

CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

History teaches us nothing if it doesn't teach us that human beings have a great capacity for abusing other human beings. When this abuse is severe enough, and moves beyond the mistreatment of a few individuals, we call it a crime against humanity. Crimes against humanity generally refer to any large-scale atrocity committed against a group of innocent human beings. They are not crimes of passion, they are crimes of precision. They are not the result of accidental, momentary impulses, they are thought out and rationalized. The scale of such crimes cannot be carried out by individuals. They require the cooperation and consent of many, many people, and this is exactly what history shows us. The most notorious example, of course, is the Jewish Holocaust, in which six million European Jews were executed for their racial heritage.

In 1943, Raphael Lemkin, a Polish-Jewish lawyer, coined the term "genocide" in an effort to more specifically describe this Nazi attempt to annihilate whole people groups. The word "genocide" combines the Greek word for race (geno) with the Latin word for killing (cide). The Nuremberg trials, which concluded in 1946, used the term "genocide" in their indictment against top Nazi officials who were there convicted for "crimes against humanity". In 1948, the United Nations officially made genocide an international crime at the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. The Convention defined genocide as any of a series of acts designed to "destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group." The acts listed include among others, causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group, imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group or forcibly transferring children out of the group.

Since then, the term "genocide" has been applied to many other historic and contemporary crimes against humanity. In some instances, such as Pol Pot's Cambodian genocide, the victims have been targeted for non-racial reasons. This broadening definition of genocide is reflected in Webster's New World Encyclopedia:

gen·o·cide - n.

The deliberate and systematic destruction of a national, racial, religious, political, cultural, ethnic, or other group defined by the exterminators as undesirable.

Webster's New World Encyclopedia, Prentice Hall General Reference, 1992

Such definition, in fact, is broad enough to include abortion, and some pro-life groups have made a compelling case that abortion is genocide. Abortion is certainly deliberate and systematic. There is nearly one abortion for every two live births in America. Abortions are performed in a vast network of clinics around the country, almost 4,000 a day, 1.3 million a year, and more than 40 million since abortion was legalized in 1973. Furthermore, abortion targets a very specific group of human beings: unwanted, unborn children, a victim class that is defined by the pro-abortion mantra, "Every child, a Wanted Child". Their "final solution" for unwanted, unborn children is abortion.

While the appropriateness of calling abortion "genocide" depends on what definition of genocide you are using, it is a plain and simple fact that abortion is the systematic destruction of millions of human beings. Genocide or not, abortion, like the Jewish Holocaust and like the mistreatment of native and

African-Americans, is a phenomena which dehumanizes a group of human beings so as to justify their elimination. This nation, and the world as a whole, has a sad legacy of dehumanizing people who have something we want or get in our way.

The reason that some people take such offense at comparing abortion to past crimes against humanity is the same reason that the white establishment of America was scandalized when Dr. Martin Luther King compared the abuse of black Americans to the Holocaust. It is easy to condemn crimes that are far away (either by distance or time), it is much harder to condemn them when they sit right in your back yard. Abortion supporters are infuriated at the notion that abortion is comparable to the Holocaust because they incessantly argue that the unborn aren't people. This is exactly the same argument that is always made to justify crimes against humanity. *They're not really people.* This is what Hitler said. This is what America said when it used to count blacks as 3/5 of a person. If we can't compare atrocities past to atrocities present, then the term "never again" loses all it's meaning.

At the end of the day, if the unborn are people (and they are), then abortion is not only comparable to past crimes against humanity, it is, in fact, the greatest holocaust of all.