

Ultranationalism and Crimes Against Humanity

Social Studies 20-1

Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

On August 6, 1945, during World War II, an American B-29 bomber dropped the world's first deployed atomic bomb over the Japanese city of Hiroshima. The explosion wiped out 90 percent of the city and immediately killed 80,000 people; tens of thousands more would later die of radiation exposure. Three days later, a second B-29 dropped another A-bomb on Nagasaki, killing an estimated 40,000 people. Japan's Emperor Hirohito announced his country's unconditional surrender in World War II in a radio address on August 15, citing the devastating power of "a new and most cruel bomb."



One of the atomic bombs, codenamed "Little Boy" was dropped over Hiroshima on August 6th. The bomb, which detonated with an energy around 15 kilotons of TNT, was the first nuclear weapon deployed during war time.

Timeline

- May 1945 – Germany surrenders and WW2 is over in Europe, but Japanese troops are still fighting in the Pacific
- Fall 1945 – American leaders are preparing to invade Japan
- **Why the bombs? Many Americans believed the Japanese were so dedicated that they would never surrender... if they fight until the end, million of Japanese, as well as thousands of Americans will die.**
- August 6, 1945 – the United States drops an atomic bomb on Hiroshima
- August 9, 1945 – the United States drops a second bomb on Nagasaki



Such was the ferocity of the blast, eerie shadows of incinerated humans were left imprinted on steps, pavements and walls. The haunting impressions were caused by the heat of the explosion, which changed the colour of surfaces – hence the outline of bodies and objects that absorbed some of the blast.



Left: The skeleton of a Japanese victim is found in 1945 after the flesh was cooked off the bones by the heat of the blast.

Right: A damaged cross lies in the devastation after the atom bomb was dropped on Nagasaki in 1945.



A Japanese baby sits cries in the rubble following the explosion in Hiroshima on Aug. 6, 1945.

- More than 90% of the population of central Hiroshima perished. Almost all the families of the evacuees died; only six to 11-year-olds and the infirm had been evacuated.
- Large numbers of people continued to die for months afterward from the effects of burns, radiation sickness, and other injuries, compounded by illness and malnutrition. In both cities, most of the dead were civilians.
- Monitoring of nearly all pregnancies in Hiroshima and Nagasaki began in 1948 and continued for six years. Birth Defects among the children of atomic-bomb Survivors significant increased or other untoward pregnancy outcomes was seen among children of survivors.



A man with burns over his entire body is treated at the Army Transport Quarantine Station on Ninoshima Island. This man was exposed within 1 kilometer of the hypocenter of the atom bomb dropped on Aug. 6, 1945.



A victim of the Hiroshima bombing displays his wounds for the camera in 1945.



Sumiteru Taniguchi is treated for horrific burns he suffered in 1945 from the bomb dropped on Nagasaki.



Students attend class in a bombed-out Hiroshima classroom, one year following the atomic blast.

Discussion Questions

- What do you feel when you look at pictures of the destruction of Hiroshima?
- Invade Japan or drop the atomic bombs? Were these the only alternatives available to American leaders? Was there any other way WW2 could have been ended quickly?
- Was dropping the bombs an appropriate response to Japanese ultranationalism?
- Was dropping the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki an act of ultranationalism?



“Hate as a nearly limitless ability to dehumanize its victims, shutting down the most basic human capacities for sympathy and compassion.”



Key Concepts

- Genocide
- Crimes Against Humanity
- War Crimes
- Ethnic Cleansing

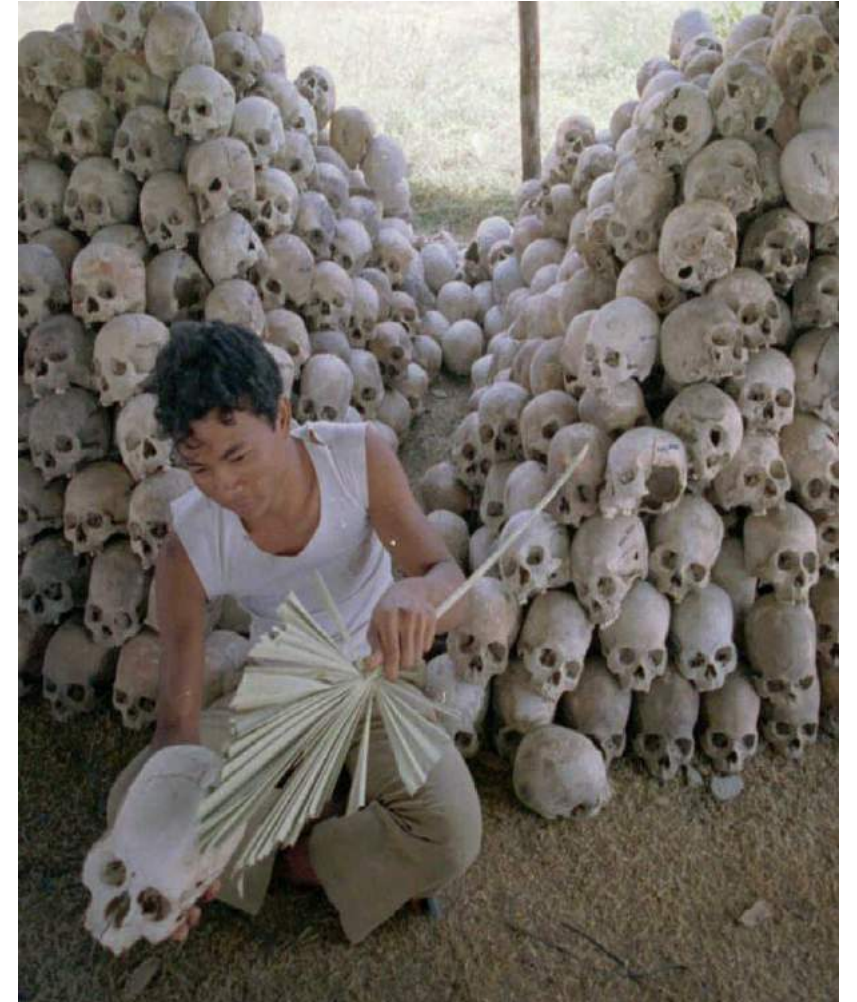
Crimes Against Humanity

Widespread or systematic attacks against a civilian population – murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, imprisonment, torture, rape or sexual slavery, enforced disappearance of persons, and the crime of apartheid.

Mass Grave

The exhumation of the Killing Fields at Choeung Ek in 1980 by the People's Republic of Kampuchea was one of the first concrete proofs to the outside world that something terrible had happened in Democratic Kampuchea (the Cambodian State during totalitarian rule).

A man cleans a skull near a mass grave at the Chaung Ek torture camp run by the Khmer Rouge in this photo.



Genocide

The killing of members of a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; and deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of the life calculated to bring about its physical destruction.

Mass Grave

Rwandan genocide survivors looking over the bodies of their relatives killed and buried in a mass grave during the 1994 100-day massacre.



Ethnic Cleansing

A term used to make more socially acceptable the murder or expulsion of an ethnic nation from a territory.

Islamic State fighters invaded Iraq, and waged a systematic ethnic-cleansing campaign against the Yazidi community. This included mass executions, forced religious conversions and widespread sexual violence. These attacks resulted in the massacre of Yazidi men, women and children.

Remember that genocide is a process, not an event. The continued suffering, fear and uncertainty in the Yazidi community show that the genocide process is ongoing. Many remain trapped in camps in northern Iraq. Yazidis in these camps live in weather-worn tents without adequate access to food, water, electricity, education or opportunities to work. They also lack basic health care, including psychological support to aid in trauma recovery.



War Crimes

Wilful killing, torture, or inhuman treatment wilfully causing great suffering; and intentionally directing attacks against a civilian population or against those who are involved in a humanitarian or peacekeeping missions.

The UN experts investigated a coalition air strike on a bus carrying children in August 2018. The UK, US, France and Iran may be complicit in possible war crimes in Yemen over their support for parties to the conflict there.



Where do these definitions come from? They are written by the International Criminal Court, a permanent court that was conceived by the UN in 1998 and supported by many countries, including Canada. Why is it important to have definitions? With specific legal definitions of these crimes, the ICC can both try and judge people accused of “the most serious crimes of international concern.”

How can Ultrationalism Cause Crimes Against Humanity?

It starts off with...

- Racism
- Segregation
- Exclusion
- Forceful Relocation
- Denying Rights
- Restriction of Movement
- Blame

Which leads to...

- Destruction of Culture
- Deportation
- Genocide
- Crimes Against Humanity
- War Crimes

Wait...how can this happen...Is this legal?

YES!

A country can approve these crimes and create policies that encourage them...

Can you think of any examples of countries who have done this... in the past or currently?

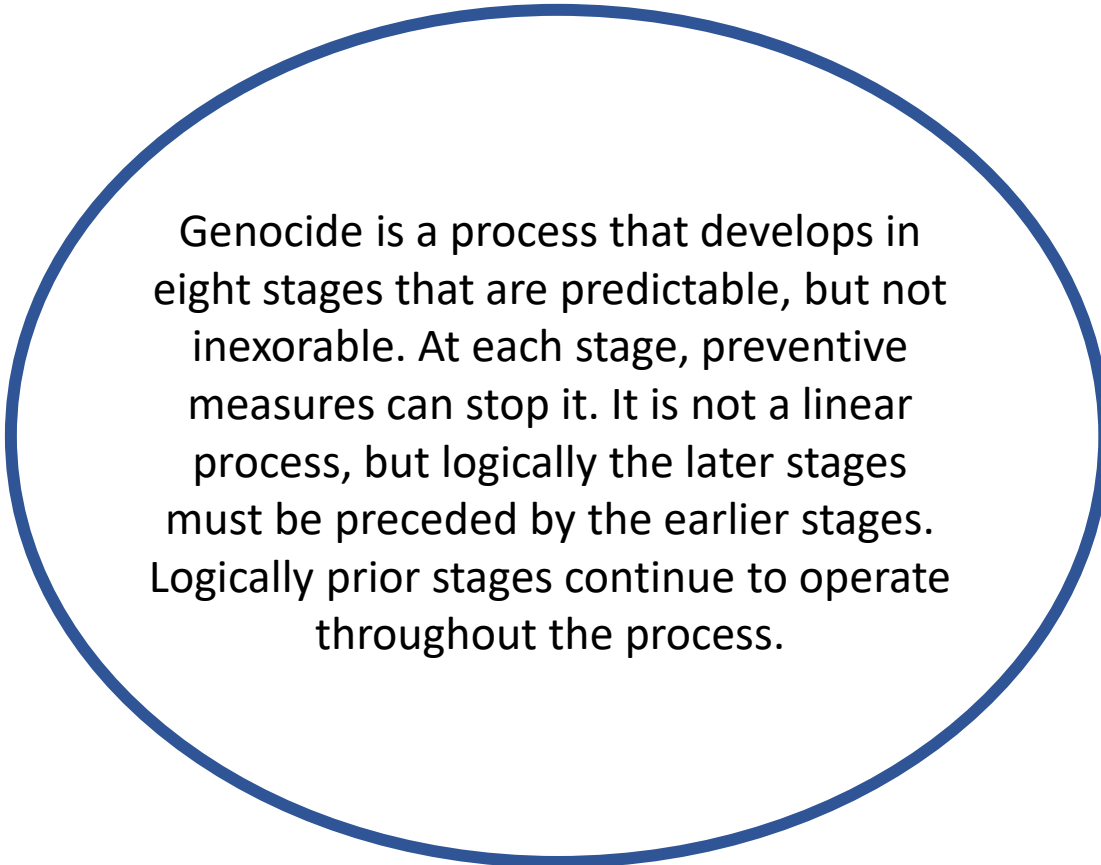
It is our job as educated and informed citizens to understand history and use what we've learned from the past to recognize injustices and stand up for each other to prevent these types of atrocities.

“Those who do not remember
the past are condemned to
repeat it ”



Eight Stages of Genocide

1. Classification
2. Symbolization
3. Dehumanization
4. Organization
5. Polarization
6. Preparation
7. Extermination
8. Denial



Genocide is a process that develops in eight stages that are predictable, but not inexorable. At each stage, preventive measures can stop it. It is not a linear process, but logically the later stages must be preceded by the earlier stages. Logically prior stages continue to operate throughout the process.

Eight Stages of Genocide

1. **Classification:** People are divided into "them and us"
2. **Symbolization:** Giving names or other symbols to the classifications. This can also be done through colors or dress.
3. **Dehumanization:** One group denies the humanity of the other group. Members of it are equated with animals, vermin, insects or diseases.
4. **Organization:** Genocide is always organized, usually by the state, though sometimes informally or by terrorist groups. Special army units or militias are often trained and armed. Plans are made for genocidal killings.
5. **Polarization:** Extremists drive the groups apart. Hate groups broadcast polarizing propaganda. Laws may forbid intermarriage or social interaction.

Eight Stages of Genocide

- 6. Preparation:** Victims are identified and separated out because of their identity. Death lists are drawn up. Members of victim groups are forced to wear identifying symbols. Their property is expropriated. They are often segregated into ghettos, forced into concentration camps, or confined to a famine-struck region and starved.
- 7. Extermination:** The the mass killing legally called “genocide.” It is “extermination” to the killers because they do not believe their victims to be fully human.
- 8. Denial:** It is among the surest indicators of further genocidal massacres. The perpetrators of genocide dig up the mass graves, burn the bodies, try to cover up the evidence and intimidate the witnesses. They deny that they committed any crimes, and often blame what happened on the victims. They block investigations of the crimes, and continue to govern until driven from power by force, when they flee into exile.

“If we bear all this suffering and if there are still Jews left when it is over, then Jews, instead of being doomed, will be help up as an example”

Anne Frank

