

WHAT MAKES THE HOLOCAUST A UNIQUELY UNIQUE GENOCIDE?

Meri Kraja

Justice Department, Faculty of Law, “WisdomUniversity”, Tirana, Albania.
e-mail: merikraja@yahoo.it

Abstract

The legacy of the last century is marred by tragic events where human rights were violated and the international community failed to respond adequately. More than a half-century has passed since the end of World War II, and interest in the Holocaust remains greater than ever. The murdered of European Jews – which many scholars and others call simply “the Holocaust”, is perhaps the one genocide of which every educated person has heard. We are living in a new world; it offers new tools to keep the memory, to learn and teach about the past. This impact is expressed in the diverse debates about the Holocaust. This paper aims to analysed the question: Is the Holocaust “uniquely unique”? Or, to put another way, was the murder of the six million Jews an exceptional event that it cannot be compared to any other atrocity committed in human history? Was Rwanda, “uniquely unique”? The question of the "uniqueness" of the Holocaust has itself become a unique question. The Latin descriptive term, often used in law, for such an event or occurrence is to call it “sui generis”. It was only in the case of the Jews that vast factories were constructed and managed with the sole purpose of killing trainload after trainload of people. This paper aims at giving a description for the contemporary debate about the uniqueness of the Holocaust. This problem is also related to another debate: what other mass killings in human history, both ancient and contemporary, should likewise be called “genocide.” The question is whether the Jewish Holocaust is “Sui generis”–that is, “uniquely unique”? It is difficult to think of another historical genocide where the perpetrators had a grand plan to “ingather” and then kill all the targeted victim population from wherever they were in the world. Among the questions asked are: was the Holocaust so dissimilar to other historical genocides that it makes the Holocaust unique in history?

Keywords: *unique, europe, holocaust, genocide, Jews.*