The United Nations Genocide Convention was deeply entwined with the politics of race in early post World War II America. In 1951, a group of prominent African-American intellectuals and political activists, including W.E.B. DuBois and Paul Robeson, saw the Convention as an opportunity to address lynching in the American South. The result was a petition entitled *We Charge Genocide; The Crime of Government against the Negro People*, presented to the United Nations in December 1951. Despite its adoption by the United States in 1948, the Convention was not ratified until 1987. It was effectively blocked by Southern Senators, who feared an infringement of state’s rights and Jim Crow. Trapped in the politics of the Cold War, the Genocide Convention became a casualty of the confrontation between the African American experience of slavery, segregation, racial violence, and its origins in the immediate postwar experience of the crimes of Nazi Germany and the Holocaust.

**March 5, 2018 at 6:00 p.m.**

*Roemmele Global Commons, Williams Hall*

The Philip and Muriel Berman Center for Jewish Studies

**“We Charge Genocide”: American Racism, Memory, and the Genocide Convention in the Cold War**

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