

The Killing of Death  
Denying the genocide against the Tutsi  
Roland Moerland



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**The Killing of Death. Denying the genocide against the Tutsi**  
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*Avant le génocide, sa préparation est dissimulée,  
pendant le génocide, sa réalité est démentie,  
après le génocide, sa nature même est niée.*

Jean-François Dupaquier

*Rwanda: Le révisionnisme,  
poursuite du génocide par d'autres moyens*

*The essence of genocide is denegation.*

Marc Nichanian

*The historiographic perversion*

## PREFACE

Normally, in the tradition of PhD manuscripts, the acknowledgments would feature here. I admit that it is somewhat ironic to have a manuscript about denial that does not have acknowledgments. This does not mean that I do not appreciate the help I received. I am grateful to those who participated in my research and I am indebted to those who were always willing to hear me out. I am, however, also thankful to those who did not inquire about my research and temporarily relieved me from this subject which has been dominating my life for several years now. The last remark already reveals how topical the subject of this study is. People need denial in order to lead healthy lives; it is often a normal and human reaction that is necessary to cope with the burdens of existence. However, as this study will show, denial cannot only be constructive, it can also be destructive. This is the case when denial operates in the context of genocide and serves the perpetration of that crime. My research addresses the problem of such genocide denialism and it more particularly focuses on the denial of one specific genocide, namely the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. *The broader aim of this study is to come to a more profound understanding of genocide denialism and how it operates in the specific case of the genocide against the Tutsi.* The inquiry into these issues has resulted in an elaborate study that can be found in the 7 Chapters that follow. Although I introduce the abovementioned research topic and the approach taken in this study in Chapter 1, I think it is nonetheless important to briefly address the following aspects at the outset of this study.

It is first of all important to notice that my study does not aim to deal with the conflict in Rwanda and the Great Lakes Region in an exhaustive manner. In this study I have focussed on those elements of the conflict history that are helpful (functional) in understanding the denial of the genocide against the Tutsi. I am aware of the fact that the reality of the conflict is more complex and multifaceted than presented in this manuscript. The same can be said for how I have approached the conceptualisation of genocide. In my analysis of the phenomenon I have highlighted those aspects that were most helpful in understanding the role denial plays in the process of genocide.

Due to the multidisciplinary nature of the study, a wide variety of theoretically and methodologically relevant concepts are discussed. I have, however, tried to strike a fair balance between “information” and “communication” in order not to overwhelm the reader. That is also why certain theories, concepts and methods are not elaborated in a single chapter at the beginning of the manuscript as is generally the case. Instead, they are dealt with at that point in the manuscript where they are most relevant for the analysis.

As to the style of writing, it must be noted that the manuscript is written for a mixed audience. I have a background in law and criminology and I branched out into the field of genocide studies. My audience is thus a mixed bag of people including, jurists, sociologists, psychologists, political scientists, etc. I therefore tried to write in a manner that makes the subject matter accessible to such a broad audience.

Research on the genocide against the Tutsi, almost always leads to a dichotomy between the Tutsi as victims and the Hutu as perpetrators. It cannot be denied that the genocide was staged by a group of Hutu extremists and that many Hutu participated in the genocide against the Tutsi. One should, however, also be careful about the creation of such categorical differences, because it could result in a situation in which the entire Hutu population becomes collectively labelled and demonised as the perpetrators of genocide. This is however not my intention. In 2014 I visited a conference in Rwanda, where Holocaust survivor Simon Winston spoke to a group of Rwandan youth about the persecution of his people and his remarkable story of survival. When asked by some participants whether he hated the Germans, Simon had a crucial message. He said: "I do not hate all Germans. That would be wrong, because some of them were good people." He added, "So, when you discuss the genocide against the Tutsi, don't make the mistake to blame all Hutus." If we categorically lump every individual into a group, we are actually following the absolute logic on which genocide thrives.

Lastly, genocide denialism is a delicate topic and the analysis of the cases in this book can be misinterpreted as an accusatory (*ad hominem*) exercise. Although I do refer to actors by name, it is not my intention to attack them personally or to discredit them. It is not about the particular individual actor but about the actions performed and *my analysis of these actions serves to illustrate the complex and problematic nature of genocide denialism and its far reaching implications*. It is important to read the entire study, because otherwise things can easily be misunderstood or be taken out of context.

Roland Moerland

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AI	Amnesty International
ASF	Avocats Sans Frontières
AVEGA	Association des Veuves du Génocide Agahozo
CDR	Coalition pour la Défense de la République
CNLG	National Commission for the Fights against Genocide
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EU	European Union
FDLR	Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICTR	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
ICTY	International Criminal Court for the former Yugoslavia
IRDP	Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace
LM	Living Marxism
MDR	Mouvement Démocratique Républicain
MRND	Mouvement Républicain National pour la Démocratie et le Développement
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
RAF	Rwandan Armed Forces
RDR	Rassemblement pour le Retour des Réfugiés et la Démocratie au Rwanda
RGE	Rwandan Government in Exile
RIG	Rwandan Interim Government
RPA	Rwandan Patriotic Army
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
RTL	Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines
UDF	United Democratic Forces
UN	United Nations
UNAMIR	United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda
UNCHR	United Nations Commission on Human Rights
US	United States
VOR	Voices of Rwanda

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