

Holocaust vs Genocide

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This discussion will challenge participants to expand the scope of memory beyond the basic themes of victimhood and resistance that have come to mark traditional Holocaust remembrance. It will guide participants to make use of these expanded approaches in order to develop a set of responsibilities and obligations to act in the face of injustices in the current day.

The discussion will first ask participants to consider the Holocaust in comparison with the definition of Genocide developed by Raphael Lemkin. With this in mind, participants will be asked how the Holocaust (and other acts of genocide) conform or differ from this definition.

The discussion will move on to discuss what means of dissent were employed or could have been employed to stop the Holocaust, and whether or not the feelings that this conversation raises could or should drive us to act in instances of injustice we see around us today.

During this conversation, the primary duty of the host is to create a harmonious, accepting environment, enabling self-reflection and sharing by the participants. We also expect the host to be attentive to the participant's needs and interests, deviating from the prescribed discussion plan as feels natural.

Stage Two:

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Questions to further discussion:

- ▼ Does this definition speak to the events of the Holocaust?
 - ▼ Is there anything about the Holocaust that this definition does not cover?
 - ▼ Alternatively, is anything included in this definition that is beyond the scope of the Holocaust?
- ▼ Does anything about his definition surprise you?
- ▼ Does it matter that this concept was developed by someone Jewish?
- ▼ How does having a definition of genocide change memory of the Holocaust?
 - ▼ Does it change the way we understand the uniqueness of the Holocaust and the Jewish experience in particular? Would it matter?
- ▼ Should/Can Holocaust Memorial Day include other memories of atrocities?
 - ▼ Does their inclusion help us understand the Holocaust or might their inclusion take away from understanding our experience as victims?
 - ▼ (If the group comes to a consensus that including them would be useful/is the right thing to do)
 - ▼ How can we mobilize our experiences as victims to speak out against similar acts of violence we witness today?
 - ▼ (If the group is less interested in including other events)
 - ▼ What about the Jewish experience requires our own unique response?
 - ▼ How do we make sure other communities of victims are able to process their experiences as well as we can?
 - ▼ Do we still have any unique responsibility to act when we witness this kind of events today? What might it be?

Stage One:

2

Definition of Genocide - Rafael Lemkin (1944)

(Rafael Lemkin was an American Jewish jurist whose definition of Genocide has become the one most relied upon in International Law circles, developed in response to the Armenian Genocide, Holocaust and Holodomor. It was first used in a legal context to convict perpetrators of the Rwandan Genocide in 1998)

"Genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;*
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;*
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;*
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;*
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group."*