

A CANADIAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION 2010 PANEL SESSION

Organized by

Prof. Frank Chalk/History Department/Concordia University

Monday, 31 May 2010 from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Hall Building Room 423, 1455 De Maisonneuve Blvd. West

Panel Title: LESSONS FROM THE FIELD: PREVENTING FUTURE MASS
ATROCITIES IN BURUNDI, RWANDA, BOSNIA, AND KOSOVO

Paper Titles, Panel Presenters, Abstracts and Bios:

MOBILIZING THE DOMESTIC WILL TO INTERVENE: LESSONS LEARNED
FROM CANADIAN AND UNITED STATES POLICIES TOWARDS RWANDA'S
GENOCIDE OF 1994 AND KOSOVO'S EVENTS OF 1999

Frank Chalk, Professor of History and Director, Montreal Institute for Genocide and
Human Rights Studies, Concordia University, and Kyle Matthews, Will to Intervene
Project Leader, Concordia University

FROM SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE TO SOCIAL DEATH: HEALING THE WOUNDS OF
GENOCIDE IN RWANDA AND BOSNIA-HERCEGOVINA

Erin Jessee, doctoral student in the Ph.D. in the Humanities, Concordia University

APPROACHES TOWARDS POST-CONFLICT RESOLUTION,
DEMOCRATIZATION AND RECONCILIATION: GENOCIDE PREVENTION IN
RWANDA AND BURUNDI

Philippe Rieder, doctoral student in the Ph.D. in the Humanities, Concordia University

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ABSTRACTS

Erin Jessee

“From Symbolic Violence to Social Death: Healing the Wounds of Genocide in
Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina”

For my contribution to the panel “Lessons From the Field: Preventing Future
Mass Atrocities in Burundi, Rwanda, Bosnia and Kosovo” I propose to discuss the
relevance of various forms of symbolic violence that occurred during the genocides in
Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina for the social vitality of the affected communities in the
present. In the course of 14 months of intensive interdisciplinary fieldwork in Rwanda
and Bosnia-Herzegovina, I conducted interviews with over 100 survivors, perpetrators
and ex-combatants, and engaged in ethnographic observation with the goal of better
understanding how local communities made sense of the violence they experience during
episodes of genocide. Drawing upon the disciplines of oral history and cultural

anthropology, I became aware of the tendency for certain forms of symbolically laden genocidal violence, ranging from rape to the destruction of religious and cultural heritage sites, to undermine the ability of communities to recover in the aftermath of genocide. The memory of these forms of violence impedes individuals' ability to trust and rebuild meaningful relationships with those they identify as having been responsible for their suffering. This statement is accurate for individuals from all sides of the conflict.

Central to this phenomenon is the realization that in the aftermath of genocide, many people have a low standard of living without direct access to justice or closure. The current political atmosphere in both Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina is tense, and censorship imposed by the respective governments makes it difficult for people whose experiences differ from the official state narrative of suffering to speak openly. Expanding the mandate of organizations such as the International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda (ICTR) and the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), or investing in Truth and Reconciliation Commissions for each region that consider atrocities that occurred on all sides of the conflict within their historical and political context are two possibilities that could help to address some of the resentment that is impeding community building in Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina today. Such measures are necessary to prevent genocidal violence from expanding and spilling over into neighboring territories, as seen in The Democratic Republic of Congo and Republika Srpska today.

ABSTRACT

Frank Chalk and Kyle Matthews

“Mobilizing The Domestic *Will to Intervene*: Lessons Learned from Canadian and United States Policies Towards Rwanda’s Genocide of 1994 and Kosovo’s Events of 1999”

In 1994, Canada and the United States manifested the definite will NOT to intervene to halt the Rwanda genocide, aimed at that country’s Tutsis. Five years later, despite refusal the Security Council’s refusal to endorse intervention, Canada and the United States waged a military campaign in Kosovo and Serbia. Based on interviews with nearly 90 senior politicians, civil servants, and NGO leaders, as well as scholarly publications and memoirs, this paper explains why Kosovo was not treated like Rwanda, and summarizes the lessons drawn by the researchers of the *Will to Intervene* project directed by Gen. Romeo Dallaire and Prof. Frank Chalk. It asserts that the governments of Canada and the United States received sufficient early warning of Rwanda’s looming genocide to warrant the early use of preventive “soft power” as early as 1992-93, and that important field reports containing this vital intelligence were “siloed” and buried by the senior political leaders to whom they were delivered. It shows why the *Will to Intervene* developed at the highest levels of the Canadian and United States governments in 1999, and what we can learn from the top down leadership during the Kosovo crisis about mobilizing the domestic will to prevent future mass atrocities.

ABSTRACT

Philippe Rieder

ABSTRACT

Approaches Towards Post-Conflict Resolution, Democratization and Reconciliation:
Genocide Prevention in Rwanda and Burundi

This paper discusses the status of the reconciliation politics of the Rwandan Government of National Unity fifteen years after the genocide. The author assesses the history of reconciliation politics in regard of their popular acceptance and public accountability, while seeking to identify promising avenues for reconciliation politics in regard of the prevention of future mass atrocities.

Democratization has lately become a standard prescription of the international organization to prevent future intra-state violence. Recent findings, however, suggest that states are most vulnerable during the unstable conditions of a transition to democracy. The crux of the concept is this: How can a state manage the transition to democracy non-violently?

The paper's approach to the problem, focusing on the Rwandan and, to a lesser extent, the Burundian case, is based on theories that promote the construction of an independent, politically active civil society as a precondition to democratization, with the view that such networks act as strong deterrents to local mass killing. The theoretical approaches introduced concentrate on the contribution of civil society to post-conflict resolutions. The emerging concept of civil society is then tested and refined against the background of widespread African political practices such as clientelism, paternalism or the co-optation of civil society.

These premises are subsequently applied to Rwandan reconciliation politics and the role civil society plays within the state. The assessment of reconciliation efforts, divided into the categories Memory, Peace and Justice, identifies the authoritarian style of government whose conception of unity does not tolerate dissent, the politicization of memory, the general presumption of guilt versus great parts of Rwandan society, the insecurity of daily life in the Great Lakes Region, as well as the detachment of the slow international process of justice from the population. The one-sidedness of Rwandan transitional justice is treated as a major obstacle to publicly embedded reconciliation politics. Finally, the history of the peace process in Rwanda is compared to the process in Burundi in order to identify advantages and disadvantages of the differing approaches.

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BIOGRAPHIES AND CONTACT INFORMATION

FRANK CHALK

Frank Chalk (Ph.D., History, University of Wisconsin) is Professor of History and Director of the Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies at Concordia University. He is the co-author, with Prof. Kurt Jonassohn, of *The History and Sociology of Genocide: Analyses and Case Studies* (Yale University Press, 1990). Prof. Chalk's chapters and articles have appeared in a number of books and journals, including *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*. Professor Chalk served as President of the International Association of Genocide Scholars (June 1999-June 2001), and is a past president of the Canadian Association of African Studies. During his sabbatical leave in the academic year 2000-2001, Prof. Chalk was a Fellow of the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC.

Professor Chalk's current research focuses on two areas: radio broadcasting in the incitement and prevention of gross violations of human rights, including genocide, and the history of the domestic laws on genocide developed by nations who seek to implement through their national legislation the United Nations Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. He expects both research projects to result in books. With Gen. Roméo Dallaire, Prof. Chalk directs a major MIGS research project on mobilizing the Will to Intervene (W2I) in Canada and the United States. It was launched on 21 September 2009 at the U.S. Institute for Peace, Washington, DC, and the National Press Gallery, Ottawa, on 22 September 2009. He is also a researcher and cluster leader in the Concordia research project on Life Stories of Montrealers Displaced by War, Genocide, and other Human Rights Violations, funded by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

His publications include chapters on "Hate Radio in Rwanda," published in *The Path of A Genocide: The Rwanda Crisis from Uganda to Zaire*, Howard Adelman and Astri Suhrke, editors (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Press, 1999) and "Radio Broadcasting in the Incitement and Interdiction of Gross Violations of Human Rights, including Genocide," in *Genocide: Essays Toward Understanding, Early Warning, and Prevention*, Roger Smith, editor (Association of Genocide Scholars, 1999). Together with Dinah Shelton, Howard Adelman, Alexander Kiss, and William Schabas, he was an editor of the three-volume Macmillan USA (Thomson Gale) *Encyclopedia of Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity*, which was published in November 2004. Recent publications include "Le Service hongrois de la BBC et le sauvetage des juifs de Hongrie," a chapter in the book, *La résistance aux génocides. De la pluralité des actes de sauvetage* (pp. 295-315), Jacques Semelin, Claire Andrieu, Sarah Gensburger (eds.) (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2008) (to be published in English by Columbia University Press next fall) and, with Danielle Kelton, "Mass Atrocity Crimes in Darfur and The Response of Government of Sudan Media to International Pressure," chapter 5 in *Crisis in Darfur*, Amanda Grzyb, ed. (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2009).

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ERIN JESSEE

Erin Jessee is a doctoral candidate in the Interdisciplinary Humanities Doctoral Program at Concordia University in Montreal, Canada. Her primary advisor is Dr Frank Chalk, a pioneer in the field of genocide scholarship and co-founder of the Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies (MIGS). Her other committee members include Dr Steve High (Canada Research Chair and Oral Historian in the History Department at Concordia University), Dr Erica Lehrer (Canada Research Chair and Anthropologist in the History Department at Concordia University) and Dr Mark Skinner (Forensic Bio-Archaeologist at Simon Fraser University). She has a Masters in Archaeology from Simon Fraser University, where she specialized in the application of forensic archaeological methods and theory to the international investigation of mass graves and other crime scenes resulting from mass human rights violations in regions such as Turkish Armenia, Bosnia, Rwanda, Cambodia and Argentina, among others.

Jessee's current research project is entitled "Negotiating Unnatural Death: Trauma, Memory and Community in the 'Aftermath' of the Rwandan and Bosnian Genocides." Her fieldwork drew on oral history, anthropology, and forensic archaeology. This interdisciplinary approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of the cultural meaning behind the genocides in Rwanda and Bosnia. Jessee has developed an interdisciplinary methodology that includes conducting ethnographic and oral historical fieldwork, and participating in ongoing forensic exhumations, in order to explore its occurrence in greater detail in relation to the genocides in Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Jessee's studies thus far have earned her a number of awards and honors. Her Master's thesis earned her a mention in a 2004 MacLean's article entitled "The Best and Brightest: MacLean's 25 University Stars." More recently, she was a recipient of a SSHRC Canada Graduate Scholarship, as well as a Students for Development Internship administered through CIDA and the AUCC aimed at supporting the Rwanda portion of her fieldwork. The funds granted by the CCHS were used to complete 13 months of fieldwork in Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

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PHILIPPE RIEDER

Philippe Rieder completed his master's degree at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland in 2005, writing on the subject of international and Swiss public and state reaction to the genocide in Rwanda 1994. During his research, he became increasingly interested in the political and social consequences of the genocide for the Great Lakes region in Africa. Focusing on the questions of reconciliation, reconstruction and democratization and acknowledging that the complexity of these issues demand an interdisciplinary approach,

he joined the Humanities Doctoral Program at Concordia in January 2008. Philippe Rieder currently also works with the New York-based International Peace Institute (IPI) on a project regarding compliance to UNSC resolutions in civil wars and *urumuri*, a Swiss-Rwandan-Burundian project providing assistance to community projects in the Great Lakes Region that he co-founded in 2004.