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The Specter of genocide: mass murder in historical perspective, ed. by Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan. Cambridge, 2003. 306p index ISBN 0-521-82063-4, \$60.00; ISBN 0-521-52750-3 pbk, \$22.00. Reviewed in 2004jan CHOICE.

Kiernan (director, Genocide Studies Center, Yale Univ.) and Gellately (Holocaust history, Clark Univ.) have assembled a stellar group of academics to produce a first-rate book usefully balanced between theory and case studies and focusing on the 55 years since the UN genocide convention was adopted. Chapters come from 17 internationally respected scholars, about two-thirds from the US; their 15 chapters are, in turn, grouped into sections dealing with genocide and modernity, indigenous people and colonial issues, the two World Wars, and genocide and mass murder since WW II. All of the essays are good; many are excellent. War, revolution, and the absence of effective, responsive means of political expression stand out as common denominators in the various chapters, most of which are compressed into 15-25 pages. In some cases (e.g., Rwanda, Bosnia), the active participation of local inhabitants in mass killings was essential. Most chapters focus on a single country, the major exceptions being a comparison between Rwanda and Ethiopia, and the former Yugoslavia; East Timor is the only state examined twice (first when occupied by Indonesian forces, second when these troops withdrew). Summing Up: Highly recommended. Upper-division undergraduates and above. --- C. E. Welch, University at Buffalo, SUNY

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