

Project Summary

Devorah West

Brown University

Mentor: Elisabeth Wood, Research Professor, Santa Fe Institute

War and conflict are prevalent throughout history both in the formation and the destruction of nations and empires. The preparations to mobilize a nation's population to fight a war are complex and difficult. Yet, through tools of propaganda and war rhetoric, countries are able to gain the support of their citizens. The escalation of war into genocide is of particular interest to me, for the thin line separating these two is grey and has become a critical feature of the twentieth century history. Working with Libby Wood, I will research and examine this phenomenon of genocide. Specifically examining the varying levels of sexual violence, I plan to do a comparative analysis of the genocide of the Jews in Nazi Germany to the 1996 Cambodia genocide. As Wood is currently researching, sexual violence greatly varies across and between different wars. I am interested in the extent to which this also holds true for genocide, and why there was relatively little sexual violence against the Jews in both the Nazi concentration and death camps. I will research and examine these puzzling differences drawing upon primary witness accounts as well as preexisting works concerning Nazi ideology, culture, and values in the different sectors of the Nazi regime.