Genocide

Rachel K. Fischer, Guest Columnist

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Genocide

Genocide, the deliberate elimination of a race, religious group, or gender, occurs more often than expected. Commonly known genocides include persecutions against the Cambodians, Rwandans, Armenians, and the European Jews; however, there are many lesser known attacks, including those against the Alevi Kurds of Turkey in 1937 and the Aboriginal Australians in the early 1900s. Here, Rachel K. Fischer has collected a suite of materials that are of use to academic and research libraries; however, many of these items should be considered for adoption by small and large public libraries as well. Though grim, the topic is important in American and international history. Fischer became interested in studying the Holocaust, genocide, and human rights as a child because of her Jewish background.—Editor

Genocide is an unfortunate tactic used in the conquest and colonization of lands and people. It is a form of massacre that constitutes ethnic cleansing, allowing the invading army to take control of the government. While readers may know about the Holocaust or have heard about the recent genocides in Rwanda and Darfur, it is not uncommon for them to be unaware of the genocide the Turkish committed against the Armenian, Greek, and Syrian Christians or the atrocities committed against Native Americans in both North and South America. Many cultures openly deny that genocide has occurred in their countries. The American lifestyle is so far removed from that of war torn countries, like the former Yugoslavia or certain regions in Africa that lack running water and electricity, that it can be difficult to comprehend what daily life there is like. The politics of intervention, or lack thereof, are controversial on an international level and are a primary topic of many of the recommended books here.

When selecting titles, it is important to expand one’s focus from the Jewish Holocaust and include all situations of genocide. Some universities have paved the way for future studies by creating genocide studies programs with the hope of being able to intervene and prevent future atrocities. Additionally, some libraries have sponsored genocide-focused special collections. Gendercide, the massacre of select genders, is less common. One example consists of women being raped to produce children while simultaneously being kept in concentration camps; men are killed. These scenarios occurred in Bosnia in the 1990s. Some cultures even appear to have escaped criminal prosecution for the genocide committed, such as the Indonesian massacres in East Timor, the Belgian massacres in Congo, or the German massacres committed by the Second Reich in Namibia.
The Alert Collector

The issue of genocide appears in both fiction and nonfiction. Fictional books about genocide include historical fiction, literature fiction, science fiction, and fantasy.

Nonfiction writings include history books, essays, and personal accounts, such as biographies and memoirs, some of which are published collectively as interviews. These accounts have originated from multiple perspectives, including those of the criminal, the victim, and the observing journalist or military agent. The recommendations here include suspenseful, wrenching accounts that are at times inspirational; many of these books have been made into films.

Genocide is an important topic in adult, young adult, and juvenile literature. The following items should prove useful to both teenagers and adults for both academic and personal studies. These books were chosen for their applicability to a variety of interdisciplinary topics and should be strongly considered as sources for classroom assignments. They can be used as sources for information about the cultural, historical, gender, and international politics and policies of genocide, including the roles that the United Nations and other international agencies play in these events. It is important that these events and individuals are never forgotten, and a library collection that honors these tragic events is one that a university and community can be proud of.

Nonfiction Books

General Resources


This collection of scholarly essays discusses the military interventions of the United States and United Nations. Articles include discussions of humanitarian aid, peacekeeping, and human rights as they relate to genocides in Yugoslavia, Rwanda, and East Timor.


This book contains essays by international scholars on genocides around the world including those in Armenia, Cambodia, Rwanda, North America, and Guatemala. They address political situations and ideologies and propose underlying themes to explain how genocide occurs. These expert perspectives are an excellent addition for any library collection.


The term gendercide was introduced in 1985 as a way to describe gender-selective mass murder. Jones offers interdisciplinary perspectives on war, history, and gender studies. This is one of the first books to include essays on the genocide of males.


Covering genocides from classical Greece to the present day, this history provides in-depth coverage of all major worldwide genocide events, including Nazi Germany, Stalin’s mass murders, Cambodia, and Rwanda. Due to its comprehensiveness, this book could be used as a textbook in an introductory genocide studies course or as a supplement to the textbook in a history or political science course.


The entire sub-Saharan region of Africa has been in turmoil following the Rwandan genocide of 1994, and this history book describes the many contemporary wars that have occurred there since then. It places the events of Rwanda within the context of the political situation of the entire region and describes how and why corruption in other parties and countries followed. It is an excellent resource for those libraries with an emphasis on African studies.

Armenia


Balakian was arrested, deported, and lived as a fugitive during the Armenian genocide. This memoir includes his observations of the horrible experiences suffered by the Armenians. It is an excellent resource for students interested in personal accounts related to the Armenian genocide and how the victims survived.


The authors interviewed one hundred survivors of the Armenian genocide, including members of their own family. The book includes personal accounts of how individuals survived as well as an analysis of political situations at the time. This is an excellent resource on coping with trauma and devastation.


This is one of the most up-to-date collections of essays on the Armenian genocide by Armenian and Turkish scholars. Many Armenians believe the facts related to this genocide have been denied or distorted over the years. This book will help readers understand the political situation within the Ottoman Empire as well as the variables that surrounded World War I.
Bosnia


As a foreign correspondent for the New York Times, Sudetic told the personal story of his wife’s family’s experience surviving the Bosnian genocide. The author’s narrative reaches back to the Battle of Kosovo in 1389. It is an excellent historical reference about the former Yugoslavia.


This book includes the testimony of sixty women who survived the genocide of Muslims in the city of Srebrenica. Their stories include accounts of daily life before the war, events related to the massacre, and how they survived. This book gives these women a voice.


This is Rieff’s investigation into the roles that the United States, the United Nations, and Europe played during the war and genocide in Bosnia. The author feels that the international community failed to prevent the violence and genocide in Srebrenica and presents significant evidence here to support that claim.

Cambodia


This book contains the memoirs of twenty-nine individuals who survived the Khmer Rouge regime. Just children at the start of the revolution, they lived in labor camps, witnessed genocide, suffered atrocities, and lived to tell these compelling stories. The book is an important inclusion for academic library collections.


Philip Short met the leader of the Khmer Rouge, Pol Pot, in 1975. His book describes the political situation related to Pol Pot’s reign, the Khmer Rouge’s revolution, and Pol Pot’s distorted utopian vision that led to the massacre of one million people in Cambodia.


This is the memoir of the daughter of a high-ranking Cambodian government official who was murdered by the Khmer Rouge. She survived in a labor camp and was trained as a child soldier, ultimately escaping to Thailand with her brother four years later. The memoir is a captivating personal account of one child’s survival experience and her observations and reflections on the Khmer Rouge genocide.

Congo


King Leopold of Belgium established colonial power in the African Congo and was ultimately responsible for the death of ten million Africans there. His primary interest was profiting from the abundant rubber crop. Hochschild also tells the story of Edmund Morel who became an investigative journalist after stumbling upon Leopold’s doings and ultimately made the United States aware of the ongoing atrocities.

Darfur


Coauthored by actor and human rights activist Don Cheadle, this book offers strategies to educate the public about genocide and methods to raise funds to help its victims. It is an excellent resource for the human rights groups on campus or in the community. Individuals wishing to read more about the impact activists can have will find this book beneficial as well.


A native of Darfur, Sudan, Hari worked there as a translator for foreign investigators and journalists. His family’s village was burned, and many villagers were killed. He returned and interviewed more than one thousand villagers, assembling their stories with his own. His memoir is suspenseful and moving and is an excellent primary resource to learn more about the crimes that occurred in Darfur.


This book explains the history of the political, economic, ethnic, and religious influences that led to the genocide in Darfur. The author’s expert analysis of the situation offers an excellent understanding of the situation in Sudan and the issues that contribute to genocidal behavior.

East Timor


Nevins tells the history of Indonesia’s rule of the island of East Timor and the violence and genocide that has occurred there. He examines the political situation, the role that the United Nations played, the power struggle within the country,
and the resulting violence. It is an excellent book describing colonialism and genocide in Asia.

Guatemala


As a researcher for Human Rights Watch, Higonnet has intimate knowledge of the events of the Guatemalan genocide. He reports the historical, legal, and political issues related to the genocide that occurred in Guatemala between 1981 and 1983. Additionally, he examines the role played by the United Nations as well as how international human rights law has affected this problem. This book is useful for anyone researching South America and International Human Rights Laws.

Nazi Germany


Originally published in 1947, this is the famous diary of an adolescent Jewish girl who lived in hiding for two years before her family was caught by the Nazis and deported to Auschwitz. This modern version includes approximately 30 percent more text than was originally published in 1947 and provides a richer account of Anne's experiences. This book should be included in all libraries.


Written by the man responsible for initiating the Holocaust, *Mein Kampf* is the publication Hitler used to spread his beliefs. Readers can refer to this primary resource for information on the Nazis' racist agenda to eliminate the Jewish population.


This is the autobiography of the commanding Nazi officer in charge of Auschwitz. It is one of the best publications documenting the atrocities and genocide of the Holocaust from the perpetrator's perspective. It includes information about the Nazis' attempt to exterminate the world's Jewish population and the postwar trials. This is an excellent primary resource for an academic library collection.


Levi was an Italian Jew who was deported to Auschwitz during World War II. He spent ten months in this concentration camp before it was liberated. This autobiography was first published in 1958.


Born a Jew in Hungary, Wiesel and his village were deported to Auschwitz during World War II. His autobiography provides a vivid and graphic account of his experiences surviving in a concentration camp as an adolescent. It includes an introduction by his wife and translator, Marion Wiesel.

China


This book chronicles the biological germ warfare program Japan developed to use against the Chinese between 1932 and 1945. Approximately 250,000 individuals (including Americans) were infected with viruses by doctors, nurses, and scientists; many died. Barenblatt provides original research into this ghastly chapter in Japanese history and asserts that the US military was aware of this program. Somehow the culprits were not held accountable. This is an important resource for inclusion in academic libraries.

Russia


The author argues that when Stalin executed more than a million Russians, his crimes constituted genocide—a perspective not shared by some historians. In addition, millions of citizens were forced into labor, deported, and massacred between 1930 and his death in 1953. Much of this violence occurred in the Ukraine. Naimark offers comparisons between Stalin and Hitler, placing the Russian atrocities in perspective.

Rwanda


This is a memoir of the Canadian general who served as the force commander of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda. In his role attempting to help two warring parties achieve peace, he observed the killing of many Rwandans. Additionally, this book was made into a film in 2007 starring Roy Dupuis. It is an outstanding resource for any library.


Gourevitch describes the account of the Rwandan government's call for the Hutu to kill the Tutsi minority; more than 800,000 Tutsis died. Winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award for Nonfiction, this book is appropriate for public and academic libraries.

International best selling author Danielle Steel tells the story of three generations of a Jewish family that has intermarried with a Catholic family. They struggle during both world wars and in the concentration camps. It is perfect for reading circles, public libraries, and academic libraries.

**REFERENCE**


This encyclopedia includes the biographies of international political figures, humanitarian aid workers, and journalists who have played an important role in either causing genocide or assisting victims of genocide. It is an excellent resource for readers seeking clarification about important figures related to a genocide event that has occurred from the 1970s to the present day.


This comprehensive dictionary includes more than six hundred entries about events, individuals, and terms related to genocide. It provides basic definitions of genocidal events, political situations, political parties, and organizations, and it is also available as an electronic resource.


Covering a variety of issues related to genocide and other major human rights crimes, this encyclopedia has 350 entries authored by experts in the field. This is an important addition to research and academic libraries. It is also available as an electronic resource.

**SERIALS**

*Genocide Studies and Prevention*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006–. 3/year. (ISSN: 19119933, online; 19110359, print).

This peer-reviewed journal publishes articles that discuss prevention, intervention, and conflict management as they relate to genocide. This is the official publication of the Association of Genocide Scholars and is appropriate for academic and research libraries.


This is the official journal of the International Network of Genocide Scholars, one of the largest scholarly organizations in the field. It offers articles on the legal, historical, sociological, and political events surrounding genocide. It is

**IMPORTANT FICTION**


In this combination of historical, literary, and romance fiction, Bohjalian tells the story of a woman who travels to Syria to provide medical aid to refugees of the Armenian genocide. There, she attempts to understand her family's history and secrets. Bohjalian received positive reviews from a number of major sources, including Oprah, *Library Journal*, and *Kirkus*. This book is especially appropriate for public libraries and relevant for academic and research libraries as well.


This work of fiction is based on the life of the German Oskar Schindler who rescued 1,300 Jews from their deaths in the Nazi gas chambers. Originally constructed from the testimony of the survivors, it was eventually made into an Academy Award-winning movie directed by Steven Spielberg. This text is highly recommended by *Library Journal*.


This is a novel about ten Rwandan Hutus and Tutsis before, during, and after the violent war and massacres. The narrative brings to life the truth behind the headlines. This is a compelling story for any library.


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appropriate for academic and research libraries.


This is an important resource for teachers with course goals that include understanding the Holocaust and genocide. The journal is appropriate for teachers and scholars, as well as students and the general reader interested in the history and current events of the Jewish experience. It includes book reviews, film commentary, and useful information on how to supplement a library collection. It is appropriate for academic and large public libraries.


Published by the Criminal Justice Program at Pennsylvania State University, this scholarly journal is dedicated to the prevention of violations of international crimes and human rights law and emphasizes articles with a legal or criminal focus. Articles are relevant to the international community.

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**FEATURE AND NONFEATURE FILMS**

**Armenia**


This PBS special tells the entire story of the Armenian genocide by the Turkish during World War I. It features archival footage of the events that has previously not been seen by the public and includes interviews with well-known experts, including author Peter Balakian. It is an important selection for research and academic collections.

**Cambodia**


This feature film was based on the true stories of journalists Dith Pran and Sydney Schanberg. Pran, a Cambodian, was detained and imprisoned in a labor camp until the end of the war. A great dramatic production, it won three Academy Awards.

**Darfur**


Academy Award–winning actor and activist Don Cheadle documents the stories of six international activists who attempted to stop the violence in Darfur. It is a general resource on genocide and humanitarian aid and can be included in any library's collection.

**Germany**


Based on the autobiography of the same name, Roman Polanski directs a moving story of a Polish Jew who survived the Holocaust by living in hiding in Warsaw. With international critical reception, the film won awards from the Academy Awards, the British Academy of Film and Television Arts, the Cannes Film Festival, and the Cesar Award in France.


This early documentary about the Holocaust was made during a period when issues of responsibility about the Holocaust were still not completely understood. It shows archival footage from concentration camps, discusses various truths about the Holocaust, and addresses the issues of anti-Semitism that existed after the war ended. It can be considered an example of propaganda-style cinema.


Oskar Schindler rescued 1,300 Jews from death in the German gas chambers. The story was constructed from the testimony of the survivors he saved. This work of fiction is based on a book of the same name.


Revealing new information as to how the Nazi party implemented concentration camps and its “final solution”, this BBC documentary provides valuable information on the history of the Holocaust, the criminals who were involved, and the victims’ experiences.

**Rwanda**


In this Frontline documentary from PBS Home Video, the director interviews government officials and diplomats for their perceptions and opinions about the Rwandan genocide that occurred in 1994. The documentary emphasizes how the
international community failed to stop the violence. It is an excellent addition to the collection of any library.


This film was based on the true story of a hotel manager (Paul Rusesabagina) who hid over one thousand individuals in his hotel to protect them from the violence of the genocide that was raging in their community. It won three Academy Awards, and three Screen Actors Guild awards, among many others.

INTERNET RESOURCES


This database contains information on genocide and massacres that have occurred around the world. It has general historical information, case studies, scholarly papers, chronological indexes for individual countries, and a glossary of basic and advanced terms.


Human Rights Watch is an international non-profit agency dedicated to raising awareness about human rights violations around the world. This website can be referred to for articles and multimedia resources about current events around the world.


Gendercide Watch focuses on the issue of gender-selective massacres and includes case studies for further research. Gendercide.org is the organization’s primary mean for communicating with and educating the public.


The purpose of this United Nations department is to raise awareness about genocide and alert readers about the risk of genocide in countries around the world. The goal is to mobilize for appropriate action and thus combat genocide appropriately. This resource is useful for understanding international intervention and prevention.