

Frank Jacob

# 1 Genocide and Mass Violence in Asia: An Introduction

“A genocide begins with the killing of one [woman or] man—  
not for what [she or] he has done, but because of who [she or] he is.”<sup>1</sup>

The late Nobel Peace Prize laureate and former General Secretary of the UN Kofi Annan (1938–2018) emphasized in his Nobel Lecture in 2001 that the “crime of all crimes” often begins with a single murder. This violent act does not only physically destroy a human being, but, as French philosopher Michel Foucault (1926–1984) highlighted, power relations are established and new mechanisms of power are eventually installed or fortified within a society.<sup>2</sup> The 20th century in particular witnessed countless attempts to restructure such power relations and, as a whole, the years between the First World War and the end of the Cold War, i.e. the period Eric Hobsbawm (1917–2012) called the “Age of Extremes,”<sup>3</sup> were perhaps, as Kofi Annan correctly further remarked, “the deadliest in human history, devastated by innumerable conflicts, untold suffering, and unimaginable crimes.”<sup>4</sup>

The century was determined by imperial wars, two World Wars, the Cold War, and new wars at its end.<sup>5</sup> These were often accompanied by forms of mass

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1 Kofi Annan, “Nobel Lecture,” Oslo, December 10, 2001. Accessed February 20, 2019. <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2001/annan/lecture/>

2 Michel Foucault, “Body/Power [1975],” in idem, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 60; Michel Foucault, “The Subject and Power,” in idem, *Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 219. Both also cited in Jacob Maze, “Towards an Analytic of Violence: Foucault, Arendt & Power,” *Foucault Studies* 25 (2018): 122–123. Maze extensively discussed Foucault’s ideas related to power and violence.

3 Eric Hobsbawm, *Das Zeitalter der Extreme: Weltgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: DTV, 1998).

4 Annan, “Nobel Lecture.”

5 A survey for the European conflicts is offered in Richard C. Hall, *Consumed by War: European Conflict in the 20th Century* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2010). A slightly more global discussion, although omitting Africa and Latin America, is provided by Alistair Horne, *Hubris: The Tragedy of War in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper, 2015).

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violence, i.e. mass killings or genocides.<sup>6</sup> German historian Christian Gerlach consequently speaks of “extremely violent societies” that determined the course of this “Age of Extremes.” Gerlach describes these “extremely violent societies” as

formations where *various population groups* become victims of massive physical violence, in which, acting together with organs of the state, *diverse social groups participate for a multitude of reasons*. Simply put, the occurrence and the thrust of mass violence depends on broad and diverse support, but this is based on a variety of motives and interests that cause violence to spread in different directions and varying intensities and forms.<sup>7</sup>

Individuals and groups were challenged by political developments, and identity conflicts between, but often also within, societies were the consequences. In Asia, nationalism and anti-colonialism stimulated change, but also opened new conflicts, especially between those who had different concepts of identity that were based on religion, political ideas, or social classes.<sup>8</sup> The Cold War in particular influenced genocidal acts related to the proxy wars of the superpowers in Asia, which is why Immanuel Wallerstein’s evaluation of this conflict is correct: the Cold War may have been “cold” in Europe, but in Asia, it was definitely a “hot” war, causing countless casualties and destruction.<sup>9</sup> Regardless of the numerous attempts to contain such violent eruptions and to prevent further genocides, the last two decades of the 20th century made it obvious that the “crime of crimes” did not only determine the last century, but is still a dangerous factor and, as Italian sociologist Franco Ferrarotti emphasizes, “[i]t is significant that genocide[s] occurred after the establishment of human rights organizations [and] after the invention of modern, instantaneous communication technologies.”<sup>10</sup> The term “Age of Genocide,”<sup>11</sup> as used

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**6** Ervin Staub, “Genocide and Mass Killing: Origins, Prevention, Healing and Reconciliation,” *Political Psychology* 21, no. 2 (2000): 367.

**7** Christian Gerlach, *Extremely Violent Societies: Mass Violence in the Twentieth-Century World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 1–2.

**8** Staub, “Genocide and Mass Killing,” 368.

**9** Immanuel Wallerstein, “What Cold War In Asia? An Interpretative Essay,” in *The Cold War in Asia: The Battle for Hearts and Minds*, eds. Zheng Yangwen, Hong Liu and Michael Szonyi (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 15–24.

**10** Franco Ferrarotti, “On Genocide, Old and New,” in *Genocide: Approaches, Case Studies, and Responses*, eds. Graham C. Kinloch and Raj P. Mohan (New York: Algora Publishing, 2005), 81.

**11** Peter J. Stoett, “This Age of Genocide: Conceptual and Institutional Implications,” *International Journal* 50, no. 3, China and Its Neighbours (1995): 594–618.

by the Canadian political scientist Peter J. Stoett for the last century, obviously stretches into the 21st century as well, especially when considering current cases, like that of the Rohingyas in Myanmar.<sup>12</sup>

Regardless of such contemporary cases of mass violence, the number of genocides since the end of the Second World War is rather low, especially in Asia. This, however, is related to problems with the definition, introduced by Polish lawyer and anti-genocide activist Raphael Lemkin (1900–1959) in the 1940s.<sup>13</sup> When Lemkin defined genocide in 1944,<sup>14</sup> he, of course, coined a term “born from the Holocaust,”<sup>15</sup> which was almost naturally often read in reference to the almost total destruction of the European Jews by the Nazis.<sup>16</sup> Due to the timely context of Lemkin’s theoretical concept, as legal scholar Tatiana E. Sainati states, “the Holocaust remains the lens through which other cases of possible genocide are interpreted, [and] which has significantly limited the number of

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**12** Azeem Ibrahim, *The Rohingyas: Inside Myanmar’s Hidden Genocide* (London: Hurst, 2016).

**13** On the problems of Lemkin’s definition with regard to the Asian cases of genocide and mass violence see: Frank Jacob, “Raphael Lemkin and Asian Genocides: Theoretical Opportunities and Limitations,” forthcoming paper for the conference volume “Lemkin. Witness to the Age of Genocide,” December 3–5, 2018, Pilecki Institute Warsaw. On Lemkin and his work on the concept of genocide see: Adam Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction* (London/New York: Routledge, 2006), 8–12 and in more detail Raphael Lemkin, *Totally Unofficial: The Autobiography*, ed. Donna-Lee Frieze (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013).

**14** Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944), 79–95.

**15** Stoett, “This Age of Genocide,” 599.

**16** In reviews, Lemkin’s concept was therefore only considered within the limits of the European context of the Holocaust, and not broadened to include other crimes of mass violence, especially as those committed by the Japanese Imperial Army in Asia during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945) and the Pacific War (1941–1945). For some of the important reviews of Lemkin’s book see: Merle Fainsod, “Review: Axis Rule in Occupied Europe, by Raphaël Lemkin,” *Harvard Law Review* 58, no. 5 (1945): 744–747; John H. Herz, “Review: Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress by Raphael Lemkin,” *The American Political Science Review* 39, no. 2 (1945): 366–367; Arthur Leon Horniker, “Review: Axis Rule in Occupied Europe, by Raphael Lemkin,” *Military Affairs* 9, no. 1 (1945): 69–73; Arthur K. Kuhn, “Review: Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress by Raphael Lemkin and George A. Finch,” *The American Journal of International Law* 39, no. 2 (1945): 360–362; Linden A. Mander, “Review: Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress, by Raphaël Lemkin,” *The American Historical Review* 51, no. 1 (1945): 117–120; Melchior Palyi, “Review: Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress, by Raphael Lemkin,” *American Journal of Sociology* 51, no. 5, Human Behavior in Military Society (1946): 496–497.

incidents that have ultimately been labeled as genocide.”<sup>17</sup> This limitation is, however, in the first place related to Lemkin’s original concept as such:

Genocide is the crime of destroying *national, racial or religious* groups. The problem now arises as to whether it is a crime of only national importance, or a crime in which international society as such should be vitally interested. Many reasons speak for the second alternative. It would be impractical to treat genocide as a national crime, since by its very nature it is committed by the state or by powerful groups which have the backing of the state. A state would never prosecute a crime instigated or backed by itself.<sup>18</sup>

Lemkin consequently argued that it was important to sign the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1948 to prevent further genocides in the future.<sup>19</sup>

Nevertheless, his concept has its limitations, namely related to methods of killing<sup>20</sup> and the reasons for it. Although Lemkin wanted to continue his research on genocide and the available project description for a planned global history of genocides<sup>21</sup> implies that the Polish lawyer would have included non-Western and especially Asian case studies as well, it is a fact that the concept as such remained existent in its limited and very Eurocentric form. Today, two conceptions – i.e. a minimalist one, arguing for the pursuance of Lemkin’s original definition of 1944 and the UN Convention of 1948, and a maximalist one arguing for the inclusion of “death from state negligence, imperial expansion, economic exploitation, and cultural destruction”<sup>22</sup> – are used to either limit or to broaden the number of genocides.

In particular, mass violence against a group that shares a specific political or gender identity is not covered by the UN Convention, and therefore would rather deserve to be defined as or called “politicide”<sup>23</sup> or

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**17** Tatiana E. Sainati, “Toward a Comparative Approach to the Crime of Genocide,” *Duke Law Journal* 62, no. 1 (2012): 164–165.

**18** Raphael Lemkin, “Genocide,” *American Scholar* 15, no. 2 (1946): 227–230. Accessed November 15, 2018. <http://www.preventgenocide.org/lemkin/americanscholar1946.htm>, my emphasis.

**19** On the UN Convention see: Jones, *Genocide*, 12–14.

**20** R. J. Rummel, “Democracy, Power, Genocide, and Mass Murder,” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 39, no. 1 (1995): 3–4.

**21** Raphael Lemkin, Project Outline, n.d., Raphael Lemkin Papers, New York Public Library, Manuscript and Archives Division, \*ZL-273, Reel 2.

**22** Stoett, “This Age of Genocide,” 600.

**23** Barbara Harff and Ted Robert Gurr, “Victims of the State: Genocides, Politicides and Group Repression since 1945,” *International Review of Victimology* 1, no. 1 (1989): 23–41. For a short summary see: Jens Meierhenrich, *Genocide: A Reader* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 75–76.

“gendercide.”<sup>24</sup> Especially in the Asian context, the use of the UN Convention’s definition limits the perspective, as mass violence due to political reasons is almost totally excluded,<sup>25</sup> and the case of Cambodia already “illustrates the critical shortfall of the Genocide Convention.”<sup>26</sup> The limitations of the 1948 Convention must be understood as a necessity of the time, however, because, as Sainati correctly highlights, the “explicit omission of political groups from the definition of genocide that was enshrined in the 1948 Convention . . . exemplifies the practical compromises that were necessary to ensure widespread support in the harsh world of Cold War politics.”<sup>27</sup> It is, however, no surprise, that this limitation has been criticized in the decades since the late 1940s, and attempts to change the terminology have been made by many lawyers, historians, and activists alike.<sup>28</sup>

While genocide scholars are very often hesitant to consider politically motivated mass violence as genocide,<sup>29</sup> it has to be incorporated in studies of the phenomenon during the “Age of Extremes,” which is why the present volume will not only look at genocide, but also at mass violence in Asia. Since the six “officially accepted” cases of genocide in the 20th century – the Armenian genocide, the Holocaust, the Cambodian genocide by the Khmer Rouge, the killing of the Kurds in North Iraq, the killing of the Tutsi in Rwanda by the Hutu, and the genocide during the Yugoslav Wars<sup>30</sup> – cover only one Asian case, namely Cambodia,<sup>31</sup> it seems to be specifically (but not exclusively) limited with regard to this region. Europeans and North Americans do not usually pay much attention to mass killings of a genocidal caliber in places that are

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**24** Adam Jones, *Gendercide and Genocide* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2011). For a recent discussion of the interrelation of gender and genocide also see: Elissa Bemporad and Joyce W. Warren, eds. *Women and Genocide: Survivors, Victims, Perpetrators* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018).

**25** Robert Cribb, “Political Genocides in Postcolonial Asia,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies*, eds. Donald Bloxham and A. Dirk Moses (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 445.

**26** Beth van Schaack, “The Crime of Political Genocide: Repairing the Genocide Convention’s Blind Spot,” *The Yale Law Journal* 106, no. 7 (1997): 2261.

**27** Sainati, “Toward a Comparative Approach,” 165.

**28** A survey of this discussion until 2008 is provided in: William A. Schabas, “Genocide Law in a Time of Transition: Recent Developments in the Law of Genocide,” *Rutgers Law Review* 61, no. 1 (2008): 161–192.

**29** Cribb, “Political Genocides,” 446.

**30** Brij Mohan, “The Ultimate Oppression: The Urge to Genocide,” in *Genocide: Approaches, Case Studies, and Responses*, eds. Graham C. Kinloch and Raj P. Mohan (New York: Algora Publishing, 2005), 66–67.

**31** Jones, *Genocide*, 185–211. For more detailed studies see:

geographically and conceptually too far away to care about, which is why forms of mass violence are often not considered when talking about genocide.<sup>32</sup> One such statement is provided by Roger Baldwin, leader of the American Civil Liberties Union in 1947, when he explains in a letter why Japan's use of mass violence within its colonial empire and the countries occupied by the Imperial Japanese Army were hard to consider as genocide:

I do not think you will get very far with the subject of genocide in relation to the Japanese occupation of Korea. That followed the regular old pattern of imperialism except for the single feature that Korea was annexed as an integral part of Japan. . . . I doubt whether you will find anything properly relating to genocide in Korean experience. There was no attempt at exterminating a people on racial grounds.<sup>33</sup>

The obvious fading out of Japanese war crimes<sup>34</sup> from the discussion of genocides after 1945 again highlights the Eurocentric perspective of the definition as it was later accepted by the UN Convention. Many other Asian cases of mass violence would consequently not be considered as genocides, be it due to a lack of interest in the single events or the narrow definition. The present volume will therefore highlight cases of mass violence and genocide – including politicide and gendecide – to provide a broader perspective of the specific Asian context.

In Asia, the 20th century was determined by Western imperialism, the rise and fall of the Japanese Empire during the Second Sino-Japanese and the Pacific Wars, as well as decolonization during the Cold War. In addition, many former colonies went through extreme waves of nationalism and civil wars, while the countries very often also tried to modernize, especially with regard to their economies. Modernization and the use of new technologies, regardless of idealistic ideas, is no guarantee against the abuse of violence by governments, especially since such a “society can be technically advanced and humanly barbaric”<sup>35</sup> at

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<sup>32</sup> Ferrarotti, “On Genocide,” 80.

<sup>33</sup> Roger Baldwin to Miss Miriam L. Milliren, New York July 7, 1947, Raphael Lemkin Papers, New York Public Library, Manuscript and Archives Division, \*ZL-273, Reel 1.

<sup>34</sup> Frank Jacob, *Japanese War Crimes During WWII: Atrocity and the Psychology of Collective Violence* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2018). Especially the Rape of Nanking could have been discussed in more detail, since many American observers had written and reported about the events. For a survey of the events and a discussion of the forms of violence used during the Rape of Nanking see: idem, “Banzai! And the Others Die – Collective Violence in the Rape of Nanking,” in *Global Lynching and Collective Violence*, Vol. 1: *Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*, ed. Michael J. Pfeifer (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017), 78–102.

<sup>35</sup> Ferrarotti, “On Genocide,” 78. For the Holocaust, the interrelation between genocide and modernity is discussed in Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1989).

the same time. It is therefore not the level of scientific development or technological advancement that determines if genocide is more or less likely to occur.<sup>36</sup> It is far more important, as Mark Levene emphasizes, to understand that

we cannot begin to understand genocide without grappling with history, by which is implied not only the historical context of each individual genocide which necessarily must tell us a special and unique story but rather the macrohistorical record, the broad and moving canvas in which we might chart and hopefully analyze the emergence and development of the current international system.<sup>37</sup>

To accurately deal with mass violence and genocide in Asia, as in other parts of the world, research consequently has to “shed light on the blind spots”<sup>38</sup> and also consider other determining factors of identity than those described in Lemkin’s original concept and the UN Convention,<sup>39</sup> especially since, very often, particular “sociocultural factors generate large-scale genocide.”<sup>40</sup> It is important to connect the theoretical concept to the problems of the 20th as well as the 21st century and to accept diversities with regard to the single cases, because if we only “understand genocide to be synonymous with mass killing,” to quote genocide scholars Douglas Irvin-Erickson, Thomas La Pointe, and Alexander Laban Hinton, “we lay the foundation for understanding genocide as a dwindling phenomenon connected to a distant past, if at all.”<sup>41</sup> It is therefore also not surprising that several movements and scholars around the globe have tried to point the world’s interest in the direction of so-called hidden genocides.<sup>42</sup>

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**36** Mark Levene, “Why Is the Twentieth Century the Century of Genocide?” *Journal of World History* 11, no. 2 (2000): 307; Mohan, “The Ultimate Oppression,” 65.

**37** Levene, “Twentieth Century,” 308.

**38** Douglas Irvin-Erickson, Thomas La Pointe, and Alexander Laban Hinton, “Introduction,” in *Hidden Genocides: Power, Knowledge, Memory*, eds. Alexander Laban Hinton, Thomas La Pointe, and Douglas Irvin-Erickson (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2013), 3.

**39** Ferrarotti, “On Genocide,” 82.

**40** Alexander Laban Hinton, “Why Did You Kill? The Cambodian Genocide and the Dark Side of Face and Honor,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 57, no. 1 (1998): 95–96. In the Cambodian case, to name a specific example, the “cultural model of disproportionate revenge (*karsang-soek*) contributed to the genocidal violence that occurred” during the Cambodian genocide. Alexander Laban Hinton, “A Head for an Eye: Revenge in the Cambodian Genocide,” *American Ethnologist* 25, no. 3 (1998): 353.

**41** Irvin-Erickson, La Pointe, and Hinton, “Introduction,” 4.

**42** *Ibid.*, 1–2.

New conceptual considerations, like democide (domestic killings by a state government),<sup>43</sup> have been introduced to further broaden the understanding of mass violence and genocide during the “Age of Extremes.” The discussions will continue, especially since the Eurocentrism of Lemkin’s original concept will not suffice to describe the forms of genocidal mass violence, just as they did not suffice, especially in the Asian context, during the last century. Regardless of these theoretical shortcomings, Asia also witnessed and “has also been deeply affected” by a “century of genocide.”<sup>44</sup> While Deborah Mayersen and Annie Pohlman discussed the legacies and possible preventions of genocide and mass atrocities in Asia (in their book of the same name), they failed to include Japan, one of the main perpetrator states in the region, omitting the impact of Japan’s colonial empire<sup>45</sup> and the legacies of the war crimes trials in the aftermath of the Second World War.<sup>46</sup>

It was the decline of Japan’s rule over large parts of Asia, like the end of the British Empire in other regions of the continent, that stimulated “fundamental conflicts over the national character” of the postcolonial nation states, and the protagonists in the evolving struggles “were engaged in a struggle to reshape the fundamentals of national character” and therefore began to destroy enemies who represented a different national idea for the future.<sup>47</sup> In Indonesia, China, and Cambodia,<sup>48</sup> millions of lives were destroyed while the perpetrators, as Robert Cribb put it,

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**43** R. J. Rummel, “Democracy, Power, Genocide, and Mass Murder,” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 39, no. 1 (1995): 3–26 tried to introduce this theoretical approach. Rummel argued that “the less democratic a regime, the more unchecked and unbalanced power at the center, the more it should commit democide. Democide becomes a device of rule, as in eliminating possible opponents, or a means for achieving one’s ideological goal, as in the purification of one’s country of an alien race or the reconstruction of society.” *Ibid.*, 5.

**44** Deborah Mayersen and Annie Pohlman, “Introduction,” in *Genocide and Mass Atrocities in Asia: Legacies and Prevention*, eds. Deborah Mayersen and Annie Pohlman (London/New York: Routledge, 2013), 1.

**45** Sandra Wilson and Robert Cribb, “Japan’s Colonial Empire,” in *Routledge Handbook of Modern Japanese History*, ed. Sven Saaler and Christopher W.A. Szpilman (London/New York: Routledge, 2018), 77–91.

**46** Richard Cribb and Kerstin von Lingen, “War Crimes Trials in Asia: Collaboration and Complicity in the Aftermath of War,” in *Debating Collaboration and Complicity in War Crimes Trials in Asia 1945–1956*, ed. Kerstin von Lingen (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 1–18.

**47** Cribb, “Political Genocides,” 449.

**48** *Ibid.*, 450–463.



saw themselves as shaping the character of their nation by removing a category of people who could never be a legitimate part of it. This category was defined by membership of the communist party in Indonesia and by imputed class membership in China and Cambodia, but the rationale for purging was similar in all three cases. The nation as it was envisaged by those in charge could not survive the presence of masses of people with different national conceptions.<sup>49</sup>

The conflicts since 1945 were further stimulated by the Cold War, since many perpetrators considered their own actions, e.g. in Indonesia, to be backed by the superpowers, whose interests were assumed to be the same when it came to the destruction of the enemy. The mass violence and genocides in the Asian context consequently also need to be embedded into a global perspective, taking into account transnational factors like the Cold War, as well as the UN.

## The Contributions

The present introductory reader is intended to provide a first introduction to mass violence and genocide in Asia. In four sections, it will take a closer look at: 1) forms of mass violence and genocide; 2) victims; 3) perpetrators; and 4) memory and justice in Asian countries. The first section begins with an analysis of “crowd violence” in East Pakistan/Bangladesh in 1917/72 by Christian Gerlach. After this first theoretical approach to highlight the diversity of violence used in the context of Asian mass violence and genocide, Anwar Ouassini and Nabil Ouassini discuss the interrelation between genocide and rape during the Bangladesh Liberation War.

The second section will discuss some specific victimologies of mass violence and genocide in Asia. Margaret D. Stetz will highlight new considerations related to the “Comfort Women” issue,<sup>50</sup> due to which young women and girls were forcefully recruited for a military brothel system run by the Japanese Army between the early 1930s and 1945. Samantha Christiansen will then highlight the role of students as an activist and victim group during the Bangladesh Liberation War. These chapters show, as mentioned before, that other victim identities, further to ethnic, national, or religious identities, must be taken into consideration when studying mass violence and genocide, especially in Asia.

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 464.

<sup>50</sup> For a recent and detailed discussion of this issue see: Pyong Gap Min, Thomas R. Chung and Sejung Yim, eds. *Japanese Military Sexual Slavery: The Transnational Redress Movement for the Victims* (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2019).

A closer look at perpetrators in the Asian context will afterwards be taken by Frank Jacob and Marcel Berni. While Jacob provides an insight into some first findings with regard to postwar narratives by Japanese perpetrators and their own perceptions of guilt and justice, Berni provides an analysis of atrocities in South Vietnam (1965–1973) that explains why excessive violence was committed and how it was perceived by the American perpetrators.

The final section will then deal with questions of memory and justice of mass violence and genocide in Asia. Toshiya Ikō will discuss the role of war crimes trials in China and how the postwar society of one of the new main players in the region would deal with Japanese war crimes. Paul Antonopoulos and Drew Cottle then discuss a “Forgotten Genocide in Indonesia,” focusing on West Papua and its struggle for independence. They also highlight the impact of these events and how they have been remembered in Indonesia until today. Last but not least, Michael G. Vann shows how Cold War politics shaped the way mass violence and genocide is remembered in museums in Jakarta, Ho Chi Minh City, and Phnom Penh today.

All in all, the present volume should be considered as an introductory reader for those who study mass violence and genocide in its Asian context and want to get an initial overview of recent research findings and approaches related to this topic. It offers a first insight and hopefully stimulates broader interest in questions that deal with the history of the “Age of Extremes” from a non-European or non-Western perspective. Mass violence and genocide were as deadly in Asia as they were and are anywhere else, which is why this region offers a variety of case studies, which, if they are taken as a comparison, can offer a better understanding of these two phenomena within human history from a really universal perspective.

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