

Reactions To Genocide

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Introduction.

The aim of this particular workshop is to examine reactions to both real and potential genocidal acts. The session needs to identify and examine individual and corporate reaction; reaction which can be juxtaposed on the familiar Holocaust tropes of, victim, perpetrator and bystander. The Holocaust provided us with insights from the Evian Conference of 1938 and the Bermuda Conference of 1943, both of which were examples of the phenomenon of not just bystanders as individuals but of bystander nations. The questions arising from this centre on The United Nations and supporting governments and their responses to Rwanda, Bosnia and latterly Darfur. What of intervention, what is Peace Keeping, Peace Enforcement and War fighting. What are the options open to governments and collectives, what is the value of the 'do nothing option', what are the costs of intervention. Bystander nations can be addressed thematically but individual reactions can be examined, by employing personal case study, this will be introduced as examples of personal involvement in Rwanda and Bosnia.

Any topic concerned with reaction to genocide must now include reaction to potential genocide. Is it possible to accurately predict the onset of genocide, are there common themes which aid prediction. The importance of prediction must be stressed in the light of 21st century mankind's ability to murder masses extremely quickly, the Holocaust was perhaps the first example of 'modern' governmental mass killing and it was achieved with primitive devices when compared to those systems available now. Following on from this should be initial thoughts on intervention based on prediction and the effects such intervention would have on opinion, in a post Iraq world.

Personal experience, (15 minutes).

1. Experience in Rwanda covering initially the pre genocidal phase and then moving to the actual genocidal phase.
2. Experience from Bosnia, in particular Srebrenica. Response of an international NGO.

Both of the above will facilitate the introduction of the common themes of prediction linked to those apparent in the Holocaust, themes based around the essential role of sophisticated bureaucracy, healing and killing, propaganda and euphemistic language. The second in particular will highlight the part played by Non Governmental Organizations and can be juxtaposed on the 'Beautification of Theresienstadt' and the role of the Danish Red Cross.

This initial 15 minutes will also allow those participating in the session to examine and discuss an example of close, personal reaction and its accompanying frustration.

Prediction (10 minutes).

How does a bureaucrat function, what of Raul Hilberg and bureaucracy at rest, can there be a 'banality of evil'. An introduction to the 21st century concept of mission command and its roots in 'working towards the Führer'. The importance of negative propaganda designed to promote racial hatred and how this is linked to euphemism. Does the language suggest healing/killing and the concept that killing a marginalized group is the only way to save the nation.

Responses (20 minutes).

This is particularly interesting and would be introduced by way of Jewish response to the Holocaust, indeed, that question would need to be asked. It would then be necessary to examine it briefly and decide what was the language used in the response, what colour was it, was it rabbinic, secular, assimilated, middle class, elite, eastern or western. In other words, *what* Jewish response, there were 6 million Jewish responses, all of them different. This introduces the difficult concept of a world response to current and future problems. Difficult, multidimensional concepts, which govern reactions and direct responses. Against this backdrop, personal experience of close involvement will be employed in order to introduce and explain the different military options available to governments and the UN. It will also provide an opportunity to further highlight the frustrations generated amongst those soldiers and others, who are required to deal with situations in theatre. The theoretical session will close with an essential introduction to the most powerful and widely used option; *do nothing*.