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Latest Issue of *Genocide Studies and Prevention* Highlights New Directions in Genocide Research



As *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* completes its third year of publication, its latest issue presents some interesting and influential new directions in the field. The topics presented include: the insidious role rape plays within a genocidal context, affecting not only women but entire societies; insight into the paradox of genocide prevention; a review and critique of comparative genocide theory; the importance and effects of teaching genocide; and the role hate speech plays in ethnic violence and genocide.

“Rape as a Weapon of Genocide” by Alison Ruby Reid-Cunningham, PhD Candidate, School of Social Welfare, at the University of California-Berkeley is one of the few scholarly articles on rape in genocide. This is an extremely timely issue in light of the ongoing use of rape as a weapon both in the Darfur region of Sudan and in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Reid-Cunningham examines the cases of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Rwanda, Darfur, and the DRC and argues that the impact of rape pierces the entire community and is a means of cultural control. Her thorough analysis moves genocide studies much farther along the path toward understanding how crimes against women become “generalized to the whole population as survivors, witnesses, families, and communities internalize rape as an assault on their collective consciousness.”

Robert Melson, the Cathy Cohen-Lasry Distinguished Professor in the Strassler Family Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Clark University investigates “Churchill in Munich: The Paradox of Genocide Prevention.” The paradox involves the irony that leaders who have gone to great lengths to prevent catastrophes are not rewarded for their actions, simply because society only sees the cost spent on prevention, and there is no proof of their success if the genocide is averted.

The third article, “Theorizing Destruction: Reflections on the State of Comparative Genocide Theory,” is by Maureen Hiebert, Assistant Professor, Law and Society Program, Faculty of Communications and Culture, at the University of Calgary and an ongoing Faculty member of the GHRUP. She illustrates that although comparative genocide theorizing has come a long way in explaining the onset of genocide and genocidal process, there is still much work to be done. Professor Hiebert believes that comparative genocide studies’ focus on definitions of genocide leaves the discipline under-theorized relative to other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities. In addition, she argues that the discipline requires more rigorous testing of the existing theories using comparative methodological practices. Ultimately she concludes that genocide scholars must find a way to “bridge the gap between abstract theorizing...and concrete policy making.”

Henry Maitles, Faculty of Education, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, examines the question “Why are we learning this?": Does Studying the Holocaust Encourage Better Citizenship Values?”. This study followed a cohort of 100 students (aged 11-12) who studied the Holocaust and compared their values one year later both to their earlier attitudes and to those of their peers who had not studied the Holocaust. Professor Maitles found that in general, learning about the Holocaust had a positive effect on students' attitudes on contemporary issues, such as racism and discrimination.

Lastly, “Counteracting Hate Speech as a Way of Preventing Genocidal Violence” by Wibke Timmerman, PhD Candidate, Irish Centre for Human Rights, at the National University of Ireland suggests that “In order to successfully prevent genocidal crimes and violence, it is indispensable to effectively address the problem of systematic incitement of hatred.” Timmerman further suggests that effectively addressing this problem would require state-organized hate propaganda to be criminalized under international law. The criminalization of hate speech sits on a slippery slope with risks to freedom of speech, and thus this article opens up an important discussion, but falls short of answering some critical questions in terms of utility in genocide prevention.

Editor Herb Hirsch, Professor of Government and Public Affairs at Virginia Commonwealth University, proudly notes in his introduction some of the groundbreaking topics the journal has covered in its first three years of publication. He states that the editors are looking forward to the fourth year of the journal and a continued trend in presenting new and innovative material.

Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal was co-founded by the International Association of Genocide Scholars and the International Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies (A Division of the Zoryan Institute). The journal's mission is to understand the phenomenon of genocide, create an awareness of it as an ongoing scourge, and promote the necessity of preventing it, for both pragmatic and moral reasons. It is the official journal of the International Association of Genocide Scholars and is published three times a year by the University of Toronto Press. For more information, contact the IIGHRS at admin@genocidestudies.org or Tel: 416-250-9807.