

Genocides are bred in a cesspool of contradictions. Their perpetrators thrive in inconsistencies, using them to build power with horrifying ease. The Holocaust, for example, was carried out by a majority Protestant German public that was fed contradictory lies until it became one itself. Propaganda othered the Jewish race, a term that directly conflicts with Judaism's classification as an ethno religion, and led to the segregation, incarceration, and murder of the Jewish people (Friedländer 7). In conducting this genocide, the Nazis became a group of murderous Christians, abandoning their faith's peaceful values while still holding claim to their religious identity. The terrifying effectiveness contradictory propaganda had in inciting the Holocaust can aid in the global understanding of Buddhist support for the persecution of the Rohingya in Myanmar.

In many ways, the messaging in Myanmar surrounding the Rohingya mirrors that surrounding the victims of the Holocaust. The Tatmadaw's justification of the mass persecution and murder of the Rohingya is riddled with contradictions. For example, they target the group because of their status as Bengali immigrants. The Rohingya, indigenous to Myanmar's Rakhine State, are neither Bengali nor immigrants (Williams & Edge). This blatant and contradictory falsehood is analogous to the Nazi propaganda that stripped Jewish and Roma Europeans of their national identities.

Perhaps the one of the scariest parallels between the Holocaust and the Rohingya Crisis is how much of the justification of mass persecution and murder has been rooted in religion. In both situations, religion bred a discriminatory sense of ethnonationalism among its followers. While the Nazis promoted the idea of a pure Aryan race of Christians, the Tatmadaw currently promotes a pure Buddhist state of Myanmar (Rowand & Artinger).

Homogeneity was and is the goal of the two militaries, respectively. This chauvinism was created from the antagonization of the victims' religions. In Germany, Judaism was viewed as a threat to Christianity (Friedländer 61). The Nazis weakened the moral value of their religion that preaches love and kindness by using it to justify hate. Similarly, the Islamic Rohingya are considered a threat to the Buddhist nationalists in Myanmar. The nationalists justify the atrocious actions of the Tatmadaw with the promise of strengthening Buddhist principles by freeing their nation from Islamic influence (Rowland & Artinger). When members of a belief system founded upon peace and freedom desire power to such a point where they support the removal of 700,000 people from their homes, mass rape, and mass murder, it is clear they have lost sight of the beliefs they try to protect (Williams & Edge).

In order to protect religious minorities while maintaining the core positive values of all faiths, the idea of a secular education on religious diversity should be promoted by international institutions. This way, citizens of the world will understand that most faiths preach similar ideals, debunking the myth that the prosperity of one religious group will always come at the cost of another. This would leave the masses less vulnerable to the fear-mongering of the few, preventing further persecution.

Bibliography

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