

BOOK REVIEW

Rockel, Stephen J. and Rick Halpern, eds. 2009. *Inventing Collateral Damage: Civilian Casualties, War, and Empire*. Toronto: Between the Lines. ISBN 9781897071120. Paperback: 39.95 CAN. Pages: 372.

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Inventing Collateral Damage: Civilian Casualties, War, and Empire, is an edited volume that grew out of a Spring 2004 conference entitled 'Collateral Damage: Civilian Casualties from Antiquity through the Gulf Wars,' held at the Munk Centre for International Studies, University of Toronto. The editors, Stephen J. Rockel and Rick Halpern had already been engaged in the study of post-colonial conflict, and the issues of race, labour, slavery, and empire in Africa and North America. Yet, the idea of the conference and the resulting volume emerged more immediately from events such as the 11 September 2001 attacks and various assaults on civilians in Afghanistan. The volume is as much about the present as it is about history, and calls for the historization of the term collateral damage as it traces its use. The approach followed throughout the volume is that one needs to adhere to a critical stance towards violence and the language used to justify its use in 'just' and 'unjust' wars and outside of the context of war.

In the book's introduction, Rockel engages in a comparative historical study of 'collateral damage,' a euphemism for civilian casualty that became part of everyday language in the nuclear age and particularly since the Vietnam War. Rockel's extensive and detailed introduction makes the reader aware of this euphemism's use to legitimize the illegitimate. He also provides a historical survey of civilian casualties (prior to the use of the term) during Antiquity, the Enlightenment phase of European history, in colonial and post-colonial conflicts, through the world wars of the 20th century and to the present day. Rockel also examines philosophical changes concerning war. Ultimately, he emphasizes the 'importance of working internationally to reduce civilian suffering' (76) in the light of contemporary events such as US air strikes in Afghanistan wiping out a wedding party in July 2008. Rockel's introduction stands as a highlight of the book.

The book is divided into five parts. The first part focuses on France and the USA. Brian Sandberg examines the atrocities and civilian casualties during the French wars of religion. Through a study of official correspondence, literary and art work, Sandberg notes the use of the rhetoric of rebellion to justify coercion and violence against civilians and that these wars were waged without consideration of the laws of war. The second article in this first part is on the American South in 1863-65. Scott Reynolds Nelson reinterprets the American Civil War as the 'inauguration of a series of wars of incarceration' (123). The strategy used by the Northern forces was repeated in the Plains Wars of the 1870s, the Anglo-Boer war, and in the colonial/imperial wars in the Philippines, Vietnam and beyond.

The second part of the book brings together articles dealing with planned attacks against noncombatants during the partition of Africa in the context of colonial domination with a study of the conquest of the Zulu kingdom (Jeff Guy), the South African war (Chris Madsen), and German East Africa 1885-1903 (Michael Pesek). The third section is devoted to empires and imperialism, and calls for an examination of collateral damage beyond the boundaries of military engagement. The section begins with Robert Gregg's examination of various historical theorizations within anthropology and economics; including Henry George's call for a progressive colonialism; Basil Thomson's presentation of the British empire as a 'modernization' regime, and Sir Roger Casement's emphasis on the victims of colonial oppression. Gregg considers the execution of the latter as speaking to the issue of collateral damage (185). This part also focuses on Japan's 1937 invasion of China (Timothy Brook), and presents an examination of how wars were covered in late 19th century Metropolitan illustrated magazines (Tom Gretton). Smita Tewari Jassal, studying narratives of lower caste (Mallah caste) heroes and resistance during colonial-era India, argues for a broadening of 'collateral damage' beyond civilian casualties to include 'collective punishment meted out to an entire social group,' making us think of our own contemporary racial profiling in the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 attacks that has been affecting entire populations that even remotely resemble the stereotyped Middle Easterner. Marlene Epp's article, which is the only article in the next section on sexual violence and war, highlights the rape of German Mennonite refugee women by Soviet forces during the Second World War. This is the thinnest and thus weakest section in the volume and does not incorporate recent studies on the subject.

The last section of the book focuses on civilian casualties from the Second World War onward. Sven Lindqvist's translated article starts with a reference to the British rhetoric of justification in the destruction of German cities. Lindqvist critically examines Mark Connelly's *Reaching for the Stars: A New History of Bomber Command in World War II* (I.B. Tauris, 2002) and Robin Neillands' *The Bomber War: Arthur Harris and the Allied Bomber Offensive 1939-1945* (John Murray Publishers, 2001) and finds these works to be based on revisionist history. Marc W. Herold examines the 1991 Gulf War, the NATO air attacks on Yugoslavia, and the early strikes in the Afghan war as the basis to construct an index of civilian casualties. He points out that '[t]he greater the share of precision weapons employed, the higher the rate of civilian casualties' (303).

The volume concludes with Natalie Zemon Davis's review of the volume and ends with a hope that 'the stories we tell will help to change norms for behaviour in many settings' (338).

Marilyn B. Young, as quoted on the cover of book, aptly recognizes the value of the volume and stresses that rarely has 'the violence of empire and civil war been so succinctly and powerfully summarized.' However, in spite its impressive depth, the volume lacks examples from the early phase of history. Civilians have always been victims of war. They were subject to raids in the absence of formal governments. Women and children were under siege as a hostage population starting with the early State societies. The volume's weakness is that it was based on a conference and hence includes a limited number of case studies. In particular, as noted above, the section on violence against women unfortunately contains only one chapter.