

Reminder: Children and Nation: Forcible Child Transfer and the Genocide Convention through Historical and Contemporary Lenses

Announcement published by Edita Gzoyan on Friday, December 6, 2019

Type:

Conference

Date:

June 24, 2020 to June 26, 2020

Location:

Armenia

Subject Fields:

Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies, Human Rights

Long before the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child entered into force in 1990, children were already regarded by the international community as a key component of societal and cultural wellness and survival. For instance, in 1948, children were explicitly included as a key insight of the newly minted Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (CPPCG). Article 2(e) of the Genocide Convention declares that forcible child transfer committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group as such, amounts to genocide. The inclusion of the forcible child transfer clause in the Genocide Convention was connected with the vulnerability of children, their “dependence, futurity, and malleability” as well as the destructive consequences of this practice for the viability of group survival.

Forcible child transfer with the intent to destroy a group features abundantly in the history and ongoing contemporary challenges of many societies. As several examples demonstrate, this practice is tightly bound into the processes of conquest and of colonization whereby children are targeted. For instance, a blood tax, *Devshirme*, in the Ottoman Empire, whereby young Christian boys were kidnapped, converted to Islam and raised as Muslims is mentioned as one of the early examples of forcible child transfer. This phenomenon culminated during the Armenian Genocide, resulting in the forced transfer and Islamization of dozens of thousands of Armenian children. Further, in Australia, Canada and the United States, thousands of Indigenous children were stolen from their families and communities for absorption and westernization. In another example, during 1920-1970s, the Swiss removed Roma children for the same purpose and starting from 1920s, Indigenous Siberian children were removed and placed in distant schools in the Soviet Union for Russification. Another large-scale program was implemented during the Second World War when “racially valuable” children, mainly Polish, were forcibly removed by the Nazis from the occupied eastern lands to Germany for their Germanization. And finally, the forcible abduction of Greek children by Soviet states in the 1940s was the case study behind the initiation of Article 2 (e) of the CPPCG.

As these examples demonstrate, the purpose and practice of forcible child removal is a global phenomenon with a deep history. As such, we welcome papers that explore various aspects of 19th - 21st century forcible child transfers with the Genocide Convention as a touchpoint. We invite academics, museum and memorial professionals, archivists and educators to participate in this

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international conference.

Professor Manfred Nowak, Independent Expert leading the United Nations Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty

Professor Debórah Dwork, Founding Director, Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Inaugural Rose Professor of Holocaust History, Clark University

Important Information:

Dates: June 24, 2020 – June 26, 2020

Location: Yerevan, Armenia

Conference Fees: Early bird (before March 15): USD\$150 Late registration (after March 15 and before April 30): USD\$200

REGISTRATION FOR SUBMISSION OF ABSTRACTS CLOSES: 11:59pm (GMT+4) Sunday December 15th (participants will be advised of the success or otherwise of their submission by early February 2020.)

Please submit the following to the conference organizers at childandnationconf@gmail.com:

- A title and 250 word abstract: please do **NOT** attach your name or contact details to this submission as the papers will be sent to the conference reviewers for a blind review.
- A **separate** document with:
 - The title of your paper
 - Your full name
 - Your affiliation
 - Your email address
- A brief biography of no more than 200 words (no CVs please).

Contact Info:

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