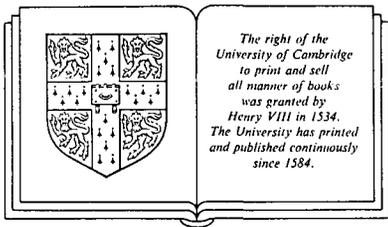


# The roots of evil

The origins of genocide  
and other group violence

ERVIN STAUB

*University of Massachusetts at Amherst*



CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

*Cambridge*

*New York Port Chester Melbourne Sydney*

# Contents

<i>Preface</i>	page xiii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xvii

## **Part I Psychological and cultural bases of genocide and other forms of group violence**

<b>1 An introduction</b>	3
The approach and content of the book	4
<i>A brief preview · Differences and similarities and the selection of cases</i>	
The definitions of genocide and mass killing	7
Four mass killings/genocides	8
<i>The Holocaust · The genocide of the Armenians · The autogenocide (Khmer killing Khmer) in Cambodia · The disappearances in Argentina · Is mass killing ever justified?</i>	
<b>2 The origins of genocide and mass killing: core concepts</b>	13
A conception of the origins of genocide and mass killing	13
<i>Difficult life conditions · Psychological consequences: needs and goals · Ways of coping and fulfilling needs and goals · The continuum of destruction · Cultural-societal characteristics · The role of bystanders · The role of motivation</i>	
Leadership and followership	23
The individual and the system	24
The roots of evil	25
<i>Groups as evil or good</i>	
Comparison of personal (and social) goal theory and other approaches	28
<i>Compartmentalization of functions and euphemistic language ·</i>	

	<i>Obedience to authority and the authoritarianism of culture · Psychosocial consequences of World War I on German youth · Anti-Semitism in Germany · The role of the family · Hitler's personality and psychopathology · The role of victims · Complex analyses of the origins of the Holocaust · Some further comparisons</i>	
	Summary: a conception of motivation and evolution	33
<b>3</b>	<b>The psychology of hard times: the effects of difficult life conditions</b>	35
	Motivations arising from threat, frustration, or difficult life conditions	36
	<i>Motivational sources of human behavior · Motivations for aggression: psychological states and processes that promote aggression · Difficult life conditions and aggression</i>	
	The effect of stress and danger on psychological experience	44
	<i>The long-term effects of combat experience</i>	
	Strategies for coping and goal satisfaction	48
<b>4</b>	<b>Cultural and individual characteristics</b>	51
	The influence of culture	51
	<i>Aggressiveness as a persistent behavioral mode · Cultural self-concept, self-esteem, and world view · Cultural goals and values · Moral value orientations · Ingroup–outgroup differentiation and devaluation of outgroups · Pluralistic and monolithic cultures · Orientation to authority · Unconscious motivation – individual and cultural</i>	
	The influence of sociopolitical organization	65
	<i>Governmental system · Social institutions</i>	
<b>5</b>	<b>The psychology of perpetrators: individuals and groups</b>	67
	Roles and other social processes as origins of harm-doing	69
	Self-selection and the personality of perpetrators	69
	<i>The potentially antisocial person · Family origins of the potentially antisocial personality · Authority orientation and its sources in the family</i>	
	The origins of destructiveness in personality and in the situation	75
	The fanatic as perpetrator	76
	Behavior in groups	77
	<i>The subcultures of perpetrators · Psychological functioning and individual responsibility</i>	

<b>6 Steps along a continuum of destruction: perpetrators and bystanders</b>	79
Just-world thinking	79
Learning by doing and the evolution of extreme destructiveness	80
<i>Compartmentalization and integration</i>	
Other origins of mistreatment	85
The role and power of bystanders	86

## **Part II The Nazi Holocaust**

<b>7 Hitler comes to power</b>	91
Genocide and “insanity”	91
Life conditions: loss of war, the Treaty of Versailles, and economic and political chaos	91
The guiding motive for the Holocaust: ideology	94
Reasons for Hitler’s appeal: a summary	98
<b>8 Preconditions for the Holocaust in German culture</b>	100
The devaluation of Jews	100
Self-concept, self-esteem, and national goals	104
<i>The Germans as a superior people</i>	
Respect for and obedience to authority	108
The influence of Nietzsche	111
Rationality versus sentimental romanticism	113
The psychological effects on German youth of World War I and the postwar period	113
Youth groups and military groups after World War I	114
<b>9 Nazi rule and steps along the continuum of destruction</b>	116
Increasing mistreatment of Jews	117
The evolution of ideas, actions, and the system: euthanasia and genocide	121
The power of giving oneself over to a group, an ideal, or a leader	124
The role of the totalitarian system	125
<b>10 The SS and the psychology of perpetrators</b>	128
The creation, evolution, and role of the SS	128
<i>Characteristics of SS members</i>	
Learning by participation	134

The interweaving and merging of role and person	137
The extermination camps: Auschwitz	141
The psychology of perpetrators: individuals and the system	144
<i>The characteristics and functioning of perpetrators · Behavioral shifts</i>	
Moral equilibration, choice, and responsibility	147
<i>Individual responsibility</i>	
The completion tendency: killing till the very end	149
<b>11 The behavior and psychology of bystanders and victims</b>	151
The role of bystanders	151
<i>The passivity of German bystanders · Bystanders and perpetrators in Nazi Europe · The passivity of the outside world</i>	
Jewish cooperation, resistance, and psychological experience	158
<i>The Jewish councils · Jewish actions · The psychology of victims</i>	
The power of heroic bystanders	165
<i>Heroic rescuers</i>	
<b>Part III Other genocides and mass killings</b>	
<b>12 The Turkish genocide of the Armenians</b>	173
Historical (life) conditions	173
Cultural preconditions	175
<i>The devaluation of minorities and Christians · Orientation to authority</i>	
Steps along the continuum of destruction	176
<i>Devaluation and increasing mistreatment</i>	
Armenian “provocation”	178
The evolution of Young Turk ideology	181
<i>The machinery of destruction</i>	
The genocide	182
The role of bystanders	184
<b>13 Cambodia: genocide to create a better world</b>	188
Historical (life) conditions	188
<i>Cambodian peasants: economic conditions, uprising, reprisals · Political instability and violence</i>	
The Khmer Rouge rule and “autogenocide”	191

<i>Ideological bias and reports and views of atrocities</i>	
Ideology, world view, and the aims of the Khmer Rouge	194
Cultural preconditions: the roots of ideology and genocide	195
<i>Class divisions, urban–rural rift, and slavery · Orientation to authority · The ideology of antagonism toward Vietnam · Cultural self-concept · A tradition of violence in Cambodia</i>	
Experiential and intellectual sources of ideology and fanaticism	201
Gaining followers: the tools of revolution and genocide	204
The role of specific individuals	206
Steps along the continuum of destruction	208
The role of bystanders	208
<b>14 This disappearances: mass killing in Argentina</b>	210
Historical (life) conditions	210
<i>Economic difficulties · Political conflict and violence</i>	
Cultural preconditions	212
<i>The role of the military in public life · The self-concept and ideology of the military</i>	
Steps along the continuum of destruction	217
<i>Changing institutions · The machinery of destruction</i>	
The mass killings	220
The selection of victims: ideology, self-interest, caprice	223
The psychology of direct perpetrators	225
The role of bystanders	227
<i>Internal bystanders · Mothers of the Plaza del Mayo · External bystanders</i>	
Conclusions	230
<b>15 Summary and conclusions: the societal and psychological origins of genocide and other atrocities</b>	232
A comparison of the four instances	232
<i>Difficult life conditions · Cultural preconditions</i>	
Leaders and followers	236
The psychology and motives of perpetrators	237
<i>The psychological processes of groups</i>	
Steps along the continuum of destruction	238
The obligation of bystanders	239
More and less central origins of genocide	240
Predicting genocide and mass killing	241
The psychology of torture and torturers	244

<b>Part IV Further extensions: the roots of war and the creation of caring and nonaggressive persons and societies</b>	
<b>16 The cultural and psychological origins of war</b>	249
Motivations for war	249
Cultural preconditions for war	250
<i>The ideology of antagonism · Societal self-concept and national goals · Nationalism, belonging, and the self-concept · National security and related ideologies · World views that contribute to war · Pluralistic versus monolithic societies · Leadership</i>	
The national interest	257
Minimalism in the relations of nations	258
Toward positive reciprocity	259
<b>17 The nature of groups: security, power, justice, and positive connection</b>	261
Assumptions about human nature and the nature of societies	262
An alternative view of individual and group potentials	264
<i>Relations between the individual and the group</i>	
Important societal issues	266
<i>Social justice and life problems · Creating a society of enablement · Individualism and community · The accountability of leaders · Freedom, pluralism, and self-censorship</i>	
<b>18 The creation and evolution of caring, connection, and nonaggression</b>	274
Changing cultures and the relations between societies	274
<i>Crosscutting relations and superordinate goals · Learning by doing and steps along a continuum of benevolence · Creating positive connections between groups</i>	
Positive socialization: parenting, the family, and schools	279
Avenues for change	281
<i>Language and ideas · Writers, artists, the media, leaders, all citizens</i>	
 <i>Notes</i>	 284
<i>Index</i>	319