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The International Relations of Genocide:

From Twentieth-Century Europe to the Twenty-First Century World

Genocide was internationally *constituted*, in legal and political terms, in December 1948, when the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. However it is widely regarded as a *phenomenon* of domestic politics and society, which becomes of international significance mainly because it offends against Convention. Although many scholars treat genocide at least partially in an international context, explicit claims for the domestic character of the most important episodes have been influential in the genocide studies literature. Thus the political scientist Robert Melson refers to 'total *domestic genocides* like the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust, including the extermination of the Gypsies, ... the destruction of the Kulaks and the Cambodian "autogenocide".' (Melson, 1992: 18). Christian Scherrer (1999) also distinguishes 'foreign' and 'domestic' genocides, putting the Holocaust in the 'domestic' category, while René Lemarchand (2002) remarks that both Jews and Rwandan Tutsis 'have been the target of a "total domestic genocide", to use Melson's phrase' (501).

Once one examines these episodes it becomes clear that Melson's 'domestic' characterisation cannot be sustained. For the Armenians resided in areas across the borders of the Ottoman and Russian empires, and their implication in the international conflict between the two states in the First World War was the catalyst for their destruction by the Ottomans. The genocide was the conclusion of a series of complex international and intermittently genocidal conflicts between the Ottomans and the emergent nations of south-eastern Europe, which in turn involved the other major empires in what Donald Bloxham (2007) has aptly called 'the great game of genocide'. In the Holocaust the Nazis, far from targeting mainly German Jews (who only comprised one in twenty of Jewish victims), attacked the Jews of an entire continent conquered through aggressive international war; likewise their Roma and Sinti victims were collected from across their new empire. The Cambodian genocide was an outcome of the Khmer Rouge's wars with both the United States and the Vietnamese Communists, and far from being targeted simply at other Khmer (as the misleading term 'autogenocide' suggests), was directed disproportionately at ethnic Vietnamese who, like the Armenians in the Ottoman empire, were linked to an international enemy. (Kiernan 1996) From Melson's list only the destruction of the *kulaks* could even superficially be considered domestic in both scope and genesis - but even here a full explanation would need to include the international origins of Stalinism and forced industrialisation in internationalised civil war, and how international rivalry and threat helped shape Stalin's ideology and policies.

Thus I propose that when conflicts become genocidal, they should normally be understood in international terms. For even if genocidal conflicts are often perceived initially as 'domestic', they generally come to be seen as 'international', as for example with Rwanda and Yugoslavia in the 1990s or the Darfur conflict of the present decade; and in any case, a full explanation should include the international context. Yet astonishingly International Relations (IR) scholars have produced very little wide-ranging work on genocide and appear to have largely accepted the idea that genocide is produced in domestic, or at most local and regional, contexts; it is not generated by the larger frameworks of international relations and has no bearing on the big questions of international theory. Despite the implication of the Nazi genocide in the greatest international war of the twentieth century, manifestly a turning point in the history of the international system, IR accounts rarely highlight genocide as a major cause or consequence in international relations. Although 'humanitarian intervention' has been a major topic of the last two decades, genocide has not usually been specified as the prompt for intervention, with the single exception of its lack in Rwanda. Indeed one of the few good IR books on genocide is Michael Barnett's *Eye-Witness to a Genocide* (2002), about his secondment to the United Nations during the Rwanda crisis: only afterwards did he realise fully what they had been dealing with. Barnett's ringside experience may be unusual, but his absorption of the ideological reflexes of the practitioners is typical: just as political leaders have been reluctant to use the 'g-word', so IR scholars have been too willing to use practitioner euphemisms like 'humanitarian crisis' and 'ethnic cleansing' for situations which have actually involved genocidal violence. Even a brand-new textbook on *The International Relations of Forced Migration* (Betts, 2009) fails *completely* to mention genocide or even 'ethnic cleansing', although these must surely be considered major causes of such migration.

This paper therefore tackles a large and complex question: in what sense must a theoretical approach to genocide be 'international'? It is a question which needs to be answered, I argue, not only for the development of a viable theory of modern genocide, but also from the point of view of an adequate understanding of modern international relations in general, of which genocide is a more symptomatic expression than often recognised. In what follows, I consider first the methodological correlate of the 'domestic' framing of genocide studies, the dominant framing of the field by the 'comparative method'. I then turn to how some genocide scholars have begun to break out of this framework, developing 'international' approaches, and the strengths and limitations of these. Following this, I come to the core questions of international theory which are exposed by these arguments, but which have been hardly addressed in International Relations. I then outline an international-theoretical approach, from a historical-sociological perspective, to the problems of twentieth-century European genocide, as a basis for understanding genocide in the twenty-first century.

1. Domestic context and comparative method in genocide research

The interdisciplinary field of 'genocide studies', which has developed in the last two decades and to which historians, anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists and legal scholars are the main contributors, has been widely defined as a field of *comparative* study (Scherrer, 1999). Indeed the necessity of comparison, which might otherwise be seen as normal in historical and social-scientific research, is seen in this field as a hard-won gain over the idea of Holocaust 'uniqueness' (Huttenbach, 2010), with each additional 'genocide' having to be painstakingly added to the canon, often after political campaigning as well as scholarship. The recognition of the 1915 Armenian genocide as comparable to the Holocaust, pursued mainly by diaspora historians (e.g. Dadrian 2001) and campaigners, is a model which advocates of recognising other genocides have followed. Modern genocide research is effectively a variant, therefore, of comparative social science, whose methodology assumes that the causes of each particular genocide should be sought in its specific (primarily domestic) context, and whose genocidal characteristics should be established by comparison with established cases. Thus almost all the major synthetic works that have been produced - from Chalk and Jonahsson's pathbreaking survey (1990) to what Straus (2007) describes as the 'second wave' of genocide research (Weitz 2003, Valentino 2004, Mann 2005, Midlarsky 2005 and Sémelin 2007) - follow this approach by dealing with a certain number of major genocides as discrete phenomena. These are treated successively and compared *across* their discrete situations but without systematically drawing connections *between* them. Thus the literature is more interested in *transhistorical comparisons* between these cases than in *historical connections*; this tendency prioritises domestic and local environments rather than systematic investigation of international contexts. For example, one can find many comparisons between the Holocaust and Rwanda (e.g. Lemarchand 2002, Miles 2003, Sémelin 2007), but one will not find much discussion of the connections between Nazi policies and those of other states, including the Soviet Union, the Western Allies and the various eastern European states allied to all of these, in the specific context of the Second World War; or of the connections between what happened in Rwanda in 1994 and preceding genocidal violence in Burundi and Uganda, or the succeeding violence in the Congo. Yet *prima facie* these two different 'international' contexts have at least as much to tell us about the Holocaust and Rwanda respectively as do any comparisons between them. It is true that some of those who practice the comparative approach have also argued for recognising international contexts (especially Midlarsky, 2005 and Sémelin 2007), but this leads more to an enlarged picture of the domestic-centred context than to systematic international explanation.

The bias towards comparative study of major genocides reflects not only the historical origins of the genocide idea in the specific case of the Nazi genocide (Lemkin 1944) - which renamed the 'Holocaust' then became a 'standard' for the phenomenon (Shaw 2007: 37-47) - and the disciplinary origins of modern genocide studies in the sociological works of Horowitz (1979), Fein (1991) and Chalk and Jonahsson (1990). Yet the limiting consequences of the 'comparative' definition have been seen most clearly in the 'second wave' which Straus identified. Genocide, it is widely assumed, concerns a relatively small number of large, isolated, exceptional, almost totally

murderous episodes, which Levene (2005a: 163) calls 'mega-genocides'. Thus Straus can assert (2007: 479) that the consensus view is that '[g]enocide is a rare event'. However the consequence of this approach is that episodes of group destruction which are smaller in scale or less murderous, like some of those perpetrated by Germany's wartime allies, or like events in Burundi and the Congo, are marginalised. Moreover genocides are normally defined, following the Holocaust model, as concerning relations between a single perpetrator centre (often seen as a necessarily a state) and a single victim group, so that *complex alliances* among sometimes non-state centric perpetrators and *multiple targeting* of a range of victims receive less attention than the biggest perpetrator centres and the largest victim groups (Gerlach, 2006, Gomez-Suarez, 2007). Thus major episodes are reified as 'the Holocaust', 'the Armenian Genocide', etc., a process which gels with - even when not motivated by - the political agendas of the representatives of major victim-groups. These assumptions have so little fit with the complex, messy realities of anti-population violence in most cases that Christian Gerlach (2006) has proposed abandoning the 'genocide' concept altogether, in favour of the idea of 'extremely violent societies'.

Moreover the definition of genocide studies through a few major cases and their comparative study has been associated with other theoretically problematic tendencies. Straus's recent survey concludes that there remains little agreement on the scope of genocide, the universe of cases, or the appropriate explanatory model (Straus, 2007: 478-79). Indeed since its emergence as a distinctive field in the early 1990s, genocide research has never escaped from its definitional quandary. Although some scholars use the Genocide Convention's legal definition as a matter of convenience (as well as because of its operative significance in international legal and political relations), it has been argued that it is deficient in at least two major respects. First, its specification of the targets of genocide as 'ethnic, national, racial and religious' groups is widely seen as too restrictive, to be remedied either by adding additional categories (political groups, social classes) or by a generic definition in terms of all 'permanent social groups' (Fein, 1990), 'civilian groups' (Shaw, 2007) or of groups 'as defined by the perpetrators' (Chalk and Jonahsson, 1991). Second, its specification of five means of genocide is seen as too broad by scholars who wish to redefine genocide simply as 'mass murder' (Chalk and Jonahsson, 1990, Charny, 1991). The comparative study of 'mega-genocides' tends to be associated with the narrower specification of the means of genocide, and several recent comparative and single-case studies (Midlarsky, 2005, Straus, 2006, Sémelin, 2007) have expressed this tendency, albeit in different ways. Corresponding to the narrow specification of the means of genocide, scholars have proliferated new concepts for the broader-based social destruction which is now excluded from the scope of genocide. On the one hand, many have adopted the Serbian-inspired 'ethnic cleansing' euphemism as historical or social-scientific category (Bell-Fialkoff 1996, Naimark 2004, Mann 2005). On the other, scholars have invented new terms, mostly further '-cide' terms (ethnicide, politicide, gendercide, etc.)

A related problem is that much of the literature places excessive emphasis on the subjectivity of the perpetrators. To be sure, genocide must be considered as *action*,

and so the ideas and objectives (in genocide-speak, 'intentions') of the collective and individual actors who carry it out may be a valuable, even necessary starting-point for understanding. However an actor-based definition of genocide centred on the 'intent' of the perpetrators, while unavoidable in international criminal law, is not necessarily adequate for the explanatory purposes of social science, for which political relationships and context are more important. The general narratives of genocide to which comparative research leads do, of course, vary considerably between authors, but too many privilege ideology and/or social-psychological mechanisms (Weitz, 2005 and Sémelin, 2007 are recent examples), which reinforces a focus on a specific leader and movement rather than on context and political relationships. Even Mann's account (2005) which emphasises the rise of the democracy and the nation-state, is still centred on the ideological mechanism which converts 'people' into 'nation' and hence motivates exclusion. Surprisingly from the historical sociologist who outlined the complex interactions of international and national power-networks in *The Sources of Social Power* (1986, 1993), *The Dark Side of Democracy* also adopts a largely national, case by case, mode of presentation, and although recognising that genocide results from 'political *and geopolitical* crises' (emphasis added) does not systematically investigate the latter's contribution.

The problem with genocide studies is not only, therefore, the omission or understatement of its 'international' aspects. The latter is a part of a larger problem of the field, for which this article proposes a broad and deep reorientation. It draws on the work which sees the Convention not as too broad, but *too narrow* in its specification of means, and wish to return to Lemkin's (1944) concept of genocide as multi-faceted social destruction, including social and cultural as well as physical and biological destruction (Shaw, 2007, Curthoys and Docker, 2008). It assumes that genocide, even considered as the action of the perpetrators, is necessarily *social*, not only in that it always involves social relations among different perpetrators, but also in the sense of creating, and indeed being predicated on, their social *relations* - however unequal - with the attacked population or civilian social groups. Since some of these relations are continuous and reproduced, we can talk about the social *relationships* of genocide and of *structures* in these relationships, i.e. of genocide as a particular type of *structure of conflict*. Even following Weber's methodology, *verstehen* can only be a starting point; we need to move from the subjectivity of the perpetrators to the structures of genocide.

Genocide should therefore be considered as both action *and* structure (Shaw, 2007: 154).

Moreover, once we consider genocide as a structure of conflict, we need to understand the linkages between its structures and other social structural contexts; indeed since genocide, even if not rare, is not universally present in societies, or even in modern society, the presumption must be that we need to understand genocide's relationships to more fundamental, permanent structures, for example those of socio-economic, cultural-ideological, political and military power. I follow Mann (2005) in his argument that genocide (which he sees as 'murderous cleansing') is primarily, that

is most directly, generated in *political*, including *geopolitical*, contexts (even if there are problems with the specific thesis that it is the 'dark side of democracy'). However while Mann includes geopolitical conflicts as part of his causal framework, he does not strongly emphasise or distinguish them; hence his 'political' account tends to be largely domestically driven. I therefore qualify Mann's argument, arguing that genocide generally develops where political relations become armed or violent, i.e. where political power also involves *military* power. In terms of Mann's fourfold typology of the 'sources of social power', therefore, genocide belongs not simply in the political arena but in the *interface* between political and military power. Here we are beginning to approach the 'international relations' of genocide. But first we must consider countervailing tendencies in genocide research, which have more to offer for an international approach, even if they do not draw on IR theory.

2. From colonial genocide to an international approach in contemporary genocide studies

At the centre of these trends is a body of historical work on colonial genocide. Influentially, Dirk Moses has argued that genocide was a structural concomitant of European colonisation - especially in its *settler* form - leading to serial 'genocidal moments' in Australian history (Moses 2000). Giving this approach wider purchase, a series of studies has documented widespread genocidal violence throughout the history of European colonisation in the Americas, Asia and Africa (Moses 2004, 2008, Moses and Stone 2006, Levene 2005b, Kiernan 2007). Mann too has found settler control over local institutions directly linked to the murderousness of 'cleansing': 'It is the most direct relationship I have found between democratic regimes and mass murder.' (2005: 4) Thus genocide has been shown to be (1) associated with the inherently *international* relationships of colonialism, (2) manifested not in a few isolated and exceptional catastrophes but in *extensive patterns* of violence, and (3) implicated in *complex state-society relations* between settlers and imperial centres. This literature also utilises the concept of 'genocidal massacres' - smaller-scale incidents in which local populations belonging to larger groups are targeted - introduced much earlier by Leo Kuper (1981: 32), and some writers (e.g. Moses), use the broader specification of the means of genocide from Lemkin's original concept. Moreover, in a 'postcolonial' move, some scholars have noted that Lemkin defined genocide as an imperial relation, involving the imposition of one 'national pattern' on another (Lemkin 1944: 79); and that the Nazi genocide can itself be re-envisioned as project of colonisation in eastern Europe (Zimmerer 2006); this chimes with a trend in the historiography (e.g. Mazower 2009) to emphasise the imperial character of the Nazi project.

In addition, this literature has introduced the idea that there were historical *relations*, not just between different colonial episodes of genocide, across time and space, but also between colonial and European genocide, particularly in the lines of connection in German militarism and nationalism leading from the genocide of the Herero and Nama in German South-West Africa in 1905 to the Holocaust (Zimmerer 2009). Such 'relational' arguments are potentially of much wider significance, and

open up the question of whether we might look not just of relations between genocides, but at the wider complexes of social and international relations in which these specific genocide connections are embedded. Indeed it is an obvious move from 'relational' arguments about genocide to what we may call an 'international relations *of* genocide', and some historians have indeed introduced both general and specific arguments on the role of international relations, which (in the absence of theorising in IR itself) represent the most developed generalisations on these questions to date. Mark Levene, in his multi-volume history, *Genocide in the Age of the Nation State* (2005a and b are the first and second of a projected four volumes), locates genocidal continuities in the logic of the competitive international 'system' of nation-states: 'The system is itself a root cause of modern genocide ...'. (2005a: 156) He suggests several ways in which the 'system' is causative:

1. 'all modern genocides [are] perpetrated with an eye to the integrity of the state vis-à-vis other competitor states';
2. 'the linkage regularly manifests itself in the way that regimes repeatedly accuse the targeted communal population of being collective agents of outside, extra-state forces whose alleged aim is the undermining of the state's own efforts towards covering up, or rectifying, its international *weakness*' (Levene, 2005a: 156, emphasis in original);
3. although 'the system, in principle, has been committed to a repudiation of genocide [in the Genocide Convention] ... [t]he system has colluded with genocide because to do otherwise would have been massively to destabilise the sophistry upon which the system rides: namely that it is a global family of bounded but equally sovereign states.' Levene, 2005a: 158-9)

With his third argument, Levene starts to recognise differences between states within the 'system': 'while, thus, acts of genocide are mostly committed by states challenging or defying the system ground rules, the system leaders themselves - that is those with the power to respond - have either condoned, or turned a blind eye, or in some cases, even covertly abetted such acts in complete contradiction of their own UNC [United Nations Convention] rhetoric.' (Levene, 2005a: 159) Therefore despite systemic drivers, Levene notes important variations in the 'diversity of political entities' which commit genocide. Moreover, he qualifies his state-system argument to acknowledge relationships between states and other 'loci of power' (parties, militaries, etc.: genocide is not necessarily committed by states as such); the 'specific contexts' (particularly 'crisis conditions') in which genocide emanates, which include war, state instability and revolution; and variations in political geography (the importance of 'regional clusters' in places like the Great Lakes and Balkans). Nevertheless he proposes 'a broad chronological plot ... geared towards drawing parallels between the emergence and changing contours of the international system and the actual incidence of genocide.' And since both old colonial empires like Britain's and 'radically reformulated entities' like Communist Russia and China have been notable perpetrators, Levene is drawn back to genocide as 'an essential continuity of state geo-strategic policies ... regardless of the radical change of regimes.' (Levene, 2005a:

162) And yet he wants to insist on 'the dynamics of uneven historical development' (Levene, 2005a: 174), and particularly on a 'three-tier system profile' of relations between core, semi-periphery and periphery (Levene, 2005a: 178). He also argues that 'genocide states are likely to be ones obsessed by their "strong-weak" contradictions, ... [and] whose anxiety on this account are [sic] often unfolded in an "old state-new state" dichotomy or discrepancy.' (Levene, 2005a: 187).

Levene's is perhaps the most advanced general formulation of the problem, but it will be apparent that his argument is quite loose, shifting to and fro between strong generalisations about 'the system' and recognitions of the diversity of genocidal contexts, regimes, etc. His theoretical basis is also eclectic - Anthony Giddens (1985) and Immanuel Wallerstein (1974-89) figure most strongly - and he has not engaged with the discussions which international theorists have developed of the 'international system' and related concepts. Although he starts from a determined 'system' perspective, he is heavily drawn back into a focus on the units within the system, and the types of units which are particularly genocide-prone. This suggests that Levene recognises that his strong version of the 'system' argument cannot really be sustained. If genocide is a tendency of the modern international system in the most general sense, it clearly doesn't occur, and certainly not with anything remotely resembling consistency, across all its periods, regions, units, etc.

Levene's theorising from an abstract concept of the 'international system' therefore reproduces one of the faults of realist IR, to which Giddens' historical sociology is also prone and which is mirrored in Wallerstein's conception of the 'world system'. More fruitful tendencies in international relations have critiqued the idea of a continuous system based on the principle of 'sovereignty', supposed to have originated in the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 (Teschke 2003). In any case, if it is the idea of the 'nation' embedded in exclusive nationalism which is central to high-modern genocide (and on this there is a convergence between Levene, Mann and others), this is much more plausibly dated from the French Revolution of 1789. Indeed Levene sees 'nation-state' genocide beginning with the revolutionary state's assault on the Vendée in 1794 (Levene, 2005b, 103-61). And clearly, as Levene recognises, an overall account of modern genocide must *begin* earlier than that in the rather different contexts of colonial conquest and settlement, linked more obviously to 'empire' than to 'nation'. Moreover Levene's reversion to actor-type analysis tends to blunt more historically specific system-type questions: what have been the historical tendencies in the forms and incidence of genocide, how international relations in general have changed over time, and what are the relationships between the trends? Theoretically the problem is best encapsulated not by the most abstract system-level type of analysis, but by theorising *specific* types of genocidal context in the context of constantly *mutating* international politics.

A more nuanced historical account of genocide, in the context of twentieth-century international relations, is indeed emerging, notably in the work of Bloxham referred to above. Not only has he shown the Armenian Genocide of 1915 as the culmination of a regional pattern of international relations in south-eastern Europe, developing from

the final quarter of the nineteenth century, in which *many* actors pursued destructive, exclusive population policies against many 'other' ethnic or national groups; in his subsequent work (Bloxham, 2008, 2009a, 2009b) has knitted this story into a larger picture of genocidal nationalisms in east-central Europe after 1875. In a complementary study, Eric Weitz (2008) has stressed the extent to which 'population politics', that is politics centred on the ethnic or national composition of states' populations, came to constitute the core of the 'Paris international system' after 1918. Weitz emphasises the complementary developments of forced deportations and minority protection from the 1860s. These contributions offer a more tightly specified version of Levene's argument about the international 'system', but they leave unanswered two key general issues. The first, for IR, concerns the meaning of genocide for international relations. The second, for history and for a historical-sociological IR, concerns the role of the high-genocidal period in the larger history of genocide. I shall examine each in turn.

3. International relations and the meaning of genocide

In what sense, then, should genocide be regarded as an international phenomenon? So far I have relied on given understandings, but it is necessary to interrogate the meaning of 'international' in the context of genocide. If genocide is essentially a set of violent relations between 'armed power organisations' (often, but not always, states or state institutions) and 'civilian social groups' or populations, it is superficially plausible to consider it as involving 'domestic' relations. Yet clearly such relations can develop between a power centre and a 'domestic' civilian population (Third Reich: German Jews) and/or between such a centre and an 'international' population (Third Reich: European Jews). Moreover the meanings of 'domestic' and 'international' in these situations are fast changing: when Melson classified the Holocaust as domestic, he meant that it occurred within the German empire. Yet in their expanded realm, the Nazis preserved distinctions between the *Reich* itself, into which only a part of Poland was incorporated, and the General Government and other new colonised jurisdictions, and these were very important for the development of the Nazi genocide. Evidently, genocide tends to *problematise* the domestic-international dichotomy, and we must be as wary of a simple 'international' as of a purely 'domestic' definition of the problem.

The study of genocide, moreover, compels us to remember that the study of international relations must always attend to two principal alternate meanings of 'international' - as 'interstate' and 'between nations' - and the fact that 'nation' and 'state' do not necessarily coincide even in so-called 'nation-states'. So genocide may involve relations between a state, whether or not formally an empire, and subordinate nations, as for example in the Ottomans' extermination of the Armenians. Although constitutionally this appears as a 'domestic' relationship since the Armenian population had long lived under Ottoman rule, the very identification of the Armenians as an enemy was premised on their rulers' belief that they were *not* part of the emerging Turkish nation-state, but were another, incompatible nation. In this

sense genocide, with its declaration of profound and irreconcilable otherness, often presupposes and/or constructs a relationship which is 'international' in the antagonistic sense.

This consideration brings us to an argument that, in parallel debates, has become very important in both IR and genocide studies: that categories like 'international' and 'domestic', 'nation' and 'ethnic group' are not fixed and given, but fluid and constructed. This idea has been particularly difficult in the genocide field. The idea emerged from the era of the Second World War in which the principle of nationality was at its strongest in world affairs, so that in Lemkin's conception there was little doubt as to the meaning of 'nation'. The Genocide Convention then inscribed this and its related categories ('ethnic group', 'race', 'religion') as though their meanings were fixed and self-evident. Some legal scholars such as William Schabas (2000), have defended this notion and resisted any fluid interpretation, let alone replacement, of these categories. However Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn's (1991: 23) insistence that the target group of genocide is *subjectively* defined by the perpetrators has been highly influential. Even in international law there has been increasing recognition of the need to understand categories like ethnicity flexibly, and to move partially beyond them, as when the Rwanda tribunal argued that the destruction of the Tutsis constituted genocide even though they were not an ethnic group in the given sense of the term (Schabas 2000: 131-32).

Another of Melson's cases highlights the difficulties of the standard approach and the need to think 'international' in a broad sense. The Cambodian case appeared not to fit the Conventional understanding of genocide because the Khmer Rouge regime targeted, in addition to the Vietnamese and Cham minorities, the ethnic Khmer population from which its own members mostly derived. It has therefore sometimes been defined by the peculiar term 'auto-genocide', which appears to mean collective self-destruction, although this is obviously not what was happening (Shaw 2007: 76-77). Clearly the rationale of Khmer Rouge policies was that the existing Cambodian people as a whole, including many specific groups (the educated, city-dwellers, Buddhists, etc. as well as national and ethnic minorities), constituted for the regime 'others' to be destroyed - not in the sense of total physical liquidation, of course, but of total social reconstruction achieved through extensive violence and killing. Following the logic we applied in the Armenian case, we can understand this not as an 'auto-' or 'domestic' genocide but another kind of radical 'othering', a type of 'international' relationship between the Khmer Rouge with its *idea* of the Khmer nation and the *existing*, 'flawed' nation that constituted its enemy.

Indeed it is in something like this sense that writers like Moses (2008) and Zimmerer (2006) have insisted, following Lemkin's own formulations, that genocide, whether conducted in the context of formal colonisation or not, is inherently a 'colonial' relationship. The advantage of adopting this terminology is that the 'colonial', which in its classical conception is invariably a variant of the international, necessarily suggests inequality and imposition, whereas 'international' itself is neutral as to the content of the relations between nations or states, and can be understood in both

equal/unequal and cooperative/antagonistic senses. However it is not evident that a history of colonialism, any more than of international relations in a narrow sense, will inscribe the full range of genocidal experiences, including for example the destruction of religious-, political- and class-defined populations. Therefore genocide forces us to think categories like 'colonial' and 'international' in a broad, open sense. If genocide occurs whenever any organised, armed actor defines any civilian social group or population as an enemy and aims to destroy that group or population, then we need to bear in mind that defining genocide as an inherently international (or colonial) phenomenon is a way of encapsulating the 'othering' involved. Genocidists and genocide-victims may not always see themselves as national in character, operating in an international relationship (nor may they see themselves as colonisers and colonised): rather, on either side, other markers of identity may be used. The justification, therefore, for seeing genocide as involving international relationships is that national (and the closely related ethnic) are *typical* markers and that state (and parastatal) actors are *typical* core perpetrators.

Moreover genocidal actors operate, as Levene rightly argues, in an *interstate* as well as a state-society context. The importance of the international is not only in describing the content of genocidal relations themselves, i.e. of the relationships between 'perpetrator' and 'target' (or 'victim') actors, but the *structural contexts* which generate genocidal relations and also are produced by them. Therefore what the most interesting work in genocide studies leads us towards is a conception of late-modern genocide as nested primarily, not in international relations in a narrow (interstate) sense, but in the shifting, contested nexus of *national-and-international relations* (Shaw 2000), in both nation *and* state senses, which was increasingly central to world society and politics in the high-modern period. To the extent that states have been defined coextensively with nations (and other, related markers of identity), conflicts both *within* and *between* states have centred on the population composition of states, with the potential for anti-population violence. To understand this nexus of issues, it is evident that some approaches from IR theory have more to offer than others. Clearly, approaches which involve an exclusive emphasis on interstate relations are necessarily problematic, given that the core relations of genocide are between armed power centres and societies, populations and social groups. Any adequate 'international' theory of genocide must simultaneously be a *historical-sociological* theory which offers a complex understanding of relations between state and society as well as between states in the fast-shifting historical transformations of modernity.

4. International relations and twentieth-century European genocide

A fundamental question for a historical-sociological approach, indicated by my critique of Levene, is the question of historical *transformation* in genocide, its forms, scale and incidence. Although much genocide research is historical, the prevailing method of transhistorical comparison, emphasising the fundamental similarities between genocides across time, as well as the usual problems of historical

empiricism, have inhibited any serious consideration of such questions. Thus there are historical studies of genocide, there are histories of genocide, but there is not really a *history* of genocide, in the sense of work which discuss the *tendencies* of genocide over time, and the *variation* between different periods. Promisingly entitled volumes like Weitz's *A Century of Genocide* (2005) turn out to be the usual comparisons of four or five major episodes, through a thematic prism (in his case, 'utopias of race and nation'): they almost never offer a comprehensive, *developmental* history of genocide even in the given period. There is one self-described 'world history of genocide' (Kiernan, 2007), but even this turns out on examination to offer an uneven combination of, first, relatively extensive surveys of genocidal massacres in key regions of western imperial expansion and settler colonialism with, secondly, fairly conventional, discrete case studies of the largest recognised genocides of the twentieth century. The linkage between the two is established primarily in terms of the *continuity* of the overarching themes of the volume: in this case, cults of antiquity, a fetish for agriculture, ethnic enmity and imperial and territorial conquests. The briefest of introductory notes (one and a half pages) to the twentieth-century part provides only one clue to a possible *discontinuity* in the history of genocide: 'By 1910 the world had become smaller, the great powers greater, and contests for territory more closely fought. A new phenomenon emerged: genocides perpetrated by national chauvinist dictatorships that had seized control of tottering, shrinking, or new empires, aiming to reverse real or perceived territorial losses or conquer new regions from established powers.' (Kiernan 2007: 393). The looseness of this thesis is evident in the alternatives 'tottering ... or new', 'reverse ... or conquer'; its location within the established comparative literature rather than international relations is suggested by the emphasis on regime type ('national chauvinist dictatorships'); and in any case, the book fails to systematically pursue this argument. Nevertheless the sense that there was a major *shift* in genocide, from the era of settler colonisation to that of radical party-states, is also implicit in Mann's account (2005). Indeed his study adds a further disjuncture: the shift from the era of ethno-nationalist genocide, perpetrated primarily by radical party-states, to the post-colonial era, in which maximal forms of mass murder are tending to give way to less murderous forms of 'ethnic cleansing'.

The aim of an international historical sociology of genocide should therefore be to make these questions of *historical transformation* central to research, and to formulate more precise theories of their changing international and social contexts. And if genocide is not a matter of isolated, indeed 'rare', mega-genocides, then a more *structural* emphasis on macro-historical contexts (regional as well as global) is necessary, to look at the relations that underpin continuities and connections between genocidal episodes. However a fundamental problem for this project is the one which we have already encountered in the context of Levene's 'system' theory: if genocide is not as rare as some think, it is also, fortunately, neither ubiquitous nor a general feature of international relations in all periods and regions. A central task is to identify the specific international conditions in which patterns of genocidal violence occur; and to look at the larger international dynamics involved in particular temporal and regional clusters of cases.

The first key question of transformation is the character of the changes in the distribution and forms of genocide represented by its apparent resurgence in Europe from the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Clearly genocidal violence had not previously been lacking in Europe: the suppression in the Vendée in 1794, closely followed by the 'subaltern' genocide of the Haitian revolt and its suppression in 1802-04 (Girard 2007), reminds us that popular nationalism and imperialism were already linked in their genocidal dangers at the time of the French Revolution. Indeed although it has been argued that twentieth-century, inter-imperial total war was particularly prone to genocide (Markusen and Kopf 1995, Shaw 2003), Bell (2007) proposes that the Vendéean suppression should be seen as the original episode of modern total war. If (unlike Bell) we regard the Vendée as a case of genocide (since there was a clear attempt to destroy a particular population), then we need to re-evaluate the war-genocide relationship: modern genocide and total war were intertwined *from their beginnings*.

On Bloxham's account, however, an important shift took place from the 1870s onwards, first in south-eastern Europe and later across eastern Europe. In the disintegration of the Ottoman, Romanov and Hapsburg empires, nationalism became increasingly widely - although never universally or constantly - genocidal. Moreover insurgent as well as post-imperial nationalisms were implicated: although the Ottoman Young Turks perpetrated the largest genocide, Turks and Muslims were also victims of genocidal expulsions and massacres at the hands of Christian nationalists, for example in Serbia and Bulgaria. Although nationalist population politics thus became increasingly important drivers of genocide, they were also increasingly implicated in general inter-imperial rivalries and wars. Balkan nationalism helped provoke the First World War, but once this was underway, the dynamics and forms of inter-imperial conflict themselves increasingly conditioned the development of genocide. Thus although there had been earlier large-scale massacres of Armenians and other Christians in Anatolia, the heartland of the Ottoman empire, the catalyst for the 1915 genocide was the war with Russia. Moreover the denouement of the war brought further large-scale genocidal violence, not only in the former Ottoman lands (where Greek and Turkish armies marauded in 1918-21, expelling, often murderously, the 'other' population: Bloxham, 2007) but further north too, in the civil war following the Russian Revolution, most notoriously in the massacres of Jews in the Ukraine in 1918-20 (Midlarsky, 2005: 45-53). The international settlement following the war, based on the Wilsonian principle of national self-determination, also provided (since in mixed societies, one nation's self-determination was invariably another's subordination) incentives for exclusion. Although accompanied by measures for minority protection, these served to irritate 'majority' nationalists as much as to genuinely protect. The culmination of the post-Ottoman violence was of course the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923 which internationally sanctioned the destruction of historic Greek and Turkish communities in modern Turkey and Greece respectively.

Clearly nationalist population politics, legitimated at Versailles and in the League of Nations (and reinforced by V. I. Lenin's endorsement of 'self-determination'), became only more central to the international system, and were at the centre of Nazism's

revisionist approach to the post-First World War settlement. Indeed Nazi Germany's first major international aggression, the annexation of the Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia, invoked the principle of minority protection. Certainly other types of anti-group, anti-civilian violence, on a 'class' (e.g. Stalin's 'liquidation of the *kulaks*) and a 'political' basis (e.g. Franco's persecution and killing of Spanish Republicans even after his military victory), also occurred in this period. But exclusive nationalism was its main political driver, and undoubtedly the Nazis were its most internationally important instigators. Theirs was the largest-scale, most ambitious and most murderous genocide, and their military aggression and (population-inspired) territorial expansionism the catalyst for the wider pattern. Yet, as a result of the kind of war that Germany unleashed, genocide became *systemic* in the war, at least in its eastern and central European theatre, and so it is ultimately its *general* character, rather than its Nazi-centrism, which is most important.

To an academic literature, let alone public opinion, which is heavily saturated with the idea of the specificity, if not 'uniqueness', of the Holocaust, this may seem a radical reorientation. Yet the Holocaust, rather than being the exception, was the most intensively murderous element of Nazi Germany's generally genocidal campaign in eastern Europe (against Slavs as well as Jews), which in turn was the most comprehensive and aggressive of the genocidal campaigns of *many* of the states and armed movements involved in the war in Europe (and in Asia) who practiced genocidal violence. Most of Germany's allies and clients developed their own genocidal objectives, to remove unwanted minorities (Italy and Hungary to 'nationalise' annexed Yugoslav territories, Croatia to murder Serbs, Romania to remove Turks), as well as participating in Nazism's overall anti-Jewish programme, sometimes (as in Romania) developing their own lethal anti-Jewish initiatives (Ahonen et al. 2008: 43-60). The Soviet Union, when it invaded eastern Poland in the aftermath of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact of 1939, engaged in large-scale ethnic removals (Ahonen et al. 2008: 23-26), just as did the Nazis in their much better known expulsions in the west of the country. After the German invasion of the USSR in 1941, Stalin carried out genocidal expulsions of the Chechens, Crimean Tartars and other peoples deemed unreliable in the war (Werth 2008: 405-06). On the Allied side, the governments-in-exile of Czechoslovakia and Poland developed plans for the expulsion of their German populations, which in turn were endorsed by Great Britain and the USA. (Ahonen et al. 2008: 61-69). In the concluding stages of the war, the Soviet Union, in conjunction with Czechoslovakia, Poland and Yugoslavia, expelled some ten million or more Germans. In addition, the USSR also expelled Poles from the areas of former Poland it annexed, and the Yugoslav Communists expelled Italians from their reconquered territories. All the expulsions can be considered genocidal because their aims were to *destroy* the 'enemy' populations as a presence in their homelands; the implementation of genocidal policies was invariably accomplished with violence, sometimes at high levels (at least half a million Germans died in the expulsions, mostly in the last stages of the war: Bloxham 2008: 122). The continuity between events that were often seen as categorically opposed is aptly summed up when Bloxham notes (2008: 122) that 'the eviction of more than 200,000 ethnic Germans from Hungary from 1945 [was]

conducted by many of the same Hungarian personnel as had helped deport Jews in 1944.'

The important questions for an international relations of genocide are: (1) how were these various genocidal policies and actions related to each other, to war, and to the international system; and (2) how did these international contexts affect the form and incidence of genocide? I identify five *levels of international structuring* which require us to talk of an *increasingly genocidal international system*:

The increasing embedding of population politics in the international system from the end of the nineteenth century. This meant that even liberal-democratic and Communist leaders, whose politics were ostensibly not defined by nationalism, thought in terms of the equation of nation and territory. Versailles legitimated this principle, which was a necessary if not a sufficient condition for genocide. Moreover as Weitz puts it, 'the origins of human rights standards are not so pristine and pure ... A major part of their history lies in a way of thinking about populations - group protection and group rights - that entailed the very same thought patterns that enabled and promoted forced deportations [sic]' (2008: 1316) The same leaders advocated both. Sharper nationalist repression of minorities, including Jews, was an international trend in east-central Europe throughout the interwar period.

The coming to power of extreme nationalists for whom violent expulsion was an acceptable means of solving population 'problems'. War and international politics often helped radicalise domestic politics, bringing to power more radical nationalists, particularly but not only the rise of the Young Turks in responses to Ottoman losses in wars before the First World War, and the Nazis' rise in Germany, which also should not be regarded as a purely 'domestic' phenomenon - it was clearly conditioned by the international results of the First World War (militarism, resentment at Germany's treatment) and the subsequent international economic crisis.

The role of war in radicalising nationalist population policies, providing opportunities for deportationism and mass murder and (in extreme nationalist eyes) the necessity for it. Throughout the period, war made possible 'solutions' which otherwise were not politically possible. For many extreme nationalists, not only the Nazis, genocidal population policies were a large part of what the 1939-45 war in eastern Europe was about. Moreover the accession of extreme nationalists to power in German-allied Europe was a direct result of Germany's war campaign: indeed some of the states involved, such as Croatia and Slovakia, were creations of the expanding Nazi empire.

1. *Genocidal expulsions as responses to enemy military campaigns.* The Ottoman campaign against the Armenians can be seen partly in this light. However the clearest case is probably the expulsions of nationalities inside the USSR which - although with precedents going back to ethnic deportations the civil war as well as the campaigns against the peasantry in the 1930s - were responses to the German war campaign, mediated by Stalin's own proto-genocidal ideology which represented the deported populations as 'treacherous peoples'.
2. *Genocidal expulsions as 'counter-genocide', i.e. responses to enemy genocide.* The 'revenge' expulsions of Germans can be seen as conditioned by the *genocide* the Nazis themselves had committed, as well as more generally by

their aggressive war and its atrocities, against Poles, Czechs, Russians and others (but not much by their specifically anti-Jewish policies). However genocidal population policies were also important *war aims* for the USSR in its annexations of the Baltic states and Poland in 1939, and for the USSR, Poland, Czechoslovakia and the emergent Tito regime in Yugoslavia in the later stages of the war.

3. *The role of international alliances, institutions and law in promoting and legitimising expulsions and murder.* Clearly Nazi Germany's policies greatly stimulated the policies of its allies. However the Western powers' 'Paris system' had earlier stimulated genocidal expulsions; and the same powers approved, or at least condoned, the destruction of German communities after the second war. That the USSR began destroying Polish communities in pre-war western Poland through an understanding with Nazi Germany (1939-41), and then completed the process with the collusion of the Western powers and even of the re-emergent Poland (1944-45), is a perfect example of the systemic character of population-expulsion in the war.

I conclude that in all these ways, the *international system* produced genocide, at least in the east-central European region, over an extended period. In particular, international relations became genocidal through what we can call the *war system*: the interactive stimuli, demands and constraints of armed conflict. Yet although there was an important 'counter-genocidal' aspect to the development of genocide, for the most part genocide was developed - or constrained - because of how the political goals of the actors changed in the context of armed conflict, not in response to prior genocide. Moreover neither the war system nor the international system were generally genocidal. In western Europe, even the Nazis' war was not generally genocidal against the major national populations (although of course it was against the Jews). In Asia, some Japanese policies might be qualified as genocidal, but not all. But overall genocide was only *part* even of the Axis campaigns - it was only sometimes and in some places what they were about - and not what the war was generally about. Therefore a crucial question is why international relations, as especially the world wars, were not *more* widely genocidal. Another is that of the relationship of the genocidal and non-genocidal zones of the international system, and the role of the 'non-genocidal' Western empires: how the ambivalent, hands-off role of Western empires during genocidal violence in their colonies continued in their mostly indirect involvement in the developments in Europe.

The other side of the historical analysis of the high-genocidal period of European history is that of the changes it brought in the forms and modalities of genocide. There is not space here to address this in full, but it is important to emphasise that since exclusive nationalism developed, and periodically achieved genocidal expression, as part of projects of nation-state formation, European genocide was generally more *statist* than colonial genocide - although not as statist as the 'totalitarian' stereotype suggests - and what is more was practiced by major world empires like Germany, the Soviet Union and Japan.

5. Post-war, post-genocidal? Genocide in global international relations after 1945 and 1989

I have discussed this high-genocidal European period at length because, in terms of a world history of genocide in the modern international system, it represents *prima facie* a maximal case. Compared to the earlier modern period, genocide became more systematically embedded within international relations in a major part of the system's central region - indeed as I have argued, genocide became *systemic* and even (although to a limited extent) *interactive*. Thus it was more pivotal in interstate rivalries, as well as more state-centric. But at the same time, genocide remained partial, even within the context of unprecedentedly globalised and total warfare. Indeed although warfare provided the conditions for a generalisation of genocide, in itself even the most total war ever seen did not spread genocide worldwide.

The key questions for an international relations of modern genocide which *follow* from this argument are how, how far, and why, this system has mutated since 1945? To the extent that the systemic character of genocide was a function of the war system, clearly the international system as a whole - which has thankfully not seen another world war - has become less centrally genocidal since 1945. In particular, this was a consequence of the resolution of Europe's genocidal conflicts and the development of a new system of conflict, the Cold War, which had a different axis. But genocide did not disappear: even in the narrow terms of the comparative study of mega-genocides, the 1990s saw a major episode in Rwanda; on the basis of the definition used here, genocidal violence of various types and scales has been widespread in many regions and sub-regions at different times since 1945. So the key basic questions to be addressed are: *how* widespread, in *which* regions and times, and with *what relationships* to the larger structures of the post-1945 international system and their evolutions? More specifically, following from the above analysis: how far have regional 'war systems' produced genocide, in areas like former Yugoslavia and the African Great Lakes - or have more genocidal episodes been discrete and localised? How far did the larger post-war structures of the international system - apparently committed against genocide, as Levene noted - help to produce, or at least allow, widespread further genocide?

A global survey is needed which examines the problems of genocide in political and international conflicts, taking in all the major world regions and especially the more conflict-ridden sub-regions. However the primary task of an 'international relations of genocide' is to elucidate the changing world-historical complexes and regional power structures within which particular clusters and forms of genocide are produced. What I hope my analysis has indicated is the complexity of the analytical problem: if the question of genocide was complex even in the high-genocidal context of the Second World War in Europe, it is even more so in the further-flung, paradoxically less globally integrated conflicts of today's 'globalising' world. However what is needed, for the period since 1949 just as much as for 1875-1949, is a coherent world-level account linking the many large and small episodes of genocidal violence in many local and regional conflicts with the largest structures of global power, cultural and

economic as well as political and military. Studying the international relations of genocide in the way proposed here has the potential to radically change the direction of genocide research. At the same time, it challenges International Relations to recognise the extent to which genocide is a recurring feature of international relations both historically and in the present era, and to adapt its theories and concepts to become adequate to this challenge.

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