

(updated 10/16/01)

Samantha Power is the executive director of the *Carr Center for Human Rights Policy* (<http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/cchrrp/>) at Harvard University. From 1993-1996, Power covered the wars in the former Yugoslavia as a reporter for the US News and World Report and the Economist. In 1996 she worked for the International Crisis Group (ICG) as a political analyst. She is currently writing a book, "**A Problem from Hell**": **America and the Age of Genocide** (Basic Books, 2001), which examines U.S. responses to genocide since the Holocaust. She is a frequent contributor to the New Republic and edited, with Graham Allison, *Realizing Human Rights: Moving from Inspiration to Impact* (St. Martin's, 2000). She is a graduate of Yale University and Harvard Law School, and moved to the United States from Ireland in 1979.

Her recent article *Bystanders to Genocide* is a stunning account of the American government's handling of the Rwanda genocide.

Michael Kelly of The Atlantic Monthly comments:

For some time Samantha Power has been, as a war correspondent and as a human-rights lawyer, professionally thinking about murder on a mass scale. The past century has been a rich one for this particular field of inquiry: Hitler's Final Solution, Stalin's purges and forced famines, Pol Pot's re-education of Cambodia. A few years ago Power focused her thinking on one question that arises out of genocide—not why do such great evils happen but why are they allowed to happen? Why do decent people and decent governments, again and again, stand by and let the killers kill? Why does "Never again" so often turn into "Well, just this one last time"?

In writing a book to answer this question, Power has analyzed U.S. responses to the major genocides of the twentieth century — including the murder, in 1994, of some 800,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu by soldiers and volunteer civilian butchers controlled by the Hutu government in the African nation of Rwanda.

Power spent three years interviewing scores of the participants in the U.S. response to Rwanda, and she reviewed hundreds of pages of declassified documents pertaining to the response. The lessons she has unearthed apply not only to Rwanda and the Clinton Administration but to the larger question of genocide and bureaucratic response in general, and they are disturbing lessons. "What is most frightening about this story," Power writes of the U.S. failure in Rwanda, "is that it testifies to a system that in effect worked."

Full article (<http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/prem/200109/kelly>)

Related Links:

Children of Rwanda's Genocide **A New York Times photojournalism project**
(<http://www.nytimes.com/library/world/africa/index-rwanda-children.html>)

Leave None to Tell the Story **Human Rights Watch report on the genocide in Rwanda**
(<http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/rwanda/>)

***Holocaust and Genocide Studies On-line Resource at
Webster University***
(<http://www.webster.edu/%7Ewoolfm/holocaust.html>)