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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

exaggerated. Her article implies that no such cases of rape occurred in Bangladesh based on research, which has only lent an ear to Pakistani military officials and openly refused to acknowledge eyewitness accounts.

The testimonies go on. Donald Bleacher in his research titled *The politics of genocide scholarship: the case of Bangladesh* cites the investigation by the International Commission of Jurists in 1971, which indicates that what happened in '71 was indeed a genocide. The numbers vary according to research — the death toll ranges from one to three million; figures cite between 20,000 and 40,000 women being raped. Dr John E Rohde, who served in Bangladesh for the USAID, in his senate testimony reported of going to Dhaka University on March 29. He met a man who was "forced to drag the bodies outside, counted one hundred and three Hindu students buried there." That's just the body count of one night of killing. Reporter Sidney Schanberg of *The New York Times* met a missionary in Barisal who mentioned "over a thousand Hindus killed in one night" there.

But in spite of overwhelming evidence, Pakistan today denies and diminishes the extent of the brutality and asks of us to work towards better bilateral relations. Worse still are those in this country who echo the same thoughts — to foster love and forget all that is 'past'. And this is largely due to our own failure in preserving and promoting the study of our own history without ulterior motives that denials abound.

I, like my generation, have not seen the war. The wounds and deaths are second hand, they do not sting the same way as

they did Jahanara Imam when they killed her son, or the families of the freedom fighters, or the women raped and the intellectuals bayoneted. But what we do know is through what has been preserved, through the reports of Simon Dring and Anthony Mascarenhas and Sydney Schanberg, through the cables of Archer K Blood, and most importantly through the

a veil of political expediency, we must enable an atmosphere where history is not changed and distorted.

The attitude towards our history manifests in the attitudes we adopt towards the war crimes trial, in our daily actions in a country of people from more than one religion. And sadly, all the manifestations have not been positive.

destroy the Buddhist temples of Ramu, hate on other countries' cricket teams on social media, or pontificate on the need to let the past be the past.

If Germany had not come to terms with preserving their own history, preserving the history of those who died in the atrocities, then maybe today the death of 6 million Jews could be similarly denied —



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Rape was used as a device for instilling fear. Students were killed and buried in mass graves, and over 10 million refugees fled the borders to India.

testimonies of all who fought in the war.

Genocide denial is common throughout the world. The Jewish Holocaust did not receive the attention of researchers for the first two decades after the war. We already have people who have done dedicated work towards preserving what happened during the war. This is why history is important. We need to remember without

1971 saw the Bangladeshis portrayed as an 'other' that needed to be destroyed. And out of the war emerged the dream of a secular country, where Hindus were not another 'other', but a Bangladeshi who was the same as the others. Instead it seems our pride for what we are as Bangladeshis is brought out through racism when we wipe out Hindu temples,

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from outside and within. Instead when Israel's Prime Minister today distorts historical facts and accuses the Palestinian Grand Mufti of orchestrating the Holocaust, it is Germany who can stand up and acknowledge the truth of history. When our own nation thinks it better to forget and distort the past, then Pakistan's denials will no longer be needed.

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