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REFLECTIONS ON PHASES OF MASS ATROCITY CRIMES

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An analytical exploration of different aspects and phases of mass atrocity crimes are offered, including some of the key underlining terms employed to describe such a major and complex destructive process. Amongst the concepts discussed are: war crimes, genocide, crimes against humanity, politicide, forced ethnic expulsions, so-called ethnic cleansing, and man-made famine. Amongst the methods described are financial plundering, ghettoization, mass imprisonment, coerced slave labour, man-made starvation, mass shootings, and extermination by gas chambers. A case study of the Nazi Germany's regime of mass deportations and murder is offered to contextualize and provide historic examples of the concepts discussed. Comparisons with aspects and phases of the Armenian Genocide are also offered. The article concludes by offering several cautionary reflections about the grim prospects for even more calamitous consequences of mass atrocity crimes, such as omnicide, in the contemporary era.

Keywords: *mass atrocity crimes, phases of genocide, crimes against humanity, Holocaust, Armenian Genocide.*

Introduction

Objects in nature may initially appear to be straightforward and may, in preliminary *linguistic analysis*, be described as one single, important entity. However, upon further detailed inspection and more rigorous exploration, it can be discerned that there are sub-component parts which are distinctive and primary in their own right. This important conceptualization was offered by Karl Popper in his pioneering, two-volume work *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1963, vol. 2, 375-376). For example, a molecule was once considered a fundamental building block of all things. However, conceptually it was subsequently partially supplanted by the newer awareness of the presence of atoms. Still even later was the discovery of the notion of sub-atomic particles. Similarly, in the realms of linguistics, social science and

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international criminal law, authors have explored the concept of mass atrocity (Gasparyan et al., 2019), which early on seemed to be one overarching fundamental term, but over time it has been suggested to actually be a number of interrelated and overlapping features that can be broken down into more specific terms, concepts and even phases or stages (Hilberg, 1985; Shaw, 2007, 2015, 2025; Bloxham, 2008, 102; Jones, 2017). In summary, mass atrocity crimes can be explored through a multitude of terms, several mass atrocity phases, different groups targeted, and a range of malevolent methods employed. The methodology employed is comparative analysis of the language and terms used to describe aspects and phases of mass atrocity crimes. Major books and articles in the field will be assessed, while offering a critical overview.

Emergence of different mass atrocity terms

Over the past two centuries, a number of concepts have emerged to *describe the indescribable* of mass atrocity crimes (Fein, 1984; Hilberg, 1985, pp 133-134; Whitehorn, 2015a, 2015b, 2024, 2025c). The most frequently used three legal terms are *war crimes*, *crimes against humanity* and *genocide* (Jones, 2007, 2008; 2017; Shaw, 2007, 2015; Bassiouni, 2014; Crowe, 2014). Unfortunately, a fourth term *ethnic cleansing* has also come into frequent usage in recent decades (Bell-Fialkoff, 1996, 2009; Naimark, 2001; Mann, 2005, 2009; Schabas, 2005; Lieberman, 2006, 2013; Whitehorn, 2024; Whitehorn, 2025c; Shaw, 2025). *Ethnic cleansing*, as a genocidaire-initiated label, is somewhat problematic. More appropriate terms such as *forced ethnic displacement* or *crimes against humanity* seem more suitable substitutes.

As a number of prominent scholars have noted, there is often a tendency to use, or even overuse, a single term such as *genocide* (Shaw, 2007, 2015; Jones, 2007, 2017; Moses, 2021), leading some to suggest alternative terms (Shaw, 2007, 2015; Jones, 2017; Moses, 2021; Whitehorn, 2025c). Possible use of alternate terms may partially address this problem. Amongst the other terms which have emerged are *democide*, *politicide*, *ethnocide*, *autogenocide*, *urbicide*, *gendercide* and *omnicide* (Rummel, 1997; Shaw, 2007, 2015; 2025; Jones, 2017; Totten & Bartrop, 2009; Whitehorn, 2025c), and they too can help to provide further insights into aspects of mass atrocities.

Regrettably, the perpetrators themselves often have had their own *genocide self-praising terms* for such radically-sweeping proposals and major upheavals of the existing social order. To the German racist Nazis, it was *Aryanization* or *Germanization*. For the Young Turk nationalist revolutionaries, it was *Turkification* (Ungor, 2012, Ungor & Polatel, 2013). For the imperial Russian expansionist

conquerors of its borderlands, it was “Russification”. For the Chinese dynastic rulers, it was *Sinification*.

The victims themselves, overwhelmed by such enormously tragic and community-altering mass atrocity experiences, often created *ethnic-specific terms* (Jones, 2011 pp 22-23, 2017 pp 30-31) to describe such a catastrophic disruption and massive human death toll. For the Armenians under the Young Turk dictatorship in the Ottoman Empire during World War I, it was *Metz Yeghern* (variously translated as *Great Catastrophe, Massacre or Genocide*) (Matiossian, 2023). For the Assyrians, who suffered enormous numbers of deported and killed by the Turkish government during World War I and after, it was the *Sayfor* (Year of the Sword) (Gaunt et al, 2017). For the Ukrainians who endured the 1930s man-made famine of the brutal Stalinist soviet regime, it was the *Holodomor* (man-made famine) (Makuch & Sysn, 2015). For the Jews under Nazi tyranny and slaughter prior to and during World War II, it was the *Shoah* (Catastrophe/Holocaust) (Bergen, 2009b, 2009c).¹ For the Palestinians in the 1940s and more recent decades, victims of Israeli state expulsions, it is the *Nakba* (Catastrophe) (Pappe, 2006).

Phases of mass atrocity crimes

It is increasingly evident that the dynamics of mass atrocity crimes are often complex, reflecting *phases or stages* (Fein, 1984, 9, 63; Hilberg, 1985, 263-268; Dawidowicz, 1976, 1986; Fein, 1993; Stanton, 2009, 2019; Weitz, 2003; Whitehorn, 2010, 2012b, 2024).² First to occur are early preliminary phases; then more extensive and intensive unleashing of violent behaviour takes place; followed at a later time, with a winding down and/or cessation; and finally in the long run, the emergence of an extended post-atrocity epilogue. Tragically, such general phases of mass atrocity crimes can continue in subsequent new iterations. It is not uncommon for criminals to become repeat offenders and for societies to experience more than one cycle of mass atrocity episodes.³ In fact, past violent episodes are often a strong indicator of probability of more such events (Harff, 2002, 128-129).

Of course, before the stages of mass atrocity crimes occur, other forms of structural inequality involving negative attitudes and behaviour can take place (Fein, 1984; Hilberg, 1985; Fein, 1993; Stanton, 2009, 2019; Whitehorn, 2010, 2012b). A number of prominent authors have suggested different phases. Raul Hilberg had sought to outline in *The Destruction of the European Jews* (1985, 267) the complex genocidal process by noting the following six steps: definition, dismissal and expropriation, concentration, exploitation and starvation, annihilation and confiscation of personal effects. Hilberg also noted prior operations and techniques of killing (concentration, mobile killing operations, deportations and killing-center

operations). Echoing Hilberg, Helen Fein, in both her pioneering book *Accounting for Genocide* (1984) and her overarching monograph/special issue of *Current Sociology* (1990), which later was reprinted as a book with the title *Genocide: A Sociological Perspective* (1993), outlines five stages of genocide: definition, stripping, segregation (stigmatization), isolation, and finally, concentration and killing (Fein, 1984, 63; 1990, 59-60).

Over several decades from the 1990s to 2010s, Gregory Stanton listed a number of stages, initially outlining seven, then eight, and finally in 2012 outlining ten: classification, symbolization, discrimination, dehumanization, organization, polarization, preparation, persecution, extermination, denial (Stanton, 2009, 2019).⁴

In both a *Peace Magazine* article (2010) and a New York city conference paper for the Association for the Study of Nationalities (2012b), I had also discussed different stages of genocide and proposed adding categories. This theme of sequential stages was even explored in my poem *The Verbs of Genocide* (Whitehorn, 2012a, 2024, 99-100; 2025b) which outlined the theme of increasing hostility and violence in the following passage: *Categorized/Stereotyped /Stigmatized/Marginalized/Disenfranchised/Deprived/Victimised/Robbed/ Ghettoized/Deported/Stripped/Raped/Tortured/Murdered/Mutilated/Dismembered/ Discarded/Denied/Forgotten?*

A case study of Nazi mass atrocity crimes

To explore the unwrapping of linguistic analysis and phases of mass atrocity crimes in more detail, one will analyze the Nazi Holocaust of the Jews and other groups, while also making brief comparisons to the Ottoman Turk genocide of the Armenians and other Christians (Melson, 1992).⁵ The Holocaust is the pre-eminent historical case study that reflects the overwhelming focus of so much writing and commentary on mass atrocity crimes and is by far the most cited example, particularly in its detailed accounts of the fate of the Jewish people. One commences by a look at Hitler's *German Nazi dictatorship* (Rummel, 1992, 1997), a horrific *totalitarian regime* (Friedrich, 1964; Friedrich & Brzezinski, 1965), that engaged in expansionistic and aggressive warfare, extensive deportations of civilian populations and mass killings. In further analysis, one can observe both different phases and descriptions of the malevolent deeds and multiple targets of ongoing mass atrocity crimes. As such, different terms and phases are employed in order to gain insight.

After Hitler's initially coming to electoral power, the first victims to be targeted were immediate rival political leaders and social activists, particularly those on the ideological left of the political spectrum, such as the socialists and communists. Their parties' combined electoral vote, in fact, had been initially greater than that of

Hitler's Nazis. From Hitler's perspective the potential electoral threat was significant. This period of swift political repression can be specifically labelled as involving *politicide* (Harff, 1992, 2009; Harff & Gurr, 2014.⁵ This involved the targeting of political rivals in order to acquire and consolidate a Nazi concentration of power into what would become increasingly a brutal totalitarian dictatorship (Friedrich, 1964). In Martin Shaw's most recent book *The New Age of Genocide* (2025, pp 139-141), he seeks to widen the genocide concept to include political targets with the analytical label *class-political genocide*. However, the terms *politicide* or crimes against humanity seem a better fit and have already been employed.

One of the first categories of group victims targeted in 1939 by the radical social Darwinist Nazi ideologists were the allegedly handicapped and mentally infirm (Friedman, 1990; Lifton, 1990). Browning (1993, p ix) observes: "If the Nazi regime had suddenly ceased to exist in the first half of 1941, its most notorious achievements in human destruction would have been the so-called *euthanasia* killing of seventy to eighty thousand German mentally ill and the systematic murder of the Polish intelligentsia." In the Nazi eliminationist phrasing of the euthanasia programme, the victims were portrayed as "those unfit to continue to live" (Lifton, 1990. 2000). In Hitler's world view and apocalyptic vision of racial stratification and conflict, with its proclaimed need for violent purification, the social groups that were deemed to be inferior were to be forcefully removed and killed. These state acts of targeted violence fit the legal label of *crimes against humanity*. The goal was a genetically superior Germanic race, but these targeted groups were neither primarily ethnic nor religious categories, but a social category classified by allegedly inferior physical or mental condition.

Hitler's world view before and during World War II viciously blamed Jews for both Germany's and the world's ills. Accordingly, early on he commenced state-ordered *discrimination* against Germany's Jewish population (Weitz, 2003). Jews experienced state discrimination in economic policies and regulations (Dawidowicz, 1976), were dismissed from the government civil service, their shops were boycotted and vandalized (Lemkin, 2008), and increasingly they were targeted with violence. The original mass atrocity legal terms suggested by Lemkin in the 1930s were *barbarism* and *vandalism* (Frieze, 2013, p 22). They were violent acts against civilians and the destruction of property. Both labels fit the malevolent deeds. A decade later, he would merge the two analytical concepts into his newly-created term *genocide*.

Initially, an increasing number of Nazi state economic and social policies led to the *plundering and impoverishing* of the Jewish population of Germany.⁶ Jews had been dismissed from the civil service and other key sectors of the economy

(Dawidowicz, 1976). Jewish property was both vandalized (e.g., Kristallnacht) and confiscated (Gilbert, 2006; Dean, 2008). These actions were preparatory and component parts of the Nazi overall state-policy of forcefully expelling Jews from Germany.

The *forced ethnic expulsion* was self-described by Nazi ideologues as a process of 'Aryanization' (Dean, 2008; Whitehorn, 2025c). This pattern of Nazi policies occurred as long as other countries were available and willing to receive such a forced migrant population. However, as more lands, particularly in East Europe and Russia were invaded and occupied, the number of Jews under Nazi rule increased dramatically, while at the same time, globally more countries restricted Jewish immigration. As a result, the Nazi forced-emigration policy towards the Jewish population became less viable as a state option and henceforth, a more violent and radical approach was explored and adopted.

Amongst the more extreme measures were state-coordinated *mass imprisonment* and *mass murder*, which became the horrific new norm. The ruthless plan for *ethnic extermination* would transform into more deadly variants.

Man-made famine

One early strategy the Nazis employed to eradicate the Jews and others was mass death by *man-made famine* and disease (de Waal, 2018). Commencing in 1939 and continuing to at least 1942, as the Nazis wars of expansion acquired more lands in the East, vast numbers of Jews, were rounded up and confined to small, highly-restricted ghettos, the largest being in Lodz and Warsaw, Poland. This process of *ghettoization* (Browning, 1993, 52; Sakowska, 2002) was a brutal form of coerced, urban imprisonment. The macabre process of ghettoization involved slow and painful *genocide by attrition* (Fein, 2007) or *death by starvation* (de Waal, 2018),⁷ with its ultimate goal being the mass extinction of an entire people. Browning cites Raul Hilberg's estimate that over half a million Polish Jews died in the ghettos, a number which constituted almost 10% of all Jewish victims of the Holocaust (Browning, 1993, 52; Hilberg, 1985, 338).

Historically, Hitler's Jewish ghetto plan had significant analytical parallels to the North American settler colonial-created reservations which had confined, starved and led to the deaths of countless aboriginal Indians (first nations) in earlier centuries (Churchill, 1997). So too during World War I, the remnants of the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire, who had been able to survive the mass deportations and initial waves of extensive killings by the Young Turk dictatorial regime, were subsequently subjected to the slow and painful state-sponsored and purposeful-death by starvation. Vast numbers of the Armenian emaciated survivors perished in the bleak, disease-

ridden deportee camps in Der-Zor and elsewhere in Ottoman Mesopotamia (Syria) (Kaiser, 2002; Kevorkian, 2011). Similarly, there is also growing documentary evidence regarding the Stalinist man-made famine of Ukrainians in the 1930s (Naimark, 2010) that caused millions of deaths. The Nazi man-made famine fits this historical pattern of state-sponsored mass atrocities.

An important additional component to the starvation of the victims of the Nazi-constructed ghettos and concentration camps was the extensive use of *coerced slave labour* (Black, 1990; Bloxham, 2008)⁸ for the ambitious and ruthless German war effort. It was a key component of *total war*. Millions of subjugated ethnic nationals (Jews, Soviet POWs, and Slavic peoples) were mobilized through forced labour (Gutman, 1990; Rummel, 1992, 1997). A combination of exhausting and dangerous work, along with extreme malnutrition, inevitably led to massive numbers of extremely ill and dead prisoners. It was, in effect, *extermination through labour* (Black, 1990).

From expulsion and ghettoization to mass murder

With the occupation and invasion of foreign borderlands (e.g., parts of Czechoslovakia) and countries (e.g., Poland) and the unleashing of blitzkrieg terrorizing *total war* or *war of annihilation* (Hirschfeld, 1986; Hull, 2005, 205-6; Kramer, 2007) where not only military opponents were targeted, but also fleeing civilians such as women, children, the elderly and the wounded, international norms and rules of war were shattered. The German onslaught in Western Europe, East Europe and North Africa can be categorized as both *war crimes* and *crimes against humanity* (Bloxham, 2003; Jones, 2008; Crowe, 2014; Bassiouni, 2014; Whitehorn, 2024). In fact, the post-war Nuremberg Tribunal used such criminal charges.

The initial capture and killing of vast numbers of prisoners of war (war crimes) and former foreign political leaders (politicide), particularly in East Europe and the Soviet Union, have been documented (Fedowich & Moore, 1996), but are often less discussed, particularly by Western scholars and journalists. As Browning (1993, p ix) notes: “If the [Nazi] regime had disappeared in the spring of 1942, its historical infamy would have rested on the ‘war of destruction’ against the Soviet Union. The mass death of some two million prisoners of war in the first nine months of that conflict would have stood out even more prominently than the killing of approximately one-half million Jews in that same period.”

On the ethnic front, the swift and violent targeting of the Jews of Poland, the Soviet Union and East Europe initially involved mass shootings and discarding the large number of corpses and even the near-dead into mass open pit graves in somewhat isolated killing fields and ravines. It was the slaughter of the unarmed. It

was *genocide by bullets* (Desbois, 2008) that constituted the death of millions (Hilberg, 1985, 338).⁹ Babi Yar was the infamous locale in Ukraine where over 30,000 Jews were slaughtered (Bloxham, 2008, 107), and immortalized in the poem of the same name by Yevgeny Yevtushenko (Schiff, 1995). It was all for the insatiable German expansionist quest for lands that were intended to be *cleansed* of Slavs, Jews and other allegedly inferior peoples. The goal was to make the newly acquired territories free (e.g., *Judenfrei*) of supposedly undesirable peoples (Weitz, 2003; Lieberman, 2006). In the Nazi perpetrator's perverse mind-set, it was *ethnic cleansing*. In the Nazi worldview, it was cleansing the land of inferior races and peoples, so as to allow the Germans readily free access. The term *ethnic cleansing* was originally created by and employed by genocidaires in their malevolent vision of remaking the demographic composition of the vast European continental expanse of land (Lieberman, 2006). As such, it is a problematic concept for scholars, journalists and international officials to use (Shaw, 2025, 100; Whitehorn, 2025a, 2025c). Other analytical terms should be employed instead.

Some speculate that genocide begins with a leader's comprehensive plan early on that is then followed up later by ardent followers. Others suggest that genocide, like revolutions, become more radical over time and stages/phases, as more extremist views come to the fore, and wartime crises foster more violent and deadly deeds. In accounts of the Holocaust, one can differentiate between the *intentionalist*; vs *functionalist* schools of genocide history (Browning, 1993; Bloxham, 2008).¹⁰ Amongst the scholars who portray the intentionalist nature of the perpetrators are Dawidowicz (1981, p 15, 1986) and Goldhagen, (1996), while the authors outlining the functionalist accounts include Hilberg (1985). Relatedly, one can differentiate between *genocide from above* initiated by the dictatorial leader vs *genocide from below* generated by militant activists' actions.

The 1942 Wannsee Conference (Roseman, 2002; Longerich, 2021) in the Berlin, German suburb was a high-level confidential meeting of senior Nazi officials where the central government's plans for the mass deportation, incarceration and murder of millions of Jews were formulated. An extensive railroad network, a vast number of *concentration/extermination camps* (Sofsky, 1999), and gruesome gas chambers became the instruments for a modern, *industrial-scale mass murder* and *genocide*. Many of the most powerful images of the Holocaust are scenes from the concentration and extermination camps. Most were located in Eastern Europe. Amongst the most infamous were: Auschwitz-Birkenau, Treblinka, Sobibor and Chelmno.

While the Jews of all of Europe were a primary target (Fein, 1984), they were not the only ones to be enmeshed in the destructive maelstrom. *Other groups targeted* (Berenbaum, 1990; Weitz, 2003) included the Roma and Sinti (Gypsies)

(Churchill, 1997; Lewy, 2000; Kenrick & Puxon, 2009), Russians, particularly Soviet prisoners of war (Hirschfeld, 1986; Steitt, 1990; Vitwitsky, 1990; Rummel, 1992; Fedowich & Moore, 1996), Polish citizens (Lukas, 1990; Gutman, 1990), homosexuals (Settington, 2013) and political and social dissidents, all totaling a vast number of victims. The Nazi categorizing of undesirable and impure “others” led to the deaths of millions of non-Jews. Estimates of numbers dead by a variety of causes include millions of Poles (Gutman, 1990, p. 98; Lukas, 1990, p. 90), millions of Russians, (Kumanev, 1990, p. 140; Rummel, 1992, p. 41; 1997, p. 112), millions of Soviet POWs (Streitt, 1990, p. 142; Dawidowicz, 1981, p. 6; Bloxham, 2008, p. 115; de Waal, 2018, p. 62), over 250,000 Roma and Sinti (Dawidowicz, 1981, p. 11; Feig, 1990, p. 168;) hundreds of thousands in the euthanasia programme targeting allegedly physically and mentally inferior labelled groups (Dawidowicz, 1981, p. 9) and vast numbers of other ethnic nations. In total, at least as many as five million victims.

As Feig (1990, p 162) observes: “[...] the Nazis murdered approximately six million Jews. The Nazis also purposefully and systematically murdered at least five million non-Jews.”¹¹ One notes that it is such a large number, involving several million, that analytically it is unwise to ignore, downplay, let alone to deny these other victims. Given that the large residual category of the *others* involves so many millions dead, one has to wonder why so little is written about them. Such lack of coverage or even at times mention is analytically and morally problematic (Churchill, 1997; Bloxham, 2008). It seems similar to the problem of other targeted religious minorities victimized during the Young Turk dictatorship that had killed so many Armenians during WW I (Shirinian, 2017). Why is one victim group written extensively about, but less so another? Is it just a question of numbers? Or is it something else? Are some victims less visible? Are some victims more vocal? Are some victims more relatable? In any case, the targeting of other, non-Germanic ethnic and religious groups by the Nazi dictatorship involved a deadly mix of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Clearly, the mass atrocity crimes span several analytical categories.

Post-war tribunals and ethnic retribution

At the post-WW II Nuremberg Tribunal, the top leadership of the German political, military and party bureaucracies were arrested and brought to trial by the victorious Allies.¹² Four international criminal charges were laid: *crimes against peace, wars of aggression, war crimes, and crimes against humanity* (Harris, 1999; Ball, 1999; Bloxham, 2003). The new analytical term of genocide, introduced into the world in 1944 by Raphael Lemkin, was not yet formally part of the international legal

lexicon,¹³ and accordingly it was not one of the formal charges employed in the court proceedings against the Nazi leadership prisoners. The Nuremberg Tribunal sought to address the mass atrocity crimes committed by the Nazi regime during the war, but not before. Sadly, the mass atrocities also did not cease with the end of the war.

In the aftermath of the war, the former victim populations, having regained their freedom from oppressive German rule, took their revenge (Lieberman, 2006) on the ethnic Germans that remained in the Eastern lands that were beyond the domain of the newly emerging post-WW II German states of West and East Germany. Over half a million ethnic Germans died (Bloxham, 2008) and over ten million others fled or were expelled (De Zayas, 1994; Lieberman, 2006). In the eyes of many former victims and observers, it was retribution for past wrongs, while for some, it was simply revenge, mass murder.¹⁴ Analytically, scholars could describe it as *reverse ethnic cleansing* or *counter-genocide* (Shaw, 2025, p. 65). The demographic ethnic make-up of Europe continued to be dramatically altered by mass atrocity events (Lieberman, 2006), even after world war.

Some ominous questions and conclusion

In the urgent military quest to build ever deadly weapons of war, Germany and the United States were engaged in a desperate race to build the world's first-ever atomic bomb, a profoundly unique weapon of mass destruction. Their fear was the other side would acquire such a devastating weapon first. With enormous effort and expenditure, the United States was successful in its scientific break-through, while Germany was not. However, the war in Europe ended in May of 1945 before the American doomsday weapon was fully operational, and thus, it was not used, as intended, against Germany, but rather later that year against Japan, the Asian Axis power. In August 1945, an atomic bomb was dropped on each of the two civilian cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, thus ushering in the atomic era and a new level of human destructiveness. Today, the world deals with the increasing risks of global nuclear confrontation and a possible *omnicide* – the global killing of all humans on the continent or planet (Lifton & Markusen, 1990; Goodman & Hoff, 1990). Had Hitler acquired such an advanced technological development, it is likely that his regime would not have been described as having committed genocide, but something far worse. Had the war in Europe lasted longer and Hitler acquired yet another so-called *wonder weapon*, World War II might have become the war to end all wars, with omnicide (Lifton & Falk, 1982; Goodman & Hoff, 1990;). This is a profoundly sobering thought to consider in the 21st century, where a significant number of aggressive dictators, heavily armed with nuclear weapons, exist and raise the spectre of a nuclear holocaust.

World War II and the Nazi dictatorship both ended before a potentially unthinkable catastrophe, a nuclear-armed Hitler engaged in total warfare. If he had possessed such a weapon of mass destruction, there is little doubt, given his annihilationist mindset, that he would have used such a weapon. For example, V1 and V2 rockets were employed to terrorize and bomb Londoners in the final months of the war. We have a multitude of mass atrocity terms that we can employ to analyze the different years and phases of Hitler's Nazi regime. Fortunately, we are spared one such term. Omnicide did not occur. It is muted optimism about history indeed.

In this conflict-filled contemporary world that is so heavily weaponized, we continue to investigate, document and analyze mass atrocity crimes. Some of the tool kits that we employ are the conceptual terms and categories of such crimes against humanity.¹⁵ The painful and enduring collective legacies of mass atrocities, which often are overwhelming, nevertheless can be broken down into a number of component parts and phases assisting in our understanding. The further we proceed in our analysis, the more we discover deeper sociological and linguistic complexities (Popper, 1963). It becomes our existential task and also requires our dedicated collective effort to "describe the indescribable," as best we can. In greater knowledge, there is hope for a better future. In the words of distinguished Holocaust scholar Christopher Browning, "Explaining is not excusing; understanding is not forgiving.... [but] understanding is the beacon light of our studies" (1998, xx).

Notes

1. A literal translation of the term was *burned offering*.
2. Kevorkian (2011) also notes phases of the Armenian Genocide.
3. Lieberman (2006) suggests the South Caucasus exhibits cyclical patterns of mass atrocities (e.g. "ethnic cleansing") between Armenians and Tatars/Azerbaijanis.
4. Stanton initially mentioned a shift from eight stages to ten in a university lecture that was first reported in the Auschwitz Institute Blog (2012). As he has subsequently noted in his *Genocide Watch* website (Stanton, 2019), he had earlier engaged in correspondence with this author on the topic of expanding the number of stages in his framework.
5. In the Armenian Genocide of 1915, amongst the first to be targeted were the Armenian political, religious and social leaders (Kevorkian, 2011, pp. 251-254).
6. A key economic component of the Armenian Genocide was the confiscation of Armenian property, household furniture, crops, orchards, farm animals, and personal valuables (Ungor & Polatel, 2013; Akcam & Kurt, 2015) and redistribution to Moslem Turks.

7. De Waal (2018, p 22) uses the term “forced mass starvation” to describe the Nazi Hunger Plan. Documentary evidence shows that even in the concentration camps, the central Nazi decision-makers had early on designed the discriminatory allocation of the meager food rations to ensure the man-made famine of the most targeted groups. The lowest ration allocations were assigned to the Jews.

8. The Young Turk dictatorship also made use of coerced labour when it forcefully disarmed Armenian Ottoman army conscripts and had them work under brutal, starvation conditions, and soon thereafter murdered them *en masse* (Whitehorn, 2015c).

9. Military-age Armenian men were usually shot early on in the Armenian Genocide by Turkish troops or militia. In comparison, Rwanda, was often described as *genocide by machette*. Similarly, the Assyrian phrasing *Sayfo* speaks of *death by the sword*.

10. A similar academic discussion has emerged about how early and how extensive was the Young Turk plan to deport and kill Armenians *en masse* vs did the dictatorial regime became more radical over time with some of the malevolent deeds initiated by local militants (Akcem, 2012, p. 127).

11. Rummel (1992, pp. 13, 18, 41) estimates that over ten million Slavs were *murdered*. In his analysis, he uses the more generic label of *democide*.

12. Early efforts after World War I by the occupying Entente powers to foster military criminal prosecutions of the Young Turk war crimes perpetrators were for the most part limited and even less effective in practice (Dadrian & Akcam, 2011; Bandazian, 2015).

13. The Genocide Convention would be passed by the United Nations General Assembly only in 1948.

14. Lieberman (2006) suggests the history of the South Caucasus also exhibited this pattern.

15. The United Nations is currently engaged in discussions about an international treaty on crimes against humanity (Global Justice Center, 2024).

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no ethical issues or conflict of interests in this research.

Ethical standards

The author affirms this research did not involve human subjects.

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**ԽՈՐՀՐԴԱԾՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐ ԶԱՆԳՎԱԾԱՅԻՆ
ՈՃՐԱԳՈՐԾՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԻ ՓՈՒԼԵՐԻ ՎԵՐԱԲԵՐՅԱԼ**

Ալան Ուայթհորն

Սույն հոդվածն արծարծում է զանգվածային վայրագությունների տարբեր կողմերին և փուլերին վերաբերող հարցեր: Հիմնականում վերլուծվում են զանգվածային հանցագործությունների հետ կապված տերմիններ, որոնք օգտագործվում են բարդ, մեծածավալ ու կործանարար գործընթացները նկարագրելիս: Քննարկվող հասկացությունների թվում են՝ *պատերազմական հանցագործություններ*, *ցեղասպանություն*, *մարդկության դեմ հանցագործություններ*, *քաղաքական սպանություն*, *հարկադիր էթնիկական արտաքսում*, այսպես կոչված *էթնիկ զտումներ* և *մարդածին սով* տերմինները: Նկարագրվում են նաև ֆինանսական թալանը, գետտոիզացիան, զանգվածային բանտարկությունը, հարկադիր ստրկական աշխատանքը, զանգվածային գնդակահարությունները և գազային խցիկներով ոչնչացումը: Առաջարկվում են նաև համեմատություններ Հայոց ցեղասպանության տարբեր կողմերի և փուլերի հետ: Հոդվածն ավարտվում է ժամանակակից դարաշրջանում ավելի ադեոսալի հետևանքների մոայլ հեռանկարների վերաբերյալ մի քանի նախագուշացնող մտորումներով:

Բանալի բառեր՝ *զանգվածային վայրագություններ*, *ցեղասպանության փուլեր*, *մարդկության դեմ հանցագործություններ*, *Հոլոքոստ*, *Հայոց ցեղասպանություն*: