

Genocide and Mass Atrocities in Asia: Legacies and Prevention. Edited by Deborah Mayersen and Annie Pohlman, London: Routledge, 2013, p.210. USD\$ 140, hardcover.

The volume brings together experts in genocide studies and area specialists to look into the legacies of past genocides and mass atrocities in Asia. The volume provides a regional perspective with case studies from East Timor, East Pakistan, Cambodia and Indonesia. The volume is divided into two central themes: legacies and prevention. Under the theme of legacies, past genocides and mass atrocities are examined from both historical and contemporary perspectives. Under the theme of prevention, the volume explores the prospects and challenges associated with preventing future mass atrocities.

The editors begin by exploring definitions of genocide and mass atrocities from a global context. Starting with the Genocide Convention and the failures to uphold its provisions in Cambodia and Rwanda, the authors highlight the renewed international focus on genocide studies with new measures, such as the responsibility to protect (RtoP) to prevent genocide and mass atrocities. RtoP seeks to overcome the barriers that inhibit the effectiveness of the Genocide Convention. As Deborah Mayersen points out, the main problems with the Genocide Convention include the definition of genocide that excludes political groups and the demand for an intent to commit the crime (179-181). In contrast, RtoP includes an expanded range of crimes and lacks provision for intent. Yet, there is a need for substantial discussion on the range of acts that constitute RtoP crimes.

The diversity of the term 'mass atrocities' is recognized by pointing out that genocide, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity and war crimes occur in different circumstances and need different responses due to varied causes to prevent their occurrence. The authors challenge the homogenous conception of these crimes (5). All the chapters in the volume offer an insightful analysis on genocide and mass atrocities from varied contexts. This is evident in chapters by Pohlman, Fernandes and Orchard.

Annie Pohlman uses the case of torture in Indonesia to examine the relationship between past mass human rights violations and ongoing abuses, highlighting the cyclical relationship between ongoing impunity for past incidents of serious abuses, institutionalizing such impunity in the security sector and the urgent need for redress and reform. The author traces the use of torture during the authoritarian New Order regime under President Suharto. Here the author highlights the culture of impunity in Indonesia and argues that a lack of acknowledgement of such violations by successive Indonesian governments is the greatest impediment to lasting reform in the protection of human rights (44). Clinton Fernandes explores the circumstances of human-induced famines during the early years of Indonesia's occupation of East Timor (1975-79). Fernandes also highlights how famines and other forms of international crimes committed during the Indonesian occupation of East Timor continue to affect the process of rebuilding the nation.

Phil Orchard examines the role of the international community (UN and global powers) in responding to genocide and mass atrocities. Failings in such responses were evident in the Cambodian genocide. The author explores the legacies of the UN Security Council's inaction in the case of East Pakistan (1971) and East Timor (1975-79), wherein it was evident that the UN Security Council was completely powerless in the face of genocide and mass atrocities, nevertheless the body had the ability to retain its legitimacy. Orchard argues that seizing these

missed or lost opportunities by the UN Security Council could have contributed to a different international system.

Heather Castel and Alex Hinton examine the dilemmas associated with transitional justice in two Asian contexts. Castel examines the efficacy of the CAVR (Comissau de Acolhimento, Verdade e Reconciliacao) within a framework of maximization. Here, the author argues that the CAVR achieved results amidst existing flaws. The author also highlights the tensions that arise in the attempt to achieve justice for past atrocities when the needs of the present are equally important. Hinton provides an anthropological perspective on the realities of transitional justice on the current trials of the past Khmer Rouge leaders. Through an analysis of the Khmer Institute of Democracy Booklet, Hinton further examines the intersections between international and local perceptions of justice.

In terms of prevention, two chapters can be highlighted. In the first, Dale Bagshaw and Damien Coghlan explore the constraints and challenges of using Western and traditional approaches to mediation in Asia. They argue that the effectiveness of such mediation is found during the early stages of the conflict, where traditional conflict resolution involves culturally fluent mediators (170). Benjamin Goldsmith, Dimitri Semenovitch and Arcot Sowmya identify a two-stage model based on a qualitative methodology to understand and forecast genocide and mass atrocities. According to the authors, this can contribute to an early warning and prevention study on genocide or mass atrocities. The author also probes into specific regional factors that contribute to the risk of genocide and mass atrocities in Asia and the Pacific focusing on the role of domestic political institutions (136-150).

In the final chapter, Deborah Mayersen analyzes the Genocide Convention in terms of the responsibilities and obligations of parties to respond or prevent genocide. Using the case of the Cambodian genocide, Mayersen analyzes international responses wherein the Convention was not invoked to respond to genocide along with exploring critical barriers that prevented the use of the Convention. The author highlights the important role for an RtoP that can circumvent existing barriers in the Convention (179-191).

The volume's main contribution is its focus on understanding genocide and mass atrocities. Using different cases and contexts, the volume advocates for an inclusive approach to defining genocide and mass atrocities by reflecting upon cases of extreme violence from the Asian region. Being a Sri Lankan, and with a keen interest in the present post war context in Sri Lanka after a war involving mass atrocities, the questions that emerge in my mind is 'How can new international instruments prevent or reduce the risk of mass atrocities in the future?'. Prevention of genocide and mass atrocities require broader commitment to international principles and a greater understanding of the causes and risk mitigation strategies associated with such crimes.

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