

on the coverage of that catastrophe in media. Second, the volume goes beyond the mere collection of newspaper articles by offering, besides in-depth analyses of press coverage, an analysis of film. Third, the nine chapters collected in the volume bring together coverage of the Genocide in geographic areas, times, and issues that are rarely considered (Canada, for example). More than one essay highlights the significance of wartime state censorship of the press. Fourth, it offers a theoretical framework for the reception of media coverage of the event that focuses on “the rhetoric and representation” of the event, and on the contested nature of that representation. The volume, therefore, constitutes a remarkable contribution to our understanding of the relationship between media and historical memory.

The volume does have some problems, however. A more thorough summary of the period under study in the introduction would have been useful for the reader. Clearly not all chapters contribute directly to the debate implied in the title and initiated in the introduction. A few are simply narratives, detached from this debate and lacking solid contextualization.

The volume could also have benefitted from an analysis, even a brief one, of the relevance of media representations of the Armenian Genocide today, and of their bearing on the political behavior of Armenian polities today.

There certainly would have been room in the appropriate chapters to mention at least two recent works, among others, that are relevant to the debate, Marie-Aude Baronian’s *Mémoire et Image. Regards sur la catastrophe arménienne* (2013), and Muge Gocek’s *Denial of Violence: Ottoman Past, Turkish Present, and Collective Violence against the Armenians, 1789-2009* (2015), as well as an earlier volume that reproduced a large number of articles, *The Genocide arménien dans la presse Canadienne/The Armenian Genocide in the Canadian Press*, (1985). Finally, the volume could also have benefitted from a more rigorous copy editing.

These critical comments do not reduce the value of this volume for its sheer scope and contribution to the critical understanding between representation in media, politics, and historical memory.

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AKÇAM, Taner and Umit Kurt – *The Spirit of the Laws: The Plunder of Wealth in the Armenian Genocide*. Translated by Aram Arkun. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2015, Pp. 206.

Once the Armenian and Assyrians peoples were deported out of their historic lands and decimated through barbaric acts, there remained the question of the property, land, wealth, and civilization left behind. There was also the issue of survivors and their descendants who could have claims over what was euphemistically called ‘Abandoned Properties’ thus leading to the creation and refinement of the

“Abandoned Properties Laws”. Taner Akçam and Umit Kurt have already made important contributions to document the wrongful acts and the lies on which the current historical narrative of their country, Turkey, is built. With this book, they undertake the systematic examination of the legal framework put in place and refined over the years by successive Turkish governments, Ottoman and Republican, starting from the Genocide of 1915 in a systematic effort to cover up an important aspect of the planned annihilation of their own Armenian (and Assyrian) citizens and finally to deny citizenship rights to the former in 1964.

The book starts with a brief dedication to Hrant Dink, the editor of the Armenian Turkish newspaper AGOS, assassinated on January 19, 2007, in Istanbul. The inspiration for undertaking the research upon which the book is based derives from a question he asked during an interview: “What happened to the civilization, the wealth created by a thousand-year-old society (i.e. Armenians)?”

Scholars who work in the legal profession like to remind us that no laws can prevent genocides from being perpetrated or from recurring. The authors of this book point out that Raphael Lemkin (1944) introduced the concept of genocide for the first time in his book entitled *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* – anchoring his analysis not merely on the barbaric acts committed by the Nazis, but in law, and thus illustrating the fact that genocide is indeed embedded in ordinary legal documents. The book under review is a good case study echoing Lemkin’s the approach, providing illustration of the special structural and institutional basis for genocides.

The book consists of seven chapters, along with an introduction and conclusion. The introduction states the central thesis of the book: the Abandoned Properties Laws examined therein “were a structural element of the Armenian Genocide of 1915 as well as today’s Turkish system, and yet paradoxically, they continue to this very day to protect the rights of the Armenians to their properties.” (p. 2) The two authors go on to document their claim that the elimination of the physical and cultural existence of the Armenians in Anatolia was institutionalized in the Turkish legal system and that “This is why we call the system a genocidal regime.” (p. 13) This characterization of the system is seen as the root of the denialism perpetuated today by the Turkish state, of the difficult positioning of Turkey in international affairs, and of the possibility of risk to Turkey’s security itself. The authors make sure to indicate that the two questions are quite separate. They also seek to avoid confusion between the Abandoned Properties Laws and their implications, on the one hand, and the indemnity claims, on the other. The seven chapters of the book follow the evolution of the Abandoned Properties Laws from the different stages of Committee of Union and Progress Period, to the Republican Period, and to today, emphasising the Treaty of Lausanne as a turning point.

It is important to note the difficulty in approaching the topic of genocide from a purely legal perspective for two authors who are not merely historians but also Turkish citizens. They live a double moral dilemma and their courage to confront the examination of genocide is appreciated. They state in the conclusion of their book their wish to cleanse the shame inflicted by the state on its own citizens and express their hope to see change and transformation in Turkey: The last thing that

we can add is that, without changing this legal structure, the political and social democratization of Turkey will be very difficult. A society based on a mentality that views the absence of the other as the condition for its own existence, and on a legal system created as the product of this mentality, cannot be democratic. A future respecting human dignity and honor cannot be established. We have written these lines in the spirit and hope that this will be understood and changed one day. (p. 193)

This book is a valuable addition to filling the gaps of our understanding of genocide and helps readers navigate complex terrain in the case study presented. In this regard, at the end of the first four chapters, the authors have added summaries entitled “A Brief Evaluation” that capture the spirit of the laws discussed therein and their implications. It would have been interesting to add similar summaries to the three final chapters as well. The bibliography might have been further enriched by the presence of some relevant recent works, for example Kevork K. Baghdjian’s *The Confiscation of Armenian Properties by the Turkish Government Said to be Abandoned* (A.B. Gureghian, Translator, Editor; Yves Ternon, Introduction. Antelias, Lebanon: Catholicosate of His Eminence of Cilicia, 2010).

I recommend this book as a case study to be included in graduate level courses. In addition to its thorough review of the questionable statecraft of genocidal states, it is a reminder of the merits of engaged scholarship. Akçam and Kurt, by sharing their research as an act of solidarity with citizens who continue to challenge state restraints and master narratives based on genocide, make a contribution to the ongoing process of crafting a just society.

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MARCHAND, Laure et Guillaume Perrier – *La Turquie et le fantôme arménien : Sur les traces du génocide*. Arles, Solin- Actes Sud, 2013, 218 p.

C’est dans le contexte de l’approche du centenaire du premier génocide du XX^e siècle – perpétré par l’Empire ottoman contre les Arméniens, impuni et farouchement nié par le gouvernement turc – que deux journalistes, Laure Marchand et Guillaume Perrier, tous deux correspondants de presse en Turquie, l’une pour *Le Figaro* et *Le Nouvel Observateur*, l’autre pour *Le Monde*, nous offrent ce livre. Ce récit passionnant est une synthèse originale et surprenante d’une dizaine d’années d’enquêtes de terrain que les auteurs ont effectuées, surtout dans des lieux historiques en Turquie. Cet ouvrage, qui a eu un écho important dans les médias, a d’ailleurs été publié sous forme de bande dessinée en 2015.

Les auteurs nous proposent un voyage de l’intérieur, un voyage dans le temps et dans l’espace où l’ici et l’ailleurs se mélangent, les documents officiels et les témoignages conversent, où la diaspora et la Turquie se rejoignent et ce, en partant