University of Sussex

# The University of Sussex Undergraduate History Journal

## Issue 3: Spring 2012

## "Historical Memory"

Edited by Elizabeth Hardwell and Julia Kompe

# Contents

# Welcome...

...to the Spring 2012 edition of the University of Sussex Undergraduate History Journal. We are very pleased with the positive feedback we have received in response to our first two editions. Interest in the journal keeps growing and we are happy about the increasing amount of outstanding contributions that have been submitted from students at home and abroad.

The focus of our third edition lies on the subject of historical memory. Of great importance for the field of cultural history, historical memory, whether experienced by an individual or a collective, allows us to see historical events from various perspectives. Whilst affording us illuminating insights into representations of the past, the role of memory in individual reconciliation and composure allows us to connect with the methodological problems of historical study and its inherent subjectivity. We hope that this issue demonstrates that this subjectivity can be celebrated, and that the articles we chose will complement the existing scholarship in their fields by shedding fresh light on aspects of historical memory.

Certainly doing so is **Charlotte Fraser** by looking at the train as a microcosm of the Holocaust. Highlighting the human experience on trains and the meaning behind them she explores a previously neglected area of Holocaust studies. She argues that the train journey facilitated a variety of experiences from the beginning of a process of dehumanisation to a space where strength and hope was cultivated. Her highly original research reveals new perspectives of the victims' perceptions of the journey while extending the time frame of the Holocaust at the same time.

**Danielle Joyce** looks directly at the role of historical memory in the Northern Ireland conflict, in a creative analysis of its cultural narratives. She argues that feelings of loss and bereavement manifested in murals to the Troubles drew on memory to strengthen feelings of victimisation on each side. Conversely, collective memory as shaped by community projects helped to aid the reconciliation process by fostering a sense of universal experience.

Finally **Ruth Taylor** explores the impact of historical memory on language by critically engaging with the use of the term "ethnic cleansing" after the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s. Taylor investigates the usefulness of the term as an analytical tool, and her rigorous definitions help to problematise the concepts of where ethnic cleansing starts and genocide begins. Whilst arguing that the memory of the Yugoslav wars may hinder the subjectivity of the term as used in a political context, she maintains that it is an important component of genocide studies in allowing historians to penetrate the processes of escalating violence.

We hope you enjoy this latest issue, and we welcome your comments and feedback at usuhj@sussex.ac.uk. Look out for our next edition coming soon.

Best wishes,

Elizabeth Hardwell and Julia Kompe
The USUHJ Editors

# The Train in the Holocaust from the Perspective of the Victims

**Charlotte Fraser**

History B.A., University of Sussex (Brighton, UK)

**Abstract:** The train as a microcosm of the Holocaust gives a different time frame to the Holocaust, one which did not end when the concentration camps were liberated. The train journeys facilitated a variety of experiences from the beginning of a process of dehumanisation to a space where strength and hope was cultivated. Viewing the experiences on the trains with imagination presents experiences of the Holocaust which have previously been sidelined in favour of the concentration camps.

**Keywords:** Holocaust, train, victims, death, dehumanisation, hope, resistance, strength, survival, prison, memory.

The train is often seen as a means by which the Holocaust took place however, for the victims, it was as big a part as any other. The train as a microcosm of the Holocaust puts many debates from Holocaust literature in a particular time and space. It shows the need to view the train as a separate entity, in the context of the whole experience. Focusing on the train itself through survivor testimonies will explore experiences which have not been exclusively focused on before. Although it was not just the Jewish who were deported on the trains, this essay will focus its scope to only the Jews as victims. The train for some as a signal of death, a prison and as something that caused fear will be contrasted to the hope and strength that existed for others on the trains. The four phases of the Holocaust[1] may be applicable to a linear reading of the Holocaust where the camps are seen as the zenith point, but does not apply when the train is taken as its own entity. Not only was the train was needed for all the phases, but as a continuous object in history and the Holocaust, shows such categorisation to be misleading and not applicable to all experiences of the Holocaust. The train has become to be seen as a Nazi bureaucratic device in secondary literature concerned with numbers and time[2]. However, as Gigliotti points out, for the victims it did not matter to them how many people were in the cattle car with them, it was the fact that there was no room to sit down[3]. It is necessary to employ a more imaginative

[1] Kren, George and Rappoport, Leon, '*The Holocaust and the Crisis of Human Behaviour',* Revised Edition, (London: Holmes and Meier, 1994), p.99.

[2] For example see Chapter 5 'Deportation' in Hilberg, Raul, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, (New York: Holmes and Meier 1985).

[3] Gigliotti, Simone, '*The Train Journey: Transit, Captivity and Witnessing in the Holocaust'*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), p6.

method of history, what Gigliotti calls "sensory witnessing"[4], where emotion and feeling have a role, rather than numbers. The train began a process of dehumanisation, whereby social codes were removed and humiliation and vulnerability increased due to the public space in which private acts had to be performed. The train allowed a unique type of resistance in jumping from it, and how this was understood by survivors informs the discussion of this resistance. How memory works when a traumatic experience has been lived through will be considered, the balance between embellishing and forgetting hard to find when memory can be informed by the publication of other memoirs. As the journey which began the suffering, and as a space where suffering took place independently of the Holocaust, the train when viewed with imagination presents experiences which have previously been sidelined.

The train was seen as a vehicle of imprisonment, in the physical sense of being locked in with many other people, and symbolically as place where freedom of control was taken away. The train was already something that Jews could not use freely and so had connotations of being part of an authoritative system. In the Lodz ghetto, for example, Jews were not allowed on trains which would take them out of Frankfurt[5]. Something that epitomised movement and freedom became a Nazi dominated area, so when it was used to forcibly deport the Jews, it became a symbol of imprisonment. Even the cattle cars with barred windows, if any at all, resembled prison like conditions. The train had become such a symbol of imprisonment that when liberation came, it was with disbelief that Jews left the trains. Moshe Sandberg describes the bizarre experience of leaving the train as a free person, not quite able to understand and without feeling any real joy[6]. This shows how symbolic the train had become in acting as a prison. If there were no feelings of imprisonment, leaving the train would not have been such a major issue. The train is seen differently after liberation emphasising the division survivors made between being deported as a prisoner and travelling freely. Jurek Kestenberg describes a journey no longer as a prisoner, going to Paris where he was taken "through in a ...in a train"[7]. The pause is significant and highlights a distinction made between the two journeys. The train has imprisoned itself in the memory of survivors although they may not focus on the train journey due to the pervasiveness of the camps in literature about the Holocaust[8]. However, those survivors such as Jacques Austerlitz retracing their journey years later consciously or subconsciously have highlighted the train as a major part in their experience of the Holocaust[9]. The train represented a prison, as somewhere that restricted freedom and should not be sidelined in favour of the camps.

Although the idea that being deported to a camp was a death sentence, the train journey itself was a place of death. The train as a journey to death became ingrained in the minds of both victims and civilians. Richard Glazier remembers how a Polish boy gestured a death sign to the Jews on the train[10]. This shows that for civilians the train symbolised the death of the Jews. Survivors are cynical about the train, seeing it as something that will lead

[4] Ibid., p.3.
[5] Gilbert, Martin, '*Final Journey: The Fate of the Jews in Nazi Europe'*, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1979), p.81.
[6] Gilbert, Martin, '*The Holocaust: The Jewish Tragedy'*, (London: Fontana, 1987), p.80.
[7] Kestenberg, Jurek, Interview, (July 1946), *http://voices.iit.edu/interview?doc=kestenbergJ&display=kestenbergJ_en*
[8] Gigliotti, '*The Train Journey'*, p.6
[9] Sebald, Winfried, '*Austerlitz'*, (London: Penguin, 2002).
[10] Lanzmann, Claude, '*Shoah'*, (Channel 4: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1985)

them to death[11]. However, this idea is present only in the Jews who are angry with the Nazis and wish to demonise them. The train is only mentioned by survivors in this negative context when a broader political point is being made. It also reflects David Broder's aim of finding unique Holocaust stories so as to bring something new to Holocaust literature, rather than document stories in an objective manner. Arad makes the necessary distinction between the train transporting the Jews to death, and the train being a place of death[12]. This distinction allows the train to be seen as a microcosm of the Holocaust with its own experiences to tell. Death on the train came in different forms to that in the camps or ghettos due to Allied bombing. Polia Bisenhaus remembers that many were killed by such bombs, especially in the later months of the war[13]. The train as an ultimate signal of death can be seen through photographs of the Dachau 'Death Train' where a trainload of corpses was transported[14]. This also highlights the necessity to turn to photographs where there are no survivors to tell that story. Death on the train shows the huge geographic spread of the Holocaust, and how it began and ended at different times for different people. Even in April 1945 when camps were being liberated, people were still dying on trains, such as the one that roamed around Czechoslovakia[15]. It shows the danger of viewing the liberation of the camps as the end of the Holocaust for all. The train should be seen as a place of death, not just transportation to death.

Despite the way the train can be seen as a signal of death, the hope that existed for many on the train offers a contending perspective. Aron describes the hope that hit him when he realised there was a window, despite having been on the train for days already[16]. This shows that hope did not fade as suffering increased. The hope felt at every moment that the situation changed is seen in the memoirs of Leo Scheidemann[17]. Hope allowed the current suffering to be reduced with anticipation for something better in the future. Examples of pre-planning in the way of baking food[18] to take on board, or saving food for the next day[19] shows how hope played such a large role in the actions of Jews. This planning ahead represents optimistic expectation without which there would have been no reason to save for tomorrow. Messages left on the walls of Drancy show an unabating hope in survival. Mosie Chetovy wrote she was in "very very good spirits, and in the hope of coming back soon"[20]. It could be suggested that those who had not been already deported to a ghetto or experienced any kind of suffering would have a more optimistic outlook, but this suggests otherwise. Mosie Chetovy's hope has not been extinguished although she has experienced life in an internment camp. Gigliotti's belief that the train could only represent doom[21] is misleading when compared to survivor testimonies who state that nothing could crush the hope they felt[22]. For some, the train journey was not particularly horrible meaning

[11] Kestenberg, *Interview*
[12] Arad, Yitzhak, *Belzec, Sobibor, 'Treblinka: The Operation Reinhard Death Camps'*, (Indiana: Indiana U.P, 1987) p.63.
[13] Bisenhaus, Polia, Interview, (July 1946), *http://voices.iit.edu/interviewee?doc=bisenhausP*
[14] "Dachau Death Train", (May 1945*), http://resources.ushmm.org/inquery/uia_doc.php/photos/14230?hr=null*
[15] Reitlinger, Gerald, '*The Final Solution'*, (London: Sphere, 1961), p.505.
[16] Derman, Aron, Memoir, 1994*, http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/media_oi.php?MediaId=1082*
[17] Schneiderman, Leo, Memoir, 1990, *http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/media_oi.php?MediaId=1905*
[18] Csillag, Irene, Memoir, *http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007883*
[19] Wiesel, Elie, '*Night'*¸ (London: Penguin, 1981), p34.
[20] Gilbert, '*Final Journey'*, p.155.
[21] Gigliotti, '*The Train'*, p.6.
[22] Gilbert, '*The Holocaust'*, p.668.

that there would be no reason for hope to diminish. A rare bit of film from inside the train shows Jews as having enough room to sit down and a woman is even able to sew[23]. Even in 1943 when mass exterminations had begun, some train experiences were not crammed or dehumanising and therefore hope that their fate would not be a horrible experience would be higher than those who experienced unpleasant conditions. Hilberg has a more cynical view of hope, seeing it as a "psychological mechanism" which was partly a way of refusing to accept death[24]. Although hope may have been used to lessen the current fear and suffering, it was more a way of trying to normalise the situation rather than refusal to accept death. Hope should be taken into account when looking at resistance, because as long as hope existed, the need to resist was diminished.

The train harboured opportunities for resistance and without recognising individual acts as resistance, agency is taken away from the Jews. Hilberg does not recognise the Jews as having the ability to resist en masse, and therefore sees them as complying with German orders[25]. The train too is seen as part of a continuous cycle of the Holocaust that was implemented from above and could not be broken[26]. This narrow scope does not allow Jewish resistance in any form. Jews who hid files in their shoes had made a conscious effort to do something they were not allowed to do[27]. Although this may not be on the scale of the Warsaw uprising, is still an example of an active decision to resist Nazi rules. Arad too puts the Jews at fault for not resisting, the passivity of the Jews allowing for smooth deportations[28]. By not including small individual acts of defiance, he is automatically limiting the scope of resistance. Bauer holds a more encompassing view[29]. In her case, those Jews smuggling nail files on board were resisting. Gilbert even includes survival as resistance because it required strong human spirit[30]. It is this spiritual resistance or symbolic resistance that created the hope, which was most common on the train[31]. The train allowed for a unique type of resistance in the form of jumping. Kren sees escape as resistance, and this can be applied to the trains as much as the camps and ghettos[32]. Survivor Alexander Kimel sees jumping from the train as a form of passive resistance[33]. Understanding how the Jews saw their own actions is most helpful in defining resistance and if jumping is seen as resistance by Kimel, historians should take this into account. If the train represented a type of prison, jumping from it was a type of resistance. It may have been spontaneous and individual as in Jurek Kestenberg's case[34], but still the act was in defiance of Nazi aims. Looking at Nazi documents allows insight into how the Nazis saw resistance. A 1941 report from a Captain of the Schutzpolizei notes resistance to moving Jews from one carriage to

[23] "Deportation of Jews from Macedonia", March 1943, *http://www.ushmm.org/lcmedia/viewer/wlc/film.php?RefId=DFB0212D*
[24] Ibid., p.333.
[25] Hilberg, '*The Destruction'*, p.196.
[26] Hilberg, '*The Destruction'*, p.174.
[27] Kestenberg, Interview
[28] Arad, *Belzec*, p.30.
[29] Bauer, Yehuda, '*Rethinking the Holocaust'*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), p.119.
[30] Gilbert, '*The Holocaust'*, p.828.
[31] For further discussion about types of resistance see Marrus, Michael, "Jewish Resistance to the Holocaust", *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.30, No.1 (1995), pp.83-110, pp.94-5.
[32] Kren and Rappoport, '*The Holocaust',* p.127.
[33] Kimel, Alexander, "Jumpers",*www.kimel.net/resist4.html*
[34] Jurek Kestenberg, who says "I decided to jump. This is it! What will happen will happen", Interview.

another[35]. It follows that if the train guards were having problems with resistant Jews, that resistance should be acknowledged by historians. A will to survive even where other people got hurt in the process goes against Kren and Rappoport's fallacy of innocence[36]. Behaviour such as threatening verbal retaliation shows there was not so much a refusal to accept victimhood, but reactions when victimisation became personal[37]. The refusal to give up on cultural practises can be seen as resistance. David describes how his father managed to sneak a bottle of wine onto the train in order to celebrate his Bar Mitzvah[38]. Continuing cultural practises when an entire culture and population was being wiped out has to be seen as resistance. Instead of seeing the train as a Nazi device that could not allow for resistance, acknowledging individual and cultural acts, the passivity of the Jews is shown to be misleading.

The train journey began a process of dehumanisation where social codes were removed and private acts became public. From a top down perspective, the whole train that deported Jews was specially designated as something different from a normal train. Use of a sonderzüge created the perception that the Jews were an 'other' that needed special cruel treatment. Even the words extermination and deportation have connotations of vermin and criminality. The use of cattle cars in which the Jews were transported removed the acknowledgement that they should be treated respectfully as humans and compared them to animals. This is especially highlighted by the fact that accompanying guards travelled in passenger cars[39]. Social codes disappeared and what would be socially acceptable behaviour in ordinary society went with them. In another context, sitting upon the body of a dead person would be seen as disrespectful however, in the context of a train in the Holocaust it was merely survival[40]. This is not to say that the Jews became inhuman, but that conventions that stood in normal society were broken down in an attempt to dehumanise them. On occasions, the Jews were made to remove their clothes before boarding the train[41]. This again removed a crucial part of being human and increased feelings of vulnerability and humility. Leo Bretholz even states that the lack of toilet facilities on the train was the beginning of a "process of dehumanisation"[42]. He does not use the words 'us' or 'we' in his account, further emphasising how he did not feel like a human and that he cannot associate himself with that time. For Gigliotti, it was a taboo-breaking experience[43]. Things that had been deemed as unacceptable in society became a necessity to survival. Drinking the urine of another to quench a terrible thirst is an example of this[44]. Levi's analysis of changing moral codes helps historians to understand what could be deemed 'selfish' behaviour[45]. Without this insight, fighting on board which led in one case to a father

[35] Lozowick, "Documentation: 'Judenspediteur', A Deportation Train", *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3, (1991), pp283-292), p.287.
[36] Kren and Rappoport, '*The Holocaust',* p.86-87.
[37] Gilbert, *The Holocaust*, p.674, Mel Mermelstein remembers a woman screaming death threats at a guard who killed her child.
[38] Bergman, David, Interview, (1990). *http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/phistories/viewmedia/phi_fset.php?MediaId=1903*
[39] Arad, *Belzec*, p.49.
[40] Zonka Pollak, in Gilbert, '*The Holocaust'*, p.412.
[41] Gilbert, '*The Holocaust'*, p.326.
[42] Ibid., p.495.
[43] Gigliotti, '*The Train'*, p.4.
[44] Piskorz, Benjamin, Interview.
[45] Levi, Primo, '*The Drowned and The Saved'*, (London: Abacus, 1988), pp.59-62.

and son killing each other over a loaf of bread [46] could be judged in terms of dehumanisation. This shows that codes of behaviour are not static but adapt to different situations. A more positive picture is painted by Wiesel, who describes the young people openly having sex in the darkness of the train, but does highlight how privacy did not exist[47]. The train in the Holocaust began an attempt to dehumanise the Jews by removing social codes causing private behaviour to take place in a public space.

Fear, tension and confusion were common feelings experienced on the train, although for others great strength was suddenly found. The unknown paradoxically maintained a certain degree of stability and calmness. When a concrete destination was discovered, the fear on the trains greatly increased. Mogilewer describes the escalation of fear when their destination of Lublin is discovered, which rises from stifled sobbing to piercing shrieks and pandemonium[48]. The nerves of the Jews on the train were only just held together, and one person losing their nerve could cause the whole train to also break down in panic[49]. The contagious fear shows how reliant they were on one another to remain as calm as possible and this would have created a lot of tension which was "exhausting"[50]. The confusion on the train can be seen in survivors who recognised the daze they were in and also from the lack of details about the journey[51]. Irene only notes basic details about the train like that they had no food and it was packed, emphasising how the confusion stopped her from taking in anything of particular detail. Dehydration, starvation and lack of air must have had a large effect on mental capacity to take in what was going on. Because of this confusion, it is important to include perspectives from those who were not on the train but saw the consequences it had on the Jews. Confused memory can cause embellishments and conversely, understatements. Fania Fenelon saw the Jews at the moment of arrival in the camp and describes the complete madness that had overtaken many of them[52]. The Jews themselves would not have recognised this madness because that is all they would have known from being on the train. It takes an outsider to show how mad they had become. The perspectives of the drivers of the trains should be taken into account when looking at the role of the train in the Holocaust. *Shoah* documents eyewitness accounts a driver of a train. He heard screams and smelt the stench which was distressing for him, and caused him to have to drink vodka to do the job[53]. His perspective is useful because it shows how the train journey was horrible for somebody who was not held a prisoner, and backs up testimonies of survivors. However, for others this fear did not exist and instead conjured great courage, physically and mentally. This was the case for Aron Derman who compared his strength to that of Samson[54]. Although there were random incidents which allowed some to escape and survive[55], looking out for oneself was the best way to survive. Survival came before fear and created strength in people. The mental strength to fight back when

[46] Wiesel, '*Night'*, pp.111-113.
[47] Wiesel, '*Night'*, p.34.
[48] Mogilewer in Gilbert, '*Final Journey'*, p.28.
[49] Wiesel, *Night*, p36.
[50] Fania Fenelon in Gilbert, '*Final Journey'*, p72.
[51] Csillag, Memoir.
[52] In Gilbert, '*Final Journey*', p176.
[53] Lanzmann, '*Shoah'*.
[54] Derman, Memoir
[55] Such as Hanna Cohen who when thrown a pair of shoes randomly was able to knock the window bars out and escape from J. Cohen, 1947, *http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/ar/belzec/belzecescape.html*

being individually victimised is arguably greater than mass resistance. Some experienced fear and confusion on the train, whilst others found great strength.

It is because all human activity can take place on a train that there are huge varieties in experiences, and is why it is so important not to sideline the train in favour of seeing the concentration camps as the centre of the Holocaust. The train journey became a symbol of death of the Jews for civilians and victims, but was also a place where death was physically present. The restriction of freedom the train as a prison caused was augmented due to the train already being a banned area as a Nazi dominated space. However, for others the train did not diminish hope, and it is this hope which should be considered when a lack of resistance is perceived. Symbolic and cultural resistance should not be automatically rejected as resistance just because it does not aim to overthrow the oppressor. There were reactions against personal victimisation and blanketing the Jews as passive victims only allows for a myopic view of the ability to resist. Dehumanising conditions through removal of social codes did not cause the Jews to lose their humanity, but to adopt instinct behaviour which would not be deemed acceptable in ordinary society. Privacy was negated due to the public nature of the train. Looking at perspectives from those who were not on the trains allows us to see how mad with fear some Jews became, whilst others conjured strength and fought to survive. The train as a microcosm of the Holocaust highlights new experiences and challenges existing perceptions about victim experiences.

## Bibliography


### Primary Sources

Kimel, Alexander, "Jumpers", *www.kimel.net/resist4.html*

### Interviews and memoirs

Wohl, Agnes, Memoir, *http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007779*

Derman, Aron, Memoir, (1994),
*http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/media_oi.php?MediaId=1082*

Piskorz, Benjamin, Interview, (September 1946),
*http://voices.iit.edu/interview?doc=piskorzB&display=piskorzB_en*

Bergman, David, Interview, (1990),
*http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/phistories/viewmedia/phi_fset.php?MediaId=1903*

Csillag, Irene, Memoir, *http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007883*

Kestenberg, Jurek, Oral Interview, (July 1946),
*http://voices.iit.edu/interview?doc=kestenbergJ&display=kestenbergJ_en*

Schneiderman, Leo, Memoir, (1990),
*http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/media_oi.php?MediaId=1905*

Bisenhaus, Polia, Interview, (July 1946), *http://voices.iit.edu/interviewee?doc=bisenhausP*

### Audio isual

Lanzmann, Claude, '*Shoah'*, (Channel 4: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1985).

"Deportation of Jews from Macedonia", (March 1943),
*http://www.ushmm.org/lcmedia/viewer/wlc/film.php?RefId=DFB0212D*

### Pictures

"Dachau Death Train", (May 1945),
*http://resources.ushmm.org/inquery/uia_doc.php/photos/14230?hr=null*

**Secondary Sources**

Arad, Yitzhak *, 'Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka: The Operation Reinhard Death Camps'*, (Indiana: Indiana Univesity Press, 1987).

Bauer, Yehuda, '*Rethinking the Holocaust'*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

Clendinnen, Inga, '*Reading the Holocaust'*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Gigliotti, Simone, '*The Train Journey: Transit, Captivity and Witnessing in the Holocaust'*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009).

Gilbert, Martin, '*Final Journey: The Fate of the Jews in Nazi Europe'*, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1979).

Gilbert, Martin, '*The Holocaust: The Jewish Tragedy'*, (New York: Henry Holt, 1987).

Hilberg, Raul, '*The Destruction of the European Jews'*, (New York: Holmes, 1985).

Kren, George, and Rappoport, Leon, '*The Holocaust and the Crisis of Human Behaviour'*, Revised Edition, (London: Holmes and Meier, 1994).

Lang, Berel, (ed.) '*Writing and the Holocaust'*, (USA: Holmes & Meier, 1988).

Levi, Primo, '*The Drowned and The Saved'*, (London: Abacus, 1988).

Lozowick, 'Documentation: "Judenspediteur", A Deportation Train', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3, (1991), pp283-292).

Marrus, Michael, 'Jewish Resistance to the Holocaust', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.30, No.1 (1995), pp83-110.

Reitlinger, Gerald, '*The Final Solution'*, (London: Sphere, 1961).

Sebald, Winfried, '*Austerlitz'*, (London: Penguin, 2002).

Wiesel, Elie, '*Night'*, (London: Penguin, 1981).

# Discuss the Role of Memory in Understanding the Situation in Northern Ireland

**Danielle Joyce**

History B.A., University of Sussex (Brighton, UK)

**Abstract:** The role of memory in Northern Ireland changed from a cause for division to a catalyst for resolution. Two opposing sides appealed to historical memory in order to justify their stance in the religious and political conflict. This article shows how the nature of memory changed, from historical to collective, in order to help reconcile the divide. Individual stories were used to explain a public conflict, to formulate a social narrative around the theme of loss and bereavement which helped the reconciliation process. The article discusses the manipulation of memory and how it functioned throughout the unrest across Northern Ireland and how this affected internal relations.

**Keywords:** Northern Ireland, Collective Memory, Conflict, Reconciliation, Graham Dawson, Murals, Healing Through Remembering

Memory is a necessary concept in understanding the Troubles in Northern Ireland as it not only causes a divide amongst the population but is also used as an aide to the reconciliation process. Historical memory shapes the identity of the two competing narratives which dominate the history of the unrest. The aim of this essay is to discuss the role of memory in understanding the situation in Northern Ireland, and in particular what the reconciliation process teaches us about the use of memory in the conflict. Social or collective memories are used as a means of confronting the past and a move towards a peaceful future. Historical memory which retained a strong prominence in the discourse of the Troubles shaped the identities as two competing communities alluded to history in order to display themselves as victimised by the other. This appeal to history is portrayed through the murals painted on the walls of cities such as Belfast in the North, representing the prominence of the past in the mindset of the conflict-ridden Northern Ireland. It is from this point that the role of memory shifts to reconcile the divide through the formulation of a collective memory with a common experience of loss and bereavement across both narratives. Memory in this sense operates through community projects which groups victims of the conflict together with the aim of creating a universal social experience and mutual understanding. In order to understand the conflict and peace process in Northern Ireland the role that memory plays needs to be understood, both how historical memory, which kept the past alive in the Troubles, and the use of memory to leave the past behind and permit reconciliation to take place. The function and effect of memory changes throughout the chronology of events in Northern Ireland, from a cause for division to a

catalyst for resolution. This essay will investigate such developments and demonstrate how relations are affected by memory.

The Troubles in Northern Ireland were fuelled by the use of memory which caused a sectarian divide between the Irish Republicans and the British Loyalists. The use of historical memory was evident through the murals from both communities which used historical conflicts in order to justify their stance in the unrest. The Republicans and the Loyalists displayed two different narratives and it is these narratives which are used as a way of appealing to and underlining continued conflicts.[1] Self-perception is influenced by the role of memory as historical conflicts shaped the two contested identity groupings in Northern Ireland. The Republican mural in Cliftonville, Belfast, placed responsibility for 'The Great Hunger' of the nineteenth century in Ireland on to the British and is acting as a reminder of the negative consequences of British rule (see Appendix 1). The historical memory of the starvation of the Irish population is used as a tool to show the victimhood of the Republicans and provide reasoning for the conflict against the Loyalists in the North. This mural represents how identity was formulated in the conflict and provides an example of one narrative which can be considered the 'same' history.[2] Another Republican mural on Ballymurphy Road in Belfast also uses the memory of the Great Famine as a cause for divide and conflict (see Appendix 2). References to the Great Hunger as 'British genocide by Starvation' and ' Ireland's Holocaust' act as a means of arousing feelings of anger or disgust against the British presence in the North for events which are no longer in living memory. The historical memory of relations between Britain and Ireland is being used to justify the resentment felt during the unrest. In these instances, memory functions through history rather than personal experiences in order to shape the identities of a particular community. However, Murals also relied on living memory as a means of sharpening the divide in the North which is shown through the commemorative mural in Derry (see Appendix 3). By commemorating the victims of Bloody Sunday it represents a constant reminder of the lost lives of the Bogside Massacre due to actions of the British Army. The role of memory here is to respect the lives of the protesters whilst remembering the pain caused by the opposing British force. The memory of Bloody Sunday is being used to stir an emotional reaction against the Loyalist British community. Parallels can be drawn with the murals depicted by the Loyalist community who claim to be victims of Republican terror. The Protestant mural in Belfast that was demanding 'let us not forget' was forcing the public to recollect the murderous actions of the Republicans (see Appendix 4). This mural appeals to the memory of those who were murdered and uses both living and historical memory to sharpen the divide between the two communities. Historical memory is also prominent in the rhetoric of Loyalists as shown through the Cromwell mural which focuses more on the religious aspect of the conflict (see Appendix 5). It appeals to the history of Oliver Cromwell and his attack on Catholicism. This mural uses historical memory to argue in favour of Protestantism in Ireland and therefore it lies on the Loyalist side of the conflict. This mural states that 'there will be no peace in Ireland until the Catholic Church is crushed' relating the Troubles to the Catholic Church which has a history of dispute with Protestantism. The depiction of newspaper headlines showing the violence of the IRA and Republican forces (see Appendix 6) was acting a reminder of trauma which the Loyalists experienced. This places them in a position of apparent victimhood which justifies their own violence as a form of defence. This

[1] Horning, Audrey, 'Cultures of Contact, Cultures of Conflict?' in *Stanford Journal of Archaeology,* Vol.05 (2007) pp.107-133, p.111.

[2] Dawson, Graham, '*Making Peace with the Past?',* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), p.33.

relies on the use of living memory as many of the actions it is referring to would have been experienced and personally remembered by the public involved. These visible displays of conflict and division use the concept of memory to recollect the trauma as a way to arouse anger and resentment against one another. It is this effect that the memory has which heightens the tension within the conflict. The emotions attached to both the historical and living memories are used by both communities to sharpen their own identity in contrast to one another. Memory is being manipulated in order to justify a continued conflict in Northern Ireland.

When attempting to understand the conflict in Northern Ireland it is necessary to acknowledge the changing nature of the role of memory. The concept which was once used by the two forces as a means of division and conflict was also used by members of research projects and reconciliatory groups as a necessary part of the peace process. Michael Foley argues that it is inappropriate to expect victims of such violence to forgive one another yet it is reasonable to suggest that conditions should be formulated which create the framework for forgiveness and healing.[3] Although his analysis may be in reference to Latin America it is easily transferable with the situation in Ulster. The framework in which he believes is essential in aiding reconciliation is created in Northern Ireland using the concept of collective memory whereby victims from opposing sides share a common experience. The personal struggle is used to define a public conflict thereby creating social memory with the aim to rejoin the divided population. This would take the personal stories through memoirs and interviews and fuse them together so that both communities acknowledge the commonalties between them around the topic of loss of loved ones. However the process in which this occurs underlines the issues surrounding the use of memory for reconciliation purposes. Creating a framework in which reconciliation can take place between two opposing communities requires a recollection of events which, previously, have been the reason behind the hostility. This is where problems begin to arise as reparative remembering, outlined by Dawson, in part of the process of forgetting the trauma caused by the conflict forces the remembrance of events which are likely to worsen the divide more than cause peace by opening up old wounds.[4] Reconciliation teaches us how memory that once sharpened a political and religious divide can be used to bridge the gap between these two identities but the process in which this occurs can often be problematic.

The use of memory to help reconciling is most prominent through the community projects which work across both communities in an attempt to heal the divide that has been separating the two identities in Northern Ireland. These schemes helped to bring the victims and experiences to the forefront of public awareness and were not exclusive to one community therefore creating this aforementioned framework for reconciliation. Community projects such as *Healing through Remembering* focused on how remembering should take place so that the healing process could occur by allowing victims to tell their stories. They centralised their research around the question 'How should we remember the events connected with the conflict in and about Northern Ireland?' as they believed that memory plays an important role in the social and psychological healing as identities are formed by what people remember. *Healing through Remembering* used memory as a way to move forward in society whilst recognising that dealing with the past can be divisive as the

[3] Arthur, Paul, 'Conflict, Memory and Reconciliation' in Elliott Marianne, (ed.), *The Long Road to Peace in Northern Ireland,* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2002), pp.143-152, p.151.

[4] Dawson, '*Making Peace with the Past?',* p.77.

memories they are using were those which alienated the communities from one another. The experiences collected through this initiative aimed to build trust between members from both communities and to show no bias to enable reconciliation to take place.[5] Rather than using memory as a means of shaping group identity, it is being used to form a collective experience across the Loyalists and Republicans. Both communities experienced loss of loved ones and acts of violence even if the victims themselves did not directly participate in the political or religious conflict. This project provides an important insight in to the way in which memory functions in order dissolve tensions providing an understanding of how reconciliation was able to take place in Northern Ireland.

During the reconciliation process the concept of memory was used to illustrate the impact and consequences of violent conflict. This approach was taken by Marie Smyth and the coordinators of *The Cost of the Troubles* charity who aimed to document the extent and nature of the Troubles on the Northern Irish population from both communities involved.[6] These recollections publicised the results of a sectarian divide in which people were victimised simply because of their faith or identity, innocent lives were lost from both communities and through this a collective experience can be constructed across the divide. This not only acts as a catharsis for those victimised, it also forms a common discourse of loss and bereavement. Although the beliefs and personal stories of those interviewed differed there was a commonality around the theme of violence and death. This project also highlighted the determination of the public to have the conflict come to a permanent close based on the trauma that was experienced thus showing how memory can be used as a means of moving on and learning from the past.[7] Remembrance projects such as these help us understand the situation in Northern Ireland as they provide a personal insight into the public conflict. These groups symbolise the role that memory plays in the peace process, by requesting that the public remember what happened during this period, they acknowledge the victims on both the Loyalist and Republican sides showing that both of the communities were affected. The collective experience of loss attempts to gap the bridge between the two groups and a public recognition of the violence underlines the need for an end to the conflict. The interviewees of *The Cost of the Troubles* share a lack of the opportunity to mourn, sedation was provided as an alternative, they argue that they 'should have been allowed to grieve and shout about it'[8] and that they were just 'left to cope'.[9] Alice Nocher, for example, speaks of how she wanted to be left alone so she could 'have this good old cry'.[10] The personal stories show how violence and loss was inclusive of both communities.

The interviews carried out by *The Cost of the Troubles* initiative raised questions surrounding how memory of the Troubles is experienced by those who were not directly involved in the violence. Can those who did not directly witness the conflict remember such

[5] McClelland, Roy, 'The Report of the Healing through Remembering Project' (June 2002), *http://www.healingthroughremembering.org/images/assets/htrreport.pdf*, (Date Accessed: 29/04/2011).

[6] 'Cost of the Troubles Study', *http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/cts/* (Date Accessed: 23/04/2011).
Smyth, Marie and Fay, Marie-Therese., 'Introduction' in Smyth, Marie & Fay, Marie-Therese (eds.), *Personal Accounts from Northern Ireland's Troubles: Public Conflict, Private Loss,* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), pp.1-6, p.1.
Valente, Margaret., 'Multiple Bereavement and Loss' in Smyth & Fay (eds.), *Personal Accounts from Northern Ireland's Troubles,* pp.20-33, p.23.
Nocher, Alice, 'The Troubles is my Life' in Smyth & Fay (eds.), *Personal Accounts from Northern Ireland's Troubles* pp.7-19, p.9.

[10] Ibid. p.16.

events? If so, what do they remember? How does the collective experience of loss and bereavement play out in their memories? This forms an investigation as to how individuals, outside the scope of conflict, shape their personal accounts in relation to the public discussions open to them.[11] To answer these questions a discussion was called between my grandfather, William Sexton, and I. William was a born in the Republic of Ireland as a Catholic and was living in County Kildare during the Troubles; his answers were striking in determining the place of memory in understanding Northern Ireland. He stated that he was unable to remember anything in detail as it had little personal impact on the life of him or his family. This is in direct contrast to the stories that originated from the North. William's memory is shaped by what he reads in papers; the media formed his perception of the conflict, and as the media coverage lessened the memory no longer held as much precedent in his mind. As Marie Smyth and Marie-Therese Fay described in their introduction to the personal accounts, media interest ceases after a short period of time which allows public consciousness to overlook the impact of conflict for those most affected by it.[12] Throughout the interview he seemed reluctant to share information and although he admitted that things were no longer the same he said there was a silence surrounding what was happening, it was not spoke about as 'you wouldn't know who you'd be talking to'.[13] He spoke about how he worked on the central heating in a pub which had been bombed and yet 'the crowd that owned the pub never mentioned it', he recalls that there was avoidance of discussion around what was happening.[14] Apart from unnamed or undated bombings which took place in Dublin around the 1970s William was unable or unwilling to recall much else reflecting how memory of the Troubles, in this individual case, did not have a lasting impact on those who were not directly involved and his location in the Republic of Ireland may have had an influence in this. He shows a reluctance to participate in the memory of the Troubles and by insisting on a lack of memory due to no personal involvement, William distances himself from the collective narrative of the unrest. He recognised the loss of lives yet had no emotional involvement in this which is in contrast to the highly emotive recollections of those affected by the unrest. The themes of loss and bereavement were not prominent in his memory nor were they considered at great length. The idea behind completing this interview was to see how memory functions for those outside of the conflict and the impact the collective experience had outside of those directly affected. The use of memory in the personal stories and the community project is aimed at helping those within Ulster's borders reconcile their differences and therefore has a limited impact on the remainder of the Irish population. Memory was used as a cause for division and then an aide to reconciliation yet this interview shows us how memory can be formulated through the media rather than personal experience. Attention in the media is paid more to the social memory of violence and damage than the individual experience of loss and bereavement. Although remaining respectful, William describes how the events in the North were of little interest to him as they did not pose a threat to his livelihood. There is a sense of detachment from himself and the conflict. As there is no emotional impact the memory is not engrained his mind therefore allowing the violence to be ignored. This is highlighted by the fact that the most prominent memories of bomb attacks were those that happened

[11] Jones, Ben, 'Telling Family Stories: Interpretive Authority and Intersubjectivity in Life History Research' in *University of Sussex Journal of Contemporary History,* Vol 01, Issue 07 (Summer 2004) p.1.
[12] Smyth & Fay, 'Introduction', p.5.
[13] Telephone Interview with William Sexton (see Appendix 7).
[14] Telephone Interview with William Sexton (see Appendix 7).

closer to home. William recognises a lack of understanding of the political debate that covered the span of the Troubles and knows little about the actual reconciliation process other than the violence has not been a focal point in the news in comparison to the 1970s and 1980s. The recollections that shape my grandfather's memories of the Troubles centralise around what the media has put forward. His understanding of the Troubles is not through personal experience but through second hand representations through the press. This interview gives an insight into a personal understanding of the situation in the North from an outsider, showing how he interprets the events through his own memory and what shapes his memory despite not witnessing it firsthand.

Memory in Northern Ireland had a profound impact on the relations between the Loyalists and the Republicans, as shown through the manipulation of history in the conflict. This illustrated through the murals which portrayed an image of victimhood for both communities. These negative relations relied on the formulation of a collective memory and understanding in order for reconciliation to occur. Both Loyalists and Republicans relied on memory in order to justify their stance in the conflict; the causes for division were based on both historical and living memory, whereas the causes for reconciliation were based solely on personal experience. Memory in Northern Ireland is significant as each community relied on both historical and living memory in order to justify their political and social positions. The individual story was used to explain a public conflict, to formulate a social narrative around the theme of loss and bereavement. However, the functionality of memory differed outside of Ulster where the personal aspect of the remembrance is not as prominent, which means that for outsiders such as those in the Republic of Ireland, individuals are not so emotionally attached to the themes of loss and bereavement. The emotion that is attached to memories plays a significant role in determining the extent of conflict and reconciliation in the Troubles. The memories collected by the community projects enabled the victims to grieve and have their stories told, some for the first time, which aided the healing process. The memories in Northern Ireland are determined by personal experience however those outside of its borders formulate their memory of the events through second hand experiences portrayed in the press, and as media coverage dies down, so the living memory diminishes for those not directly involved.

## Appendix

**Appendix 1**: Famine Mural, Cliftonville, Belfast, Photo Taken: 11/06/2007 (date accessed: 03/04/2011).

**Appendix 2**: An Gorta Mor Mural, Whiterock Road, Belfast. Photo Taken: 06/04/2007 (date accessed: 23/04/2011).

**Appendix 3**: Bloody Sunday Commemoration, Derry, Painted: January 1999

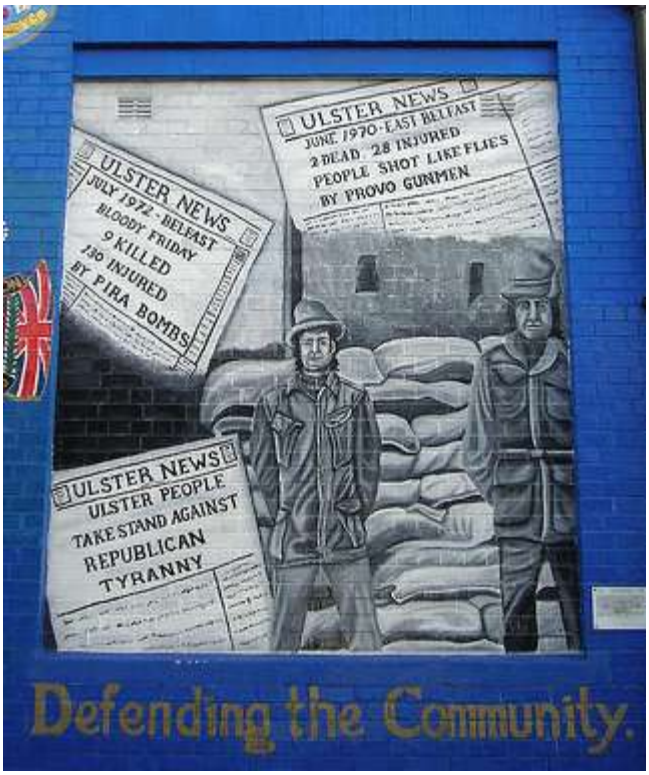
(date accessed: 22/04/2011).

**Appendix 4:** Protestant Mural on the Lower Newtownards Road, Belfast, Photo Taken: 29/04/2008

(date accessed: 20/04/2011).

**Appendix 5**: Oliver Cromwell Mural, Shankill, Belfast, Photo Taken: 31/07/2009 (date accessed: 23/04/2011).


**Appendix 6**: Defending the Community Mural, Thorndyke Street, Belfast, Painted: 2004 (date accessed: 25/04/2011).



**Appendix 7:** Abridged Transcription of Telephone Interview with William Sexton – 18/05/2011 (Permission gained from William Sexton)

Danielle Joyce (DJ): Do you remember anything about the Northern Irish Troubles?
William Sexton (WS): No nothing really, not something that I take an interest you know. I only know that were a lot of people killed in it but other than that I can't help you.

DJ: So you can't recall any of the actual events?

WS: Only that there was a few bombings up in Dublin in the 70s and that, you know, there was a good few killed in that. But for dates and times now I wouldn't have a clue.

DJ: How do you remember these bombings?

WS: I remember the goings on at the time but it's not something that would stick in my mind. I'd hear it on the news and that would be it forgotten then. But what happened and what they called it I couldn't tell you at all.

DJ: What about the reconciliation and the Peace Talks?

WS: No, No, I had no interest in that at all, sure it didn't affect me. I just got on with my own life. If I heard it in the news then I'd hear it in the news but if I didn't then that was it. Do you know what I mean? I wouldn't be one of those people to sit down and study it so there's no point in me telling you anything different.

DJ: Do you know anyone who was directly involved in the conflict?

WS: No sorry I don't, no. I didn't know anyone that had to do with the bombings or anything like that. I'd read it in the papers and that would be it then. If it didn't affect me I didn't get interested in it, there was no need to, you know. I'd hear it on the news and then the next day it would be hard to remember it. I haven't a clue now. As I said all I remember is that a bomb went off in a pub there, one up in Dublin, I can't remember the name now but that's about all I remember about it. As a matter of fact I was doing the central heating in the pub afterwards, after it was blown up, but they never talked about it up there, do you know what I mean?

DJ: So people just ignored it and carried on?

WS: The crowd that owned the pub never mentioned it, the bomb was left in it and that was it.

DJ: So apart from that, all that you can remember is what was said in the press and on the news?

WS: Yes, just what I hear on the news or the radio, other than that I wouldn't have a clue about it at all. That's it. It's not something I was fussed knowing about. I know you have to study it but I wouldn't be interested in it at all. Don't get me wrong, I wouldn't like to see them bombs going off again or anything but I wouldn't go round asking questions or that about it. Times over here you wouldn't know who you you'd be talking to, you could say the wrong thing and you could find yourself sitting on a bomb. Well it's not so bad now of course as it was back then. All I know is that it happened in the 70s and that's it then.

*End of abridged transcription.*

## Bibliography:

### Primary Sources

Nocher, Alice, 'The Troubles is my Life' in Marie Smyth & Marie-Therese Fay (eds.), *Personal Accounts from Northern Ireland's Troubles: Public Conflict, Private Loss* (London, 2002), pp.7-19.

Valente, Margaret, 'Multiple Loss and Bereavement' in Smyth, Marie and Fay, Marie-Therese (eds.), *Personal Accounts from Northern Ireland's Troubles: Public Conflict, Private Loss* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), pp.20-33.

An Gorta Mor Mural, Whiterock Road, Belfast. Photo Taken: 06/04/2007 (Date Accessed: 23/04/2011).

Bloody Sunday Commemoration, Derry, Painted: January 1999 (Date Accessed: 22/04/2011).

Defending the Community Mural, Thorndyke Street, Belfast, Painted: 2004 (Date Accessed: 25/04/2011).

Famine Mural, Cliftonville, Belfast, Photo Taken: 11/06/2007 (Date Accessed: 23/04/2011).

Oliver Cromwell Mural, Shankill, Belfast, Photo Taken: 31/07/2009 (Date Accessed: 23/04/2011)

Protestant Mural on the Lower Newtownards Road, Belfast, Photo Taken: 29/04/2008 (date accessed: 20/04/2011).

Danielle Joyce, Telephone Interview with William Sexton, 18/05/2011 (Brighton, 2011).

'Cost of the Troubles Study'*, http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/cts/* (Date Accessed 23/04/2011).

McClelland, Roy, 'The Report of the Healing through Remembering Project' (June 2002) *http://www.healingthroughremembering.org/images/assets/htrreport.pdf* (Date Accessed 29/04/2011).

**Secondary Sources**

Arthur, Paul, 'Conflict, Memory and Reconciliation' in Elliott, Marianne, (ed.), *The Long Road to Peace in Northern Ireland* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2002).

Graham Dawson, '*Making Peace with the Past?',* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

Horning, Audrey, 'Cultures of Contact, Cultures of Conflict?' in *Stanford Journal of Archaeology*, Vol.5 (2007).

Jones, Ben, 'Telling Family Stories: Interpretive Authority and Intersubjectivity in Life History Research' in *University of Sussex Journal of Contemporary History,* Vol. 01, Issue 07 (Summer 2004).

Smyth, Marie and Fay, Marie-Therese, 'Introduction' in Smyth, Marie and Fay, Marie-Therese (eds.), *Personal Accounts from Northern Ireland's Troubles: Public Conflict, Private Loss* (London, 2002).

# Assessing the Relevance of Ethnic Cleansing in the Field of Genocide Studies

**Ruth Taylor**

History B.A., University of Sussex (Brighton, UK)

**Abstract**: The term 'ethnic cleansing' came into prevalence during the Yugoslav wars of the early 1990s. It has since been used to describe acts of 'genocidal' mass violence and expulsion of peoples from a given area of land. This article will explore the worth of 'ethnic cleaning' as an analytical tool in a genocide studies framework. It will endeavor to show how 'ethnic cleansing' should be seen as a marker for the international community to warn that a society may be becoming genocidal. It will also explore the dangers of the term becoming too associated with the Yugoslav and thus Bosnian context.

**Keywords**: Ethnic Cleansing, Genocide, Yugoslavia, Serbia, Bosnia, Holocaust.

Although acts of what is now considered ethnic cleansing arguably occurred before 1990[1], it was during the Yugoslav wars that the phrase formally came into usage in the Western world. However, the act of ethnic cleansing is closely related to that of genocide. Can ethnic cleansing, then, be used effectively to describe different events from genocide, part of a genocidal process, or are they just synonyms of each other? To assess this, and the relevance of ethnic cleansing in the genocide studies field, firstly this essay will define both terms. This will highlight the overlap and lack of clarity in respective definitions of the two terms. Secondly, it will examine the utility of ethnic cleansing as an analytical tool in genocide studies. It will argue that ethnic cleansing can be seen as part of a genocidal process, providing a useful analytical tool into marking the escalation of violence in a potentially genocidal society. On the other hand, it will draw attention to the relationship of the term ethnic cleansing to the Yugoslav conflict, which could detract from the worth of the term in genocide studies as it may become intrinsically linked to this single conflict.

To assess the relevance of ethnic cleansing, it is crucial to define it. Ethnic cleansing originated from the Serbian term 'etnicko ciscenje'[2]. The United Nations (UN) first defined the term in 1992 stating it was 'the elimination by the ethnic group exercising control over a given territory of members of other ethnic groups.'[3] This definition of ethnic cleansing[4] has elements of Raphael

[1] See: Niamark, Norman '*Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth Century Europe*' (Cambridge: Harvard University Press: 2002) and Pohl, J. Otto, '*Ethnic Cleansing in the USSR, 1937-1949*' (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1999).

[2] Conversi, Daniele 'Genocide, Ethnic Cleansing and Nationalism' in Gerard Delanty and Krishan Kumar (eds.) *The SAGE Handbook of Nations and Nationalism* (SAGE: 2006), p.320.

[3] United Nations General Assembly Security Council 'Human Rights Questions: Human Rights Situations and Reports of the Special Rapporteurs and Representatives: Situation of Human Rights in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia' S/24809 17 November 1992. Available at *http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=s/24809* [Accessed on 05/02/2011] (See Appendix I: Points 8-10 for full definition).

Lemkin called 'cultural genocide'[5] a point emphasised by Damir Mirkovic[6]. By 1994 the UN definition transformed into one that was more conclusive: 'the systematic purge of the civilian population based on ethnic criteria, with the view to forcing it to abandon the territories where it lives'[7]. Despite the UN's definition, scholars have differing views over what ethnic cleansing has come to mean. Mark Levene states that 'population mass displacement... [is] in today's parlance, ethnic cleansing'[8], this view is over-simplistic, ignoring the means and intent of the perpetrators. Firstly, ethnic cleansing is undoubtedly the persecution against an *ethnic* group, rather than a *political* or *religious* group (of course, the latter two are arguably part of ethnicity). Therefore, the first scholarly attempts to define ethnic cleansing by Andrew Bell-Fialkoff and Drazen Petrovic should be viewed with caution, as they included a range of groups: religious, political, national, ideological and strategic[9]. This is too broad a term for ethnic cleansing, and as a result, Bell-Fialkoff provides many examples in his essay that could simply be seen as *population cleansing* rather than *ethnic cleansing*[10]. The most important element of ethnic cleansing is the aim of 'purification' of a *territory*, rather than a *population*. It often requires mass violence to facilitate the policy. Murder, torture and rape are but a few violent methods that are used to forcibly remove people from their homes. The disintegration of victim's daily lives is also an objective, for instance, by destroying their places of worship and not allowing them to speak their mother tongue[11]. This follows the line of 'cultural genocide' put forward by Lemkin[12]. However, as stated by Benjamin Valentino 'the decision to engage in ethnic cleansing, however, is not always a decision to perpetrate mass killing'[13]. Therefore, although ethnic cleansing in its simplest form could be seen as a 'population transfer' policy to create a homogenously ethnically nation, in practice it involves mass violence as a means to this end.

Secondly, it is essential to highlight the problematic relationship between various definitions of ethnic cleansing and genocide. Genocide can primarily be defined by the United Nations Genocide Convention[14]. This simplistic definition sets genocide aside from ethnic cleansing effectively by means of intent. The importance of intent has been highlighted by many scholars[15], with Norman Naimark stating 'Genocide is the **intentional killing** off of part or all of an ethnic, religious, or national group... The **intention** of ethnic cleansing is to **remove people** and often all traces of them

---

4 See: Appendix I: Point 8-9.

5 See: Appendix II.

6 Mirkovic, Damir 'Ethnic Conflict and Genocide: Reflections on Ethnic Cleansing in the Former Yugoslavia', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* Vol. 548, The Holocaust: Remembering for the Future (Nov., 1996), p.196.

7 United Nations Economic and Social Council 'Situation of Human Rights: Sixth Periodic Report on the Situation of Human Rights in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia', E/CN.4/1994/110 21 February 1994. Available at *http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=E/CN.4/1994/110* [Accessed on 06/02/2011].

8 Levene, Mark, '*Genocide in the Age of the Nation State: The Meaning of Genocide'* (London: I.B.Tauris: 2005), p.45.

9 See: Bell-Fialkoff, Andrew 'A brief history of ethnic cleansing', *Foreign Affairs 72/3* (1993), p.110 and Petrovic, Drazen 'Ethnic Cleansing- An Attempt at Methodology' (1994) *5 EJIL*, p.351.

10 See: Bell-Fialkoff, Andrew 'A brief history...'

11 See for Bosnian example: Sell, Louis '*Slobodan Milosevic and the Destruction of Yugoslavia',* (London: Duke University Press, 2003), p.167.

12 See: Appendix II.

13 Valentino, Benjamin, '*Final Solution: Mass Killing and Genocide in the Twentieth Century',* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2004), p.76.

14 See: Appendix III.

15 See: May, Larry, '*Genocide: A Normative Account',* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2010), p.106 and Yamin, Alicia, 'Ethnic Cleansing and Other Lies: Combining Health and Human Rights in the Search for Truth and Justice in the Former Yugoslavia', *Health and Human Rights,* Vol. 2, No. 1, (1996), p.71.

from a **concrete territory**'[16]. This can be seen in the wording of the UN Genocide Convention which states: '**intent to destroy**, in whole or in part'[17]. Therefore, perpetrators of genocide intend to kill a group, whereas perpetrators of ethnic cleansing intend to remove a group from a given territory. However, if the definition of genocide is expanded to the Lemkinian definition[18], the difference between the two terms is blurred. Lemkin states 'genocide does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation'[19], thus there is no intention to kill. Lemkin's definition includes 'cultural genocide'[20] which is an aspect of ethnic cleansing and similar to the UN's definition. Therefore, the legal definition of genocide provides a clear distinction between genocide and ethnic cleansing; however a broad definition like Lemkin's is problematic.

Having defined both genocide and ethnic cleansing, it is now useful to ascertain the usefulness of ethnic cleansing as an analytical tool to describe and explain acts of mass violence. Where does ethnic cleansing stop and genocide start? As highlighted before, intent is a major difference and allows for conceptual separation. However, it is more useful for historians and other academics in the genocide studies field not to entirely dichotomise the concepts, and to see ethnic cleansing as part of a genocidal process. Many scholars refer to ethnic cleansing as 'genocidal'[21], this suggests that the two terms are interrelated. That is not to say that all instances of ethnic cleansing lead to genocide, for example the case of many ethnic Germans being expelled from numerous countries post-World War II[22]. However, the use of mass violence causes scholars to call ethnic cleansing 'genocidal', but Naimark argues it is genocidal violence without the intention of genocide[23]. Valentino provides an ideal insight into how ethnic cleansing fits into the genocidal process: ethnic cleansing is primarily the removal of an ethnic group from a given territory, however it starts to become genocide when the perpetrators kill the intelligentsia of the victim group to scare them into fleeing. It ultimately becomes fully-fledged genocide when the scaring fails to work or the perpetrators realise that there is nowhere for the victims to flee or they will become a 'cross-border threat' thus having to kill the population to remove them[24]. This can be seen in the escalation of violence and persecution against the Jews in Nazi Germany, notably after the failure of projects such as Madagascar (1940). Therefore, Schabas correctly argues that 'ethnic cleansing is... a warning sign of genocide to come. Genocide is the last resort of the frustrated ethnic cleanser'[25]. Consequently, as an analytical tool, ethnic cleansing is part of the genocidal process and should be appreciated as a potential marker for genocide by the international community.

It is important, however, that the term ethnic cleansing does not become overly entwined with the Yugoslav conflict; as Akbar Ahmed warns: 'however much Bosnia hypnotizes us, we need to broaden our frame of reference beyond Bosnia'[26]. The Holocaust arguably provides a blueprint for

[16] Niamark, Norman '*Fires of Hatred...',* p.3. (Emphasis added).
[17] United Nations 'Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide'. Available at *http://www.hrweb.org/legal/genocide.html* [Accessed on 07/02/2011] (Emphasis added).
[18] See Appendix IV.
[19] Lemkin, Raphael *'Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation - Analysis of Government - Proposals for Redress'*, (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944). Available at *http://www.preventgenocide.org/lemkin/AxisRule1944-1.htm* [Accessed on 07/02/2011].
[20] See Appendix II.
[21] See: Nickel, James, 'Moral Dimension of Four Ways of Getting Rid of Groups' in Aleksandar Jokic (ed.) *War Crimes and Collective Wrongdoing: A Reader,* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), p.165-174 and Shaw, Martin, '*What is Genocide...',* p.37-62.
[22] See: Bell-Fialkoff, Andrew, 'A brief history...', p. 115 and Niamark, Norman '*Fires of Hatred...'*, p.108-138
[23] Niamark, Norman '*Fires of Hatred...',* p.4.
[24] Valentino, Benjamin '*Final Solution...',* p.155-7.
[25] Schabas, William, '*Genocide in International Law: The Crime of Crimes',* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2000), p.201.
[26] Ahmed, Akbar, 'Ethnic Cleansing': A Metaphor for Our Time?', *Ethnic And Racial Studies,* 18:1, p.3

genocide, with others neglected or seen as 'lesser' genocides. Also, although scholars such as Bell-Fialkoff have tried to attach the phrase to other episodes of 'cleansing', they are not necessarily 'ethnic' in nature and thus cannot be connotative to the phrase[27]. This has led to Schabas to argue that 'ethnic cleansing is probably better described as a popular or journalistic expression with no recognized legal meaning in a technical sense.'[28] This is partially how the term ethnic cleansing evolved, as Shaw states 'new experiences of violence against civilians in Yugoslavia led to the rapid spread of an alternative concept, 'ethnic cleansing'. Although these horrors reminded many of Nazi persecutions, there was a feeling that they fell short and deserved a different label'[29]. This highlights the danger that ethnic cleansing will become overly related to the Bosnian case to be effectively used as an analytical tool elsewhere. This could simply lead to a multitude of different definitions in similar cases, for arguably the same concept. Therefore, as Helen Fein argues, ethnic cleansing was due to genocide avoidance from the West: 'the world community still prefers to promise post-war retribution... rather than to recognise and label genocide and intervene to stop genocide'[30]. Furthermore, ethnic cleansing is the Serbian perpetrators' term, which means it is immediately inherent to the Yugoslav conflict; as the Holocaust is with genocide because it was in 1944 the term was first coined and it was the first case the term was applied to. Therefore, there is a danger ethnic cleansing may become too caught up in the Yugoslav conflict for it to be used effectively as an analytical tool.

In conclusion, ethnic cleansing has clear merits as an analytical tool. Its contrasting definition to genocide as formulated by the UN provides a useful distinction. But, crucially, ethnic cleansing can also be part of a genocidal process of escalating violence. However, it is important to realise that this transition does not always occur. Although it is a useful analytical tool in the sense that it could be seen as a prelude to genocide, there is a danger that the term will become inescapably associated with the Yugoslav context and may become redundant when talking about similar conflicts. For the field of genocide studies, the analytical worth of ethnic cleansing is clear. To maintain validity as a term, it must be placed in a genocidal process, without focusing exclusively on one context in future cases of ethnic violence.

[27] See Bell-Fialkoff, Andrew 'A brief history...'

[28] Schabas, William, 'Ethnic Cleansing and Genocide Similarities and Distinctions' in European Centre for Minority Issues (ed.) *European Yearbook of Minority Issues*, Vol. 3, 2003/4 (Martinus Nijhoff Publishers: 2005), p.112.

[29] Shaw, Martin '*What is Genocide...',* p.7.

[30] Fein, Helen, '*Human Rights and Wrongs: Slavery, Terror, Genocide',* (London: Paradigm Publisher, 2007), p.154.

**Appendix I: United Nations General Assembly Security Council *Human Rights Questions: Human Rights Situations and Reports of the Special Rapporteurs and Representatives: situation of Human Rights in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia* S/24809, (17 November 1992).**

A/47/666
S/24809
English
Page 6

II. BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

A. Ethnic cleansing

1. General observations

8. Ethnic cleansing is the direct cause of the vast majority of human rights violations which have occurred in Bosnia and Herzegovina since the present human rights emergency began, in March and April 1992.

9. The term ethnic cleansing refers to the elimination by the ethnic group exercising control over a given territory of members of other ethnic groups. A wide variety of methods are used to accomplish this end, including threats, harassment and intimidation; shooting or using explosives against homes, shops and places of business; destruction of places of worship and cultural institutions; transfer or relocation of populations by force; summary execution; the commission of atrocities calculated to instil terror among the population, such as torture, rape and the mutilation of corpses; and the shelling of civilian population centres.

10. Ethnic cleansing is often accompanied by confiscation of the property of those forced to leave, including homes, farms and agricultural equipment. In some areas, homes and farm buildings have been razed, in order to preclude any possibility of return. Departure often involves long and arduous journeys during which the displaced population is systematically robbed of savings, jewellery and other personal effects, exposed to beatings and rape, deprived of food and shelter. In many instances the fleeing population has been obliged to cross through areas of armed conflict.

11. Many of the inhumane practices employed in Serbian-controlled areas as a means of achieving ethnic cleansing also occur in those parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina under the control of the Government, and in the so-called "Croatian Community of Herzeg-Bosna". b/ According to the best information available at the present time in the areas under government control, human rights violations associated with ethnic cleansing are not committed in a systematic fashion and the violations which do occur, while they must be strongly condemned, do not appear to form part of a deliberate campaign to cleanse these areas of the Serbian population. In the areas controlled by the "Croatian Community of Herzeg-Bosna" there is somewhat more evidence of deliberate efforts to force the Serbian population to depart. However, in general a more limited range of measures is used, and the effort is not as systematic as in the Serbian-controlled areas.

12. While precise figures are not available, the number of Croat and Muslim refugees fleeing areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina under Serbian control is three to four times greater than the number of Serbian refugees and displaced persons from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The greater prevalence of ethnic cleansing in Serbian-occupied territories is undoubtedly related to the political objectives formulated and pursued by Serbian nationalists, namely, ensuring Serbian control over all territories inhabited by significant numbers

/...

**Appendix II: Lemkin, Raphael *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation - Analysis of Government - Proposals for Redress*, (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944) - II. TECHNIQUES OF GENOCIDE IN VARIOUS FIELDS – Cultural Genocide.**

CULTURAL

In the incorporated areas the local population is forbidden to use its own language in schools and in printing. According to the decree of August 6, 1940, (19) the language of instruction in all Luxemburg schools was made exclusively German. The French language was not permitted to be taught in primary schools; only in secondary schools could courses in that language continue to be given. German teachers were introduced into the schools and they were compelled to teach according to the principles of National Socialism. (20) In Lorraine general compulsory education to assure the upbringing of youth in the spirit of National Socialism begins at the age of six. (21) It continues for eight years, or to the completion of the grammar school *(Volksschule),* and then for three more years, or to the completion of a vocational school. Moreover, in the Polish areas Polish youths were excluded from the benefit of liberal arts studies and were channeled predominantly into the trade schools. The occupant apparently believes that the study of the liberal arts may develop independent national Polish thinking, and therefore he tends to prepare Polish youths for the role of skilled labor, to be employed in German industries.

In order to prevent the expression of the national spirit through artistic media, a rigid control of all cultural activities has been introduced. All persons engaged in painting, drawing, sculpture, music, literature, and the theater are required to obtain a license for the continuation of their activities. Control in these fields is exercised through German authorities. In Luxemburg this control is exercised through the Public Relations Section of the Reich Propaganda Office and embraces music, painting, theater, architecture, literature, press, radio, and cinema. Every one of these activities is controlled through a special chamber and all these chambers are controlled by one chamber, which is called the Reich Chamber of Culture *(Reichskulturkammer*). (22) The local chambers of culture are presided over by the propaganda chief of the National Socialist Party in the given area. Not only have national creative activities in the cultural and artistic field been rendered impossible by regimentation, but the population has also been deprived inspiration from the existing cultural and artistic values. Thus, especially in Poland, were national monuments destroyed and libraries, archives, museums, and galleries of art carried away. (23) In 1939 the Germans burned [p. 85] the great library of the Jewish Theological Seminary at Lublin, Poland. This was reported by the Germans as follows:

For us it was a matter of special pride to destroy the Talmudic Academy which was known as the greatest in Poland. . . . We threw out of the building the great Talmudic library, and carted it to market. There we set fire t the books. The fire lasted for twenty hours. The Jews of Lublin were assembled around and cried bitterly. Their cried almost silenced us. Then we summoned the military band and the joyful shouts of the soldiers silenced the sound of the Jewish cries. (34)

**Appendix III: Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide - Articles 1-10**

*Adopted by Resolution 260 (III) A of the United Nations General Assembly on 9 December 1948.*

Article 1

The Contracting Parties confirm that genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and to punish.

Article 2
In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Article 3
The following acts shall be punishable:

- (a) Genocide;
- (b) Conspiracy to commit genocide;
- (c) Direct and public incitement to commit genocide;
- (d) Attempt to commit genocide;
- (e) Complicity in genocide.

Article 4
Persons committing genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in Article 3 shall be punished, whether they are constitutionally responsible rulers, public officials or private individuals.

Article 5
The Contracting Parties undertake to enact, in accordance with their respective Constitutions, the necessary legislation to give effect to the provisions of the present Convention and, in particular, to provide effective penalties for persons guilty of genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in Article 3.

Article 6
Persons charged with genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in Article 3 shall be tried by a competent tribunal of the State in the territory of which the act was committed, or by such international penal tribunal as may have jurisdiction with respect to those Contracting Parties which shall have accepted its jurisdiction.

Article 7
Genocide and the other acts enumerated in Article 3 shall not be considered as political crimes for the purpose of extradition.

The Contracting Parties pledge themselves in such cases to grant extradition in accordance with their laws and treaties in force.

Article 8
Any Contracting Party may call upon the competent organs of the United Nations to take such action under the Charter of the United Nations as they consider appropriate for the prevention and suppression of acts of genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in Article 3.

Article 9
Disputes between the Contracting Parties relating to the interpretation, application or fulfilment of the present Convention, including those relating to the responsibility of a State for genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in Article 3, shall be submitted to the International Court of Justice at the request of any of the parties to the dispute.

Article 10
The present Convention, of which the Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish texts are equally authentic, shall bear the date of 9 December 1948.

**Appendix IV: Lemkin, Raphael *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation - Analysis of Government - Proposals for Redress*, (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944)**

I. GENOCIDE - A NEW TERM AND NEW CONCEPTION FOR DESTRUCTION OF NATIONS

New conceptions require new terms. By "genocide" we mean the destruction of a nation or of an ethnic group. This new word, coined by the author to denote an old practice in its modern development, is made from the ancient Greek word *genos* (race, tribe) and the Latin *cide* (killing), thus corresponding in its formation to such words as tyrannicide, homocide, infanticide, etc.[(1)] Generally speaking, genocide does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation, except when accomplished by mass killings of all members of a nation. It is intended rather to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves. The objectives of such a plan would be disintegration of the political and social institutions, of culture, language, national feelings, religion, and the economic existence of national groups, and the destruction of the personal security, liberty, health, dignity, and even the lives of the individuals belonging to such groups. Genocide is directed against the national group as an entity, and the actions involved are directed against individuals, not in their individual capacity, but as members of the national group.

The following illustration will suffice. The confiscation of property of nationals of an occupied area on the ground that they have left the country may be considered simply as a deprivation of their individual property rights. However, if the confiscations are ordered against individuals solely because they are Poles, Jews, or Czechs, then the same confiscations tend in effect to weaken the national entities of which those persons are members.

Genocide has two phases: one, destruction of the national pattern of the oppressed group; the other, the imposition of the national pattern of the oppressor. This imposition, in turn, may be made upon the oppressed population which is allowed to remain or upon the territory alone, after removal of the population and the colonization by the oppressor's own nationals.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

Lemkin, Raphael, 'Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation - Analysis of Government - Proposals for Redress', (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944). Available at *http://www.preventgenocide.org/lemkin/AxisRule1944-1.htm* [Accessed on 07/02/2011].

United Nations *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* Available at *http://www.hrweb.org/legal/genocide.html* [Accessed on 07/02/2011].

United Nations General Assembly Security Council, 'Human Rights Questions: Human Rights Situations and Reports of the Special Rapporteurs and Representatives: Situation of Human Rights in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia', S/24809, 17 November 1992. Available at *http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=s/24809* [Accessed on 05/02/2011].

United Nations Economic and Social Council, 'Situation of Human Rights: Sixth Periodic Report on the Situation of Human Rights in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia', E/CN.4/1994/110 21 February 1994.
Available at *http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=E/CN.4/1994/110* [Accessed on 06/02/2011].

### Secondary Sources

Ahmed, Akbar, 'Ethnic Cleansing: A Metaphor for Our Time?', *Ethnic And Racial Studies,* 18:1.

Bell-Fialkoff, Andrew, 'A brief history of ethnic cleansing', *Foreign Affairs, 72/3* (1993).

Conversi, Daniele, 'Genocide, Ethnic Cleansing and Nationalism' in Gerard Delanty and Krishan Kumar (eds.) *The SAGE Handbook of Nations and Nationalism,* (SAGE: 2006).

Fein, Helen, '*Human Rights and Wrongs: Slavery, Terror, Genocide',* (London: Paradigm Publisher, 2007).

Levene, Mark, '*Genocide in the Age of the Nation State: The Meaning of Genocide',* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2005).

May, Larry, '*Genocide: A Normative Account',* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2010).

Mirkovic, Damir, 'Ethnic Conflict and Genocide: Reflections on Ethnic Cleansing in the Former Yugoslavia', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* Vol. 548, The Holocaust: Remembering for the Future (Nov., 1996).

Niamark, Norman, '*Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth Century Europe',* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press: 2002).

Nickel, James, 'Moral Dimension of Four Ways of Getting Rid of Groups' in Aleksandar Jokic (ed.) *War Crimes and Collective Wrongdoing: A Reader,* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001).

Petrovic, Drazen, 'Ethnic Cleansing - An Attempt at Methodology', (1994) *5 EJIL.*

Pohl, Otto, '*Ethnic Cleansing in the USSR, 1937-1949',* (Greenwood Press: 1999).

Schabas, William, '*Genocide in International Law: The Crime of Crimes',* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

Schabas, William, 'Ethnic Cleansing' and Genocide Similarities and Distinctions' in European Centre for Minority Issues (ed.) *European Yearbook of Minority Issues*, Vol. 3, 2003/4 (Martinus Nijhoff Publishers: 2005).

Sell, Louis, '*Slobodan Milosevic and the Destruction of Yugoslavia',* (London: Duke University Press: 2003).

Valentino, Benjamin, '*Final Solution: Mass Killing and Genocide in the Twentieth Century',* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2004).

Yamin, Alicia, 'Ethnic Cleansing and Other Lies: Combining Health and Human Rights in the Search for Truth and Justice in the Former Yugoslavia', *Health and Human Rights,* Vol. 2, (1996).