocide is concerned are the Serbian efforts to perpetrate "ethnic cleansing" on Croats and Bosnian Muslims and the associated efforts such as mass executions, hidden mass graves, rape rooms where women of those ethnicities were taken to be tortured and raped as an effort to shame them and their families, and the long term shelling of civilian populations, often under the nose of UN peacekeepers including American forces.⁵⁰ The historical and cultural reasons that influenced this tragedy include ethnic groups that were once the same but converted to different religions and the feeling among other groups of collaboration due to those religious affiliations. Bosnian Muslims are obviously Muslim and these conversions often took place during Ottoman rule,

⁴⁹ Toni Shapiro-Phim, "Dance, Music, and the Nature of Terror in Democratic Kampuche," in ed. Alexander Laban Hinton, *Annihilating Difference: The Anthropology of Genocide*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA 2002), 181-182, 273, 275, 278. For further reading, see Ben Kierman, *The Pol Pot Regime*, (New Haven: Yale University, 2002) and Phillip Short, *Pol Pot: Anatomy of a Nightmare*, (New York: Henry Holt & Co, LLC, 2004).

⁵⁰ Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 243-95.

Serbs were primarily eastern Orthodox and had strong ties to Russia due to their coreligionist and Slavic connections, while Croats are predominantly Catholic and that affiliation is often tied to Austro-Hungarian imperialism in the area. All of these religious ties also seemed to, in part at least, have geographic components with more Serbs in the east, more Croats closer to Italy and Austria, and Muslims spread throughout.⁵¹

With the collapse of the Communist Bloc and the desire for independence by other Yugoslav ethnicities and the desire for continued dominance by the Serbs conflict erupted quickly and on many fronts. Ethnic militias formed and large swaths of the former Yugoslavia were under siege. This conflict escalated to a level that the UN was forced to step in, even though no such mass involvement was forthcoming for Rwanda during the same period of time. Eventually the Serbs were pushed out of many areas and the war ground to a halt, but not before destroying politically, culturally, and on economic and material levels what was once one nation that became many nations.⁵²

The wars in Congo that have led to many different forms of mass killing were in some ways echoes of the Rwandan refugee crisis. Hutu militias and former Rwanda military personnel were still highly armed, living in Zaire, and acting as a combination of government in exile and a collection of local thuggish warlords. As they came into conflict with indigenous Tutsi population Rwanda decided to enter the conflict. As time went on various African governments and rebel forces entered into the conflict until a bloodbath of huge proportions and many sides was the reality for the former Zaire for many years. With various groups from within and outside Zaire-Congo this conflict saw atrocities coming from many quarters, some of them

⁵¹ Ibid, 10-12

⁵² Ibid, 353-427.

directed for ethno-political reasons while others were seemingly only about power and not even couched in racist language.⁵³

Moving into the twenty-first century ethnic conflict continued in the Congo while Darfur became the *cause célèbre*. Darfur was another case, at least in part, of a societal construct being used to define the “other,” Black Muslims killing other Black Muslims due to the fact that the group doing the killing believes it has Arabic heritage and is therefore superior to their victims and deserving of domination over them while the victims are deserving of nothing save torture, subjugation, and/or death.⁵⁴ Even for all of the media and popular culture attention brought to the Genocide in Darfur little real action was taken, showing that even a concerted media effort cannot fully drive government policy, but at least there was some chance of action, whereas with Rwanda there was seemingly none.

The 1948 Genocide Convention and the Question of was Rwanda a Genocide?

According to the Genocide Convention of 1948 Genocide’s most simple definition is the attempt, in whole or in part to eliminate a specific ethnic group. This means that if a group is targeted for elimination specifically because it is an ethnic group then that is Genocide.⁵⁵ While some may argue that there is no difference between Tutsi and Hutu due to their shared language and centuries of intermarriage the situation on the ground was that Hutu and Tutsi perceived themselves as different and ethnic identity cards were the norm. In many ways the daily lives of Tutsi and Hutu in late twentieth century Rwanda before the Genocide were incredibly similar, aside from the periodic ethnic clash.

⁵³ Prunier, *Africa’s World War*.

⁵⁴ Prunier, *Africa’s World War*, 353 and for Darfur Gerard Prunier, *Darfur: A 21st Century Genocide*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008).

⁵⁵ UN Convention on Genocide, 1948.

There are many reasons that this was not simple ethnic strife. The *Interhamwe* were trained, armed, indoctrinated and coached to target Tutsis and to a lesser extent enemy Hutu. They were trained to look for ethnic identity cards. The radio broadcast on RTML and other outlets were put together to play on slang, popular culture, and long and short term ethnic slurs and code words to embolden killers and direct traffic. Additionally lists were drawn up to target directly Tutsis as well as moderate Hutu that might stand in the way of the Genocide. There was also a tremendous effort put forth to obfuscate the facts, sell the international community on the narrative of a double Genocide, and to use their rotating position on the UN Security Council to not only delay action but to keep the interim government apprised of what the UN and the great powers were thinking day to day. Rwanda's rotating position on the UN Security Council started in January 1994, three months before the Genocide began.⁵⁶

Other reasons to call what happened in Rwanda in 1994 a Genocide are often post facto reasoning. Nevertheless many of these notions are compelling. There have been numerous people convicted of Genocide both within the Rwandan court system and at the ICTR in Arusha.⁵⁷ The United Nations, United States, France, and various other nations have declared that the extermination of Tutsis in Rwanda in 1994 was a Genocide. The last set of sources that prove the Genocide are the words of victims, survivors, witnesses, and perpetrators. While many accused *genocidaires* deny their part in the Genocide enough have come forward admitting their complicity, for whatever reason. Additionally, enough survivors and witnesses have described events that there is sufficient documentary evidence to make a case for something that goes far beyond ethnic unrest.

⁵⁶ Linda Melvern, *A People Betrayed: The Role of the West in Rwanda's Genocide*, (London: Zed Books, 2004), 244.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

Historical Background of the Rwandan Genocide

Prior to the arrival of Europeans the portion of the African Great Lakes region that was to become Rwanda and Burundi, along with small regions in neighboring countries, had three ethnic groups within it. These groups are believed to have arrived in a successive order with the new arrivals eventually gaining a modicum of control over the previous inhabitants each time. Over time small kingdoms formed under local power structures and these kingdoms went through a process of combination, conquest, absorption, growth, and decline. The Twa (*Batwa*) are widely believed to be the first inhabitants of Rwanda and Burundi. They are a pygmy group of hunter-gatherers. During the Bantu migration the Hutu (*Bahutu*) came into the area. Over time they pushed Twa into, or further into, the forest of the mountains and hills of the area. The Hutu also over time and waves of migration became the dominant ethnic group of the area and their population outstripped that of the Twa. The local language of Rwanda is Kinyarwanda, which is a Bantu language. The Hutu were predominantly an agricultural society. Eventually the Tutsi (*Batutsi*) migrated into this area. There are multiple theories as to the origins of the Tutsi, who were a pastoralist group predominantly. As they slowly assimilated into the area they took on the local language and took over some, but not all areas of present day Rwanda and Burundi.⁵⁸

Among the more popular origin ideas for the Tutsi are the Hamitic Hypothesis, which supposes that they are somehow tied to the Biblical story of Noah and descended from his son Ham. This theory has helped form others like the idea that the Tutsi are originally from either

⁵⁸ Guy Vassall-Adams, *Rwanda: An Agenda for International Action*, (Oxford: Oxfam Publications, 1994), 7.

the Ethiopian highlands or Egypt.⁵⁹ Other ideas include an origin as a different Bantu group that entered Rwanda later than the Hutu or that they were a political and economic group that evolved into an ethnicity fully after the arrival of Europeans in the area with a large amount of push from those Europeans to create an ethnic group where none existed before.

In late 1800s Europeans first entered what is now Rwanda and came into contact with its population. At the time most of modern Rwanda was a single kingdom ruled by a Tutsi king. This king had various vassals, many of them also Tutsi who governed smaller areas in his stead on a day to day basis. In the area that became Rwanda there were also smaller areas that were more locally governed, some of which were ruled by Tutsi and some by Hutu. As Germany came to dominate this area the smaller kingdoms were absorbed into the already extant Rwandan kingdom and incorporated into its pre-existing governmental system which was subverted for European purposes.

After the loss in the Great War by the Central Powers, Rwanda-Burundi became a League of Nations mandate territory that was run by and incorporated into the Belgian colonial system within Africa. Over time the system of ethnic identity was hardened into a rigid one involving identity paperwork that stated the official “ethnicity,” but was also somewhat mutable. The ethnic delineation of Tutsi involved owning at least ten cows regardless of what ethnicity one was. Tutsi were favored by the Belgian colonial government and had various advantages in regards to education and the possibility of government employment. There was also a tendency to favor Tutsi within the Church. This favoritism was akin to Britain’s system of colonial management in which different ethnic, religious, and other groups were turned against each other

⁵⁹ Dina Temple-Raston, *Justice on the Grass, Three Rwandan Journalists, Their Trial for War Crimes, and a Nation’s Quest for Redemption*, (New York: Free Press, 2005), 17-18.

by favoring some and oppressing others. In this way colonial subjects cannot unite against the colonial occupier. This system put the majority Hutu, who made up some 80% or more of the population at a distinct disadvantage. Additionally within Rwanda and Burundi other smaller kingdoms, some of them with Hutu power structures were consumed and incorporated in the two larger kingdoms that went on to become the nations of Rwanda and Burundi.

After World War II and with the coming of decolonization there was an eventual shift in the colonial administration, and for that matter religious administration, in Rwanda. A shift occurred towards favoring the Hutu majority as Belgium sought to keep their influence in the region after Rwanda became independent. This movement was contemporary to a rising sense of Hutu nationalism in which many Hutu felt that Tutsi were foreign invaders akin to the Belgians and the Germans before them. This idea was reinforced by decades of theories on the origins of the Tutsi, questions of how they came to power, and the scientific racism that was so popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

As decolonization was close at hand in 1959 the Hutu attempted to assassinate the Tutsi king and slaughtered tens of thousands of Tutsi. The king and many other Tutsi also went into exile. When Rwanda gained independence in 1962 it was essentially a state run by the Hutu political-ethnic group for itself. The Twa had long since been marginalized and made up around 1% of the population. The Tutsi made up only 15% of the population. They were politically marginalized and often subject to discrimination, lower social status, problems attaining education especially as compared to the majority of the colonial period, and periodic outbursts of anti-Tutsi violence that could end in anything from low levels of injury to high death tolls and more Tutsi flight from Rwanda into neighboring nations or areas further afield. Rather quickly Rwanda became an one party state and the militant Hutu government actively suppressed

opposition parties, the return of Tutsi refugees, any Tutsi rebellions -real or perceived -, and any other threats that it saw to its one party ethno-political rule that was predicated on Hutu supremacy, punishing the Tutsi for invading Hutu lands in the dark recesses of Rwandan oral tradition - though before any written history of Rwanda -, and keeping a status quo.

This government lasted until the rise from the ranks of the military of Juvenal Habyarimana. A Hutu from the north with ties to one of the most powerful families from a region of northern Rwanda that escaped Tutsi political control until after the coming of Europeans, Habyarimana seized control in 1973 and while initially more conciliatory towards the Tutsis within a year he reversed course leading to another series of attacks on Tutsi and further governmental, educational, and social alienation. This also sparked yet another round of Tutsi flight to nations like Uganda.⁶⁰

In 1990, having been in power for seventeen years, Habyarimana faced a major challenge to his rule and to Hutu power within Rwanda. A rebel force, the Rwandan Patriotic Front, moved into Rwanda from Uganda with an army, the Rwandan Patriotic Army, intent on at least gaining some political power for Tutsis, moving away from a one party system, and allowing exiles to come home to Rwanda. This force was composed of a large number of Tutsi, with some Hutu members, and it had years of military experience as part of the anti-Milton Obote National Resistance Army in Uganda. Many future members of the RPF then served in the government army in Uganda while also laying the groundwork for and creating the RPF.⁶¹

The October 1990 invasion of Rwanda was not initially very successful and the leader of the RPF was killed in the early days of the invasion. Paul Kagame returned from a military

⁶⁰ Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 41 - 92

⁶¹ Klinghoffer, *The International Dimensions of the Rwandan Genocide*, 14-18.

training course in the United States to lead the RPF forces and managed to calm the confusion reigning in the RPF ranks. He then led the RPF in a battle plan that was more about keeping his opponent guessing and on their toes than any real major gains. This started a process of peace deals that would lead to the final round of Arusha Accords in late 1993. In between these times other political parties sprang up in Rwanda and Habyarimana's group, the opposition parties, fake opposition parties that were really just more extreme militant Hutu groups, and the RPF were all to share in power until regular elections could be held.

It was during this period that Habyarimana felt pressure from all sides. Moderate/opposition Hutu groups were not likely to vote him back into power nor were those that supported the RPF, Tutsi or otherwise. His followers were disillusioned with the prospect of allowing Tutsi back into the government and his wife, Agathe - who some have posited was the real force behind his rise to power, and her clique, the *Akuzi*,⁶² were also not only not happy with the situation but were already acting against Tutsi interests in many ways. From the training and arming of the *Interahamwe*, a militia force trained to act as one and target Tutsi and noncompliant (read moderate and or opposition) Hutu to the radio station RTLM which broadcast thinly veiled messages before the Genocide instructing its Hutu listeners to eliminate the cockroaches, or *inyenzi*, which was a derisive term for Tutsi. The orders became even less thinly veiled after the Genocide started and RTLM was even directing traffic telling its listeners areas where Tutsis were still believed to be alive.⁶³

⁶² Little house, which was something of a northern Hutu conspiratorial group that held a large amount of power within the government and the military, many came to full power after the assassination of President Habyarimana and were responsible for the planning of the Genocide. Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 401.

⁶³ Klinghoffer, *The International Dimensions of the Rwandan Genocide*, 37, 41, 45, 62 - 63, 84, 92, 112.

President Juvenal Habyarimana of Rwanda and the President of Burundi Cyprien Ntaryamira were flying into Kigali on the night on April 6th, 1994. Their plane was shot down and both men, along with others on the plane, were killed.⁶⁴ Within hours of the assassination the Rwandan military blocked United Nations observers from the site of the plane crash and the Genocide started within hours of the plane crash. Among the targets, aside from Tutsi, the Prime Minister elect of the government to be implemented due to the Arusha accords was targeted and slain to prevent her from coming to power. Belgian peacekeepers were also slaughtered at around the same time.

From April 6th through the end of the Genocide approximately one hundred days later 800,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu were killed in the Rwandan Genocide.⁶⁵ Deaths were often a result of machete wounds with torture, rape, beatings, small arms, and explosives also used as methods of death. Most of the targets were Tutsi who were easily identified due to the ethnically particular identity cards used by the population and created by the government. Many of those killed were killed by the *Interahamwe* while others involved in the slaughter included civilians, police officers, government officials, military forces, church officials, teachers, and local politicians. The two main methods of finding targets were hunting them down at locations the victims were known to be at or places they had hidden or the checkpoint method. The police, military, and *Interahamwe* set up checkpoints at certain points such as roadways and in front of important buildings, checking identity cards. This method was particularly effective in finding those Tutsi, and moderate Hutu, those that escaped notice or their original hunters. Lists of

⁶⁴ Destexhe, *Rwanda and Genocide in the Twentieth Century*, 81.

⁶⁵ Samantha Power, *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*, (New York: Perennial, 2003), 91, among others.

targets were drawn up before the Genocide started and named targets could and did slip through the net, at least initially and some of them even survived the Genocide in toto.⁶⁶

The United Nations was warned about the possibility of the arming of *Interahamwe* militia and the stockpiling of weapons well before the Genocide started. The Belgians sought a total withdrawal and attempted to get their allies including the United States and the United Kingdom on their side. After losing their own troops in a nation that they were once the colonial master of and seeking to withdraw without a full United Nations pull out would make Belgium look impotent. A full UN withdraw would give them cover and show that the international community also believed that the situation was untenable.⁶⁷

The UN would eventually come around but they could not find any takers for a peacemaking effort in Rwanda considering the peacekeeping efforts failing, the restarting of the Civil War, and the start of Genocide. Only France was willing to get involved on their own terms.

French reaction was that of a paternalist nation seeking to assist its client state. After arming the Rwandan government and its proxies and seeing the tide of the Civil War turn against that government after the onset of the Genocide, France had to do something to stem the tide. Seeing that its allies wanted nothing to do with the situation for various reasons but that there was cause to intervene and at least some UN support for an intervention France got the UN to acquiesce to Operation Turquoise which was a French “humanitarian” intervention that helped corral the Hutu refugees that were departing Rwanda ahead of the RPF advance for fear of reprisals for the Genocide, a fear that the Rwandan government and its unofficial propaganda

⁶⁶ Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 212 - 270.

⁶⁷ Klinghoffer, *The International Dimensions of the Rwandan Genocide*, 3-8, 23 - 36, 54-56, 91-92, 96-97, 139-140, 148, 161, 163, 209.

wing RTLM was more than happy to play up to increase the size of the refugee population. The larger the refugee population the more difficult it would be to track down the perpetrators and planners of the Genocide and the more legitimacy the government going into exile would have with the international community, at the diplomatic bargaining table , and with the NGOs flooding into neighboring countries to assist with the crisis.⁶⁸

The American reaction to the Rwandan Genocide was one tempered by the recent failure in Somalia of a peacemaking mission, the sheer number of humanitarian crises occurring in the late 1990s, and a world in which America was the lone standing superpower. America was also an ally of Belgium and of France, who both had differing but not mutually exclusive goals involving Rwanda, no matter what America's connections to the then leader of the RPF and current President of Rwanda Paul Kagame.⁶⁹

By mid August the RPF and its military wing the RPA had won the day, but at a terrible cost. Millions of Rwandans, many Hutu but with some Tutsi and Twa mixed in had fled the country for neighboring countries like Burundi and Tanzania but the vast majority of them ended up in the Kivu area of the then Zaire, now the Democratic Republic of Congo. Despite fighting against the *Interahamwe*, forces of the deposed and exiled government, and at times with French peacekeeping forces of Operation Turquoise, the rebel RPF had gained control of Rwanda and stopped the Genocide that the entire world stood by and allowed to happen, while coming up with excuses as to why intervention was either not needed or could not happen as fast as was necessary.

⁶⁸ Andrew Wallis, *Silent Accomplice: The Untold Story of France's Role in the Rwandan Genocide*, (New York: I.B. Taurus & Co. Ltd., 2007), 129 - 135.

⁶⁹ Klinghoffer, *The International Dimensions of the Rwandan Genocide*, 91, 93, 95-99.

The refugee crisis, particularly in the former Zaire, was the next stage in this tragedy that the international community, Rwanda, and all of its neighbors had to deal with. This was all the more problematic due to the presence in Kivu of the *Banyamulenge* minority, a Tutsi population that had long lived in the now Democratic Republic of Congo. This population became a focus of attacks by militant parts of the Hutu refugees, who were also staging attacks into Rwanda. This, along with already extant political, social, and economic problems, led to some of the *Banyarmulenge* to ally with the RPF, other regional powers, and other rebel groups to overthrow the sitting government in one civil war, which led to another civil war. These Congo Wars have been described by Gerard Prunier as *Africa's World War*. During these conflicts all sides committed various atrocities, including rumors of cannibalism being used as a weapon against a population of pygmies in Congo. The death toll of these wars, civilian and military, numbers in the millions, involved various African governments and rebel/extra-governmental forces, and continues to destabilize the region to this day.

Historiography

One of the seminal works in scholarship of the Rwandan Genocide is Gerard Prunier's *The Rwanda Crisis*.⁷⁰ This work, which in its second edition, was expanded to look further into developments coming out of the refugee camps post Genocide and post Rwandan Civil War. Prunier has become so involved not only in the Great Lakes region of Africa but also in scholarship involving Genocide in Africa that he has written two subsequent books on the topic.⁷¹ The main thrust of *The Rwanda Crisis* is that there are no arcane and mystical reasons

⁷⁰ Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*.

⁷¹ Gerard Prunier, *Africa's World War: Congo, the Rwandan Genocide, and the Making of a Continental Catastrophe*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); and Gerard Prunier, *Darfur: A 21st Century Genocide*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2008).

for the Genocide. There is no prehistoric reason for the slaughter. Instead there were calculated steps taken by those in power and those that wished to be in power to prevent a power sharing agreement at any cost. While they may have used the myths of Rwandan “history” to manipulate others and while some may have believed those myths themselves the real motivation was a desire for political and military power through ethnic division and ethnic slaughter.⁷²

Another work that is often cited is Arthur Jay Klinghoffer’s *International Dimensions of the Rwandan Genocide*. Primarily a political science tome this work looks mostly at the failure of the international community to intervene during the Civil War and Genocide and discusses some of the ramifications for that internationally, regionally, and in Rwanda proper.⁷³ He shows how the situation in Rwanda destabilized the region.⁷⁴

Alain Destexhe’s *Rwanda and Genocide in the Twentieth Century* is another work that covers the basic background of the situation in Rwanda before and during the Genocide. While working from a somewhat comparative model invoking the Holocaust as similar to the Rwandan Genocide Destexhe shows that the international community did not do its job and how humanitarianism and moral relativism combined with great power obstructionism and uninformed media coverage to all for a Genocide to continue unabated.⁷⁵ That Destexhe called for “Belgium, France and the United States” to “accept a degree of responsibility for the genocide”⁷⁶ in a book written mere months after the halt of the Genocide shows that he was already well versed in the ins and outs of the sleight of hand that was being used by Western governments to avoid stopping the Genocide and France’s large scale of complicity in it. His

⁷² Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 226-9.

⁷³ Klinghoffer, *The International Dimensions of the Rwandan Genocide*.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 154-6.

⁷⁵ Alain Destexhe, *Rwanda and Genocide in the Twentieth Century*, (New York: New York University Press, 1998).

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 71.

final thought on the Genocide shows how far from reason and humanity Western governments were on this issue.

Where justice and reason are lacking, the human solidarity that replaces them, such as was displayed at Goma-but too late to save the victims of genocide-is worth nothing. It is the moral responsibility of each one of us, citizens of this planet, to contribute something to prevent this unique event from being forgotten, even before it has been properly recognized.⁷⁷

American

Samantha Power's *A Problem from Hell: America in the Age of Genocide* is one of the books that more directly addresses how America has dealt with Genocide in the twentieth century. Power shows a Clinton Administration that was very unconcerned with the Rwandan Genocide, noting that "President Clinton did not convene a single meeting of his senior foreign policy advisers to discuss U.S. options for Rwanda."⁷⁸ As early as April 8th, 1994, less than a week into the Genocide Prudence Bushnell, Assistant Secretary of State on African Affairs at the time, made public comments about the situation in Rwanda that fell on deaf ears, those of her colleagues in the Clinton Administration and the American media, about the violence in Rwanda. Few save Bushnell seemed to understand what was taking place. "Neither Journalists nor officials in the United States were focused on the Tutsi."⁷⁹ Power also says that no matter what issues were occurring within the Washington intelligence community "the reports from Rwanda were severe enough to distinguish Hutu killers from ordinary combatants in civil war."⁸⁰ The general tone of Power's chapter on Rwanda is one of derision of the media second and the

⁷⁷ Ibid, 75.

⁷⁸ Samantha Power, *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*, (New York: Perennial, 2003), 335.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 351-2.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 354.

Clinton Administration first. There was little done and those things that were done were what amounted to totems, symbolic more than effective.⁸¹

One Hundred Days of Silence is another work dealing wholly with US involvement, or the lack thereof in the Genocide. The author Jared Cohen was even able to have Bushnell write a brief foreword for the book. Cohen covers a great many topics and interviews many of the people involved in the American policy apparatus during this time. The main thrust of his book can be summed up in this quotation.

The U.S. refusal to intervene in the Rwanda [sic] genocide was blatant and obvious. While at the time many policymakers were influenced by the Somalia legacy, the marginal importance of Rwanda when compared with other pressing issues around the globe, and the varying opinions about what exactly was occurring in Rwanda, no policy maker could deny that their [sic] were hundreds of thousands of deaths taking place at a rapid pace. If one looks at the outcome of the Rwanda [sic] genocide, it is obvious that neither the United States, nor the international community wanted to intervene. However, what is even more shocking is the unwillingness to discuss Rwanda at senior levels.⁸²

This echoes the sentiments of Power and concisely sums up not only Cohen's ideas on the Rwandan Genocide but those of a great many people that have studied this event. There was no reason to act as it was not in America's limited interests to do so.

International/NGO/UN

One of the earliest reports on the international factors in the Genocide comes from OXFAM. In it they lay out a fairly explicit case for the West, including France and the United States helping to arm the Habyarimana regime. While for the US it was \$600,000 in 1993, France was responsible for more than \$6 million dollars in military aid.⁸³

Alan J. Kuperman's *The Limits of Humanitarian Intervention* takes a similarly strong approach to the report by Vassal-Adams for OXFAM. He examines how various internal and

⁸¹ Ibid, 383-5.

⁸² Jared Cohen, *One Hundred Days of Silence: America and the Rwandan Genocide*, (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC., 2007), 175.

⁸³ Guy Vassall-Adams, *Rwanda: An Agenda for International Action*, (Oxford: Oxfam Publications, 1994) 27.

external factors contributed to the Genocide and the international community's muted response. On US policy relating to peacekeeping and Genocide Kuperman states that there are two antithetical notions that in cases like Rwanda create a stagnation that is deadly. One notion is that of peacekeepers should not be put on the ground while a civil war is still active. The other idea is that Genocide must be stopped. These ideas cannot be compatible in a world where most Genocides occur within countries instead of across borders.⁸⁴ This is largely a policy driven work coming from the Brookings Institute and as such is similar to the OXFAM book in that it is looking for ways to make improvements in international responses as well as to document what happened.

Kuperman states that the initial reporting on the Genocide was flawed and may have damaged policy makers' abilities to discern what was happening due to the ideas that a two way civil war was occurring instead of a Genocide, that early death tolls were underreported and depicted as a slowing down of violence after the initial bursts of slaughter, most of the reporting centered on the capital, Kigali, and that it took weeks for anyone in the media or NGOs to call the killings Genocide.⁸⁵ On the American media, and Western media in general, Kuperman says that the media withdrawal with other Westerners was particularly harmful when it happened due to that being the height of the killings.⁸⁶ He also states that after being hesitant to report Rwanda as a Genocide, Western media has since been more likely to call any slaughter a Genocide, whether it is one or not.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Alan J. Kuperman, *The Limits of Humanitarian Intervention: Genocide in Rwanda*, (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2001), 116.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 24.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 27.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 112.

Returning to foreign policy involving Rwanda Kuperman puts a large amount of blame on the international community for forcing democracy and power sharing on the extremist Hutu government of Rwanda and believes that by setting up a system where elimination of the enemy was the only viable option for staying in power they helped cause the Genocide.

Had the international community intended to promote genocide, it could hardly have devised a better strategy. The clear lesson is that the best way to stop genocide is not military intervention after the fact but wise diplomacy that prevents genocide from starting in the first place.⁸⁸

France

France's hand in the Genocide in Rwanda has largely been covered by authors such as Prunier, Klinghoffer, and Destxhe, among others. Daniela Krosiak takes a more focused approach, looking at French efforts to arm the Habyarimana regime and to prop up the interim government after his death. She shows that France not only took the wrong path before and during the Genocide but they have chosen an alternate wrong path from that of England and America post Genocide. While the US and the UK have allowed a great many excesses by the RPF controlled regime in Kigali, France has done its best to remain aloof and refuses to issue the apologies that other nations did after the RPF stopped the slaughter. Beyond her detailing of French misdeeds and their mishandling of the political situation after the Genocide, Krosiak shows a France that was deeply involved in the Genocide by doing all it could to aid the perpetrators before, during and after the bloodletting.⁸⁹

The other main title dealing with French complicity in the Genocide is much more damning. In *Silent Accomplice*, Andrew Wallis, an investigative reporting, states that not only did the genocidal Interim Government have strong ties to France but that it was formed in the

⁸⁸ Ibid, 109-10.

⁸⁹ Daniela Krosiak, *The Role of France in the Rwandan Genocide*, (London: Hurst & Company, 2007), 271-9.

French Embassy in Kigali. He further goes on to state that France's initial reaction after the death of President Habyarimana and the onset of the Genocide was to immediately evacuate French citizens. "The French plainly knew within hours of the crash that genocide, or at least killing on an unprecedented scale, was underway."⁹⁰ They possessed everything from traditional and electronic intelligence information to direct ties to the new regime. Said new regime was assembled in the French Embassy.⁹¹

Legal

There is no single prevailing trend currently among books dealing with the legal issues involving the Rwandan Genocide. While there is a good amount of literature on the subject it seems to be split into two camps. The first camp comes from the earlier branch of the subject involving the International Tribunal at Arusha, Tanzania. The second grouping looks at the reinstitution and repurposing of the old *Gacaca* system to deal with internal Rwandan trials involving *Genocidaires*.

When looking at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) two books of are of utmost importance, the *International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda* and *International Criminal Practice*. The book specifically dealing with the ICTR is more accessible to academics that do not have a legal background, has more historical analysis, and is not a primary source with some minor legal comments as *International Criminal Practice* is. Neither book offers much help in dealing with issues of US policy during the Genocide or media coverage of it, but

⁹⁰ Andrew Wallis, *Silent Accomplice*, 210.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

when looking not only at the ICTR but at Rwanda's internal high court, as opposed to the *Gacaca* system, these books are very valuable to scholars of the Rwandan Genocide.⁹²

When looking at the *Gacaca* system that has become so important in alleviating the backlog of Rwanda's court system since the Genocide there are two books to consider. *Justice on the Grass* and *Rwanda's Gamble* both look at the use of *Gacaca* courts to address the backlog of cases and incarcerated persons and provide healing to the victims, the relatives of victims, and survivors of the Genocide. *Justice on the Grass* looks largely at the trial of three journalists tied to the hate radio station that was used to incite the Genocide. It also veers into political and journalistic issues involving the case, *Gacaca* courts, and freedom of speech and the press. The main ideas behind *Rwanda's Gamble* are how the system works, why it is appropriate, and how this type of a court system can not only be effective as a tool of punishment but also to heal the wounds of the Genocide.⁹³

Firsthand Accounts

One of the heroes to emerge from the Genocide, Paul Rusesabagina, wrote an autobiography that deals largely with his efforts to save himself, his neighbors, and others that were potential victims of the Genocide. This work offers wonderful insight into not only the on the ground situation within Rwanda but also shows some of the motivations and actions of interim government officials during this time period. While this work does not delve into this

⁹² Virginia Morris & Michael P. Scharf, *The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda*, (New York: Transnational Publishers, 1998) and John R.W.D. Jones & Steven Powles, *International Criminal Practice*, third edition, (New York: Transnational Publishers, 2003).

⁹³ Dina Temple-Raston, *Justice on the Grass: Three Rwandan Journalists, Their Trial for War Crimes, and a Nation's Quest for Redemption*, (New York: Free Press, 2005) and Peter Harrell, *Rwanda's Gamble: Gacaca and a New Model of Transitional Justice*, (New York: Writer's Club Press,

book, it is a useful contextual reference for those wishing to obtain a more nuanced view of the actions occurring in Rwanda at the time.⁹⁴

Machete Season: The Killers in Rwanda Speak is one of the more interesting works on the Rwandan Genocide. It offers little of use to the topics of American media and American reactions during the Genocide but it is a fascinating look into the mind of those that carried out the Genocide.⁹⁵ A similar firsthand account that does not have as much moral baggage is *Surviving the Slaughter*, which shows the journey of a Hutu refugee during the Rwandan Civil War into the refugee camps in the former Zaire and beyond.⁹⁶ Neither of these books are studied in depth in this thesis though they are both part of the growing literature that seems intent on showing the view of the other side of the Genocide. While it is infrequent at best that scholars, journalists, and officials writing on this subject matter completely ignore the atrocities of the RPF committed before, during, and after the Genocide, and many have spent a great deal of effort trying to explain why ordinary Rwandans took part in the Genocide, it does provide a stark contrast to much of the other literature in the field, however unsettling it may be.

A different level of disturbing firsthand accounts comes from a work describing and analyzing artwork done by children that witnessed and survived the Genocide. This book

⁹⁴ Paul Rusesabagina with Tom Zoellner, *An Ordinary Man: An Autobiography*, (New York: Viking, 2006). Additionally there is a work on the making of the movie that further brought Mr. Rusesabagina into the public eye, *Hotel Rwanda: Bringing the True Story of an African Hero to Film* edited by Terry George with a screenplay by George and Keir Pearson (New York: New Market Press, 2005). While this book is predominantly about the movie it does offer some historical information that can be of use to many non-experts.

⁹⁵ Jean Hatzfeld, *Machete Season: The Killer in Rwanda Speak*, Trans. Linda Coverdale, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005).

⁹⁶ Marie Beatrice Umutesi, *Surviving the Slaughter: The Ordeal of a Rwandan Refugee in Zaire*, Trans. Julia Emerson, (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004).

provides notion of material importance to this study but it does give the reader pause when thinking about what the life of Genocide survivors, particularly child survivors, is like.⁹⁷

Other firsthand accounts of the Genocide include *Land of a Thousand Hills*. This work gives very little detail into the situation on the ground as the author was an US national that was evacuated during the early part of April 1994. The rest of her account is that of someone watching the news during the event from afar.⁹⁸ A similar book, from a French expatriate point of view is *The Shadow of Imana*, which is not a direct recollection but rather the author asking questions of witnesses while travelling around Rwanda after the Genocide.⁹⁹ Neither of these works gives much of an account of the American government or media involvement though they do provide good outsider on the ground style information.

Another facet of the firsthand accounts in the blending of scholarly or investigative works with firsthand accounts. This trend, which is only slightly historiographical is yielding fascinating results. Works by Josias Semujanga, John A. Berry & Carol Pott Berry, and Louise Mushikiwabo combine firsthand accounts and scholarship into a synthesis that provides insider perspectives into the Genocide with a bit of scholarly rigor.¹⁰⁰

The Churches and Religious Matters

There is another trend in writings on the Rwandan Genocide, one that involves the study of religion, whether from a scholarly perspective or otherwise. There were many people within

⁹⁷ Richard A. Salem, ed., *Witness to Genocide: The Children of Rwanda. Drawings by Child Survivors of the Rwandan Genocide of 1994*, (New York: Friendship Press, National Council of Churches, 2000).

⁹⁸ Rosamond Halsey Carr with An Howard Halsey, *Land of a Thousand Hills*, (New York: Plume, 1999), 206-12.

⁹⁹ Veronique Tadjou, *The Shadow of Imana: Travels in the Heart of Rwanda*, Trans. Veronique Wakerley, (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Publishers, 2002).

¹⁰⁰ Josias Semujanga, *Origins of the Rwandan Genocide*, (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2003). John A. Berry and Carol Pott Berry, *Rwanda: A Collective Memory*, (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1999). Louise Mushikiwabo and Jack Kramer, *Rwanda Means the Universe: A Native's Memoir of Blood and Bloodlines*, (New York: St. Martins Press, 2006).

the various faiths in Rwanda, particularly the Catholic Church, that were involved in the Genocide in some way, whether as victim, survivor, perpetrator, attempted or successful savior of targets of Genocide, or mere witnesses. Clergy or not, religion played a factor in the Genocide and in the processes of reconstructing lives and a nation that followed for a great many people. The Civil War and Genocide touched the lives of almost everyone in Rwanda in some way. As such it is not surprising that some turned to religious organizations for help, no matter what role they played in the tragedy.

The anthology *Genocide in Rwanda: Complicity of the Churches?* touches on many aspects of the Genocide and the effects, positive and negative, that various churches had on this event. Among the various articles there is a common thread “words do more to incite genocide than to prevent or stop it.”¹⁰¹ Aside from that idea there are various articles throughout the book discussing issues involving churches and the Rwandan Genocide from firsthand accounts and more detached views. This book, like others to be discussed comes from a deeply Christian point of view in most cases.

Left to Tell is an account by a Tutsi survivor of the Rwandan Genocide. While it could have been listed in the firsthand account section it seemed more fitting here. While there is much information available in this book for scholars and non-academics alike to digest from a survivor’s account this book in many ways is about religion and how the author used her faith to survive the Genocide and move on with her life.¹⁰² Another work by John Rucyahana shows a similar trajectory. Mr. Rucyahana is a Bishop in Rwanda and while much of his book is about

¹⁰¹ John K. Roth, “What should be Remembered?,” in *Genocide in Rwanda: Complicity of the Churches?*, eds Carol Rittner, John K. Roth, and Wendy Whitworth, (St. Paul, Minnesota: Paragon House, 2004), 273.

¹⁰² Immaculee Ilibagiza with Steve Erwin, *Left to Tell: Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust*, (New York: Hay House Inc., 2006).

the power of faith to heal wounds and forgive ills he does take some time to castigate, however politely, Madeleine Albright in particular and the Clinton Administration in general for their efforts of obfuscation.¹⁰³

As many of the articles in *Rwanda: Complicity of the Churches* are not scholarly in nature and the other two books addressed are certainly coming from a very religious viewpoint there is not a great deal of academic rigour in these works. The historiographic and literary trend is one of churches doing too little during the Genocide and being a key to the healing process afterwards. Beyond the religious issues involved there are many things that can be gleaned from these works from an historical perspective if one reads against the grain.

Historiographic Trends

There have been various trends within the literature and a great deal of cross pollination of ideas between different fields. Among the important trends biographical and autobiographical writing has been at the forefront. Literature from survivors and perpetrators of the Genocide, aid workers and military personnel, as well as journalist memoirs among other biographical topics have been manifold in this topic of study. Beyond that trend has been an incredibly large amount of work done by political scientists and historians detailing various international factors regarding everything from arming the genocidal regime to reasons for the relative lack of an international response. Within that stream of literature the works of Prunier and Klinghoffer are very influential and often cited, while others like Melvern and Powers have certainly influenced how the Rwandan Genocide is framed, both within academic and non-academic circles. There have also been various attempts to explain the reasons why the Genocide occurred, focusing on

¹⁰³ John Rucyahana with James Riordan, *The Bishop of Rwanda: Finding Forgiveness Amidst a Pile of Bone*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2007), 197.

internal and external motivations. Among these studies Mahmood Mamdani's *When Victims Become Killers* is both seminal and controversial, for its stance that can be perceived as a justification for the Genocide due to previous historical wrongdoing committed by Rwandan Tutsi when they were in power.¹⁰⁴

The other trends in the literature, such as studies on NGOs, legal issues, and religious issues within the Genocide have all been previously addressed. The overall trend within the literature seems to be one of diversity in both topic and methodology with many works branching off in various smaller topics as more is written about the Genocide.

¹⁰⁴ Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).

CHAPTER TWO: TOO FEW VOICES; TOO MANY DISTRACTIONS; THE AMERICAN MEDIA AND THE RWANDAN GENOCIDE

In 1994, over a period of less than four months, 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were slaughtered during the Rwandan Genocide.¹⁰⁵ While there was media coverage of this Genocide in America it could barely be called adequate. Additionally it was not until the refugee situation that the American Government decided to act. In some cases reporters seemed less interested in calling for American or Western action than those that wrote letters to the magazines did. Did other news stories occurring contemporaneous to the Genocide push Rwanda from the picture? Is there anything in the language used by reporters that reflects the priority level of the Genocide, or for that matter the desire of reporters and/or editors to truly understand Rwanda? Was Rwanda looked at as a modern country, with its own problems, history, and society or an exotic and distant charnel house, where ancient tribal hatred and chthonic blood feuds ruled the day? Were Rwandans portrayed as sub-humans that were incapable of handling their own problems in any way other than slaughtering entire populations over political disputes? Was the language used in describing Rwanda conducive to convincing average Americans that this story, one of Genocide and Civil War, one that they should care about in any meaningful way? Why did the refugee crisis attract more attention than the Genocide? These questions will be addressed by looking at various mainstream American periodicals in the period during and shortly after the Rwandan Genocide.

This chapter has multiple sections. Following this introduction there will be a timeline of the history of Rwanda, focusing on, but not limited to, the Genocide. Following that there will

¹⁰⁵ Power, *A Problem from Hell*, 91, among others.

be a brief look at books written by Western investigative journalists after the Genocide to attempt to ascertain whether or not notions of “tribalism” and “ancient hatreds” continued to be promulgated after the Genocide ended. Then there will be a section on more mainstream print magazines followed by sections detailing the works looking at more left and right leaning publications.

Investigative Journalistic Books Written after the Genocide

Fergal Keane, already by the time of the Rwandan Genocide an extremely experienced African correspondent, illustrates some of the problems with the reporting of this Genocide. “I was too preoccupied with the dramatic events unfolding in South Africa to give the matter anything more than cursory attention.”¹⁰⁶ These words reflect his thoughts immediately after the deaths of the presidents of Burundi and Rwanda ignited ethno-political tensions, turning them into Genocide. He goes on to explain how the pictures and video clips coming out of Rwanda in the early stages of the Genocide were received by reporters and other Westerners in South Africa and why he feels this reception occurred.

The general consensus was that Rwanda was a madhouse, a primitive torture chamber where rival tribes were busy settling ancient scores. I could not, watching the apocalyptic images unfolding on the video screens, imagine Rwanda as country in its own right¹⁰⁷

Keane goes on to talk about the fact that many in the community of reporters in Africa, as well as in the larger international community, knew this was Genocide but could not think of this conflict as anything other than ancient tribal rivalries gone awry. This he claims is in part because of the journalistic habit of only covering Rwanda and Burundi during ethnic strife, doing

¹⁰⁶ Fergal Keane, *Season of Blood: a Rwanda Journey*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 5.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 6.

so quickly, and then leaving to chase another story.¹⁰⁸ A final point of note that Keane makes about the coverage of the Rwandan Genocide is the constant depiction of both the Rwandan Civil War and the Genocide as the result of ethnic tensions, that these events “were a straight forward ‘tribal war.’”¹⁰⁹

It is interesting that this type of terminology is used, instead of ethnic clash, terms such as “tribal war,” “tribal rivalry,” or any phrase in which the term “tribal” can be used. Keane points out the lack of concern for social and/or political reasons in a lot of the early coverage of this Genocide.¹¹⁰ As a scholar it is difficult not to wonder how much this idea of tribal problems, and in the cases of some reports, ancient tribal problems allowed for the sitting on hands of the UN, the US government, and the nations of Western Europe. By portraying Africans as tribal, was this reporting doing anything save abetting inertia?

Other Western journalists showed similar attitudes towards Rwanda that Keane displayed early on. Christian Jennings’ work on Rwanda does not begin until after the Genocide was over and the RPF had already won and taken over the country.¹¹¹

For a more nuanced, if somewhat hyperbolic and poetic, view on Rwanda from a European journalist there is Ryszard Kapuscinski’s chapter on Rwanda in his book *The Shadow of the Sun*. While he delves into many topics in Rwandan history from prehistory until the refugee crisis his words still strike a similar paternalist Western tone.¹¹² He also sums up Western reaction perfectly. “Those in Europe, observing the endless columns on their television

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 6-7.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 8.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 7.

¹¹¹ Christian Jennings, *Across the Red River: Rwanda, Burundi, & the Heart of Darkness*, (London: Phoenix, 2000), 3.

¹¹² Ryszard Kapuscinski, *The Shadow of the Sun*, trans. Klara Glowczewska, (New York: Vintage Books International, 2002), 165-82.

screens, could not fathom what force propelled these emaciated wanderers.”¹¹³ Of course he was describing the largely Hutu refugees and spends almost as much time on their story as he does on the Genocide itself, helping prop up the dual victimhood narrative that the rest of the world had settled on.

Other works such as those of Linda Melvern and Samantha Power provide much more nuanced and rigorous looks at the Genocide. These books are more likely to leave aside the clichés about “tribalism” and savagery.

Timeline of Coverage

There are remarkable similarities to be found when looking at the coverage in the four more mainstream publications *Newsweek*, *The New Yorker*, *Time*, and *US News and World Report*. For example there are multiple times in each publication that Rwanda does not get covered at all during one of the most devastating Genocides since the Holocaust. How could there be any kind of rush to force America or the UN to intervene if Genocide receives little to no coverage? This is especially true when national stories with more of an appeal to the cult of celebrity come into the picture. The Simpson and Cobain situations came forward and often reduced, if not eliminated, coverage of Rwanda. While the Cobain suicide did not demand as much attention as did Simpson, Cobain’s death still overshadowed the deaths of thousands when it happened. The Simpson case was even more detrimental to coverage of the ongoing civil war and Genocide in Rwanda. It is not until after the capture of most of the country by the RPF and the creation of the French safe zone that Rwanda re-enters the spotlight.

This reappearance is marked by the increase in the refugee situation, which by that point had already succeeded in vamping coverage away from the Genocide itself. And with this new

¹¹³ Ibid, 182.

Rwandan crisis, one that was born at least partially as the result of Western inaction suddenly both mainstream magazines and the world start to pay attention. Suddenly even the more disinterested publications are filled with concern for the poor starving Rwandans, all the while acknowledging that some of these refugees were responsible for the Genocide. Rwanda suddenly becomes worthy of the cover again, if it was ever worthy of it at all, once the refugee crisis is in full swing. This seems somewhat logical in that it is easier and safer to be safe in a UN or NGO run camp than in the midst of a civil war and a Genocide to go about finding human interest stories.

April

The Rwandan Genocide enters the picture in *US News and World Report* with the April 18, 1994 edition. Rwanda gets the same amount of coverage as Bosnia, about a third of a page, while a story on the South African elections gets two pages. The Rwanda piece covers the so-called “Somalia factor” and the fact that Western governments rushed in to get their people out while no one was calling for an international force to deal with the situation. It also reiterates the wildly discarded theory that it was the RPF that shot down the plane carrying President Habyarimana. The Western, especially American, efforts to pull their citizens out of Rwanda has an interesting counterpoint in the Bosnia article which quotes President Clinton saying that the West must show “firm resolve”¹¹⁴ It is rather likely that the White House did not yet know the full extent of what was happening nor what was coming but obviously they knew enough to feel that pulling out American citizens was a prudent idea. Firm resolve was needed for a European problem but there was no resolve called for or desired in regards to Rwanda.

¹¹⁴ *US News and World Report*, “Carnage Shunned” page 18 for Rwanda, “A Time Not to Fight” page 19 for Bosnia, and pages 12-3 for South Africa, April 18, 1994.

The subsequent issue shows how much more important the South African elections were as opposed to either Rwanda or Bosnia in the eyes of this publication. South Africa gets nine pages, while Rwanda gets a little over one third of a page and Bosnia sees a paragraph in the political gossip column “Washington Whispers.” The RPF is discussed as if it is inevitable that they will seek out and obtain the most bloody of retributions. This article does, at least, do a little more castigating of the world powers for their lack of response.¹¹⁵

Newsweek's attention to Rwanda starts with their April 18, 1994 edition. At the same time coverage of the Cobain suicide also begins. In this issue articles dealing with Cobain and the related topic of suicide/teen suicide total six pages as well as the cover while Rwanda only gets a page of coverage. The Rwanda article again uses the buzzword of the topic for the print media, tribal.¹¹⁶ This topic has already been commented on and will be addressed again in this section. Returning to the Cobain dilemma, it is telling of the editorial staff at *Newsweek* that the death of one rock star, by his own hand no less, is given more attention than the plight of thousands in what amounts to a far off land that many Americans, even those with tertiary education, would be hard pressed to find on a map. This culture of celebrity mindset has already been shown to have drastic consequences on the coverage of the Rwandan Genocide once the Simpson story breaks and will be shown to have the same effect throughout this work.

This separation of topics and prioritizing has to happen in every magazine, but this helps reinforce the notions of the previously discussed study on the media and natural disasters. Not only did a slower running disaster in Eastern Europe demand comparable attention to Rwanda but both the Cobain and Simpson cases, which did not fully synch up chronologically to the

¹¹⁵ *US News and World Report*, “Africa’s Continuing Horror Show” page 14 for Rwanda, page 27 for Bosnia, and pages 44-6, 59-62, 64, and 66 for South Africa, April 25, 1994.

¹¹⁶ *Newsweek*, “Corpses Everywhere” page 33 and pages 44-9 for Cobain, April 18, 1994

Rwandan Genocide and Civil War, became focuses demanding comparable, if not higher, amounts of attention. While on a certain level the simplistic interpretation of the Einsensee and Stromberg study is “the closer to the home the more important”, a larger take away would be the closer to familiar, the more important.¹¹⁷ Priority is given to something that is somehow more understandable, while those things that are less understandable are less important. This lessened importance in some ways anticipates and gives motivation to the “othering” and Orientalizing of Rwandans. If something is removed from importance and from understanding making it important and understandable by creating a narrative that promotes understanding. That narrative is one that has existed for a long time, the narrative of the savage, uncivilized, and barbarous African tribesman. This type of narrative could in many ways be seen as a default setting for Africa in the age of parachute journalism.¹¹⁸

The next issue contains two Rwanda stories and surprisingly one of them has a pro intervention direction. The other article, two pages in length, uses the phrase “orgy of tribal slaughter,” revealing, yet again, the propensity of the media during this period to show Rwanda in a less civilized light, as if Genocides had not happened in the Western world. The opinion piece has several noteworthy passages. In one section the author asks, when mentioning situations such as religious strife in Ireland, “Incidentally, why aren’t Protestants and Catholics- or Muslims and Serbs in Bosnia- referred to as “tribes””? Weren’t the Celts once a tribe?” Then, a scant one paragraph later, uses the words “tribal violence.” This man, Jonathan Alter, then goes on to criticize both Clinton and African-American leaders for their shortcomings during this crisis. He also points out the paradox of morality between intervention in Bosnia and

¹¹⁷ Einsensee and Stromberg, “News Floods, News Droughts, American Disaster Relief,” 14.

¹¹⁸ Keim, *Mistaking Africa*, Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis, and various other sources*.

the lack thereof in Rwanda.¹¹⁹ This early call for action, as well as the astute nature of the critiques of certain American leaders, is something not seen in other mainstream publications covered for this study. Some of these points, in more detailed fashion, have been laid out by academics in works written after the dust had cleared from the Genocide and the concurrent Civil War. Overall this piece is one of the best examples of how the media might have been able to force more debate about taking action, if not forcing action itself, as it seems obvious that Alter wished something would be done. On the other hand the usage of tribal is still problematic from a language point of view. Pointing out how others from less settled parts of Europe are committing the same types of violence does little to portray Rwandans as modern and human, instead it creates a larger pool of “tribal savages” that defy reason.

The New Yorker stories detailing Rwanda are, as previously mentioned, good pieces that show some knowledge of the topic. Of the four pieces on Rwanda during the period mentioned earlier only two are articles. One of the other two is an opinion piece while the last is a portrayal of Rwanda by an artist. It should also be pointed out that the one Bosnia piece contains little in the way of an article and is mostly artistic interpretations of the ongoing strife by children.¹²⁰ While these children are from Bosnia it is telling that this story only appears once in eighteen issues. Combining this with the one story on Haiti, it does tend to show a pattern.

Another facet of this coverage is that when Rwanda is addressed for the first time so is the Kurt Cobain suicide. In this issue Cobain receives one more page of coverage than Rwanda does. This story about Rwanda is about a human rights worker of Rwandan extraction and the trials and tribulations of her escape from the country during the days immediately after the

¹¹⁹ *Newsweek*, “Deeper in the Abyss” pages 32-3 and “When the World Shrugs” page 34, April 25, 1994.

¹²⁰ *The New Yorker*, April 4, 1994, page 87-9.

initiation of the Genocide.¹²¹ This story is rather specialized, dealing with a person that worked for Human Rights Watch, thusly a person of interest to Westerners. It is also of the human interest story vein that so many stories during this period turned out to be.

May

A *Time* magazine article shows how in one report a magazine can get it both right and wrong simultaneously. While dedicating part of the space in the cover story on Rwanda to gaining information from noted historians, earlier portions of the article still use phrases like “long litany of tribal massacres.”¹²² That phrase sets a false stage for the academic perspective that is presented in the article. The phrase is used to compare the Rwandan Genocide to other conflicts in developing nations. Although this article goes into more depth and discusses some of the political reasons behind the slaughters the use of the word tribal can preclude a full understanding of the underlying social, political, and economic causes of the Rwandan Genocide. How much credence would be given to a report discussing problems between Greeks and Turks living on the same land if the words “tribal differences” were used? While this report has some holes in it, it does highlight some of the problems occurring on the ground at that time. There is another view of the Rwandan Genocide that bears mentioning in this same issue. In a letter to *Time*, a reader decries their use of a “ghastly photograph.” His recommendation was that information could be “communicated through writing, without employing photographs unfit for publication.”¹²³ It is possible that this reader had a point in his letter, in that the many images of carnage coming out of Rwanda were insufficient to move the UN or the West into actions, so

¹²¹ *The New Yorker*, pages 42-5, April 25, 1994.

¹²² *Time* “The Killing Fields of Rwanda” page 57 for the quotation, pages 56-63 for the complete article, May 16, 1994.

¹²³ *Time* “Letters” page 6, May 16, 1994.

what point did these photographs serve at the time, other than to act as some kind of, for lack of a better term, violence pornography? Did showing the carnage in graphic detail contribute the overload on humanitarian crises that America seems to have been unable to handle? After a story in which “tribalism” was used again these pictures might not have been news in the eyes of some readers. Instead they might have reinforced the hopelessness that this level of carnage and the notion that the conflict that created the Genocide was so long running, ingrained, and never ending that even an intervention would do little save forestall the inevitable.

The May editions of *US News and World Report* shows new ways to cover Rwanda. The first installment chooses to go with a favored tactic of journalists, the human interest story. In this one page story, the plight of a young man that was sent by his parents to America to go to high school is chronicled. It goes through his reaction to the outbreak of ethno-political massacres through the slaughter of his family. This article also uses the already critiqued word “tribal” to describe the slaughter and the political differences but this word is also used in another piece from this edition detailing the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia.¹²⁴ This shows that the word tribal has demeaning contextual tones, and that Bosnia was also deemed worthy of those tones. Of course the context of tribe in Europe versus tribe in Africa is vastly different, even if the targets of “othering” in Bosnia fall under other groups traditionally misunderstood in the United States, to greater or lesser degrees, of course: Muslims, Catholics, and Eastern Orthodox Christians. If the latter then it would likely have something to do with two of the three factions in that conflict being Muslim and Eastern Orthodox.

¹²⁴ *US News and World Report*, “Dateline” Outlook section for Rwanda and “Standing up to the Serbs” page 11 for Bosnia, May 2, 1994.

The May 2nd edition gives much more attention to Bosnia: one letter, a two page story and a two plus page story, than Rwanda, which receives two thirds of a page in comparison. South Africa gets a two plus page story and Haiti gets one half of a page in addition to sharing space in an editorial with Bosnia and China.¹²⁵

The following issue gives no attention at all to Rwanda while South African developments gain the cover, a two page article, and an eight page one. Bosnia, on the other hand, gets a page story and a paragraph story.¹²⁶ It is telling that Rwanda could be found not fit for mention for approximately a month after the plane explosion that destroyed a nation.

Rwanda returns to the attention of *US News* with a brief two page story discussing the already growing refugee situation after about a month of hostilities. The word “tribal” comes up again and this piece seems to be striving to let the West off the hook. This article asserts that there is little chance to pierce the level of “tribal and ethnic” animosities but that instead the world should go about feeding and giving medical care to the survivors, with no policy of differentiating victims from killers mentioned, while employing diplomatic methods to try to resolve the conflict.¹²⁷ The article reinforces to the average American that Africans are not worthy of saving from horrible violence but they are worthy of receiving basic humanitarian aid. The illogical conflicts of the “other” are beyond Western understanding however, these articles do not promote what can be considered the most basic form of humanitarian aid, protection of life, especially protecting civilians from mass slaughter.

¹²⁵ *US News and World Report*, *US News and World Report*, Rwanda already cited, Bosnia letters page, page 10-11, 42-4, South Africa pages 40-2, Haiti/Bosnia editorial page 76.

¹²⁶ *US News and World Report*, pages 10-1, 28-35 for South Africa and pages 13 and 14 for Bosnia, May 9, 1994.

¹²⁷ *US News and World Report*, “Rwanda’s Trail of Tears” pages 10-1, May 16, 1994.

This issue seemed to be rather light on foreign policy and international crisis overall as Haiti is mentioned in a paragraph and has a three page story, South Africa gets two stories that combine to be about a full page, and Bosnia receives only brief, if rather scathing, mention in a two page story on foreign policy.¹²⁸ This seems to be a rather miniscule amount of coverage of world events when so many eruptions were happening around the world.

The subsequent issue gives most of its attention to Haiti, while the readers seem to favor South Africa, leaving very little to both Bosnia and Rwanda. South Africa receives a partial page story and three letters. Haiti seven pages total for two stories. Bosnia gets a partial page, Rwanda, a three page story. The Rwanda story is actually quite good, going into repercussions involving Burundi amongst other issues. The third of a page Bosnia article shows something that could help explain the pattern of *US News* giving excuses for Western, UN, and American inaction. This article praises the world leaders, including America, for delivering a peace plan to the Serbs, Bosnian Muslims, and Croats, while going on to say that America will not put troops on the ground if the parties do not agree to the peace plan.¹²⁹ The logic of this plan seems dubious on many levels, but is something seen in international brinkmanship again and again, equating a level of equality to victim and victimizer, while placing the intervening power(s) above the situation. The following issue makes no mention of Rwanda or Haiti but does cover Bosnia and the Kurt Cobain situation in brief and devotes an editorial to South Africa.¹³⁰

Newsweek starts off May without coverage of the Genocide or related stories. This lack of attention to the Genocide is the first of seven such examples by *Newsweek* during the period

¹²⁸ *US News and World Report*, Haiti Washington Whispers page and pages 36-8, South Africa pages 39 and 42, and Bosnia in “‘Don’t Bother Me with Foreign Policy’” on page 39.

¹²⁹ *US News and World Report*, South Africa letters page and page 20, Bosnia “A ‘Foundation for Peace’ in Bosnia” page 17, Haiti pages 14-5 and 26-30, and Rwanda pages 46-8, May 23, 1994.

¹³⁰ *US News and World Report*, May 30, 1994.

from April 18 to the end of August, 1994. Seven separate issues that do not address the Rwandan Genocide by a major publication is far too many. The others will be attended later, in the order in which they occurred¹³¹ .

When Rwanda returns to the attention of this periodical the word tribal again rears its head, this time as “savage tribal warfare.” This type of language becomes more common the deeper one delves into the coverage of the time. The other point of interest in this piece is that the word Genocide is used, for what appears to be the first time by *Newsweek* in this story.¹³² This story shows a pattern from this magazine, insight and interest in the Rwandan situation are combined with poorly chosen words. When combined with no attention in the previous issue and the pros and cons of the other issues already covered the developing picture is one of erratic coverage. “Savage tribal warfare” does more than the normalize the notion that Rwandans, indeed Africans are incapable of reasoned thought and are controlled by primitive drives and long held arcane hatreds.

The next issue shows more of the up and down nature of *Newsweek's* coverage. In the article about Rwanda there is a serious editing error, calling the Hutu the minority, and attention being paid to refugees and RPF atrocities while largely ignoring the Genocide that was occurring.¹³³ While it is not the intention of this study to defend the actions of the RPF as a whole, or its members, focusing on what now seem to be relatively isolated incidents of RPF reprisals is to show one of the most narrow views of the conflict and the Genocide. Additionally, by getting to the refugee story this early *Newsweek* is foreshadowing the path that most of the later coverage will take once the refugee crisis has reached its height.

¹³¹ *Newsweek*, May 2, 1994.

¹³² *Newsweek*, “Mass Murder” pages 40-1, May 9, 1994.

¹³³ *Newsweek*, “Escape from Hell” pages 34-5, May 16, 1994.

The subsequent issue has a somewhat insightful story detailing the history of churches in the Hutu-Tutsi conflict over the decades and shows that the safe harbor offered by said churches in years past was a thing of the past. The other main thrust of this story is the emptying of villages ahead of the RPF's advance.¹³⁴ The detail and accuracy with which the execution of massacres at churches shows a more in depth side of the *Newsweek* coverage. But this is soon to be lessened by three problems. The first is a three week, three issue banishment of coverage of the Rwandan Genocide. The next is a largely fatalist article when Rwanda returns to the pages of this publication.¹³⁵

June

The letters continue to roll into *Time* magazine for their June 6, 1994 edition after a veritable flurry of coverage in the intervening two issues, those being a paragraph on the Rwandan Genocide in each of the May 23 and 30 issues.¹³⁶ This time the letters are a little more thoughtful. These letters include one from a Rwandan in America saying that blame for the Genocide cannot be placed at the feet of either the German or Belgian colonial masters. Additional letters about Rwanda in this issue include various points of view.¹³⁷ There are demands for action by the international community, feelings of guilt about the ability of Americans to filter out the inhumanity of the crisis in Rwanda, and a reminder that ethnic violence claimed thousands in Burundi the previous year to little fanfare then or even as a comparison to the Rwandan Genocide. One letter from this bunch is of particular interest. This

¹³⁴ *Newsweek*, "The Killing Fields" pages 46-7, May 23, 1994.

¹³⁵ *Newsweek*, May 30, June 6, & June 13, 1994 for the gap and "Inside a War Zone: 'The Situation is Desperate'" pages 44-6, June 20, 1994.

¹³⁶ *Time*, dates provided.

¹³⁷ There were five letters that seem to have been printed in full plus a quotation from another letter.

letter is a rebuke of the previously mentioned one from May 16, 1994. To sum up the letter its author wishes that more people took as much offence at the pictures of violence in Rwanda to act, instead of just complaining about being forced to see them.¹³⁸ It could be argued that these letters in some way diminish the argument of this thesis. Some people were engaging the subject matter, looking past the “othering” and “exoticizing” of Rwanda to try to understand the situation on the ground. On the other hand the notions contained in these letters show that some can read beyond the simplistic and stereotypical ways in which the media was covering the Genocide and Civil War. This nuanced reading of the subject matter by a mass audience shows, or at least implies, that a more complete and accurate reporting and commentary could have made humanitarian aid and mass appeal for such aid, a possibility. It should be noted that there was action taken about the Refugee Crisis which became the main topic of media scrutiny as the Genocide was winding down.

Additionally this issue has a one paragraph description of the Hutu flight from Kigali as the RPF advances and a quotation from Boutros Boutros-Ghali about the failure of the international community. There is also a one-page piece about the international community and its response to the Rwandan Genocide and the Rwandan Civil War. This article covers many of the myriad reasons for the lack of international intervention but does not seem to be pressing for any real action. It does less to call the world community to task, instead focusing on why it will not move to stop a Genocide and giving the, somewhat correct in retrospect, opinion that the only way the world would get involved en masse would be if the RPF won control of the country and did not start mass reprisals.¹³⁹ It is this type of reporting of the print media and reaction

¹³⁸ *Time* “Letters” page 6, June 6, 1994.

¹³⁹ *Time*, “Rebels Gain in Rwanda” page 14 for paragraph and “Sorry, Wrong Country” page 34 for the article.

from the public that lies at the center of this work. Letters trying to provide a more thorough context and/or hoping for intervention are found in the same issue as a one paragraph piece that splits time between Boutros-Ghali's half-hearted admonishments to the world and the mass exodus from Kigali and a one page article reciting chapter and verse the excuses of the world at large and the West in particular. This type of coverage seems cursory and ill thought out especially considering the flood of coverage given to the post-Rwandan Genocide, post-Rwandan Civil War refugee problem in Zaire and Burundi.

Another point that comes up again and again in the coverage of the Genocide and Civil War is a need to mention, seemingly at least once an article in *Time*, that the RPF is largely Tutsi.¹⁴⁰ A perfect example of this is an article "All the Hatred in the World."¹⁴¹ This need to nuance the coverage is interesting as in many cases later reporting, after the victory of the RPF, seems to cast a skeptical glance at moderate Hutus in positions of power after the RPF became the official government of Rwanda.

On June 20, 1994 this magazine can again only offer Rwanda a paragraph in their news in brief section, called "Chronicle." What is even more amazing is that this paragraph reports on a RPF massacre, which compared to the sheer volume of those committed by government forces were exceedingly rare. The other frightening thing about this issue is that within it is another article about American foreign policy that fails to even address Rwanda, as if the situation there has nothing to do with foreign policy.¹⁴² It appears at this point as if after missing out on the chance to villainize and demonize the genocidaires properly in earlier stories the man that saved Rwanda and his army are in some ways the new target.

¹⁴⁰ *Time*, April-August 1994.

¹⁴¹ *Time*, pages 36-7, June 13, 1994.

¹⁴² *Time*, "Rwandan End Game?" page 20 and Hurry Up and Wait" pages 40-1.

This pattern continues in the next issue, in which the letters section devotes more time to Rwanda than the rest of the magazine does. There are only four letters dealing with Rwanda and one of them is in a section of letters dealing with the fiftieth anniversary of D-Day. The one paragraph article details the RPF capture of the interim capital set up by the government after the fall of Kigali.¹⁴³ However, this lack of coverage can easily be explained by the main story, O. J. Simpson. In this same issue the O. J. situation dominates the coverage: the cover; a paragraph on page 19; an eight page story and an essay.¹⁴⁴ Bosnia also gains more attention this issue with a one paragraph story and a four page story.¹⁴⁵ The exotic African nation of Rwanda is calming down and America now has its own tragedy to deal with, the death of two white people in an upper class neighborhood, in a major metropolitan area and the prime suspect is not only black but a former professional football player and occasional actor.

US News and World Report coverage in June starts with three weeks not mentioning Rwanda. In the first Bosnia gets three letters, a mention in a story about European revolutions of the past, while Haiti gets one paragraph. These two stories are mentioned in relation to Clinton and human rights. South Africa also receives a two paragraph story.¹⁴⁶ The third consecutive issue not mentioning Rwanda contains only brief mentions of Haiti with none of the other stories being addressed.¹⁴⁷ In the last of this series of lack of Rwanda coverage Haiti gets two mentions, as does Bosnia, while South Africa gets mentioned in the “Business” Section.¹⁴⁸ How does Genocide of this magnitude, with so many dying, so quickly fail to be noteworthy, or

¹⁴³ *Time*, pages 10 and 12 for letters and “Rebels Advance in Rwanda” page 26, June 27, 1994.

¹⁴⁴ *Time*, pages 28-35.

¹⁴⁵ *Time*, page 24 and pages 48-51.

¹⁴⁶ *US News and World Report*, letters page and page 53 for Bosnia, page 17 for Haiti, page 12 for Haiti and Bosnia, and page 17 for South Africa., June 6, 1994.

¹⁴⁷ *US News and World Report*, June 13, 1994.

¹⁴⁸ *US News and World Report*, June 20, 1994.

indeed newsworthy, for four straight weeks? This is somewhat unfathomable. The lack of coverage of Genocide is rarely seen. In the cases that were unreported, or underreported¹⁴⁹, in the twentieth century, the countries were completely locked down. This is not the case in Rwanda as there were areas where reporters could maneuver, a somewhat dangerous situation to be sure, but still manageable. What makes this even more alarming is that other magazines were running Rwanda articles at the same time.

The next issue closes out the month started in the analysis above and returns to the overly covered O. J. Simpson case. Simpson gets five pages of coverage, Haiti just over a page, while Rwanda's return to *US News and World Report* coverage is under a page long.¹⁵⁰

In *Newsweek* a chilling tale of the human interest variety is seen about a man trying to find his two surviving daughters after losing his pregnant wife and dozens of other relatives to the Genocide.¹⁵¹ This issue also marks the start of a sequence of three consecutive covers dedicated to the O.J. Simpson trial.¹⁵² While the issues of domestic violence and the criminal justice system's treatment of minorities and the rich are all fascinating and thoroughly valid topics, by the time this stretch of three O.J. covers has concluded the Rwandan Genocide is almost three months old and Rwanda has still not deserved a cover if one were to go by what the publication in question did.

After an eight week gap in coverage by *The New Yorker*, there is a return of the human interest story style of reporting, though this one is longer than the previous efforts. This is the telling of a man trying to get his Tutsi relatives out of Burundi before the violence in Rwanda

¹⁴⁹ Such as the liquidation of the Kulaks in Soviet controlled Ukraine.

¹⁵⁰ *US News and World Report* pages 26-9 and 32 for Simpson, pages 38-9 for Haiti and page 12 for Rwanda, June 27, 1994.

¹⁵¹ *Newsweek*, "I Lost Nearly Everyone" page 41, June 27, 1994

¹⁵² *Newsweek*, June 27, July 4 and July 11, 1994 issues.

spills over the border enough to endanger their lives.¹⁵³ While interesting, and in some ways informative this story, as well as the previously mentioned one, are not going to provide readers with a great deal of knowledge of the situation. This story does give occasional glimpses into the past of both Rwanda and Burundi and shows how these problems affected these would-be émigrés. Both of these stories are well put together for what they are, human interest type stories.

July

Time's focus on the Simpson case occurs again as the coverage enters July, where Rwanda gets one paragraph about French troops entering the country while the O. J. case gets addressed in the "To Our Readers" page, a story of similar length to the Rwanda story, and two other stories taking up a total of ten pages.¹⁵⁴ Again Simpson coverage pushes the ongoing disaster of Rwanda aside in the subsequent issue, although not to the extent of the previous two issues. O. J. gets a one paragraph piece within "Chronicles" as does Rwanda, detailing the flight of large numbers of Hutu into other nations once it became clear that the RPF was going to take over the whole country, but Simpson also gets a three page long story.¹⁵⁵ The Simpson factor increases seemingly exponentially in the following installment of *Time* as that story receives twenty letters, a one paragraph story, a pair of other stories totaling four pages, and a cartoon, while Rwanda receives one paragraph on a UN plan for a ceasefire and on the number of refugees in the French occupied zone.¹⁵⁶ The Rwandan story has largely become old news at this point and it has yet to fully morph into a much more palatable and photogenic refugee crisis

¹⁵³ *The New Yorker*, "Flight from Death" pages 44-7 & 50-5, June 20, 1994.

¹⁵⁴ *Time* July 4, 1994.

¹⁵⁵ *Time*, page 14 for Rwanda page 11 and pages 26-8 for Simpson, July 11, 1994.

¹⁵⁶ *Time*, letters page, page 9, pages 34-7, and page 12 for Simpson, page 14 for Rwanda, July 18, 1994

that will force the hand of the international community. And again Bosnia also receives slightly more attention in *Time's next* issue, with a paragraph story and one letter.¹⁵⁷ The O. J. Simpson murder case becomes rather important to the media from its introduction on and from this point forward the deaths of two people in California garners much more attention than the death of 800,000 in Central Africa.¹⁵⁸ Anyone that watched television during the time of the Simpson case should remember how impossible it was to not get deluged by media coverage. Even if one did not try to keep up with the goings on of the trial friends, family members, and coworkers were likely to keep one apprised as a matter of course. The edition of *Time* just covered also shows the change of direction, and magnitude, of the Rwanda coverage. Once the refugee crisis breaks and the RPF ties up most of the country, allowing for easier media access, the media shifts to showing pictures and talking about the plight of those that fled Rwanda. Now an exotic and failing Africa could be shown without all the danger of facing down perpetrators of Genocide and without the possibility of going against the official wording of the Clinton Administration on the Genocide. Now it could avoid reminding world leaders of their legal responsibility to act to stop Genocide, instead reminding them of a simple moral responsibility to help refugees. The moralizing level in stories like this shows through clearly. And the end result is that refugees are portrayed as more important than Genocide victims, even if a large number of the refugees committed said Genocide. Whether this was an effort to cover the catastrophe in a more palatable way, an effort to sell more magazines, or an effort to prop up the aid industry is unclear. What is clear is that, at least from an editorial perspective, a refugee is greater than a victim of crimes against humanity.

¹⁵⁷ *Time*, letters page and page 12, July 25, 1994.

¹⁵⁸ Power, *A Problem from Hell*, 91, among others.

Once the refugee problem becomes apparent the media starts paying a great deal of attention to Rwanda again. It is hard to determine if this is because it is easier to cover this story because the Civil War has largely ended and the escapees are in a more accessible place or if Rwanda, after the initial outbreak of Genocide and the resurgence of the civil war, became yesterday's news but the advent of the second humanitarian crisis of Rwanda brings new fervor to *Time*. In fact while the Simpson case generates a large number of letters, fourteen to be exact, it only gets only one paragraph of attention by the magazine, Rwanda gets a paragraph plus a three-page story once the refugee crisis comes into focus.¹⁵⁹ This is a continuation of the themes discussed in both Said and Keim. Rwanda goes from a genocidal nightmare to a more manageable humanitarian crisis, at least to the common thought of the time. Once this happens, the media has a story that it can sink its teeth into and the international community has a crisis that it can in some way do something about without putting troops at risk. The international community could be forced into action to help refugees no matter how many *genocidaires* were hiding among them. The popular nature of these magazines notwithstanding a higher level of clarity and differentiation might have helped to reveal the situation to average Americans sooner.

In *US News and World Report* the pattern shown prior continues similarly throughout the rest of the period of this work. In the following two issues Rwanda gets two pages to Simpson's seven, while Haiti receives just a paragraph and then Rwanda receives nothing while O. J. gets four letters and six pages of stories and Haiti gets a letter and two pages of coverage.¹⁶⁰ The good thing about the above mentioned Rwanda story is that it compliments France for their planned intervention while pointing out their ties to the former Habyarimana regime and

¹⁵⁹ *Time*, letters page and page 13 for Simpson and page 17 and pages 34-6 for Rwanda, July 25, 1994.

¹⁶⁰ *US News and World Report*, July 4 and 11, 1994 issues.

questioning their motives.¹⁶¹ The rest of the month of July shows Rwanda getting little mention while O. J. gets the lion's share of attention.¹⁶² The attention paid to Rwanda is not only lacking in volume in this publication during this period, it is also a decidedly mixed bag. The July 18 article makes the French intervention seem less self serving, as if praising French intervention, while the article from the July 25 can hardly be called that, it merely sets up the later, more heavily covered in many outlets, refugee topic by showing a picture of those fleeing and a paragraph that is mostly statistics of the number of the people fleeing.¹⁶³

In the second issue of a string of *Newsweek* issues bearing a Simpson case related cover again does an interesting job of covering Rwanda, this time providing an editorialized piece about French intervention, showing great insight into the situation both on the ground and in the back rooms of the halls of power in both France and Rwanda.¹⁶⁴ This is one of the better covered topics by the mainstream media; it appears that some of these magazines did their homework. It is somewhat amazing that so much knowledge could be possessed about the political situation in Rwanda while at the same time the country is being depicted with the word tribal over and over again. The next two issues are another gap in Rwanda coverage, the first of which sees Simpson receiving the third consecutive cover and then the subsequent edition gives the Simpson case a sizable amount of coverage.¹⁶⁵

Rwanda returns at the end of the currently discussed month with three separate mentions. The first is one sentence in the "Conventional Wisdom" section. The second is yet another in the

¹⁶¹ *US News and World Report*, "The Horrific Scars of Rwanda's Civil War" pages 51-2.

¹⁶² *US News and World Report*, "Rwanda's Rebels Find a surprising Friend" page 17, July 18, 1994 and "Refugee Flight of the Century" page 9, July 25, 1994.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ *Newsweek*, "Nice Idea, Wrong Army" page 48, July 4, 1994

¹⁶⁵ *Newsweek*, July 11 & 18, 1994.

ongoing swell of refugee stories at the time, while the third is reminiscent of a letter discussed earlier when detailing *Time*'s coverage of the Rwandan Genocide.¹⁶⁶ While this letter is less critical than the one mentioned in *Time*, it wonders why “obscenities” and/or “photos of a healthy, naked human body” would not be published but large, detailed shots of a casualty can be shown. The author of this letter thinks that *Newsweek* should be allowed to print what they wish but felt that a smaller picture might have been warranted. This letter is in many ways indicative of the type of coverage that was to come as the Simpson case became a primary journalistic concern. The issues of celebrity, race, economic power, and gender in the Simpson case can be seen by many as important but Rwanda encompassed all of those issues and many more while at the same time looking at global power dynamics. But the Simpson case, while gruesome, was not the charnel house that Rwanda was.

The New Yorker has an opinion piece on Operation Turquoise, and it is among the better pieces discussed for this chapter as it covers, in pithy but enlightening fashion the ties between France and the Rwandan regime at the time. While this commentary is largely culled from other journalistic sources, both domestic and European, it does a rather detailed job of showing the reasons why the French might be prone to intervening to protect a Francophone country from a group of English speaking rebels. This opinion piece is very straightforward and does a good job of bringing up questions relating to the issues at hand.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ *Newsweek*, “Conventional Wisdom” section, “Its Too Big” pages 30-1, & “Letters” page 12, July 25, 1994.

¹⁶⁷ *The New Yorker*, “Gallic Mischief” pages 4-5 July 18, 1994.

August

The August 1 issue of *Time* contains many interesting items. Rwanda gets the cover again for the second time during this period. Rwanda also gets a paragraph length story, a ten page story and a one page essay comparing Rwanda and a recent astronomical explosion.¹⁶⁸ The essay comparing the Rwandan Genocide to a natural phenomenon is very similar to the language to what Said and Keim discuss in their books. African disasters and explosions in space, both are savage, unknowable, exotic, foreign, and completely beyond control.

There are two key points in the long article of this edition. The first is that the figures given for deaths do not come close to what is supposed by historians, 800,000.¹⁶⁹ The casualty total for the Rwandan Genocide used in this article is at least 500,000. While this at least covers some complaints, it is telling that media estimates fall at least 300,000 deaths short of historical consensus.

The second deals not so much with the magazine as with President Clinton, his foreign policy decisions, and his reasons for them. Clinton was moved to involve the US military in humanitarian efforts for the refugees in the camps due to a death rate of one person per minute.¹⁷⁰ This would create an average total of 1,440 deaths per day in the camp. This sum, while abhorrent, does not come close to the approximately 8,000 deaths per day during the Genocide if the commonly held figures are to be believed. It would take about 555 days for the refugee crisis to kill as many Rwandans as the genocide did going with the 800,000 deaths figure or roughly 347 days if the figure from the article being discussed was to be taken as the proper

¹⁶⁸ *Time*, cover, page 13, pages 28-37, and page 64.

¹⁶⁹ Power, *A Problem from Hell*, 91, among others.

¹⁷⁰ *Time*, "Cry the Forsaken Country" page 33 for the Genocide death toll, the number of deaths in the camp and President Clinton's response.

source. Yet with this information Clinton decided not to act in the face of the Genocide but found it prudent to do so very close to the beginning of the refugee situation. This is a similar thought process to many thoughts on Africa and the developing world. Africans could not be stopped from engaging in violence over the slights of the past but the US did not have to change thoughts and minds to provide food, tents, and clean water to the primitive Africans.

The rest of the month of August 1994 provides similar results. In the following installment there are two Rwanda stories, a one paragraph piece on US humanitarian aid to Kigali and another that was discussed above.¹⁷¹ Simpson is addressed in the “To our Readers” section, a one paragraph story, in a cartoon, and in a two page story, while Bosnia gets a paragraph and Haiti two letters.¹⁷² This amount and type of coverage is actually very good and shows a certain amount of balance. The next issues shows Rwanda starting to slip into the background with the same amount of stories but less overall pages, with stories of one paragraph and one page. These stories are about the return of a small number of refugees, the tactics used by some in the former government military and paramilitary organizations to keep them in the camps, and the thirst of these same people for vengeance.¹⁷³ In this issue both Bosnia and Haiti receive approximately the same amount of attention.¹⁷⁴ This shows that Rwanda is starting to regain competition even during the morbidly photogenic refugee period.

The subsequent issue shows that some readers do care more about Rwanda than they do about O. J. The letters breakdown is six to three in favor of Rwanda. There is also a quotation from another letter on Rwanda that does not appear to be published in full. The quotation in

¹⁷¹ *Time*, “US Troops in Rwanda” page 19 and “Destination Unknown” pages 38-41, August 8, 1994.

¹⁷² *Time*, pages 16, 18, 46-7 for Simpson, page 19 for Bosnia, and the letters page for Haiti.

¹⁷³ *Time*, “Devil’s Dilemma in Rwanda” page 12 and “The Swagger of Defeat” page 25, August 15, 1994.

¹⁷⁴ *Time*, pages 10 and 24 for Bosnia and pages 11 and 22-3 for Haiti.

question speaks of the apathy that is killing Rwandans, one wonders where this concern for apathy was during the Genocide?¹⁷⁵ Despite the ongoing issues, and communications from readers seemingly wanting more coverage given the amount of letters on the topic, Rwanda receives a one paragraph story that splits time between a riot in Goma, Zaire and RPF approval of and desire to cooperate with an international war crime tribunal.¹⁷⁶ The Simpson case, in addition to the letters, receives a brief mention of foot surgery and a one page story, while Bosnia gets only a paragraph.¹⁷⁷ This continues the pattern of a Genocide being outflanked for media attention by a refugee crisis caused and, in some cases, partaken of by the very people that committed the Genocide and that even this refugee crisis has to compete with other issues of the day. While the Genocide was obviously over by this point, much reporting could have been done on mass graves, but this topic must not have had the same importance. Or perhaps the African situation cannot be properly criticized and exoticized if Western failures were also brought up.

The last issue of *Time* to be covered in this thesis is the August 29, 1994 issue. In this issue Rwanda again has to compete with OJ Simpson for attention, a one paragraph story each, Rwanda getting two stories that share two pages while Simpson gets a one page article. South Africa and Bosnia both get a paragraph each. Rwanda's one paragraph story and the top story of the split page story both deal with the repercussions of the French withdrawal from Rwanda and the fears that this might lead to another mass exodus by Hutu, especially those in the formerly French controlled zone. The other story might not even be considered a Rwandan story, as it is more about what the situation in Rwanda might cause, and had already caused to that point, in

¹⁷⁵ *Time*, page 9 for all letters, August 22, 1994.

¹⁷⁶ *Time*, "Zairean Soldiers Stoned" page 22 and "Hope Battles Fear" page 53.

¹⁷⁷ *Time*, "Milestones" page and page 60 for Simpson and page 18 for Bosnia.

Burundi. The top article of the split page once again uses the erroneous 500,000 figure for the Genocide death toll.¹⁷⁸ These articles definitely look at valid topics, but it seems as if there is little that those at *Time* want to discuss about the Genocide. It is mentioned in passing throughout the articles after the victory of the RPF and the first huge surges of refugee situation, but in many ways this attention seems to be a mere afterthought, seemingly the Genocide is over now it should only be mentioned in passing, often with faulty numbers, and often as a reason why the refugees are afraid, or should be, and why the RPF might start enacting reprisals.

This magazine was not full of cries for help and/or action by the international community, the UN, or the US coming from the journalists or editors. The most compelling cases made for intervention, and sometimes even concern, were given by letters from their readers. Does this not show a somewhat disinterested stance by the magazine? Looking back through the *Time* articles read for this work the author cannot recall seeing anyone call the White House to task for their tacit avoidance of the word Genocide, which academics such as Prunier have discussed at length. Overall what this magazine covered and how it covered it was not the worst case looked at but it is in the same consistently mediocre vein that many other publications supplied.

One such example of this is the article “Destination Unknown.” This piece says that Paul Kagame is the “Vice President and Defense Minister...the Tutsi general who holds the real power in the country.”¹⁷⁹ While there is obviously some veracity to these ideas the fact that two of the three power positions, Prime Minister and President, were held by Hutus does show some desire to form an equitable Rwandan government by the RPF. Additionally even if Kagame was not

¹⁷⁸ *Time*, pages 19 and 45 for Simpson, “French Hand off in Rwanda” page 20 and 56-7 for Rwanda and page 20 for both Bosnia and South Africa.

¹⁷⁹ *Time*, pages 38-41, August 8, 1994.

playing puppet-master he would certainly be needed to control troops that followed him as well as those Tutsi survivors of the Genocide that would in all likelihood view him as a savior. This idea receives short shrift in *Time*. Kagame's later stranglehold on power in Rwanda does, of course, somewhat validate these notions. This nuanced view is also reinforcing the "othering" of Rwandans to a certain level by providing more agency to Kagame, who received western training, than other Rwandans. This much spot on analysis being included in a story about the incoming order when in many ways the early reporting was rife with "othering," denigrating, and infantilizing Rwandans. This new analysis is just another way to "other." The man who stopped the Genocide was going to have power as an almost messianic figure and as the leader of the new military force of the new government.

August 1994 shows the same kind of coverage of the refugee crisis to *US News* that *Time* displayed. The first issue of the month Rwanda outpaces all of the other stories being looked at in this work. O. J., Bosnia and Haiti get a combined two pages while the Rwandan refugee crisis gets five pages.¹⁸⁰ This switch to large scale coverage, especially after the earlier discussed period of little to no coverage starts to reinforce the idea that the refugee situation is in some way more important than a Genocide. The Rwanda piece is rather well done and discusses many of the possible ramifications to the rest of central Africa as well as looking at its main focus, the refugee problem, although the article does imply that the refugee problem is worse than the Genocide that precipitated it.¹⁸¹

Attention to the crisis stays fairly steady for the rest of the month in this publication while the other stories are relegated to second tier status. In the next issue, Rwanda gets a paragraph

¹⁸⁰ *US News and World Report*, Bosnia and Haiti page 8, Simpson page 23, and Rwanda pages 42-6, August 1, 1994.

¹⁸¹ *US News and World Report*, pages 42-6, August 1, 1994.

story plus a two and one third page article. Simpson is not covered in a story but is the focus of three letters, Haiti attracts the attention of two letters and also gets a one third of a page story and Bosnia gets two thirds of a page.¹⁸² The Rwanda stories are about fears of instability in central Africa and the need for Rwandan refugees to return home if the humanitarian crisis is to be solved. These stories both seem to be accurate and well thought out.

The stories of the following installment detailing Rwanda are not very important within the scope of this project, one story on US efforts to bring water filtration systems to the camps and another on the refugee situation. What is interesting is that the second article gives a new estimate for the number of casualties for the Genocide, one million deaths.¹⁸³ What is so remarkable about this new death toll is that mere weeks previous the magazine was reporting a figure half that and now this doubling, to what many would now call an inaccurate number, has no mention with it of why the figure has risen so fast. It seems possible, indeed likely, that the new narrative of the Refugee Crisis precipitated this change. As this narrative comes to dominate the discourse and as relief for refugees became something that the media, Western governments, and the UN could get behind, reported death tolls rising and the need for intervention became paramount. This type of intervention involves something that the West has long been good at, the feel good tragedy. By setting up a permanent refugee crisis international aid organizations are able to ensure jobs for their organizations and in their fields, while those that, consciously or unconsciously, portray Africans, indeed any from the Third World, as subhuman, less cultured, savage, et al have an easy story. The Rwandan Refugee Crisis left

¹⁸² *US News and World Report*, Rwanda pages 24 and 39-41, Simpson letters page, Haiti letters page and page 16, and Bosnia page 21, August 8, 1994.

¹⁸³ *US News and World Report*, "Rwanda: A U.S. Hand" page 14 and "Resurrecting a Nation" pages 45-6 (specifically page 45 for new death toll estimate), August 15, 1994.

Rwanda an empty nation, it turned refugee camps into armed insurgency bases where the rule of the gun was king, and it allowed for international intervention without the fear of getting into a shooting war. By setting up international aid predominantly outside of Rwanda most conflicts, major and minor, for the next several months were confined to the areas just inside the borders of Rwanda, making the biggest threat to aid workers also the biggest threat to the new, RPF led government in Rwanda, the refugees, and to regional stability. Rwanda's borders became a slow burning conflict that would draw in various governmental and rebel powers from around Africa.¹⁸⁴ The issue following this one brings with it no mention of Rwanda and only passing interest in other stories such as O. J. and Haiti.¹⁸⁵

The last issue of *US News* to be addressed is both within and outside the bounds of this study as a result of it being a multi date issue. The August 29/September 5 issue has only a partial page story on the goings on in Rwanda, discussing the new batch of refugees leaving the French safe zone as the French mandate for peacekeeping expired.¹⁸⁶ This rather brief story is a fitting end to the coverage of this magazine addressed in this work as it shows both the preoccupation with the refugee crisis over the Genocide and/or efforts to rebuild Rwanda and it is an incredibly short piece that recalls many earlier issues and their limited coverage. That is probably the most apt analysis that can be given of the *US News and World Report* coverage of Rwanda, spotty coverage that did not seem to be very concerned with the situation in Rwanda, showing brief flashes of interest with periods of minimal or nonexistent attention.

Rwanda does not fly under the radar in the August 1 edition of *Newsweek*, getting the cover, a quotation, a cartoon, and three stories detailing Africa in general and Rwanda in

¹⁸⁴ Prunier, *Africa's World War*.

¹⁸⁵ *US News and World Report*, Washington Whispers page for Simpson, page 12 for Haiti, August 22, 1994.

¹⁸⁶ *US News and World Report*, Page 14, August 29/September 5 1994.

particular. The largest story details the situation in the refugee camps, while two one page stories deal with Western/African interaction and the question of whether or not war crimes tribunals are a good idea for Rwanda, respectively.¹⁸⁷ The refugee story is rather standard fare for this time, combining details of the situation in the camps with hopes that the victims can be saved and fears that they will not be.

The article on Western/African interactions is rather detailed and shows good understanding of the situation on the ground in Africa. There is a potential problem with both this article and the subsequent; both cite the Genocide death toll at 1 million victims. As has been previously stated, this study prefers the 800,000 figure for the death toll.¹⁸⁸ The final Rwanda related article discusses fears that war crimes trials will deter the return and reintegration of refugees. The question dealt with in this article comes down to whether peace is more valuable than justice. The author concludes, correctly the historical record shows, that “the weary West will choose peace.”¹⁸⁹

In the remaining four issues of Newsweek for the month, and for this study show another decline in coverage as even the refugee camp situation cannot seem to hold attention for too long. The August 8 issue has two stories dealing with Rwanda, one a diary of camp life and death, and the other about intervention by the West in Third World countries.¹⁹⁰ The former shows the same human interest type of coverage that a previous story about the man looking for his surviving daughters showed while the latter talks about places such as Rwanda, Bosnia, and

¹⁸⁷ *Newsweek*, Perspectives for cartoon and quotation page 17, “A Race with Death” pages 26-31, “A Generation of Failure” for story on western interaction with Africa page 32. and “Will It Be Peace of Punishment?” page 37 for story on whether or not to hold war crimes trials.

¹⁸⁸ Power, *A Problem from Hell*, 91, among others.

¹⁸⁹ *Newsweek*, page 37.

¹⁹⁰ *Newsweek*, “Death Watch” page 14 and “A Field Guide for Neocolonialists” page 27, August 8, 1994.

Haiti that the West may decide to intervene in, as well as other less obvious choices for Western action. This article is particularly critical of France and her motives for intervening.

The next issue has only one quotation dealing with the situation in and around Rwanda after the RPF victory and during the height of the camp situation. A Rwandan soldier, presumably of the former regime, in Zaire is asked what he wanted from the world at large. His answer was “Bullets, so we can go back to our country.”¹⁹¹ This answer in many ways shows how effective the indoctrination of Rwandan soldiers was and why the continued presence of peacekeepers was necessary, unfortunately by just using this quotation by itself and not combining with other such sentiments in a story there is less contextual explanation than might be needed. The final two issues of the month show little new content dealing with Rwanda. The August 22 issue prints four reader letters and a commentary by the magazine on these and other letters while the next issue does not deal with Rwanda at all.¹⁹²

Overall the coverage by *Newsweek* was erratic. Some good stories, some more questionable ones combined with gaps in coverage and the constant use of the word tribal when referring to the violence. The opinion of this study is that the reporting by this magazine was helped by a somewhat higher level of concern, or at the very least attention as witnessed by the rather early and strong call for intervention. But as with the previous magazines in this chapter rushes to push aside not just Rwanda but Bosnia for the Simpson case and the Cobain suicide show a tendency towards sensationalism and away from both a desire to inform readers of the world beyond American borders and any humanitarian activist goals.

¹⁹¹ *Newsweek*, “Perspectives” page 17, August 15, 1994

¹⁹² *Newsweek*, “Letters” page 12, August 22, 1994 and August 29, 1994.

In the overall coverage of *the New Yorker* detailing the Rwandan Genocide is somewhat sparse, but as this publication is geared towards a New York City audience this is expected. Within this limited coverage are some very well thought out articles and opinion pieces that provide valid and insightful coverage of certain topics concerning this Genocide. But as with other media sources to be covered previously or later in this study the *New Yorker* chose to give a large amount of their attention to the Simpson case while giving less attention to humanitarian crises such as Bosnia and Haiti. There are four stories dealing with Rwanda between April 4 and August 8, 1994. Bosnia receives only one story during this time, Cobain one story and two letters, South African elections two stories and one letter, Haiti one story, and O.J. Simpson five stories/commentary pieces.¹⁹³ This relatively even level of stories detailing the Simpson case and the Rwandan Genocide belies the true level of coverage. The five Simpson stories are printed over four consecutive issues, while the Rwanda stories are printed between April 25 and August 8. O.J. as the main story is something seen over and over again from the print media in this period.

Overall while their perspectives on Rwanda seem to be well informed, *the New Yorker* seemed to follow a slightly esoteric track when covering the Genocide. Their interest seems to be largely on people from the region with ties to the West, as opposed to the situation overall. This might have been a deliberate tactic, showing ties between Rwanda, Burundi, and the Western World, or it could have been because those involved in the two human interest stories had ties to people living in New York state. Whatever the case may be these stories do provide some context for the greater happenings in Rwanda and Burundi. The opinion piece is somewhat standard in that it questions French intervention in Rwanda. This does at least show knowledge

¹⁹³ *The New Yorker*, April 4-August 8 1994.

of the area, its history, and the political situations that ensnared many facets of the Rwandan Genocide. If there had been more coverage and/or a more concerted effort to focus on the big picture as opposed to tiny snippets then *the New Yorker* might have been much better off than the other sources in this chapter. Considering the purpose of this magazine it is not surprising that they only went as far as they did, and limited good coverage is better than no coverage at all.

Conclusions

There are publications that do not fit neatly into a month by month breakdown. *Mother Jones* and *the Progressive*, provide coverage scarcely, if at all, of Rwanda. *Mother Jones* does not cover the Rwandan Genocide during a period of five issues that goes beyond the time frame normally addressed by this study. The rather extended period of looking at the coverage of this magazine (four months/two issues) is due in large part to the lack of the familiar stories being covered at this time. It seemed possible that this magazine was putting issues out well ahead of time and that coverage of Rwanda would eventually catch up. This turned out to not be the case. It is not only Rwanda that does not receive much attention, but Bosnia and South Africa only get small stories. During this period, however, there is a rather lengthy piece discussing India. That combined with the two short pieces show that this publication did pay some attention to international events, yet Rwanda did not seem worthy of any coverage at all to the editors of this magazine.¹⁹⁴

Overall in the period from the May 2 issue to the August 22/29 issue of *Mother Jones* there are few other references to Rwanda, including two editorials and one opinion piece

¹⁹⁴ *Mother Jones*, March/April 1994, May/June 1994, July/August 1994, September/October 1994, and November/December 1994. See page 18 for South Africa story and pages 42-9 for India in the July/August 1994 issue and page 19 for the South Africa story pages 52-5 for the Simpson story in September/October 1994.

discussing the possibility of a standing UN army that mentions Rwanda within the context of other human rights disasters of that era.

The coverage in *the New Republic* provides much more coverage than the other liberal leaning publications covered *Mother Jones*, *the Progressive*, and *the Nation* combined. This magazine gives a fairly steady amount of attention to the Rwandan Genocide but still does not provide a major push for intervention. Additionally it takes on a somewhat specialized aspect to its coverage, though not to the extent of the earlier discussed *New Yorker*. From the period beginning in April and ending in August this publication provides ten stories dealing with Rwanda to varying degrees. The first piece in *the New Republic* about Rwanda does not appear until May. In this piece a familiar name shows up, that of Joshua Hammer, who penned so many of the *Newsweek* reports on Rwanda. This story discusses the beginnings of the Genocide and what the situation was like in Kigali before foreigners of Western extraction were evacuated. This story gives some short, and somewhat simplified, mentions of the history of both Rwanda and Burundi and talks about some the effects of the Civil War and Genocide that he witnessed in and on the way to Kigali.¹⁹⁵ This story is good for what it is, a firsthand account of the beginnings of the Rwandan Genocide. It does not delve into some of the depths of his stories in *Newsweek* but it seems rather obvious that this is an early story.

The issue following has two mentions of Rwanda, two paragraphs in a piece on American foreign policy while the other is a one page story about why Bosnia was more important to international order than Rwanda was at the time. The two paragraphs detail the UN withdrawal of many of its troops from Rwanda and compare Rwanda to Haiti and Bosnia. This

¹⁹⁵ *The New Republic*, "Darkness Visible" pages 9-10, May 9, 1994.

story takes the stance that Haiti was at the time more important than Rwanda because it has long been part of “the American sphere of influence.”¹⁹⁶

The coverage of the Rwandan Genocide by the *Nation* shows an amount of concern for the people of Rwanda, but only sporadically. Considering that the killings started in early April it is somewhat surprising that there is no mention of Rwanda until the May 2 edition. The first article to appear in *the Nation* gives little information about the death of Tutsis instead focusing on a short, and somewhat inaccurate in this author’s opinion, history of the divisions between Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda while also covering the Rwandan Civil War and the plane crash. The main thrust of this article however is the international arms market in relation to the Rwandan government.¹⁹⁷ The portion about international arms dealers is rather well done, much better than some works by historians and political scientists if all of the information is valid. It should be noted however that this article does not really delve into the heart of the matter. By turning away from the Genocide and democide committed by the Rwandan government and its proxies and instead focusing on the minutiae of the conflict this article does something of a disservice to the readers of this magazine, not to mention the victims in Rwanda.

After this article Rwanda is not mentioned again until four weeks, and four issues, later. First briefly in a response to a letter from a reader, with the respondent saying that he was going to Rwanda and then there is a brief criticism of the Clinton administration for being more concerned about a young man about to be caned in Singapore than about the Genocide in Rwanda.¹⁹⁸ It is telling that a story of mass murder can somehow go under the proverbial radar for three issues and then in a fourth only receive a couple of passing mentions.

¹⁹⁶ *The New Republic*, “Cambridge Diarist” page 50, May 16, 1994.

¹⁹⁷ *The Nation*, “Arms for Rwanda, Blood Money and Geopolitics” May 2, 1994.

¹⁹⁸ *The Nation*, “Letters” page 734 and “Pressure Drop” page 738 respectively May 30, 1994.

Moving on to the coverage, or rather the lack thereof, of the Rwandan Genocide in the *National Review*, there is very little of merit to be mentioned. That is not to say that there is not much to address with this publications coverage of one of the greatest humanitarian disasters of the twentieth century. Starting with the April 4, 1994 issue and ending with the August 29 issue of that same year Rwanda is mentioned fewer times than some of their favorite adversaries. Returning to the coverage by the *National Review* on Rwanda the only major mention of the problems of Rwanda comes not during the Genocide/Civil War period but instead deals with the refugee problem, or to be more exact humanitarian efforts to fix what the Genocide and the Civil War wrought on the country and the region. There is one shining light in this brief, one paragraph long story. It calls upon Europe in general and France in particular, to take an active role in relief efforts. It also calls to attention the fact that France armed the old regime and stepped into the fray “only when their clients were in full flight.”¹⁹⁹ While this reporting is valid and follows the current historical record wonderfully, one paragraph dedicated to the slaughter of 800,000 people would not seem to be a sufficient amount of coverage.²⁰⁰ This type of disregard can in some ways be expected as this magazine is noted for its conservative bent, especially considering the pseudo-isolationist ideas of the Republican party at that time,²⁰¹ but other human rights issues of the day were either largely ignored or used as fodder for assault on the mainstream media and/or the Clinton administration.

The, at the time, ongoing ethno-political conflict in Bosnia comes up a mere six times in serious fashion during the above mentioned issues, two of which are just brief mentions in other

¹⁹⁹ *National Review*, page 10, August 15, 1994.

²⁰⁰ Power, *A Problem from Hell*, 91, among others.

²⁰¹ For ideas of isolationism, and more importantly unilateralism which would more accurately describe Republican policies during the Clinton Administration years, in general see Walter McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World since 1776*, (New York: Mariner, 1997).

stories. The total with jokes and spoof pieces barely rises to double figures. South Africa is addressed a total of nine times during this period, Haiti ten. Thankfully there is little to no mention during this period of either Kurt Cobain or O. J. Simpson, which many other publications overemphasized.²⁰²

Another interesting case of lack of coverage is *the Forward*, a weekly newspaper published for the Jewish-American community. Between the beginning of April to the end of August 1994 Rwanda is mentioned a mere five times. Three of those times are mere passing references, one by a playwright whose newest play was being discussed, another by a man going on vacation to Disney that wanted to leave his troubles, and those of the world, at the door, and a third mention of Rwanda, along with the O.J. Simpson case, taking focus away from a meeting between Israeli and Jordanian leaders.²⁰³

Returning to the *Forward*, in an opinion piece the Rwandan Genocide is used as an example of how the American left should learn to use force when necessary. The following passage is the only part of this article in which Rwanda is addressed and shows the general tenor of the article.

America doesn't have to be part of every multinational force, but we should at least join in somewhere, most logically in Haiti and Bosnia. Rwanda has virtually slipped by on a radar operating on genocidal overload, but one can hope that the American left would support the formation of a multinational African force to end the slaughter there.²⁰⁴

It is telling that someone working for the *Forward* would mention Rwanda slipping “under the radar” when that publication was contributing to that very problem.

²⁰² *National Review*, April 4, 1994-August 29 1994

²⁰³ *The Forward*, “Miller’s Tale of ‘Tribalism’: The Playwright Returns to His Roots” page 1 April 22, 1994, “Masha Leon” page 5 May 13, 1994, and “Worthy of Peace” page 7, July 29, 1994.

²⁰⁴ *The Forward*, page 7, May 27, 1994.

The final time Rwanda comes up in *The Forward* is in a story that castigates American inaction and the futility of the UN. While the laudable goal of trying to get America to act is a part of this opinion piece, and the condemnation of Boutros-Ghali and the UN is obviously valid to anyone knowledgeable of the history of the atrocities that took place in either Bosnia or Rwanda, the main goal seems to be a combination of making sure that mass slaughter does not become another average tragedy story and that the US and the UN will be prepared for future ethnic strife and act accordingly.²⁰⁵ This is one of the strongest opinion pieces looked at for this chapter of this work but it seems largely fatalistic, as if there is nothing that can be done by this point in Rwanda. Even though the slaughter was declining as the RPF was pushing further into government held territory, were there not war criminals still in need of capture? The situation that was perceived by some as the other possible Genocide of the time, Bosnia, actually garnered much more mention during the entire period of the Rwandan Genocide than Rwanda did. It was mentioned in passing in four of the five stories discussed above as well as in fifteen other stories, eight of them directly dealing with Bosnia and seven others where the situation is addressed in relation to some other topic. The coverage of the *Forward* is noteworthy and rather surprising. A newspaper in a democratic nation, which serves an audience made up primarily of, and directed towards, a group that was the main target of the quintessential Genocide, might be expected to have more compassion for, or at the very least interest in the plight of others suffering from attempts to eradicate them.

During the course of coverage of the Rwandan Genocide reporters and columnists often fell back on clichés that are informed by the same thought processes talked about by authors such as Keim and Said. The mysticizing and othering of Rwandans in many ways took the

²⁰⁵ The *Forward*, “Rhetoric Fatigue” page 7, June 10, 1994.

simultaneous Genocide and Civil War and painted them as something that was uniquely African, and specifically Rwandan, phenomenon. While the precipitating events that led to the Genocide are certainly a part of the history of Rwanda they are not uniquely Rwandan. These events bear striking similarities to other Genocides and crimes against humanity that have happened throughout the twentieth century, if not throughout human history. Authors and humanitarian organizations have warned of the need for early detection to prevent Genocide from 1944 through the present day. While each death in Rwanda was unique and the circumstances that made the slaughter possible were also unique, that it happened was not. Genocides have occurred throughout the world. This was not an African problem. This was a problem involving economics, greed, lust for power, racism, and envy. In this it is no more an African problem than the Holocaust was a European problem. The Holocaust was a European tragedy, while the Rwandan Genocide was an African tragedy.

By looking at the Rwandan Genocide from a lens of Western cultural imperialism many Western journalists created a narrative that was at best half truth. Were the “ancient hatreds” displayed by Hutu for Tutsi and Tutsi for Hutu vastly different from any “ancient hatreds” that Germans may have had for Jews or even Jews for Germans? Considering the already addressed narrative of when Tutsi entered Rwanda it would appear that even the timelines of when Jews came to Germany and Tutsi to Rwanda were similar. Were Germans barbaric because they were Germanic? Or Central European? Or were they a people that, as a group, committed a horrible crime, as a group, and have since made efforts to atone for that crime? The latter seems more likely. And while the heat of the moment of reporting, especially when one considers the massive and incredibly fast death toll, may explain some of the reporting that many journalistic

works written after the Genocide, with the potential for a cooling off period show similar language and thought processes is telling.

By looking at the Genocide from a lens of savagery, in an African milieu, from a Western perspective, journalists were painting a picture that included “othering” language the made exotic and primitive something that has happened often in human history. While it could be argued that the need to eliminate the other is a fundamentally primitive mental function, something that dates back to the beginnings of human society, the sheer level organization required to plan and perpetrate a Genocide, let alone one with such a staggeringly rapid death toll, involves many higher mental functions. Planning the execution of 800,000 people is a barbaric act, not the act of barbarian.

This type of coverage creates a distance between the Genocide in Rwanda and the civilized world. Rwanda seemed to be too hopeless for help to be effective if this type of hatred was normal there. And this allowed the linguistic and diplomatic tactics discussed in the next chapter to be effective for as long as they were.

There is an additional facet to the media coverage described above. The large focus on the Refugee Crisis helped turn Western attention away from Genocide and towards a more humanitarian relief story. While there is no reason not to cover this story more attention to the control that from Rwandan government, military, and *Interahamwe* leaders had in the camp, and more reminders of the atrocities that occurred on the ground might have equalized things more. On many levels victims of the Refugee Crisis were covered with as much, if not more, compassion than victims of the Genocide. This was a situation more easily covered, that more easily played into Western notions of the helpless African villager. This coverage showed the same “othering” of Rwandans that coverage of the Genocide did. But this narrative allowed for

more calls to action, and appears to have precipitated more action. The West largely ignored the Genocide. Even France's Operation Turquoise has been shown by many authors to be largely self interested.²⁰⁶ Returning to the more boots on the ground theory, the large amounts of coverage of the Refugee Crisis may or may not have forced action but that the coverage of this portion of the story of Rwanda in 1994 gained more international support than the Genocide did. Whether it was more understandable, an easier crisis to respond to, or if the international community was shamed into action as more facts came out of Rwanda regarding the Genocide, more action did occur.

The increased international activity with the Refugee Crisis is not the main thrust of the coverage. The "othering" of Rwandans is, be they victims, perpetrators, or witnesses to the Genocide, or refugees in Zaire. The coverage of the various crises in a way that painted them as the rustle of African primitivism set many things in motion. No Genocide this effective can be spontaneous violence, nor can it be the workings of a primitive society.

By looking at print coverage of the Rwandan Genocide in American periodicals not just as a matter of "othering" language but also from the lens of the Einsensee and Stromberg article there are multiple things that come up.²⁰⁷ When looking at a death toll that was less than one quarter over the course of seven years that the 100 day Rwandan Genocide was the numbers for various magazines certainly lean towards the natural disaster numbers of Einsensee and Stromberg, but are not quite as stark. It did not take 40 times the amount of deaths for Rwanda to be covered in similar fashion to the former Yugoslavia. Looking at the three major magazines during the period from April to August shows that Rwanda received 53 stories to Yugoslavia's

²⁰⁶ See Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*; Krosiak, *The Role of France in the Rwandan Genocide*, and various others.

²⁰⁷ Einsensee and Stromberg, "News Floods, News Droughts, American Disaster Relief," 3.

43.²⁰⁸ While shows some inflation towards Rwanda people were dying at rate of 8,000 per day, while in Yugoslavia the death toll was precipitously lower. Once the more esoteric publications come into the picture the numbers tend to skew even more towards Yugoslavia. Africa's importance is lesser than that of Europe, even when Africans are dying at much higher rates.

²⁰⁸ *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *US News and World Report*, April- August, 1994.

CONCLUSION: TOO LITTLE UNDERSTANDING AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

During the Rwandan Genocide there were other international issues at the time such as the collapsing former Yugoslavia with its multipart ethno-religious conflict involving warfare, slaughter of civilians, international brinkmanship, and such abhorrent practices as rape rooms and mass executions as part of a Genocide, disguised as “ethnic cleansing.” Add to that the Haiti crisis and a realigning world after the Cold War with a single superpower and the international issues are staggering.²⁰⁹ When domestic news stories such as the OJ Simpson case and Kurt Cobain’s suicide are taken into account the amount of things vying for American media and governmental attention are immense.²¹⁰ The international community was legally bound to intervene and many nations did everything in their power to not live up to that obligation. In many international humanitarian crises America leads the way and sets the tone for global response. They were not the only, or even the main, power working against intervention in Rwanda. France had its own reasons for its limited intervention and China, Russia, and the United Kingdom had little interest in deploying troops to Rwanda. The path of print media coverage that was taken allowed the great powers to do so. A media more concerned about sensationalizing a Genocide, characterizing Rwandans on all sides of the Genocide and Civil

²⁰⁹ For Bosnia Mann, *ibid*, 356, and Eller, *ibid.*, 243-95, For Haiti see Jonathon Shattuck, *Freedom On Fire: Human Rights Wars and America’s Response*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 6, 15, 77-112.

²¹⁰ For Simpson see *Time*, 1 August, 1994. The issues of celebrity, wealth, the race of the accused, and the charges of Mark Furman being a racist in many ways divided many Americans. This trial highlighted the myriad issues of race and class that were, and still are, extant within the US. These issues mitigate the inaction of the Clinton Administration and provide context for the large amounts of attention paid to this case by the US media machine with the addition of this story’s ability to sell magazines and newspapers as well as advertising economic and social factions beyond the othering of Africa were at play. With the Cobain suicide and the attention that people, especially America’s youth of the time, likely had an effect on the attention that people under the age of 30 paid to the Rwandan Genocide, though trying to quantify that is not something this thesis should, or is even capable of, doing.

War as “the other” (individually and collectively), and propping up the myth of a backwards, primordial, chthonic, and unknowable Africa did not help matters. In many ways they made matters worse.

The other topics discussed were likely purposefully covered more than a Genocide due to the potential for advertising revenue and increased circulation. Once one also factors in the “Orientalizing” or “othering” or “Mistaking of” Rwanda by the media the notion of an intervention became improbable at best. Why would America waste its troops in a land where “ancient tribal hatred” and “primordial violence” were the buzzwords of the day? The efforts to not say the “G” word were largely not needed by the Clinton Administration.²¹¹ America would be rather unlikely to get behind a mission to save people that were being portrayed as obviously intent on killing each other. The dual Genocide narrative was a powerful force in “othering” Rwandans. In the minds of Americans Rwandans, victims of Genocide and perpetrators, were “tribal” peoples, engaged in revenge for “ancient” hatreds, involved in a bloodletting on a massive, frightening, and unfortunate scale was appalling. But the media was telling the public that this is what happens in Africa. They were telling people that this hatred went back to a time before European knowledge of the existence of Rwanda. This was something that preceded the recorded history of Rwanda. These hatreds and their causes were somehow ingrained, a part of not only the culture, heritage, and history of Rwanda but also part of the very DNA of Tutsi and Hutu. There is a type of fatalism in the coverage. This type of hatred was portrayed as, in its own way, immortal. America already suffered from notions of peacekeeping fatigue due to Somalia, the former Yugoslavia, et al, why did it need another hopeless windmill to tilt at? The sources state that it did not, no matter what its duty was as not only a member, but the leading

²¹¹ Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 274-5

member, of the international community. In a monopolar, post Cold War world America was the global super power. It had a legal imperative to act, instead it obfuscated, deflected, and dodged that responsibility until a tiny rebel army did what the world could not do, and rarely if ever has done, stopped a Genocide. The RPF did this even with French troops in charge of a large swath of Rwanda in which the *genocidaires* were still active and hiding, if not openly operating. Even with fairly open hostility coming from French troops and the former government and Interahamwe forces still armed, they stopped a Genocide.²¹² Whatever crimes the RPF committed before or since, and more than a few scholars and activists would argue that there have been many,²¹³ that outnumbered rebel forces stopped the killings.

The similarity of language used in media coverage of Bosnia and Rwanda is on some levels unsettling, but for all of the horror unfolding in the former Yugoslavia it was unfolding at a snail's pace compared to Rwanda. The media was given time to get it right. Or perhaps more honestly the long drawn out carnage of the breakup of Yugoslavia forced the media to develop sources on the ground, talk to academics and diplomats with knowledge of the area, and adjust their coverage. Yugoslavia's collapse might still have been being described in the same language of chthonic hatred that the civilized, enlightened, and post modern American society of the 1990s could not understand but they had several advantages. Aside from the slow build towards collapse and a slower path through bloodshed there were also factors such as the people of the former Yugoslavia being not only European but Caucasian European; they were in a part of Europe that had a hand in igniting both World Wars; and in a part of Europe now bereft of the level of clientship by the former leaders of the Communist Bloc, Russia, as the most prominent

²¹² Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 296-299.

²¹³ Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*; Prunier, *Africa's World War*; Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, among others.

state of the former USSR, and China. This last point afforded America a chance to have more influence in a part of Europe it has been unable to prior.

The efforts the world took on behalf of Bosnia, and did not take on behalf of Rwanda, very much line up with what Einsensee and Stromberg have put forth in their study on natural disasters.²¹⁴ It is not just in natural occurrences that Africa is largely ignored, it is in almost all forms of disaster relief. Even the disaster relief that is taken does more to exacerbate regional problems and border disputes as it does to quell them. By supporting long term refugee camps similar situations to the start of the Rwandan Civil War and the Congo Wars²¹⁵ are almost guaranteed to happen. The situation in Rwanda both started and ended with refugee populations displaced from Rwanda. In both situations those displaced represented the elites of the deposed regime, even if the majority of them never experienced that level of power or privilege.

All motivation for things involving intervention might not be this sinister and calculating, but these motivations do exist. Europe has long been an area of concern for the United States. Four of the five official declared wars that the United States has been involved in were against European opponents, five of six if the Revolutionary War is added to this list. Two of those wars were the World Wars. Additionally the officially undeclared, but very real, Cold War turned all of Europe, indeed all of the world, into a theatre of constant political, diplomatic, economic, propaganda, and espionage brinkmanship. Shifting this focus so soon after the end of the Cold War would prove to be difficult at best.²¹⁶

²¹⁴ Einsensee and Stromberg, "News Floods, News Droughts, American Disaster Relief."

²¹⁵ Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis* and Prunier, *Africa's World War*.

²¹⁶ http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/history/h_multi_sections_and_teasers/WarDeclarationsbyCongress.htm last accessed 3/10/2013. The American Revolution against Britain, the War of 1812 against Britain, the Spanish-American War against Spain, the First World War against Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey, and the Second World War against Germany, Italy, and Japan were the wars against, in whole or in part, European nations. The Cold War, though unofficial would also fall into this category as the USSR and many of their allies were European.

Once the dust settled a series of multiyear wars broke out in the former Zaire which claimed the lives of millions. America, NATO, and the UN did little to nothing under successive but there another intervention again in the former Yugoslavia, this time to aid Kosovo.

Beyond that issue the basic fact is that America does not understand Africa. It spent the entirety of the Cold War using that continent as a chess board upon which it could fight proxy wars. It allowed erstwhile ally France to not only keep a sphere of influence in Africa but to expand it. America, France, Britain, the USSR, and other powers used Africa as a playground politically, militarily, and economically for decades. The media, whether news or advertising, in America turned Africa into a distant and unknowable land, where wild animals live next to people, where differences between disparate African groups are prehistoric and unintelligible to the modern mind, and where bloodshed and humanitarian crises are the norm.²¹⁷ Rwanda provided no cause for singing “We are the World” and cutting a check. People were dying painful deaths not caused by famine but caused by torture, machete, firearm, and hand grenade. How could America stop that? And why would they? The implicit mentality appeared to be “It is Africa after all, this will just happen again.”

What is lost in all of this is that the UN has rarely, if ever, stopped a Genocide. More Genocides have occurred after the UN convention on Genocide came into effect than occurred in the hundred years before it was enacted.²¹⁸ More people have died of Genocide,²¹⁹ even though these numbers have to be stacked against the tens of millions that died at the hands of Hitler and

The outlier from officially declared wars was the Mexican American War. To say there is an Eurocentric bias in the US is to state the obvious.

²¹⁷ Keim, *Mistaking Africa*, 35-40, 105-7, & 212-3.

²¹⁸ <http://genocidewatch.org/genocide/genocidespoliticides.html> and <http://genocidewatch.org/genocide.html> both last accessed on 8/15/2013, it should be noted that Genocide Watch also states that more people have died from Genocide, Politicide, and other forms of mass violence have killed more people than those killed in combat in all of the wars of the twentieth century.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

Stalin alone. Yet nothing happens. Genocides do not happen in First World nations very often. They more often occur in areas that are out of sight and out of mind by the international community. That major world powers commit Genocide is nothing new. The first Genocide of the twentieth century was committed by Germany in 1904 in what is now Namibia. They also committed the most recognizable and written about Genocide, the Holocaust. Japan perpetrated the Rape of Nanking and other crimes against humanity such as the use of Comfort Women during World War II. Stalinist Russia had the purges and the liquidation of the Kulaks in the 1930s and beyond. China's Great Leap Forward is probably the largest Politicide that ever occurred. Turkey's attacks on Armenians is often cited as the first modern Genocide but it is still historically debated and Genocidal assaults on other Christian ethnic groups during that time are largely unknown even among historians. Genocide is not new. But Genocide is also not stopped.

Even if there was a Genocide occurring, why did they continuously get involved in the same region of Europe, what was once one country, while ignoring Rwanda, Burundi, and the Congo? Were they expecting to teach the Europeans a lesson, and assuming they could not teach that lesson to Africans? The constant attention on Europe may never end, but the lack of attention on Africa likely will not either. As long as there is a perception of Africa, and its component nations, as a place of savages where only bad things happen Africa stands little chance of Africans being equated as equal on the world stage. If only Europeans are worthy of anti-Genocide intervention, do Europeans and Americans even consider Africans, be they in Rwanda, Congo, Darfur, or Egypt, to be human? While the answer politicians give would likely

be different actions speak clearly, and they loudly reply no. Just ask the Coptic Christians after a short time under the Arab Spring.²²⁰

²²⁰ http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/24/opinion/the-copts-and-the-arab-spring.html?_r=0 , <http://www.genocidewatch.org/egypt.html>, and <http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/in-egypt-the-warning-signs-of-genocide/>. Last accessed 3/15/2013. While the conditions do not yet rise to the level of Genocide the intent, the propaganda, the weapons and the will to commit Genocide all seem present. And here we go again. For a reaction by the Coptic community in America see http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2011-10-19/local/35277298_1_coptic-christians-hussein-tantawi-egyptian-army last accessed 3/15/2013.

**APPENDIX A:
TIMELINE OF THE RWANDA GENOCIDE**

1506 Large scale unification and state formation in the Kingdom of Rwanda

1885 Conference of Berlin decides that Ruanda-Urundi (Rwanda and Burundi) will become German colonies

1894 Gustav Adolf von Gotzen, of Germany, becomes the first recorded European to set foot in Rwanda

1900 The White Fathers missionaries found their first mission in Rwanda

1907 A permanent German colonial post to Rwanda is established in Kigali

1910 The borders of Uganda (Britain), Belgian Congo, and German East Africa (including Rwanda and Burundi) are codified

1913 The cash crop coffee comes to Rwanda

1916 Belgian military forces seize Ruanda-Urundi as part of military operations involving the Great War

1923 Ruanda-Urundi is put under the control of Belgium under League of Nations mandate

1933 Belgian colonial masters perform a census and officially divide Rwandans and Burundians into permanent legal ethnic categories of Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa

July 1959 Tutsi king dies under suspicious circumstances

November 1959 Large parts of the Rwandan Hutu population rebel, causing flight of many Tutsi into Burundi. Belgium now favors the majority Hutu ethnic group

1961 The Tutsi monarchy is abolished and a republic is declared. More anti-Tutsi ethnic violence leads to more Tutsi migration from Rwanda into neighboring countries

1973 Tutsi removed from many governmental and academic posts. More anti-Tutsi violence leads to more Tutsi refugees. Juvenal Habyarimana's successful rebellion leads to a one party system that remains in place until the Genocide starts and Habyarimana is assassinated in 1994.

1982 Violence against Tutsi refugees in Uganda leaves them trapped between hostile forces.

1986 Habyarimana government announces that it will not allow Tutsi refugees to return due to overpopulation issues.

1986 Victory in Uganda for the rebel Yoweri Museveni and his National Resistance Army, a part of the military faction of the NRA were Tutsi exiles from Rwanda and their descendents

1988 Rwandan Patriotic Force formed in Uganda. Political tension leads the government of Uganda to remove overt support from the Tutsi military faction while tacitly supporting the formation and early operations of the RPF

October 1990 RPF invades Rwanda

October 1990 First arms deals between Rwanda and Egypt and South Africa

October 1990 300+ Tutsi slaughtered in Rwanda

January 1991 More massacres of Tutsi in four different prefectures

February 1991 RPF attacks in response to anti-Tutsi violence

June 1991 Multi party constitution drafted in Rwanda

June 1991 French intelligence report states that a cabal of racist extremists centered around first lady Agathe

Habyarimana is interested in blocking democratic changes and shared power with Tutsi

February 1992 Tutsis killed in Bugesera, which attributed in part to Radio Rwanda by human rights organizations

October 1992 Phillip Reytsjens, a noted academic specializing in the Rwanda-Burundi area, holds a press conference announcing that there are dangerous militias mobilizing in Rwanda against the Tutsi

November 1992 Hutu extremist Dr. Mugesera announces that Hutu should send Tutsi back to Ethiopia via north flowing rivers. This foreshadows one of the iconic scenes of the Rwandan Genocide

December 1992 US military forces land on the beaches of Somalia as part of a humanitarian mission

January 1993 Negotiations in Arusha, Tanzania lead to the blue print for a multiparty, broad based government

January 1993 300 Tutsi killed in northwest Rwanda

February 1993 RPF offensive puts RPF troops very close to the Rwandan capital of Kigali. The Rwandan government turns to France for military aid to stop the RPF.

February 1993 This offensive contributes to 1 million displaced people within Rwanda

March 1993 UN report states that more than 2000 Rwandan Tutsi have been killed since 1990 in Rwanda

April 1993 the International Red Cross releases a statement predicting a humanitarian catastrophe in Rwanda, famine seems likely at this point.

May 1993 Rwanda buys arms from France

May 1993 UN recommendation for a peace keeping mission to Rwanda

June 1993 United Nations Mission Uganda-Rwanda (UNOMOR) codified within the UN

August 1993 Arusha Accords signed, they are designed to bring power sharing and multiparty elections within 22 months

October 1993 The US loses eighteen peacekeeping troops in Somalia

October 1993 UN creates United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) to implement the Arusha Accords. UNOMOR is to become part of UNAMIR

November 1993 Organization of African Unity Neutral Military Observer Group becomes a part of UNAMIR

November 1993 Belgian troops arrive for UNAMIR duty

November 1993 More Tutsi killed in northern Rwanda

January 1994 Rwanda takes its rotating seat on the UN Security Council

January 1994 The Transitional government laid out in the Arusha Accords does not come together, with blame being aimed at all involved parties by those involved parties

January 1994 Interahamwe stage a violent demonstration in Kigali

January 1994 CIA report states that if conflict returns to Rwanda upwards of half a million people are likely to die

January 1994 UNAMIR Commanding Officer Romeo Dallaire tells the UN that he has an informant tied to Hutu extremists willing to show him large stockpiles of weapons stating that a Genocide is planned. Dallaire fails in his attempts to gain permission to seize the weapons caches

February 1994 Dallaire informs the UN of hit lists, death squads, and the disbursement of weapons among militia groups. He also asks for reinforcements.

February 1994 The US government puts out travel advisories for Rwanda

February 1994 The International Red Cross and Doctors Without Borders missions both prepare for large scale casualties

March 1994-2 April 1994 The mandate for UNAMIR is running out and the Secretary General requests an extension. His envoy to Rwanda tells the various sides that without implementation of the Arusha Accords the UN will pull out.

5 April 1994 The UN Security Council approves an extension of UNAMIR which states that without implementation of the Accords within six weeks UNAMIR will disband

6 April 1994 Assassination of President Habyarimana when his plane is shot down. Some killings start immediately.

7 April 1994 the Genocide begins in earnest, the moderate Hutu Prime Minister Uwilingiyimana is assassinated and a contingent of the Belgian forces within UNAMIR are captured, tortured, and killed.

7 April 1994 RPF clashes with Rwandan Army and Presidential Guard forces in Kigali

7 April 1994 Interahamwe, government regular forces, the Presidential Guard, and the gendarmerie start the mass killings of Tutsi and politically moderate Hutu

9 April 1994 The RPF mobilizes in their territories and open warfare resumes in various parts of Rwanda

10 April 1994 The US embassy in Kigali is closed

11 April 1994 A temporary ceasefire is put together to allow foreign nationals to be evacuated

11 April 1994 Belgian peacekeepers leave Kicukiro abandoning 2,000 people to the Interahamwe

12 April 1994 French embassy closes

12 April 1994 The Rwandan interim government moves from Kigali to Gitarama due to RPF advances

14 April 1994 Belgium announces that their troops will be leaving Rwanda and UNAMIR

20 April 1994 Final Belgian peacekeepers leave Rwanda

22 April 1994 UN Security Council votes to draw down of UNAMIR

24 April 1994 Doctors Without Borders closes its operation in Butare

28 April 1994 Oxfam NGO stats that the killings in Rwanda are a Genocide

28-29 April 1994 Approximately 250,000 refugees flee from Rwanda into Tanzania in what was at the time the largest human migration seen by the UN

29 April 1994 A UN Security council meeting becomes a long debate about the use of the word Genocide in relation to Rwanda. The US and UK, both permanent seat holders on the council with veto powers, are against the use of the word

1 May 1994 The refugee situation puts Rwanda in the world media spotlight

4 May 1994 Boutros-Ghali states on Nightline that the situation in Rwanda is Genocide

5 May 1994 President Museveni of Uganda accuses the Rwandan government of Genocide

13 May 1994 Boutros-Ghali pushes the Security Council on an earlier recommendation of Dallaire to bring 5,500 more troops to Rwanda.

13 May 1994 Dallaire has conversations with US Senators Paul Simon and James Jefford. The Senators agree to contact the Clinton Administration

17 May 1994 The suggestion of 5,500 more troops is accepted and codified but no troops are deployed

25 May 1994 Ethiopia, Ghana, and Senegal each offer up 800 troops, Nigeria and Zimbabwe soon sign on with similar promises.

2 June 1994 Kabgayi falls to the RPF

5 June 1994 A Canadian relief flight is stopped from landing in Kigali due to intense fighting in the city. Further flights are stopped for the time being

8 June 1994 UNAMIR mandate extended to December 1994

10 June 1994 White House press conference in which the “acts of Genocide” argument took place

13 June 1994 Gitarama falls to the RPF

17 June 1994 France offers to deploy a mission to Rwanda under French command to bridge the gap between the current situation and the deployment of further UN forces

21 June 1994 French troops are deployed just beyond Rwandan borders in Zaire

22 June 1994 The Security Council accepts France’s offer, Operation Turquoise now has UN approval

24 June 1994 French forces cross into Rwanda from Zaire

28 June 1994 UN Commission on Human Rights report is issued stating that the killings in Rwanda amounted to a planned and methodical Genocide

1 July 1994 A group is set up by the Security Council to investigate acts of Genocide within Rwanda.²²¹

2 July 1994 Boutros-Ghali backs a plan to allow France to set up a humanitarian safe zone in the area of southwest Rwanda that they control

3 July 1994 The RPF gain control of Butare

4 July 1994 The RPF gain control of the capital, Kigali

²²¹ It should be noted that is approximately 78 or 79 days after the start of the Genocide.

4 July 1994 The RPF announces plans to implement a government based on the Arusha Accords. This plan does not include a place for those that were genocidaires

5 July 1994 Operations Turquoise establishes a humanitarian safe zone in southwest Rwanda

6 July 1994 Resumption of Canadian relief flights

7 July 1994 Kigali airport is reopened

13 July 1994 The RPF takes Ruhengeri

13-14 July 1994 Approximately 1 million people begin flooding into Zaire from Rwanda, largely from the humanitarian safe zone

14 July 1994 6,000 people per hour flee into the French controlled safe zone

15 July 1994 The US announces that it no longer recognizes the interim government of Rwanda

17 July 1994 the RPF takes Gisenyi, this largely brings about the end of the Rwandan Civil War and the Genocide

22 July 1994 The US government announces that it will begin humanitarian relief to Zaire to help the refugees

October 1994 A UN Commission of Experts releases a report that states that Genocide did occur in Rwanda

November 1994 The UN approves a measure to fund, organize, and operate a court to prosecute war crimes during the Rwandan Genocide²²²

²²² Melvern: *A People Betrayed*, 239-248.

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