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Introduction: the study and history of genocide

Meierhenrich, Jens (2014) *Introduction: the study and history of genocide*. In: *Genocide: a Reader*. Oxford New York, USA, pp. 3-55. ISBN 9780195377668

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Abstract

Genocide confounds scholars, practitioners, and laypersons alike. Despite the carnage of the twentieth century, our understanding of genocide remains partial. Popular, moralizing accounts have done their share to hinder our understanding of genocide. This Reader lays the foundation for a more complete understanding of genocide. Meierhenrich provides an introduction to the myriad dimensions of this human phenomena, and to the various ways of making sense of it—from autobiographical remembering to theoretical reasoning. As such, the Reader showcases our extant knowledge about genocide. It traverses disciplinary and geographic boundaries, in an effort to acquaint readers with the complexity of the phenomenon, and to challenge the critical thinking that exists concerning it. In pursuit of this goal, the volume assembles some 150 readings that attempt to shed light on one of nine distinct themes in the study of genocide. The readings look at genocide in different periods of history, and attempt to understand different definitions of genocide. From the Irish famine to the decimation of Australian indigenous peoples to the Holocaust, Meierhenrich provides a variety of illustrations of how people commit, experience, and remember genocide.

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