



Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal

Volume 9 | 2015 Time, Movement, and Space:
Genocide Studies and Indigenous Peoples

Issue 2 | Article 3

Editors' Introduction

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Keywords.
genocide, indigenous, colonial

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Recommended Citation

O'Brien, Melanie; Irvin-Erickson, Douglas; and Gudehus, Christian (2015) "Editors' Introduction," *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal*: Vol. 9: Iss. 2: 1.

DOI:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.5038/1911-9933.9.2.1359>

Available at: <https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/gsp/vol9/iss2/3>

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Editors' Introduction

This special issue of GSP emanates from the 2014 conference of the International Association of Genocide Scholars, which focused on Indigenous and colonial genocides. We received so many fascinating, relevant and important submissions for the special issue that we have decided to make two special issues; the second will be published in early 2016. Our guest editors for both issues, Tricia Logan and David MacDonald, have put in many hours of work, and the quality of this issue owes much to their hard work and dedication. Both Tricia and David are Canadians who have a vast array of experience in dealing with issues of acknowledgement and reconciliation with regards to colonial atrocities in Canada. Their expertise and sharp eye for detail have led to two special issues that address pertinent and crucial debates in genocide scholarship.

We have endeavoured to cover indigenous genocides beyond North America, although due to the location of the conference, there is more of a focus on North American genocides. However, all of the discussions are relevant to indigenous genocides around the globe, demonstrating similarities between experiences and the specific peculiarities of indigenous colonial genocides. The controversy over the use of the word genocide with regards to colonial atrocities continues today, as we see clearly with the recent release of the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission's initial report, which Tricia and David discuss in their introduction. The refusal of governments to acknowledge colonial genocide of indigenous peoples creates a barrier to reconciliation and contributes to a culture of denial. Hence why IAGS and GSP thought it so important to hold a conference and publish a special issue on the topic; to contribute to the discussion and ensure that scholarship in genocide studies does not focus on the most prominent and well-known genocides.

This special issue has five articles, dealing with indigenous genocides in Papua New Guinea, Canada, the United States and Australia. The articles are complemented with two conference summaries, including one of the IAGS 2014 conference, and Tony Barta's keynote speech from the IAGS conference. We thought this was an appropriate way for those who attended to remember the conferences, and for those who did not to feel included. Two book reviews analyse two recent publications on indigenous genocides.

The issue also includes three film reviews which do not fit within the indigenous genocides theme, but are complementary to one another. Annie Pohlman delivers a historical analysis of Joshua Oppenheimer's ground-breaking film, *The Act of Killing*. Nicole Rafter then provides a criminological perspective of Oppenheimer's follow-up film, *The Look of Silence*. Both films deal with the aftermath of the 1960s violence in Indonesia. They are shocking in their depiction of perpetrators of mass atrocities, and the lack of concern for the atrocities they committed.

A subject that surfaces in the conversation on indigenous genocides is that of genocide not just being about physical destruction, but also cultural destruction. This engages the issue of the definition of genocide. The legal definition is often restricted, but it is hoped that scholarship such as the pieces in this special issue will motivate and assist law makers and judiciary at domestic and international level to acknowledge that cultural destruction is genocide.

Finally, the issue concludes with James P. Finkel's annual report on the U.S. government's inter-agency Atrocity Prevention Board. Finkel, who recently ended his 35-year career as a member of the senior civil service, is a close advisor to the Director of National Intelligence and the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. The report is intended to provide recommendations for several practical steps that the Board can take to enhance its performance and its public visibility, and to help provide a critical assessment of the state of atrocity prevention within the U.S. government and U.S. foreign policy for an audience of scholars and practitioners. The report looks ahead to GSP's next issue, 9.3, which focuses on new directions in the field of genocide and atrocity prevention.

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