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Editor's Introduction

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Editor's Introduction

The editors of *Genocide Studies and Prevention* are pleased to offer this general issue for volume 3, number 3. The next year will bring us to volume 4, our fourth year of publication. *GSP* has, we believe, offered some unique and interesting articles on the traditional topics of genocide studies, and we think we have published some new and innovative material. This issue continues that trend.

The first article, "Rape as Cultural Control: Consequences of Sexual Violence against Women during Genocide" by Allison Ruby Reid-Cunningham, is one of the first scholarly articles on rape during genocide to appear in a genocide journal. That this is a salient and important contemporary concern is evident in continuing revelations of the use of rape as a weapon of intimidation both in the Darfur region of Sudan and in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Responding to this type of situation, Reid-Cunningham argues that "rape is used as a tactic of war and genocide because of its physical and psychosocial consequence on individuals, families, and communities." She examines the cases of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Rwanda, Darfur, and the DRC and notes that the impact of rape spreads to the entire community. In particular, "forced impregnation . . . represents a symbolic conquest of the woman by the rapist and, by extension, of the raped woman's community, family, and culture."

This article is interesting and important because it points out how rape is a "regulation of power through sexual means," as well as "an instrument to inflict damage through sexual means." In this sense, it is an integral part of genocide. Reid-Cunningham fits her analysis into a theoretical framework and explicates the complicated relationship between rape and genocide. Her exceptional analysis moves genocide studies much farther along the path toward understanding how crimes against women are a major part of crimes against humanity. It is also our hope that this article will help to focus attention on this important and perennially relevant topic.

The second article in this issue highlights another important and often ignored aspect of genocide. Through his analysis of "Churchill in Munich," Robert Melson asks whether a "catastrophe averted is likely to be viewed as a catastrophe." As Melson argues, "politicians hesitate to act to prevent catastrophe in general, and genocide in particular, because if they act decisively and yet fail to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe they can be blamed for failure, while if they succeed at prevention they are unlikely to be rewarded for their success." To illustrate this idea, Melson poses this question: If Winston Churchill instead of Neville Chamberlain had gone to meet Adolf Hitler in Munich, and if he had succeeded in averting World War II, would he have been accused of bringing the world to the brink of war? Melson calls this the "the paradox of genocide prevention." As he notes,

the trouble is that no generation seems to know how to learn from the past and avoid the catastrophes of the future. In the context of uncertainty, ambiguity, and unintended consequences that is the future, political leaders do not wish to incur the costs of prevention. These costs may be too high, endangering their political survival, while the political benefits may be too low or even nonexistent.

While Melson's essay raises important and interesting questions about genocide prevention, it does not directly address the problem of proving a negative. That is, how

can one ever know what was prevented, and how does one know what might have occurred? Such speculation is, of course, at the heart of the modern debate over genocide prevention.

The third article in this issue, "Theorizing Destruction: Reflections on the State of comparative Genocide Theory" by Maureen Hiebert, is a needed review of some of the recent literature in what Hiebert refers to as the "young discipline that seeks to understand an 'old scourge.'" Hiebert's focus is on the "comparative analysis of multiple cases of genocide" and, in particular, on "comparative genocide theory."

Hiebert believes, in fact, that the focus on definitions of genocide leaves "comparative genocide studies under-theorized relative to other disciplines in the social science and humanities." She progresses through the different approaches, summarizing and analyzing each. Her thorough examination is too detailed for this brief introduction; her conclusion is that while "comparative genocide theory has flourished over the last twenty years," we now need to "concentrate on how we theorize, specifically how we create comparative theories and how we test those theories using the comparative method." Overall, she points out, genocide scholars must find a way to "bridge the gap between abstract theorizing . . . and concrete policy making."

The piece that follows constitutes a major shift in attention. In "Why are we learning this? Does Studying the Holocaust Encourage Better Citizenship Values?" Henry Maitles examines the "relationship between learning about the Holocaust and the development of positive values." Maitles' research was designed to find out whether learning about the Holocaust affected students' attitudes on contemporary issues such as racism and discrimination. After testing a cohort of about 100 students (aged 11 and 12) who studied the Holocaust and comparing them with peers who did not, he found that the group who studied the Holocaust "maintained more positive values than they had before their lessons on the Holocaust and were more positive than their peers."

Again shifting topics, the fifth article, by Wibke Timmerman, examines the impact of hate speech as it relates to genocide. In "Counteracting Hate Speech as a Way of Preventing Genocidal Violence," Timmermann argues that hate speech precedes and is part of ethnic violence and genocide. Her basic argument that "vicious, systematic, and state-organized hate propaganda should be criminalized under international law" is based on several justifications for "proscribing hate speech," including the protection of human dignity and of the equality rights of victims of such speech; the need to "protect public peace"; and the danger that hate speech may create a "climate of hate and violence directed against a specific group."

Although Timmermann maintains that this approach respects "the important right to freedom of speech," and attempts to elaborate that argument, her discussion does not sufficiently counter the fact that legal systems that protect free speech within their constitutions, in particular the United States, would have a difficult time justifying the approach she advocates. Her argument that hate speech prepares populations for crimes planned by the country's leadership is not universal, since hate speech of many different forms may be found in most societies, the majority of which have not committed genocide. Therefore, while this article opens an important discussion, it does not definitively answer the important questions posed by the author or by those interested in the prevention of genocide and the preservation of free speech. That discussion continues, and we hope it will produce more articles to be submitted to *GSP*.

The final article in this volume is our second Research Note. We publish Research Notes when the submission is not sufficiently developed to be included as a full-length article but contains important material on a topic currently being researched by the author. Research Notes highlight ongoing research and address topics about which little is known.

In the present case, “The Greek Relief Committee: America’s Response to the Greek Genocide” by Nikolaos Hlamides examines the role of an aid organization based in New York City that worked from 1917 through 1921 to administer aid to the Ottoman Greek population “in response to the genocide of the Greeks in the Ottoman Empire.” Hlamides highlights a relatively ignored and largely unknown chapter in the genocides of the twentieth century.

As we submit this last issue of volume 3 and plan for volume 4, we trust that you have found an array of interesting and innovative material in *Genocide Studies and Prevention*. As far as we are aware, we were the first journal to publish an article on rape in genocide; the first to call for a change in international law to add an entire new category of crimes, as called for by David Scheffer (“atrocities crimes”); the first to publish a symposium on international law and genocide that revolved around this proposal; and the first to publish a special issue on the aftermath of genocide—in addition to the many other accomplishments that characterize *GSP*’s three short years of publication. We trust that you will renew your membership in the International Association of Genocide Studies to continue to receive *Genocide Studies and Prevention* as perhaps the best means to stay up to date on the latest research in the field and to help support the continued publication of the journal. We, the editors, want to thank you for your continued support as readers, contributors, and reviewers. With that in mind, we are proud to offer *GSP* 3:3 to our readers.

Herb Hirsch
GSP Co-editor