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Encyclopedia of Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity  
(review)

Zev Garber

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Complicating matters still further for post-war French Armenians and Jews was the rise of an independent Republic of Armenia and of Israel respectively. With the exception of a few nationalists who emigrated, most Armenians and Jews remained in France, while supporting the independence of the new states. The creation of Israel in particular seems to have reinforced an assertiveness on the part of French Jews who had already begun “to articulate a more politically defined notion of Jewish identity” following the Holocaust (p. 204). Similarly, after the Second World War a new generation of Armenians, feeling secure as French citizens, were able to give voice to their support for Armenia and to solidarity with the Armenian diaspora. Neither community, however, felt that it wished to trade its French identity for another or that their new “homelands” had any political or legal claims on them.

Despite the many parallels between Armenians and Jews in France, Mandel might have stressed some of the differences perhaps more than she does. Mandel does point out that unlike the Armenians, native French Jews have a long history in the country. They were officially emancipated after the revolution, a status confirmed again by Napoleon in 1806, but that did not prevent the rise of modern French antisemitism in the manner of Drumont and the Action Française, which in its 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century incarnations was as vicious as any other in Europe. French Jews have had ample time to become fully integrated into French society. That they have not suggests that their traditional pariah status in Europe still clings to them even after the Holocaust, and the religious divide remains deep, deeper than for Armenians who are Christians and have converted to Catholicism. Moreover, given their experiences, French Jews may not wish fully to assimilate into a post-Holocaust and post-Vichy France. In the future it is possible to foresee an unselfconscious Armenian strain in French culture and identity, but one suspects that Jews will remain apart as they have in the past.

Robert Melson  
Department of Political Science  
Purdue University



**Encyclopedia of Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity**, edited by Dinah I. Shelton. Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2005. 3 vols., 1458 pp. \$395.00.

Responding but not limited to the near-successful state-authorized murder of European Jewry during World War II, professor and lawyer Raphael Lemkin coined and defined the term genocide as actions of deconstruction

and elimination directed against individuals who are members of a national entity: "Generally speaking, genocide does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation, except when accomplished by mass killings. It is intended rather to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aimed at the destruction of the essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves. The objectives of such a plan would be a disintegration of political and social institutions—of culture, language, national feelings, religion, and the economic existence of national groups, and the destruction of personal security, liberty, health, dignity, and even the lives of the individuals belonging to such groups."<sup>1</sup> Lemkin's study influenced the original draft of the United Nations 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Various aspects of the Draft's definitions of physical genocide, biological genocide, and cultural genocide are the glue that unite the multiple entries in this informative reference work geared to a general readership.

Armenian genocide, apartheid in South Africa, the killing fields of the Communist Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Herzegovina, killing of Kurds in Iraq, genocidal activities in Rwanda and Sudan, persecution in the name of religion in Northern Ireland, in India, in Pakistan, in Malaysia and Indonesia, terrorism in Israel and reciprocal bombardment, the attack on America on September 11, 2001 and its consequences, race matters in the United States—the late twentieth century and the start of the twenty-first century are a minefield of ethnic and nationalistic conflict. Invariably, the world of one humanity is threatened by economic competition, political unrest, and social divisiveness. But the fact that man's distrust of man prevails at the end of the century of Shoah and genocide and in the beginning of the century of global terrorism requires examination. Are ordinary and extraordinary acts of "dislike of the unlike," individual and group, products of chance or fated by a predetermined goal? How to explain the ideologies of nationalism, tribalism, and racism in perpetuating a world-wide cycle of pain? Are premeditated crimes against humanity without end? If yes, what apparatus and measures are there to prevent the seemingly endless slaughter of innocents?

This set of volumes, ably edited by Dinah L. Shelton (George Washington University Law School) and her editorial board, are an attempt to ex-

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<sup>1</sup>Cited in the article on "Ethnocide" from R. Lemkin, "Axis Rule in Occupied Europe" (1944). See <http://www.preetenocide.org/Lemkin/AxisRule1944-1.htm>.

plain and inform about the what, when, where, who, and why of genocide. More than 350 entries ranging in length from five hundred (people, places, terms) to five thousand words (e.g., African Americans, Armenian Genocide, Holocaust) cover the gamut of man's tendency to hate and obliterate from the ancient world to the present day. The *Encyclopedia* includes articles on antisemitism, racism, conventions against torture and other acts of degrading behavior, apartheid, prevention and punishment of genocide, international criminal and tribunal courts, and means and methods of teaching hatred and executing genocidal acts. A number of articles contain historic images and contemporary photographs to help visualize the written word. At the end of each entry there is a short, select bibliography and cross-references to related topics. Also featured are list of articles and outline of contents in the front matter of volume one and a glossary, filmography, primary sources, and index at the end of volume three.

No one who writes on genocide and crimes against humanity can be accused of tackling an issue simple or limited in scope, or of not expressing one's perception of "it is what it is." To be sure, many words on the subject are not in short supply. We pay attention to these words, in awe or frustration, agreement or disagreement depending on which area of genocide intrigues us and whether it is agreeable to our own sense of reality. Commendable, for example, is the important lesson taught in the article on Antisemitism that the Jew is the exemplar of the marginalized outsider, objectified by religion and state, fed by myth and hate, and revealed in revilement, persecution, and genocide. There are, of course, a number of entries which place the author's parochial objectives as the be-all of objective scholarship, e.g., the pieces on African Americans, Impunity, etc. Also, in a number of essays, a clear distinction is not drawn between "natural bias," that is, the ingrained bias of cultural antagonists that is typically reflected in national, cultural and political hues, and a more conscious form of social prejudice that is manifest in any group as it premeditatedly considers its relationship with a distinctly different group. Economics, racial, ethnic and/or religious differences are typically the engines that drive this more active form of prejudice.

In sum, a resourceful reference work, felicitously edited, whose selective data ponders pragmatically whether humanity was—is—will be humane.

Zev Garber  
Judaic Studies  
Los Angeles Valley College

