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Genocide Education in a Global Context: A Comparative Study of the Holocaust and Khmer Rouge Regime

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Introduction

Teaching about genocide became part of the global education movement at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Since then, the history of genocide and other related topics, especially grave human rights violations, have been taught and debated across continents. A number of genocide scholars, especially in Europe and North America, have developed curricula and appropriate methodologies, and introduced them into secondary schools and universities. Thousands of books and articles on genocide education have been published in a number of languages. Today, there is a truly transnational group of genocide scholars who aim to bring about awareness and knowledge of past atrocities.

However, academic tradition and pedagogical methods differ from one country to another. Genocide education remains in a transitional stage in many post-genocidal countries, especially those in the developing world, due to political and social concerns and lack of resources and motivation. But it is important that students have the opportunity not only to learn the history of genocide but also when and how genocide education came into discourse, its importance, and the debates over both the positive and negative effects of learning about the violent past. The comparative study of genocide in an academic setting is important in the sense that it allows students to grasp that the problem of genocide is a matter for all human beings. It is not just only about the Holocaust victims; it is not only about Cambodia; it is about all of us who have the shared responsibility to learn, to understand, and to prevent future genocide and other serious crimes.

This paper examines the similarities and the differences between the study of the Holocaust and genocide education in Cambodia (by and large the Jewish community and Cambodian government have taken radically different approaches in the pursuit of genocide education). It also explores how comparative genocide education can contribute to the promotion of a better understanding and analysis of the past, how reconciliation might be achieved, how social beliefs are reshaped, and how political conditions influence historical narratives. The paper recommends that both educators and genocide scholars not focus solely on the Holocaust but also on the mass atrocities that took place in Cambodia, Rwanda and other countries. Putting mass atrocities from around the world into the comparative genocide curriculum will enable students to see how the actions of these countries' leaders led to genocide, and as Edward Kissi wrote, enable us to see "the roles that history, ideology, revolution, states and culture play in the genocidal process."¹

¹ Kissi, Edward (2004). "Rwanda, Ethiopia and Cambodia: Links, Faultlines and Complexities in a Comparative Study of Genocide," *Journal of Genocide Research*, 6:1, 116.

To place this discussion into context, the paper first characterizes the genocides in Nazi-occupied Europe and Cambodia, the motives of their leaders, and what happened in the aftermath of these annihilations. These discussions will give students a basis for understanding the process of genocide education itself. The answers to the following questions are important prior to discussing genocide education. What are the differences between the Holocaust and Cambodian genocide? What were the circumstances that led Nazi Germany to annihilate millions of Jews and other targeted groups such as Roma, the disabled, Poles, Russians, Jehovah's Witnesses, communists, and homosexuals, and that allowed the Khmer Rouge to bring about the deaths of millions of Cambodians including ethnic Khmer, Cham Muslims, Vietnamese, Chinese, intellectuals, and people they suspected of betrayal? What were the ultimate goals of the Nazi organization and the Khmer Rouge revolution? What were typologies of the Holocaust and Cambodian genocide? How were Holocaust and Cambodian genocide ended? What were the circumstances in the aftermath of the Holocaust and Cambodian genocide in relation to the response and measures to protect and prevent future genocide? Answering these questions will enable students to trace the developments from the time these atrocities started to the time they ended, and the challenges involved in putting these atrocities into discourse to preserve memories and prevent future atrocities.

Most post-genocidal countries face a number of challenges in writing about the history of the atrocities committed on their soil, and it takes many years to overcome them. Moreover, only in politically stable circumstances can students learn about past atrocities accurately. This paper observes that overcoming these challenges takes concerted efforts and the commitment of the governments and their people. While this comparative study focuses on the Holocaust and Cambodian genocide the author cannot represent all genocides that have taken place around the world. Nonetheless, it does give a large-scale overview of the circumstances that lead to genocide education. The Holocaust represents the circumstances in the western developed world, whereas the Cambodian case represents the circumstances in developing Asian countries.

Nazi Party vs. the Khmer Rouge: The Contexts of Genocide

At the end of World War II, as many as eleven million people were dead as a result of Nazi Germany's policies in Europe. Scholars have called this great destruction the "Holocaust." There have been a number of debates over the definition of this term. According to US Holocaust Memorial Museum's (USHMM) official website, the Holocaust was "the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators."² Non-Jewish victims who were also killed during the Holocaust did not agree with this definition. Edward Linenthal notes that the new definition was revised to be "six million Jews—and the millions of other Nazi victims in World War II."³ The

² For more information, please visit the museum's official website at www.ushmm.org. The website is valuable resource for both educators and students.

³ Linenthal, Edward (2001). *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America's Holocaust Museum*. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 50.

Holocaust is considered to be the most egregious example of human rights violations in the 20th century, and the world vowed that it would “never again” allow such great destruction to occur again.

However, after the Second Indochina War and followed by five years of civil war, another huge violation of human rights occurred, this time in Cambodia, thirty years after the Holocaust. The Khmer Rouge, which controlled Cambodia from 1975 to 1979, caused the deaths of about 1.7 million of the country’s 8 million people by execution, torture, starvation, malnutrition, untreated disease, and overwork. Some scholars and researchers call the massacres in Cambodia “the Cambodian version of the Holocaust.”

Terminology: Holocaust vs. Genocide. The annihilation of European Jewry has been a major subject of research, debate and study for genocide scholars, historians and researchers. Following the coining of the term “genocide” by Jewish lawyer Raphael Lemkin and the adoption of the Genocide Convention by the UN General Assembly in 1948, the definition of genocide almost exclusively referred to the destruction of European Jewry. Widespread mass killings in other countries that meet this standard definition can, according to Stuart D. Stein, “be similarly classified.”⁴ In this respect, the terms “Holocaust” and “genocide” are not different.

More recently, scholars have applied different terms to mass killings that do not strictly fit into the definition of genocide, including “gendercide,” “ethnocide,” “cultural genocide” and “ethnic cleansing” (some have termed what occurred in Cambodia as “democide” because the Khmer Rouge targeted people within their own ethnic group). Stein argued that when widespread mass killings do not meet the standard definition of genocide, “new terms are substituted, many of them being either modifications of genocide, or the formulation of an alternative prefix to *cide*.”⁵

Similarities and Differences: Germany and Cambodia. Both the Holocaust and Cambodian genocide have many similarities despite the fact that there are several differences in terms of the factors that led to these atrocities. First, Holocaust scholars have argued for the uniqueness of the term Holocaust, which they feel refers only to the killings of Jews in German-occupied Europe during World War II, while genocide refers to the killings in other countries such as Cambodia, Rwanda, Armenia and Ethiopia. This has become a controversial issue for genocide scholars, and it is important to understand the contentious debates on this subject before addressing the challenges of putting the Holocaust and Cambodian genocide into both formal and informal education.

Before their genocides occurred, Germany was one of the most powerful countries in Western Europe, while Cambodia was a small and weak country. However, both nations were strongly nationalistic, shared a strong sense of cultural pride, and

⁴ Stein, Stuart D. (2005). “Conceptions and terms: templates for the analysis of holocausts and genocides,” *Journal of Genocide Research*, 7:2, 173.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

looked on themselves as being having great civilizations. And prior to their genocides, both had fallen: Germany had undergone great destruction after World War I and Cambodia had fallen from the great Angkorean period in the ninth century to become a French colony from 1863 to 1953. Their diminished capacities laid the groundwork for the rise of extremist leaders in both countries who sought national pride and dignity in their regions and world recognition.

The leaders pursued their visions of national pride in different ways. Germany's Hitler wanted his "master race" to occupy and control the entire European continent, while Pol Pot wanted to transform Cambodia into the most modern socialist country in the world. Hitler believed that the German people were superior to other ethnic groups and should establish permanent rule in Europe. In this sense, people the Nazis viewed as racially inferior groups, especially Jews, were subjected to social, political and economic persecution and elimination. Similarly, educated Khmers who received scholarships to study abroad during the 1950s were full of the ideas of superiority and a sense of extreme nationalism. At that time, no one in Cambodia saw the French colonization, the incursions of neighboring Vietnam into Cambodian land, social exploitation and corruption, and social inequality as more humiliating than Pol Pot. Pol Pot led a revolution hoping that he could restore the country's lost glory and reestablish a society that had no poor people, no rich people and no exploitation. Everyone in the country would enjoy life, work and leisure activities equally. These utopian ideologies generated radical policies that led to millions of innocent people perishing.

The Nazi Party came to power through a political struggle during which the democratic Weimar Republic could no longer respond to Germany's economic crisis. Following his appointment as chancellor of Germany in January 1933, Adolf Hitler began to implement his policies of authoritarianism and racism, and eliminated some of the basic rights and freedoms of the population while at the same time marginalizing the well-being of the Jewish population and several other unwanted ethnic groups. The Jews were no longer allowed to participate in social, political and economic life, and were stripped of their positions in the government. The Nazis' opponents, such as Communist Party of Germany, were gradually subjected to intimidation and persecution and finally faced elimination. Within a few months, the Nazi Party was able to control the government's legislative and executive powers. Upon the death of Paul von Hindenburg (President of Weimar Republic) in August 1934, Hitler became both the president and chancellor of Germany as well as the leader of the Nazi Party. His words became law for the country, and government officials and armed forces swore an oath of loyalty to him. His power was unlimited.

Pol Pot came to power through political, military, and diplomatic struggles under the façade of Prince Norodom Sihanouk (the then-deposed head of state) and his government in exile called the Royal Government of the National Union of Cambodia. Upon their April 1975 victory over the Khmer Republic,⁶ Pol Pot and his

⁶ The Khmer Republic was an American-backed government led by Marshall Lon Nol, who ousted Prince Sihanouk from power in March 1970. This regime controlled Cambodia during the entire period of civil war from 1970 to 1975.

associates took tight control of the country and endorsed the policies of mass evacuations, the elimination of enemies “burrowing” from the inside, and the elimination of all old forms of society including currency, markets, education, religious practices and culture. Like Hitler, Pol Pot established policies and regulations for the entire country to practice.

It is important to note how the Nazis Party and Communist Party of Kampuchea defined the groups they wanted to destroy. The Nazis saw Jews as the main target for execution, while the Khmer Rouge saw people within their own Khmer ethnic group as their targeted victims, although many other ethnic groups such as the Cham, Chinese and Vietnamese were also targeted.

Life under both the Nazi and Khmer Rouge regimes was described by many survivors as “hell on earth,” although the circumstances differed. The capital city of Phnom Penh became a ghost town with only a small number of trusted party members residing there, mostly Khmer Rouge leaders, soldiers and factory workers. The Nazis first established thousands of ghettos, where Jews and others were forced to live in miserable conditions and worked to death. Later, almost all of this regime’s victims were deported to concentration camps for extermination. Like the Nazis, the Khmer Rouge established hundreds of security centers throughout the country to detain, torture and kill those who were accused of being traitors, enemies of Angkar (“the organization,” referring to the Communist Party of Kampuchea) and revolutionary traitors (those who were marked as American CIA, Soviet KGB or Vietnamese agents). One difference, however, is that entering a concentration camp during World War II meant certain death, while detention in a Khmer Rouge security center could mean release after one was “re-educated.” Only in S-21, the central-level prison in Phnom Penh, was release virtually impossible.

It is also important to understand the perpetrators’ motives for committing genocide. The Nazi Party and Khmer Rouge had different ideologies and motivations. An extreme rightist, Hitler was anti-democratic and anti-communist. He believed that every social problem was caused by the Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals and disabled. Therefore, in order to solve these problems, these groups of people had to be exterminated. In so doing, he endorsed the policies of anti-Semitism and the “final solution,” which allowed German soldiers to kill Jews outside the judicial system. Hitler wanted to create a “Greater Germany” dominated by Germans. In contrast, the Khmer Rouge adopted the communist Leninist-Maoist ideologies from the Soviet Union and China as well as communist Vietnam. The best examples were the evacuation of people from the cities to the countryside, the four-year plan emphasizing agriculture, and the “super great-leap forward revolution.”⁷ Pol Pot wanted Cambodia to be politically and economically independent because Cambodia had been the victim of colonialism, imperialism and expansionism for a thousand years. Moreover, he wanted all Cambodians to be pure and honest to the Khmer Rouge organization.

⁷ Fein, Helen (1993). “Revolutionary and antirevolutionary genocides: A comparison of state murders in Democratic Kampuchea, 1975 to 1979, and in Indonesia, 1965 to 1966.” *Comparative Study in Society and History*, Vol. 35, No. 4, p. 810.

War and revolution were forces that allowed the both Nazi authoritarian leaders and Cambodian radical nationalists to seize power. Regional and domestic war and economic hardship and inequality contributed to the rise of the Khmer Rouge, who used revolution as their tool to get rid of their enemies. The Nazis used World War II as a pretext to annihilate Jews and other opponents. Paul Bartrop argues that, “the genocide took place under the cover of war; the war was in reality a crucial part of the genocide’s success.” He claimed that World War II and the annihilation of the Jews were “interdependent.”⁸ Many genocide scholars agree with Bartrop and emphasize repeatedly that genocide is almost always connected with war. Supporting Bartrop’s claim and reflecting on the Cambodian case, Helen Fein also argued that communist states like Democratic Kampuchea used revolution to justify their murders.⁹

Pol Pot’s treatment of ethnic Vietnamese was not far different from Hitler’s treatment of the Jews. Looking back to Vietnam’s history of repeatedly invading and occupying Cambodia, as well as their more recent use of Cambodian land during the Vietnam War, the Khmer Rouge saw the Vietnamese as land-swallowing monsters who had to be eliminated. However, in contrast to the Nazis, who forced Jews to live in miserable ghettos and eventually killed them, the Khmer Rouge originally expelled the Vietnamese back to Vietnam. Those who resisted were arrested and killed. Therefore, the state-directed war and revolution served as contexts for genocide and other grave human rights violations.

Nazi Germany ended at the close of World War II when the allied forces, including the United States, Great Britain, Russia and France, defeated the Axis countries (Germany, Italy and Japan) and liberated the concentration camps. After controlling Cambodia for nearly four years, the Khmer Rouge atrocities were ended with the Vietnamese invasion in early 1979.

The aftermaths of the both genocides were years of devastation. In addition to the millions of people killed, the countries were ruined by war. Many Jewish survivors were traumatized and feared anti-Semitism if they should return to their homes. Many Cambodian survivors returned back to their native villages but with almost nothing left for them, and many lower-level perpetrators did not return, fearing reprisal. Hundred of thousands of both Jewish and Cambodian survivors fled their countries and became refugees. While there was some economic hope in Europe after World War II as a result of the Marshall Plan, little international aid made its way to Cambodia. After 1979, most Cambodians lived in dire poverty since almost all of the country’s infrastructure, including its education and health-care systems, had been destroyed.

⁸ Bartrop, Paul (2002). “The relationship between war and genocide in the twentieth century: a consideration,” *Journal of Genocide Research*, 4:4, pp. 523-535.

⁹ Fein, Helen (1993). “Revolutionary and antirevolutionary genocides: A comparison of state murders in Democratic Kampuchea, 1975 to 1979, and in Indonesia, 1965 to 1966,” *Comparative Study in Society and History*, Vol. 35, No. 4, p. 797.

Little attention has been given to placing genocide education into discourse, despite the fact that the world community has failed to honor its pledge of “never again,” as the 1975-1979 Cambodian genocide and the 1994 Rwandan genocide attest. The following discussions analyze the history and challenges of Holocaust studies and genocide education.

Holocaust Studies vs. Cambodian Genocide Education: History and Challenges

Genocide education has become a global concern in contemporary society. The study of the annihilation of eleven million people in German-occupied Europe was not given much attention during the first two decades after the end of World War II. From the 1960s to the 1980s, however, Holocaust education experienced considerable progress. Survivors started to share their stories and talked publicly, and a number of publications were issued. However, only after the end of the Cold War, almost half century later, was Holocaust education given serious attention and broadly publicized. One of the remarkable events was the construction of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in 1993.

Since then, the history of the Holocaust has been widely studied in many schools, universities, and institutions worldwide. The study of the Holocaust has set a precedent for other post-genocidal countries to push for genocide education in their own schools. The efforts to have the histories of these two atrocities studied formally are also not very different, but the effort in Cambodia has taken longer. It took about three decades to introduce Holocaust studies to school curriculums, but in the three decades since the collapse of the Khmer Rouge, Cambodia is still struggling to put genocide education into its curriculum.

Holocaust studies. The destruction of European Jews and non-Jews in German-occupied Europe has been studied and remembered not only within the Jewish communities but also in the rest of the world.¹⁰ As a result, those who have no connection to Jews also share some understanding of their suffering, which Daniel Levy and Natan Sanaider term “cosmopolitan memory.” The two scholars argue that the Holocaust “has become a moral certainty that now stretches across national borders and unites Europe and other parts of the world.”¹¹ In this sense, the experiences during the Holocaust belong not only to the direct victims of the Nazi regime but also to all victims of the crime of genocide. However, reaching this point required overcoming many political and social obstacles in the course of more than half century. The examination of how the Holocaust has been remembered in America, Germany and Israel as well as in many other countries, is very important as an example for Cambodia and other post-genocidal countries. Understanding how the Holocaust became prominent on the international stage will help set inspire post-genocidal countries to start developing an interest in genocide education.

¹⁰ Levy, Daniel and Sznajder, Natan (2002). “Memory Unbound: The Holocaust and the Formation of Cosmopolitan Memory,” *European Journal of Social Theory*, 5(1), p. 88.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

In the post-World War II period, the world was nearly silent on the killing of Jews; in fact, the Holocaust did not even have a name yet. Former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill called the annihilation of the Jews by the Nazis “a crime without a name.”¹² Immediately after the collapse of the Nazi Germany, the Nuremberg Trials was held to prosecute Nazi leaders for many crimes; however, none of them was accused of the crime of genocide since the term “genocide” had not yet been coined.

Raphael Lemkin, a Jewish lawyer whose family members were killed during the Holocaust, had tried tirelessly to put a name on this horror and came up with the word “genocide.” The term was a combination of his knowledge in international law, his interest in language and his desire to prevent this ultimate terror.¹³ He introduced the new term to the Nuremberg Trials so that prosecutors would include the crime of genocide in their indictments. However, the term was only internationally recognized in 1948 when the UN General Assembly adopted the Genocide Convention.

The Holocaust was also the backbone of the two international treaties. The 1948 adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights “must be understood as direct responses to the shared moral revulsion of the delegates against the Holocaust—a sentiment that was also reflected in the direct connection between the Declaration and some of the legal principles established in the Nuremberg war crimes trials,” claimed Levy and Sznajder.¹⁴ The second treaty was also formed in 1948: The Genocide Convention, where the term “genocide” was codified. Many scholars considered these two treaties as an evolution of international law.

Levy and Sznajder argued that “Germany, Israel and the US had different motivations for being silent about this past.”¹⁵ The succeeding German government considered itself as a complete break from Nazi Germany. They claimed that they were also victims and that the crimes committed were organized by a small group of people in the name of Germany. In Israel, the first official commemoration of the Jewish annihilation was celebrated fourteen years after World War II. In the minds of Jewish victims in Israel, recalling their suffering meant reminding people in the world about “Jewish passivity as a consequence of the lack of sovereignty...a reminder of helpless passivity typical of Jewish existence outside the sovereign space of the territorial states.”¹⁶ Until 1954, students in Israel had no access to Holocaust studies, which were incorporated into Jewish history and the history of World War II.

¹² Power, Samantha (2002). *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*. New York: Harper Perennial, p. 17.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

¹⁴ Levy and Sznajder, *op cit.*, p. 150.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 94-95.

Dan A. Porat argued that, “the Holocaust was ignored so that Israeli students could overcome what was perceived as a national humiliation.”¹⁷

On the other hand, the absence of Holocaust studies in the early post-war period in the United States was due to politics. In order to compete with the Soviet Union on the Cold War battlefield, the US did not want to risk facing a fractious Europe, which included its former enemy Germany. In this political situation, raising awareness about the Holocaust meant working against Germany and strengthening the Soviet Union. Moreover, the memory of the Holocaust would also remind the world that America stood by and did not intervene on time, passively allowing the Nazis to kill millions of innocent civilians. For American Jews, talking too much about the Holocaust would mean naming Germany as the perpetrator. This could jeopardize the Jews’ relationship with the US at a time when they needed its support for the fledgling state of Israel. Together, these factors contributed to making the Holocaust nearly invisible in America.¹⁸

Genocide scholar Omer Bartov sees the absence of Holocaust studies differently. Bartov argued that the historical unconsciousness of the Holocaust during the post-World War II period was due to the “anti-semitic prejudice” and communist ideologies in which many documents and archives were locked away and unavailable for research.¹⁹ Therefore, during the first decade after the war, the Holocaust was not part of the Second World War’s memory, and this period was marked by many Holocaust scholars as the period of “Holocaust denial.”

From the 1960s to 1980s, the Holocaust memory was gradually publicized among survivors and people in Germany, Israel, and the United States. According to a study by Yuval Dror, Holocaust curricula in Israeli secondary schools improved dramatically following the Eichmann Trial in 1961.²⁰ Events from the Holocaust were broadcast in the media and a number of papers were published that reached wider audiences than in the previous decade. One of the key publications on the Holocaust was Anne Frank diary, which was translated into many languages including Khmer language.

According to Levy and Sznajder, the Holocaust by that time had become part of Israeli politics. The Jews needed a strong state with enough military capability to protect their national sovereignty and identity as Jews within a specific territorial

¹⁷ Porat, Dan A. (2004). “From the scandal to the Holocaust in Israeli Education,” *The Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 39, No. 4, October, p. 621.

¹⁸ Diner, Hasia (2003). “Post-World-War-II American Jewry and the Confrontation with Catastrophe,” *Jewish Studies: New and Notable Books and Journals*, Indiana University Press, pp. 443.

¹⁹ Bartov, Omer (2004). *The Holocaust as “Leimotif” of the Twentieth Century*, *Zeitgeschichte*, 31(5), pp. 315-16.

²⁰ Dror, Yuval (2001). “Holocaust Curricula in Israeli Secondary School, 1960s-1990s: Historical Evaluation from the Moral Education Perspective,” *The Journal of Holocaust Education*, Vol. 10, No. 2, p. 30.

boundary. As the two scholars emphasized, "it was mapped onto the Arab/Israeli conflict and has remained there ever since."²¹

In the US between the 1960s and 1980s the Holocaust had been regarded as a universal memory that must be retained to prevent future genocides, which could possibly happen to anyone and at any time and anywhere in the world. It also became a policy of the Carter administration to establish good relationships with Jewish-American communities, which had become more prominent and politicized. Israel's victory in the 1967 war was a battle cry for American Jews to arise from their long sleep. They began to talk about their past victimization. The stories of their suffering also became a political vehicle the US government used to further its support of Israel, both politically and logistically.²² More importantly, in the 1980s the Israeli parliament adopted Holocaust studies as a compulsory subject for secondary schools in Israel.²³

The end of the Cold War was a turning point in world politics. It also saw a shift in emphasis to a universal moral value in which the Holocaust played an important role. Israel, as Levy and Sznajder demonstrated, viewed the post-Cold War period as the time for a peace process and the end of using the Holocaust for political purposes. Thus, the Holocaust became an inspiration for compassion toward both Jewish and Palestinian victims.²⁴ In Germany, the Holocaust became a major part of national history since Germany was seeking political and cultural integration into larger Europe, in which "the prevention of another Holocaust became a civilizational foundation of a new official European memory."²⁵ Thus, the Holocaust became the symbol of European collective memory, which emphasized calls for immediate interventions in other cases of genocide and compassion for all victims regardless of their politics or race.

During this period, the Holocaust also became part of education discourse in the United States since many publications on this period were available in English, many of the survivors immigrated to the United States after the war, and it was part of US policy to raise moral consciousness against human rights violations that were occurring in many countries in the world. One of the best examples for the US to start considering about the Holocaust was Cambodian genocide in which the KR were identical to the Nazis with regards to the killings and the treatments of prisoners.

Beginning in the 1990s, the Holocaust became a popular subject in many schools, universities and other private and public institutions, both inside and outside Israel and the United States. More importantly, the construction of the United States

²¹ Levy and Sznajder, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

²² Diner, *op. cit.*, p. 445.

²³ Dror, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

²⁴ Diner, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in 1993 has largely contributed to making the Holocaust a global subject and a global memory for all human beings. The museum is situated in the heart of America's capital city of Washington, DC. It was designed and created as a center for the study and preservation of the memory of the Holocaust. As Edward Linenthal wrote in his volume *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America's Holocaust Museum*, the USHMM is not just a place to remember. It gives a sense of civil and moral responsibility for all visitors to confront the horrifying past and acknowledge the suffering of the victims, which is an important step toward healing and reconciliation.²⁶

All visitors entering the museum ride elevators that take them to permanent exhibition on the fourth floor. Once the elevator is full, the doors close and the lights dim; looking up, one can see that the light is small and in a small wire cage, remind the visitor of what it must have felt like in the concentration camp showers. As Edward Linenthal claimed, "visitors are twice removed from Washington, DC."²⁷ It is as if they are in another space where they can see the suffering of the Jews and other Nazi victims during WWII through photographs, films, and displays of such artifacts as milk cans, prisoners' clothes, and train cars. They are also given a name tag with a picture of an actual victim. Through these experiences, visitors will feel as if the story is their own. They seem to be in the world of ghettoization, deportation, and extermination camps.

To date, hundreds of museums, memorials and institutions have been established in Israel, the United States and Europe, and several more are in process. As Geoffrey Short pointed out, Holocaust museums are not created only for the memory of the Nazi annihilation of the Jews but also "to educate people of all ages and backgrounds about twentieth century Jewish history."²⁸ The history of annihilation is hardly to be understood without viewing the full dimensions of Jewish life and the history of anti-Semitism. These museums help visitors to understand Europe's political, economic and cultural climates before and during the Holocaust, the prejudices against the Jews, and the actions that led to their annihilation during World War II.

The Holocaust remains a popular subject for discussion and presentation almost everywhere in the world, especially North America and Europe. Hundreds of books and tens of thousands of articles and journals on the Holocaust have been written, published, and catalogued for research purposes and further understanding. The concept of the Holocaust has been used as a means to generate awareness of other grave abuses of human rights in other parts of the world. For example, the Holocaust was recently used to raise awareness of the genocide taking place in Darfur. Therefore, the history of the Holocaust is being taught formally and informally, and has become a force behind genocide education in other post-genocidal countries.

²⁶ Lenenthal, Edward T. (2001). *Preserving Memory: The Structure to Create America's Holocaust Museum*, New York: Columbia University Press, pp. xiii.

²⁷ Ibid. p. 170.

²⁸ Short, Geoffrey (2000). "The Holocaust Museum as an educational resource: A view from New York City," *The Journal of Holocaust Education*, Vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 1-18.

The original aims of Holocaust studies were several. These included “remembrance and knowledge of the Holocaust itself; the role of anti-Semitism in the Holocaust, and a broader understanding of the factors involved in the development and perpetuation of modern-day anti-Semitism; and the broader understanding of factors contributing to the violation of human rights and tendencies toward genocide, and how to prevent such factors from triumphing.”²⁹ Namely, the main aims are not only to educate young people about the historical facts of the Holocaust but also to reduce anti-Semitism and increase compassion toward people and commitment to the respect for human rights.

Holocaust educators have recently taken another step forward to assess the existing curricula to see the progress made in Holocaust education and determine new directions for future initiatives. The assessments focus on whether the objectives are achieved, whether the programs are delivered efficiently, and whether the learning outcomes are satisfactory. Moreover, they also attempt to see if the existing curriculum is sufficiently accurate and comprehensive. Other assessments suggested by Gallant and Hartman include: “Do teachers have adequate training? Do they spend enough time on the various materials? Are they precise in their delivery? Are emotions evoked but not challenged to appropriate action outlets? Is the material presented to the appropriate target population? Do they present material in an appropriate order to achieve the objectives? Is it fragmented or coherent?”³⁰

In addition, the assessments aim to see what students are able to do after studying the Holocaust and to determine whether their knowledge of the Holocaust could have some part in their future careers or their activism as citizens. In this sense, the assessments look to see what parts of Holocaust studies have more impact and are of more interest for students so that educators are able to foresee the areas of priorities to achieve the best match between objectives and educational materials.

Cambodian Genocide Education. In the early 1980s, shortly after the collapse of the Khmer Rouge, Cambodian school children were taught about the Khmer Rouge genocide in politically charged, propagandistic ways, which sought to instill in them a desire for violence, hatred and revenge. Because Cambodian society at that time prioritized basic economic recovery, the suffering of the Cambodian people under the Khmer Rouge became a folktale for young Cambodians who were born after the regime collapsed.

As the years passed, the content of Khmer Rouge history did not improve and has never become national concern. The curriculum on Khmer Rouge history provided by the People’s Republic of Kampuchea’s (PRK) Ministry of Education (this was the successor regime to the Khmer Rouge, which was controlled by the Vietnamese) was a political tool designed mainly to justify the Vietnamese presence in Cambodia.

²⁹ Gallant, Mary J. and Hartman, Harriet (2001). “Holocaust Education for the New Millennium: Assessing our Progress,” *The Journal of Holocaust Education*, Vol. 10, No. 2, p. 11.

³⁰ Ibid. pp. 13.

Children from grade one and up were taught via school textbooks to hate and fear the Khmer Rouge. For example, a reading textbook for grade one (published in 1979 by the PRK's Ministry of National Education) contained the following two sentences devoted to the Khmer Rouge period: "Our people supplied foodstuffs to soldiers who were sweeping up the traitors Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique. The United Front for the National Salvation of Kampuchea eliminated the traitors Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique."³¹

While most researchers on Democratic Kampuchea put the number of deaths during the genocide at between 1 million to 2 million, students during this period were taught that over 3 million people were killed by the Khmer Rouge. In the reading book for 2nd grade, the following sentences appear: "Pol Pot-Ieng Sary cliques killed more than 3 million people and completely destroyed everything in Cambodia. We are absolutely furious and strongly struggle against these atrocities."³² These textbooks were used during the period of Cambodian post-war conflict (from 1979 to 1991) to teach young Cambodians who were born after the Khmer Rouge.

In 1991, all of the political factions that had been vying for power in Cambodia, including the Khmer Rouge, reached a peace agreement and agreed to hold the first national election in 1993 under the direct supervision of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). The election marked a turning point in Cambodian politics and in the country's education system. The PRK's textbooks were replaced by new textbooks. But none of the new textbooks included an account of the Khmer Rouge era. The Cambodian Government claimed that the absence of Khmer Rouge history was necessary "for the sake of national reconciliation."

Teachers were instructed not to mention the Khmer Rouge in classrooms. From 1991 to 2000, political instabilities and work toward national reconciliation ensured that the account of the Khmer Rouge history would continue to remain absent from school curriculum, even though officials at the Ministry of Education had frequently discussed putting the Khmer Rouge atrocities into the curriculum. In 1996, Tol Lah, the then-Cambodian Minister of Education, vowed to teachers and researchers that the Ministry would not take Khmer Rouge history for granted. He was quoted in the local newspaper, *The Cambodia Daily*, saying that, "We will not rewrite history. History is to be history. Facts have to remain as they are."³³ However, the questions remained of when and how to educate Cambodian students on Khmer Rouge history.

Following the defection and collapse of the Khmer Rouge, civil society began to demand that curriculum be revised to include an account of the Cambodian genocide. The Ministry of Education finally revised the existing curriculum in 2000-

³¹ Reading book for grade 1, Part 1, Publication of the Ministry of National Education, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 1979, pp. 43 and 46.

³² Reading book for grade 2, Party 1, Publication of the Ministry of National Education, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 1979, p. 59.

³³ Pin Sisovann and Matt Reed (2002). "Textbook Delay Reflects Sensitivity of Cambodia's Recent History," *The Cambodia Daily*, March 23-24.

2001 and published new social study textbooks for grades 9 and 12. The new textbooks included an account of Cambodian modern history from 1953 up to the 1998 national election, which included an account of the Cambodian genocide. But the Khmer Rouge history was shockingly brief, far too brief to ensure that young generations of Cambodians understand what really happened at that time. Indeed, the 9th and 12th grade textbooks devote only a few sentences and a few paragraphs respectively to the Khmer Rouge era.

Teaching Khmer Rouge history in classrooms remains an issue in Cambodia today. Decision-making on the content of the curriculum still lies in the hands of politicians, and the depiction of modern Cambodian history in the two social studies textbooks remains politically controversial. For example, while the 12th grade textbook does mention the Cambodian Peoples Party's (CPP) victory in the 1998 national election, it neglected to mention that the Royalist Funcinpec Party won the first national election in 1993. Prince Norodom Ranariddh, then head of the Funcinpec Party and President of the Cambodian National Assembly, criticized the book for failing to mention his party's victory, and called for further revisions.³⁴ In response, the section on Cambodian modern history, including the account of the Khmer Rouge era, was removed entirely from the 12th grade textbook. Later, in the middle of the 2002 school year, Prime Minister Hun Sen ordered the withdrawal of all 12th grade social studies textbooks.³⁵ Meanwhile, the development of new curricula and subsequent publication of new texts have been ignored or at least have been very slow in coming. Six years later, Cambodian students study history without textbooks.

Since it was formed in 1980, Cambodia's Ministry of Education has had firm control over the content of school curricula for all levels of education. The Ministry instructs teachers, textbook writers, and curriculum designers on the topics to be taught and the fundamental objectives of teaching history. However, the last few years have seen considerable progress in terms of genocide education when the government took positive steps to seriously consider the matter.

This is largely owing to the efforts of the Cambodian non-government organization, the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam). In late 2006, it published a book entitled *A History of Democratic Kampuchea* and requested that the government put all or parts of the book into the high school curriculum. The government's initial response did not give much reason for optimism, although it did not close the door. Khmer Rouge history has long been a center of controversy in Cambodian education due to its political nature and the highly disputed history of the communist party. At the root of this controversy is the fact that several high-ranking officials of the current ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) are former members of the Khmer Rouge.

However, on September 26, 2006, Prime Minister Hun Sen wrote a note ordering his Deputy Sok An to establish a government working commission to review and

³⁴ Lor Chandara (2002). "Prince Ranariddh Slams New History Textbook," *The Cambodia Daily*, April 27-28.

³⁵ Pin Sisovann (2002). "Prime Minister Orders Recall of Textbooks," *The Cambodia Daily*, April 29.

reconsider DC-Cam's request. The commission was established on October 6 by government decree. It had seven members and was chaired by Im Sothy, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Education. All of the other members were officials from the Ministry of Education and Royal Academy of Cambodia. No private experts or educators were allowed to be involved in the process.

On December 14, the commission met to discuss the draft of the book. Member Sorn Samnang commented that the book "goes too far beyond the period 1975 to 1979. It describes each political regime....it should be kept for at least 60 years before starting to discuss it."³⁶ Kuoy Theavy commented that, "we are worried that if we show violence, there will be more and more violence."³⁷ Other members suggested changes in the text and the deletion of some chapters. However, Im Sothy voiced conditional support for the effort made in producing the text. The meeting minutes quoted him as saying:

This text is well written and well prepared for historians for further study. Writing a history textbook to be put into the official curriculum for general knowledge meets a lot of difficulties. Even Japan, which has many experiences in writing history books, still encounters a lot of problems in writing history related to Korea and China....This "A History of Democratic Kampuchea" can only be used as supplementary material to write a history textbook for general knowledge.³⁸

At the end, members of the government working commission unanimously agreed that "the text will be used as core supplementary discussion material and a base to write a history lesson for students in general education."³⁹ Later, in early 2008, DC-Cam continued sending letters to the Ministry of Education urging it to accept DC-Cam's proposal to expand genocide education as well as to raise the status of its published Khmer Rouge history book beyond that of supplementary material. At this stage, DC-Cam proposed that it undertake four main activities in cooperation with the Ministry:

- The preparation of guidance materials for teachers
- Pedagogical workshops for teachers
- The preparation of students to become teachers
- The translation of the textbook into five languages in addition to Khmer and English: Thai, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Japanese and French.

³⁶ Minutes of meeting of the government working commission to discuss the draft of the "History of Democratic Kampuchea" which was convened at the meeting hall of the Ministry of Education on December 14, 2006. The entire pdf file of the minute can be found at <http://dccam.org/Projects/Genocide/A11.pdf> .

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

On April 30, 2008, the Ministry of Education sent a formal letter to DC-Cam endorsing all four points. The government allowed the use of the existing history book and the development of a pedagogical curriculum through private initiatives. This was the first time that the government had made a decision to use anything other than the traditional state-sponsored history textbook and curriculum design. The letter stated that DC-Cam could work collaboratively with the Pedagogical Research Department and Teachers' Training Department of the Ministry of Education (as well as international experts on genocide education) to implement this project. The government also asserted the importance of teaching the history of genocide in Cambodia.⁴⁰ By mid-2008, Cambodia was on its way to change the history of the Khmer Rouge genocide from a forbidden subject to a required subject in the high school curriculum.

However, even thirty years after the fall of the Khmer Rouge, the history of Cambodia's genocide is still a politically sensitive event because of its links to previous regimes. Talking about Khmer Rouge history, one cannot avoid discussing events during the French colonial period, Cambodia under Prince Norodom Sihanouk, the Khmer Republic regime, and the US bombings of Cambodia. Nor can one stay away from a discussion of the Peoples Republic of Kampuchea regime, the State of Cambodia (SOC), the transitional period of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia, and the second Kingdom of Cambodia. The full dimension of the Khmer Rouge genocide cannot be understood unless it is presented within the framework of the emerging communist movement in Cambodia from the 1940s through its total collapse in 1999. This framework allows students to trace the development of the Khmer Rouge movement and to link this movement to other historical events for further research and broader understanding. And this will help to preserve the memory of the past to prevent, as Yair Auron said, "the forgetting that is always present alongside memory."⁴¹

Analysis of Textbooks and Pedagogical Methodology

School textbooks are a means to transfer knowledge on historical facts to students. Teachers rely heavily on history textbooks in preparing lesson plans and organizing lectures, and students use them to absorb historical information and as a basis for analyzing this information. As Daniel Bar-Tal wrote, textbooks "construct the social reality of the students. They enforce the self-perception values of a society, or more accurately its dominant elite, required norms, societal goals, nature of relations with different outgroups, stereotypes of other groups."⁴² Students often gain their first

⁴⁰ Letter from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport to Mr. Youk Chhang, Director of DC-Cam. The entire letter can be found pdf file at http://dccam.org/Projects/Genocide/pdf/Letter_from_Ministry_of_Education_to_DC-Cam--Eng.pdf.

⁴¹ Yair Auron (2005). *The Pain of Knowledge: Holocaust and Genocide Issues in Education*, New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers.

⁴² Bar-Tal, Daniel, (1998), "The rocky road toward peace: Beliefs on conflict in Israel textbooks," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 35, No. 6, p. 725.

exposure to their country's history and other important social events through textbooks. In preparing school textbooks of all kinds, especially history of genocide, it is important that authors attempt to be accurate, impartial, and balanced in terms of politics.

Historically, school textbooks – both on the Cambodian genocide during the 1980s and on the Holocaust during the 1960s – were developed by the Ministries of Education. It is inevitable that each country, whether during peacetime after emerging from genocide or violent conflict, will prepare such texts in accordance with their social views and social objectives.

History, geography, literature and Hebrew textbooks in Israel during the 1960s were designed to teach Jewish children that the country that is Israeli today originally belonged to the Jews, who created the nation of Israel and lived there for centuries. They also stress that the Arab peoples, especially Palestinians, had no claim on this land. In addition to glorifying the efforts of their Jewish ancestors to take care of the land, the textbooks depicted the Arabs as the ignorant, “unenlightened, inferior, fatalistic, unproductive, apathetic, dirty and noisy.”⁴³ These textbooks' negative treatment of Arabs contributed to the seemingly incurable conflict between the two nation states.

As discussed earlier, during the 1950s and 1960s, the Jewish community in all parts of the world focused little attention on educating their children about the suffering of the Jews during the Holocaust. Instead, their textbooks focused almost exclusively on the origin of Israel and the Israel/Arab conflict to generate the social perceptions that the Arabs were hostile and cruel people who wanted to annihilate Jews like the Nazis. Thus, the Arabs were labeled as “robbers, bloodthirsty mobs, killers, gangs or rioters.”⁴⁴ Similar sentiments can be found in Cambodian textbooks during the 1980s, which described the sufferings of the people under the Khmer Rouge and described the Khmer Rouge as “devils” or “monsters.”

In the 1980s and 1990s, however, curriculum developers in Israel reduced the amount of space their textbooks devoted to negative views on the Arab world. As Bar-Tal note, “there is less emphasis on inculcation of blind patriotic beliefs and less ethnocentric, self-presentation of Jews.”⁴⁵ Instead, the curriculum was designed in an effort to introduce unity between the Jews and Arabs, and to reduce prejudice against the Arabs. Today, textbooks on the Holocaust around the world are diverse. They are no longer created by Ministries of Education exclusively; many NGOs and Holocaust museums design both books and curricula that are used in formal and informal education.

Similarly, Cambodian textbooks during the 1980s became part of the domestic conflicts among rival Cambodian political factions as well as the international conflict

⁴³ Ibid. pp. 726.

⁴⁴ Ibid. pp. 726.

⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 739.

among the super powers involved in the Cold War. With assistance from Vietnam, the PRK attempted to bring communism to Cambodia in the hope that it would become a socialist country like Vietnam. It also aimed to prevent the return of the Khmer Rouge and other Cambodian factions that were forming armed forces along the Cambodian-Thai border. Generally, the main aim was to completely abolish what they called “the genocidal clique of Pol Pot.” With these objectives, the textbooks were used to introduce the crimes of the Khmer Rouge into classrooms as early as primary school. The textbooks also glorified the good acts of the United Front for the National Salvation of Kampuchea (UFNSK), a group of Khmer Rouge defectors who escaped to Vietnam, formed an armed force along the Vietnamese border, and with the Vietnamese military took control of Cambodia and ousted the Khmer Rouge from power in January 1979.

In addition, the textbooks mentioned the good conduct of the Vietnamese in liberating Cambodia and helping Cambodian people in all areas. They constantly invoked “Kampuchean-Vietnamese friendship” and called upon young people to take the resistance movements of Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos as a model in fighting “reactionary” enemies. Excerpts from a textbook published in 1980s reads:

Our people are determined to overcome all kinds of up-coming dangers and happily strive to defend and build up the country. They believe that the pure and correct Socialism will absolutely bring peace and good living condition.... After the liberation of 7 January 1979, Vietnamese people helped us to build up the country in all kinds.⁴⁶

We are striving to strengthen and expand the friendship Kampuchea-Vietnam-Laos to be even stronger and long lasting....Friend Vietnamese have helped and supported, in every possible way, our Cambodian people....Most farmers in Svay Rieng province lacked cattle, plows, rakes, etc. Our Friend the Vietnamese bought plowing machines to plow our people’s rice fields for four days. We, male and female students, strongly love our brother Vietnamese, for they had eliminated Kampuchea foes.⁴⁷

We clearly know that apart from Vietnam there are other socialist nations such as Laos and Soviet, which are supporting us in every section.⁴⁸

The school textbooks during the PRK period were strongly influenced by the Vietnamese world picture. They had to “please the Vietnamese advisers who would not have appreciated any critical allusion to the Vietnamese role. Therefore, [PRK

⁴⁶ Reading textbook for grade two, part one. Publish by the Ministry of National Education of the PRK. Published in Phnom Penh.

⁴⁷ Reading textbook for grade one. Publish in 1982 by the Ministry of National Education of the PRK. Publish in Ho Chi Minh City, pp. 93-172.

⁴⁸ Reading textbook for grade 2, part 2. Publish in 1981 by the Ministry of National Education of the PRK. Publish in Phnom Penh, p. 130-131.

historians] had to operate in a restricted framework.”⁴⁹ Cambodian textbooks in the 1980s also introduced hatred toward the enemies of Vietnam including America, China, and their allies. They labeled America as imperialist and the Chinese as expansionists and hegemonists, who supported the Khmer Rouge from the pre-revolutionary period until the peace agreement in 1991. Through textbooks, the PRK blamed China for the deaths of millions of Cambodians and the almost complete destruction of the country’s infrastructure:

Cambodian people won over the invasive, country-swallowing China Beijing.⁵⁰

Recently, our people have eliminated the genocidal regime of Pol Pot-Ieng Sary and their master, the Beijing expansionists.⁵¹

Under the ideas of the great crazy hegemonists Beijing, Democratic Kampuchea became the invaded base and was a pedestal for them to attack the nearby countries in Southeast Asia. The power holders in Beijing ordered Pol Pot and Ieng Sary to invade and offensively fought against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.⁵²

All people in Indochina have confronted to fight the enemies together: the French colonialism, American imperialism, and Beijing expansionism and its lackeys Pol Pot-Ieng Sary, who were the masters of genocide in Cambodia.⁵³

Under the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary-Khieu Samphan regime, more than three million Cambodian people were killed and all properties were completely destroyed.⁵⁴

National security was a main emphasis of the PRK, since the Khmer Rouge and two non-communist factions were still fighting to attain the complete withdrawal of all Vietnamese forces from Cambodian land. According to the views expressed in the textbooks, the PRK strongly believed that the United States, China and France were

⁴⁹ Frings, K. Viviane, (Oct., 1997), “Rewriting Cambodian History to Adapt It to a New Political Context: The Kampuchean People’s Revolutionary Party’s Historiography,” *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 4, Cambridge University Press, p. 812.

⁵⁰ Reading textbook for grade one, part one. Publish in 1979 by the Ministry of National Education of the PRK. Published in Phnom Penh, p. 42.

⁵¹ Reading textbook for grade 2, part 2. Publish in 1981 by the Ministry of National Education of the PRK. Published in Phnom Penh, p. 86.

⁵² Reading textbook for grade 3, part 1. Publish in 1981 by the Ministry of National Education of the PRK. Published in Ho Chi Minh City, p. 63-65.

⁵³ *Ibid.* p. 80-81.

⁵⁴ Reading textbook for grade 3, part 2. Publish in 1984 by the Ministry of National Education of the PRK. Published in Phnom Penh, p. 36-37.

attempting to take over Cambodia by using Pol Pot and former President Lon Nol as their tools. The textbook for grade 3 presented the following negative stereotype:

The emperor and expansionist Beijing exercised genocidal policy in Cambodia, which they chose their absolute slaves Pol Pot-Ieng Sary to act as murderers. They hoped that they would be able to send millions of Chinese soldiers and people to live in Cambodia in order to convert Cambodia into the front garrison to serve the expansionism in Southeast Asia. In late 1979, Beijing was having an agreement with Washington in order to form a separate movement against the Peoples Republic of Kampuchea. The expansionist Beijing and the American Imperialists had a big plan to send Lon Nol, who is the puppet of the Americans, and the soldiers loyal to Lon Nol to lead a movement to destroy the Peoples Republic of Kampuchea. Beijing policy to restore the dictatorial bloodthirsty regime of Pol Pot-Ieng Sary will absolutely not be achieved. The Peoples Republic of Kampuchea with the support from Socialist countries will not fall into the trap of the reactionary, imperialist and expansionist regime.⁵⁵

Education on the Cambodian genocide was silent during the 1990s. In 2001, as discussed above, the Cambodian government published new social studies books; their contents are much better than the ones in the 1980s. These texts attempted to transmit a new educational agenda and social beliefs; however, there were still many areas where information is deficient. There is little discussion, for example, on the Khmer Rouge. The description of the Khmer Rouge in the grade 9 social studies book reads:

From April 25 to April 27, 1975, the Khmer Rouge leaders held a special general assembly in order to form a new Constitution and renamed the country "Democratic Kampuchea" A new government of DK, led by Pol Pot, came into existence, after which the massacre of Khmer citizens began.⁵⁶

This content has little benefit or consequence in terms of generating historical awareness, much less an ability to understand and conceptualize the conditions in the past in order to apply them to the present and future. Despite its paucity, this passage did present history in a more accurate and less hostile manner than during the 1980s' more ideological representation of the past. Moreover, although this was a small change, it is symbolically important, for it was a sign that the Cambodian government was taking a different approach in teaching Cambodian children about their country's past trauma.

The textbooks in both Israel and Cambodia indicate that the leaders of both countries attempted to inculcate prescribed social beliefs to young people through

⁵⁵ Reading textbook for grade 3, part 1. Publish in 1981 by the Ministry of National Education of the PRK. Publish in Ho Chi Minh City, p. 108-109.

⁵⁶ Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Royal Government of Cambodia, Social Study textbook, Grade 9th, Lesson 12, page 169, Edition 2000. (Unofficial translation by Bun Sou Sour, Documentation Center of Cambodia).

indoctrination, political propaganda, and hatred toward their countries' enemies. The textbooks in Cambodia presented a positive self-image of the winners of the war, while discrediting its losers. The state also used the country's modern history to justify particular government perspectives. These manners, attitudes and beliefs have rooted in Cambodian society and today are part of the vicious circle of conflicts, violence, and political suppression. Therefore, in preparing school textbooks on the history of genocide and violent conflicts, it is important to ensure that the textbooks used in schools contain only historical facts and are free from political propaganda.

Accurate and unbiased textbooks alone will be of little value without proper pedagogy and teaching methodology. This emphasizes the key role of students and teacher guidebooks and teacher training so that teachers are able to teach the history of genocide appropriately. In developing both student and teacher guidebooks, it is important to emphasize the connections between genocide education and public life, genocide education and social justice, genocide education and the changing of negative social beliefs, as well as the role of genocide education in reconciliation. Putting this statement in the form of a question, one can ask: What can genocide education contribute to the struggle for justice, memory, social change, reconciliation and genocide prevention? This question will be discussed in more detail below. Here, I term these contributions as "genocide education activism" because they offer young people opportunities to actively participate in the process of moving toward a more just society. Moreover, with an appropriate methodology, genocide education can offer opportunities to promote "tolerance, inclusiveness, and ability to deal with conflict nonviolently, and the capacity to think critically and question assumptions that could again be manipulated to instigate conflict."⁵⁷

Therefore, curricula on genocide education should be designed in a way that provides students with an opportunity to trace the key events that led to a genocide within a chronological framework. This allows students to identify, analyze, evaluate and investigate historical events and interpret them in light of the past. A well-written text will enable them to think critically, debate ideas in class, and form their own independent judgments. Moreover, in Cambodia, with good pedagogy, students will be able to transform themselves from passive to active learners. To accomplish this, students need a curriculum that is more relevant to their current conditions and lives. As Alison Kitson argued, "much of its success might well depend on a teacher's ability to draw very particular lessons from the past in order to illuminate the present and actively address the kinds of current attitudes that impede conflict resolution."⁵⁸

To teach the history of genocide effectively, there should be no concession between pedagogy and political engagement at the expense of historical facts and values. However, it is inevitable that curriculum development in post-genocidal or post-conflict countries is presented with state objectives in mind. The comparative

⁵⁷ Cole, Elizabeth A. (2007), "Reconciliation and History Education," in "Teaching the Violent Past: History Education and Reconciliation," edited by Elizabeth A. Cole, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC., Carnegie Council for Ethnicity in International Affairs, p. 2.

⁵⁸ Kitson, Alison, (2007), "History Teaching and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland," in "Teaching the Violent Past: History Education and Reconciliation," edited by Elizabeth A. Cole, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC., Carnegie Council for Ethnicity in International Affairs, p. 129-130.

analyses in the next section shows how histories were conveyed in Cambodia, Germany, Israel and the United States, and how students in a post-genocidal period were surrounded with versions of past that were dominated by politicians, who pressured academics to design curricula that legitimized the state's political agenda.

Comparative Analysis

Although the Jewish community in the United States did not want to talk about their traumatic experiences during the early post-war period, this attitude changed during the 1980s. Since then, they have built a number of Holocaust memorials across the United States. Holocaust studies then became part of the official curricula in various schools and universities in many states. Both the US Holocaust Memorial Museum and Jewish education institutions have published many survivors' accounts, academic books on the Holocaust, monographs, journals, course materials, and teaching manuals to educate people inside and outside North America about the Holocaust. As Hasia Diner pointed out, "Jewish organizations have developed informational packets that are distributed to schools, synagogues, and organizations to help communities remember."⁵⁹ In addition, many universities have prepared symposia, colloquia, conferences and seminars on the history of the Holocaust to raise awareness among scholars, students and interested members of the community.

Conversely, the short text on the Cambodian genocide was torn out of the country's secondary school textbooks as a result of a political, intra-governmental conflict over the treatment of the 1993 national election. It seemed that the way to deal with the past, for the Cambodian government, was to forget the past. In Omsameng, the Chairman of the Ministry of Education's Committee for Curriculum Development, stated just four years ago that the texts do not discuss the killings in detail because "we don't want Cambodian children to repeat the bitter history. We try to bury even the smell."⁶⁰ This comment echoes Hun Sen's remark that "it is time to dig a hole and bury the past, even when we consider that the past is for thousands of Cambodians an unbearable burden."⁶¹ Likewise, former Democratic Kampuchea (DK) Head State Khieu Samphan, though claiming that he knew nothing of what happened during the DK regime, apologized to those who died and suffered during DK and called upon the Cambodian people to "forgive and forget."⁶²

Seeing this important gap in governmental responsibility, the Documentation Center of Cambodia, which has been independently documenting the Khmer Rouge genocide since 1995, established and implemented a Genocide Education Project.⁶³

⁵⁹ Diner, Hasia. "Post-World-War-II American Jewry and the Confrontation with Catastrophe," *Jewish Studies: New and Notable Books and Journals*, 2003, Indiana University Press, pp. 439.

⁶⁰ The Cambodia Daily, "Textbook Delay Reflects Sensitivity of Cambodia's Recent History," March 23-24, 2002.

⁶¹ Suzana Linton, "Reconciliation in Cambodia," Documentation Center of Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2004, page 84.

⁶² Rasmei Kampuchea Daily, "Khieu Samphan: Sorry and Please Forget the Past," January 1, 1999.

⁶³ DC-Cam's proposal on Genocide Education Project, implemented from Setp. 2004 to April 2007.

The result of the project was the publication of a book called *A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)*.⁶⁴ Coinciding with the Khmer Rouge Tribunal, copies of the book have been very well received by students, teachers, researchers and the public. 1,500 copies were delivered to 259 high schools throughout the country. As discussed earlier, at this moment in time, the Cambodian Government seemed to be more flexible in its attitudes on the way to educate Cambodians students about genocide, and what they should be taught. (This move may also have been spurred world attention focused on Cambodia in light of the upcoming Khmer Rouge Tribunal.) This book's publication was the real move toward establishing formal genocide education in Cambodia.

Historically, the Holocaust and Cambodian genocide are similar in their devastation and tolls of human suffering, but the ways in which their histories have been treated are dramatically different. Holocaust studies have developed from an initial unwillingness to talk about the Holocaust to an immense amount of writing and scholarship on the subject, in addition to radio broadcasts, films, and more recently, e-learning. In fact, some scholars claim that the Holocaust receives too much attention today. The Jewish community itself has been active – both in terms of time and money – in disseminating their experiences, such as by sponsoring various organizations and institutions to hold seminars or conferences on various dimensions of the Holocaust.

In contrast, Cambodia had devolved in this respect. Its attention to the genocide began with relatively long sections in its textbooks that were highly politicized and often nearly pure propaganda, and later depicted Democratic Kampuchea in five sentences. By the mid 1990s, account of the Khmer Rouge regime had disappeared from the texts entirely.

For the three decades since the collapse of the Khmer Rouge, the majority of the Cambodian people have been struggling to live in a country that was devastated by civil war, internal conflicts, political instability and national insecurity. People have taken their own sufferings for granted. Only with the emergence of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal, officially known as the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), and the publication and nationwide distribution of the DK history book did people begin a broader dialogue with their neighbors and families about their pasts.

Since the beginning of genocide education, world attention has focused on the Holocaust. There has been far less attention on the victims of other genocides like Cambodians and Rwandans. Genocide education in Cambodia, under the Documentation Center of Cambodia will not only be the first such education on the history of the Khmer Rouge but will also represent other genocides in other countries. The incorporation of other genocides in a comparative study will allow Cambodian students to compare their country's experience with those of others, realize that what happened to Cambodia happened in other countries, and gain

⁶⁴ The full text of the book in PDF files can be found at:
<http://dccam.org/Projects/Genocide/English.htm>

compassion for genocide victims in other parts of the world. The Center will emphasize genocide not only as a matter of Cambodia but also one of human beings.

Although Holocaust education seems to focus on the fate of the Jewish people, it is important to examine its content in methods in order to learn about what problems have arisen in these studies and avoid them when teaching about the Cambodian genocide. In his article "The Holocaust Museum as an Educational Resource: A View from New York City," Geoffrey Short has pointed out a number of important problems in teaching about the Holocaust. The improper development of textbooks and curricula, and additional sources for teaching can possibly lead students to view genocide education in a way that is different from the educators' original objectives. In this sense, it is important to properly study the quality of genocide education offered to high school and college students. A study on the development of texts about the Holocaust intended for high school students in England in mid-1990 showed that most teachers failed to deliver the history of the Holocaust appropriately in class. Short wrote that:

Most teachers failed to explore their students' perceptions of Jews and Judaism prior to teaching about the Holocaust....The study also showed that many teachers allocate no more than two to four hours to the Nazi treatment of the Jews with the inevitable consequence that some significant topics are dealt with superficially whilst others are not dealt with at all. The issue of anti-Semitism is a case in point. None of the 34 teachers that were interviewed was concerned to teach the Holocaust with a view to informing students about the specific nature of this form of prejudice. They tended, instead, to favor a more broadly-based rationale, stressing the Holocaust's value in helping to combat racism in all its forms.⁶⁵

When incorrect perceptions are given to students or teachers fail to present enough information, students may have equally incorrect perceptions about the victims of genocide. Short argued that with such a one-sided view of Jewish history in addition to the historical distortions, "some students might conclude that there is no smoke without fire and assume that Jews are, at least to some extent, the authors of their own misfortune."⁶⁶

The saying "there is no smoke without fire" is also a very popular one in Cambodian culture. And the same problems Short discussed regarding teaching about the Holocaust also existed in Cambodia in the aftermath of the genocide. With no proper publications or teaching methods about genocide, and with different interpretations by conflicting parties as well as social unrest and a traumatized population, the messages about the Khmer Rouge genocide were conveyed in the wrong way. Thus, many young people had little knowledge or understanding of the Democratic Kampuchea regime (for example, some students interviewed by the press said that

⁶⁵ Short, Geoffrey (2000). "The Holocaust Museum as an educational resource: A view from New York City," *The Journal of Holocaust Education*, Vol. 9, No. 1, p. 3.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* p. 4.

they “admired” Pol Pot). At this stage, there is still virtually no knowledge about other genocides on the part of the Cambodian population.

People in the Khmer Rouge and resistance movement-controlled areas believed that the murders between 1975 and 1979 were clearly the doings of the Vietnamese, who wanted to “sweep away” the Cambodian people in order to swallow Cambodian land. The Khmer Rouge movement near Thai border, with support from China, America and Thailand, published textbooks stating that Vietnam wanted to annex Cambodia as they did to Laos to form an Indochinese Federation under the supervision of Vietnam. In addition to the textbook, the Khmer Rouge broadcast stories on the radio that Vietnam had repeatedly attempted to take over Cambodia from 1979 to 1989.

There was some basis in fact for this propaganda. Vietnam installed a new government called the People’s Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) in Cambodia; all of its leaders were selected by and trained in Vietnam. The PRK was under the tight control of the Vietnamese militarily, economically and politically. This control aroused suspicions, especially on the part of Cambodians living in the border areas and abroad, as well as some people inside the country.

On the other hand, the PRK published social studies textbooks and “political study bulletins” saying that the Khmer Rouge was used as a Chinese tool to kill their own people. China had provided millions of dollars in military, technical and political support to the Khmer Rouge. China sent thousands of advisors and experts to help build up Democratic Kampuchea and to fight against Vietnam. Evidently, after the defeat the Khmer Rouge in 1979, China continued to support them in a number of ways. Even today, many members of the Cambodian Diasporas and people living inside the country still believe that the blame for the Cambodian genocide can be laid squarely at the feet of the Vietnamese.

In November 2007, a group of Cambodian nationals in France announced that they are trying to reestablish the government of Democratic Kampuchea in order to save Cambodia and Cambodians from Vietnam. The unofficial translation of the statement they released is as follows:

I would like to announce to all Cambodians of all statuses to know that I am going to establish the government of “Democratic Kampuchea” that the general opinion confuses that it was the government that executed genocide and that the Vietnamese eliminated it on 7 January 1979. The leaders of Democratic Kampuchea are innocent people. They are the real patriots and liberated Khmers from the Vietnamese. But foreigners have played tricks to have the international court to prosecute these leaders. Democratic Kampuchea has to win....The United Nations has to find out the truth even though the world opinions still get confused....We should not leave those who don’t know the truth to continue to serve as the slaves of the Vietnamese and continue to kill Khmers....The United Nations...has to give justice to Democratic Kampuchea and find out which group killed almost two million Cambodians....It was clearly the “high organization” organized by Vietnam who took control of Phnom

Penh and all provinces....Democratic Kampuchea was not the one who committed genocide....⁶⁷

For thirty years, the Cambodian people (much less those in the rest of the world) have not been able to make a clear determination of what was going on during the period of Democratic Kampuchea. The same questions have been haunting them for years. These questions include: Why did the Cambodians kill their own people? Did Vietnam and China want to swallow Cambodia by eliminating the Cambodian people?

The roots of the Holocaust are clearer, yet also contain omissions. For example the texts on the Holocaust that were used to teach students in Britain, Canada and the United States failed to mention the role of the churches in anti-Semitism. According to a study of 23 history teachers in Toronto in May 1998, nearly half of the sample talked very little about the role of anti-Semitism and the other half said almost nothing in their classrooms. To some, teachers in North America and Europe seem to have less compassion toward the Jews when teaching about their fates. They normally, as Short put, "spent longer on the woeful response of the western powers, the treatment of non-Jews victims and the similarities and differences between the Holocaust and more recent genocides."⁶⁸ Those who developed curricula did not want to reveal the Christian origins of anti-Semitism, which tended to emphasize that anti-Semitism and prejudice against Jews did not exist prior to Hitler's time.

Having suffered from Khmer Rouge persecutions and without proper training and curricula, many Cambodian teachers are likely to convey Khmer Rouge history in emotional terms. This, instead of generating critical thinking and understanding toward compassion and national unity, can possibly instill a sense of hatred and revenge among students. Under political pressures, some teachers may not dare to discuss the relationship of some current government officials with the Khmer Rouge. This would lead to gaps in the history. Ethical neutralism against personal emotion in genocide education is important. Without this concept in mind, teachers may teach students with their own version of the truth and interpretation of the history of genocide.

In the United States, developments in the curricula on the Holocaust have long been a matter of concern because of their misrepresentations. A study conducted during the 1990s showed that the curriculum in California gave the impression that "Hitler's primary targets were blacks rather than Jews."⁶⁹ Other curricula in the state also misrepresented the position of the United States in the operation to rescue Jews.

⁶⁷ "Association Pour UN Cambodge Libre" or "ACL". The announcement was released on November 20, 2007.

⁶⁸ Short, Geoffrey (2000), "The Holocaust Museum as an educational resource: A view from New York City," *The Journal of Holocaust Education*, Vol. 9, No. 1, p. 6.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* p. 6.

This same situation exists with the curriculum development in Cambodia during the PRK regime, which aimed to instill in students the concept of socialism and anti-Khmer Rouge sentiments. The misrepresentations were intentionally placed in the texts in order to shape the way the students viewed the Khmer Rouge and Vietnamese forces in Cambodia, to garner support for the PRK government, and specifically to advance an historical interpretation that was in the government's political interests.

Today, Holocaust studies are a required subject in many American high schools and universities. The scope or amount of text to be put into the existing crowded curricula is also another main challenge. In some cases, high school history teachers in the United States inevitably have to leave some of the topics out of the discussion. This challenge already exists in Cambodia, even an official text has been incorporated into the high school curriculum. However, it is worth anticipating these potential problems before a text is incorporated. The Cambodian government commission that was established by government decree to review the draft of *A History of Democratic Kampuchea*, also complained about the length of the text which was a little under one hundred pages in English. Sorn Samnang suggested that Cambodian Ministry of Education "should consider the appropriate balances between study hours, number of pages, number of parts, and number of history lessons in comparison to other lessons and courses."⁷⁰

In addition to introducing Holocaust studies to classes ranging from primary schools to universities, Holocaust educators have provided a variety of different resources, different teaching strategies and different instructional techniques. For instance, some teachers might screen documentary films before distributing reading materials and lectures, while the others classes are prepared to watch a movie along with reading materials. In some schools, educators bring students to museums several times during the academic year.

However, in Cambodia, the Ministry of Education just accepted a history book to be part of the curriculum. This material is the only source of genocide education for high school students at this point. Hopefully, in the future, Cambodia can reach the stage that a variety of materials and methodologies on teaching about the Cambodian genocide are introduced so that history teachers can compare them and find the best techniques for instructing students. As Gallant and Hartman claimed, "Careful comparisons of different strategies...can help educators make informed choices for their own programs and learning situations so as to assure the most efficient use of resources for the achievement of the most appropriate and important objectives."⁷¹

⁷⁰ The Commission was established by Cambodian government after receiving draft and request from DC-Cam to put in whole or in part the text on the history of Democratic Kampuchea prepared by DC-Cam into high school official curriculum. The commission chaired by Im Sethy, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Education, held its first meeting on December 14, 2006 to discuss and review the draft. For the entire minute meeting, please go to DC-Cam's official website: <http://dccam.org/Projects/Genocide/A11.pdf>.

⁷¹ Gallant, Mary J. and Hartman, Harriet (2001). "Holocaust Education for the New Millennium: Assessing our Progress," *The Journal of Holocaust Education*, Vol. 10, No. 2, p. 22.

Museums have an important role to play to supplement teaching in schools. Holocaust scholars and educators have used museums to teach students; a museum visit not only saves time but also gives visitors a visceral, visual and auditory experience of the Holocaust. Beyond educating students, museums also function as centers to educate the public about the Holocaust. All Holocaust museums in North America, Israel and Europe comprise photo exhibitions, film footage and artifacts. Thus, the museum can convey more detail quickly than a curriculum can cover. The topics they address range from the life and civilization of the Jews in Europe before the Holocaust, the history of anti-Semitism, the rise of the Nazi Party in Germany, the implementation of the Holocaust, and Jewish resistance. Holocaust museums also exhibit the fates of non-Jewish victims, the establishment of the state of Israel, and the post-war Jewish experience in the United States.

The same lessons apply to the case of Cambodian genocide education. Textbooks alone cannot give students a full account of the Khmer Rouge. Bringing students to visit genocide museums, killing sites, former security centers and mass graves will enable them to understand more about people's lives during the Khmer Rouge, the factors that helped the Khmer Rouge take power, and the genocide's aftermath. Distributing guidebook or booklets as an explanatory notes prior to the visit will also be of great advantage. After visiting a museum such as Tuol Sleng, students may have a broader dialogue in the class about what they have seen in addition to what they have learned. In this sense, the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum will play a role that is similar to the one the US Holocaust Memorial Museum plays for students in the United States. Because the government-run Tuol Sleng Museum has little emphasis on pedagogy, it will need assistance in reorganizing a teaching methodology and educational materials. Nonetheless, it has the potential to become an integral part of both formal and informal genocide education in Cambodia for people of every age and educational level.

The experiences of teaching about the Holocaust have shown that some students have developed an anti-German sentiment. Likewise, teaching on the Cambodian genocide can produce more anti-Vietnamese, anti-Chinese, or anti-former Khmer Rouge cadre prejudice. Therefore, textbook developers and museums have to be careful when they plan their work and in structuring discussions about the differences between national and ideological identities. Students should be provided with the knowledge that not all Germans were committed to the Nazi Party, and not all Cambodians were committed to the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK), and that not all Vietnamese or Chinese were involved with the Khmer Rouge genocide. Only a handful of Vietnamese and Chinese advisers and experts were sent to Cambodia during the civil war and Khmer Rouge regime, respectively, to help with the communist revolution.

The anti-German perception sometimes leads to the interchangeable use of the terms "Nazi" and "German" depicted "not only in popular publications but in scholarly ones as well."⁷² In comparison, it is possible that in Cambodia, there could be

⁷² Mork, Gordon R. (1980), "Teaching the Hitler period: History and Morality," *The History Teacher Journal*, Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 509-522.

confusion in the usage of the terms “Khmer Rouge” and “Cambodians” or “Vietnamese” and “genocide.” If the distinction is unclear, it could lead to the distortion of historical facts and political conflicts among the nations in Southeast Asia and among ethnic groups within Cambodia.

This case is not so different from the views of some people who use Holocaust studies as political propaganda to support Israel in a war against Palestine. In addition, Germany had its own self-esteem to recoup after World War II, and it was reluctant to introduce Holocaust studies to its schools during the early post-war period. Germany wanted to make a clear-cut distinction between Germany and the Nazi Party, which the German Government defined as a group of authoritarian and barbarous leaders who misled the country.

What can comparative genocide education contribute to the battle to solve social problems?

Comparative genocide education will allow Cambodian students to see beyond the Cambodian genocide and realize that similar heinous crimes and inhuman acts have also taken place in many other parts of the world throughout human history. Moreover, it gives a sense of responsibility to study and to react, to generate critical thinking among children, to reflect on their country’s current political and social situation, and to participate in the world mission to combat the reoccurrence of genocide. In addition to understanding the past and developing special skills, comparative genocide education allows children to develop special values including compassion and tolerance toward each other.

More importantly, comparative genocide study helps to shift post-genocidal countries from prejudicial thinking about their own country. For instance, because Cambodia and her people have experienced hard times for many decades, the population generally seems to believe that Cambodia is synonymous with killing, conflict, war, power struggles, hardship, and poverty. The Cambodian people, most of whom are Buddhists, are likely to accept what they view as fate and let the situation go with little sense of struggle to change their destiny. Therefore, with the benefit of comparative genocide education, Cambodian people can see how victims of the Holocaust and other genocides have struggled to survive and overcome all obstacles.

Moreover, comparative genocide education allows students to go beyond historical description to figure out the connection between war and genocide. Historically, genocide has almost always happened in or shortly after the presence of war. The slaughter of Armenians by the Turks occurred during World War I; the Holocaust occurred during World War II. Looking to the connection between the Holocaust and World War II, Christopher Fettweis, although he denied the uniqueness of the connection between World War II and the Holocaust, asserted that, “At the very least, the war made the Holocaust more likely, and easier for the Nazis to accomplish. It greased the gears of the genocide machine, creating an atmosphere where ideas

that during times of peace would have been unthinkable became reasonable and acceptable."⁷³

Likewise, Pol Pot and his cliques established the killing fields in Cambodia during civil war and the second Indochina War in the 1970s; the Bosnian Serbs exercised ethnic cleansing on Muslims during the internal war in the former Yugoslavia; and the Hutus' massacre of ethnic Tutsis and moderate Hutus in Rwanda was a direct outgrowth of that country's civil war. Such comparisons can give students a perception that wherever war occurs, there is a prospect of genocide, or at least when war occurs, it creates the conditions that can lead to genocide and mass murder. It is evident in Cambodia that war generated deep hatred among the extreme nationalists toward their enemies. But soon, they could not differentiate who were enemies and who were not, which led to mass killings in the country.

Germany was one of the modern and industrial nations in Europe. Similarly, many foreign visitors who spent their holidays in Cambodia during the 1960s described Cambodia as an "island of peace." They called the capital city of Phnom Penh the most beautiful city in Southeast Asia. Truly, Cambodia was a Buddhist and civilized country. But civil war and internal power struggles, as well as the devastation brought about by international wars, pushed the country to the abyss of evil. These circumstances led to the Khmer Rouge thinking that the ideas of democracy and peaceful negotiation could not be applied in Cambodia and that totalitarianism, communist ideologies, and warfare were the only ways to solve Cambodia's long-standing conflict. And as occurred with the Nazis, the impossible and unthinkable became possible and thinkable. The Khmer Rouge came to the conclusion that people just like themselves and of their own race became their enemies. Therefore, it is crucial to study the nature of war, the nature of the Holocaust, and the nature of Cambodian genocide and conflict comparatively if future genocide is to be prevented.

In Cambodia, the future of genocide education is a matter of political commitment and the devotion of politicians to allow the young generation to have full access to the dark side of Cambodian history, just as Germany has done in the past few decades. Comprehending the whole of their country's history is important if they are to go forward in the right direction and if Cambodia is not to return again and again to the same path she has taken several times in the past decades. A comparative study also allows students to understand that genocide is not "a problem from hell," as Samantha Power has titled her book. It is clearly a man-made product that can be prevented when people are given opportunities to look more deeply into the circumstances that led to genocide. Genocide-like events can possibly occur as long as the circumstances are right. Therefore, understanding this concept will help to erase the old perception that such atrocities will inevitably happen.

From looking at both the Holocaust and Cambodian genocide, it is evident that Holocaust studies is important for both the Jewish people and others around the

⁷³ Fettweis, Christopher J. (2003) "War as catalyst: Moving World War II to the center of Holocaust scholarship," *Journal of Genocide Research*, 5:2, p. 234.

world who are stimulated to promote genocide prevention, respects for human rights, democracy, peace and reconciliation. In this respect, Cambodian people need full access to their country's history of genocide before they can lead the country forward toward the concepts of rule of law, full democracy, peace and unity. Despite the advances in Holocaust studies over the course of more than 50 years, in the words of Yuval Dror, "there remain some fundamental omissions in formal and non-formal secondary school curricula...and a great deal of room for development and improvement in order to reflect the concerns of modern society."⁷⁴

Introducing the Khmer Rouge genocide and comparative genocide education in Cambodia is an important step to reshape social beliefs in order to make social and political changes in this chronically damaged society. For decades, political leaders have shaped social beliefs among the population, which divided the country into social and political factions. The ways in which Cambodia's national leaders of the 1960s and 70s shaped social beliefs, despite of the facts that developments and progresses did come up, brought many negative effects to society, which eventually led to the ultimate disaster of the Khmer Rouge era. Social beliefs of extreme nationalism and patriotism generated loyalty, love, care and sacrifice for the sake of the nation. Instead of increasing cohesiveness and unity within society, these extreme beliefs indoctrinated people to the point that they were able to kill their own relatives and destroy their thousand-year religious and cultural heritages.

Today, attitudes toward social problems such as corruption, impunity, social exploitation of the poor, power struggles, gun violence, drug trafficking, human rights abuses, human trafficking, and so forth, create the perception among the population that these ills are part of their daily life that cannot be solved. They eventually become part of Cambodia's language, symbols, myths, culture and collective memories. These social beliefs caused the outbreaks of conflicts, civil war, violence and the continuation of these social problems, which still exist today and will continue to exist in the future if the current problem of the lack of genocide education remains unresolved. Cambodia must be given a chance to learn from its mistakes, much as Germany did; today, it is one of the world's champions of human rights. If we are to shape children's attitudes now, we must allow them help them to learn from the past and shape their future in a different way.

An examination of the comparative study of genocide education shows that genocide education during a country's post-genocidal period is almost always politicized in line with politics and state objectives. It takes several decades to shape the way that genocide education is correctly introduced into schools. It took about four decades for Israel to change its textbooks from introducing prejudice to reducing prejudice and from separating the Jewish community from the Arab world toward a move to strengthen Jewish-Arab coexistence.

⁷⁴ Dror, Yuval (2001), "Holocaust Curricula in Israeli Secondary School, 1960s-1990s: Historical Evaluation from the Moral Education Perspective," *The Journal of Holocaust Education*, Vol. 10, No. 2, p. 37.

Likewise, it took Cambodia thirty years to change its textbooks, to evolve from introducing political propaganda, indoctrination, hatred, and revenge to the texts that are historically accurate and politically unbiased. Perhaps time is the answer, for it gives countries and people perspective. The Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport aims to formally introduce genocide education to the high school curriculum by the year 2009.

It is important to reshape social beliefs by constructing knowledge through history education. This requires strong political will on the part of post-genocidal countries, which must attempt to separate genocide education from politics. Post-genocidal or post-conflict governments have to take their hands out of textbook and curriculum development and allow professional educators to work freely on both writing textbooks and designing pedagogical and methodological curricula. This will raise the chances that historical texts will be presented in a balanced manner, and will include both the good and dark sides of history so that students are able to think critically. When developing products for students, textbook writers and curriculum designers have to bear in mind that the ultimate goal of genocide education is not only to prevent genocide but also to form the good social beliefs in order to achieve sustainable and long-lasting peace and national reconciliation. As Dan A. Porat pointed out, educators “must question not only the accuracy of the depiction but also how the teaching of an event reflects the social and political context in which the narrative was shaped and how the account is expected to shape the concurrent social and political circumstances.”⁷⁵

Comparative genocide education gives young people an opportunity to have an overview of genocidal regimes and contrast the views of those regimes’ leaders with other social mores, which will equip them with ideas for dealing with deeply rooted social prejudices. In other words, what can we learn from the mistakes in the past and apply what we have learned to the social problems that we are facing today?

Nazi Germany believed that only those of pure German stock were fit to control the country. Anyone else was viewed as inhuman or bad elements that had to be discarded. Likewise, the Khmer Rouge viewed nearly all Cambodians (they of course excepted themselves) as corrupted human beings; only newborn children were pure enough to handle the revolution. Killing, mental and physical torture, disappearances, forced labor, family separation, fear, and respect for Angkar became culturally and socially normal for daily life under the Khmer Rouge’s reign. Facing these inhuman acts and losing hope of long-delayed justice, as well as being occupied with the day-to-day struggle to live in poverty, many Cambodian people believe that their suffering during the Khmer Rouge was the result of their sins in a previous life. These social perceptions continue to exist to some degree and in different forms in Cambodian society today. Therefore, studying comparative genocide will allow people, especially those in the young generations, to contrast these social views and form internal compassion with regards to life itself.

⁷⁵ Porat, Dan A, (Oct., 2004), “From the scandal to the Holocaust in Israeli Education,” *The Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 39, No. 4, p. 620.

Conclusion

In the years immediately after World War II, nations did not give much attention to genocide education as a measure to confront recurring past atrocities. Rather, the main focus was the competition for economic and political power, and the competition for ideological influence in various parts of the world. This left a “loophole” that encouraged more killings and grave human rights abuses in many parts of the world, as evidenced in Cambodia from 1975 to 1979, Rwanda in 1994, ethnic cleansing in Bosnia in 1995, and so on. In the beginning of the 21st century, the world is constantly being alerted to the on-going acts of genocide and other human rights abuses in Sudan and other locations. Scholars, researchers and educators have begun to see the important role of genocide education in solving this problem.

However, genocide education around the world continues to concentrate on the events during the Holocaust, while little attention is being paid to the genocides that are occurring in many developing countries. Genocide scholars should turn their focus toward the issues in the third world. The Cambodian case could be the best example for such study since it has come across many obstacles on the way to providing genocide education over the course of three decades.

Education on the violent past plays an important role in the development of every country, and post-genocidal countries in particular. Despite this, deeply divided and fragile societies like Cambodia encounter many challenges. The fragility is not rooted only in people’s attitudes but also in social infrastructure and political institutions. Since the Cambodian people have experienced many cycles of violence, they have lost confidence on the country’s social and political systems. The manipulation of history, especially Khmer Rouge history, by politicians has posed even far greater challenge for the country to fix as well as to regain the trust of its people. To correct these deficiencies, a country needs economic and social reconstruction, but it must come to terms with the past before it can move forward toward development and stability.

In this sense, genocide education plays a key role in social reconstruction, social reconciliation, and trust building. Unfortunately, the history of genocide has long been politicized in Cambodia as part of nation building and has been used to achieve political objectives, especially during the 1980s and early 1990s. However, like Holocaust education, teaching genocide in Cambodia is more hopeful in the present situation due to the positive reactions and changes in the government policy toward teaching the country’s violent history. The Cambodian genocide will become a more practical history for study if the government expresses more willingness to revise textbooks and curricula, and loosen state control on writing textbooks.

To generalize, teaching genocide in post-genocidal countries, taking the Holocaust and Cambodia as examples, it is critical to deal with four factors in order to achieve the objectives of genocide education. These are: textbook development, pedagogy, teacher capacity and way of conveying history, and government support. As pointed out in this paper, textbooks must be developed in an accurate and unbiased manner, and in a way that promotes compassion and unity, rather than anger, hatred or violence. Likewise, the pedagogical component (the way the history of genocide is

taught) has to be designed in conformation to the values of history. As Audrey Chapman argued, while these two components matter, teachers' style and their interpretation also "play an important role in the understanding that the students derive from their course....Many teachers... are reluctant to discuss controversial period, events, and issues and prefer to skip them. They also fail to ask challenging questions."⁷⁶ Last, a government's political willingness to allow educators to work freely on textbooks and curriculum development will help overcome the challenges in teaching genocide in post-genocidal countries. Teachers will be more willing to express their views or to discuss controversial points more broadly in an atmosphere where political conditions permit this.

When these four components are achieved, it is possible to move forward and engage the public in genocide education and, especially, to participate actively in the learning process. Because genocides are traumatic and cause great suffering, it is important that the survivors engage in this process through conversing with their children about their experiences and giving testimony. In this way, students will become active learners, and the survivors can instill constructive values and beliefs in them.

As Chapman said, historical descriptions and their incorporation into school curricula, especially the history of genocide, may change with the passage of time and the political developments of a given country. In the Cambodian case, the historical narratives of genocide were broadly expressed early in the post-genocide period. When the Khmer Rouge faction was ended militarily and politically, the description of the genocide disappeared from government textbooks. During the legal process to prosecute the Khmer Rouge, the discussion began to emerge again. Nevertheless, it is important to end the Khmer Rouge genocide historically, which conversely means preserving the memory of the past genocide for future generations. This applies to all post-genocidal countries in the globalized world.

⁷⁶ "Teaching the Violent Past: History Education and Reconciliation," editing by Elizabeth A. Cole, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC., Carnegie Council for Ethnicity in International Affairs, 2007, p.323.

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