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Review of *The Routledge History of Genocide*

Cathie Carmichael and Richard C. Maguire, eds., The Routledge History of Genocide. New York: Routledge, 2015. Pp. xiv + 348. Index. \$240 (cloth).

By Alan Rosenfeld

The Routledge History of Genocide deserves commendation for the geographic and thematic expanse it traverses. Consisting of a brief introduction followed by twenty-one case studies and theoretical investigations, this collected volume examines genocidal violence in Africa, Asia, Australia, and a variety of European contexts, focusing in all but two essays on the twentieth century. Editors Cathie Carmichael and Richard C. Maguire are based at the University of East Anglia, and the majority of contributors hold faculty positions at European universities. The volume's greatest strength consists of the editors' success in bringing together a wide range of studies that should be praised for both the depth of their historical analyses and the utility of their theoretical musings.

Although several of the contributions grapple with the challenge of defining "genocide" as a term, there is no discernable attempt to reach a consensus and thereby impose definitions or restrictions upon the readers. Along the same lines, the authors refrain from arriving at a "final conclusion about the historical applicability" of the term for each of the cases under consideration (4). However, this approach only serves to strengthen the overall quality of the book, which seeks to open the doors of inquiry rather than close them. Indeed, applying the term "genocide" ex-post facto to cases of violence that occurred before the Second World War presents a theoretical conundrum, and many instances of violence in more recent decades have blurred the "boundaries between genocide and those acts generally deemed to fall short" (78).

Discussions of definition in the collection rightly center on the international attorney Raphael Lemkin, who is credited with coining the word "genocide," and the terms of the 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (UNCPPCG), which he played a leading role in drafting. In the end, the UN document described genocide as an attempt to eliminate a "national, ethnical, racial, or religious group," but the final draft also included the forcible transfer of children, which is examined in Simone Gigliotti's study of the "stolen generations" of Australia (38) and Ugur Umit Ungor's discussion of the Young Turks' treatment of Armenians (283). Importantly, as Ungor and Kate Ferguson both

recognize, Lemkin's oeuvre did in fact include a consideration of the notion of cultural genocide, even if that conception was omitted from the final version of the UNCPCPG. Lemkin recognized that, in addition to the physical obliteration of a national group, genocide could include attempts to eradicate the language, feelings, and identity of a target population (242, 315). Other notable questions of definition raised in the collection include David Edwards' consideration of the presence of deliberate plans, numbers of civilian casualties, and the implementation of scorched earth policies in Tudor-ruled Ireland. T.O. Smith introduces the concept of auto-genocide in his study of 1970s Cambodia, calling attention to the fact that, in addition to genocidal atrocities carried out against Vietnamese and other minority groups, the Pol Pot regime also attacked the county's "indigenous Khmer population" (128).

Several essays predictably but appropriately emphasize the significance of the concepts of purification and contamination in the process of genocide. Benjamin Lieberman, for example, in his examination of the expulsion of ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe at the end of the Second World War, calls attention to the "shared broader goals" of "purifying imagined homelands" that characterize both mass expulsions and genocide (84). Kate Temoney provides an essay exploring the "nexuses of religion and genocide" in which she discusses religion's common role as a "cultural faultline along which people can be differentiated and 'othered' as an enemy" (230), facilitating the dehumanization of perceived enemies into "targets for extirpation" (233). The dialectical relationship between purification and contamination in genocidal violence has tragically come to the fore at the locus between genocide and sexual violence, with the mass rapes of ethnic German women by Soviet soldiers and of Muslim women at the hands of Bosnian Serbs serving as harrowing examples. Kate Ferguson delves deeply into the latter occurrence, documenting the rapists' persistent assertions that the female victims would give "birth to a Serbian baby" (315).

One of the crowning achievements of *The Routledge History of Genocide* is the ability of several contributors to convincingly illustrate that genocide should be conceived as a process rather than as an event. This can be seen as the triumph of historical contingency over teleology. Rene Lemarchand articulates this position most explicitly and effectively in the case of genocidal violence in the African Great Lakes region, arguing that explanatory models emphasizing either spontaneity or planning both fall short. Instead, Lemarchand presents the Rwandan genocide as a process that "came

into effect in stages," as part of a continuous "trial of strength between hardliners and moderates in a growing context of insecurity" (175–176). He stresses the theoretical fallacy of viewing genocidal violence through the restrictive framework of "country-specific antagonisms rooted in primordial ethnic conflict" (168). This approach is echoed in Benjamin Lieberman's conclusion to his essay on the German expulsions, when he contends that while those actions might not have been genocidal, they appeared at times to be "on the verge of following a genocidal path" (86). Rather than viewing genocide as an inevitable expression of latent prejudice and difference, we should identify it as a dynamic process unfolding in the midst of specific historical contexts, including refugee crises, internal conflicts between hardliners and moderates, and the involvement of collaborators whose desire for material gains spurs them to commit atrocities that bind them to their sponsors in a network of genocidal complicity.

Several contributors successfully carve out a space for the concept of cultural genocide, which has remained controversial to the extent that it was excluded from the final draft of the UNCPPCG. Rather than subjecting historical incidents to a binary litmus test, these essays encourage us to consider questions of form and degree. It is important to recognize, for example, that different types of genocide can occur simultaneously and that events such as refugee crises or attacks on cultural artifacts can signal the potential for genocidal violence. Ugur Umit Ungor is particularly successful in sketching a viable theoretical framework, beginning with the definition of cultural genocide as the "destruction of a culture of people as opposed to the people themselves" (241). Examples cited by Ungor and other contributors include the Young Turks' obliteration of Armenian monasteries, Nazi assaults on Polish libraries, and the Serbian demolition of libraries, museums, and mosques belonging to the Muslim population of Serbia (315). Ungor also explores instances involving the "forced linguistic change of minorities" (241), a topic which resonates poignantly with Simone Gigliotti's investigation of the abduction of Aboriginal children in Australia. In her essay on Bosnia, Kate Ferguson demonstrates that cultural genocide in that context was accompanied by the concurrent eradication of "as many educated Muslims as possible" (315). Although the perpetrators purposefully deployed the euphemistic term "ethnic cleansing" to describe this sordid campaign, the UN General Assembly pronounced the actions of Serb forces as a case of genocide (315).

Indeed, this volume repeatedly calls attention to the ways in which genocide inevitably simultaneously encompasses a rhetorical struggle over memory and identity. This acknowledgement only serves to underscore the notion of genocide as a process rather than an event. Acts of genocidal violence are succeeded—and often preceded—by battles over historical narratives in a constantly evolving milieu of official memories, counter-memories, and silenced memories. While genocide memorials constitute a single fragment of the historical landscape, Rebecca Jinks rightly acknowledges the "higher stakes" involved in these types of projects (185). Nicolas Werth, for example, documents the "rediscovery" in the 1990s of the Great Ukrainian Famine of the 1930s (147), which, along with the coining of the term "Holodomor," amplified the place of the tragedy in the formation of a post-Soviet Ukrainian identity. These rhetorical struggles typically feature the participation of the perpetrators of genocidal violence (or, at least, their defenders), with Kate Temoney (235) and Kate Ferguson (312) presenting the Serbian memorialization of the 1389 Battle of Kosovo as a rhetorical attempt to construct their own narrative of victimization at the hands of Muslim forces. Another example can be found in the realm of Holocaust denial, which Mark Hobbs uncovers as an attempt to construct a narrative of reverse victimization that positions the far right as the recipients of discriminatory treatment (204). Paul Jackson examines a similar logic at work in the emergence of the concept of "white genocide," which features proponents "decri[ing] an alleged threat posed by an imagined genocide being carried out against white people" (212). Rather than dismissing these verbal deliberations as harmless banter, we need to consider the interlaced entanglements between these competing narratives and the manifestation of physical violence as related aspects of an interrelated process.

Overall, *The Routledge History of Genocide* constitutes a valuable addition to this politically charged and high-stakes academic subfield. At times, the project is undercut by careless errors, such as the repeated reference to the Japanese *bakko ichiu* campaign as *bakko ichui* [sic]. More significant is the lack of thematic unity the reader might encounter from one essay to the next, with certain pieces appearing out of place in the volume. Nevertheless, this is an impressive undertaking that provides a comprehensive investigation of genocide in the twentieth century. The selections are probably a bit dense for undergraduate students, but the collection certainly justifies inclusion in a graduate course on the topic of genocide and is an absolute necessity as a resource for anyone who teaches an undergraduate course on the subject. The

contributors should be applauded for articulating a theoretical framework that provokes critical inquiry and avoids uncompromising conclusions.