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## Book Review (reviewing Patricia Marchak, *Reigns of Terror* (2004))

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with previously unavailable documents about the genocide, Hinton's book provides a personalized, detailed understanding of life under the Khmer Rouge.

Though Hinton presents a compelling set of narratives, his conclusions are not entirely novel. The findings of Stanley Milgram's obedience experiments, for example, have been applied to acts of genocide numerous times before, as the author does here. The author is careful, however, to seek explanations for genocide beyond the help that Milgram and his obedience experiments offer. As Hinton notes, Milgram himself was taciturn about extending his findings to situations of such vast wrongdoing. Hinton contends that perpetrator motivation largely stems from the movement's creation of a diseased, threatening "other"; from the leadership's ability to funnel social, political, and economic unrest toward their own ends; and from the mounting insecurities and fear induced by the most authoritarian of regimes. None of these are entirely new ideas, and it is when Hinton tries to draw sweeping (and familiar) conclusions that the study starts to falter.

Thus the real power of the book lies in the study of Cambodian social structure, embrace of Buddhism, and familial norms. By grounding his study in the everyday details of Cambodian society, Hinton's ethnography helps us understand the Khmer Rouge genocide from the perspective of those who wielded the knives and guns. Though the horror of genocide can never be excused, it can be understood in more nuanced ways; Hinton makes a very important contribution to developing a holistic understanding of the roots of the genocide in Cambodia.

—Stacy Humes-Schulz

*Reigns of Terror.* By Patricia Marchak. Montreal, Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003. Pp. 306. \$75.00, cloth.

Genocide is politics by other means. Although Carl von Clausewitz is never mentioned in *Reigns of Terror*, this paraphrase of his famous maxim describes the central tenet of Patricia Marchak's latest book. With exceeding breadth, Marchak analyzes the conditions under which states commit acts of violence—in particular, "crimes against humanity"—against their own people. Informing and controlling her theory is a stalwartly Marxian and Weberian view of the institution of the state, which results in an original, albeit not wholly persuasive, analysis of state violence.

*Reigns of Terror* is divided into two parts, offering two organizational approaches to the material. Part One assesses various factors previously raised as causes of state violence, culminating in Marchak's own theory in Chapter Six. Part Two describes and reviews particular cases of crimes against humanity. Those considered are the Ottoman Empire 1915–16 (Armenian genocide); U.S.S.R. 1932–33 (Eastern Ukraine); Nazi Germany 1933–45; Burundi and

Rwanda 1972–95; Chile 1973–88; Cambodia 1975–79; Argentina 1976–83; and Yugoslavia 1990–94. These case studies include information about both the historical background of these episodes and the violent periods themselves. While the summaries are not comprehensive, they provide a good context for a reader who lacks expertise regarding one or more of these cases.

The heart of Marchak's project is her study of state violence theory in Part One. Marchak frames her analysis by the metaphor of the "Janus State." Janus, meaning "opening" or "gate," was a Roman God with two faces. Just as Janus simultaneously looks outside the city and within it, Roman armies marched out to conquer new populations but also recognized a duty to maintain order at home. Marchak is more interested in Janus's inward face and the circumstances under which states use force at home.

Marchak argues that states exist only because they are effective instruments of maintaining extant inequalities and hierarchies within their populations. This purpose underlies all state actions. According to Marchak, crimes against humanity are no different than any other acts of government. When internal or external circumstances (such as severe environmental problems or foreign economic influence) paralyze states, nonviolent governance becomes ineffectual and states turn to violence. Marchak asserts that this phenomenon threatens both old regimes with crumbling legitimacy and new regimes struggling to achieve their purported objectives.

Common theories about why states commit crimes against humanity focus on tensions arising from differences within a population, most notably those related to race, class, culture, and political views. Marchak does not dismiss these differences as irrelevant; however, she is skeptical of the causal link between these differences and violence. In her view, population differences merely present opportunities for state exploitation. In this vein, Marchak maintains that state ideologies can be consciously deployed to harness underlying divisions and breed the conformity necessary to embark on genocidal campaigns. Even though Marchak rejects population differences as the ultimate motivation, she is persuasive in her descriptions of a process through which states can transform ordinary citizens into instruments of violence.

Marchak argues that crimes against humanity are usually based on material concerns. She writes that "an overriding theme in human affairs is greed, which may be entirely personal, or displaced, on behalf of a collectivity." It is the almighty dollar (or mark, peso, or dinar as the case may be) that invigorates states to resort to heinous crimes in defense of the inequalities inherent in their political systems. While the number of pages dedicated to this claim may be few—most of Part One criticizes other theories of state violence—the state's inherent connection to inequality and the material motivation for crimes against humanity represent the intellectual hallmark of *Reigns of Terror*.

Marchak's material theory is intriguing, but the arguments she musters against other theorists are equally damaging to her. Marchak asserts that scholars who concentrate on race or politics as the cause of mass atrocities make

the fundamental error of mistaking correlation for causation. Yet her theory does not fare much better. Simply articulating a material motivation for state violence does not establish causation. The paucity of ink devoted to defending her argument is particularly problematic, especially given that some of her cases include states materially disadvantaged by their policies of violence (such as the case of Eastern Ukraine). Marchak should be commended for decoupling crimes against humanity and identity, but she must be viewed critically for only re-coupling the violence with materialism.

More generally, *Reigns of Terror* falls short of one of the main challenges facing scholarly works in this field—explaining why a particular set of factors (whether they be material or not) produce crimes against humanity only in certain states and only at certain times. A more complex analysis would allow for predictive theories about state violence and provide guidance to practitioners in international affairs. As almost an afterthought and with little commentary, Marchak briefly lists “necessary conditions” and “additional, but not necessary, conditions” that can combine to predicate crimes against humanity. Making such a list without then providing guidance leaves readers in the same position as when they began.

Patricia Marchak's *Reigns of Terror* is a good starting point for a reader new to the study of state violence or a scholar interested in an alternative explanation for this phenomenon. While her argument is not wholly persuasive, her parsing of various factors related to crimes against humanity—including the means by which states can manipulate these factors using ideology—is important in understanding and ultimately trying to prevent such heinous acts.

—Zachary D. Clopton