The Weight of Words

Construction and Implications of Genocide Discourse in Bosnia and Sudan
Century of Genocide

- **Armenian Genocide** 1915-1918 - 1,500,000 Deaths
- **Ukraine Famine** 1932-1933 - 7,000,000 Deaths
- **Nanking Massacre** 1937-1938 - 300,000 Deaths
- **Holocaust** 1938-1945 - 6,000,000 Deaths
- **Cambodia Genocide** 1975-1979 - 2,000,000 Deaths
- **Rwanda** 1994 - 800,000 Deaths
- **Bosnia Genocide** 1992-1995 - 200,000 Deaths
- **Darfur, Sudan** Feb. 2003 - Present - 400,000 + deaths (and counting)
Raphael Lemkin

- Studied Linguistics
- Interest in Armenian Genocide
- Refugee - fled Poland during Holocaust, taught in the U.S.
- Struggled to convince others of horrors of the Holocaust
The “Kodak” Inspiration

- Short
- Unlikely to be mispronounced
- Unique
“GENOCIDE”

- Greek derivative “GENO” - “race”
- Latin derivative “CIDE” from “Caedere” - “killing”
“…the role of the third world is usually to have a large number of them being killed. Like I don’t think Indians and Africans exist in terms of news value here in units of less than about 10,000.”

-Alexander Cockburn
Narratives

- Ethnic rivalries/hatred
- Long-standing conflict
- “African” problems
- INEVITABLITY
Bosnia- background
“Ethnic Cleansing”

- Massacres
- Plundering of villages
- Rape Camps
Language Used

- “ethnic cleansing”
- “tremendous humanitarian problems”
- “civil-war”
- “nightmare”
- “tragedy”
- “ancient rivalries”
City of Ancient Hatreds?

Multiculturalism

Tolerance

Citizenship
“Genocide is big because it carries the Nazi label, which sells well. “Ethnic cleansing” is the next-best (though far behind) because it goes with Bosnia, which was the last big-story European massacre. But simple killing is boring, especially in Africa.”

- Gerard Prunier, “Darfur: The Ambiguous Genocide”
Sudan - background

- Conflict over resources and identities
- Rebellion led by SLA
- Violent reaction by government
- Mass displacement and migration of 2 million Darfurians.
Since Rwandan genocide, notion of "tribal hatred" has stuck
Framed all discourse on genocide
Offers explanation lacking in essential history
“‘Never again’ meant nothing more than: Never again would Germans kill Jews in Europe in the 1940s.”

- David Rieff
www.darfurscores.org