

Case study on the rwanda genocide history essay



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In 1994, Rwanda's population of seven million was composed of three ethnic groups: Hutu (approximately 85%), Tutsi (14%) and Twa (1%). In the beginning of the 1990s, Rwanda's economic, political and social pressures were increasing. Consequently, Hutu extremists of the political elite accused the entire Tutsi minority population. Moreover, Tutsi civilians were also blamed of supporting the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) which was a Tutsi-dominated rebel group. By the end of 1992, president Habyarimana and his group increased divisions among Hutu and Tutsi using propaganda and clever political actions that were constant. In Kigali, a campaign of vengeance was introduced immediately by the presidential guard. As a result, leaders of the political opposition were killed, and almost instantly, the massacre of Tutsis. Within hours, recruits were sent rapidly throughout the country to carry out a wave of slaughter. On April 1994, President Habyarimana who was a Hutu was assassinated as the airplane prepared to land in Kigali. It was the catalyst for the Rwanda Genocide. Violence started almost instantly after that. Under the cover of war, Hutu extremists launched their plans for the destruction of the entire Tutsi civilian. In the weeks after April 6, 1994, 800, 000 men, children and women died in the Rwandan genocide, possibly as many as three quarters of the Tutsi population. Most of the dead were Tutsis and most of those who perpetrated the violence were Hutus. At the same time, thousands of Hutu were murdered because they opposed the killing campaign and the forces directing it. The Rwanda Genocide should be examined to understand the concepts of preparing or justifying a war and how propaganda was used. Why did hundreds of thousands of Hutu, who had never before killed, take part in the slaughter? Media were used in Rwanda to spread hatred, to dehumanize people, and

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even to guide the genocidaires toward their victims to sanction the terrible human suffering that ensued.

Many Rwandans couldn't read or write, as a result, radio was an essential method for the government to deliver messages to the population.

Furthermore, the radio was an important technique for the government of transmitting messages to the population. The radio wasn't only an official voice of the state and a propaganda channel for the single party, it also helped connecting families whose relatives were faraway, The broadcast of deaths in the news so that relatives could return home for funerals. " In March 1992, Radio Rwanda was first used in directly promoting the killing of Tutsi in a place called Bugesera, south of the national capital." Authorities used RTLM (Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines) and Radio Rwanda to encourage and direct killings both in those areas most eager to attack Tutsi and members of the Hutu opposition and in areas where the killings originally were resisted. They relied on both radios to incite and mobilize, then to give specific directions for carrying out the killings. " The radio station soon became the voice of extremism because during the genocide it called for a total war in order to " exterminate the cockroaches," the Tutsi [...] Anti-Tutsi music dominated the radio". When foreign individuals started criticizing the genocide, RTLM attempted to maintain the legitimacy of the authorities by ignoring all negative comments and by reminding its listeners that all they had to do was to win the war and then foreign critics would not remember any crimes they had done. Furthermore, the media didn't focus on the details of the conflict but rather on the bodies and horror. Rwanda media, most notably Kangura and by August 1993, Radio Television Mille

Collines (RTLM), openly advocated discrimination, persecution, and even extermination of Tutsis." In addition to the increasingly destructive propaganda against the Tutsi, the radio sent threats to attack on Hutu who were continuing to cooperate with the Tutsi. As a result, it used increasingly violent language. In some cases, the radio moved from general condemnation to naming specific people which included the Hutu prime minister, as enemies of the nation who should be eliminated one way or another from the public scene. Moreover, " In December 1990, Kangura published an article titled " Appeal to the Conscience of the Hutu" which included the so called " Ten Commandments." The article and the " Ten Commandments" portrayed the Tutsi as the enemy, as evil, dishonest and ambitious." Also, Kangura spread the notion that the Tutsi were preparing a genocidal war against the Hutu that would leave no survivors and that the RPF wanted to re-establish the Tutsi monarchy and enslave the Hutu. Rwandan newspapers looked very much alike in format and presentation. Most of them were tabloids; they have printed articles in Kinyarwanda which is the language spoken in Rwanda and used cartoons to portray political leaders. They watched each other closely and tried to imitate or outsmart each other. Consequently, examples of dehumanization could be found in many of these papers, including those associated with political opposition and the RPF. " Editorials portrayed the Hutu as generous and naïve. The Tutsi were portrayed as devious and aggressive. Kangura suggested that Tutsi women intentionally used their sexuality to lure Hutu men into sex in order to promote ethnic dominance of the Tutsi over the Hutu." The hate speech from the media helped to develop and maintain a Hutu mind-set in which ethnic hatred was common political ideology. RTLM's animators also

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implicated ordinary listeners in the activities of the genocide; farmers at roadblocks or on the street were frequently interviewed, and RTLM employed techniques that acted on relations among listeners. Additionally, the media served the narrow political ends of their owners by playing on the ordinary Hutu's fear of dispossession, violence and displacement. To do this the media relied heavily on half-truths and sometimes complete lies and threats.

The Rwanda genocide left many devastating consequences. Both children and adults faced catastrophic psychological damage, those who saw atrocities, those who were forced to commit them, and those who were victims of attack. As a result, many of these victims remain disfigured and handicapped, which makes daily life a struggle not only physically but psychologically as well. The economy and education system are extremely slow to recover. Most children are not attending school. Rwandans are struggling to make a living and survive despite the failing economy. They are facing extreme poverty and starvation and with little education they are not developing as a nation; the children are the leaders of the future, but with little education that future looks depressing.