

# Evoking Genocide

Scholars and Activists Describe  
the Works That Shaped Their Lives



Edited by  
Adam Jones

# **Evoking Genocide**

## **Also by Adam Jones**

*Gender Inclusive: Essays on Violence, Men, and Feminist International Relations.* Routledge, 2009.

(ed. with Nicholas Robins) *Genocides by the Oppressed: Subaltern Genocide in Theory and Practice.* Indiana University Press, 2009.

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*Crimes Against Humanity: A Beginner's Guide.* Oneworld Publications, 2008.

*Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction.* Routledge, 2006.

(ed.) *Men of the Global South: A Reader.* Zed Books, 2006.

(ed.) *Política Mundial: Cambio y Conflicto: Ensayos Escogidos de Kal Holsti* [World Politics: Change and Conflict: Selected Essays of Kal Holsti], trans. Atenea Acevedo. CIDE, 2005.

(ed.) *Genocide, War Crimes & the West: History and Complicity.* Zed Books, 2004.

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*Beyond the Barricades: Nicaragua and the Struggle for the Sandinista Press, 1979–1998.* Ohio University Press, 2002.

*The Press in Transition: A Comparative Study of Nicaragua, South Africa, Jordan, and Russia.* German Overseas Institute, 2002.

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# Preface

“I remember when I first read . . . saw . . . heard . . . visited . . .”

For years, genocide scholars and activists have made these comments in my hearing, or in correspondence. They usually presaged an off-the-cuff tribute to a work of art or communication—a book, film, song, painting, photograph, document, monument, reportage, personal testimony—that had a formative impact on the individual’s evolution in the field.

I felt it would be enlightening to compile a series of short essays paying homage to such works. The response to my call for submissions was livelier than I had expected, and *Evoking Genocide* is the gratifying result. Contributors were invited to explore intersections of history, cultural criticism, and autobiography: to engage both with the works themselves, and with their influence on the author’s own evolution. I was also curious to know whether contributors had used the work in their teaching or activism. If so, how, and with what reaction from students or other audiences?

Along these general lines, different authors weighted their pieces differently. I saw my editorial role as respecting and preserving their voices, not imposing a uniform tone. Their contributions range from the angry to the elegiac, sometimes within the space of a single essay.

Not all books are a joy to edit, but this one has been a labor of love. A number of contributors also emphasized how much they had enjoyed writing their pieces—a welcome relief, they said, from the more detached and “objective” style that scholars are often confined by. I hope the freshness and vitality of the engagement with their chosen subjects comes through. I also hope that the diverse materials presented here will inspire readers, as they have inspired me, to seek out a personal engagement with works they may not have encountered—or even heard of. A section of further reading and links is provided for this purpose at the end of the volume.

I have chosen to organize the essays in broadly chronological order, according to the historical events that each addresses. *Evoking Genocide* begins with the European conquest of the Americas, and moves through the Armenian genocide, Aboriginal “residential schools,” and the Jewish Holocaust, to key post-World War Two events like the birth of the Genocide Convention and the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem. It then alights on Cambodia, Vietnam, Argentina, Guatemala, the anti-nuclear movement of the 1980s, events

surrounding East Timor's struggle for independence, the Rwandan apocalypse of 1994, and finally the Darfur genocide. There are occasional minor shadings on this chronological scheme throughout the text, for improved "flow" as I perceive it. I hope the overall effect is to convey something of the scope and scale of genocide in history, while also highlighting the human beings who intervened in it, bore witness to it, struggled against it, and strove to memorialize it.

Inevitably, there is a heavy—some might say disproportionate—emphasis in this book on works that deal with the Jewish Holocaust and the Nazis' other genocidal crimes. My own writing on genocide sets these seminal events in comparative perspective, rejecting any notion that they are "uniquely unique."<sup>1</sup> But the predominance of a Holocaust theme here is predictable, and I think defensible. Most contributors grew up when the Holocaust was the paradigmatic genocide, the *ne plus ultra*. For many people, it still is, and it has given rise to a far vaster body of artistic representations and scholarly investigations than all other genocides combined. The Rwandan and Darfur genocides may be beginning to play something of a similar anchoring role for a new generation of scholars and activists, and a sense of this is conveyed by the closing essays in the volume.

Readers who are well-grounded in genocide studies should delight in the vistas that this book opens to them. But I also hope that *Evoking Genocide* will serve as an accessible introduction to genocide for those who are new to this field of study. Sometimes, the sheer accumulation of grim historical and empirical detail can make the initial engagement with the subject of mass crimes a daunting one. And it is true that there is no shortage of "hearts of darkness" and "grey zones" ahead of you in the volume. But there may also be a catharsis in witnessing works of art and communication forged from the raw trauma of genocide, and the pleasure of sharing contributors' sense of discovery as they explore these works with you. I hope you will emerge sobered and informed—but also captivated, and energized to make your own contribution.

**[www.evokinggenocide.org](http://www.evokinggenocide.org)**

Accompanying this edited volume is a website, [www.evokinggenocide.org](http://www.evokinggenocide.org), which serves both to publicize the book and as a forum for readers and others to offer their thoughts on works that have influenced them personally.

Readers are invited to visit the website and consider contributing their own essay, which may be incorporated in any future editions of the book. All correspondence regarding the website may be addressed to the editor at adam.jones@ubc.ca, or to the individual authors whose email addresses appear in the biographical notes.

### Acknowledgments

*Evoking Genocide* was substantially compiled and edited during my time as an Associate Research Fellow in the Genocide Studies Program at Yale University. I am deeply grateful to the program's director, Ben Kiernan, and to Frederick J. Iseman of Caxton-Iseman Capital, Inc., who personally funded much of the fellowship that brought me to Yale. Thanks also to Ian Shapiro, Richard Kane, and Nancy Rutherford of the Whitney and Betty MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies at Yale. Work on the book concluded after I moved to my new post at the University of British Columbia Okanagan. My UBCO colleagues, like my family and friends, have been stalwart in their support.

Working at long distance with the book's terrific designer, Olga Lagounova, was a constant (indeed, for a stretch, almost daily) pleasure. Special thanks to Olga for incorporating a deluge of minor alterations and adjustments along the way, and doing so with good humor and professionalism.

### Dedication

By common agreement, the editor and contributors to this volume dedicate it to the memory of two leading genocide scholars, for many of us dear friends.

Eric Markusen died after a long illness in January 2007. He was one of the first genocide scholars I ever met, and I took to him instantly, as everyone did. Eric was a gracious, loving man who made a seminal contribution to genocide studies on subjects like the bombing of German and Japanese cities during World War Two, the "genocidal mentality," and genocide denial.

Stephen C. Feinstein, who passed with shocking suddenness in March 2008, contributes a searching essay to this book (see p. 148) that stands as one of his final testimonials. Examining Zbigniew Libera's Lego crematorium, it displays something of Stephen's eclecticism and cultural astuteness, as well

as his readiness to tackle offbeat and controversial subjects. From the warm welcome he extended to me on visits to Minneapolis, I know how gregarious and generous he was personally.<sup>2</sup>

Both of these men left us unfairly soon; both will inspire and inform the work in our field for decades.

*Adam Jones*  
*Kelowna, BC, Canada*  
*September 2009*

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> See the discussion in Adam Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 162–63.

<sup>2</sup> See Ben Cohen's tribute, "Eric Markusen Studied Roots of Genocide," *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*, 31 January 2007, <http://www.startribune.com/obituaries/11604066.html>; and Kathryn Nelson's warm tribute to Stephen Feinstein, "Historian's Death Called Loss to Study of the Nazi Holocaust," *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*, 5 March 2008, <http://www.startribune.com/local/16319736.html>.

# “All My Inner Self Protested”

*Raphael Lemkin*

*Genocide scholars and activists, it seems, have always drawn inspiration from creative and communicative works — beginning with the first such scholar, Raphael Lemkin (1900–59), who coined the term “genocide” in 1944. In this excerpt from his unpublished autobiography, edited by Samuel Totten and Steven L. Jacobs for publication in their volume *Pioneers of Genocide Studies* (Transaction Publishers, 2002), Lemkin describes the impact on his emerging world-view of stories and songs he heard, books he read, and news reports that reached him as a child growing up in Poland.*

I was born and lived my first ten years on a farm called “Ozerisko,” fourteen miles from the city of Wolkowysk. Through this city marched the Swedish and Napoleonic armies, and innumerable tussles in this area took place between the Russians and the Poles, Lithuanians and Ukrainians, and earlier, among the Mongols and the Tartars.

The farm of “Ozerisko” lay in a large clearing between huge forests. It was a joint tenancy of two families, my father’s and that of my uncle. The children, who were mostly of the same age, spent their days together in one happy gang. The forest was the heart of the farm.

The ground of the forest was covered with dried leaves and pine needles, which was a ready-made bed for tired heads of children explorers, hungry for dreams. This was my world that I learned to love and that gave me the first lessons in aloneness. From my early years I took a special delight in being alone, so that I could think and feel without outer disturbances. At that time I did not understand the meaning and purpose of this feeling, but I fully enjoyed the delight of contemplation. Lost from my companions, I spent hours in the forest listening through my third ear how the story of life was sung by the sparrows, robins, crows, and blackbirds, innumerable mosquitoes, and insects. Though they were playing on discordant instruments, they still were producing harmonious melodies . . .

The evenings were a delight. My mother gathered us near the warm stove. She taught us to sing songs and taught us poetry through the songs