

A New Proposal for a Worldwide Union of Genocide Victim Peoples - and All Caring People - On Behalf of a Right to Life of All People (R2L)

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A new proposal has been advanced to launch an international movement and organization devoted to the Right to Life of all human beings – R2L.

Israel Charny, a co-founder and a past president of the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) has proposed creating R2L! - A WORLDWIDE UNION OF GENOCIDE VICTIM PEOPLES – AND ALL CARING PEOPLE—ON BEHALF OF A RIGHT TO LIFE OF ALL PEOPLE.

Charny, longtime Executive Director of the Institute on the Holocaust and Genocide in Jerusalem, and now also Executive Director and Editor-in-Chief of GPN Genocide Prevention Now, a worldwide webmagazine with information about genocide and about organizations and professionals devoted to the study and prevention of genocide, presented the proposal in a speech in Athens, Greece to an International Conference, “Three Genocides, One Strategy,” devoted to the often neglected Assyrian and Greek Genocides that took place alongside the Armenian Genocide.

The proposal was received enthusiastically and the organizers of the conference, for whom this was a second conference and who plan a third meeting in Sweden in a continuing series in the coming years, announced that they were adopting the proposal for R2L and would devote active efforts to its development. The proposed concept of R2L is recognizable as a companion to the historic proposal of R2P or the Right to Protect, which was put forward by the former Foreign Minister of Australia among others, has been adopted by the United Nations and is considered by many a momentous breakthrough in human thinking and the value system of the international community. R2P creates a legal breakthrough concept that instead of countries being responsible not to intervene in the sovereignty/domestic affairs of other nations, each nation has a responsibility to intervene on behalf of saving human lives when it became clear that the government of another nation is failing to do so or itself is actively involved in mass killing.

R2L is a companion concept that asserts the inviolable right of every human being to live. R2L- a Worldwide Union of Genocide Victim Peoplee begins with the establishment of a movement by no less than victim peoples of past genocides, for who should be more sensitive than the peoples of past victims of genocide to the right of all living people to live? At the same time, the proposed organization is clearly intended for all people and invites participation from non-victim peoples as well. R2L proposes conducting an international cultural campaign on behalf of the sanctity of life and a commitment to protecting human life, with projects conveyed in the different languages of our world, through the various cultural forms known and trusted by different peoples, including religious leaders, folk artists, musicians, sport and military and musical heroes, and many more admired leaders in different cultures who will lend them contribute to such a longterm campaign. “The goal is to work towards R2L becoming a window into a far better world with less ethnic rivalries and less ethnic cleansing and genocide.”

Charny proposes that the R2L- Worldwide Union of Genocide Victim Peoples create a series of projects to further its goal of promoting greater acceptance in the world of a cardinal principle of every human being's right to life. Among proposed projects for R2L, Chany listed the mounting of a WORLD GENOCIDE SITUATION ROOM in museums of genocide of individual peoples, and a WORLDWIDE GENOCIDE EARLY WARNING SYSTEM on behalf of all human life. In both cases R2L as an international organization would undertake to contribute core materials to the museums of genocides and to the research centers undertaking to create an early warning system, Charny said that over the years he has proposed the idea of a World Genocide Situation Room to several genocide museums in the world, but in each case the directors have been so devoted to furthering knowledge of the specific genocide to which they were committed that they could not muster the will to devote energies and museum space to other peoples. R2L would help to establish and maintain a World Genocide Situation Room in each of many museums around the world that are devoted to a specific genocide.

"Amazingly, but then not at all surprisingly, I know of no Holocaust or genocide museum that has made a real transition from its dedicated presentation of the genocide with which it deals to the actual current and future threats of genocide in the world in which we are living," Charny said. "There is some exception in what was the Committee of Conscience and then the Academy for Genocide Prevention at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, but the work of this section of the US Holocaust Museum organization is limited and more important it is not really reflected in the museum experience for the everyday visitor."

Similarly, there have been many proposals and substantial theoretical work for a World Genocide Early Warning System, and some meaningful component scientific studies, but there has never been a large scale worldwide project anywhere. R2L could provide professional assistance and consultation to the development of such early warning systems in different institutions in the world.

The proposal for R2L was delivered in the course of a lecture by Charny on "The Psychology of Denying Other Victims: A Quest for Exclusivity and Superiority -- Disturbingly, Not Unlike Similar Motives in those who Commit Genocide." Thus, in the Armenian Genocide by the Ottoman Turks, the first major genocide of the 20th century, there were victims from the Assyrians (also Christians like the Armenians), Greek (also Christians), and Yezedi people (not Christians but also non-Moslems/Turks), altogether totaling several million in addition to the million to million and a half Armenians who were murdered, as well as more victims from other non-Turkish peoples. In the Holocaust, along with the Jews, there were several million more victims from the Roma (Gypsies), Russian POW's, Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, and mentally defective and disabled children, some of whom were executed in the same kinds of murder procedures used against the Jews. In both ethnic cases there are scholars who have assembled the larger picture, but overall there is a great deal of neglect and angry resistance in these ethnic communities and their institutions to recognizing the other victims fully and clearly.

"All of us, sons and daughters of our own people's genocide, and all of us students and scholars of

genocide who want a better world with far less mass killing are fully aware of the lying and obscenity of the deniers of established genocides," Charny said. We are alternately disgusted, outraged, and frightened by the continuing implications of these denials especially by a government, not only as continuing insults to intelligence and sensibility, but as totalitarian control of minds as well as a legitimization and threat of renewed and further violence and genocide by a government that allows itself to do whatever it wants to do in seeking power. But little do we allow ourselves to know that WE sons and daughters of our own people's genocide and students and scholars of genocide also engage in considerable denials, beginning with different degrees of omission and indifference and continuing with denials of evidence and relabeling of meanings, of the mass murders of any number of fellow victims who were killed right alongside of our people in a major genocide."