

Mina Rosner Essay Contest

How Events and Lessons of the Shoah are Relevant to Present Day Life

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Mina Rosner Essay Submission

Shoah 41G

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No matter the nation that one may reside, or colour of their skin, or their religion, every human has a global citizenship. The unimaginable atrocities that took place during the Shoah were a shocking reminder that the world has seemed to forget that humankind is one. The unity of human beings is not a new issue to humankind. Since the beginning of recorded history, there have been divides between people of all race, sex, and class. The divides have become strong enough to the point where they lead to wars and mass murders. Many ask themselves why civilizations have repeatedly built themselves upon separation. Perhaps greed, power, or ego? The question has not been answered to this day. A degree of divide between people is natural and can be beneficial, however at the moment when one stops caring about others, or regards them as sub-human, atrocities and injustices begin to take place.

The idea of global citizenship and a unity of humankind is not easily digested by many people. In western society at least, for as advanced as one may think it is, there is a lack of compassion between people. The divide between the rich and the poor is becoming greater. The split of different religions is becoming stronger. And the indifference that one feels to another is ever more concerning. The idea that one human being is less of a human than another is where most of this prevalent indifference and prejudice stems. In less developed nations, the indifferent feelings between one person to another is often embedded even stronger in popular belief. The sheer lack of compassion can be seen in populations from every country, and its severity is increasingly concerning. Just as the Nazis saw the Jews as sub-human, vast amounts of the global population see others as “less” than them.

Indifference itself is never the sole reason of genocide and injustice, however it plays a crucial role in the severity of these crimes. One does not need a large amount of support to commit

evil, however it is easy to do incredible harms if there is no backlash from the general population. The lack of interest and compassion from one man to another very quickly leads to silence. This very silence paves the road to an allowance of whatever injustices and murder take place. This lack of backlash within a general population or even the entire globe rots at the trust and strength that humanity should hold as one. The Shoah is a clear example of how the lack of compassion from other nations, and each citizen of those countries, allowed Hitler to carry out his plans without considerable interruption. The same principles can be applied to any genocide, such as the Cambodian Genocide, Holodomor, and Rwandan Genocide.

All genocides in modern history share the same characteristic. They could have all been stopped by the global community if it came together to fight for the freedom and lives of the citizens of the troubled nations. The global community repeatedly did not unify in order to combat the horrendous injustices. Many nations create excuses time and time again, however in reality there is no excuse to ignore other people's suffering, especially when it is on a grand scale. Not only do individuals often feel indifferent to others, but nations as a whole can normalize these feelings within a large population.

There is a line that must be crossed for any mass genocide to take place. Genocides never emerge out of nowhere, there is always a regime, or even a single person behind it all. When the perpetrator becomes supported by the government, or becomes the government all together, the entire social and political web becomes destroyed. This leaves room for unimaginable injustices to take place. When the perpetrator controls the governing body of a nation, there is no longer a way for the population to properly defend itself. The changing of laws, and unjust use of the military essentially traps the population in a place that they once felt safe in. Governments are a necessary

body needed for any functioning society. Governments control and regulate most affairs, and because of the sheer power of a government, every precaution must be taken in order to prevent it from becoming corrupt. This is no easy task, as even in 2015 in today's society there are many governments of extreme corruption located on all continents of the world.

Indifference can be related back to government rule. Just as developed countries during World War II did not fight against Germany's Nazi regime, citizens in Germany did not stand up for their fellow Jewish, homosexual, Roma, and disabled neighbors. They felt indifferent to those who were being treated like vermin. Many did not have enough compassion in their hearts to help. This is a minor issue if only a small proportion of the population houses this indifference, but when an overbearing majority of a population does, the serious consequences quickly unfold.

A part of what makes a human is the ability to learn from one's mistakes. Humanity as a whole often learns from its mistakes. However, on the subject of power, prejudice, and indifference, humanity has not been able to learn from the past. *Zachor*: Remember; as they say, if no one remembers, humanity is sure to quickly repeat the mistakes from the past, to never learn from its faults. Modern civilization is far from perfect, but every person who learns and remembers past injustices is more likely to protect and fight against future injustices. The world is far from fair and equal in many parts. Change must be created. From the Shoah, it is easy to see how many parallels are taking place in inhumane countries like Syria. The powerful lessons from the Shoah of the extreme potential of indifference, and the mutilation of a healthy social construct and government are present in today's society. These lessons should be learned by humanity, taught to future generations, and used as protective education against future genocides happening around the world.