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# Editor's Introduction

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We are very pleased to enter our third year of publication. The editors hope that you found the first two volumes of *Genocide Studies and Prevention* stimulating and innovative. Our purpose has been to publish the most important, relevant, and interesting material related to the study and prevention of genocide. We will endeavor to maintain what we think has been a successful effort as we enter our third volume year.

Accordingly, *GSP* 3:1 is a general issue with an eclectic array of articles covering important and controversial topics in genocide studies.

The lead article, "The Three 'Switches' of Identity Construction in Genocide: The Nazi Final Solution and the Cambodian Killing Fields" by Maureen Hiebert, is an addition to some of the theoretical concepts most integral to the study of genocide. Hiebert argues that "elites decide to commit genocide, and not some less catastrophic policy of repression or violence, when three conceptual 'switches' concerning the identity, interests, and future actions of the victim group are 'turned on' by the perpetrators." These are closely related to some of the traditional conceptualizations of earlier genocide scholars. For example, the first "switch" involves "the victim group" losing its "status within the political community and [being] constructed as outsiders to whom rights and obligations are no longer owed." This is really another version of the famous idea Helen Fein first discussed in her pioneering work *Understanding Genocide* when she coined the term "the universe of moral obligation" and noted that victim groups are often defined as being outside that universe. They are then viewed, as Hiebert notes, as "dangerous enemies" and finally as subhumans "who can be killed without compunction." Hiebert's "switches" are very close to the process of dehumanization that has been a consistent component of many theories concerning the genocidal process; in the end, her view of the process also involves a trigger related to economic and political crises.

The second article in this issue, "Value Hierarchies of Holocaust Rescuers and Resistance Fighters," is an empirical examination comparing participants in armed resistance movements with individuals who rescued Jews from the Nazi Holocaust. Using quantitative measures and thematic content analysis, Peter Suedfeld and Stefanie de Best compare forty-seven members of resistance movements and fifty Holocaust rescuers. Finding both differences and similarities, they also examine the implications of their research for the study of altruism in extreme circumstances. As there are few such empirical examinations, this study forms an important building block in the continuing research on helping behavior.

In the third contribution, "Kurds in Turkey and in (Iraqi) Kurdistan: A Comparison of Kurdish Educational Language Policy in Two Situations of Occupation," Tove Skutnabb-Kangas and Desmond Fernandes compare what they call "linguistic human rights." Using this term to refer to the right to study the language of the culture of a person's birth, they accuse Turkey of committing "linguistic and cultural genocide (according to definition of genocide in Articles 2b and 2e in the UNGC) in relation to the Kurdish nation/minority." The authors examine the different educational outcomes in Turkey and Iraq and discuss some of the reasons for the differences and similarities.

As a result of this comparison, this is a controversial and interesting analysis with important political and educational consequences.

Robert McCormick's "The United States' Response to Genocide in the Independent State of Croatia, 1941–1945," examines an incident of genocide that has received little scholarly attention. Focusing on the role of the United States in the genocide engineered in Croatia by Ante Pavelić and his Ustaše Party, McCormick points out that the atrocities received public scrutiny but were largely ignored by US policy makers, a phenomenon he attributes to the concern that public commentary might "foster violence in the United States that would weaken the domestic war effort, especially in heavy industry where Yugoslav immigrants tended to work." McCormick concludes that genocide was committed in Croatia while American authorities decided to remain silent and engaged in "exceedingly pragmatic decisions designed to maintain a peaceful and productive war effort."

The last full-length article in the issue examines various aspects of the Holocaust as they were "prefigured" by the Armenian Genocide. As one of the pre-eminent scholars of Armenian history, Vahakn Dadrian is in a particularly advantageous position from which to make such a comparison. He intends, as he notes, to examine "the common body of knowledge by exploring in more detail the comparative aspects of the two genocides. Such an attempt does not preclude some of the very important other aspects separating the two, nor does it discount the distinct pre-eminence of the Holocaust in the overall picture of genocide studies . . ." In short, Dadrian is interested in the comparative study of genocide in order to provide insights into the causes and eventual prevention of the crime.

*GSP* 3:1 also gives us an opportunity to offer readers both a review essay and a research note. The review essay, by Taner Akçam, is an extended engagement with a book that has generated great concern among genocide scholars. Since Gunter Lewy published *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey: A Disputed Genocide* in 2004, the book has generated discussion and controversy. Lewy's main thesis is that because, as he asserts, significant numbers of Armenians openly fought the Turks, Armenians were themselves to blame for any violence that befell them. Akçam systematically and critically sets out Lewy's arguments and just as systematically and critically demonstrates how each is flawed, concluding that Lewy's "premises, assessments, and conclusions are based on an incomplete study of the material and [that] he is not in command of the subject matter." There is little doubt that Akçam's very comprehensive review will not satisfy those who continue to deny the fact that the massacre of the Armenians was, in fact, a "genocide," nor will it persuade them of the questionable scholarship of Lewy's book. The fact that there is a pervasive political dimension to this debate is reinforced continually and is no way more evident than in the recent warning (delivered on 9 October 2007) from the government of Turkey to the United States that, if the US Congress passes a bill recognizing as "genocide" the Ottoman empire's killing of Armenians, the bilateral relationship between the United States and Turkey will suffer. Therefore, a scholarly disposition and critical analysis of Lewy's book, such as Akçam's, is essential to bring the discussion back to a semblance of rationality.

Finally, we offer our first "research note." Research notes, as we see them, are shorter pieces in which interesting, controversial, and ongoing research is discussed in a format shorter than article length. The present contribution, "Fear Not, For You Have Brothers in Greece" by Hikmet Karčić, examines a virtually unknown aspect of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. It is a little-known fact that, during the aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, volunteers from many

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Orthodox countries fought in the Army of the Republika Srpska. These volunteers included, according to the author, Ukrainians, Romanians, Greeks, and Russians. Karčić points out that this topic is “important” and “controversial” and “has been little investigated”; his research note explores the role of Greece and Greek fighters and attempts to put them in the historical perspective of the conflict.

We, the editors, hope that this third volume will continue our record of publishing high-quality, interesting, and controversial research as we strive to stimulate further interest in studying and preventing genocide.

*Herb Hirsch*  
*GSP Co-editor*

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# The Three "Switches" of Identity Construction in Genocide: The Nazi Final Solution and the Cambodian Killing Fields

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*If we want to understand why political elites choose to commit genocide, we need to inquire into how elite perpetrators reconstruct the collective identity of the victim group such that genocide becomes the only possible policy option. This article argues that elites decide to commit genocide, and not some other less catastrophic policy of repression or violence, when three conceptual "switches" concerning the identity, interests, and future actions of the victim group are "turned on" by the perpetrators. First, members of the victim group lose their (often marginal) status within the political community and are constructed as outsiders, to whom rights and obligations are no longer owed. Next, they come to be seen as dangerous enemies whose continued physical presence is seen to pose an overwhelming threat to the political community. This second mortal-threat conception consists of three mortal-threat "motifs": the struggle between the perpetrator and victims as an epic battle; the victims as the controlling force behind, or controlled by, powerful threatening external forces; and the victims as carriers of deadly biological contagion. Finally, the victims are viewed as subhumans who can be killed without compunction. The process of identity reconstruction as a whole is underpinned by a pre-genocide history of exclusionary and authoritarian intergroup norms and practices, and of authoritarian approaches to conflict management, and is triggered by serious economic, political, or security crises.*

*Keywords: genocide, identity, constructivism, Holocaust, Cambodian genocide*

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## Introduction

For genocide scholars, the overriding research question is, Why does something so terrible as genocide happen (and continue to happen)? Given the enormous scope of the question and the problems associated with grand theorizing in the social sciences,<sup>1</sup> one way to at least partially answer this larger question is to attempt to answer several smaller ones: What are the underlying conditions that lead to genocide? Why are certain groups identified as targets? Why do bystanders allow the killing to occur? Why do the perpetrators do what they do? and so on. This article deals with another smaller but central question: Why do political elites choose a policy of genocide instead of some other less catastrophic and irrevocable policy?

As several genocide scholars have noted, the genocides of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have often been preceded by serious destabilizing security, economic, or political crises with which the eventual victims of genocide come to be negatively identified.<sup>2</sup> If we want to know why genocide against a specific group or groups becomes the policy option of political elites in the wake of crisis, we need to think through carefully the way in which genocidal political elites and the dominant

society reconceptualize the victim group's identity, interests, and potential actions as a response to crises. I argue here that elite conceptions of the victim group that culminate in genocide go beyond identifying the victim group as being to blame for specific crises (the scapegoat theory) or as a general threat to the future well-being of the political community. If the collective identity-construction process stops at this point, the policy response is likely to be anything from the arrest and repression of the group's cultural, political, or economic elite to restrictions on members' economic, political, or cultural activities. More seriously, elites may choose to use violence to encourage flight or to terrorize the group into submission, or they may use large-scale population-control measures such as physical segregation, internal deportation, or expulsion, as well as retributive massacres. State-sponsored violence, terror, forced population movements, and, of course, mass killing are, to be sure, often part of the genocidal process itself. But in genocide they are specific policies designed to achieve the larger policy goal of physically liquidating all or a part of the victim group; they are not stand-alone policies believed by elites to be sufficient to counter the real and perceived threats posed by a specific group.

The central claim being made here is that the reconstruction of the identity, interests, and future actions of the victim group that leads to specifically genocidal policies consists of a more precise formulation of the threat the victim group is believed to pose. Fundamental to the reconceptualization process is the emergent belief that the victim group imperils the dominant community *through the mere fact of its continued physical existence*. Because the existence of the victim group is perceived to be the ultimate source of the threat menacing the political community, the physical liquidation of the victim group is understood by political elites (and accepted by the dominant society) as the only way to protect society, truly and definitively, from a pernicious and threatening "enemy within." Without this specific reconceptualization process, the response to crises would be other, less catastrophic forms of state violence, repression, or conflict in which the victim group is stripped of real material power but not of the lives of the members of the group.

To understand how political elites arrive at this specific reconceptualization of the victim group, I begin by unpacking the mutually reinforcing and constitutive relationship between structures and elite agency and then show how this relationship influences the process by which elite political actors choose to initiate and execute genocide. The article then examines what are called, in this study, the three conceptual "switches" regarding the victim group—as foreigners, as mortal threats, and as subhumans—that must be "turned on" in order for genocide to happen. The final section provides a brief illustration of the argument with reference to two relatively dissimilar cases of genocide: the Nazis' Final Solution against the Jews of Europe (a "racial"/ethnic genocide) and the Cambodian genocide (a political/revolutionary genocide).<sup>3</sup>

### **Genocide as a "Rational Choice"**

On the face of it, genocide as a response to a crisis and a perceived threat to society is not only evil but irrational. Reasonable human beings would rightly ask why the Nazis, the Khmer Rouge, the Young Turks, or the Hutu Power regime chose to destroy whole groups of people in response to real and perceived threats, to exterminate men, women, and children simply because of who they were. It is an act that seems to rest on entirely irrational prejudices, fears, and suspicions. But, as Helen Fein suggests, genocide is, from the perspective of the perpetrators, an apparently "rational choice"—a

“goal-oriented act [that] is rationally instrumental to their ends.”<sup>4</sup> Genocide is a rational choice not because of the ideas or perceptions upon which it is based but because of the decision-making process that leads to its perpetration.

In a recent example of an attempt to explain genocide as a rational, goal-oriented strategic policy, Benjamin Valentino contends that elites commit genocide in order to realize radical policy goals. In pursuit of these wider policy goals, perpetrator elites employ exterminatory policies against a target group to force its members to do something they would otherwise not do that is required for the realization of these policies—for example, to submit to a radical new way of life, to give up their homes and possessions, to cease supporting political and military opposition groups—or to counter threats posed by a group. This decision, for Valentino, is made only when leaders have concluded that other options for achieving their ends, including less violent forms of repression or limited concessions to victim groups, are ineffective or impractical.<sup>5</sup> Valentino further suggests that what he calls “ethnic mass killing”<sup>6</sup> takes place when elites believe that the victims “pose a threat that can be countered only by physically removing [them] from society.”<sup>7</sup>

Leaving aside Valentino’s assertion that genocide is a means to a strategic end rather than a policy goal in and of itself (a position that has been the subject of much debate among genocide scholars for some time), his argument concerning conceptions of threat and the decision to commit genocide is convincing, but it does not go far enough. Neither the general perception of threat attributed to the victim group nor the failure of less drastic policies directed at specific groups to realize other policy goals is, on its own, enough to explain why genocide specifically is the policy response of radical political elites, rather than other forms of violence and repression. We need to go further and inquire into how elites construct the identities of their victims such that genocide becomes *the only* policy option.

Another possible approach to explaining why and how political elites make the rational but horrible choice to commit genocide is rational choice theory. As an exclusively agency-oriented explanation of political behavior, rational choice theory argues that actors choose between sets of goals; that goals are “ordered by purposive actors”; that the possible choices that actors might make are only those known to the chooser; that actors try to choose the best means to their ends; that means themselves are chosen through a process of calculating “subjective expected utility”; and that “intentions can be inferred from behaviour.”<sup>8</sup> Significantly for the present study, rational choice theory does not inquire into how actors arrive at their intentions or goals. Rational choice theorist William H. Riker argues that linking intentions to prevailing social norms or structures is an “unnecessary convolution that complicates but does not eliminate the rational choice model,” because social norms “are themselves creations of actors for some purpose,” elements that actors choose from to frame their intentions and make their choices.<sup>9</sup>

Using a rational choice approach, we might argue that genocide (the observed behavior of a state or comparable authority) is simply based on the intention to respond to a crisis or set of crises and to meet a threat posed to the political community. But without examining how genocidal elites arrive at this intention, and what precisely underpins it, we have no way of knowing why genocide, and not some other, less horrific form of repression or violence, is the response to crisis. All that rational choice theory can tell us is that intentions are connected to goals and that purposive actors act to achieve their goals, based on a set of expected utility calculations that genocidal elites *may* follow in making the choice to commit genocide.<sup>10</sup> Riker’s understanding of social

norms or structures as simply the outcome of previous choices by actors misses the possibility that agents' actions consciously shape social norms and structures only part of the time—that is, that actors do not stand apart from ideational or material structures and simply pick and choose which elements of structure, such as norms, beliefs, and practices, will influence their intentions and goals. Missing in rational choice explanations is the mutually constitutive nature of structure and agency and, therefore, the crucial ideational content that informs a choice to commit genocide as opposed to some other act.

The missing content can be filled in by examining the interrelationship between structure and agency—specifically, how the mutually constitutive relationship between structure and agency affects how genocidal elites come to reconstruct the interests, identity, and future actions of the victim group.

## **A Constructivist Explanation**

As several genocide scholars have pointed out, modern genocides are motivated in part by ideas. Robert Melson argues, for example, that revolutionary ideologies and the revolutions they inspire call for the radical restructuring of society and the exclusion of whole groups of people who are defined either as outside the new revolutionary order or as fundamental threats to it.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, Eric Weitz suggests that genocidal ideologies are founded on modern exclusionary conceptions, such as nation, race, social Darwinism, eugenics, hygiene, and imperialism, that have been combined in lethal ways by genocidal elites to create ideologies that variously espouse the superiority of specific races, the need for ethnically homogenous nation-states, the imperative of protecting one's own race from contamination by other races, and, in the case of communism, the overthrow of exploitative economic systems and the socioeconomic groups that dominate these systems.<sup>12</sup> As Alex Alvarez also shows, such ideologies are used by genocidal elites to manipulate state institutions and ordinary people alike to target specific groups for elimination.<sup>13</sup>

Arguments that emphasize ideology are important, because they help identify why genocidal regimes pinpoint certain groups as either superfluous or dangerous and in need of removal from the new revolutionary order. But what ideology on its own cannot explain is why genocide becomes the policy, rather than economic marginalization, physical segregation, or expulsion. Weitz, for example, lays out in great detail the origins of Nazi racist ideology but, in his treatment of the Holocaust, does not explain why the same ideology singled out the Jews for complete extermination while the Poles were slated for perpetual servitude. In short, the same ideology produced two difference policy outcomes for two separate groups.

While acknowledging the importance of ideology in the overall genocidal process, we need to examine the importance of ideas—particularly shared cultural and political norms, beliefs, and historical practices—in a slightly different way if we want to understand how it is that elites come to choose genocide as a policy option. Specifically, we need to concentrate on how genocidal elites come to construct the identities of their victims and how this identity construction is influence by pre-genocide norms, beliefs, and practices. How elites construct the identities of groups in society determines whether genocide or some other form of repression or violence becomes the policy of the state. To be sure, the motivations to commit genocide for mid-level officials and front-line killers, although influenced by elite conceptions of the victim group and by the same set of shared exclusionary norms and practices that inspire elite actors, are not identical to those of senior decision makers. Christopher Browning's research into the

evolution of the Nazi Final Solution, for example, shows that “desk killers” of various ranks were driven by a variety of imperatives, from bureaucratic infighting to career advancement,<sup>14</sup> while social psychologist James Waller argues that the ordinary people who actually do the killing do so because of the all-too-human social-psychological tendency to acquiesce to authority and the perceived requirements of group solidarity, to allow killing to become routinized over time, and to see members of out-groups as competitors or threats.<sup>15</sup>

Drawing on constructivist social theory, international relations theorist Alexander Wendt argues, in his self-described meta-theory of collective identity construction, that the subjective understanding of a group’s identity is influenced not only by formal political and economic organizational arrangements, and by the material distribution of power capabilities between collective actors, but also by knowledge and practices.<sup>16</sup> Wendt suggests that material and ideational structures broadly construed, not just political ideologies, shape conceptions of identities and interests, as well as behavior, not only among members of one’s own group but with respect to other groups. Collective identities are thus constructed and reconstructed according to collective understandings of the “self” and “other.” Meanwhile, conceptions of the “reality” of intergroup relations are also socially constructed, such that new sets of mutual understandings, expectations, knowledge, and perceived interests regarding different groups can either change or solidify over time and thus, in turn, can change or solidify certain intergroup relationships and actions.<sup>17</sup>

For Wendt, the structure of social consciousness—what he terms the “distribution of ideas or knowledge”—is shared among actors in the form of norms, rules, or institutions. Social and ideational structures constitute identities and interests, helping actors to, for example, find common solutions to problems, define expectations of behavior, and identify what constitutes a threat.<sup>18</sup> I argue here that in genocide, the “distribution of ideas” is composed of formalized rules and practices of exclusionary and unequal group interaction, exclusionary norms concerning conceptions of the community, and authoritarian methods of conflict management that exist prior to the genocide. These pre-genocide practices, norms, and ideas, in turn, serve as the lens through which the meaning of crises is interpreted, namely, as the responsibility of the victim group, such that the victim group is believed to pose a general threat to the political community in the future. Exclusionary practices and norms also function as the material and ideational foundation upon which rests political elites’ further reconstruction of the collective interests, identities, and behavioral expectations of the victim group as a mortal threat to the continued survival of the race, revolution, or nation.

As for how the “rational choice” to commit genocide is made, we must inquire into how preferences are constituted, because, as Wendt tells us, “we want what we want because of how we think about it.”<sup>19</sup> Motivations, desires, or interests should be seen as “schemas,” “scripts,” “frames,” or “representations,” which are knowledge structures that make possible “the identification of objects and events.”<sup>20</sup> How elites think about a crisis and specific groups in society and how they come to reframe the identity, interests, and future actions of the victim group are part of a pattern of symbolic interaction in which collective actors relate to one another on the basis of the meaning they have given to one another and to the specific acts they perform. These meanings themselves stem from how the broader situation is understood, which, in turn, is itself “embedded in culture.”<sup>21</sup> Actors revise their definitions of the situation as they learn more about each other through continued social interaction. In situations in

which power capabilities are uneven—as is clearly the case between the perpetrators and the victims of genocide—“social acts . . . tend to evolve in the direction favored by the more powerful.”<sup>22</sup>

Wendt argues that, like individual actors, collective actors engage in “perspective taking” (i.e., cognitively standing in the others’ shoes) to further define each other’s identity and interests. Through a process of shared interaction, Ego shapes a conception of Alter that may or may not be objectively correct. Incorrect interpretations of the identity and interests of Alter are not, however, the result of incomplete information about Alter or of misinterpretations of the “facts” about Alter, as rational choice theory would suggest. Instead, emerging perceptions of Alter, no matter what they are, are not passive perceptions of something that exists independent of Ego

but actively and over time *constitutive* of Alter’s role vis-à-vis Ego. Through her representational practices Ego is saying to Alter, “you *are* an X, and I will act toward you as if you were an X.” To that extent who Alter is, in this interaction, depends on who Ego *thinks* Alter is . . . Role-identities are the meanings that actors attribute to themselves when seeing themselves as an object, that is, from the perspective of the Other. To that extent who Ego is, in this interaction, is not independent of who Ego thinks Alter thinks Ego is . . . These self-understandings are in one sense inside Ego’s own head, but they only become meaningful in virtue of Alter confirming them, which is to say in virtue of social relations.<sup>23</sup>

Playing the role of Wendt’s “Ego,” genocidal political elites take the perspective of “Alter”—that is, the victim group—such that the latter is believed to see in the state and the dominant society a community that will be or is already covertly under the group’s control, and/or a vulnerable society that can be exploited and ruined, to the victim group’s advantage. Perpetrator elites, in effect, say to the victim group, “Your continued existence *is* a mortal threat to our continued survival, and we expect you to act as such a threat, and we will act toward you as if you were a mortal threat.” For genocidal elites, the victim group’s identity *is* that of a mortal threat, because elites *think* the group is a mortal threat.

This “perspective” is not, of course, the real perspective of the victim group but a socially constructed one, based on perceptions rooted in pre-genocide exclusionary norms and practices and in the interpretation of crisis. When political elites contemplate genocide in the wake of crises, they do not, of course, begin a brand-new process of social interaction with the victim group. Rather, the process of symbolic interaction through perspective taking is a continuation of the social interaction between elites and the dominant society, on the one hand, and the eventual victim group, on the other, that has been going on for years but is now pursued in a more urgent and malevolent fashion.

The conceptual possibility of coming to see the victim group’s existence as a mortal threat is grounded in widely held and entrenched pre-genocide norms and practices marked by an unequal and exclusionary relationship between the victim group and rest of society; in the tendency for groups in society to engage in informal sectarian associational arrangements; in a conception of the political community that views the victim group as outside or marginal to “true” or “authentic” membership in the community; and in a state with a history of seeing societal conflicts—including those involving the victim group—as serious threats to the stability of the state and society that must be countered with repression, exclusion, and possibly force. Crises serve to animate the worst existing conceptions of the victim group as well as to create an extremist context in which political elites search for a way to understand the situation

they are in, to bring the crisis or crises to a conclusion, and to prevent such crises in the future.<sup>24</sup> Turning to an already suspect group, elites engage in a renewed process of interaction through perspective taking with the eventual victims of genocide. Drawing on existing conceptions of the group and a recent history of disruptive crises, elites read into the identity, interests, and future actions of the victim group a new and more powerful threat to the community that can be solved only through deadly "final solutions" to what are presented as perennial, and now urgent and deadly, "problems."

By comparison, in non-genocidal situations, either the response to crises includes no reconceptualization of the identity and future behavior of groups in society, or the reconceptualization process does not involve seeing the continued physical presence of a specific group as an overwhelming threat. In the former situation, crises are accompanied by a conceptualization process in which different groups within the political community continue to be seen as full members of that community, with commonly held rights and obligations *vis-à-vis* each other and the state and shared goals for the future. Cooperation or, at least, accommodation in the face of internal or external crises, whether economic, political, or military/security, is the result. The political community, while in some instances still heterogeneous, is nonetheless conceived of by elites and by members of society as a whole as one political community to which all members of society still belong. Here the collective self is conceptualized as inclusive, such that there is no other; a collective self thus confronts crisis as a unified whole. Unlike genocidal situations, such cases are characterized by intersubjective understandings of society based on an existing political culture of tolerance and inclusiveness.

In instances where non-genocidal state violence, repression, or intergroup conflict is the result of crises—for example, the Spanish Civil War—membership in the political community may become contested at the same time that there is an absence of common goals within the larger political community. The groups involved, whether they be ethnically, religiously, linguistically, economically, or politically defined, see each other as competitors for economic, political, military/security, territorial, or social goods in the present and possibly even as threats to group gains in the future. While the important element of threat and fear for the future also occurs in genocide, non-genocidal conflict situations produce intergroup conflict because the threat posed by competing groups is perceived to be mutual and is derived from actually existing power capabilities, not from the mere fact of a group's physical existence. Conflict between groups or state-sponsored repression is pursued in order to weaken a competitor group, to acquire the group's capabilities, or to subordinate or even repress members of the group so that one's own group or the state may reap the benefits of having acquired the adversary's power capabilities (e.g., territory, economic and political power) for present and future gain and protection.

Like cases of genocide, situations of mutual conflict are marked by a conceptualization of the collective self and other in which a relatively strict boundary is drawn between the competing groups. Intergroup conflict is also frequently underpinned by exclusionary and authoritarian norms and practices. But such situations differ from genocide in that each group does objectively maintain some kind of real power capability and that the contest itself is, for the most part, over real things and, therefore, is not a purely constructed one.

### **Constructing Victims: The "Three Switches" of Genocide**

The collective identity reconceptualization process that leads to genocide involves three discernible yet often overlapping switches that must be turned on in order for genocide

to occur. What sets this process apart from situations of mutual conflict and from the exercise of non-genocidal state violence is the conceptualization of the victim group as a powerful and dangerous “enemy within” whose overwhelming power is believed to derive from their physical existence. The three switches are (1) the identification of the victim group as outside or foreign to the political community; (2) the identification of the victim group as an almost superhumanly powerful, dangerous “enemy within” whose continued existence threatens the very survival of the political community; and (3) the paradoxical identification of the victim group as subhuman.

The first switch in the process revolves around the definition of who lies within and outside the political community or what Helen Fein calls the universe of reciprocal obligations.<sup>25</sup> The function of this conceptualization is to delineate clearly to whom political, economic, and social rights and obligations are owed, including citizenship, constitutionally recognized political rights, socioeconomic support, and participation in the economy. Those who are conceptualized to lie outside the political community are deemed not to be entitled to such obligations and are, therefore, reconceptualized from marginalized insiders to non-members or “foreigners.” A strict boundary is drawn between “us” and “them,” or the collective “self” and the alien “other.” This boundary is similar to that drawn between competitor groups in situations of intergroup conflict but goes much further, in that membership in the political community is no longer contested by competing groups, as is the case, for example, in civil wars. Rather, the victim group is unilaterally stripped of membership, first conceptually and then practically, by the state and the dominant society. No longer part of the community, the victim group is effectively removed from society, and thus from protection by their (former) fellow citizens against a hostile state.

The second switch in the genocidal conceptual process is the one that is entirely unique to genocide. The now “foreign” victim group is further reconceptualized as a powerful enemy bent on the destruction of the dominant group. Crucially, the source of this power and threat is believed to reside, ultimately, with the physical presence of the victim group. The continued existence of the victim group thus portends great danger for the very survival of the wider community and produces, as Daniel Chirot and Clark McCauley note, an intense “fear of extermination.”<sup>26</sup> The history and future of the political community are reconstructed as an epic battle between a virtuous “us” and an alien, subversive, inherently threatening “enemy within.” Claims regarding the supposed economic, political, or other manifestations of the victim group’s power are regularly asserted, but the actual resources or power capabilities possessed by the victim group are dwarfed by those held by the perpetrator state and the dominant society. Objectively, the victim group does not pose a credible threat to the dominant society. Because it is believed that the victim group derives its overwhelming power from the members’ physical existence, and not from substantive power capabilities, conflict, or repression—in which real power capabilities could potentially be removed from a threatening group—is not enough; to neutralize the perceived threat posed by the victim group, its members must be physically eliminated in order to rid the group of the true source of its power. As psychologist Robert Jay Lifton concludes in his study of Nazi doctors at Auschwitz, “where the threat is so absolute and so ultimate... genocide becomes not only appropriate but an urgent necessity.”<sup>27</sup> Lifton continues, “thus perceived as an absolute threat to the continuous life of one’s own people, the victim group is seen as the bearer of death and therefore the embodiment of evil. More than merely nonhuman or heathen, it is dangerously anti-man and anti-God. Its disease takes the form of infecting others with death taint and deadly

weakness . . . Only genocide, total elimination of the disease will protect one from that weakness." Because the victim group "threatens one's own people with extinction . . . one must absolutely extinguish him first."<sup>28</sup>

More specifically, the second-switch conception of the victim group is grounded in, and expressed as, three mortal-threat "motifs" in which the very survival of the political community is perceived by political elites to be at stake. The first motif is that of "epic struggle," in which elite perpetrators believe that they are engaged in a battle to the death—a "race war" or "class conflict," for example—with their victims. Victory requires the physical liquidation of the threatening victim group, whose own victory is thought to result in the destruction of the race, nation, or revolution. The second threat motif is that of pernicious foreign ideological or national influence or invasion. For some perpetrators, this conception involves linking the extermination of the victim group with the need to save the political community from threatening external actors who are believed to be under the victim group's control. For other perpetrators, "internal enemies" are targeted because of their supposed links to expansionist or powerful external actors. Finally, the third threat motif is expressed as a disease metaphor. According to this perception, the victims must be physically eliminated because their continued existence is believed to expose the perpetrators and the wider society to lethal contagions. Perceived as "microbes," "bacteria," or "cancer," members of the victim group are to be killed through violent processes of "purification," "cleansing," and the surgical "cutting out" of diseased parts.

The dehumanization of the foreigner-*cum*-dangerous-enemy-within is the final switch of the genocidal reconceptualization process. This conceptualization of the victim group is not the motivation for genocide, as much of the existing genocide literature suggests, but, instead, provides an understanding of the victim group that is necessary in order for the actual extermination to take place. The dehumanization of the victim group is not enough to lead to genocide, because to see members of a particular group as subhuman is not to impute to them the capacity or the power to constitute an overwhelming mortal threat. The Nazis, for example, regarded Poles and other Slavs as *Untermenschen*, as less-than-human beings to be repressed and transformed into slave laborers for the Third Reich and the new German East. Here only the third switch was turned on. Jews, on the other hand, were regarded as mortal threats who, because of the very fact of their existence, had to be exterminated.

Victims of genocide are nonetheless dehumanized by being equated with "animals," "vermin," or "pests," so that the actual act of exterminating whole groups of people becomes intellectually comprehensible and psychologically tolerable for perpetrators and bystanders alike. Whereas the mortal-threat conceptualization (the second switch) provides the motivation and rationale for genocide, dehumanizing the victim group makes the actual genocide psychologically palatable and, therefore, makes its perpetration possible. As Herbert Kelman argues, dehumanization in a genocidal context is one of the processes by which the "usual moral inhibitions against violence become weakened." Such an understanding of the target group creates a situation in which "moral principles no longer apply to the victim," thus facilitating smooth and efficient killing, as moral restrictions are more easily overcome.<sup>29</sup>

### **The Nazis' Final Solution and the Cambodian Killing Fields**

What follows is a necessarily brief analysis of the three switches with reference to the Final Solution and the Cambodian Killing Fields. Rather than a chronological narrative of each genocide or a detailed examination of the available historical

evidence regarding exactly when and how the decision to commit genocide was made, the discussion will focus on a few key illustrations of how elite perpetrators reconceptualized the identity of their victims in such a way that they came to consider genocide the only acceptable policy option.

## The First Switch

The first conceptual switch for Germany's Jews was turned on by Adolf Hitler and his victorious National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) shortly after they came to power in January 1933. Central to the Nazi conception of German Jews at this time was the idea that Jews were inherently foreign and that a strict boundary must be drawn between the alien, corrupting "Jew" and the German, or "Aryan," majority. Hitler saw conceptually and practically stripping German Jews of their "Germanness" as key to achieving the *völkisch* ideal of a strong, homogeneous, and united Germany free of destructive Jewish influence. Looking back on the first years of Nazi leadership, Hitler made plain this conception of German Jews, urging in his closing speech at the Nuremberg *Parteitag* on 12 September 1938 that the removal of German Jews from all facets of German society must continue, "because National Socialism desires to establish a true community of the people . . . Because we are National Socialists we can never suffer an alien race which has nothing to do with us to claim the leadership of our working people."<sup>30</sup> More than a year earlier, Hitler similarly argued, in a speech before the Reichstag on 30 January 1937, that "we refuse to permit an alien race any influence upon our political, spiritual, or cultural life or to allow an alien any privileged position in the economic sphere."<sup>31</sup>

Throughout the 1930s, the Nazi regime implemented measures that successively stripped Jews of their legal and economic rights as well as their place within German culture and society. But it was the enactment of the Reich Citizenship Laws of 15 September 1935 that drew the most explicit line between Jews and Germans, unilaterally stripping Jews of their legal status as citizens and thereby definitively removing them, legally and conceptually, from the German political community. Paragraph 2 established the criterion for full citizenship: "a Reich citizen is a subject of the State who is of German or related blood"; "the Reich citizen is sole bearer of full political rights in accordance with the Law."<sup>32</sup> In the First Decree to the Reich Citizenship Law, 14 November 1935, paragraph 4 explicitly disenfranchised Jews: "A Jew cannot be a Reich citizen. He has no voting right in political matters." Departing from Judaism's definition of Jewishness as based on matrilineal descent and embracing instead a racial definition, the decree defined a Jew as "a person descended from at least three Jewish grandparents who are full Jews by race."<sup>33</sup>

The legal and, more importantly, conceptual framing of the identity of Jews as separate from German and other national identities was not lost on at least some Jews at the time. Reading newspaper reports of the promulgation of the Nuremberg Laws from his vantage point in Vienna, the highly secularized and assimilated future death-camp survivor Jean Amery (then named Hans Mayer) was immediately struck by the new separate racial identity conferred on him by the Nazi regime. Amery wrote after the war that he "needed only to skim them and already I could perceive that they applied to me. Society, concretized in the National representatives of the German people, had just made me formally and beyond any question a Jew."<sup>34</sup> Amery writes that as the Holocaust unfolded he experienced, prior to his deportation and even later in Auschwitz, "the social reality of the wall of rejection that arose before us everywhere."<sup>35</sup>

Summing up the Nazi regime's steady removal of Jews from German society in the 1930s, Holocaust historian Saul Friedlander suggests that the Nazis doggedly overcame the challenge of separating out a previously assimilated minority:

Among the main obstacles faced by the regime in its attempt to eliminate the Jews from Germany was the fact that the victims had been part and parcel of every field of activity in German society. In consequence, if direct violence was not [yet] possible, the system had to elaborate ever new administrative or legal measures in order to undo, stage by stage, step by step, the existing ties between society and the Jews.<sup>36</sup>

With the turn toward deportation and concentration during the first years of the war, the Nazi leadership still kept the first conceptual switch on concerning the collective identity of the Jews—even as it moved closer and closer to turning on the second conceptual switch, which would lead from 1941 onward to the annihilation of European Jewry. In the summer of 1941, for example, Joseph Goebbels emphasized the necessity of maintaining the unequal legal and conceptual status of the Jews through their continued removal from Nazi Germany. In a bid to head off criticism of the requirement that German Jews wear the *Judenstern* (the yellow star), Goebbels, as propaganda minister and *Gauleiter* of Berlin, argued forcefully that “the Jews had no right to claim equality with us” because “they are Jews who have no right to a voice in the community.”<sup>37</sup>

In the case of Cambodia, the first-switch dynamic differs in a number of respects from the reconceptualization of German Jews as foreign or alien to German society. The Khmer Rouge period in Cambodia involved the first-switch reconceptualization of not one but several different groups of people at different times for the duration of Khmer Rouge rule. As well, the first-switch conceptualization of the victim groups in Cambodia occurred virtually simultaneously with the second conceptual switch, which further defined these same groups as not only alien to the revolution but also inherently threatening and dangerous. Further, while the victims of the Khmer Rouge were targeted for destruction by means both direct (execution) and indirect (malnutrition, lack of medical care, abuse, etc.), the act of physical separation of the victims did not occur as it did in the Holocaust.

The first-switch reconceptualization of the identity of the various victim groups as outside revolutionary Cambodian society revolved around the Khmer Rouge's own particularly rigid Marxist understanding of Cambodian society as historically and presently divided into antagonistic classes. In the quest for a homogeneous, united, “collective” revolutionary community, classes, ethnic groups, and, eventually, individual cadres and their associates and families deemed suspect were to be overcome and, as Alex Hinton argues, “excluded from the revolutionary community of equals.”<sup>38</sup>

Using personal histories to categorize Cambodians into revolutionary and reactionary classes served to conceptually and practically divide the society of Democratic Kampuchea into three distinct and separate groups, each with differing levels of membership, or non-membership, in the new revolutionary community. The “new people,” mostly urbanites from what were labeled Classes I and II, were non-members of revolutionary Cambodia. A 1978 party publication identified the poor peasants as the foundation of the revolution and therefore deserving of the designation “full rights members,” while “reactionaries,” whose status varied according to the degree to which they were perceived to be naturally hostile to the revolution, were further broken down into three sub-groups: “those who can be drawn to the revolution”; “neutralists, who do not oppose the revolution”; and, in language that

clearly demonstrates the third-switch conception of the victim group as non-human, “the savage ones who cannot be reeducated.” All leadership cadres were instructed to “select and assign by dividing into separate categories full rights, probationary and depositee members,” with the latter understood to be the “new people” deported from the cities. The purpose of this exercise was to “clearly distinguish the good from the bad.”<sup>39</sup>

Just as the Nazis maintained an essentialist understanding of Jews as a “race” that could never be German, the Khmer Rouge made plain its similarly rigid conception of the counterrevolutionary identity of the “new people” and other suspect groups. Members of suspect classes were defined by, and could not overcome, their counterrevolutionary identity. The previous possession of property was said, in a 1976 special issue of the party publication *Tung Pradevat* (“Revolutionary Flags”), to “obstruct the understanding and the absorption of the Socialist Revolution. No matter how we explain it, the struggle cannot break it out.”<sup>40</sup> Even though these classes had been defeated with the advent of Democratic Kampuchea, “their specific traits and contradictions (*tamna*) still exist...in consciousness, in standpoint,” and, more threateningly, in “class rage.” Capitalists, feudal landlords, and *petit-bourgeois* intellectuals, therefore, still maintained the “essence of class.” This essence was “the class standpoint, class character (*nissay*), sentiments, [and] habits” that “remind[ed] it of the desire to oppress.” The article concludes by reinforcing the static nature of counter revolutionary class identity, suggesting that, quite simply, “[a] number of them [*vea*, literally “things”] cannot be corrected,” since they “continuously seek occasions to oppose the revolution.”<sup>41</sup>

## The Second Switch

### *The Epic-Battle Motif*

At the heart of much of Nazi ideology were the belief that the world is divided into superior and degenerate races, the need to protect the purity of a people’s “blood,” and the idea of race wars. This belief applied particularly to the perceived epic struggle between Jews and Aryans. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler argued that “the mightiest counterpart to the Aryan is represented by the Jew.”<sup>42</sup> Behind this assertion is a more general understanding that “history itself represents the progression of a people’s struggle for survival,” in which “life is a never ending battle against death.”<sup>43</sup> If a successful struggle for the preservation of the blood and culture of the German people is not waged against the Jews,

then the Jews can move in, in every form, and this master of international poison concoction and racial debasement will not rest until he has completely uprooted and thereby corrupted such a people. The end, then, is the loss of a certain uniform racial value and thus the final decay...every existing racial value of a people [will become] ineffective—if not downright endangered.”<sup>44</sup>

Drawing on these foundational ideas, both Hitler and those of his subordinates most closely involved in the decision, taken in mid-1941, to exterminate Europe’s Jews began to describe the Jews as mortal enemies who must be destroyed if the Reich and the German people were to be saved. In a leading article titled “The Jews are Guilty!” published in the Nazi journal *Das Reich* on 16 November 1941, Goebbels invoked the epic struggle motif, proclaiming that “the Jews are receiving a penalty that is certainly hard, but more than deserved... and is now gradually experiencing the destruction it planned for us, and would have carried out without a second thought if it had

possessed the ability.”<sup>45</sup> “Every Jew is our enemy in this historic struggle,” he warned his readers, whether those Jews lived in the ghettos of Europe or on Wall Street: “All Jews by virtue of their birth and their race are part of an international conspiracy against National Socialist Germany. They want defeat and annihilation, and do all in their power to bring it about.”<sup>46</sup>

In 1942 and 1943, once the genocide was underway, Hitler himself repeatedly referred to his “prophecy,” articulated in what has come to be known as his “threat speech” of 30 January 1939, in which he forecast the destruction of European Jewry should the Jews “succeed” in plunging Europe once again into war. But in restating his prophecy, Hitler noticeably changed its language to directly connect the Jews not with starting a new European-wide war that would lead to the “Bolshevization” of Europe, as Hitler had originally warned in January 1939,<sup>47</sup> but with the destruction of the “Aryan race.” Thus, on the ninth anniversary of the Nazi seizure of power, Hitler proclaimed, in his address at the Berlin Sportpalast on 30 January 1942,

that the war can only end either with the extermination of the Aryan peoples or the disappearance of Jewry from Europe . . . [Th]at this [war] will not come to an end as the Jews imagine, with the extermination of the European-Aryan peoples, but that the result of this war will be the annihilation (*Vernichtung*) of Jewry. For the first time the old Jewish law will now be applied: an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth . . . And the hour will come when the most evil world-enemy of all time will have played out its role, at least for a thousand years.<sup>48</sup>

Like Hitler and Goebbels, Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler similarly argued, in an infamous speech before an assembly of SS officers in Posen in October 1943, the dangers of leaving any Jews alive in Germany and, by extension, in Europe. Seeking to assure his men that their role in the extermination program was a just and noble cause, Himmler stressed that the SS “had the moral right, we had the duty toward our people, to destroy the people that wanted to destroy us.”<sup>49</sup>

In the Cambodian case, the epic-struggle motif revolved not around race (apart from the Vietnamese) but around the conception of an unending lethal struggle between antagonistic classes. Building and protecting the revolution involved a constant battle to confront inevitable class contradictions and the hidden class “enemies within” they produced—enemies whose goal it was to destroy Democratic Kampuchea, the Communist Party, and the revolution.

Senior Khmer Rouge leaders believed that the recent history of the party was that of a “party led by the working class” steeped in “the contradictions in Kampuchean society,” as “Brother Number Two,” Nuon Chea, told a Communist Party delegation from Denmark in July 1978. In pre-revolutionary times, the party fought “external contradictions” between the Cambodian nation and “US imperialism” while simultaneously battling “internal contradictions . . . between, on the one hand the working class and the capitalists and on the other the poor peasants and the feudal class.”<sup>50</sup> Among the “new people”—or “new peasants,” as the article “Sharpen the Consciousness” calls them—there still existed “life and death contradictions.”<sup>51</sup>

Making explicit reference to the enduring nature of class struggle between revolutionary and counterrevolutionary forces and, therefore, the continuous threat of internal class enemies to the revolution, a Communist Party document from 3–7 June 1976 notes that while the revolution had defeated many enemies, there will still be many more in the future: “the enemy will carry out activities against us, against our revolution, in various forms. This is the continuous non-stop struggle between revolution and counter-revolution.” The document then projects this as a permanent

state of affairs: “there will be enemies in ten years, twenty years, thirty years into the future... the struggle between revolution and counter-revolution will continue.” Noting that not all but some contradictions are created by enemies, the document concludes that “we cannot escape them.”<sup>52</sup> While the party conceded that “it is possible that some compositions [i.e., classes] can correct themselves... many cannot.” Even “if these people die,” the revolution will not be safe, since “they will have instructed their children to keep struggling against communists.”<sup>53</sup>

The enduring nature of the threat posed by ongoing class contradictions was further reinforced in a party study session in 1976, during which the participants were told that the party

must remain vigilant against internal class enemies because our socialist revolutionary direction is an uncompromising, bitter, life-and-death combat between classes, both indirect and most thorough, between the property-less class under the leadership of the Party and the life-and-death enemy who comprises the various exploiting classes... which hide themselves in our revolutionary ranks, in the army, and in the ranks of our Party.<sup>54</sup>

### *The Foreign-Threat Motif*

The mortal threat posed by Jews as the ultimate leaders of rapacious Bolshevism further solidified the conception of Jews as an all-powerful, inherently dangerous, threatening, and foreign force. Illogically, the Jews were also conceptualized as international capitalists who covertly controlled the Western Allies, secretly pushing Great Britain and the United States to fight another war with Germany. But it was the threat of “Jewish Bolshevism,” which surfaced repeatedly in Nazi discourse from the 1920s onward, that contributed to the perception that Jews were a threat like no other, since Nazism and Bolshevism were seen as two competing *Weltanschauungen*.

In his original “threat speech” at the Reichstag on 30 January 1939, Hitler emphasized the Jews’ dangerous capacity for the devious manipulation of international capital and Western governments, to the point of being capable of starting a new world war that, in Hitler’s view, would lead, rather nonsensically and paradoxically, to the “Bolshevization” of the world. This overwhelming power and threat posed by the Jews, would, however, be defeated in the most thorough way possible:

If the international Jewish financiers in and outside Europe should succeed in plunging the nations once more into world war, then the result will not be the bolshevization of the earth, and thus the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe!<sup>55</sup>

The link between Jews and the threat posed by Soviet Bolshevism was drawn even tighter with the launching of Operation Barbarossa (the invasion of the Soviet Union) and the advent of the genocidal *Einsatzgruppen* and *Sonderkommandos*, tasked first with the shooting to death of “commissars” and “Jewish men”—the latter described as the “intellectual reservoir of Bolshevism” by SD chief Reinhardt Heydrich. At a meeting at the headquarters of the Reichssicherheitshauptamt (the Reich’s main security office, or RSHA) on 17 June 1941, Heydrich told the assembled *Einsatzgruppen*, *Einsatzkommandos*, *Sonderkommandos*, and other top police officers that “this reservoir must be destroyed.”<sup>56</sup> For Goebbels, meanwhile, the war was the product of an unholy alliance between “Bolshevik Jews” in Moscow and the “Jewish plutocrats” in London and Washington.<sup>57</sup>

During the latter years of the war Goebbels justified the war of extermination in the East, against so-called Jewish Bolshevism, and the Final Solution by explicitly

tying the survival of the Third Reich to the destruction of the Jews. Goebbels peddled his own particular version of the world Jewish conspiracy theory by arguing that the Allies menacing the Reich from both west and east were operating under the control of world Jewry, bent on the extermination of the German people:

They organized the enemy's war economy and encourage plans to exterminate and destroy the Axis powers. England and the USA recruit from among them bloodthirsty and vengeful agitators and political lunatics and they are the source of the terror commissars of the GPU [the Soviet secret police].<sup>58</sup>

Near the end of the war, Goebbels went even further, accusing Soviet and Western Allied soldiers of being mercenaries of the Jews.<sup>59</sup>

Like the Nazis, the Khmer Rouge leadership perceived the revolution to be in mortal danger, heightened by the foreign-threat motif; in this case, however, Democratic Kampuchea's many hidden enemies were believed to be stalking horses for foreign influence and invasion whom the party considered, as one document put it, "running dog agents burrowing within ourselves," "international agents," or simply "enemy agents."<sup>60</sup>

A radio broadcast on 10 May 1978 named Vietnam and its internal agents explicitly as a mortally threatening enemy that must be neutralized in order to save the "Cambodian race." After calling for the "purification" (a common euphemism, at the time, for mass killing) of the armed forces, the Communist Party, and the masses, the broadcast went on to state that the struggle against internal and external Vietnamese-inspired enemies was vital "in order to continue fighting the enemies in defense of Cambodian territory and the Cambodian race, for if we do not do so, our race will disappear. Do we want to see the end of the Cambodian race? If we do not to defend our territory, we shall lose it, and then our race will also disappear." Should the Vietnamese invade, the broadcast predicted, "we shall lose our territory and our race will be completely swallowed up."<sup>61</sup>

In a Khmer Rouge document titled "The Last Plan," parts of the "evidence"<sup>62</sup> gathered by the party refined the supposed role of Vietnam and those purportedly working covertly for Vietnam inside DK and the party. The Vietnamese communists in Hanoi were said to be the "implementers" of a plot to take over the country and destroy the party. Inside Cambodia, secret "CIA agents" and "Vietnamese expansionists" allegedly cooperated to implement this "scheme in constant contact with the outside."<sup>63</sup> Until the plan was "uncovered," cadres involved in its implementation had worked for years to create internal divisions in order to weaken all parts of the party. The ultimate goal of the "men who were hiding inside" was to "join hands to smash all sides thus winning the power forever, particularly definitely abolishing communism."<sup>64</sup>

According to the Khmer Rouge, Democratic Kampuchea's alleged enemies were not all doing the bidding of the Vietnamese. In his confession-through-torture before execution, senior moderate cadre Hu Nim "confessed" to being recruited as a CIA member to conduct subversive activities within the party as early as 1957. His task was "to bring outsiders inside the Communist Party of Kampuchea in order to destroy it from within" and "to change the line of the [party]...and the revolutionary movement" toward "revisionism," because "revisionism is the way toward capitalism anyway."<sup>65</sup>

Without discussing when it would have happened or under what circumstances, Nuon Chea suggested in 1978 that some cadres had been imprisoned by the offending foreign powers and, like the Manchurian Candidate, tortured and turned into enemy

agents who were unwittingly accepted back into the party—but “we now realized they had become agents of the enemy.” Although a “plot” by the United States to take over DK Cambodia with the help of the Vietnamese and the KGB six months after liberation was apparently foiled, Nuon Chea asserted that the Khmer Rouge must “apprehend the people who have infiltrated our party. We know the current plan involves not only Vietnamese agents, but has something to do with US imperialism and the KGB. All of them!”<sup>66</sup>

### *The Biological-Contagion Motif*

The final mortal-threat conception, the motif of biological contagion, identified Jews as a deadly, opportunistic infectious agent that threatened the purity of German blood and society with disease and death. The future health and strength of the Aryan or Nordic race could be ensured only through the destruction of what threatened it most: the Jews.

From the early 1920s onward, Hitler’s public discourse about the Jews was riddled with references to the Jews as a “plague” and “a harmful bacillus.”<sup>67</sup> *Mein Kampf* likens the Jews to

the typical parasite, a sponger who like a noxious bacillus keeps spreading as soon as a favorable medium invites him [in]. And the effect of his existence is also like that of spongers: wherever he appears, the host people dies out after a shorter or longer period.<sup>68</sup>

Other Nazi leaders evinced the same perception of Jews as a lethal contagion. Just after the invasion of Poland, Goebbels is reported to have commented to his officials that he believed the Jews “represented an international infection, and that it will fight against the state of order until it controls them.” During the “abnormal times in the life of a nation at war,” Goebbels was “convinced that we cannot allow Jewry, as a seat of infection, to exist any longer.” He argued that there “can be no more discussion in Germany of the necessity of removing Jewry as a seat of infection. The vast majority of the German nation want a total solution to the Jewish question.”<sup>69</sup>

For the Nazi leadership, therefore, the Jews were a deadly pestilence that had to be physically removed from the European body politic. Goebbels thus invoked the specter of deadly disease and the metaphorical medical procedures required for dealing effectively with the threat posed by the Jews: “Our task here is surgical . . . drastic incisions or some day Europe will perish of the Jewish disease.”<sup>70</sup> On 23 July 1941, Hitler similarly referred to the Jews, in a conversation with Croatian Marshal Kvaternik, as “a centre of pestilence for humanity.” Without giving any details, Hitler assured Kvaternik that all Jews were going to be removed from Europe and warned that any state that retained Jews would invariably become a new source of infection and decomposition.<sup>71</sup>

For the Khmer Rouge, the motif of biological contagion was invoked repeatedly as the revolution’s internal enemies were labeled “microbes” or sources of contamination or poison, “burrowing within the revolution” to destroy it from the inside out. One Communist Party report called for “continuous measures” to be taken so that “enemies will not be able to advance, using venom and poison.”<sup>72</sup> Using almost identical language, a 1977 Central Committee document emphasizes that “[b]y screening traitorous elements and bad elements, the party enjoys relief from [the] pain and abscess [and] venom” caused by internal party enemies.<sup>73</sup> Switching to a related hygiene metaphor, cadres were reminded at a study session in 1976 to remain vigilant against enemies but were told that the party had already taken

effective measures: "We have been scrubbed clean [another euphemism for mass murder] and nurtured in political standpoint, consciousness, and organization."<sup>74</sup>

The most explicit formulation of the victims-as-disease threat motif was articulated by Pol Pot in the threatening end of his 1977 "microbes" speech, which, in effect, signaled the genocidal intraparty purge to come:

While we are engaged in a socialist revolution, there is a sickness inside the Party, born in the time when we waged a people's and a democratic revolution. We cannot locate it precisely. The illness must emerge to be examined. Because the heat of the people's revolution and the democratic revolution were insufficient at the level of the people's struggle and at the level of class struggle among all layers of the national democratic revolution, we search for the microbes within the Party without success. They are buried.<sup>75</sup>

Echoing Goebbels' reference to surgical cuts to eliminate poisonous European Jewry, the Khmer Rouge, according to one survivor,

justified destruction of "diseased elements" of the old society... We were told repeatedly that in order to save the country, it was essential to destroy all contaminated parts... It was essential to cut deep, even to destroy a few good people rather than chance one "diseased" person escaping eradication.<sup>76</sup>

The conception of the enemy as an unseen but ever-present disease infecting the party and the revolution contributed greatly to the constructed nature of the victims of the Cambodian genocide. Since the enemy was unseen but present, it could take almost any form, even appearing to be loyal to the cause or of proper class background, yet be on the inside a source of counter-revolutionary contagion. The fluid nature of the construction of the victims' collective identity led the genocide—at first inflicted on elements of the old regime, on ethnic minorities, and on clearly defined class enemies such as the "new people"—to turn inward and become a genocidal internal party purge.

### The Third Switch

Holocaust survivors have noted that low-level perpetrators in the ghettos and the camps saw Jews not as human but as animals, or even less than that.<sup>77</sup> The public dehumanization of Jews began soon after the Nazis came to power. Boasting of the alleged success of the boycott of local Jewish businesses, a participant at a conference for German civil servants told his audience that Jews should not be surprised by the boycott, since "when you, Jew, regard us as a beast, do not expect us to treat you like a human being."<sup>78</sup> Heydrich, a central figure in the planning and perpetration of the genocide until his assassination in 1942, characterized Jews to his fellow SS officers in January 1939 as "the eternal subhumans."<sup>79</sup> In a tour of newly occupied Poland in September 1939, Himmler, Heydrich's superior, later recounted to other SS officers how he had summoned a few of the "criminal specimens" to show colleagues traveling with him a sick elderly Jewish man's bone structure, calling the old man, and all *Ostjuden* (eastern Jews), "vermin."<sup>80</sup> After a similar junket to the Lodz ghetto in the General Government, Goebbels reportedly told Hitler of his visit: "It's indescribable. Those are no longer human beings. They are animals."<sup>81</sup> The following year Himmler told an audience in Krakow that "anti-Semitism is exactly the same as delousing. Getting rid of lice is not a question of ideology. It is a matter of cleanliness."<sup>82</sup>

The advent of the death camps and the industrialized killing of Jews in gas chambers was, in part, a means of relieving the psychological burden on the low-level

perpetrators of killing their victims face to face. But the death camps also served as a means by which the victims could be completely dehumanized before their deaths, making their killing by gassing, medical experimentation, starvation, abuse, or disease a psychologically acceptable task.<sup>83</sup> For some death-camp commanders, the dehumanization of Jewish prisoners through humiliation was necessary in order for the low-level perpetrators to operate the industrial machinery of death. When asked by a post-war interviewer, “If they were going to kill them anyway what was the point of all the humiliation, why all the cruelty?” the *Kommandant* of Treblinka, Franz Stangl, replied, “To condition those who actually had to carry out the policies. To make it possible for them to do what they did.”<sup>84</sup> In a statement that seems to reveal that Stangl’s approach worked on at least some frontline perpetrators, Order Policeman Alois Hafele, a guard at the Chelmno death camp, told a superior in 1943 that he had become used to the killing: “Little men or little women, it was all the same, just like stepping on a beetle.” As Hafele spoke, he reportedly made a scraping motion with his foot on the floor.<sup>85</sup>

The victims in the camps were also keenly aware of their own dehumanization. In his painful recollections of the *Muselmänner*<sup>86</sup> who haunted his memories years after his liberation from Auschwitz, Primo Levi describes the completely dehumanized state in which these “drowned” men existed:

Their life is short, but their number is endless; they, the *Muselmänner*, the drowned, form the backbone of the camp, an anonymous mass, continually renewed and always identical, of non-men who march and labour in silence, the divine spark dead within them, already too empty to really suffer. One hesitates to call them living: one hesitates to call their death death, in the face of which they have no fear, as they are too tired to understand.<sup>87</sup>

In Cambodia the refrain “to keep you is no gain, to kill you is no loss,” constantly repeated by the Khmer Rouge to the regime’s victims, clearly indicated the degree to which individual human life had become devalued and easy to extinguish. In his analysis of the orientation Khmer Rouge cadres adopted toward the urban populations of Phnom Penh and other cities, David Chandler suggests that the dehumanization of the “new people” was almost immediate. The rural cadres who took over and emptied the cities saw urban dwellers as “enemies,” to be “treated as they deserved. Overnight they became ‘new people’ or ‘April 17 people’—less than human, without privileges or rights.”<sup>88</sup>

In everyday discourse, the victims of the Khmer Rouge were addressed by the dehumanizing vulgar noun *vea* (“it” or “thing,” normally used for inanimate objects and for animals). Ethnic minority victims of the genocide were similarly addressed; the Vietnamese were frequently referred to by the pejorative *yuon* (“savage”). Such modes of discourse dehumanized those deemed to be non-members of the revolution and, as Hinton argues, helped legitimize—and, one could add, facilitate—violence against the victims.<sup>89</sup>

The dehumanization of victims in the service of death in Cambodia reached its nadir at the Tuol Sleng torture and execution facility, located in a former high school in Phnom Penh. Articulating the party leadership’s conception of their enemies as subhuman, former senior party cadre Hu Nim was tortured into proclaiming, in his extracted confession, “I am not a human being. I am an animal.”<sup>90</sup> Recalling the appallingly brutal torture he and other inmates endured at Tuol Sleng, survivor Vann Nath said in an interview after the genocide that the prisoners were treated as if they were “worth less than an animal to them . . . They didn’t treat us like people.”<sup>91</sup>

The ability to treat perceived enemies as subhuman was learned early by many Khmer Rouge cadres, even before the victory in 1975. Many of these cadres were recruited at a very young age from the nomadic hill tribes of the remote north-eastern provinces of Ratanakiri and Mondolkiri, where isolated Khmer Rouge camps were located during the latter Sihanouk years at the beginning of the civil war. By exploiting these impoverished, illiterate youths' resentment of prosperous city dwellers and the fact that they had no stake in the pre-revolutionary system, the Khmer Rouge leadership, as Karl Jackson suggests, "sought out those from the bottom rung of society—those who were so envious of persons with more wealth that they would willingly strike them down."<sup>92</sup> The teenage cadres were taken from their families, treated brutally by their superiors, and then given what the Communist Party said was the great honor of becoming *Oppakar Phdach Kar Robas Pak*, literally "the dictatorial instrument of the Party."

In this element of the third switch, then, we see a contrast with the Nazi final solution. In Cambodia, both dehumanizing discourse and the dehumanization of the perpetrators facilitated killing through execution, abuse, and neglect of the regime's victims. In the Nazi case, the explicitly dehumanizing discourse directed at the Jewish victims was also present, while the projection of the dehumanized state of the low-level perpetrators onto the victims was not. In fact, the SS, which bore the primary responsibility for executing the genocide on the ground, was billed by Himmler as an elite corps of the most racially pure Aryans in the Reich, the "hardest of the hard men," who had been given the bloody but noble task of riding the Reich and Europe of the subhuman Jewish race.

## Conclusion

The preceding discussion of the importance of collective identity reconstruction and elite decision making can help us to fill in a piece of the larger "why genocide" puzzle raised at the beginning of this essay in three ways. First, it focuses our analysis on a small but key group of actors in the genocidal process, without whom genocide would not be possible. It is, after all, these elite actors who make the decision to commit genocide. In order to understand why elite perpetrators choose genocide as a policy option, we need to go beyond considering general precursors, triggers, and general conceptions of blame, threat, and dehumanization attached to the victim group. To complete the picture, we need to account for how elite perpetrators conceptualize the identity of the victim group such that genocide comes to be seen as the only possible policy response.

Second, an emphasis on collective identity construction is useful because it also allows us to further explore the answer to the "smaller" questions noted above. The relationship between structure (both ideational and material) and collective identity reconstruction by elite and societal actors (the latter of which is not examined here but is of central importance) points to the significance of the precursors to genocide and how they directly influence the genocidal decision-making process. As is outlined only briefly in this article, pre-genocide norms and practices that include unequal and exclusionary relationships between the eventual victim group and the rest of society, exclusionary conceptions of who constitutes the genuine membership of the political community, and authoritarian and sometimes violent methods of conflict management by the state directly influence how, in the wake of crises, elite actors reconceptualize (and how the dominant society comes to accept) the identity of the victim group as a mortal threat and why specific groups are targeted for genocide while others are not. As for the perpetrators and why they do what they do, identifying the three conceptual

switches of genocide allows us to differentiate the motivation for genocide—the second mortal-threat conception of the victim group that leads elite perpetrators to chose a policy of genocide—from the dehumanization of the victim group that allows both elite and frontline perpetrators to actually carry out the extermination of objectively innocent and powerless human beings.

Finally, the case-study comparison suggests that the collective identity reconceptualization process that underpins the decision to commit genocide is common across relatively dissimilar cases and that, therefore, this process is likely common to most genocides in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The model offered here is not a predictive social-science theory. Rather, it tries to offer some insight into mutually constitutive relationship between ideational structures (norms) and material structures (practices and crises), on the one hand, and the genocidal process of reconceptualizing the victim group, on the other, as the foundation for elite decision making. The emphasis, then, is on a set of general structures and processes that get at the underlying logic of genocide and thus can tell us, albeit only partly, why something so terrible as genocide happens.

## Notes

1. Mark Blyth notes in a recent article that, at least where comparative politics is concerned, successive “grand theories” in the discipline have failed to predict and explain the occurrence of several political, social, and economic “great punctuations” since the advent of the discipline in the early twentieth century. Mark Blyth, “Great Punctuations: Prediction, Randomness, and the Evolution of Comparative Political Science,” *American Political Science Review* 100 (2006): 493–98.
2. See, e.g., Ervin Staub, *The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and Other Group Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 13–55; Israel W. Charny, *How Can We Commit the Unthinkable? Genocide, the Human Cancer* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1982), 107–10; Florence Mazian, *Why Genocide? The Armenian and Jewish Experience in Comparative Perspective* (Ames: University of Iowa Press, 1990), 243–47; Manus I. Midlarsky, *The Killing Trap: Genocide in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 83–110.
3. Despite the fact that the Final Solution and the Cambodian genocide are both cases of genocide, they are, as noted, relatively dissimilar ones. It is because of their dissimilarities that these two cases have been selected to illustrate the proposed explanatory model. The comparison is what political scientists Adam Przeworski and Henry Teune call a “most different” comparison. Although Przeworski and Teune advocate for “most similar” comparisons in order to control for as many variables as possible, a “most different” approach is useful for the comparative analysis of genocide. This is so because each case of genocide is marked by its own horrible uniqueness; as a result, we are unlikely to find exactly equivalent cases. Genocides vary, across time and space, in terms of who the victim groups are and what methods of destruction are employed, not to mention the particular individual and collective manifestations of the suffering of victim groups, the brutality of perpetrators, and the indifference of bystanders. A “most different” comparison is, in a sense, the only kind available to us. It also allows us to acknowledge, and to treat seriously, the great variety among genocides, while still attempting to locate what is fundamental to all or most genocides, in terms of both the preconditions for and the actual perpetration of genocidal mass murder. Adam Przeworski and Henry Teune, *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry* (New York: Wiley, 1970).
4. Helen Fein, *Accounting for Genocide: National Responses and Jewish Victimization during the Holocaust* (New York: Free Press, 1979), 7–8. For other scholars who understand genocide as a rational choice made by elites, see Peter du Preez, *Genocide: The Psychology of Mass Murder* (London: Boyars/Bowerdean, 1994), 3; Roger W. Smith, “State, Power, and

- Genocidal Intent: On the Uses of Genocide in the Twentieth Century,” in *Studies in Comparative Genocide*, ed. Levon Chorbajian and George Shirinian, 3–14 (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999).
5. Benjamin A. Valentino, *Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the 20th Century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), 4, 72–73.
  6. Valentino rejects the concept of genocide as “too limiting” for his analysis.
  7. Valentino, *Final Solutions*, 5.
  8. William H. Riker, “The Political Psychology of Rational Choice Theory,” *Political Psychology* 16 (1995): 24–26.
  9. Ibid.
  10. “May” is the operative word here. Several laboratory studies performed on test subjects, as well as analyses of real-world political and other actors, have demonstrated that actors are frequently incapable of ordering their preferences effectively or of calculating subjective expected utility, particularly in crisis situations. See, for example, Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, “Rational Choice and the Framing of Decisions,” *Journal of Business* 59 (1986): S251–77; Michael Nicholson, *Rationality and the Analysis of International Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Donald P. Green and Ian Shapiro, *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory: A Critique of Applications in Political Science* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994).
  11. Robert F. Melson, *Revolution and Genocide: On the Origins of the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
  12. Eric D. Weitz, *A Century of Genocide: Utopias of Race and Nation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).
  13. Alex Alvarez, *Governments, Citizens, and Genocide: A Comparative and Interdisciplinary Approach* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001).
  14. Christopher R. Browning, *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939–March 1942* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press/Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2004).
  15. James Waller, *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
  16. Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics,” *International Organization* 26 (1992): 391–425.
  17. Alexander Wendt, “Constructing International Politics,” *International Security* 20 (1995): 73–75.
  18. Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 24.
  19. Ibid., 119.
  20. Roy D’Andrade, “Schemas and Motivation,” in *Human Motives and Cultural Models*, ed. Roy D’Andrade and C. Strauss, 23–44 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 28, quoted in Wendt, *Social Theory*, 122.
  21. Wendt, *Social Theory*, 330.
  22. Ibid., 330–31.
  23. Ibid., 335.
  24. For a detailed discussion of the relationship between pre-genocide exclusionary and authoritarian norms and practices, crisis, and collective identity reconstruction in genocide, see Maureen S. Hiebert, “Origins of Genocide: Political Culture, Crisis, and the Construction of Victims” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2007).
  25. Fein argues that a necessary precondition of genocide is the conceptualization of the victim group as existing outside the community. She argues, with reference to the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust, that in both cases the victim group was decreed historically by the dominant group to be “outside the sanctified universe of obligation—that circle of people with reciprocal obligations to protect each other whose bonds arose from their relation to a deity or sacred source of authority. In the modern secular era, this traditional history of exclusion from the religious and social order allows for the modern definition

- of these same groups as strangers by virtue of the fact that the dominant group was already alienated from the victim group by traditional antipathies.” Fein, *Accounting for Genocide*, 4–5. In the theoretical approach presented here, the exclusion of the victim is only the first phase of the genocidal process, because Fein’s approach on its own does not explain why extermination is chosen over other policies, such as expulsion, forced assimilation, re-education, or the use of violence that stops short of genocide.
26. Daniel Chirot and Clark McCauley, *Why Not Kill Them All? The Logic and Prevention of Mass Murder* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 31.
  27. Robert Jay Lifton, *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide* (New York: Basic Books, 1986), 477.
  28. *Ibid.*, 479.
  29. Herbert C. Kelman, “Violence without Moral Restraint: Reflection on the Dehumanization of Victims by Victimizers,” *Journal of Social Issues* 29, no. 4 (1973): 48–49.
  30. Adolf Hitler, “Closing Speech at the Nuremberg Parteitag 1938, 12 September 1938,” in *The Speeches of Adolf Hitler, 1922–1939*, ed. and trans. Norman H. Baynes, vol. 1 (London: Oxford University Press, 1978), 735.
  31. Adolf Hitler, “Speech Before the Reichstag, 30 January 1937,” in *The Speeches of Adolf Hitler, 1922–1939*, ed. and trans. Norman H. Baynes, vol. 1 (London: Oxford University Press, 1978), 735. The idea of separating Jews from Germans came out of the earliest party platforms of the Nazis in the 1920s. Prefiguring the administrative measures taken against German Jews in the 1930s, the *völkisch* newspaper *Völkischer Beobachter* published a diatribe against the supposed evils of the *Ostjuden* (Eastern European Jews) on 10 March 1920 that ended with the party calling for the immediate removal of Jews from all government employment, newspapers, theaters, and cinemas.
  32. “Reich Citizenship Laws” (15 September 1935), trans. Ronnie Landau, in *The Nazi Holocaust*, by Ronnie Landau (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1994), Appendix E, 310.
  33. “First Decree to the Reich Citizenship Law” (14 November 1935), trans. Ronnie Landau, *ibid.*, 311. The remainder of paragraph 5 discusses the legal status of *Mischlinge*, or “half Jews.”
  34. Jean Amery, *At the Mind’s Limits: Contemplations by a Survivor on Auschwitz and Its Realities*, trans. Sidney Rosenfeld and Stella P. Rosenfeld (Bloomington: Indiana University Press/United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 1980), 85.
  35. *Ibid.*, 87–88. Perhaps projecting his later experiences during the Holocaust and what he called “my resentments” after liberation back in time, Amery contends that, from 1935 onward, to be a Jew meant for him “to be a dead man on leave, someone to be murdered, who only by chance was not yet where he properly belonged.” For Amery, the Nuremberg Laws were not simply a means of excluding Jews from German society but “a death threat” that he felt “with complete clarity.” *Ibid.*, 86.
  36. Saul Friedlander, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, Vol. 1: The Years of Persecution, 1933–1939* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), 203.
  37. Joseph Goebbels, “Mimicry,” trans. by Randall Bytwerk from *Die Zeit ohne Beispiel* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1941), <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/goeb18.htm> (accessed 2 January 2008), 3.
  38. Alexander Laban Hinton, *Why Did They Kill? Cambodia in the Shadow of Genocide* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 189, 191.
  39. “Pay Attention to Pushing the Work of Building the Party and People’s Collective Strength Even Stronger,” trans. Kem Sos and Timothy Carney, *Tung Pradevat [Revolutionary Flags]* 3 (March 1978): 37–53, in *Cambodia, 1975–1978: Rendezvous with Death*, ed. Karl D. Jackson (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 297.
  40. “Sharpen the Consciousness of the Proletarian Class to Be as Keen and Strong as Possible,” trans. Kem Sos and Timothy Carney, *Tung Pradevat*, September–October 1976, 33–97, in Jackson, *ibid.*, 270.
  41. *Ibid.*, 280.

42. Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), 300.
43. Adolf Hitler, *Hitler's Second Book: The Unpublished Sequel to Mein Kampf*, ed. Gerhard L. Weinberg, trans. Krista Smith (New York: Enigma Books, 2003), 7.
44. *Ibid.*, 33.
45. Joseph Goebbels, "The Jews are Guilty!" trans. by Randall Bytwerk from "Die Juden sind schuld!" in *Das eherne Herz*, 85–91 (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1943), <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/goeb1.htm> (accessed 2 January 2008), 1.
46. *Ibid.*
47. Throughout the war Hitler noticeably changed the date of his original "prophecy" from 30 January 1939 to 1 September 1939. By changing the date to that of the invasion of Poland and the beginning of the war in Europe, Hitler firmly tied the outbreak of war to the threat posed by the Jews.
48. Quoted in Ian Kershaw, *Hitler 1936–1945: Nemesis* (London: Allen Lane, 2000), 494.
49. Heinrich Himmler, "From a Speech by Himmler Before Senior SS Officers in Poznan, October 4, 1943" (Document no. 161), in *Documents on the Holocaust, Selected Sources on the Destruction of the Jews of Germany and Austria, Poland and the Soviet Union* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1981), 344–45, [http://www1.yadvashem.org/odot\\_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%204029.pdf](http://www1.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%204029.pdf) (accessed 2 January 2008), 1.
50. Nuon Chea, "Statement of the Communist Party of Kampuchea to the Communist Workers' Party of Denmark, July 1978," trans. Peter Bischoff, ed. Laura Summers, in *Searching for the Truth* [Khmer version] 17 (May 2001), Documentation Center of Cambodia, [http://www.dccam.org/Archives/Documents/DK\\_Policy/DK\\_Policy\\_Noun\\_Chea\\_Statement.htm](http://www.dccam.org/Archives/Documents/DK_Policy/DK_Policy_Noun_Chea_Statement.htm) (accessed 2 January 2008), 1.
51. "Sharpen the Consciousness," quoted in Jackson, *Cambodia, 1975–1978*, 298.
52. "Excerpted Report on the Leading Views of the Comrade Representing the Party Organization at the Zone Assembly," *Tung Pradevat*, 3–7 June 1976, trans. Ben Kiernan, in *Pol Pot Plans the Future: Confidential Leadership Documents from Democratic Kampuchea, 1976–1977*, ed. David Chandler, Ben Kiernan, and Chanthou Boua, 13–30 (New Haven, CT: Yale Centre for International and Area Studies, Yale University, 1988), 16.
53. "Sharpen the Consciousness," quoted in Jackson, *Cambodia, 1975–1978*, 278.
54. "Summary of the Results of the 1976 Study Session" (Party Centre, n.d.), trans. Ben Kiernan, in *Pol Pot Plans the Future: Confidential Leadership Documents from Democratic Kampuchea, 1976–1977*, ed. David Chandler, Ben Kiernan, and Chanthou Boua, 168–76 (New Haven, CT: Yale Centre for International and Area Studies, Yale University, 1988), 169–70.
55. Adolf Hitler, "Speech to the Reichstag, 30 January 1939," in *The Speeches of Adolf Hitler, 1922–1939*, ed. and trans. Norman H. Baynes, vol. 1 (London: Oxford University Press, 1978), 741. References to this prophecy/threat above are to later, more explicitly genocidal versions of the prophecy articulated by Hitler and other Nazi elites in the 1940s; here the reference is to the original prophecy, which concentrated on the "Bolshevik" conception of the Jews. As noted above, in later versions of the "prophecy" the threat of "Bolshevization" at the hands of European Jewry was replaced by the threat of extermination of the "Aryan race" by the Jews.
56. Walter Blume, interrogation (29 June 1947), NA RG 238 M-10 19/R7/848, cited in Richard Breitman, *The Architect of Genocide: Himmler and the Final Solution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 164. The so-called commissar order, ordering the mass shooting of Soviet commissars and Jewish men, issued soon after was later informally expanded to include all Jewish women and children in Nazi-occupied Soviet territory.
57. Goebbels, "Mimicry," 2.
58. Joseph Goebbels, "The War and the Jews," trans. from "Der Krieg und die Juden," in *Der steile Aufstieg*, 263–70 (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1944), <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/goeb37.htm> (accessed 3 January 2008), 1.

59. Joseph Goebbels, "The Creators of the World's Misfortune," trans. from "Die Urheber des Unglucks der Welt," *Das Reich* (21 January 1945), 1+, <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/goeb64.htm> (accessed 3 January 2008), 2.
60. "Letter of Honorary Red Flag from Community Party of Kampuchea's Central Committee to Male and Female Cadres and All Cooperative Farmers in the Districts of Prasat, Campong Tralach and Tram Kak" (1977), trans. (unofficially) Bunsou Sour (Documentation Center of Cambodia), [http://www.dccam.org/Archives/Documents/Red\\_Flag/Red\\_Flag\\_Honoray\\_to\\_Central\\_Committee.htm](http://www.dccam.org/Archives/Documents/Red_Flag/Red_Flag_Honoray_to_Central_Committee.htm) (accessed 21 January 2008), 7–9.
61. Excerpts from Phnom Penh Home Service, "Cambodia's Strategy of Defence against Vietnam," 1100 GMT, 10 May 1978 (Documentation Centre of Cambodia, FE/5813/A3/1), [http://www.dccam.org/Archives/Documents/DK\\_Policy/DK\\_Policy\\_Cam\\_Defence\\_VN.htm](http://www.dccam.org/Archives/Documents/DK_Policy/DK_Policy_Cam_Defence_VN.htm) (accessed 21 January 2008), 1.
62. This so-called evidence consisted of false confessions extracted under torture.
63. "The Last Plan: Summary of Answer [sic] by Chhuk, Secretary of Sector 24 on 23 September 1976 and of the 19th Answer by the Same Person Written on 23 September 1976," in *Cambodia, 1975–1978: Rendezvous with Death*, ed. Karl D. Jackson, 299–314 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 299.
64. *Ibid.*, 305.
65. Hu Nim, "Planning the Past: The Forced Confessions of Hu Nim," in *Pol Pot Plans the Future: Confidential Leadership Documents from Democratic Kampuchea, 1976–1977*, ed. David Chandler, Ben Kiernan, and Chanthou Boua, 227–317 (New Haven, CT: Yale Centre for International and Area Studies, Yale University, 1988), 246.
66. Nuon Chea, "Statement of the Communist Party of Kampuchea," 10.
67. Eberhard Jackel, *Hitler's World View: A Blueprint for Power* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 57.
68. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 305.
69. "Internal Memorandum Regarding the Solution of the 'Jewish Question,' Quoting Utterances Made by Goebbels on This Issue (not dated, apparently Berlin 1939)," Shoah Resource Centre, Yad Vashem Archives, TR2/N11/1009/NG1531, [http://www1.yadvashem.org/odot\\_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%20205607.pdf](http://www1.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%20205607.pdf) (accessed 21 January 2008), 1. It is important to note that at this time Goebbels was likely not talking about genocide as a "total solution" but, rather, referred to concentration and deportation.
70. Quoted in Rolf Hochhuth, *A German Love Story* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980), 18.
71. Klaus Hildebrand, *The Third Reich* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1984), 69.
72. "Excerpted Report," 16.
73. "Letter of Honorary Red Flag," 14. Although it is not stated explicitly, we can assume that "screening," in this context, likely means the detention, torture, and execution of suspect cadres.
74. "Summary of the Results," 168.
75. "Report on Activities," in *Pol Pot Plans the Future: Confidential Leadership Documents from Democratic Kampuchea, 1976–1977*, ed. David Chandler, Ben Kiernan, and Chanthou Boua, 177–212 (New Haven, CT: Yale Centre for International and Area Studies, Yale University, 1988), 183.
76. Teeda Mam Butt, *To Destroy You Is No Loss: The Odyssey of a Cambodian Family* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1987), 153–54.
77. Noting the extent to which Jews were perceived as subhuman and treated as such in the camps, one Jewish prisoner doctor said of the infamous Dr. Josef Mengele that "he really hated us" and "treated Jews like laboratory animals—not quite human," because "we were biologically inferior in his eyes." Interview quoted in Lifton, *Nazi Doctors*, 378.
78. "The German Jewish Press Reports about Anti-Jewish Incitement in the Summer of 1935 (1)" (*Judische Rundschau*, 2 July 1935), Yad Vashem Archive, Documents on the Holocaust, [http://www1.yadvashem.org/odot\\_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%20206572.pdf](http://www1.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%20206572.pdf) (accessed 21 January 2008).

79. Reinhardt Heydrich (24 January 1939), NARG242, T-175/R17/2520613, quoted in Breitman, *Architect of Genocide*, 59. Breitman notes that this particular phrase became widely used in SS circles after 1941, when the execution of the Final Solution began.
80. Quoted in Breitman, *Architect of Genocide*, 74.
81. Quoted in Kershaw, *Hitler 1936–1945*, 249.
82. Heinrich Himmler, “Speech of the Reichsfuehrer-SS Himmler at Kharkow April 1943,” partial translation of document 1918-PS, in *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, vol. 4, 572–78 (Washington, DC: US GPO, 1946), <http://www.ess.uwe.ac.uk/genocide/SS3.htm> (accessed 21 January 2008).
83. For a philosophical treatment of the dehumanizing effect of the death camps, see Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1979), 438; Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* (New York: Continuum, 1994), reprinted in *A Holocaust Reader: Responses to the Nazi Extermination*, ed. Michael L. Morgan, 42–47, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 43.
84. Quoted in Emil L. Fackenheim, “The Holocaust and Philosophy,” *Journal of Philosophy* 82 (1985): 505–14.
85. “Indictment of Gustav Laabs and Alois Hafele” (Bonn, 25 July 1962), 8Js 180/61, quoted in Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe 1933–1954* (New York: Aaron Asher Books, 1992), 34.
86. Literally “Muslims” in German. *Muselmänner* was the name used by inmates to describe “the weak, the inept, those doomed to selection.” Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, trans. Stuart Woolf (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 88.
87. *Ibid.*, 90.
88. David P. Chandler, *Brother Number One: A Political Biography of Pol Pot*, rev. ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999), 103.
89. Hinton, *Why Did They Kill?* 191.
90. Hu Nim, “Planning the Past,” 239.
91. Vann Nath, interview with Alex Hinton, in Hinton, *Why Did They Kill?* 191.
92. Kenneth Quinn, “Explaining the Terror,” in *Cambodia, 1975–1978: Rendezvous with Death*, ed. Karl D. Jackson, 215–40 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 236.

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# Value Hierarchies of Holocaust Rescuers and Resistance Fighters

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*There has been considerable theorizing and research on the motivations of individuals who rescued Jews from the Nazi Holocaust. Participants in armed resistance movements, the other major form of active opposition within Nazi-dominated Europe, have attracted less scientific attention. The study reported here compared members of these two groups using a quantitative measure applied to their own post-war memoirs and interviews. Thematic content analysis was used to score the relative strengths of eleven major value categories in materials produced by forty-seven members of resistance movements and fifty Holocaust rescuers. Benevolence, Universalism, and Spirituality were significantly higher among rescuers than among resistance fighters, with the opposite pattern for Security. There were some gender differences, but no differences based on country of residence. Comparisons with Schwartz's international norm group results are also presented, and the implications of this research with respect to altruism in extreme circumstances are discussed.*

*Keywords: Holocaust, rescuers, resisters, values*

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## Background

Despite considerable effort to predict, prevent, ameliorate, or stop genocides, ethnic cleansing, and other forms of ethno-political violence, and despite the oft-repeated post-Holocaust refrain, "Never again," such events have occurred with dismal frequency since 1945. Furthermore, several such events are occurring at any given moment somewhere in the world, many times in countries ignored by the international mass media. It may be that the only effective way to stop them once they begin is through massive armed intervention.

Nevertheless, courageous individuals and groups can at least reduce their impact, thwart their goals, and hinder their progress. Among such people are the individuals who, at great personal risk, rescued Jews from Nazi persecution during World War II; such "righteous among the nations" constitute the most prototypical examples of altruistic behavior. Samuel Oliner and Pearl Oliner characterize a behavior as altruistic when it (1) is directed toward helping another, (2) involves a high risk or sacrifice to the actor, (3) is not accompanied by any external reward, and (4) is voluntary.<sup>1</sup> These criteria for altruistic behavior were certainly met by Holocaust rescuers during World War II. Holocaust rescuers acted to help Jews, despite great risks to themselves and their families, by sheltering Jews in their own homes, providing false documents, or smuggling Jews to safer locations.<sup>2</sup>

These behaviors were dramatically different from those of the vast majority. Although precise figures cannot be established, only a tiny percentage of non-Jews living under German domination engaged in rescue activity.<sup>3</sup> Many more were collaborators in the persecution, although the majority consisted of bystanders, who engaged neither in directly hurting nor in directly helping the oppressed.

The passivity of this majority is understandable: quite aside from their own feelings about Jews, the material and psychological gains they may have accrued as a result of the persecution, and the pressures of conformity, most people were understandably reluctant to put their own lives and their family's lives into very serious danger by sheltering others, often total strangers. To do this, as rescuers did, took unusual courage and altruism.

Social scientists have been interested in the situational and dispositional factors that impelled these rescuers to take lethal chances. Most such research has used interview techniques; much less use has been made of standard psychometric instruments. Rescuers are characterized by a greater capacity for extensivity than non-rescuers. *Extensivity* is defined by the leading researchers in this area as a trait combining a strong sense of responsibility for others and greater attachment to them, heightened empathy for the pain and suffering of others, and a high internal locus of control.<sup>4</sup> Holocaust rescuers have also been consistently described as feeling greater inclusiveness—"a tendency to feel connected to diverse peoples and groups"<sup>5</sup>—and as feeling shared humanity with all people.<sup>6</sup> It has been suggested that this broad identification with others, even strangers from a somewhat different cultural and religious background, is the key feature distinguishing the altruistic Holocaust rescuer from bystanders.<sup>7</sup>

In addition, a psychometric study has found that Holocaust rescuers show differences from bystanders on seven personality variables associated with altruistic behavior: internal locus of control, autonomy, risk taking, social responsibility, empathic concern, and altruistic moral reasoning. Even half a century after the end of World War II, measures of these characteristics distinguished reliably between rescuers and bystanders.<sup>8</sup> Note, however, that using a bystander comparison group, as most researchers have done,<sup>9</sup> introduces a confounding factor: some bystanders, who may have felt just as much responsibility, empathy, and altruistic morality as rescuers, may have refrained from action because of conformity, fear, risk aversion, or general passivity in the face of overwhelming legal and military force.

There was, however, another form of active opposition to the Nazi program: participation in armed guerrilla warfare against German troops and their allies, which occurred to some degree in many occupied countries. Members of underground resistance organizations forged documents, transported illegal goods, gathered and transmitted intelligence, bombed railway tracks, assassinated German officers and Nazi collaborators, and participated in ambushes and other types of armed combat. Partisan fighters were usually organized in quasi-military fashion, with a chain of command and methods of receiving mission assignments from their own higher headquarters and sometimes from Britain or other nations at war with the Axis powers. These nations also sent arms, ammunition, radio equipment, and military advisors to partisan organizations, usually by submarine or parachute.

Surprisingly, members of resistance organizations have attracted much less attention from social scientists than have rescuers. There is nothing in the scientific literature to match the extensive studies of the personalities and motivations of those who saved Jewish lives by hiding those in danger. This seems an important omission in our understanding of non-compliant, nonconformist, risk-taking behavior in the face of serious barriers and life-threatening risks. Clearly, resistance was significantly different both from rescue and from fighting in a national army; such activity deserves more systematic study by psychologists and cognate professionals than it has so far received.

The study reported here applied an unobtrusive and non-reactive technique, previously used in research on (among others) Holocaust survivors and political leaders, to provide new information about rescuers and the much less studied, but equally interesting, category of anti-Nazi risk takers: partisans, individuals who joined underground resistance movements in Nazi-ruled countries.

It is likely that the decision to engage in either rescuing or resistance behavior was influenced by a number of complex, interacting situational and personality factors. For example, religious and political leaders were able to rally individuals, and even communities, to adhere to precepts contrary to those enforced by the Nazis and their collaborators; in other cases, fortuitous encounters with desperate refugees (or aversive encounters with arrogant Nazis) moved bystanders to become active, despite their fear and reluctance. What Holocaust rescuers and partisans had in common was that, unlike most of their compatriots, they took action against the Nazis, despite extreme risks. One might also argue that both types of action fit some of the criteria for altruistic behavior—clearly in the case of rescuers, and in a less traditional way among partisans, for whom direct assistance to individual victims was not the central goal but who voluntarily fought for their compatriots' liberation.

Hostility toward the Nazis did not necessarily imply pro-Jewish attitudes. There were partisan units, especially in Eastern Europe, who shared the Nazis' anti-Semitism even while they fought the German military. Such groups (e.g., the *Narodowe Sily Zbrojne* or NSZ, a Polish underground organization) sometimes combined battle against the German occupation with the mass murder of Jews, which, in the case of the NSZ, extended to killing returning Holocaust survivors after the end of the war.<sup>10</sup>

At the same time, there were also partisan organizations that welcomed Jewish fighters and fighting units into their ranks and tried to help such units by supplying them with arms when that was possible.<sup>11</sup> And although many, perhaps most, rescuers acted in revulsion against the persecution of the Jews, others were quite anti-Semitic. Some exploited and abused the refugees they were hiding; others, while benevolent to those particular Jews, treated them as exceptions to a general rule that Jews were undesirables whose presence in the country was unwanted.<sup>12</sup>

It is also important to note that rescue operations and armed resistance were not mutually exclusive. Some partisan groups also engaged in rescuing and hiding Jews;<sup>13</sup> some rescuers, on occasion, used violence to liberate or safeguard their charges. But, although there are such "fuzzy boundary" examples, on the whole it seems reasonable to expect that predominant aspects of the two groups would show some differences between those who risked their lives primarily to hide and shelter the defenseless and persecuted and those who risked theirs by armed attacks against the troops and military supplies of the invaders.

Resistance fighters are a particularly appropriate comparison group because they exclude those bystanders—mentioned previously—who may have been altruistically inclined but, because of fear or other factors, did not actually engage in anti-Nazi behaviors. Thus we can compare two groups, both with strongly oppositionist attitudes toward the Nazis, and both with the courage to risk their lives in order to thwart Nazi goals, but with distinctly different choices as to their actions: one peaceful, the other violent. No previous study has attempted a systematic comparison between these two groups.

In order to study these differences, we applied one kind of thematic content analysis<sup>14</sup> to archival materials generated by rescuers and resisters after the war.

Thematic content analyses allow for the measurement of objective, nomothetic features from idiographic, qualitative sources; they make possible such standard research procedures as random sampling of materials, assessment of inter-scorer and test-retest reliability, and application of measures of statistical significance and power. Scoring systems exist for a wide variety of cognitive, emotional, motivational, and personality variables.<sup>15</sup>

In the study reported here, thematic content analysis was performed on memoirs written by and interviews with Holocaust rescuers and members of resistance groups. The variable chosen for measurement was the ordering of values in the individual's value hierarchy, *values* being the desirable, trans-situational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in people's lives. Currently the most widely used scoring system is that of Shalom Schwartz,<sup>16</sup> which covers seventy-five specific values subsumed under ten major categories: Power, Achievement, Hedonism, Stimulation, Self-Direction, Universalism, Benevolence, Tradition, Conformity, and Security. Schwartz intended the ten motivationally distinct types of values to include all the core values recognized in cultures around the world,<sup>17</sup> and they have, indeed, reliably shown general recognition (although differing patterns of salience) across cultures and genders.<sup>18</sup> Although we used Schwartz's taxonomy, the reminiscences of many Holocaust survivors and the literature on rescuers led us to add another category, Spirituality, scored on the basis of references to God, religious tenets, or supernatural entities and considered non-universal by Schwartz.

Schwartz has argued that personal values can lead individuals to act altruistically in situations where such behavior contradicts their own narrow interests, explaining individual acts of heroism in extreme situations such as the Holocaust. The current study explores whether the two different kinds of heroic behavior discussed above are associated with different patterns of individual values.

Similarities and differences between the value hierarchies of Holocaust rescuers and those of resistance fighters were evaluated by comparing the mean value ratings of each group on the categories developed by Schwartz. We expected to find that Holocaust rescuers emphasize Universalism, a value category that includes the values "social justice" and "equality." This hypothesis is based on earlier reports that rescuers are strongly inclusive and have a sense of a common humanity among diverse groups of peoples.<sup>19</sup> We also predicted that rescuers would value Benevolence, a category that includes the values "helpful" and "responsible," more than resistance members would. This hypothesis is in accordance with findings that rescuers feel strongly responsible for others<sup>20</sup> and had been taught adherence to an ethic of caring from an early age.<sup>21</sup> Last, we expected that partisan fighters would place greater emphasis on Security than Holocaust rescuers. The Security category includes the values of Patriotism and National Security, which seem central to resistance activities but not necessarily to rescues.

We also looked for differences in value hierarchies related to gender and country of residence. Scholars using qualitative methods have not reported systematic differences among Holocaust rescuers based on sociocultural or demographic factors,<sup>22</sup> and quantitative studies have not analyzed gender-related personality variables among rescuers;<sup>23</sup> it was possible that such effects might be revealed by the analysis of value hierarchies.

Although our primary focus was on comparing rescuers and partisans, we were also interested in comparing the value hierarchies of both groups with the pan-cultural norms published by Schwartz and Bardi.<sup>24</sup> One would expect that self-selected groups

engaged in such unusual and dangerous activity might have a value profile quite different from universal norms.

## Method

### Procedure

Each subject was categorized on the basis of his or her role during World War II, as either a rescuer of Holocaust victims or a member of a fighting resistance group. Other independent variables considered were gender (male or female), religious affiliation, and country of residence during the war.

The dependent variables were the mean ratings of each of the eleven value categories.

### Subjects

The ninety-seven subjects of this study were either rescuers of potential victims of Nazi persecution or members of a fighting resistance organization during World War II. Table 1 presents distributions of the sample across countries of residence.

### Data Sources

The narratives were obtained from several sources. Ten personal narratives were published memoirs written by the rescuer or resister; eight unpublished memoirs were obtained from the Imperial War Museum in London. A number of personal narratives came from published collections of interviews with Holocaust rescuers, conducted in the native language of the subject and later translated into English. Twenty-nine such interviews were conducted by Gay Block and Malka Drucker,<sup>25</sup> eight by Mark Klempner,<sup>26</sup> and two by Kristen Renwick Monroe.<sup>27</sup> Sixteen interviews were obtained from an archive collected forty to fifty years after the war on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum,<sup>28</sup> nineteen from the European Resistance Archive,<sup>29</sup> and an additional five from the Imperial War Museum. All memoirs and interviews were published or collected between 1945 and 2006.

Table 1. Countries of residence at the outbreak of World War II.

	Group	
	Rescuers	Resisters
Austria	0	3
Belgium	6	2
Channel Islands	0	6
Czechoslovakia	2	0
Denmark	2	0
France	5	8
Germany	5	3
Hungary	2	0
Italy	0	6
Netherlands	17	3
Norway	0	1
Poland	11	12
Slovenia	0	3

An effort was made to balance the different types of data sources included in each subject category. Five memoirs (mean number of pages = 79.4) and forty-five interviews (mean number of extracts = 22.7) were used to obtain the rescuer data; thirteen memoirs (mean number of pages = 89.7) and thirty-four interviews (mean number of extracts = 31.2) were used to obtain the resister data. There were no significant differences in the number of pages per book ( $t(16) = -0.23, p > 0.05$ ) or extracts per interview ( $t(77) = -1.28, p > 0.05$ ) between subject categories.

## Scoring

The narratives were scored by a trained scorer using a values scoring sheet as a scoring manual. Fifty-five of the values were taken from Schwartz's list. Two of Schwartz's values, "moderate" and "broad-minded," were excluded because they did not seem relevant, and eighteen values that do seem relevant were added: hard work, perseverance, competitiveness, humor, boredom, self-doubt, dissension, anger, detachment, assertiveness, respect for others, patriotism, isolation, safety, discovering one's true self, religious membership, solitude, and belief in God. Each of these values was assigned to one of the eleven overarching value categories proposed by Schwartz.

Whenever a value was explicitly mentioned or implied in a personal narrative, it was recorded on the scoring sheet. Values mentioned in each of the eleven value categories were then summed and divided by the number of pages in the memoir, or the number of extracts in an interview, and expressed as a percentage that was then used in the statistical analysis. To test for scoring reliability, a second trained scorer independently scored every tenth scored passage, using the same guidelines. Inter-scorer reliability was  $r = 0.85$  or higher for every value. A between-groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to analyze differences in the value hierarchies of rescuers and resistance members. To analyze differences in the value hierarchies of rescuers and partisans, each value category was rank-ordered according to the frequency of its appearance in the particular narrative. Mean rank order was then calculated for each value category.

Because there were unequal numbers of subjects in the gender and nationality groups, homogeneity of variance could not be assumed. Therefore, these variables were analyzed using Welch's  $t$ -test with an alpha level of  $p = 0.05$ . All data were analyzed using SPSS.

## Results

The value hierarchies of rescuers and partisans showed several differences (see Table 2). As predicted, rescuers placed higher emphasis on the categories Benevolence and Universalism; also as predicted, partisans placed greater emphasis on Security. An unanticipated difference emerged as well: rescuers placed significantly greater emphasis on Spirituality. There were no significant differences in the remaining value categories.

Table 3 shows the value hierarchy rankings of rescuers, those of resisters, and the pan-cultural norms reported by Schwartz and Bardi.<sup>30</sup> Some of the rankings show major differences between the pan-cultural norms and one or both of the anti-Nazi activist groups.

Women in our study endorsed all value categories except Power and Achievement more strongly than men did (see Table 4). None of these differences was statistically significant.

Table 2. Mean value ratings

Value Category	Group		$F(1, 96)$	$p$
	Rescuers Mean ( $SD$ )	Resisters Mean ( $SD$ )		
Power	0.12 (0.11)	0.13 (0.11)	0.13	ns
Achievement	0.12 (0.14)	0.16 (0.13)	2.24	ns
Hedonism	0.10 (0.11)	0.12 (0.16)	0.35	ns
Stimulation	0.10 (0.09)	0.13 (0.12)	1.64	ns
Self-direction	0.11 (0.15)	0.13 (0.14)	0.30	ns
Universalism	0.22 (0.20)	0.13 (0.14)	5.76	0.02
Benevolence	0.36 (0.23)	0.23 (0.20)	9.11	0.00
Tradition	0.01 (0.03)	0.01 (0.02)	0.06	ns
Conformity	0.08 (0.09)	0.07 (0.08)	0.44	ns
Security	0.28 (0.22)	0.39 (0.27)	4.73	0.03
Spirituality	0.13 (0.16)	0.04 (0.06)	14.87	0.00

Table 3. Value hierarchies: Rank orders

Value Category	Pan-cultural Norm	Current Study	
		Rescuers	Resisters
Benevolence	1	1	2
Self-direction	2.5	7	7
Universalism	2.5	3	4
Security	4	2	1
Conformity	5	10	9
Achievement	6	6	3
Hedonism	7	8	8
Tradition	8	11	11
Stimulation	9	9	6
Power	10	5	5
Spirituality	<i>Not ranked</i>	4	10

Table 4. Value ranks by gender

Value Category	Group	
	Men	Women
Benevolence	2	2
Self-direction	7	5
Universalism	3	3
Security	1	1
Conformity	10	10
Achievement	4	6
Hedonism	8	4
Tradition	11	11
Stimulation	6	7
Power	5	8
Spirituality	9	9

Differences in value hierarchies depending on the survivors' place of residence shortly before the outbreak of the war showed no statistically significant differences.

## **Discussion**

### **Limitations**

Before discussing the results and their implications, it is appropriate to acknowledge the limitations of this study. Perhaps the most important of these has to do with sampling. Our sample sizes are relatively small, and the sample is restricted to those rescuers and fighters who have written their memoirs, or with whom interviews have been recorded. Such individuals may be more likely than other former anti-Nazi activists to be comfortable in written and oral expression, to be educated, to live in easily accessible communities, and to have maintained good mental and physical health.

Former partisans who participated in interviews with the US Holocaust Memorial Museum seem likely to be sympathetic to Jews, which was not true of all resistance groups; as we have pointed out, some actually combined fighting the Germans with murdering Jewish refugees or would-be volunteers whom they encountered.<sup>31</sup> For these reasons, it is possible that our sample of resisters is more sympathetic to Jews, and therefore more similar to rescuers (who, we hypothesize, were generally not anti-Semites), than the entire population of underground fighters. A more representative resistance sample might have shown more pronounced differences from rescuers.

Finally, the materials used were published or collected at varying times after the war. Although value hierarchies are theoretically quite stable over time, it is possible that the results would have been somewhat different if the participants could have been interviewed closer to the end of the war. Regrettably, both rescue and resistance are still needed. They are occurring in various locations around the world, so that gathering such data is feasible.

### **Findings and Implications**

Let us now turn to what we found. The data support the hypothesis that Universalism and Benevolence dominate the value hierarchies of Holocaust rescuers. Both values would be expected, intuitively as well as on the basis of earlier research, to be high among people who risked their own lives to save others on the basis of a perception of shared humanity. Benevolence values also provide the internalized motivational basis for cooperative and supportive social behaviors (e.g., working for the welfare of others; being genuine and sincere; being a close, supportive friend; and valuing emotional intimacy<sup>32</sup>), such as those necessary to live with a Jewish refugee hidden in one's home. Although Benevolence is also consistently rated as the most important value pan-culturally,<sup>33</sup> it would be interesting to assess its ranking in a sample of perpetrators or bystanders in post-Holocaust situations of ethnic or religious persecution.

Universalism is particularly relevant to the behaviors of Holocaust rescuers, as it is functionally most important when individuals must relate to, and feel concern for the welfare of, individuals with whom they do not readily identify<sup>34</sup>—in this case, Jewish targets of persecution, who were culturally and religiously different from their non-Jewish rescuers. Of the eleven value categories, Universalism, which includes values such as “equality” and “social justice,” best approximates the concept of inclusiveness and the perception of a common bond among all mankind—qualities that previous

researchers have frequently cited as the key feature distinguishing Holocaust rescuers from bystanders.<sup>35</sup>

However, neither Benevolence nor Universalism was dominant among people who took up arms to combat foreign invaders of their homeland. Universalism, in particular, could hardly be expected among a group that engaged in combat, sabotage, and assassination against an occupying foreign army. Thus, the lower ranking of this value among partisans, as compared to both rescuers and the pan-cultural norm, is not surprising.

Resistance fighters, possibly motivated more by political and patriotic values than by altruism as traditionally defined, were predicted to, and did, rank Security significantly higher than rescuers did. Security (controlling impulses and avoiding risks) was, in fact, high among the members of both groups, implying that their activism was influenced by recognition of the dangers and demands of opposing Nazi dominance. The behavioral expression of that opposition presumably differed because of the divergent importance of other values, personality characteristics, and situational factors.

The difference between rescuers and resistance members in the ranking of Spirituality was unexpected. Spirituality has not been identified as a primary motivator in previous research on rescuers, although individual rescuers have mentioned religious tenets or the personal influence of clergy. Our finding of differences in Spirituality reflects different levels of religious affiliation in our sample: 54% of the rescuers but only 21% of the resisters claimed membership in a religion. No religious affiliation was mentioned by 26% of rescuers and 49% of resisters, while 20% of rescuers and 30% of resisters indicated that they were atheists. By way of comparison, Oliner and Oliner report that although only 15% of rescuers they studied cited religion as a primary motivator for rescue, levels of religious belief in their samples of rescuers and bystanders were similar (73% of rescuers and 71% of bystanders categorized themselves as very or somewhat religious).<sup>36</sup>

Of course, holding spiritual values as important is not the same as being religious, and regarding oneself as religious does not necessarily equate with saying that one is a member of a religion. But the correlation is probably fairly high. The contrast between both samples of rescuers and Oliner and Oliner's bystanders, on the one hand, and our resisters, on the other, is striking.

The role of this category of values needs further investigation. It may be that religious affiliation cannot be taken as a proxy for deeper religious beliefs, or perhaps aspects of Spirituality other than those relating to religion are more relevant to the decision to save the persecuted. The low level of religious affiliation among resisters may also be related to the prominence of Communists and other extreme leftists in some resistance movements.

Both resisters and rescuers ranked Power more highly than the pan-cultural norm group. Power, which emphasizes control over people and resources, should indeed be more important to individuals who are willing to risk severe punishment in pursuit of their values than to those who conform to the dictates of authority even when those dictates violate the moral and legal rules in force only a short time earlier. Similarly, the low ranking of Conformity among both rescuers and partisans makes sense.

In a seeming paradox, both anti-Nazi groups ranked Self-Direction much lower than did the pan-cultural norm groups. The reasons for this are not clear; it may be that both groups considered their behavior to have been guided by moral, religious, political, or patriotic norms rather than merely by their own autonomous will (one frequently cited

comment by rescuers has been, “I had no choice but to help”). It is also possible that many people involved in anti-Nazi activities viewed themselves as part of a larger whole, rather than as individuals acting of their own volition. However, although almost all partisan units were organized in quasi-military fashion, many rescuers (especially in the later years of the war) did act alone, without a network of supporters or collaborators.<sup>37</sup>

The finding that value hierarchies did not differ as a function of country of residence indicates that rescuers and resisters were motivated by similar values regardless of the specific national culture to which they belonged. In other words, across Europe, the same values were associated with the same kinds of anti-Nazi behaviors. This is an interesting specific example for unusual subgroups of the general finding that there is high consistency across cultures concerning which values are the most and least important.<sup>38</sup> It also has implications for identifying potential rescuers and resisters in other genocides, regardless of where they may occur.

Existing data on gender differences in value hierarchies resemble the present trends. A study of men and women in seventy-three cultural groups showed that men rank power and achievement (among other values) more highly than women do, with the opposite pattern for benevolence and self-direction, but also that the differences are small. In general, men tend to emphasize “self-enhancement values,” such as power and achievement, which underlie the pursuit of one’s own interests; women tend to emphasize the opposite, “self-transcendence values” such as universalism and benevolence, which emphasize concern for the welfare of others.<sup>39</sup> This also appears to be the pattern, albeit a weak one, in our data.

It had been shown previously that among Holocaust rescuers, women and men report different motivational patterns: for women, the emphasis was on their relationship with the person they were helping, while men more often cite “a sense of justice and personal power in overcoming evil forces.”<sup>40</sup> Both the higher ranking of Power and Achievement by men and the higher ranking of Benevolence and Universalism by women in our study are consistent with this interpretation. However, as in the large international study cited above, these differences in our study are small; in fact, they are trends that do not reach the level of statistical reliability.

A study by Shalom Schwartz, Lilach Sagiv, and Klaus Boehnke<sup>41</sup> showed that certain values are associated with micro-worry (concern about self and its extensions), while others are associated with macro-worry (concern about society and the world). In particular, high priority for values such as Benevolence and Universalism was correlated with high macro-worry and low micro-worry, while priority for values such as Power and Achievement was correlated with the opposite pattern. The findings from the current study, viewed in conjunction with the results of Schwartz et al., suggest that Holocaust rescuers show a greater focus on wider society and worldly concerns than resistance members, although both groups were well aware of the need for control (Power). Again, this finding is consistent with previous research suggesting that Holocaust rescuers are characterized by a view of a shared humanity,<sup>42</sup> including all individuals in the same group as themselves and thereby making the concerns of others and of society in general more relevant to themselves as well.

Besides adducing the confirmation of quantitative data analyses to earlier impressionistic conclusions, our findings shed new light on the motivational characteristics of members of different components of the anti-Nazi resistance. They also point to the importance of stable personality factors, such as values, in the response

to tyranny and persecution, contrary to theories that claim the dominance of situational variables.<sup>43</sup> A fuller understanding of these factors could enable democratic societies to foster the qualities that enhance both humanitarian and armed resistance to future genocidal regimes.

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# Kurds in Turkey and in (Iraqi) Kurdistan: A Comparison of Kurdish Educational Language Policy in Two Situations of Occupation

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*This article describes, compares, and analyzes two educational situations for Kurds from the point of view of linguistic human rights, using prodigious exemplification. In Turkey, Kurdish-medium schools are not allowed, and Kurdish children do not even have the right to study their mother tongue as a subject in school. In addition to physical genocide through low-intensity warfare, including unacceptable living conditions, Turkey continues to commit linguistic and cultural genocide (according to definitions of genocide in articles 2(b) and 2(e) in the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide) in relation to the Kurdish nation/minority. Under the US-led occupation in Iraq, Kurdish children in (northern Iraqi) South Kurdistan are educated mainly through the medium of Kurdish and learn several foreign or second languages at school; minorities have their own schools in their own languages. We are especially interested in understanding how similar background motives on the part of Turkey's and Iraq's "partners" (mainly the United States) can result in such different educational outcomes. Thus we discuss some of the possible ethno-sociological, historical, economic, military, and political reasons for the differences and similarities, especially analyzing the seemingly contradictory US policy vis-à-vis the Kurds (including Kurdish language rights in education) in terms of three main causal factors: the US wish to secure oil, energy, and water deliveries in a new situation of uncertainties, through Turkey and from Iraqi Kurdistan; to secure support from Turkey in restructuring the Middle East; and to secure new arms deals.*

*Keywords: genocide, Kurd, Turkey, Iraq, educational language rights*

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## Introduction

Kurds, some 25 to 35 million people, have been said to be the world's largest people without a state. In Turkey, even speaking Kurdish in public places has been forbidden until recently. Kurdish-medium schools are not allowed; Kurdish children do not even have the right to study their mother tongue as a subject in Turkish schools. In theory, courses in the Kurdish language can be taught to teenagers and adults, but in practice the obstacles and conditions have been so many, and so bureaucratically and legally demanding, that almost no such courses are offered. Kurds are under Turkish occupation. In addition to physical genocide through a low-intensity warfare

that includes unacceptable living conditions,<sup>1</sup> Turkey continues to commit linguistic and cultural genocide (according to definitions of genocide in articles 2(b) and 2(e) of the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide) in relation to the Kurdish nation/minority.<sup>2</sup>

Under the US-led occupation in Iraq, Kurdish children in (northern Iraqi) South Kurdistan, which has its own regional government,<sup>3</sup> are educated mainly through the medium of Kurdish and learn several foreign or second languages at school. Minorities (Turkmens, Assyrians, etc.) have their own schools in their own languages. In 2006, Abdul-Aziz Taib, then minister of education in the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), said that every child in the world has the right to be educated through the medium of his or her mother tongue(s).<sup>4</sup>

This article describes, compares, and analyzes these two educational situations, including some of the possible ethno-sociological, historical, economic, military, and political causes for their differences and similarities, from the point of view of linguistic human rights. The approach needs to be multidisciplinary in order to do justice to the enormous complexity of the issues. This is challenging in a short article; interested readers should refer to our other writings on the topic.<sup>5</sup> We are especially interested in understanding how similar background motives in Turkey's and Iraq's "partners" (e.g., the United States) can result in such different educational outcomes. It is also interesting, at least in terms of educational policy, to see a rare positive example in which the earlier oppressed (Kurds in Iraqi Kurdistan) do *not*

Table 1. Estimates of numbers of Kurds

State	Source: Kemal Burkay	Source: Wikipedia
Turkey	18–20 million	14–21 million <sup>a</sup>
Iraq	5 million	4–6 million <sup>b</sup>
Iran	8–10 million	4.8–6.6 million <sup>c</sup>
Syria	1.5 million	0.9–2.6 million <sup>d</sup>
Total	32.5–36.5 million	23.7–36.2 million

Sources: Kemal Burkay, "The Kurdish Question—Its History and Present Situation," <http://members.aol.com/KHilfsvere/Kurds.html> (accessed 9 January 2008); Kemal Burkay is the general secretary of the Kurdistan Socialist Party. "Kurdish People," *Wikipedia*, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurdish\\_people](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurdish_people) (accessed 9 January 2008).

<sup>a</sup>These figures are based on Kurds' forming 20% of the population of Turkey: from 70,400,000 × 20% to 74,709,000 × 20%. *The World Factbook*, s.v. "Turkey" (Langley, VA: Central Intelligence Agency, 2006), <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/tu.html> (accessed 22 January 2007); *World Gazetteer*, ed. Stefan Helder, s.v. "World" (Leverkusen, Germany: Stefan Helder, 2006), [www.world-gazetteer.com/wg.php](http://www.world-gazetteer.com/wg.php) (accessed 22 January 2007). We use Wikipedia as a source here because it gives a good summary and its references can be checked.

<sup>b</sup>Estimate based on 26,783,383 × 15% (= 4,017,450) to 26,783,383 × 20% (= 5,357,000). *World Factbook*, s.v. "Iraq"; *Encyclopedia of the Orient*, ed. Tore Kjeilen, s.v., "Iraq: Religions and Peoples" (N.p.: Lexorient, 2006), [http://lexicorient.com/e.o/iraq\\_4.htm](http://lexicorient.com/e.o/iraq_4.htm) (accessed 9 January 2008).

<sup>c</sup>Estimate based on 68,688,433 × 7%. *World Factbook*, s.v. "Iran"; *Encyclopedia of the Orient*, s.v. "Iran: Religions and Peoples," [http://lexicorient.com/e.o/iran\\_4.htm](http://lexicorient.com/e.o/iran_4.htm) (accessed 9 January 2008).

<sup>d</sup>Estimate based on 18,881,361 × 5% (= 944,000) to 18,881,361 × 15% (= 2,832,000). *World Factbook*, s.v. "Syria"; *Encyclopedia of the Orient*, s.v. "Syria: Peoples. Languages. Religions."

turn into (linguistic) oppressors of others when they gain some power to control their own destiny.

Exact figures for the number of Kurds in the world are not available, because most states where they live have not wanted and still do not want to know. Kurds have not been included in any census as Kurds, and questions about ethnicity and mother tongue have not been asked. In addition, respondents fear reprisals for self-identifying as Kurds, and Middle Eastern authorities prefer to minimize numbers of Kurds.<sup>6</sup> However, many Kurdologists concur with David McDowall's estimate that there were at least 22.6 million Kurds worldwide around 1990, and with the estimate that 20% to 25% of the population of Turkey is Kurdish.<sup>7</sup> Various sources estimate the number of Kurds in Turkey at a minimum of 15 million,<sup>8</sup> and some posit 20% of the population of Turkey, but figures up to 30 million have been used.

Millions of Kurds have been killed since Mustafa Kemal Atatürk came to power in 1923, and at least 3 million Kurds are internally displaced in Turkey today.

The number of Kurds in diaspora has been estimated as follows:<sup>9</sup> Germany, 500,000–600,000; Afghanistan, 200,000; Azerbaijan, 150,000; Lebanon, 80,000; Armenia, 42,139; Turkmenistan, 40,000; United Kingdom, 25,000;<sup>10</sup> Israel, 100,000;<sup>11</sup> Sweden, 30,000;<sup>12</sup> Georgia, 34,000–60,000.<sup>13</sup> This list, which excludes several countries with sizable numbers of Kurds (e.g., Australia, Canada, Denmark, the United States), adds up to a total of some 1.231 to 1.357 million. Thus, the total number of Kurds in diaspora might be around 1.5 million.

Educational linguistic human rights, especially the right to first-language-medium education, are among the most important rights for all indigenous peoples and minorities. Without them, a minority/people whose children attend school usually cannot reproduce itself as a minority/people. It cannot integrate but is forced to assimilate. Next we describe the educational situation in two parts of Kurdistan in relation to these rights.

## **The Kurdish Language-in-Education Situation in (Turkish) Northwest Kurdistan and (Iraqi) South Kurdistan**

### **Kurdish Educational Language Policy in Turkey**

The situation in Northwest Kurdistan (Turkey) is easily described: Kurdish-medium schools are not allowed in Turkey, nor do Kurdish children have the right to study their mother tongue as a subject in school. Courses in the Kurdish language can in theory be offered for teenagers and adults, but the obstacles and conditions imposed have been such that, at the time of writing, virtually no such courses existed. The conditions imposed on private schools manifestly discourage Kurdish-language education or courses: "Sixteen conditions were outlined in the memo on the authorization of Kurdish tuition on a private basis... For the head of the teachers' union in Diyarbakir, ... Kurdish courses had been permitted" *de jure*, "but... under these conditions they were, in fact, 'simply impossible'" for appropriate teaching.<sup>14</sup> According to Mariam Benitez and David Lawson, "the Turkish Government has repeatedly linked Kurdish language and culture to separatism and terrorism."<sup>15</sup>

The following examples from 2002 through 2007 are drawn mostly from court cases in which the Kurdish language and expressions in support of Kurdish culture/language were either overtly prohibited or prohibited on the basis of being labeled "terrorist activities" under the vague definition of terrorism in various articles of the Turkish Penal Code.

The first two instances took place during the summer of 2002:

On 14th August 2002, a hearing took place in Number Four court of the state security courts in Istanbul against twelve teachers and functionaries from the trade union *Egitim-Sen*. They were accused of giving talks at various trade union congresses between 2–13th February on the right to native [i.e., Kurdish] language tuition and had, therefore, given support to the [‘terrorist’] PKK...The defendants deny the charges.<sup>16</sup>

A case has begun before the state security court in Diyarbakir against 27 children aged between 11–18, because they had demanded the right to native [Kurdish] language tuition...The state prosecutor...accuse[d] the children and adolescents of “aiding a terrorist organization” through their demands, and has called for prison terms of 3 years and 9 months.<sup>17</sup>

Also in 2002, students’ petitions calling for the right to merely receive optional instruction in the Kurdish language were incriminated

on grounds of being instrumental to the [“terrorist”] PKK’s efforts to establish itself as a political organisation. State Prosecutors were briefed by the Ministry of the Interior in January, 2002, to bring charges of “membership in a terrorist organisation” punishable with 12 years imprisonment against any students or parents who lodge[d] petitions demanding optional Kurdish lessons. By 23 January 2002, a total of 85 students and more than 30 parents ha[d] been imprisoned and over 1,000 people (among them some juveniles) detained for [merely] having demanded optional first language education in Kurdish.<sup>18</sup>

Even today, as Turkey is engaged in the EU accession process, “programs in Kurdish for children on radio or TV” remain “prohibited,” according to Jon Rud.<sup>19</sup> “Local media groups who seek [to] broadcast programs in languages and dialects other than Turkish [i.e., Kurdish]...will [need to] present...an *affidavit*” clarifying their intentions and behavior, “stating that they will not broadcast...programs with the aim of teaching that language.”<sup>20</sup>

Teachers who have sought simply to learn the Kurdish language, in preparation for a time when they might be allowed to teach it in schools, have also been targeted: “12 people of whom 11 were teachers,” we are told,

were allegedly tortured while being detained by police after having been arrested in Kiziltepe for learning Kurdish together. The 12 people, 11 of whom were members of the teachers['] trade union *Egitim-Sen*, were arrested in an apartment...in Mardin on May 7th. A magistrate had issued warrants for their arrest. The Mardin branch of *Egitim-Sen* said in a written statement that...“Our colleagues were subjected to various methods of torture; they were sprayed with high-pressure water, they had plastic bags pulled over their heads, they were forced to sing marching songs and to do the goose-step, they were brutally beaten, left for 3 days without food or water, they were stripped naked, had their testicles crushed and were verbally abused.” One of the teachers...was not spared the torture despite being pregnant. Because of her poor condition she was taken to Diyarbakir’s Medical Faculty on the evening of her detention. According to the statement, her condition remains serious. *Egitim-Sen*...pointed out that there was a complete disregard for legal procedures following the arrests. Despite complaints from their lawyers, between 25–30 police were involved in the questioning.<sup>21</sup>

In April 2004 it was reported that a “case against the members of KESK Music Group...who were charged with having sung in Kurdish during a festival organized by teachers’ union *Egitim-Sen* in Diyarbakir in 2002, was restarted on 2nd April [2004].”<sup>22</sup>

A 2004 European Commission report confirms that

in March 2004... RTUK ordered the closure for 30 days of ART TV, a local television channel broadcasting from Diyarbakir, on the grounds that it had violated “the principle of the indivisibility of the state” when, in August 2003, it broadcast two Kurdish love songs.<sup>23</sup>

Similarly,

RTUK issued a warning to one TV channel which had shown a music program with songs in Kurdish. This was based on a provision which prohibits programs that are “in breach of the general principles of the Constitution... national security...”<sup>24</sup>

In 2006 the Swedish news agency TT reported that

on the 25th of August, 2006 the Turkish authorities in Istanbul have seized 1,208 Kurdish versions of the books about Pippi Långstrump (Pippi Longstocking), the world-famous fictional children’s character. They were sent on the 7th of August from Sweden by an organization that runs an education project for Kurds. The books had been sent for delivery to libraries in five Kurdish villages. As it is well known, Astrid Lindgren’s books about Pippi Longstocking have been translated into 85 languages and published in more than 100 countries.<sup>25</sup>

As Richard Boudreaux writes,

Kurds who dominate the [southeastern] region in numbers insist on the right to hear broadcasts and study in their own language and to give their children [Kurdish]...names... Turkey’s rulers resist these demands as subversive... Military police have swept through Kurdish towns and villages, checking birth certificates of infants and toddlers. Citing a constitutional clause that children must be named “in a manner appropriate to our national culture, moral principles and customs,” the Interior Ministry has quietly instructed prosecutors to annul hundreds of children’s Kurdish names and replace them with Turkish equivalents. At least 39 families resisting the orders have been taken to court, according to the bar association in Diyarbakir... Some of them have been threatened with prosecution for “separatist propaganda,” which carries a three-year prison term.<sup>26</sup>

In June 2007, “Turkey’s highest administrative court, the Council of State ruled... to dismiss Abdullah Demirbas, Mayor of the Sur district of Diyarbakır because the municipality voted for the provision of services in languages other than Turkish.”<sup>27</sup> For the Kurdish Human Rights Project (KHRP), this action “represents the latest example of the central government’s inflexible and intolerant stance on linguistic rights”:

The recent court ruling against the mayor and council stemmed from a complaint lodged by the Interior Ministry. The board of judges voted unanimously in favor of dismissing Demirbas and the local council... The Diyarbakır chief prosecutor further demanded that Demirbas and Diyarbakır metropolitan mayor Osman Baydemir both be sentenced to a prison term of three and a half years. Twenty-one other defendants in the court case are also facing jail terms of three and a half years each. These prosecutions are currently pending.<sup>28</sup>

The *Turkish Daily News* confirms that

the country’s top administrative court... dismissed the mayor... and disbanded the municipal assembly over deciding to provide their services in Kurdish, Assyrian and English languages in addition to Turkish... It argued that the municipality’s decision violated the constitution and Turkish law... The constitution states that no language apart from Turkish can be used in public services.<sup>29</sup>

A 2006 report by the “pro-Kurdish” Democratic Society Party (DTP), published with the DTP’s permission in a blog run by an investigative journalist, also confirms the following legal actions targeted at Kurdish interests:

- On March 20, 2006, a case was filed against Mayor Demirbas on the grounds of “making propaganda to promote the aims of the terrorist organization PKK” due to his speech titled, “Municipal Services and Local Governments in the Light of Multilingualism,” which was delivered at the European Social Forum in January 2006. Although the content of the speech, very well summarized by its title, did not include any single direct or indirect reference to the PKK, as was also later affirmed by the court, the very fact that the speech aimed to explore the relations between multilingualism and local democracy and that it was delivered by a DTP Mayor was enough to render it as a form of “PKK propaganda” in the eyes of central government authorities. Mayor Demirbas was acquitted from all charges on September 19, 2006. [The] public prosecutor’s consequent appeal to the Supreme Court is still in process.
- On February 7, 2007, following the release of the Kurdish translation of Ubuntu, a free software program available in 167 languages, with the support of Sur Municipality, an investigation was launched against Mayor Demirbas and three municipal administrators on charges of “misuse of municipal resources.”
- On October 10, 2006, [the] Ministry of [the] Interior launched an investigation against Mayor Demirbas due to the children’s games and handicrafts book published by the Sur Municipality. The children’s book, which was written in both Turkish and Kurdish, was published on the occasion of Teacher’s Day.
- In March 2006 an investigation was launched against Mayor Demirbas due to his use [of] Kurdish in his speeches during a wedding ceremony in Diyarbakir.
- On April 19, 2007, Osman Baydemir, Mayor of Diyarbakir Metropolitan Municipality, will appear before the court on charges of violating the law that obliges state agencies, civic groups and private institutions to use Turkish letters. Mayor Baydemir risks 6 to 12 months of imprisonment for using the Kurdish letter “w” in his greetings cards of New Year’s Day . . .
- On March 5, 2007, [the] Ministry of [the] Interior sent inspectors to Diyarbakir for a preliminary investigation against Democratic Society Party mayors due to the Newroz invitation cards published in Kurdish and sent to the officials in Turkey.
- In March 2007, a preliminary investigation was launched against Mayor Baydemir due to the publication of public brochures on health and cleanliness in Kurdish and Turkish for local people.
- In March 2007, a preliminary investigation was launched against Mayor Baydemir due to the baby names’ book published in Kurdish.
- On January 17, 2007, an investigation was launched against Mayor Osman Baydemir due to the invitation cards sent to the officials in Turkey. The invitation cards, which were written in both Turkish and Kurdish, were sent on the occasion of the 6th Culture and Arts Festival in Diyarbakir.
- On January 12, 2007, a preliminary investigation was launched against Mayor Osman Baydemir due to the website of Diyarbakir Metropolitan Municipality, which is in Turkish, Kurdish and English.
- With an investigation filed on July 8, 2006, [the] Viransehir Mayor . . . was indicted on charges of “misuse of municipal resources” due to publication of bulletins about municipal services both in Turkish and Kurdish. Mayor Cin stated that Kurdish was the mother tongue of the majority of . . . Viransehir’s population (app. 120[, ]000), thus, in publishing bulletins also in Kurdish, the municipality aimed to better communicate municipal services to the public . . .
- On October 20, 2006, a preliminary investigation was launched against [the] Kayapinar Mayor . . . due to the provision “Municipalities take the necessary

precautions to teach their personnel Kurdish in order for them to better communicate with the public” [that was] stated in the collective agreement between the municipalities and the Union of Municipal and Local Governments Services Workers.

- Kayapinar Municipal Council’s efforts to give culturally significant Kurdish names to the parks and streets of Diyarbakir were obstructed by the Diyarbakir Governorship because these names were said to either include letters that did not exist in the Turkish alphabet (e.g. “w”) or showed parallelism with socially discriminating, separatist discourses. The court case filed by the Kayapinar City Council against the Diyarbakir Governorship is still in process.
- There are investigations against Diyarbakir Metropolitan, Kiziltepe, Sur and Silvan Municipalities opened solely for the use of Kurdish language in public speeches.<sup>30</sup>

Clearly, the linguistic human rights situation remains precarious. The chair of Turkey’s Human Rights Foundation (TIHV) has said that

other than 14 articles that needed to be changed in the current Turkish Penal Code, various laws such as the Anti-Terror Law, the Law to Protect Atatürk, the Press Law and the RTUK [Radio and Television Higher Board] Code restricted freedom of expression. [He] said that in order for freedom of expression to settle in Turkey, the soul and essence of all of these laws needed to be changed . . . “Unless this happens,” he said, “there will be no meaning in the amendments. And whether or not the cases opened and heard under these articles lead to an acquittal, they still mean intimidation through justice.”<sup>31</sup>

Martin Scheinin, UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism, has also concluded that Turkey’s anti-terrorism bill (now passed into law) “introduces ‘improper restrictions on freedom of expression . . . This danger is exacerbated by the very broad definition of terrorism’ that is being used ‘and the very long and wide list of terrorist offences.’”<sup>32</sup> The article that has been criticized most intensely in negotiations over Turkey’s EU membership is art. 301, which criminalizes the act of “public denigration” of “Turkishness,” the Republic of Turkey, the Grand National Assembly, the judicial institutions of the state, the military, or security.

It is clear that many of these laws constrain educational and linguistic human rights, and, in the US-backed war against “PKK terrorists,”<sup>33</sup> it is already apparent that one line of reasoning being used “in Turkish legal practice is,” indeed, “guilt by association.”<sup>34</sup> An example of this reasoning in relation to education:

1. The terrorist organisation the PKK is making propaganda for the right to use the Kurdish language, including in education.
2. Consequently, anyone who advocates the right to use the Kurdish language is guilty of supporting (“aiding and abetting,” Article 169 of the Turkish Penal Code) a terrorist organisation.<sup>35</sup>

Even if many legal changes have been accepted (at least on paper), it is valid to conclude that Turkey is not yet even approaching international standards of human rights, either in education or in other aspects of linguistic rights. The situation has deteriorated since 2004. Although many other countries participate in linguistic and cultural genocide in relation to minorities, Turkey is unfortunately one of the worst offenders in the world, in several ways the worst.

### **Kurdish Educational Language Policy in South Kurdistan (Northern Iraq)**

In South Kurdistan (northern Iraq), where Kurds form a large majority of the population of 5.5 million, they are in a completely different situation. The area of South Kurdistan (approximately 80,000 km<sup>2</sup>, about 18% of the total area of Iraq), comprises

the governorates of Arbil, Sulaimania, Dohuk, Kirkuk, and parts of Dyala and Nineva. Two-thirds of the 5 million Kurds in Iraq live in the first three.<sup>36</sup> These governorates are under the administration of the KRG;<sup>37</sup> the others are still administered by Iraq.

During Saddam Hussein's regime, all education in South Kurdistan—where it existed at all—was delivered in Arabic. Kurds have themselves had administrative control over education since 1991, when the “safe haven” (no-fly zone) was created. The new constitution of Iraq (dating from 15 October 2005) states, in article 4,

First: The Arabic language and the Kurdish language are the two official languages of Iraq. The right of Iraqis to educate their children in their mother tongue, such as Turkmen, Syriac, and Armenian, in government educational institutions in accordance with educational guidelines, or in any other language in private educational institutions, is guaranteed.<sup>38</sup>

According to the Kurdistan Democratic Party,

The Educational Ladder in Iraqi Kurdistan consists of 2 years pre-school education for the 4–5 years age group (not compulsory); 6 years compulsory primary education for 6–11 years; 6 years of secondary education of 2 cycles of 3 years each and higher education of 2–6 years.<sup>39</sup>

All education, including university education, is free to students. Katarina Tomasevski, former United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, in her report *The State of the Right to Education Worldwide*, examines education in 170 countries, determining to what extent education is free or fee-based. In more than half of these countries, fees are charged even for primary education.<sup>40</sup> The global pattern of poverty-based exclusion from primary school is part of the global strategies for “no poverty reduction.” Education is often priced out of the reach of the poor. The trend has been a transition from free and compulsory education to a market-based model in which the costs of even primary education have been transferred from government to family budgets. Against this background, South Kurdistan is remarkable.

For Kurdish children in Kurdistan today, Kurdish is the medium of education in all subjects. They also learn English as an obligatory subject in primary school.<sup>41</sup> Assyrian-, Turkmen-, and Arabic-speaking children in Kurdistan are taught through Assyrian/Syriac, Turkmen, and Arabic and learn Kurdish and English as second or foreign languages. These minorities have their own departments in the Ministry of Education, each with its own director general. Meetings with some of these officials gave the impression that they are very satisfied with the current position of the minority groups in education, by comparison with earlier periods.<sup>42</sup> There are also critical voices, however.<sup>43</sup>

Assyrian/Syriac, Armenian, Chaldean, Turkmen, and Arabic are taught as mother tongues. All these languages are also taught as elective subjects to those who want to learn them, while English and Kurdish (for non-Kurdish speakers) are obligatory as second or foreign languages. As mentioned above, the former minister of education, Abdul-Aziz Taib, formulated his conviction this way: “Every child in the world has the right to education through the medium of their mother tongue.”<sup>44</sup>

Thus, in (Iraqi) Kurdistan, basic linguistic human rights<sup>45</sup> are respected, both for Kurdish children (an earlier minority) and for most minority children:

1. Their mother tongues are accepted and respected.
2. They learn their mother tongues fully, as the mother tongue is the main language of instruction.
3. They are not forced to shift languages.

4. They learn an official language.<sup>46</sup>
5. They can profit from education.

But, while signs of prosperity are palpable across Kurdistan, there are also signs of corruption, nepotism, patriarchal structures and attitudes, and, in general, poor governance. Also, as in the rest of Iraq, shortages of electricity and gasoline cause considerable hardship to large segments of the population. Furthermore, there is the issue of poverty. Despite rapid economic growth generated by local and foreign investments, many families still live below the poverty line. All this influences children's health, including food availability and intake.

The material quality of schools, teaching materials, and so on remains poor. Teacher training is traditional, and often authoritarian and inadequate, despite good intentions. Teaching through the medium of languages that have seldom or never been used in schools requires time, effort, and training, and no training in language planning is yet available. Both corpus planning and acquisition planning are badly needed. There is also a risk that inappropriate advice from American and British publishers and other bodies will be accepted, both by necessity and through a lack of awareness of various aspects of languages-in-education research and experience elsewhere. Nevertheless, good intentions and motivation are palpable. For example, children's literature, including periodicals published for children, are very much in evidence.

## **A Comparison of the Two Situations in Terms of Linguistic Human Rights in Education**

All Kurdish children in Turkey are taught subtractively, in submersion (sink-or-swim) programs. Turkish is the language of instruction; children receive no education using Kurdish as the language of instruction, nor is Kurdish even taught as a subject. *Subtractive teaching* through the medium of a dominant language (i.e., using the dominant language as the language of instruction) replaces the children's mother tongue, subtracting from their linguistic repertoire. This is the situation for Kurds in Turkey.

*Additive teaching* through the medium of the mother tongue, with good teaching of the dominant language as a second language, adds to children's linguistic repertoire and makes them high-level bilinguals or multilinguals; they learn both their own language and other languages well. This is the situation for minorities in Iraqi Kurdistan. Kurdish children, a minority at the level of the Iraqi state, also have a positive situation in terms of learning their mother tongue, whereas their situation with respect to learning other languages remains unclear at the moment.

What does subtractive teaching do? It leads to forced assimilation. It is, in effect, genocidal, according to the definitions of genocide in art. 2 of the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (UNCG):

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;

- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.<sup>47</sup>

The education offered to Kurdish children in Turkey is specifically a form of genocide according to arts. 2(e), “forcibly transferring children of the group to another group,” and 2(b), “causing serious bodily *or mental* harm to members of the group.”<sup>48</sup> In this section we give a few examples, drawn from other parts of the world, of how education can contribute to genocide according to these two definitions. Pirjo Janulf’s longitudinal large-scale study of ninth-grade Finnish children in Sweden, published in 1998, is one. These children received all their education through the medium of Swedish; no Finnish-medium classes were available at that point. After fifteen years, Janulf went back to as many of her original Finnish subjects in Sweden as she could find; she discovered that *not one* of them spoke *any* Finnish to their own children.<sup>49</sup> Although they themselves may not have forgotten their Finnish completely, their children were certainly forcibly transferred to the majority group, at least linguistically. This is what Turkish education attempts to do to Kurdish children.

A 1998 Canadian report on Inuit children whose education has been through the medium of English states that “teenagers cannot converse fluently with their grandparents.”<sup>50</sup> The same is true for many Kurdish children in Turkey. Assimilationist education is genocidal because it forcibly transfers children from their own group to another group, linguistically and culturally.

Edward Williams’ 1995 study in Zambia and Malawi observed and tested some 1,500 students in first through seventh grades. The Zambian students received all their education in English from day one, whereas the Malawian children were taught in local languages, very often their mother tongues, for their first four years of school, with English as a separate subject, and switched over to English-medium teaching beginning in the fifth grade. Large numbers of Zambian pupils “have very weak or zero reading competence in two languages,” Williams states, whereas the Malawian children had slightly better test results even in the English language than the Zambian students. In addition, they learned to read and write their own languages. Williams’ conclusion is that “there is a clear risk that the policy of using English as a vehicular language may contribute to stunting, rather than promoting, academic and cognitive growth.”<sup>51</sup> This is “causing serious mental harm” in the Genocide Convention’s sense. Education of many Kurdish children in Turkey is also very likely to stunt rather than promote their cognitive and academic growth.

Another Canadian report on Inuit children in English-medium education, published in 1985, tells of Canadian Inuit “students who are neither fluent nor literate in either language” and “presents statistics showing that the students ‘end up at only Grade Four level of achievement after nine years of schooling.’”<sup>52</sup> According to Mick Mallon and Alexina Kublu, “a significant number of young people are not fully fluent in their languages,” and many Inuit students “remain apathetic, often with minimal skills in both languages.”<sup>53</sup> The same is likely true for many Kurdish children in Turkey.

Clearly, this subtractive, dominant-language-only-medium submersion model of education can cause serious mental harm to students from indigenous, minority, or dominated groups. It attempts, often successfully, to transfer them forcibly to another linguistic group. This is linguistic genocide.

To qualify as genocide, an act must be intentional. Have states acted with an intent to “forcibly transfer children of the group to another group” and to “cause serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group?” Yes—unfortunately, they have.

As our earlier examples show, Turkey has certainly had, and still has, the intent to destroy the Kurdish language and identity. This intent has been and still is openly expressed in countless documents.<sup>54</sup>

Dominant-language-only submersion programs “are widely attested as the least effective educationally for minority language students”<sup>55</sup> and it is this model Turkey is using for Kurdish children. The negative results of subtractive teaching were already known at the end of the nineteenth century. States and educational authorities, including churches, have long been aware of this.<sup>56</sup> Research results about how indigenous and minority education should be organized have been available for at least fifty years, since the publication of the UNESCO expert group’s book *The Use of Vernacular Languages in Education* in 1953. If states, despite this evidence and despite very positive results from properly conducted additive teaching, continue to offer subtractive education, with no alternatives, knowing that the results are likely to be negative and thus to “transfer children” and “cause serious mental harm,” this course of action must be seen as intentional.

What should Turkey do instead? We know from research that the longer indigenous and minority children in a low-status position have their own language as the main medium of teaching, the better they also do in the dominant language, provided, of course, that they are well taught in that language, preferably by bilingual teachers. If the Turkish state wants Kurdish children to learn Turkish well, the best way to accomplish this goal would be to use Kurdish as the main language of instruction and to teach Turkish as a subject, using teachers bilingual in Turkish and Kurdish. Schools in Turkey should *minimally* aim at competence in three languages:

1. for all, the mother tongue (Arabic, Armenian, Kurdish, Turkish, etc.);
2. for all minorities, the dominant state language (Turkish); for native Turkish speakers, a domestic minority language; and
3. for all, English (or some other major international language).

This type of education toward trilingualism is the aim of the system in (Iraqi) South Kurdistan, although they are still far from reaching it for all children. This model can be compared with the Indian three-language formula, with successes and failures.<sup>57</sup>

## **Analyzing the “Contradiction”**

How can we understand the fact that the United States (with its coalition partners) supports and participates in enacting genocide (including linguistic and cultural genocide through in education) in Turkey while at the same time, first through the “safe haven” policy and now through occupation, partially enables respect for linguistic rights in education in Iraqi Kurdistan? In this section we analyze the seemingly contradictory US policy *vis-à-vis* the Kurds, including Kurdish language rights in education, with reference to three main goals:<sup>58</sup>

1. to secure oil, energy, and water deliveries, in a new situation of uncertainty, through Turkey and from Iraqi Kurdistan;
2. to secure support from Turkey in restructuring the Middle East; and
3. to secure new arms deals.

Before analyzing possible causes, however, we present some additional facts of the physical genocide and criticism of it in Turkey, of US involvement in it from the 1980s

to 2007, and of the ideological prerequisites for enforced assimilation that have existed, and continue to exist, in both the United States and in Turkey.

### USA Involvement in Turkey: Actions, Intentions, Prerequisites

At least some 4,000 Kurdish villages have been bombed, depopulated, and destroyed.<sup>59</sup> More than three million Kurds are internally displaced; tens of thousands of Kurds—women, men, and children—have been killed, raped, tortured, and genocidally subjected to “debasement” and “mental harm.”<sup>60</sup> Noam Chomsky has observed that

there was no “looking away” in the case of Turkey and the Kurds: Washington “looked right there,” as did its allies, saw what was happening, and acted decisively to intensify the atrocities [against Kurds], particularly during the Clinton years. The US did not “fail to protect the Kurds” or “tolerate” the abuses they suffered anymore than Russia “fails to protect” the people of Grozny or “tolerates” their suffering.<sup>61</sup>

He continues,

The new generation of “humanitarian” western leaders drew the line by consciously putting as many guns as possible into the hands of the killers and torturers—not just guns, but jet planes, tanks, helicopter gunships, all the most advanced instruments of terror—sometimes in secret, because arms were sent in violation of congressional legislation. At no point was there any defensive purpose, nor any relation to the Cold War... In the case of the Kurds [in Turkey], helping them would interfere with US power interests. Accordingly, we cannot help them but must rather join in perpetrating atrocities against them.<sup>62</sup>

A disturbing testimony from a death-squad killer named Murat Ipek, if true, further suggests that US forces were directly involved in the training and coordination of some of the genocidal death squads: “An American... controlled and instructed the contra-teams.”<sup>63</sup> It has also been established that Huseyin Kocadag, chief of the Special Forces in Hakkari and deputy chief of police in Diyarbakir, who has been identified as “one of the most bloody enemies of the (Kurdish) people (and) who organised the units of the “head-hunters” in Kurdistan... was trained at a CIA school in the US.”<sup>64</sup> The US administration and American intelligence agencies were also actively involved in facilitating the illegal capture and abduction of Abdullah Öcalan (chair of the PKK) in Kenya in 1999.<sup>65</sup>

Key concerns about human rights were raised in a 1993 UK Parliamentary Human Rights Group report:

The depopulation of the Kurdish region is, we believe, part of a deliberate strategy aimed not merely at eliminating a few thousand [PKK] guerrillas, but to extinguish the separate identity of the Kurdish people... In Britain, as elsewhere, the question of Turkish Kurdistan is often presented as one of a reasonably democratic government seeking to cope with an intractable problem of terrorism. We believe that the reality is one of military terrorists aiming to extinguish the identity of a people, and we were much alarmed by the parallel drawn with the Armenian holocaust of 1915–1916.<sup>66</sup>

The charge of genocide was clearly made by prominent organizations and individuals. For the international organization Article 19, the situation was all too apparent by 1997:

We believe there is now ample evidence to indict the Turkish Government of gross violations of human rights which constitute infringements of... the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide, amongst other treaties to which Turkey is a party.<sup>67</sup>

For Karen Parker, a lawyer and analyst in international and humanitarian law,

Turkey's actions [by 1999] clearly [met] the international law test for genocide: killing and causing serious bodily harm, inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part (ethnic cleansing and other acts)... I am convinced that Turkey qualifies as a racist regime vis-à-vis the Kurdish people... The ethnic cleansing scheme, taking place in the context of the war, is both genocide and a war crime.<sup>68</sup>

And according to Vijay Prasad, "the anti-Marxist and anti-communist flavour of Euro-America [has] enabled the Turks to continue a genocidal campaign to liquidate the Kurdish people."<sup>69</sup>

In the post-9/11 period, under the cover of the global "War on Terror," the US government has continued to support the Turkish state in a highly questionable "anti-terrorism" offensive against Kurdish civilians, human-rights activists, peace campaigners, and "PKK militants" in the region.<sup>70</sup> The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), US Special Forces, and other agencies have all extended "anti-terrorism"-related "assistance."<sup>71</sup> Questionable US International Military Education Training (IMET) courses with Turkish forces have continued even as the US embassy in Ankara has confirmed that

General Joseph W. Ralston (USAF, retired) has been appointed as Special Envoy for Countering the PKK. General Ralston will have responsibility for coordinating US engagement with the Government of Turkey and the Government of Iraq to eliminate the terrorist threat of the PKK and other terrorist groups operating in northern Iraq and across the Turkey-Iraq border.<sup>72</sup>

In September 2006, General Ralston confirmed that

the United States would take tangible measures on the PKK, ... adding that all measures would be taken for an influential fighting... He ruled out the possibility of meeting with [the] PKK... "... I never meet a terrorist organization. We want to get rid of them."<sup>73</sup>

Nancy McEldowney, representing the US embassy at a September 11 commemoration service in Ankara in 2005, stated in her address that there was no difference between al-Qaeda and the PKK, or between Abdullah Öcalan and Osama Bin Laden. "Turkey and the United States' joint battle will continue," she said. "There will be no areas for them to retreat where Turkey and the US cannot go. Together we shall hunt the terrorists and destroy them."<sup>74</sup>

In this metaphor of "hunt" and "battle," which treats a minority's refusal to assimilate as an ideological challenge, the similarities between Turkey and the United States are striking. In the same way that the United States killed off or forcibly assimilated most of its indigenous peoples in order to profit from their land, water, and material resources, Turkey wants to eliminate the Kurds as a nation. In the same way that the United States does not tolerate other languages and cultures, seeing them as "un-American" and a threat to "Americanness," Turkey sees other languages and cultures as a threat to the integrity of the state and to its "Turkishness." When the United States aggressively supports the Turkish state's war against "PKK terrorists" (i.e., all Kurdish people who politically acknowledge aspects of their "Kurdishness"), the Turkish ideologies of genocide *vis-à-vis* the Kurds fit the physically genocidal (against indigenous peoples) and culturally and linguistically genocidal assimilationist (against immigrants) policies of the historical and present-day United States extremely well. Change "immigrant" to "Kurdish," "American" to "Turkish," and

“English” to “Turkish” in the following statement, made by former US president Theodore Roosevelt in a 1919 letter to the president of the American Defense League, and we have the ideology that has prevailed in Turkey since 1923:

In the first place, we should insist that if the immigrant who comes here in good faith becomes an American and assimilates himself to us, he shall be treated on an exact equality with everyone else, for it is an outrage to discriminate against any such man because of creed, or birthplace, or origin. But this is predicated upon the person's becoming in every facet an American, and nothing but an American . . . There can be no divided allegiance here. Any man who says he is an American, but something else also, isn't an American at all. We have room for but one flag, the American flag . . . We have room for but one language here, and that is the English language . . . and we have room for but one sole loyalty and that is a loyalty to the American people.<sup>75</sup>

Below we give a few examples of expressions of similar Turkish assimilationist ideologies, and of the policies and practices that put in place to realize the goals of the Kemalist state:

On March 3, 1924, . . . a decree banned all Kurdish schools, organizations, and publications, as well as religious fraternities and *medressehs*, which were the last source of education for most Kurds. Deportations of Kurds to the west [occurred] after the Sheikh Said rebellion was crushed in 1925. The purpose was to dilute the Kurdish population in order to facilitate its assimilation . . . Law No. 2510 in June 1934 sought further to disperse the Kurdish population to areas where it would constitute no more than 5 percent of the total. It was even suggested that Kurdish children be sent to boarding schools where they would speak exclusively in Turkish.<sup>76</sup>

On 4 May 1925, Turkish prime minister Ismet Inonu said,

Nationalism is our only factor of cohesion. Before the Turkish majority, other elements have no kind of influence. At any price, we must turkify the inhabitants of our land, and we will annihilate those who oppose Turks or “le Turquisme.”<sup>77</sup>

They were all Turks, [Mustafa Kemal Atatürk] told them, and for decades after his death that's how the Kurds were officially described—“Mountain Turks” who would be assimilated over time into “civilised society.” Often, it was done by overwhelming force: military officers who led the campaign against the PKK in the 1980's and 1990's had plenty of historical parallels to emulate.<sup>78</sup>

And according to Mahmut Esat Bozhurt, Turkey's minister of justice, “Only the Turkish nation is entitled to claim ethnic and national rights in this country. No other element has any such right.”<sup>79</sup>

Ismail Besikci writes,

In 1960, Mehmet Sherif Firat's book, *Dogu Illeri ve Varto Tarihi* was reprinted and distributed. This was another one of the books which claimed that there were no such people as Kurds, who were really Turks, and that Kurdish was a dialect of Turkish. Originally written in 1948, the 1960 reprint was widely distributed free of charge by the Ministry of Education to universities, professors, student associations, journalists, writers and school libraries. During this same period, numerous articles appeared, stating that the Kurds were Turks. Language experts bent over backwards trying to prove that Kurdish was a variant of Turkish. University professors lent all their efforts to the task. Numerous seminars and conferences were held.<sup>80</sup>

Further, as Michael Gunter reports,

During the 1960's, Turkish President Cemal Gursel lauded [this] book written by Sherif Firat . . . and helped to popularize the phrase “spit in the face of he who calls you a Kurd” as a way to make the word “Kurd” an insult. At the same time, Law No. 1587 furthered

the process of changing Kurdish names, “which hurt public opinion and are not suitable for our national culture, moral values, traditions and customs,” into Turkish names.<sup>81</sup>

Even as recently as 2002, an indictment against twenty-four students who had requested that Kurdish language classes be offered as elective courses at their university, submitted to the Security Court in the state of Van, claimed that

Teacher M. Serif Firat, in his work [mentioned above] . . . has advocated and proved that the Kurds are of Turkish origin . . . The Turks and the Kurds . . . share the same language . . . Although this is the case today the separatist movement and its collaborators are endeavoring to *create* a separate language and a separate people . . . The demand for Kurdish education is not possible as regards the provisions of our Constitution. *Our Constitution does not permit education in Kurdish*. Article 3 of the Constitution states: The Turkish state, with its territory and nation, is an indivisible entity. Its language is Turkish . . . Article 4 states . . . [that] the provision of Article 3 may not be amended, nor may their amendment be proposed. The final paragraph of Article 42 states: No language other than Turkish may be taught as mother tongue to Turkish citizens at any institutions of training and education and the rules to be followed by schools conducting training and education in a foreign language shall be determined by law.<sup>82</sup>

According to Besikci,

The chief vehicles for assimilation have been the mass media and educational institutions. Every possible avenue has been tried to increase the influence of Turkish teaching in Kurdistan. From the early 1960s on, Regional Boarding Schools (*Bolge Yatili Ilkokullar*) began to be constructed in various regions of Kurdistan. Children who had reached primary school age were brought from their homes to study in an environment away from their families and villages. Such environments were conducive to assimilation because the children were permeated with Turkish language and ideology and had no contact with their native Kurdish culture whatsoever . . . The schools were kept under strict discipline. During the regimes of 12 March and 12 September, military officers were appointed as headmasters. The aim of all these measures was to ensure the full severance of individuals from their Kurdish environment. Following the coup of 12 September 1980, assimilation was once again placed on the agenda . . . The literary courses which were commenced . . . were meant for the assimilation of Kurds . . . Coskun Kirca writes that “the separatists eager for independence, or the dreamers of autonomy, will be damned into seeing that no one has any other choice other than becoming a Turk or being absorbed into Turkhood.”<sup>83</sup>

Gérard Chaliand reports that “in 1966, Emin Bozarslan published an ABC for the Kurdish children of Turkey: the book was immediately banned.”<sup>84</sup>

As documented in a 1990 report by Helsinki Watch,

In May 1989, the National Security Council launched a campaign denying the existence of a distinct Kurdish nation and a Kurdish language. Pamphlets were issued and distributed to schools in the south-east, claiming that Kurdish is not a distinct language, but a dialect of Turkish.<sup>85</sup>

Professor Dr. Orhan Turkdogan has claimed that “there is no such thing as the Kurdish people or nation.”<sup>86</sup> According to the late Alparslan Turkes, general secretary of the National Action Party, “Turkey is not a cultural mosaic, everyone in Turkey is a Turk.”<sup>87</sup> Speaking of the Kurdish language, Oltan Sungurlu, Turkey’s minister of justice, is quoted as saying, “What language is that? I do not know of such a language.”<sup>88</sup>

Alpaslan Pehlivanli, chairman of the Justice Committee in the Turkish parliament, argued that

if the word “language” now in the bill [aimed at repealing Law 2932 in order to legalize the use of Kurdish “in a rather limited way”] stays in, we will have admitted that the Kurds are a nation . . . If it passes this way, tomorrow there will be cafes where Kurdish folk songs are sung, theatres where Kurdish films will be shown, and coffee houses where Kurdish is spoken. If this is not separatism, then what is?<sup>89</sup>

Similarly, Gunter writes,

Justifying its refusal to grant any concessions, the Turkish military argued that: “. . . Even pursuing language rights for the Kurds in Turkey . . . is to be regarded as serving the PKK’s [‘terrorist’] interests. Period.”<sup>90</sup>

And in 1995,

General Ahmet Corekci, the vice chief of staff, . . . [argued] that demands for Kurdish language and education rights were part of the “salami tactic . . . the more slices we cut the more they will take.”<sup>91</sup>

As Chris Morris reports,

In 2001 a Turkish court banned the Batman city council from using Kurdish words as street names . . . The highest administrative court in the land ruled that the names . . . could . . . lead to an “erosion of cultural values” . . . Even newborn children have not been immune. In 2002 parents . . . found themselves being warned that giving a child a Kurdish name would be “interpreted as terrorist propaganda.” Children should be named, as Interior Ministry directive warned, “in a manner appropriate to our national culture, moral principles and customs” . . . In March 2005 the Environment and Forestry Ministry in Ankara proudly announced that it was changing the Latin names of some indigenous animals to eliminate references to Kurdistan and Armenia.<sup>92</sup>

Morris has perceptively concluded that “since the formation of the republic, Turkey has grudgingly accepted a narrow definition of non-Muslim religious minorities, but it’s never been prepared to accept linguistic or ethnic ones (sorry, all you Kurds).”<sup>93</sup> This explains why educational language policy remains linguistically genocidal in its nature and scope. The example he cites is instructive:

When a report calling for radical change in mentality was written by an advisory group within the Prime Ministry, there was uproar. “The citizens the state should fear the least,” argued the discredited report, “are the ones who have been granted their rights.” If that means diluting the idea of Turkishness, though, it is still too much for most people in power. The AKP government hastily disowned the recommendations, a senior general growled with displeasure, and a copy of the report was torn up at a news conference which had been called to publicise it.<sup>94</sup>

In light of these examples of actions, intentions, and ideological prerequisites that the USA and Turkey seem, to a large extent, to share, we go back to the “Whys,” the three causal factors that are part of an explanation of the United States’ (and its coalition partners’) direct or indirect support of the different language-in-education models in Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan.

## Oil, Energy, and Water

The first “why” linked to the United States, and to its coalition partner the United Kingdom, has to do with securing the delivery of oil, energy, and water. The Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline, which began operating in 2006, is a key US-backed initiative aimed at cutting out Russian influence in the exploitation of Caucasus-linked oil. Turkey has developed the critical link in the project that key US–UK oil giants (Unocal, ConocoPhillips, Amerada Hess, British Petroleum) are

involved in: “The Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan oil pipeline is being developed by a consortium of oil companies led by British oil giant BP.”<sup>95</sup> Thus Turkey is a key pivot state whose cooperation is necessary to facilitate this US/UK-backed mega-project:

The Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan pipeline... transports crude oil 1,776 km from the Azeri–Chirag–Guneshli oil field in the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean Sea. Total length in... Turkey is 1076 km... Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan is a politically driven project to create a pipeline that does not transit any of the territory of the post-soviet states that do not have warm relations with the west.<sup>96</sup>

Turkey also figures centrally in US neoconservative and Israeli state plans aimed at securing critical control of, and access to, other key oil, energy, and water resources in the region.<sup>97</sup> According to a report in the *Jerusalem Post*, in May 2006 Turkey and Israel were clearly

negotiating the construction of a multi-million-dollar energy and water project... The new Turkish–Israeli proposal under discussion would see the transfer of water, electricity, natural gas and oil to Israel via four underwater pipelines. “The whole premise is based on the assumption that Turkey is becoming a major hub for energy in the region,” said Gabby Levy, the Director of International Relations at the National Infrastructure Ministry. The water would be earmarked for Israel as well as for the Palestinian territories and Jordan.<sup>98</sup>

In this situation, US administrations, in seeking to realize their geostrategic and economic aims, have agreed to support the anti-Kurdish ideological position of the Turkish state under the cover of the “War on Terror.”

Why has there been a different response to the situation of the Kurds in northern Iraq? The United States’ relations with “friendly” Middle East states that are sure to provide future oil delivery have been, and continue to be, unpredictable. This is part of the explanation for the relationship with Iraqi Kurdistan. The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) can and will be a reliable source, especially given the recent new discoveries of oil. Since South Kurdistan is in an extremely vulnerable situation, surrounded as it is by Turkey, Iran, and Syria, none of which wish their Kurdish minorities to present demands for more autonomy, friendly relations with the United States are vital for the KRG. Such relations may also include future military cooperation, air bases, and/or a commitment to assist the US and Turkish governments in their war against the “terrorist PKK.”<sup>99</sup> In return, the United States must accept, among other things, the strong position of Kurdish in Kurdistan.

But tensions exist. In the past, at the request of Turkey, the US government has allowed significant Turkish military incursions and bombing raids to take place in northern Iraq. William Hartung, in 1995, confirmed that

the Turkish government’s March 1995 invasion of Northern Iraq mark[ed] the latest chapter in its quest for a military solution to the Kurdish question. A Turkish government spokesperson proudly described the cross-border raid by 35,000 troops as “the biggest military operation in the history of the Turkish Republic.”... Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller cleared the operation with President Clinton by telephone before sending her military forces into Iraq... President Clinton and the Pentagon also ordered U.S. military personnel in Northern Iraq to “stand down” from enforcing the no fly zone against Turkish aircraft for the duration of Turkey’s intervention.<sup>100</sup>

In 1991, “under pressure from the United States and Turkey, Iraqi Kurds had agreed to fight the PKK.”<sup>101</sup> Since then, US administrations have continued to provide clearance for further Turkish military “incursions” and bombing raids (which have taken civilian lives) against PKK “forces.” Today, however, the KRG is opposed to any

major Turkish military incursion into northern Iraq that takes place without its permission. The KRG expects support from the US government in this matter, even as certain military and political circles in Turkey are pressing for US support for their own plans. Some fear that the KRG's educational policy is dependent upon a US government stance that will prevent any major Turkish military occupation force from settling and determining policy for the region.

## Restructuring the Middle East

It is vital for the United States to secure Turkey's support in the US restructuring of the Middle East and other regions. Some of the relevant issues are as follows:

- Turkey is a key NATO ally.
- Turkey has provided crucial military assistance to the United States in many of its questionable recent interventions. For example, Turkish F-16s (purchased from the United States) were used in US/NATO-linked bombing missions in Serbia.<sup>102</sup>
- Turkey was one of the countries that recently sent troops to Afghanistan, and there have been proposals to send Turkish "peacekeeping forces" into Lebanon. It also promises to assist the United States in several potential future conflicts elsewhere in its capacity as a member of NATO.
- Turkey is geostrategically a "pivot state" for the United States and Israel, and thus a key US ally, especially with the neoconservatives in power.

The aims of CIA Director Porter Goss's visit to Ankara in December 2005 possibly included, according to some analysts, securing:

- support for US policy against Iran's nuclear activities
- support for US policy to prevent Iran's support for "terrorist organizations"
- air bases for US operations against Iran and Syria

In return, the United States has had to commit, once again, to aggressive support of the Turkish state in its war against "PKK terrorists" in the southeast of the country in particular (i.e., in Northwest Kurdistan). In Iraqi South Kurdistan, however, because of the need to secure the stabilizing support of the KRG in a country where US forces are increasingly stretched by the occupation and where the KRG promises to keep the oil-rich area secure for Western exploitation, the US government has, thus far, not sought to act against the educational policies being promoted there.<sup>103</sup>

## Arms

The actions, intentions, and methods of the United States have had their most concrete expression in connection with arms, including gifts of arms to Turkey, often through NATO; training of Turkish forces; and participation in Turkey's genocidal actions against Kurds. But the world's largest manufacturer and seller of arms obviously "needs" markets for its arms, and is manufacturing these markets as intensively as it manufactures the weapons themselves.

In 1992 and 1993, the Pentagon quietly facilitated a mammoth military shipment to Turkey at no cost. According to the UN arms registry, the US government turned over 1,509 tanks, fifty-four fighter planes, and twenty-eight heavily armed attack helicopters to Turkey. The weapons were slated for reduction after the Cold War under a 1990 treaty on conventional forces in Europe; instead of scrapping them, however, the United States simply gave them away. There was no congressional oversight of or

public debate about the transfer, nor was there much question about the purpose of this unprecedented arms shipment. As *Jane's Defence Weekly* revealed as early as 1993,

“a high proportion of defense equipment supplied to Turkey is being used in operations against the PKK”...Military assistance to Turkey has even included the use of American soldiers...Hartung estimates US taxpayers...paid “tens of millions of dollars” to train Turkish forces to fight the Kurds.<sup>104</sup>

In October 2006, the *New York Times* described how the Pentagon continues to run this

little-publicized giveaway and tag sale program to clean out its overstuffed attics and closets, bulging with the greatest weapons buildup since the Reagan era. The Pentagon also uses the Excess Defense Articles program, as it is called, to reward government friends and allies across the globe. There are deals galore, available free to the right customer or for cents on the dollar of their original cost. There are lots of deal hunters, but access is by invitation only, and only for governments.<sup>105</sup>

This is a good way of getting the “friendly governments” hooked on continuing to buy the arms that they first got for free, or at massive price reductions. The list of such governments includes Turkey, now a very good customer.

In terms of arms provision, Lockheed Martin's F-16 fighter jets were “needed” during Turkey's genocidal war in the 1990s because of their usefulness in obliterating Kurdish settlements and in killing and terrifying Kurdish civilians:

It is widely known that the Turkish military...used Lockheed Martin F-16's to assist with the obliteration of Kurdish villages in North Kurdistan during the 1990's Dirty War, with the facts well-documented by human rights groups. In 1995, Human Rights Watch documented arms sales to Turkey, along with related violations of the laws of war by that state. Included among the many gross abuses that Turkey...perpetrated against the Kurdish people, the F-16 fighter jet figure[d] prominently.<sup>106</sup>

The arms trade and the training of Turkish forces by Americans (and Israelis) was ongoing as of 2006.<sup>107</sup>

The Pentagon has notified Congress [that] it plans to allow Turkey [within the context of its “defense” needs] to buy 30 [more] F-16 fighter jets and related equipment, a \$2.9 billion deal that would provide new work for Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co.'s Fort Worth assembly plant.<sup>108</sup>

Lockheed Martin is the world's largest arms manufacturer. “This proposed sale” in 2006, the US Defence Agency has claimed, “will enhance the Turkish Air Force's ability to defend Turkey”—no doubt against the internal Kurdish “threat” in the southeast, and the external one in southern Kurdistan/northern Iraq—“while patrolling the nation's extensive coastline and borders against future threats and to contribute to the Global War on Terrorism and NATO operations.”<sup>109</sup> General Joseph W. Ralston, the US government's special envoy responsible for countering the “terrorist” PKK and coordinating “actions” and “eliminationist strategies” with the Turkish and Iraqi states, happens to be “a member of the Board of Directors of Lockheed Martin, the *same* corporation whose deal for the sale of 30 F-16's [to Turkey] sits in the venerable halls of Congress at this very moment.”<sup>110</sup>

Indeed,

Ralston's appointment came at a time when Turkey was finalizing the sale of the \$2.9 billion 30 Lockheed Martin F-16 aircraft, and as Turkey was due to make a decision on the \$10 billion purchase of the new Lockheed Martin F-35 JSF aircraft.

The sale for the F-16's was approved by Congress in mid-October [2006], and Turkey's decision in favor of the F-35 JSF was announced on October 25, shortly after Ralston's recent stay in Ankara, ostensibly to counter the PKK.<sup>111</sup>

Without a US-backed "War on Terror" in this region against Kurds and the PKK, and with a meaningful PKK-linked peace initiative making headway, as George W. Bush, the neoconservatives, and US arms traders and death-dealers well know, billions of dollars' worth of weapons deals with Turkey stand to be lost. And we couldn't have that, could we?

It looks like Lockheed Martin is going to guarantee the failure of the PKK ceasefire, because of a conflict of interest . . . You see, Lockheed Martin has an insider on its board of directors, and that insider is none other than the new US PKK coordinator, Joseph Ralston, also of the Cohen Group . . . The conflict of interest becomes more obscene by the fact that both Joseph Ralston and Lockheed Martin are closely tied to the Turkish lobby organization, the American Turkish Council (ATC). Joseph Ralston is a member of the 2006 ATC Advisory Board, while a former Lockheed Martin executive, George Perlman, is a member of the 2006 ATC Officers and Board of Directors. Lockheed Martin Corporation is a Golden Horn member of the ATC, as is General Electric Company, Boeing Corporation, Raytheon, and BAE Systems, all of which stand to profit from the current sale. This conflict of interest makes it clear that neither the US nor Turkey has the intention of finding a just and peaceful solution to the great opportunity the PKK ceasefire affords them. On the contrary, both countries seek a return to the Dirty War, in order to reap the profits of repression.<sup>112</sup>

The reactions of General Ralston and of the entire Turkish establishment, from General Büyükanıt to Prime Minister Erdogan, to the ceasefire proclaimed by PKK starting on 1 October 2006 have, predictably, been almost identical. The ceasefire has little value; the "terrorist group" should lay down its arms unilaterally; a ceasefire implies a relationship between two states, and PKK is a terrorist organization, not a state. In essence, their stance is that there will be no negotiations with "terrorists."

The stance of the UK, another member of the "coalition of the willing," has been just as questionable. Chomsky has referred to the "righteous terror and ethnic cleansing that ([Tony] Blair's) government and its allies" have helped "to implement within NATO" (i.e., in Turkey).<sup>113</sup> William Clark wrote in 1999 that "the UK government is happy with the Turkish state, and has supported the war against the Kurds . . . The . . . UK's record on Kurdish issues proves it has contributed to and supported the genocidal war against them by Turkey."<sup>114</sup> According to lawyer Gareth Peirce,

the British and Turkish governments, under the rubric of "suppression of terrorism," have [even] managed to criminalize the ("Turkish") Kurdish (refugee) community of Great Britain. Without engaging the legitimacy of a Kurdish struggle for national rights, the British police has deliberately worked to cast doubt on every Kurd in the UK as terrorist suspects.<sup>115</sup>

The program of assisting with the criminalization of the ("Turkish") Kurds is clearly being used to advance the geo-strategic, anti-PKK psychological warfare operational interests of two of Britain's NATO partners and allies—Turkey and the United States—as well as the agendas of the G7/8 Terrorism Summit<sup>116</sup> and the European Union's K4/Europol and Schengen states.<sup>117</sup> In return for such support, the British government has been able to secure lucrative arms, construction, privatization, and oil deals for British companies (including BP, a key party in the BTC pipeline project), as well as a number of its own geo-strategic objectives in the Near East, the United States, and Europe.

## Northern Iraq and the Question of “Stability” in the Region

In the debate over the restructuring of the Middle East, the KRG has sought to emphasize its pivotal significance to the US administration since 2003. Portraying itself as the one relatively stable and dependable region of Iraq, capable of promoting US interests in the country and in the wider region, the KRG has suggested that its existence and its support are essential. Any threat—such as that brought about by a major Turkish military invasion and occupation—will lead to defensive actions, heightened conflict, and the destabilization of an oil-rich zone that is critical to US interests and to American geopolitical designs. KRG President Massoud Barzani, seeking to dissuade Turkey’s generals from invading South Kurdistan (in northern Iraq), has warned that any such action will also lead to turmoil in southeastern Turkey. In response, Turkey’s chief of general staff, General Büyükanıt, “said he had already sought government approval to mount military action. ‘We told both Turkey and the world on April 12 [2007] that as soldiers we are ready.’”<sup>118</sup> At the end of May 2007, Büyükanıt further

hinted at military action against Iraqi Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani and the... Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) in northern Iraq if the [Turkish] government formally requests a cross-border operation. “Are we going to fight only the PKK once we enter northern Iraq or will something happen with Barzani?” Büyükanıt asked.<sup>119</sup>

Lale Sariibrahimoglu, furthermore, confirms that retired general Edip Başer, “the appointed Turkish coordinator in the fight against the PKK, told news station CNN Turk on March 9 [2007] that Turkey’s priority strategically has been to prevent the establishment of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq rather than the fight against PKK terror. Though I found his statement odd, Gen. Başer was at least admitting Turkey’s real concerns”<sup>120</sup> and agendas. For Yilmaz, “Baser is expressing the view consistent with Henri Barkey’s analysis from 2005... It’s not only the prevention of an independent Kurdish state in South Kurdistan that the Ankara regime opposes, but control of Kerkuk is also a major issue.”<sup>121</sup>

While some commentators have argued that the policies and practices of the KRG could serve as a model for the rest of Iraq and the Middle East—for example, in terms of promoting “progressive” educational policies alongside other “democratizing” policies aimed at promoting “stability,” “security,” and “economic growth”<sup>122</sup>—others have cautioned against taking such a stance. The KRG’s educational language policies may be praiseworthy in many respects, but other policies and practices have drawn concern from a number of quarters. According to a 2007 UN report,

journalists in Iraq’s autonomous Kurdistan region face arrest and harassment for reporting on government corruption and poor public services... The United Nations also criticised Kurdish officials for failing to tackle frequent cases of “honour killings” of women<sup>123</sup> and said hundreds of detainees in Kurdish prisons were being held without charge... UNAMI [the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq]... said it continually received reports about domestic and communal violence which were largely ignored by the Kurdish authorities... The report said UNAMI had received allegations of torture or ill-treatment of detainees at government detention centres.<sup>124</sup>

Another 2007 report—*Incipient Genocide: The Ethnic Cleansing of the Assyrians of Iraq*, by Peter BetBasoo—details the following concerns:

The 2007 report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) describes Kurdish treatment of Assyrians in North Iraq: “Government complicity in religiously-motivated discrimination is also reported in

the pro-Western...KRG. According to the State Department, Christians and other minorities 'living in areas north of Mosul asserted that the KRG confiscated their property...without compensation and...Assyrian Christians also alleged that the Kurdish Democratic Party-dominated judiciary routinely discriminates against non-Muslims.' Chaldo-Assyrian Christians have also alleged that KRG officials affiliated with the Kurdistan Democratic Party deny Christians key social benefits, including employment and housing."

...On October 8, 2002 the Kurdish Parliament of north Iraq adopted a resolution... The practical effect...was to legally transfer Assyrian lands that were illegally confiscated to Kurdish persons...Assyrian villages are [also] targeted by Kurds. The USCIRF report states: "Additional reports also alleged that foreign reconstruction assistance for ChaldoAssyrian communities was being controlled by the KRG without input from that community's legitimate leaders. KRG officials were also reported to have used public works projects to divert water and other vital resources from ChaldoAssyrian to Kurdish communities. These deprivations reportedly threatened the safety of ChaldoAssyrians leading to mass exodus, which was later followed by the seizure and conversion of abandoned ChaldoAssyrian property by the local Kurdish population...Combined with non-state sources of instability,...the KRG's practices add to the continuing flight of Iraq Christians and other ethnic and religious minorities to sanctuaries outside the country."<sup>125</sup>

In the main, these worries seem well documented, even if the situation for Assyrians is much worse in the rest of Iraq. But there have also been accusations about linguistic oppression of Assyrians for which the evidence is less than strong.<sup>126</sup>

Reality is complex. Stability, in today's world, is always contextualized, both historically and globally. As long as outside interests frame the maneuvering space for both Kurds and other players in the Near and Middle East, cynically engaging in imperialist adventures (or misadventures) that leave devastation in their wake, and as long as the historically developed internal power relations favor domestic and patriarchal elites, regardless of their ethnicity, who are more or less intent on power sharing, positive models will remain scarce. In this context, KRG policies that seek to promote the right to education for all "through the medium of one's mother tongue" deserve our support and recognition, even as those that violate any group's human, cultural, or political rights urgently need to be confronted and addressed.

## **Conclusion: Oil, Arms Deals, and Political Control—Forget about Democracy, Human Rights, and the Rule of Law**

In the words of George Kennan, the main US negotiator at Bretton Woods, where the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund were put in place, the United States in 1948 had

50% of the world's wealth, but only 6.3% of its population. In this situation, our real job in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships which permit us to maintain this position of disparity. To do so, we have to dispense with all sentimentality... we should cease thinking about human rights, the raising of living standards, and democratization.<sup>127</sup>

Old US foreign policy thus continues today. Noam Chomsky's view on the United States is that it represents industrial feudalism rather than industrial democracy.<sup>128</sup> Without the millions of undocumented ("illegal") immigrants whose rights are almost non-existent, like serfs under feudalism, US (industrial) agriculture would not be able to function, and neither would many other areas of the economy that feature difficult working conditions and minimal salaries.<sup>129</sup> Some aspects of the governing

structures of today's Turkey (the "deep state"<sup>130</sup>) might be seen as representing military-economic corporatism.<sup>131</sup>

Kurds cannot expect any support from Britain either—Tony Blair expects them to "acquiesce" in their treatment: "A top-secret memo seen by *The Sunday Telegraph*, reveals [that] Tony Blair and his senior officials have drawn up an extraordinary 'wish list' of how they would like to see the world looking just 10 years from now . . . A contentious section deals with the Kurdish populations of Turkey, Iran and Iraq, all of whom face repression. To avoid being seed beds for terrorism, these populations must be acquiescing in their treatment," wrote Patrick Hennessy, political editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*, in a 2006 article.<sup>132</sup>

Is there a future for the Kurds in Turkey? If they face a combination of Turkey's military-economic corporatism and the United States' industrial feudalism, while the United Kingdom's best-case scenario is that they "must be acquiescing in their treatment," a positive outcome seems, at best, uncertain. Maintaining and supporting diversity is a prerequisite for stability; denial of linguistic and cultural human rights leads to conflict, and conflicts are expensive, politically and economically, as well as in terms of human suffering. Respect for linguistic and cultural human rights generally leads to stable coexistence and increased harmony—and this is what should be supported and encouraged in (Iraqi) South Kurdistan. We can see some substantive beginnings of this policy as it applies to linguistic human rights in South Kurdistan, however weak, problematic, and vulnerable. The issue of discriminatory practices against Assyrians in the north and south of Iraq urgently needs to be addressed. Meanwhile, Turkey and the United States, with help from the United Kingdom and other EU and NATO countries, through their genocidal activities or acceptance of same, are actively preventing peace in Turkish Kurdistan and destroying the Kurds.

We should remember the words of Mahatma Gandhi: "The cause of liberty becomes a mockery if the price to be paid is the wholesale destruction of those who are to enjoy liberty."<sup>133</sup>

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  47. *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, 9 December 1948, 78 U.N.T.S. 277, [http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/p\\_genoci.htm](http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/p_genoci.htm) (accessed 4 January 2008), art. 2.
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- businesses from using Assyrian names or putting up signs using the Assyrian language on the front of their stores, according to the Assyrian website [assyrian4all.net](http://assyrian4all.net) [accessed 20 May 2007]. Kurdish authorities have informed they may use Kurdish or English only. An Assyrian businessman observed that this policy is no different from that under Saddam's regime, when Assyrians were forced to use Arabic instead of Assyrian names. "Kurdish Authorities Outlaw the Assyrian Language in North Iraq," AINA, 10 March 2007, <http://www.aina.org/news/20070310144443.htm> (accessed 14 January 2008). We sent the text of this news release to a colleague in Dohuk, lawyer Mueyed Taib, on 22 May 2007. He went out immediately to take pictures in Dohuk and e-mailed us a dozen within a couple of hours, showing Assyrian shop signboards and other texts outside buildings in Assyrian/Syriac, Assyrian colors flying from cars, and so on, and absolutely denied that the language would be forbidden.
127. John Pilger, *Hidden Agendas* (London: Vintage, 1998), 59.
  128. Chomsky can be seen articulating this view, for example, when asked by an interviewer what he would say if he could spend one minute with George W. Bush: see "One Minute with George Bush" (uploaded to YouTube on 21 May 2006), <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aQ2LScRiz1U&mode=related&search=> (accessed 24 January 2008).
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  131. Benito Mussolini is reported to have said that "*Fascism* should more appropriately be called *corporatism* because it is a merger of state and corporate power." Giovanni Gentile, ed., *Encyclopedia Italiana*, s.v. Benito Mussolini, quoted in Thomas J. DiLorenzo, *Economic Fascism*, cited in Rick Parkany, "The Economics of War . . ." (University of Milan, 2003), <http://www.borg.com/~rparkany/PromOriginal/EconomyOfWar/EconomicsOfWar.html> (accessed 14 January 2008).
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# The United States' Response to Genocide in the Independent State of Croatia, 1941-1945

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*In April 1941, Ante Pavelić, the fascist leader of the Independent State of Croatia, and his paramilitary force, the Ustaše ("rebels"), began a genocide that killed at least 330,000 Serbs and essentially eliminated Jews and Roma from Croatia. The American response to genocide in Croatia provides a fuller context for examining Washington's reaction to the Nazi genocide. By the summer of 1941, the US government had reliable information that genocide was taking place in Croatia. Washington expressed little interest in this slaughter, except insofar it affected Croatian-American and Serbian-American relations; made no direct public statement condemning the Ustaše's actions; and offered no protest to the Vatican. Croatian events, however, propelled the FBI and the Office of War Information to suppress pro-Ustaše supporters in the United States.*

*Keywords: Croatia, genocide, United States, Ante Pavelić, State Department*

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For much of World War II, a substantial amount of the US State Department's information about Croatia originated in Ankara and Istanbul. Neutral Turkey, situated at an important crossroads for Germany, Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union, was an excellent location for mischief and fact finding. All belligerents found it a convenient playground for cloak-and-dagger operations, as well as a more innocuous center for information gathering. On 6 May 1941, a disturbing telegram, which foreshadowed future events, arrived in the State Department from the American embassy in Ankara. Rushed to Washington, the telegram contained information gained from Yugoslav contacts. The alarming message read, "according to dependable information partizans of Pavelić (in some cases in conjunction with Magyars) are massacring Serbs in Croatia, the Vojvodina and Bosnia. There is need of urgent intervention by the Vatican at Zagreb and Budapest."<sup>1</sup> The intervention so desperately sought never materialized. No one came to the aid of Serbs, Jews, and Roma who suffered so mightily under Ante Pavelić's reign in the alleged Independent State of Croatia. This telegram was the first report received in Washington that spoke of the slaughter, which eventually reached catastrophic proportions. By the end of the war, Pavelić and the Ustaše (the paramilitary force he founded in 1929) had murdered between 330,000 and 390,000 Serbs, many of whom were tortured and executed in the most despicable manner.<sup>2</sup> Tens of thousands were forced to convert, often at gunpoint, from Orthodoxy to Catholicism. The Jewish and Roma populations, substantially smaller, were all but eliminated.

Historians have paid little attention to America's role in confronting Ante Pavelić's killing spree.<sup>3</sup> Much has been written about Washington's response to Nazi mass murder, but the Independent State of Croatia (Nezavisna Država Hrvatska, or NDH)

has been left out of this discussion. Historians have given only a passing glance at America's views of and policy toward Croatian wartime atrocities. Washington's reaction to atrocities in Croatia offers an interesting case study and provides a fuller context for evaluating America's reaction to World War II genocide. Although policy-makers learned of the Independent State of Croatia's massacres at an early date, the evidence of the slaughter did not move them to significant action. The White House and the State Department made no detailed and direct public statements about the atrocities being perpetrated in the NDH. Even with accurate information in hand, much of it arriving early in the course of the genocide, officials in Washington chose to remain aloof.

It is easy to criticize American officials for failing to publicly decry the atrocities in the NDH or to attempt in any significant way to influence Pavelić's regime. Regardless of the vivid and often thorough reports of mass slaughter, American officials offered few internal or external comments about these atrocities, even after the United States entered the war. With a strong current of non-intervention and nativism focusing attention on domestic issues, one can understand why policy makers made the decisions they did. Policy toward the atrocities was dictated by the need to limit ethnic tension between Serbian Americans and Croatian Americans. The American government was concerned that the crisis in Croatia had the potential to foster violence in the United States that would weaken the domestic war effort, especially in heavy industry, where Yugoslav immigrants tended to work. This was a highly practical way of responding to atrocities in a small, distant land that only rarely garnered American attention.

## **The Ustaše**

To fully appreciate American response to the atrocities in the Independent State of Croatia, one must examine Ustaše ideology and the activities of the organization once it gained power in Croatia. The ideological foundation of the Ustaše reaches back to the nineteenth century, when Ante Starčević established the Party of Right. Starčević, a stalwart opponent of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, consistently favored Croatian independence and rejected any idea of a Yugoslavia, as supported by Bishop Josip Strossmayer. Josip Frank was the heir to Starčević's gospel, but Frank reversed a key aspect of Starčević's views: hoping to elevate Croatia's political prestige in the Dual Monarchy, Frank's Pure Party of Rights supported the regime. Although there were different opinions about Croatia's role in the Habsburg Empire, Frank's party embraced Starčević's view that Serbs were the enemy of Croatian political and territorial ambitions. As time passed, aggressively anti-Serbian views became the hallmark of the Pure Party of Rights. With the collapse of the Dual Monarchy and the creation of Yugoslavia, Frank's party descended deeper into its anti-Serbian and anti-Orthodox positions. They were fervent opponents of the centralist 1921 constitution, believing that the document extinguished hope for Croatian independence while ensuring Serbian hegemony in the new state. In this they were not alone. The Croatian Peasant Party, the political voice for the majority of Croatians, also opposed the 1921 constitution.<sup>4</sup>

Those in tune with Frank's violent anti-Serbian positions found a unifying voice in Ante Pavelić. A native of Bradina, Pavelić emerged in the 1920s as the leading spokesman for Croatian independence. Fully embracing the anti-Serb views of Starčević and Frank, and believing that a professional revolutionary organization was needed if Croatia were to gain its independence, Pavelić, a lawyer by training, established the Ustaše along the lines of Bulgaria's infamous Internal Macedonian

Revolutionary Organization (IMRO). From its inception in 1929, the Ustaše was violent and revolutionary.<sup>5</sup> Their beliefs were a collection of seemingly disparate ideologies bound together in one movement. In this way, they hoped to attract a wide variety of followers. In Ustaše ideology, one could be a proto-fascist and, at the same time, a deep believer in Catholicism. At its ideological core was a fervent, mystical belief in the holiness and sanctity of the Croatian state. As Ustaše's architect, Pavelić maintained that Croats had established a state 1,400 years earlier and that, over the centuries, they had never abandoned their right to independence. Regardless of the Ottomans, the Habsburgs, or the Karadjordjevićs, Croatia had always existed. Therefore, Pavelić's chief goal was the resurrection of an independent Croatian state with borders corresponding to earlier manifestations of Croatia. This objective was achievable only through the destruction of Serbian—foreign— influence within Croatia, which, in turn, necessitated the annihilation of Yugoslavia. Correspondingly, the well-being of the state was of such significance that individual rights ran a distant second to the establishment and maintenance of Croatia. Pavelić's fascist tendencies were apparent.<sup>6</sup>

In their desire to demonstrate the distinctiveness of their people, the Ustaše deemed Croats of pure peasant stock a separate nationality from their Balkan neighbors. By the beginning of World War II, Ustaše ideologues would proclaim that Croats were Goths, and therefore of Germanic origin, far removed from the inferior Slavic Serbs. Any myth could be used to separate Croats from Serbs. Like the Nazis, the Ustaše placed the peasant on a pedestal, extolling his virtues of clean living and hard work. The peasant was nearly incorruptible, and there was much discussion of establishing a peasant republic. Both Nazi and Croatian currency during World War II featured images of the solid and pure peasant. Pavelić, though he believed in the virtues of the peasant, was a clever politician who judged that such depictions would attract disenchanted peasants to his cause while weakening the Croatian Peasant Party.

Another key aspect of Ustaše ideology was a deep-seated commitment to the Catholic faith. As a devoted Catholic, Pavelić believed that Croats had been chosen by God to defend Catholicism against assaults from both Orthodoxy and Communism. This religious zeal, which held no tolerance for Orthodoxy, helped provide a spiritual appeal to the Ustaše movement. According to Pavelić and his minions, Croats had been warriors and martyrs for Christianity and needed to continue the good fight for their independence, which would only strengthen them as the "bulwark of Christianity." This fervor enabled Pavelić to successfully demonize Serbs. He did not despise Serbs simply because they were a different ethnic group, one that had exercised power over all of Yugoslavia for the past decade, but also because they embraced Orthodoxy, a foreign faith that, the Ustaše believed, was encouraged by the Serbian-dominated Yugoslavian government. Thus Orthodoxy was viewed as a tool for smashing Croatian national identity. Likewise, communists, who were on the march in the 1920s and 1930s, were mortal foes of Catholicism and had to be stopped.<sup>7</sup> To the Ustaše, Croats faced both political and religious enemies who were determined to destroy Croatian culture, its traditions, its language, its political life, and its religion. In other words, Ustaše ideology encouraged something akin to a holy war.

Perhaps the best description of Ustaše sentiment came during World War II from a Lieutenant Miloš, an Ustaše guard. Speaking to Vladko Maček, the leader of the Croatian Peasant Party and his prisoner, about the terrible murders of Serbs, Miloš justified his and the Ustaše's actions by saying, "I am perfectly aware of what is in

store for me. For my past, present and future deeds I shall burn in hell, but at least I shall burn for Croatia.”<sup>8</sup> Such extreme nationalistic zealotry was the foundation for a loyal core of Ustaše.

After King Aleksandar’s coup in January 1929, Pavelić, fearing arrest, fled Yugoslavia and proceeded to organize the Ustaše. His recruiting efforts, coupled with his publicly admitted goal of overthrowing the Yugoslav state, forced Belgrade to convict him of treason and hang the death penalty over his head. Not in the least deterred, Pavelić stepped up his recruiting efforts. Hoping to create absolute loyalty and *esprit de corps*, he required all members to swear allegiance to himself and to the independence of Croatia in an elaborate ceremony that included a knife, a revolver, and a crucifix. The Ustaše’s motto, *Za Dom Spremni* (“Ready for the Fatherland”), was meant to rally his followers into fighting for an independent Croatia. Pavelić’s recruiting efforts, however, achieved only modest results, since most Croats were repelled by his radical demands and his willingness to use violence. The majority of Croats followed Maček of the Croatia Peasant Party, who, although lacking in glamor, was seen as the only realistic option for gaining Croatian autonomy. Unable to recruit many followers, the Ustaše remained a fringe operation with little support within Yugoslavia. It survived by attracting thugs, the highly impressionable, and the unemployed. By 1934, Pavelić had amassed an army of perhaps 500 to 600, mostly disenchanted ne’er-do-wells. Though his numbers were small, Pavelić had established an organization of men willing to sacrifice their lives for the Ustaše cause.

The Ustaše scored a significant success in 1934, when Pavelić planned the successful assassination of King Aleksandar I of Yugoslavia in Marseilles. This audacious crime attracted worldwide attention, but it did not lead to the dismemberment of Yugoslavia, as Pavelić had hoped. Having received his second death sentence, this time from a French court, Pavelić spent the remainder of the 1930s in Benito Mussolini’s Italy. Often Pavelić’s protector, Il Duce believed that Pavelić was a destabilizing force for Yugoslavia, who could be useful to Italian interests if Yugoslavia were divided into its constituent parts. Mussolini hoped that Italy would one day gain the Dalmatian coast that had been promised to it in the 1915 Treaty of London.<sup>9</sup>

Internally, tensions between Serbs and Croats continued to spell trouble for Yugoslavia. Prince Paul and Vladko Maček signed the the *sporazum* (agreement) of 20 August 1939, hoping that it would quell unrest between Serbs and Croats and thus strengthen Yugoslavia. This agreement provided for an autonomous Croatia within Yugoslavia. Under the *sporazum*, Zagreb controlled its internal affairs through a *sabor* (assembly) and a *ban* (governor), while Belgrade remained paramount in foreign policy, defense, and the like. The *sporazum*, however, did little to solve the ethnic problems. Muslims and Serbs who now found themselves under a Croatian government feared for their rights, believing that Belgrade had abandoned them. Likewise, Pavelić and the Ustaše opposed the *sporazum*, calling it another attempt by Serbs to dominate Croats. They argued that the accord did not go far enough, since it excluded Bosnia-Herzegovina from Croatian control and allowed for too much authority from Belgrade. Pavelić insisted that no agreement was possible and that the only solution was independence. His views were little more than sour grapes, because the agreement was certainly a step in the direction desired by the majority of Croats. Although the *sporazum* was a noble attempt to unify Yugoslavia, it was too little too late. The result was a more deeply divided Yugoslavia.

With war clouds descending over Europe, the *sporazum* never had an opportunity to gain momentum. As the Third Reich extended its dominance over the continent,

German ambitions began to dictate policy in Eastern Europe. It was only a matter of time before Yugoslavia would have to choose whether or not to throw in its lot with the Nazis. After Bulgaria joined the German camp on 1 March 1941, it was apparent that Yugoslavia was going to sign the Tripartite Pact, regardless of political pressure from Western nations. Prince Paul, Yugoslavia's regent, believed that his signature, with a bit of luck, would preserve some degree of independence and avoid bloodshed. Yugoslav officials negotiated clauses that stipulated only political affiliation and did not mandate military ties, a point that had no validity in Berlin. As Germany gained influence in Bulgaria and pressure over the Italian debacle in Greece mounted, placing Yugoslavia in an untenable position, Prime Minister Dragiša Cvetković and Prince Paul joined the fascists by signing the Tripartite Pact on 25 March 1941 in Vienna.

As this crisis was brewing in 1941, President Franklin Roosevelt, in conflict with the State Department's wishes, began to show an interest in Yugoslavia. Before Yugoslavia signed the Tripartite Pact, Roosevelt sent William "Wild Bill" Donovan on a fact-finding mission into the Balkans, on the outside chance that Donovan could help create a Balkan front against German aggression.<sup>10</sup> Although such a policy was far from feasible, Roosevelt realized that Yugoslavia and the Balkans in general were an important factor in the drive to stymie German expansion. The president went so far as to promise Yugoslavia access to Lend-Lease if it remained independent of Germany's clutches. This was not a significant carrot for Yugoslavia, however, with the United States thousands of miles away and Germany on their doorstep. When Paul signed the Tripartite Pact, Roosevelt immediately showed his displeasure by ordering that all Yugoslav assets in the United States be frozen. The regent had done what he believed was right for Yugoslavia.

The Yugoslav government, however, had signed its own death warrant, as Yugoslavs erupted in protest against the Tripartite Pact. Cvetković's government lasted for only two more tumultuous days, both full of demonstrations against Germany and demands for the government's resignation. The Yugoslav military, which leaned toward the Western Allies, could not stomach joining the Tripartite Pact, believing it spelled the end of Yugoslavia and placed them squarely in the camp of their long-term enemies. With the British urging a *coup d'état*, the military overthrew the government and established a new regime, under General Dušan Simović, in the name of eighteen-year-old King Peter II. In a lightning stroke, fascism was rejected, the regency had ended, and young Peter was king.

The US State Department was jubilant over this turn of events and ordered its minister to Yugoslavia, Arthur Bliss Lane, with great haste, to express America's approval of the coup. Lane was directed to proclaim that "this event constitutes a matter for self-congratulation for every liberty-loving man and woman."<sup>11</sup> Washington wanted the new government to know that,

in accordance with the provisions of the Lend-Lease Bill, the President, in the interest of the national defense of the United States, is enabled to provide assistance to Yugoslavia, like all other nations which are seeking to maintain their independence and integrity and to repel aggression.<sup>12</sup>

Obviously Roosevelt wished to continue the policy of promising military equipment to Yugoslavia in return for a continued stand against Germany.

By all accounts, Hitler was furious at the coup and demanded that Yugoslavia be crushed. The Führer was certain that Yugoslavia would easily collapse under German military might, judging that the Croats would side with Berlin against Belgrade. Hitler was correct in his estimation. As Ulrich von Hassell, former German

ambassador to Rome, commented during his visit to Zagreb in March 1941, "Freundt (German Consul in Agram) and all Croats with whom I spoke emphasized the great differences between Croatia and Serbia. In Croatia there is no opposition whatever to Germany (with a few exceptions); on the contrary, a desire to co-operate."<sup>13</sup>

On 6 April 1941, German forces invaded Yugoslavia; in a matter of days, Yugoslavia was defeated. With the approval of Berlin, Mussolini quickly moved to install Ante Pavelić as the *poglavnik* of the alleged Independent State of Croatia.<sup>14</sup> Pavelić, with a small number of devoted Ustaše, entered the new satellite state on 13 April.

## Genocide

Upon gaining power, Pavelić wasted no time in attacking Serbs, Jews, Roma, and Croats who opposed the NDH. His initial step was to protect the NDH by eliminating all who spoke out against it, while placing all non-Croats on the fringes of society by revoking their citizenship. Similar to Jews in the Third Reich, Orthodox citizens were required to wear blue armbands bearing the letter *P*, for Pravoslavac (Orthodox). Meanwhile, the Cyrillic alphabet was prohibited on 25 April 1941, an act designed to destroy Serbian identity and transform those Serbs deemed most pliable into Croats. All schools operated by the Orthodox Church were closed. Serbs were banned from Croatian businesses and denied access to public events such as films and concerts. Over time, Serbian private property was confiscated, much of it going directly to the NDH leadership.<sup>15</sup>

The Ustaše's position on citizenship, made clear in the Law Concerning Nationality, provided the legal foundation for ending the non-Croatian presence in the NDH. Decreed by Pavelić on 30 April 1941, this law stated that

a citizen is a national of Aryan origin who has proven by his conduct that he did not engage in activities against the liberation efforts of the Croatian people and who is ready and willing to serve faithfully the Croatian nation and the Independent State of Croatia.<sup>16</sup>

This sweeping edict effectively reduced all Serbs, Jews, and Roma, as well as any Croats who had opposed independence or the NDH, to the status of aliens residing within Croatia. The law fit perfectly with the Ustaše's position that Croatia should be ruled and inhabited only by "pure" Croats, those who supported the NDH.

What gave added strength to the above-mentioned edicts was the broad Law on the Protection of the People and the State, issued by Pavelić on 17 April, which decreed that

whoever in any way does or has done harm to the honor and vital interests of the Croatian nation or who endangers in any way the existence of the Independent State of Croatia or its government authorities, shall be considered guilty of high treason, even if his act was but a mere attempt.<sup>17</sup>

Acts of treason were punishable by death. In essence, the law gave the NDH *carte blanche* to arrest and execute anyone who opposed the state in any way. Since it was retroactive, it could even be used against those who opposed the Ustaše before they came to power. Execution was meted out summarily to those who were found guilty of violating the law by hastily organized "People's Courts."<sup>18</sup>

Beginning in the spring and summer of 1941 and continuing until the end of the war, Pavelić and his henchmen unleashed a reign of terror rarely paralleled in history. A veritable murderous frenzy possessed the Ustaše, whose goal, according to an

infamous statement by Mile Budak, minister of education and *doglavnik* (second to Pavelić), was to “convert a third, expel a third and kill a third” of the Serbs.<sup>19</sup> Budak, a well-known novelist and journalist and an outspoken Ustaše supporter, publicly outlined this policy in Gospić on 22 June. According to Budak’s plan, Serbian culture would be eliminated from Croatia either by extermination, exile, or assimilation.

And so began a killing spree designed to purify the new Croatia. The Ustaše’s viciousness shocked even Nazi observers. Describing the horror, the late Irish historian Jonathan Steinberg wrote,

Serbian and Jewish men, women and children were literally hacked to death. Whole villages were razed to the ground and the people driven into barns to which the Ustasi set fire. There is in the Italian Foreign Ministry archive a collection of photographs of the butcher knives, hooks and axes used to chop up Serbian victims. There are photographs of Serb women with breasts hacked off by pocket knives, men with eyes gouged out, emasculated and mutilated.<sup>20</sup>

Serb men, women, and children were pushed from cliffs, plunging to their deaths. Whole villages of Serbs were annihilated. Unlike Germany’s systematic executions, often conducted in a clinical and sterile fashion, the Ustaše reveled in their bloodlust, employing various acts of torture such as skinning and burning victims alive. Sexual mutilation was far from unknown and was embraced by the especially wicked. Some Serbs were hacked to pieces, with their noses, ears, and tongues cut off. These techniques were often meted out to Orthodox priests, the Ustaše’s most hated enemy. There was little effort to bury the dead, unless victims had previously dug their own graves at gunpoint. Often, Ustaše victims were left to rot in the open; sometimes they were tossed into the Sava River. Such unspeakable acts were commonplace.<sup>21</sup>

In Glina, for example, about 600 Serb men, women, and children were shot, stabbed, and beaten to death in their Orthodox church, which was subsequently burned. The murders continued unabated throughout the summer of 1941. Konstantin Fotić, Yugoslavia’s minister to Washington, wrote that

Thousands of corpses were dumped into the Sava River, which flows into the Danube at Belgrade, with the inscription “Visa for Serbia” on tags around their necks. The river...became so contaminated by these corpses that access to its beaches was prohibited by the German occupiers during the whole summer of 1941.<sup>22</sup>

In June 1941, the NDH began deporting selected Serbs from Croatia. They created the *Državno Ravateljstvo* (State Directorate for Renewal), which established camps designed to assemble Serbs for resettlement. It did not take long before these camps, rife with disease as a result of poor sanitation and notorious for brutal treatment, became, in effect, death camps. To the casual observer, they did not look much like camps; instead, they resembled cattle pens. There were few barracks, and those that existed offered little sanctuary from the elements. Serbs were tossed into barbed-wire enclosures and forced to live in deplorable conditions. The NDH had no desire to resettle anyone; their ambition was to kill. The Serbs who did not die from exposure or malnutrition were executed by other means, such as axe blows and shooting. The open-air camps merely aided the execution process.

The most infamous of all the camps was Jasenovac, where thousands of men, women, and children were butchered with bullets, axes, hammers, and any other instrument available.<sup>23</sup> Built in a low-lying flood plain, Jasenovac was established in August 1941 and quickly grew into the third-largest concentration camp in Europe. In fact it was a series of five camps, located along the Sava River south of Zagreb. Jasenovac was the Croatian Auschwitz: torture and execution were daily occurrences

for Jews and Serbs alike, and guards needed only the flimsiest of excuses to shoot prisoners. The chief execution site was at Gradina, where thousands were killed by Ustaše guards. Like German-operated camps, Jasenovac discriminated on arrival between useful prisoners and those deemed suitable only for execution. Those without needed skills were summarily killed shortly after arriving in the camp, while those who were allowed to live endured a slow death from strenuous labor, malnutrition, physical abuse, and unsanitary living conditions. Anyone hardy and skillful enough to survive longer than three months was summarily executed, in accordance with camp rules.<sup>24</sup>

Although Ustaše ideology directed the greatest attention toward the Serbs, Pavelić wasted little time in unleashing brutal attacks on Jews, chiefly because he recognized that he had to satisfy Hitler and the Nazis in order to remain in power. Like the Serbs, the Jews were rounded up by the NDH beginning in the summer of 1941. Following Hitler's lead, the NDH stripped Jews of their citizenship and property, forced them to wear a yellow star armband, forbade them to marry gentiles, and removed them from all government positions. Before the end of 1941, most were well on their way to extermination. The Jewish community in Sarajevo, which totaled about 10,000, was an early and easy target. By the end of 1942, Sarajevo's Jews and most other Jews either were confined to concentration camps or had been executed. Most of Zagreb's approximately 10,000 Jews avoided the death camps until 1944.<sup>25</sup> The Ustaše enjoyed great success in abolishing the Jewish presence in Croatia by killing all but a few thousand Jews, confiscating all their private property, and destroying almost all the synagogues in the country. Hitler and his henchmen were more than satisfied with their understudy's treatment of Croatian Jews.

Since Raphael Lemkin coined the term "genocide," controversy has swirled about applying the term to particular atrocities.<sup>26</sup> Soon after World War II ended, the Yugoslav government, recognizing that ethnic hatreds emerging from the war had the capacity to destabilize the new Communist regime, tried to paper over wartime atrocities, hoping to establish a Yugoslav identity. Although the goal was to mask specific ethnic losses by extolling the dead, collectively, as victims of fascism, it did not take long for nationalism-driven figures to re-emerge, seeking to address wartime atrocities. Those killed by the NDH became a political football used by Serbian nationalists to attack all Croats as enemies of Serbia and Yugoslavia. Serb victims of the Ustaše became symbols of Serb suffering and martyrdom that complemented the theme of romanticized suffering, an important component of Serbian history. In this way, Serbian history could be interpreted through the mythology created around such events as the defeat at the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 and the heroic retreat through Albania during World War I. Even today, the Kosovo question resonates in a similar fashion. As Croatian national identity reemerged in the 1960s, Croatian nationalists sought to minimize the events in the NDH, explaining Serbian accusations of genocide as out of context and exaggerated.<sup>27</sup> Croats wanted to turn attention toward the Bleiberg Massacre, when British troops returned Croats to Yugoslavia to be slaughtered by Tito's Partisans. Through a denial of the extent of Ustaše crimes, Croatian history could be safely rescued from the blemish of genocide and refocused on the new paradigm of a long, noble history of fighting for independence. Even Ante Pavelić could be rehabilitated as a hero of Croatian independence.<sup>28</sup> During the warfare of the 1990s, focus on the NDH's atrocities reached its apex, and the atrocities of World War II were used extensively by both sides to justify all kinds of horrific acts.<sup>29</sup> This heated debate between Croatian and Serbian camps has made it difficult

for historians to develop a sober understanding of the NDH atrocities perpetrated during World War II.

If one examines the standard for genocide outlined by the 1948 UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (UNCG), Ustaše murders meet the criteria.<sup>30</sup> But this standard has received much criticism for being too narrow and much too obtuse. Over the last several years, numerous scholars have devoted themselves to studying the problematic nature of the UNCG, while sometimes providing or calling for a definition of genocide.<sup>31</sup> Crafting such a definition has been difficult, often politically charged. By most of these definitions, especially those established by Ben Kiernan, Helen Fein, and Robert Melson, the Ustaše were guilty of genocide.<sup>32</sup> Ante Pavelić targeted Serbs as a specific ethnic group; NDH policies initiated the campaign to destroy the Serbian presence in Croatia, including its historical legacy.

There is precedent for calling NDH atrocities “genocide.” Edmond Paris, in 1961, was the first author to term the Ustaše slaughters “genocide”; Paris’s version of events, though emotionally driven and lacking in context and perspective, brought attention to atrocities in the NDH.<sup>33</sup> Since that time, several historians, devoid of nationalist sentiments and emotional judgments, have applied the term to the events in the NDH. In 1968, John A. Armstrong wrote that “genocide, in the most literal sense of the term, was the Ustasa ‘final’ solution.”<sup>34</sup> In *Accounting for Genocide*, Helen Fein agrees with other historians that the atrocities in the NDH were genocide.<sup>35</sup> Leo Kuper has echoed these sentiments; Kuper calls Ustaše actions “genocide,” explaining that they “arose out of a long history of conflict between Croats and Serbs, fuelled later in the newly constituted state of Yugoslavia by Croatian resentment of Serbian hegemony and repression.”<sup>36</sup> Other notable scholars such as Bette Denich, Robert Hayden, and Michael Sells have used the term “genocide” to describe the NDH’s behavior.<sup>37</sup> More recently, in *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust*, Michael Phayer terms Ustaše actions in the NDH “genocide” in his discussion of the Vatican’s culpability in Ustaše atrocities perpetrated against Serbs, Jews, and Roma.<sup>38</sup> It appears clear that Ustaše actions in the Independent State of Croatia did constitute genocide.

## **The United States Loses a Listening Post**

The rapid and successful German invasion of Yugoslavia on 6 April 1941 forced Lane and the American delegation in Belgrade to vacate the country, leaving the Zagreb consulate as America’s only representation in Croatia and, for that matter, in Yugoslavia. But Consul John J. Meily’s outpost was not destined to last for long. The Ustaše had no interest in offending their fascist masters by keeping a potential security risk open and running. Croatian authorities were suspicious of the close ties that had existed between the British and American consulates prior to the German invasion and seized this opportunity to prove their mettle. In June 1941, Meily was summoned to the Croatian Foreign Ministry and ordered to close the consulate. The State Department offered no resistance, because Washington did not wish to operate a consulate in a county it did not recognize and was planning to close it voluntarily. Maintaining the consulate could be construed as tacit recognition of the Croatian state, something Washington wished to avoid. In late August and early September, Croatian authorities, with the help of the Italian press, accused Meily, a diplomat sympathetic to Croatian interests, of spying on behalf of the British. Their evidence, based on a few seized American documents, did little more than prove that

Meily had worked closely with the British, which was certainly no surprise in the days of Lend-Lease. Croatian accusations of espionage were far from valid. This weak attempt to embarrass Washington and ingratiate the NDH with the rest of the Axis never bore fruit.<sup>39</sup>

With no diplomatic ties to Croatia, the United States gained information about the Pavelić regime from various other locations. Ankara and Istanbul became natural centers for information through Turkey's juxtaposition to the Balkans, physically and historically, and its neutrality. The country was teeming with ex-patriates, including a large number of businessmen, and served as a clearinghouse for news and rumor. Neutral Switzerland was another place where information on Croatia arrived, especially on Allan Dulles's desk. Another source used later in the war was operatives of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). All these outlets proved to be remarkably reliable and detailed in their news gathering and analysis on Pavelić's Croatia. Though rarely closely involved in Croatian affairs, Washington had channels for regular and often trustworthy information.

### **Washington Learns of the Massacres**

Even with Yugoslavia ripped apart by the Nazi juggernaut, it did not take long for Washington to learn about the atrocities being committed in Pavelić's new state. One of Lane's last telegrams from Belgrade reported that "Serbs and Jews in Zagreb have been ordered to leave portion of city north of Illice Street. All Serbs expelled from government position in Croatia."<sup>40</sup> This message, sent via Budapest, was an indication that Pavelić was following a pattern established by his fascist friends in Germany. In June 1941, a Standard Oil Company employee who had recently left Zagreb offered more evidence of persecutions conducted by the Pavelić regime when he reported to the American delegation in Geneva that "a reign of terror" had descended on Serbs and Jews.<sup>41</sup> Although he did not mention deaths or executions, he explained that theft and looting were widespread. It was becoming obvious that a very dangerous situation was developing in Croatia.

On 14 August 1941, a letter, accompanied by sixteen pictures, reached the State Department from former Belgrade consul Karl L. Rankin with detailed information about mass executions. Though the number of victims was in dispute and was considered to be a bit "fantastic," it was clear "that many thousands of Serbian civilians [had] lost their lives" at the hands of the Ustaše.<sup>42</sup> The information presented to the State Department came from an unnamed Serbian government official and was therefore potentially easy to refute as exaggeration and propaganda. The anonymous Serbian official wrote that "we [Serbians] are confronted with a comprehensive policy aiming at the extermination of the Serbian race in the regions in question, which would be preceded by the destruction of the Serbs from an economic standpoint."<sup>43</sup> The author details a series of incidents in which the Ustaše executed Serbs, starting with the first attacks at the end of April in and around Bjelovar. These initial slaughters of Serbs set the tone for the next several months, during which the Ustaše terrorized the Serbian and Jewish populations. Some victims were slaughtered not by gunshot but in an almost animal-like fashion, with hammers and knives, their bodies hacked into pieces. Death by bullet may have been a welcome relief. The author reports that others were killed by hand grenades. Special attention, the writer notes, was given to the persecution and execution of Orthodox priests and former Yugoslav politicians. This highly detailed document includes the names of individuals executed by the Ustaše. The author even mentions the establishment of a concentration camp in Koprivnica.<sup>44</sup> Rankin thought

that the information was of great value and suggested that “more publicity regarding atrocities which the Germans are permitting, and which are possible only because of the German conquest and dismemberment of Yugoslavia, would be helpful to the Serbian and Allied cause.”<sup>45</sup> Rankin’s advice was not accepted by the State Department.

Rankin’s report came on the heels of a missive from King Peter, then in exile, to Roosevelt that also addressed the horrors taking place in Croatia. Obviously moved by news of the massacres, Roosevelt asked his secretary of state, Cordell Hull, whether Peter’s letter should be made public. Unfortunately, Hull recommended that it be kept private and that the White House inform the young king that the president had given the letter his full attention.<sup>46</sup> This silence did nothing to draw notice to the tragedy taking place in Croatia. If anything, by not making a strong, official statement, the US government enabled zealots for Croatian independence within the United States to insist that the executions and massacres were nothing but Serbian and Jewish propaganda. Likewise, the lack of an official statement only fanned the flames of hatred among Serbian Americans. Without a doubt, domestic peace between Croatian and Serbian Americans played a major role in the government’s decision, but the atrocities were so outrageous that it boggles the imagination that any country could or would keep news of them silent.

Even with the above information in hand, Hull and the State Department refused to appreciate the scope of what was happening. Only once did the State Department inquire about the NDH’s policy toward Serbs. On 29 September 1941, Hull asked the American embassy in Rome to investigate reports of “mass deportations of Serbs from Croatia.”<sup>47</sup> There is no record of a response from Rome, but Hull’s lone question, in spite of the letters and reports already received by the State Department and those that would pour into Washington later, signified a sense of disinterest as well as skepticism in Washington. In Hull’s and the State Department’s defense, they were dealing with numerous reports of mass killings and what would later come to be called genocide; it was difficult to separate the incidents in Croatia from those taking place in other corners of the globe. Hull’s lack of curiosity, however, deserves particular emphasis, especially because information about the slaughter of Serbs and Jews by the Ustaše streamed into the State Department throughout the war. Beginning in 1942, regular status reports on Croatia were sent to the State Department by Samuel Honaker, the American consul general in Istanbul, and similar officials. These detailed and remarkably accurate documents, supplemented with information from Bern, all paint the same picture: Pavelić and the Ustaše had slaughtered thousands of Serbs and Jews, terrorized the countryside, and, in the process, tried to erase any Serbian heritage from Croatia by destroying Orthodox churches and forcing conversions to Catholicism.

Although it was difficult to ignore this consistent drumbeat of information, non-intervention in foreign affairs had been a theme in the State Department during the 1920s and 1930s. Even in Latin America, an arena where the United States had made numerous intrusions prior to World War I, Washington chose to avoid direct intervention in the interwar years. Underpinning non-intervention was the “fear that insidious alien influences were endangering America’s unique institutions.”<sup>48</sup> The ideology of nativism, most clearly enunciated in the National Origins Act of 1924, continued to influence American domestic and foreign policy. Roosevelt was another factor: he was suspicious of the State Department and never granted officials, including the secretary of state, much latitude in expanding the role of American foreign policy.<sup>49</sup> Although often chafing under Roosevelt’s leadership style, most

officials in the State Department had a narrow view of the country's role in international affairs and were not eager to change it, especially when dealing with Croatia. Yugoslavia was a distant place, believed by most in the State Department to be primarily an area of British interest, far removed from American consciousness.<sup>50</sup> Only later in World War II, after the most vicious period of atrocities had passed, did the United States begin to play as large a role in Yugoslavia as the British did. The State Department's inaction can be explained also by its concern over keeping the peace between Serbian and Croatian Americans, as well as by an undercurrent of anti-Semitism.<sup>51</sup>

In part, the blame for America's slow and restrained response rests not with the State Department but on the shoulders of the Yugoslav government-in-exile. Wracked by dissension between Croat and Serb members, it failed to spread the word of Pavelić's murderous spree. Too often Serb and Croat politicians only emphasized their ethnicity and jockeyed for position to gain the best deal possible for their particular nationality at the war's conclusion. Again the Ustaše's atrocities became a political football. Many Croats in the government were unwilling to proclaim the truth about Pavelić's murderous regime, mainly because their desire for an independent Croatia led them to ignore the slaughter. Croats in the exiled Yugoslav government believed that recognizing the NDH's crimes would place Croatian interests in an unfavorable light at war's end. Demanding that the horrors be proclaimed from the highest mountain, Serbs, such as Konstantin Fotić, often incorrectly castigated all Croats as murderers. Serb nationalists hoped that information about Ustaše atrocities would help justify some of the abusive policies favored by the Serbian-dominated Yugoslav government prior to the war. Since Yugoslavism was a rare bird, most attempts to draft statements damning the NDH's actions were sabotaged.<sup>52</sup>

Regardless of the exiled government's problems, by early 1942 there were too many reports detailing the atrocities for there to be any doubt that genocide was taking place. Accounts from various sources—all repeating the same major themes, some with more detail than others—were hard to ignore. For example, an account from a "neutral businessman" who left Croatia in September 1941 states that the Ustaše had run roughshod over the country, terrorizing and murdering Serbs. This businessman, a resident of Croatia, noted that some sources claimed that 250,000 Serbs had been slaughtered, a figure exaggerated at this point in the war. "These mass killings took place mostly in the country, where Ustasi armed bands went from village to village and deliberately tried to exterminate every Serb."<sup>53</sup> In major cities, Serbs had "almost disappeared," having been forced into concentration camps, ghettoized, or deported. The same treatment had been dispensed to the NDH's Jews: "They have been murdered and beaten, sent to concentration camps, herded into railway trucks by the hundred and allowed to die en route from starvation and exposure."<sup>54</sup>

Even with a wealth of information at hand, Roosevelt's attention was far from the activities in the NDH. When young King Peter visited the United States in the summer of 1942, he delivered to Roosevelt another account of some of the atrocities committed on Pavelić's watch. According to Fotić, the Yugoslav government-in-exile's representative in the United States, the president was "shocked at the details of Ustashi massacres."<sup>55</sup> Croatian activities, however, were so far from Roosevelt's mind that Fotić, a Serbian nationalist, had to remind him that the NDH was at war with the United States. At that moment, "the President raised his hands in surprise and said that he had almost forgotten about that."<sup>56</sup> Speaking more directly about war crimes, Roosevelt told Peter

that he would make sure the Ustaše realized that they would have to pay for their crimes at the end of the war, something that, in fact, would happen only in rare cases. More pointedly, Roosevelt explained that “he would try especially to impress ‘this man Pavelić.’”<sup>57</sup> Roosevelt’s comment screamed ignorance of Pavelić’s personality and his movement. The president’s inattention is somewhat understandable, but his glaring ignorance of the situation in Croatia is surprising. Fotić responded to Roosevelt by noting that the United States could say little that would affect Pavelić.

In light of Roosevelt’s remarks, it is not surprising that the president never urged Pope Pius XII to put pressure on Pavelić to end the Ustaše’s genocide. It is obvious that other wartime matters occupied the president and took precedence over events in Croatia. Myron Taylor, however, had a good relationship with the pontiff and could have raised the issue of Croatian atrocities with him. As US representative to the Vatican, Taylor, in 1942, asked the papacy to speak out about Axis atrocities. As he did throughout the war, Pius XII only made indirect comments about the genocidal acts being committed by the Nazis and their satellite states.<sup>58</sup> Since the Vatican enjoyed a close relationship with the NDH, and Pius XII had held two audiences with Pavelić by the end of 1942, there was at least a possibility that American pressure on the Vatican might have elicited a few words of restraint in Zagreb. Unfortunately, this opportunity was missed.

One member of the government was deeply concerned with the NDH’s atrocities. Roosevelt’s minister to the Yugoslav government-in-exile, A.J. Drexel Biddle, Jr., was fed a diet of reports from the royalist Četnik leader Draža Mihailović, who was waging a halting guerilla campaign against the Nazis. These reports were of varying accuracy and quality, because the exiled government and Mihailović wanted Washington to believe that they were the only legitimate force waging war against the Germans. Biddle, one of Roosevelt’s close friends, was told by the government-in-exile that the NDH had killed about 600,000 Serbian men, women, and children as of September 1942—an exaggerated figure, designed to attract American attention, but not completely out of the ballpark. Another 300,000 had reportedly been forced out of their homes. Regardless of the numerical accuracy of these reports, exterminations were indeed taking a crushing toll, especially in ethnically diverse Bosnia.<sup>59</sup>

With so much evidence, including the publication of *Martyrdom of the Serbs* by the Orthodox Church of the United States and Canada, a book that vividly detailed the Ustaše’s crimes, there was no way for the American government to question the scope of the atrocities being committed in the NDH.<sup>60</sup> An Office of War Information (OWI) document from August 1943 underscores Washington’s concern about relations between Serbian and Croatian Americans, explaining that *Martyrdom of the Serbs* had the capacity to generate greater disturbances between these two ethnic groups by tarnishing all Croatians as supporters of Ante Pavelić and the Ustaše. Interestingly, the OWI did not question the validity of the publication, noting that “so far as is known many of these charges are true” and declaring that “the Ustashi...set out to exterminate the Serbs of Croatia.”<sup>61</sup> The evidence of wholesale slaughter, carried out in the most despicable fashion, was abundant. Pictures of decapitations, bludgeonings, and mutilations, followed by detailed reports of the extinction of villages, were not a closely kept secret. Despite the wealth of information documenting genocidal events, the US government made few comments. The White House and the State Department were concerned about domestic unrest between Serbian and Croatian Americans as a by-product of Pavelić’s actions in Croatia and decided on a strategy of silence as the best course. In this way, Roosevelt could avoid offending either nationality while charging

the OWI, the government body responsible for monitoring America's various nationalities, with keeping both Croatian and Serbian Americans united in their opposition to Nazi Germany.<sup>62</sup>

### **The Public Learns of Genocide**

The American public, outside of Serbian- and Croatian-American circles, did not learn of the Croatian atrocities until 11 October 1941, when a short item appeared on page 3 of the *New York Times* stating that the Ustaše had murdered 300,000 to 340,000 Serbs and pro-Yugoslav Croats. Citing intelligence reports from agents in Croatia and Bosnia, the anonymous reporter explained that “nearly 5,000 Serbs were slaughtered by Croatian Ustashi in a concentration camp outside Yatovo [probably Jadovno]”;<sup>63</sup> the article describes specific atrocities, some with inflated numbers. This report of thousands of deaths failed to register with the American public, however; there was little to no reaction. For most Americans, content with isolationism, Yugoslavia was a faraway speck on the map with little relevance to American interests. This genocide seemed distant to Americans, who were trying to enjoy their long Indian summer outside of the war.

The American responsibility to address this genocide increased dramatically after Germany declared war on the United States. Hitler's foolish declaration of war on 11 December 1941 mandated that Pavelić follow suit. The *poglavnik*, always loyal to his fascist controllers, declared war on the United States and its Allies on 15 December. This action had the potential to cause ethnic unrest in several American cities, for the United States was home to the largest Croatian population in the world outside of Croatia. Likewise, the declaration made it difficult for Pavelić to draw much financial, diplomatic, or moral support from Croatian Americans, who now had to choose sides in the conflict. Pavelić's significant recruiting and media efforts in the United States during the 1930s would never pay the immense dividends he and his supporters desired. The cause of Croatian independence had lost most of the sympathy traditionally allotted by Americans to nationalities seeking independence; instead, Croatia was viewed as part of Hitler's Europe, having sold its soul for a chance at a patina of independence within the fascist world.

With much bigger concerns in the Pacific Theater, the United States paid little attention to Pavelić's declaration; it received, for example, no more than one paragraph in the *New York Times*. What damage could Croatia do to American interests? Would American forces face Croatian troops in battle? Pavelić's announcement was recognized, rightly, as the action of a pawn.

In early 1942, evidence of Croatian atrocities continued to mount with the publication of a report, issued by the archbishop of the Serbian Orthodox Church, stating that more than 180,000 people had been killed by the Ustaše prior to early August.<sup>64</sup> This document, featuring many grisly details, was forwarded to the US government, where it was received as authoritative. Nevertheless, government officials and the media did little more than read the archbishop's report.

Even at this point, there were no public statements from the White House or the State Department about the executions and tortures taking place in Croatian concentration camps or about the vast number of indiscriminate murders. One of the first confirmable reports of major concentration camps came on 9 March 1942 in a telegram from Bern. The *Wiener Tageblatt* had reported that Croatia had spent 120,000,000 kuna to establish “work camps.” Jasenovac was specifically mentioned as housing 1,050 people, mostly Jews, who were well treated.<sup>65</sup> This veneer of legitimacy

was transparent to anyone in the State Department who followed affairs in the Third Reich. Unfortunately, the news never reached the American public.

Finally Roosevelt realized that a public declaration was needed to define America's position on these and other Axis atrocities. This was especially true because evidence of odious activities, as well as rumors, many being reported in Serbian and Croatian newspapers in the United States, was mounting. After receiving a letter from King Peter II that discussed atrocities being inflicted in Yugoslavia, Roosevelt requested that some action be taken to "compel the enemy to discontinue this ruthless slaughter" and asked that the men responsible for these crimes face justice at some later date. The president decided to make a public declaration pledging that those who had committed atrocities would be held responsible for their actions. As Biddle said, "The President plainly wants to publish something [a response to the atrocities]—including King Peter's letter."<sup>66</sup> Knowing that the State Department would favor making a minimal statement, if any at all, Biddle sagely added that "in dealing with atrocities you do not try to be courteous, or diplomatic, or nice. The subject matter requires that it be handled with punch."<sup>67</sup> The State Department was wary of taking unilateral action on war criminality, preferring to make a statement in cooperation with other Allied states. Although Peter's letter of 22 July was the second time the Yugoslav government had made a request for an American statement on Yugoslav war crimes—the first being on 13 April 1942—the State Department suggested that the White House only produce a statement in cooperation with the other major Allies.<sup>68</sup> The State Department carried the day. Roosevelt's reply to King Peter promised to collect evidence of war crimes so that war criminals could be brought to justice at the end of the conflict. His response, however, did not go as far as the king had requested and included little more than vague promises.<sup>69</sup>

In a public statement, the White House pledged that those who had committed war crimes would be held responsible for their actions:

The perpetrators of these crimes against civilization can no longer be dealt with merely as units of the national guilt of the Axis powers. Guilt is personal; and the men, as individuals, who have thus violated, and who continue to violate the most elementary rules of civilization, must be held personally accountable. When the time comes—as come it will—justice must be done, and civilized law must be vindicated.<sup>70</sup>

These were welcome words; but the statement does not mention Croatia or Yugoslavia by name. Instead, it was designed as a very general statement on atrocities, carefully worded so as not to offend any of the Allies or to be a future impediment to united Allied action against atrocities. Such a statement was a far cry from what King Peter had hoped for.

The wording of this announcement and others—such as that 7 October 1942, which declared that war criminals would be tried before courts at the end of the war—did presage the Moscow Declaration's Statement on Atrocities, agreed upon by the Big Three in October 1943. These documents did not mention that quislings and war criminals from Nazi satellites would be punished, although the Allies resolved to pursue German war criminals and try them for war crimes at the end of the conflict. The omission was unfortunate, and certainly it disappointed Serbs and Serbian Americans.

### **America's Domestic Concerns**

Although a public statement directly damning NDH atrocities was not to be had, the deaths in Croatia did serve to influence some government action against Pavelić's sympathizers in the United States. There was deep concern in many government

departments and in the White House that Pavelić's activities in Croatia would foment unrest between Serbian and Croatian Americans. This was all the more important because many of these immigrants worked in manufacturing sectors that were critical to the war effort. Most Croatian and Serbian-Americans were members of the working class and lived in close proximity to one another in industrial cities such as Pittsburgh, Youngstown, Akron, Chicago, and Detroit. Serbian-Americans were dismayed, shocked, and full of rage when news of Ustaše atrocities reached the United States. The *American Srbobran*, the largest and oldest Serbian newspaper in the United States, reported Pavelić's crimes in great detail beginning on 4 November 1941. In light of the news from Croatia, the paper moved toward a staunchly Serbian nationalist position, heavily criticizing Pavelić's regime and Croats in general. American authorities determined that many Serbs had seized on Pavelić's killing spree as an excuse to favor a Greater Serbia at the end of the war. This was a rather cynical way of looking at the changing Serbian position, although it did have a certain level of truth. The strong condemnation of Pavelić, and of Croats in general, came as no surprise, considering the magnitude of the news being reported.<sup>71</sup> After reading about the deaths of family members and friends at the hands of the Ustaše, Serbian fraternal organizations and newspapers unsurprisingly took a harsh anti-Croatian position, laced with a strong dose of Serbian nationalism.

Prior to the birth of the NDH, there was little direct animosity between Serbian and Croatian Americans, except on the part of fringe elements. The Ustaše's crimes changed this. It was fortunate for American interests that the Pittsburgh newspaper *Nezavisna Hrvatska Država* ("Independent State of Croatia"), a Pavelić mouthpiece established in the 1930s, found it more and more difficult to follow its pro-Pavelić line as news from Yugoslavia drifted back to the United States. Before World War II, the Post Office, the State Department, and the Justice Department repeatedly attempted to close the paper, without success. After Pavelić declared war on the United States, however, the paper, under the leadership of Luka Grbić since 1938, was forced to close its doors in March 1942.<sup>72</sup> Its demise was beneficial to the American war effort, since otherwise this fervently pro-Pavelić newspaper would have done nothing but fuel ethnic hatred. But small numbers of Croatian Americans sympathetic to Pavelić continued to spread their views. In early 1942, the FBI raided Domobran organizations, fraternal groups established by Ustaše operatives in the 1930s, and effectively drove a number of Pavelić supporters underground. Although none of the key Domobran members were arrested, J. Edgar Hoover had made his point; fifth columnists would not exist in the United States.<sup>73</sup>

An outspoken advocate of Pavelić throughout the 1930s, Ante Došen, as the highest-profile Pavelić operative in the United States, required special attention and had been arrested in 1941 by US Immigration officials. Došen had been active for years, organizing support for Pavelić among Croatian-American communities and raising money to fund Pavelić and his Ustaše operations in Europe. Seemingly always able to avoid the government's clutches, he successfully delayed the prosecution of his case and obtained letters of support from both US senators representing Pennsylvania.<sup>74</sup> Clearly frustrated by the Došen case, an OSS agent very familiar with Pavelić sympathizers in the United States remarked that,

Regardless of our constitutional rights, this man should not receive the benefits of said rights which he has flagrantly violated for years . . . Even if this man is convicted on illegal entry and a technical charge of perjury, he still would not receive just punishment.<sup>75</sup>

The United States was unable to get any charges to stick to Došen. As late as the 1970s, he was living in New York City.

Interested in identifying and locating Axis supporters or sympathizers, the OWI and the FBI believed that the Croatian Catholic Union (CCU), headquartered in Gary, Indiana, had pro-Pavelić members. Articles appearing in its weekly paper, *Nasa Nada* (“Our Hope”), gave the impression that the organization was at least in favor of Croat separatism and at most pro-Pavelić. As early as 1941, there was evidence that the CCU was opposed to any criticism of Pavelić, or even of Hitler, on the grounds that *Nasa Nada* was not a political newspaper. Francis X. Kolander, the paper’s editor, condemned Pavelić’s declaration of war against the United States and was reprimanded by George Rakić, the CCU’s president and one of its founders. Kolander was warned not to print articles expressing opposition to Pavelić again.<sup>76</sup> In May 1942, the FBI recognized that the CCU had “never issued any statement condemning the present Quisling government of Dr. Ante Pavilčh in Croatia.”<sup>77</sup> To no one’s surprise, the FBI became interested in removing the CCU’s board of directors from their positions, since they deemed them to be dangerous Nazi sympathizers operating under the aegis of Ante Pavelić.<sup>78</sup> In the fall of 1942, Kolander was defeated for re-election to his post as editor of *Nasa Nada*, partly because he had “openly condemned . . . Pavelić for having declared a state of war against the United States.”<sup>79</sup> Later, Kolander, who had a son fighting in the US Army, produced a letter written by *Nasa Nada*’s new editor, Monsignor M.G. Domladovac, that described the sentiments of some in the CCU:

Whatever PAVELIĆ may be, he at least has freed Croats from Serbian chain. That he is not a traitor . . . is seen from the fact that neither Hitler nor Mussolini believe him, because Pavelić’s children and wife are as hostages in Italy so that Hitler and Mussolini have a guarantee . . . Therefore: As American citizens we are bound to help our new fatherland in its war, but no one can force us to condemn anyone in the old fatherland until we know the TRUE situation in the old country.<sup>80</sup>

Monsignor Domladovac’s comments are interesting, if a bit delusional. Although the evidence against Pavelić was becoming mountainous, the editor refused to condemn him and, incongruously, sought to support both America and Croatia in their war efforts, even though Croatia was at war with the United States.

Both the OWI and the OSS were aware of the activities of Došen and Domladovac, but their concerns went beyond these two figures. Reverend Ivan Stipanović of Youngstown, Ohio, and Ivan Krešić, editor of *Hrvatski List i Danica Hrvatska* (“Croatian Gazette and Croatian Morning Star”), attracted interest because of their staunch and public support for Pavelić. Stipanović served as president of the newly formed Supreme Council of American Croats, the heir to the dormant Domobran cells that Branimir Jelić, a key Pavelić operative, and his followers had worked so hard to establish.<sup>81</sup> The actions and beliefs of Stipanović and Domladovac were symbolic of how Pavelić’s message had infiltrated Croatian Catholic leadership within the United States, particularly among Franciscans. Both men were so obsessed with establishing an independent Croatia that they became blind to the horrors occurring in the NDH. Hatred of Serbia, combined with intense nationalism and a romantic view of Croatia, dictated their thoughts and actions.<sup>82</sup>

As Croatian and Serbian rhetoric escalated, Yugoslavian politicians in the United States became sources of controversy. Konstantin Fotić was accused of “whipping up anti-Croat sentiment.”<sup>83</sup> Others believed that Momcilo Ninčić, the Yugoslav foreign minister, was “the chief instigator of this Greater Serbia campaign.”<sup>84</sup> The State

Department and the FBI believed that such accusations could elevate Serbian and Croatian rivalry to the point of seriously damaging the American war effort. At the State Department, Wallace Murray was fearful of what ethnic rivalry—or “hyphenisms,” as ethnic groups were often called—would do to the United States if a strong American identity was not accepted by new immigrants. “I hope I am wrong,” he wrote,

but I have the uneasy feeling that we are storing up serious trouble for ourselves in the future by permitting the propagation of bitter controversial questions among foreign residents and foreign-born American citizens in this country.<sup>85</sup>

The battles between Serbian and Croatian newspapers reached such a boiling point that Elmer Davis, in charge of the OWI, held a meeting with editors of some of the more influential papers to explain that they had to suspend their “quarreling.” Davis, and the State Department in general, believed that the newspapers were creating “a danger to the American war effort.”<sup>86</sup> Fortunately, the division between Serbs and Croats never did damage the American war machine, partly because most Serbian- and Croatian-Americans favored the reestablishment of a Yugoslavia at the war’s end or were largely apathetic with respect to events in the old country. These immigrants had become Americans.

Though small numbers of Croatian Americans pledged allegiance to Pavelić, the vast majority remained fervently loyal to America’s cause and implacable enemies of the Axis. As we have seen, Croatian Americans were torn between favoring Yugoslavism, supporting an independent Croatia sanctioned by the United States and Western Europe, or settling for Pavelić’s state. The OWI worked tirelessly to convince Croatian Americans that their first allegiance must be to the United States. As Davis noted while speaking before the Croatian Conference on 19 September 1942, “no American citizen can have more than a secondary interest in what government is workable in the old country. One thing we can be sure of is that (the future Yugoslavia problem) will be solved there by people rather than by people in this country.”<sup>87</sup> The OWI’s chief concern was to unite Serbian and Croatian Americans in the crusade against the Axis. Dissent between the two would only harm the war effort, as Davis emphatically explained at a meeting of Slavic leaders held in the State Department on 18 September 1942.<sup>88</sup>

Croatian organizations in the United States made an appeal to meet on 20–21 February 1943 in Chicago to proclaim just such sentiments. In their call for action, these prominent mainstream Croatian-American organizations clearly demonstrated support for the United States and condemned Pavelić. They proclaimed that “those who follow Pavelić are baiting Croats against the Serb people” and maintained that Pavelić and Serbian strongman Milan Nedić were “heirings” of Hitler and Mussolini.<sup>89</sup> They went so far as to call Pavelić a bandit. Delegates were careful, however, to mention the Ustaše’s atrocities only vaguely. This is understandable, but regrettable, as a clear denunciation of Pavelić’s crimes would probably have won them a great deal of respect from the American government and the grudging esteem of Serbian-American groups. This meeting was followed in September 1943 by the Sixth Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union (CFU), the largest Croatian organization in America, at which Croatian representatives pledged their loyalty to the United States and their devotion to the war effort while rejecting Pavelić and his movement.<sup>90</sup> Although there were varying political positions on both right and left in the CFU, it was becoming clear that very few Croatian Americans could support Pavelić’s policies, regardless of whether or not there was an independent Croatia. Only obsessively

nationalistic and ardently anti-Communist groups such as the CCU were willing to tolerate Pavelić's regime.

## **Roosevelt and Croatia's Future**

The NDH's atrocities, however, were an important influence on Allied views of a post-war Yugoslavia. Considering the horrific events, could Croats and Serbs live peacefully in a reunited Yugoslavia, or was separation the only viable answer? Roosevelt hinted at his opinion of post-war Yugoslavia as early as October 1942, in a meeting with Fotić. Sympathetic with the Serbs and fond of their young king, Roosevelt informed the ambassador that Serbian desires were paramount, considering their commitment to the Allied cause. Roosevelt did not oppose the continuation of Yugoslavia; instead, he wished for South Slavs to determine their fate without its being dictated to them by Western powers.<sup>91</sup> These opinions were suitably vague, for the early part of the war, to allow Roosevelt to alter his views as events dictated.

The president's opinions had shifted somewhat by early 1943. In a meeting with Anthony Eden and Harry Hopkins, Roosevelt contended that the Croats and Serbs had virtually nothing in common and that the concept of reuniting them in one state was "ridiculous." Roosevelt believed that Serbia deserved to emerge as an independent state, while Croatia would exist under a trusteeship of some sort. All of this had the obscurity of casual conversation. Influenced to some extent by the Yugoslavian government-in-exile, Eden thought that Yugoslavia could exist again with Croat and Serb side by side.<sup>92</sup> Post-war Yugoslavian affairs were far from the president's main concern. In discussions surrounding the Moscow Declaration, which dealt with holding war criminals responsible for their crimes at the end of the war, little was said about Yugoslavia's ultimate fate. The president merely reiterated his position that "Croatia may have to be set up separately from Serbia."<sup>93</sup> Neither Britain nor the United States believed that Tito would forge a united Yugoslavia under his star power and the Communist banner.

Interestingly, the regular situation reports on Croatia that littered State Department files appear to have had only limited effect in altering the views of the White House. From these documents, it was obvious that Pavelić and the Ustaše had ravaged the country, annihilated its economy, and destroyed tens of thousands of lives. The reports made for interesting reading, but they were largely ignored by both the White House and the State Department.

## **Conclusion**

American information about NDH atrocities was exceptionally and surprisingly accurate and detailed. A mere two weeks after the horrific assaults on Serbs began, the US State Department had reliable evidence that atrocities were occurring. Although the evidence mounted as weeks turned into months, and it became clear that the Ustaše's assaults had expanded to include the Jewish population as well, neither the White House nor the State Department ever uttered a public word specifically condemning the NDH's actions. Regardless of appeals by King Peter, silence remained. American authorities did issue statements condemning atrocities, but only in vague and almost neutral terms. Likewise, neither the State Department nor President Roosevelt made any effort to pressure the Vatican to counsel restraint in the NDH. Although it is far from certain that American pressure would have influenced the Vatican to act, it is certain that no such attempt was made. In part, the lack of response was because the State Department considered Croatia—and Yugoslavia,

for that matter—a British region of influence, distant from American interests. Only in the months prior to the German invasion had the United States directed attention to Yugoslavia. The White House and the State Department concerned themselves with the more significant states in Europe, paying only modest attention to the wide-scale atrocities being committed in Croatia.

This case study of American response to a lesser-known genocide illustrates the complex issues that governments face when confronting such atrocities. It is tempting to offer stern criticism of American inaction on this issue; however, the genocide did move policy makers to action in the United States. US authorities were quick to realize that atrocities in the NDH had the capacity to elevate friction between Croatian and Serbian Americans. This concern was very real to the OWI, the FBI, the White House, and the State Department, and each of these agencies focused on keeping the American war effort moving forward while preventing any fifth-column elements from emerging. A detailed public statement from the White House or the State Department condemning Pavelić's actions might have served only to increase ethnic tensions in the United States, and speaking out on NDH atrocities would have meant making statements on all ethnicities under assault by fascist regimes. Most likely, such a "bidding war" would only have led to greater ethnic tension in the country. The State Department was convinced that any statement on wartime atrocities needed to be made in cooperation with the Allies. It was deemed best to allow the OWI to monitor Serbian-American and Croatian-American newspapers and organizations, urging them to moderate their nationalism-laced views. The OWI stressed to both Croatian- and Serbian-American communities that their allegiance was to the United States and not to Croatia or Serbia. Likewise, the FBI was used to squelch the pro-Pavelić forces that had been active in the country since the early 1930s. In this manner, the genocide in Croatia had a direct effect on US domestic policy decisions. In the final analysis, although genocide was perpetrated in Croatia, American authorities remained silent, choosing instead to make exceedingly pragmatic decisions designed to maintain a peaceful and productive war effort.

## Notes

1. National Microfilm Archive Publication (NAMP) M1203, roll 16, 860J.00/1289, telegram, MacMurray to Secretary of State, 6 May 1941.
2. There is heated debate over the exact number of Serbs, Jews, and Roma killed by the Ustaše, with nationalism permeating and exaggerating statistics. Since many records are missing, it is very difficult to obtain precise figures devoid of bias. The statistics given here are those recognized by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum as the best available at this time.
3. Historians have all but ignored the US government's response to Ustaše violence. Bits of information may be found in various works, such as Mark Aarons and John Loftus, *Unholy Trinity: The Vatican, the Nazis, and the Swiss Banks* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989); George J. Prpic, *The Croatian Immigrants in America* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1971); Joseph Kraja, "The Croatian Circle, 1928–1946: Chronology and Reminiscences," *Journal of Croatian Studies* 5–6 (1964–1965): 145–204, but no comprehensive study exists.
4. There are numerous sources of excellent quality on the complicated political scene in Yugoslavia in the late 1920s and early 1930s. See John R. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History: Twice There Was a Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Aleksa Djilas, *The Contested Country: Yugoslav Unity and Communist Revolution, 1919–1953* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991); Jill A. Irvine, *The Croat Question: Partisan Politics in the Formation of the Yugoslav Socialist State* (Boulder, CO: Westview

- Press, 1993); Marcus Tanner, *Croatia: A Nation Forged in War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997); L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1958).
5. There is considerable debate as to when the Ustaše was established. While 7 January 1929 may not be the exact date, the Ustaše appears to have been in existence by the end of that month.
  6. Dimitrije Djordjevic, "Fascism in Yugoslavia: 1918–1941," in *Native Fascism in the Successor States, 1918–1945*, ed. Peter Sugar, 125–34 (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC Clio, 1971), 131–33; Ivan Avakumovic, "Yugoslavia's Fascist Movements," in *Native Fascism in the Successor States, 1918–1945*, ed. Peter Sugar, 135–43 (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC Clio, 1971), 139–42.
  7. Ante Pavelić, *Errori e orrori, comunismo e bolscevismo in Russia e nel mondo* (Varese: Istituto per gli studi di politica internazionale, 1941).
  8. Vladko Maček, *In the Struggle for Freedom*, trans. Elizabeth Gazi and Stjepan Gazi (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1957), 245.
  9. For a detailed discussion of Italian–Croatian relations see H. James Burgwyn, *Empire on the Adriatic: Mussolini's Conquest of Yugoslavia, 1941–1943* (New York: Enigma Books, 2005), 8–16. Also see James J. Sadkovich, *Italian Support for Croatian Separatism, 1927–1937* (New York: Garland, 1987).
  10. Anthony Cave Brown, *The Last Hero: Wild Bill Donovan* (New York: Times Books, 1982), 152–56.
  11. Telegram to Arthur Bliss Lane from the Acting Secretary of State, 27 March 1941, quoted *ibid.*, 969.
  12. *Ibid.*
  13. Ulrich von Hassell, *The Von Hassell Diaries, 1938–1944* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1948), 160.
  14. The Nazis hoped that Vladko Maček would take the reigns of the new Croatian state. Being an outspoken opponent of the Nazis, however, Maček refused the post.
  15. Srdja Trifković, *Ustaša: Croatian Separatism and European Politics, 1929–1945* (London: The Lord Byron Foundation for Balkan Studies), 139–41. Also see Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* (New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944), 620–26.
  16. Lemkin, *Axis Rule*, 626–27.
  17. N. Dinko Šuljak, *Croatia's Struggle for Independence: A Documentary History* (Arcadia, CA: Croatian Information Service, 1977), 177.
  18. *Ibid.*; Also see Trifković, *Ustaša*, 139.
  19. *Hrvatski List*, quoted in Richard West, *Tito and the Rise and Fall of Yugoslavia* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 1994), 88.
  20. Jonathan Steinberg, *All or Nothing: The Axis and the Holocaust, 1941–1943* (London: Routledge, 1990), 30.
  21. The USHMM possesses a significant and moving collection of photographs and records documenting this type of Ustaše behavior. Some evidence is also found in the National Archives in Washington and in the Public Record Office in London. For an excellent examination of Ustaše methods and atrocities see Jozo Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941–1945* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001).
  22. Constantin Fotitch, *The War We Lost: Yugoslavia's Tragedy and the Failure of the West* (New York: Viking Press, 1948), 121–22.
  23. Edmond Paris, *Genocide in Satellite Croatia, 1941–1945* (Chicago: American Institute for Balkan Affairs, 1961), 127–35. Also see Vladimir Dedijer, *The Yugoslav Auschwitz and the Vatican: The Croatian Massacre of the Serbs during World War II* (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1992).
  24. Richard West, "Death Camp Capture Revives Croat Shame," *The Sunday Telegraph*, 7 May 1995.

25. Harriet Pass Freidenreich, *The Jews of Yugoslavia: A Quest for Community* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979), 191–92; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, *Historical Atlas of the Holocaust* (New York: Macmillan, 1996), 171–77. Also see John F. Morley, *Vatican Diplomacy and the Jews during the Holocaust, 1939–1943* (New York: Ktav Publishing, 1980), 147–65, Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, vol. 2 (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1985), 708–18; and Leni Yahil, *The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry, 1932–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 429–31.
26. This issue is brilliantly examined in Donald Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Destruction of the Ottoman Armenians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
27. The most significant example is Franjo Tudjman, *Bespuca povijesne zbiljnosti* (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 1990). Formerly a partisan and a general in the Yugoslav army, Tudjman served as president of Croatia. Also see Ljubo Boban, “Jasenovac and the Manipulation of History,” *East European Politics and Societies* 4 (1990): 580–92.
28. Pavelić’s reputation has been restored among some in Croatia, especially young men. It is not uncommon to see men sporting tattoos featuring the Ustaše *U*, or pictures of Pavelić or Ustaše symbols in popular bars.
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42. NAMP M1203, roll 16, 860H.00/1322, letter, Consul K.L. Rankin to Secretary of State, 14 August 1941.
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# The Prefiguration of Some Aspects of the Holocaust in the Armenian Genocide (Revisiting the Comparative Perspective)

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*The field of genocide studies has been marked by a comparative tendency, while at the same time scholarship on the Holocaust has tended to focus on its singularity; the Armenian Genocide has often been treated as representing a “dress rehearsal” for the Holocaust. This article examines the parallels and commonalities, as well as the differences, between the two events, with a view to drawing them into a comparative perspective. More specifically, four major factors (vulnerability of the victim group, degradation of victims, war as opportunity, and fear of retaliation on the part of perpetrators) and three subsidiary factors (methods of extermination, disregard of economic factors, and terminological deflection) are examined with respect to both the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide.*

*Keywords: Holocaust, Armenian Genocide, comparative perspective*

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From its very inception, genocide studies has been marked by a tendency to be infused with some elements of comparativeness, while the case of the Holocaust has benefited from a profusion of works focusing on and detailing elements of singularity. The World War I Armenian Genocide has served, in this respect, a useful purpose, especially because of its significant similarities to and certain commonalities with the Holocaust. This element of a nexus, a connecting link, was not only recognized but harnessed by Raphael Lemkin for a wide and encompassing project that ushered in the era of genocide studies. In “Totally Unofficial Man,” Lemkin wrote,

In 1915 . . . I began . . . to read more history to study whether national, religious, or racial groups as such were being destroyed. The truth came out after the war. In Turkey, more than 1,200,000 Armenians were put to death . . . After the end of the war, some 150 Turkish war criminals were arrested and interned by the British Government on the island of Malta . . . Then one day, I read in the newspapers that all Turkish war criminals were to be released. I was shocked. A nation that killed and the guilty persons were set free . . . I felt that a law against this type of racial or religious murder must be adopted by the world.<sup>1</sup>

The seminal nature of the perspective inherent in this statement is noteworthy. Lemkin is not only recognizing the reality of centrally organized mass murder but also discerning the pressing need for legal mechanisms to control such a crime, with the ultimate objective of preventing it. Unlike many earlier authors, however, Lemkin set out to pave the way for framing and eventually establishing internationally prevalent penal codes for the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide. Central to all this legal and criminological endeavor was the quest for a solution to the ubiquitous problem of impunity attending that crime.<sup>2</sup> The threat of punishment, to the extent that it could be made credible, was meant to serve the purpose of prevention.

One of the foremost leaders of Zionism in Germany, Richard Lichtheim, who represented that movement in the Ottoman capital during World War I, went further when he focused on the matter of precedence. Lichtheim wrote that the Armenian experience was “the first instance of a systematic persecution in modern history, resembling Hitler’s . . . crusade of destruction against the Jews.”<sup>3</sup> Two other experts appear to have concurred: Joseph Guttman characterized the Armenian case as “the beginnings of genocide,”<sup>4</sup> while Jehuda L. Wallach, a military historian from Tel Aviv, discerned “a certain parallel between the Jewish and Armenian catastrophes.”<sup>5</sup> These linkages found a legal echo in the declaration of a jurist who played a major role in the criminal prosecution of Nazi leaders at Nuremberg. Robert Kempner was chief of division, responsible for preparing the cases of these leaders; he was also assistant to Justice Robert Jackson, chief counsel for the United States. In a law-journal article dealing with the Armenian Genocide, Kempner declared that “for the first time in legal history,” the principle of “human rights violations, especially genocide,” was recognized. He further declared that such recognition was acted upon “without committing unauthorized intervention in the internal affairs of another country.”<sup>6</sup>

In the more recent past, several noted experts on the Holocaust have expressed themselves along identical lines or in similar ways. Richard Rubenstein, for example, discerns “an eerie parallel” between the two cases.<sup>7</sup> Stating that the Armenian Genocide “foreshadows the Holocaust,” Yehuda Bauer uses the same term, “parallel.”<sup>8</sup> In a subsequent essay he again cites the Armenian case as offering “the closest parallel to the Jewish Holocaust . . . On this continuum of murderous behaviour, the Armenian massacres would figure nearest to the Holocaust.” However, Bauer seems to have felt the need to interject a caveat: “The Turks never planned the murder of Armenians outside Turkey . . . [whereas the Jews became victims of] a plan for the total physical annihilation of a people, everywhere one finds them.”<sup>9</sup> Sharing Bauer’s view of the “uniqueness” of the Holocaust, Lucy Davidowicz also grants the parallels, as evident in

the Turkish massacres of Armenians, which in their extent and horror most closely approximated the murder of European Jews . . . The once unthinkable “Armenian solution” became, in our time, the achievable “Final Solution,” the Nazi code name for the annihilation of European Jews.<sup>10</sup>

In his classic treatise on the subject, Leo Kuper, another pioneer, after describing it as the “forgotten genocide,” saw it fit to characterize the Armenian Genocide as “the precursor of the coldly calculated bureaucratic genocide”<sup>11</sup>—that is, the Holocaust. For his part, Israel Charny describes the Armenian instance as “a dress rehearsal for the Holocaust.”<sup>12</sup> Yisrael Ring, another Israeli historian, is quoted as saying that the Armenian Genocide, “a model for recent history,” in fact proved to be a “purifying precedent” for the Holocaust.<sup>13</sup>

Reference may also be made to Helen Fein, who occupies a prominent place in the galaxy of pioneers in genocide studies. Fein’s basic premise, shared by many others cited above, is that unless single case studies progress to the level of comparative studies, the field of genocide studies will essentially be handicapped as a scientific discipline. This standpoint is enunciated in her *magnum opus*, *Accounting for Genocide*, through the postulate that “for over a millennium preceding their annihilation, both Jews and Armenians had been decreed by the dominant group that was to perpetrate the crime to be outside the sanctified universe of obligation.”<sup>14</sup> As a matter of fact, the concept of the “sanctified universe of obligation” has become the very essence of Fein’s overall conceptual framework in the general theory of genocide.

The present essay is an attempt at further developing the common body of knowledge in genocide studies by exploring in more detail the comparative aspects of these two genocides. Such an attempt neither negates the very important factors that separate the two nor discounts the signal fact that the Holocaust is simply the best-known case in the overall picture of genocide studies. As a point of departure, however, one may revert back to Fein's perspective. In her introductory chapter Fein repeatedly singles out some of the specifics of this phenomenon, which may be summed up as follows. Both victim groups (i.e., the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and the Jews in Europe) lacked "sovereignty" and a "parent state"; hence, both were highly "vulnerable" victim groups, notwithstanding their "international affiliations," which did not compare with the protective condition afforded by a nation-state. This vulnerability was ensconced in the belittling titles—"rayah" and "alien"—that were attached to both victim groups. Similarly, both victim groups had experienced, at various levels and under different conditions, episodic "pogroms" during the nineteenth century—even though Jews were more assimilated, in terms of their involvement in political parties. Armenians stood among their neighbors very much as the Jews of Poland and Russia did; the former suffered the indignities of exclusion from the "Islamic universe," the latter of exclusion from the "Christian universe." Both victim groups became targets of a "premeditated genocide" that was coterminous with "organized state murder" involving "rational function" (i.e., "choice by the perpetrator"). Both perpetrator groups, the Nazis and the Young Turks, also "test[ed] the ground" by recourse to pre-genocidal "oppression" and "calculated violence against the victims."<sup>15</sup>

By departing from this overview of insights and observations, which appear to be conditioned by the authors' inveterate connectedness to Jewish ethnicity, the nexus to a transposed image of victimhood, it may be possible to construct a comparative perspective. In this respect, four primary factors may be designated for the further exploration of the comparative perspective: vulnerability, degradation of the victims, war as opportunity, and fear of retaliation. On a secondary level, the following subsidiary factors may be singled out for brief comment: techniques of extermination, belittling the economic factor, and terminological cover-ups and deflection.

## **1. Vulnerability**

Declaring Jews "a security risk," the Nazi Foreign Ministry urged "the deportation" of all Jews residing "in Axis countries." This vulnerability, in the main, issued from the fact that the Jews were "all alone" and had "no parent state," while the "Allies refrained from intervening."<sup>16</sup> General Wladyslaw Sikorski, president of the Conference on War Crimes held at St. James's Palace in 1942, justified the Allies' refusal to publicly acknowledge Nazi crimes against the Jews in their declaration on war crimes in January of that year by arguing that "the Jews were considered nationals of their reflective states" rather than being a distinct national group.<sup>17</sup>

In the Armenian case, we can observe a similar pattern of exploiting the vulnerability of the Armenian minority in the Ottoman Empire. Notorious in this respect is the promulgation, on 19 May/1 June 1915, of the Deportation Law, which was first proposed to the cabinet by Interior Minister Talât on 13/26 May 1915 and approved first by Grand Vizier Said Halim on 14/27 May and subsequently, and rather deviously, by the cabinet on 17/30 May (the established procedure required cabinet approval first). Article 2 of that law rendered the entire Armenian population, rather indirectly, a target of the whims of military authorities at almost all levels, who were thus given license to order deportations at the slightest hint (*hissetmek*) that the

victims might be suspected of “espionage and treason.”<sup>18</sup> The vulnerability here stems from the deliberate vagueness, imprecision, and general arbitrariness of the legislation. Talât recognized this element of license when he explicitly exhorted the Armenian parliamentary deputy Vartkes, just before the latter’s arrest and subsequent murder—despite his parliamentary immunity—that he intended to take full advantage of the opportunity offered by the war to settle scores and resolve the Armenian question.<sup>19</sup> When Henry Morgenthau, then US ambassador to Turkey, tried to intercede on behalf of the Armenians, Talât reportedly brushed him off, saying that “the fate of the Armenians” should be of “no concern of the U.S.A.”<sup>20</sup> A brief examination of the comparative aspects of this vulnerability factor affecting the fates of both victim groups is available within the framework of a legal analysis.<sup>21</sup>

## **2. Degradation of the Victims**

Going back to the era of the anti-Semitic protestant leader Martin Luther, the Nazis, faithfully emulating him, proceeded to denounce the Jew as “a criminal, a thug, a beast of prey.” Hitler himself referred to “a battle against a satanical power,” while another top Nazi, Julius Streicher, depicted the Jews as parasites “who live by the sweat of others.” Heinrich Himmler, chief of the SS and the police; Hans Frank, the overall governor of Poland; and Otto Thierack, the Nazis’ minister of justice, were inclined to the view that the Jews “were a lower species of life which upon contact infected the German people with deadly disease.”<sup>22</sup> Himmler, for his part, stated that “just because we exterminated a bacterium, we do not want, in the end, to be infected by that bacterium and die of it,” while Frank often described the Jews as “lice.”<sup>23</sup> In April 1943, during a visit to Berlin by Admiral Miklos Horthy, regent of Hungary, Hitler again denounced the Jews as “tubercular bacilli.”<sup>24</sup>

Although there is a relative paucity of similar denigrations of the Armenians within the Turkish camp, one of the most ferocious of the Turkish *génocidaires*, Dr. Mehmed Reşid—a veterinarian by training, and the governor general of Diyarbekir province—described his Armenian victims as “microbes,” posing the rhetorical question, “Isn’t the duty of a doctor to destroy these microbes?”<sup>25</sup>

## **3. War as Opportunity**

It is no accident that the two of the twentieth century’s many genocides were consummated, with remarkable efficiency, during the two world wars (specifically, between 1942 and 1945 and in 1915–1916). Indeed, on 13 December 1942, Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi propaganda minister, declared, “At bottom . . . I believe both the English and the Americans are happy that we are exterminating the Jewish riff-raff.”<sup>26</sup> Himmler and Goebbels considered the war a “unique opportunity for ‘Solving the problem.’”<sup>27</sup> While completing the preparations for the Auschwitz concentration camp, Himmler told Rudolf Höss, commandant of the camp, that Hitler’s order for the “Final Solution” would have to be carried out because otherwise “the Jews will later destroy the German people.”<sup>28</sup>

Official German documents amply confirm the same wartime opportunism with respect to the Armenian genocide. On 27 July 1915, for example, Germany’s consul in Aleppo, Walter Rössler, reported to his chancellor in Berlin that the Turkish authorities were exploiting the war and their alliance with Germany to solve “the Armenian Question.”<sup>29</sup> On 10 August 1915, Erzurum’s vice-consul, Max Erwin Scheubner-Richter, likewise informed the chancellor that the “Armenian question” that for decades had been occupying European diplomacy “will be solved now, during

the war.”<sup>30</sup> The German Colonel Stange, on duty in the area of the genocidal operations, reported to his superior, Marshal Otto Liman von Sanders, that the Turks were bent on exploiting “this favorable opportunity” (*diese günstige Gelegenheit*) for solving the Armenian question.<sup>31</sup> The wartime German ambassador, Count Paul von Wolff-Metternich, reported that the Turks were hiding behind the argument of “wartime exigency” to justify their atrocities (*verschanzen sich hinter Kriegsnotwendigkeiten*).<sup>32</sup> In a second report, Scheubner-Richter told Berlin that the Young Turk leaders (otherwise identified as leaders of the Committee for Union and Progress, or CUP) had confided to him, as a representative of an allied power, that the wartime deportations of the Armenians were only a vehicle for the latter’s ultimate eradication.<sup>33</sup> The foremost urgency of completing the task of eradicating the Armenians during the war was given expression in a memorandum jointly signed by Talât and Enver on 2 August 1916. Forwarded to Berlin by Marine Attaché and Lt. Commander Hans Humann, this memo contained Talât’s revealing exhortation to Berlin that he must bring to completion his plan of liquidating the Armenians: “The work that is to be done must be done now.”<sup>34</sup>

#### **4. Fear of Retaliation**

Raul Hilberg maintains that the overall public rationale for the genocidal campaign against the Jews was the so-called Jewish danger. Even the Nazis’ mobile killing units (*Einsatzgruppen*) had to contrive such rationales, although they had no need to account to anyone for their crimes—not even Reinhardt Heydrich, chief of the Reich Security Head Office.<sup>35</sup> Himmler, in the course of an address to the general lieutenants (*Gruppenführer*) of the SS delivered in 1943, declared, “We had the moral right vis-à-vis our people to annihilate (*umzubringen*) this people which wanted to annihilate us.”<sup>36</sup> On 5 February 1943, in the wake of the shattering defeat at Stalingrad, the German press was instructed to emphasize that “if we lose the war, we do not fall into the hands of some other states but will all be annihilated by world Jewry. Jewry firmly decided (*fest entschlossen*) to exterminate all Germans. International law and international custom will be no protection against the Jewish will for total annihilation. (*totaler Vernichtungswille der Juden*).”<sup>37</sup>

Ismail Enver, war minister and de facto commander-in-chief of the Ottoman-Turkish Army during World War I, told Morgenthau that he had “greatest admiration for the intelligence and industry” of the Armenians; but, he added, “a few hundred bright Armenians [are capable of] overturning Turkish government.”<sup>38</sup> For his part, Talât, omnipotent CUP party boss and interior minister, told the American ambassador that “no Armenian can be our friend after what we have done to them.”<sup>39</sup> Lewis Einstein, special agent at the American embassy in Constantinople (now Istanbul), reported that in a recent exchange Enver had admitted the CUP’s apprehensions, saying that the CUP “fears the Armenians.”<sup>40</sup>

### **Additional Subsidiary Factors**

#### **1. Techniques and Methods of Extermination**

Although the gas chambers were the principal vehicle of Nazi mass murder, other methods served as auxiliary means; these, however, should be viewed as infrequent and, therefore, as incidental rather than regular techniques. One of these was the act of burning alive (i.e., the *en masse* incineration of victims). In Slonim, for example, “many houses were set afire, until the entire ghetto was a mass of flames . . . Additional

raiders then arrived with gasoline cans and burned the dead and wounded in the streets.”<sup>41</sup> Moreover, following the establishment of the anti-partisan command under Erich von dem Bach Zelewski, “[the perpetrators] were thrown into the action on November 26, 1942...1828 Jews not counting bandits, Jews, etc., were burned in houses or dugouts.”<sup>42</sup> Commenting on von dem Bach’s role, a psychologist described him as a man

whose record of looting, arson and mass murder is equaled only by the Huns and Mongols of days past. General von dem Bach was the deputy Genghis khan of this horde. The troops which he commanded included the notorious Dirlewanger Brigade which was composed of habitual criminals...one single report...shows that, among others, 363,211 Jews were executed by these formations.<sup>43</sup>

However, Hilberg mentions an incident that depicts von dem Bach as a man weary of the psychological damage his troops were suffering as a result of these barbarities. He reportedly told Himmler,

Look at the eyes of the men in this Kommando, how deeply shaken they are! These men are finished [*fertig*] for the rest of their lives. What kind of followers are we training here? Either neurotics or savages!<sup>44</sup>

Such acts of immolation, however, as stated above, were quite widespread in the Armenian case; as such, they were a more or less integral part of the Armenian Genocide. Among numerous accounts available for study is the vivid eyewitness testimony of a Jewish observer, Eitan Belkind, an officer in the wartime Turkish army with duties at the headquarters of the Ottoman Fourth Army:

After a three day ride I reached the heart of Mesopotamia where I was a witness to a terrible tragedy...The Circassian soldiers ordered the Armenians to gather thorns and thistles and to pile them into a tall pyramid...afterwards they tied all the Armenians who were there, almost five thousand souls, hand to hand, encircled them like a ring around the pile of thistles and set it afire in a blaze which rose up to heaven together with the screams of the wretched people who were burned to death by the fire...Two days later I returned to this place and saw the charred bodies of thousands of human beings.<sup>45</sup>

Colonel Ludwig Schraudenbach, German commander of the Ottoman-Turkish Fourteenth Division, operating likewise in Mesopotamia, cites in his memoirs another case of burning alive. Relaying information he had received, he writes that “children were placed between wooden planks, tied to them, and then burned to death.”<sup>46</sup> The Swedish missionary Alma Johansson, on duty in wartime Turkey, reported that the Armenian inmates of an orphanage in Muş, along with the staff, were burned alive (“*lebendig verbrannt*”).<sup>47</sup> For his part, the German physician H. Stoffels, likewise on duty in wartime Turkey, reported that on his way to the same city of Mush he saw “a large number of formerly Armenian localities, where in the churches and houses were charred and decomposed corpses of women and children” (*verkohlte und verweste Frauen und Kinderleichen*).<sup>48</sup> Rafael Nogales, a Venezuelan major who had volunteered his services to the Turkish Army during World War I and held the title Inspector General reported observing, in the same area, “women and children penned up and burned alive.”<sup>49</sup>

Even more striking in this connection are authentic Turkish testimonies. Foremost among them is that of General Mehmed Vehip, commander of the Turkish Third Army, who testified before the Turkish military tribunal that prosecuted the authors of the Armenian Genocide in the aftermath of World War I. Vehip reported that

“Armenian women and children were burnt alive in the village of Churig, located five kilometers north of Mush”; during an inspection of the area, he had seen the charred remains of the victims.<sup>50</sup> Reference may also be made to the testimony of a Turkish military officer who, likewise, had personally observed the evidence of the holocaust in and around Muşand who ventured to identify Küçük Kâzım, the Turkish military officer who “was burning down the entire Mush valley and was annihilating the Armenians.”<sup>51</sup>

## 2. Discounting the Economic Factor

According to Hilberg, “the destruction process was oriented not to cost but to efficiency.”<sup>52</sup> In the Nazi case, the authorities of the Ministry for Eastern Occupied Territories insisted that “economic questions should not be considered in the solution of the Jewish question.”<sup>53</sup> A similar frame of mind can be discerned in the attitudes of the CUP leaders involved in genocidal decision making in Turkey. During an exchange with Morgenthau, for example, Talât declared, “We care nothing about the commercial loss. We have figured all that out . . . We don’t worry about that.”<sup>54</sup> Enver declared to the same ambassador, “Economic considerations are of no importance at this time”; the two were discussing the huge fiscal losses the Turkish economy was incurring as a result of the elimination of the Armenians.<sup>55</sup> These considerations are confirmed by the memoirs of Halidé Edib, a nationalist and feminist Turkish writer whom Talât, particularly, held in high esteem. Edib relates some exchanges with Talât and acknowledges that, in fact, self-serving economic considerations played a paramount role in the decision to uproot the Armenians: the goal was “to end the economic supremacy of the Armenians thereby clearing the markets for the Turks and the Germans.”<sup>56</sup>

## 3. Terminological Deflections and Cover-Ups

The Nazis contrived an extensive vocabulary for the express purpose of camouflaging their real goal with respect to the Jews; Hilberg’s list takes up most of a page.<sup>57</sup> The most recurrent terms are *Ausschaltung* (“elimination”), *Aussiedlung* (“resettlement”), *Sondermassnahmen* (“special measures”), *Sonderaktionen* (“special actions”), and *Sonderbehandlung* (“special treatment”). The Jews were “bluffed” and tricked with “registrations” and “resettlements,” with “baths” and “inhalations.”<sup>58</sup> In the Armenian case, however, the decision makers throughout confined themselves to the twin terms *tehcir* (“deportation”) and *tebdili mekân* (“relocation”), deflecting attention from the covert purposes of the mechanisms of deportation and covering up the ultimate, exterminatory goal.<sup>59</sup>

## Conclusion

Superseding in import and consequence all these similarities and commonalities is the overarching illegality of the origins and evolving careers of the regimes of both perpetrator groups—the type of illegality that, completely devoid of elements of responsibility and accountability, readily degenerated into lethal criminality. In the process, the functions of each state were overwhelmed by the imposition on their respective systems of the desiderata of two highly monolithic and dictatorial political parties. The subversion and ultimate criminalization of these state functions thus became the order of the day. The Reichstag fire and the Enabling Act (in February and March 1933) and the Nuremberg Laws of 1935, on the one hand, or the January 1913 Young Turk overthrow of the government and the subsequent political purges throughout the land, on the other, are the incipient initiatives of this process. The prevalence of the common pattern of substituting party authority (that of NSDAP and

the CUP, with all their variants) for legitimate state authority is all too evident. Accordingly, the cardinal lesson to be derived from this comparative essay is that the arch determinant in cases of genocide is not the state, to whose powers and resources are generally attributed the latitude for genocidal decision making and the associated enactment, but the progressively incremental power structure of dictatorial political parties. Equally important is the fact of the illicit capture of constitutional authority and its transfer from the legitimate state to a political party that is mobilized with highly secretive and radical designs, some of them exterminatory; such illicit action is capable of providing the requisite dynamics for genocidal radicalism. Among the many ways in which state functions are thus subverted, perhaps the most consequential is that many of these functions are reduced and instrumentalized for the hidden goals of the party. In other words, in addition to subverting its functions, the quasi-omnipotent party specifically aims to reduce the state to a level of optimal subservience to the party. This has been confirmed by wartime Turkish general Vehip. In one way or another, consequently, the state ultimately becomes complicit in the series of crimes that inevitably ensues. This is a process that might be called outcome-oriented, radical, and deadly task performance. Such an outcome was foreseen by Aristotle when he declared, nearly twenty-five centuries ago, that “when separated from law and justice man is the worst of all animals.”<sup>60</sup>

## Notes

1. Steven Leonard Jacobs and Samuel Totten, “Totally Unofficial Man,” in *Pioneers of Genocide Studies*, ed. Samuel Totten and Steven Leonard Jacobs, 365–99 (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2002), 371. When separating singularity from the concept of “uniqueness,” Leo Kuper, a pioneer of genocide studies, is quoted in the same work as saying that “the weakening of empathy for other groups in their affliction has always seemed to me a betrayal of traditional Jewish concern and compassion for the suffering of others.” Kuper goes on to state that such a sense of “uniqueness” can be “combined with a heightened concern for the suffering of others.” *Ibid.*, 469. Lemkin’s original unpublished manuscript is housed in the Raphael Lemkin Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library. In addition, the American Jewish Historical Society has a Raphael Lemkin collection containing “several rare documents” from 1915–1919 and 1946–1948, Box 9, Folder 23. Many of these pieces are discussed in the special issue of *Journal of Genocide Research* (volume 7, no. 4, December 2005) dedicated to the life and work of Raphael Lemkin. Armenian sources aver that Lemkin, on several occasions, emphasized the special impact the horrors of the Armenian Genocide had on him. In a 1959 article, he wrote that “the sufferings of the Armenian men, women and children thrown into the Euphrates River or massacred on the way to Deir Zor have prepared the way for the adoption for the Genocide Convention by the United Nations . . . one million Armenians died, but a law against the murder of peoples was written with the ink of their blood and the spirit of their sufferings.” Raphael Lemkin, “The Armenian Stake in the Genocide Convention,” *Hairenik Weekly*, 1 January 1959: 3.
2. Lemkin, in this respect, was not far off the mark. The convention he refers to here was preceded by two principal resolutions issued by the United Nations. One of them, Resolution 95(1) of 11 December 1946, states that the UN General Assembly “affirms the principle of international law recognized by the Charter of the Nuremberg Tribunal and the judgment of Tribunal.” But article 6(c) of that charter, which embraced the legal norm of “crimes against humanity,” was, in the main, derived and adopted from a declaration made by the Allies on 24 May 1915 with respect to the initiation of the wartime Armenian Genocide, which they branded as a “crime against humanity.” This fact is acknowledged by the authoritative UN War Crimes Commission, *History of the United Nations War Crimes Commission and the Development of the Laws of War* (London: HMSO, 1948), 26, 25, 191, 194, 196–97.

3. Richard Lichtheim, *Rückkehr* (Stuttgart: Deutsche-Verlags-Anstalt, 1970), 287, 341. Unless otherwise stated, all translations into English are my own.
4. Joseph Guttman, *The Beginnings of Genocide: A Brief Account of the Armenian Massacres in World War I* (New York: Armenian National Council of America, 1948). This document was first published in Yiddish in Israel.
5. Jehuda L. Wallach, *Anatomic einer Militärhilfe. Die preussisch-deutschen Militärmissionen in der Türkei 1835–1919* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1972), 207.
6. Robert Kempner, “Vor 60 Jahren vor einem deutschen Schwurgericht. Der Völkermord an den Armeniern,” *Recht und Politik* 3 (1980): 162–69, 167.
7. Richard Rubinstein, *The Age of Triage* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), 13, 142–44.
8. Yehuda Bauer, *A History of the Holocaust* (New York: F. Watts, 1982), 57–58.
9. Yehuda Bauer, “Essay: On the Place of Holocaust in History,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 2 (1987): 209–20, 213, 215, 217. The latter claim—that Armenians escaped annihilating massacres “outside of Turkey”—is simply inaccurate; it betrays the general prevalence of incomplete knowledge of the wide-ranging dimensions of the Armenian Genocide, whose murderous tentacles reached out into Armenia in the Transcaucasus when, in the fall of 1920, Turkish general Kâzım Karabekir’s 15th Army Corps (the former 9th Army) invaded the infant Republic of Armenia. Embedded in its constituent 3rd, 9th, and 11th Caucasian Divisions, and additionally the 12th Division, were five military officers. As leading Special Organization (SO) taskmasters, these officers had already played a major role in the organization and implementation of the wartime genocide. Colonel Seyfi (Düzgören), Colonel Deli Halit, and General Halil (Kut) were assisted by Filibeli Hilmi, who bore the title of Inspector of the Young Turk ruling party of Ittihad and had been the wartime assistant to Dr. Bahaeddin Şakir, one of the principal architects of genocide. Additionally, two bloodthirsty SO henchmen, Ebuhintli Cafer and Topal Osman, actively participated in the ensuing post–World War I massacres in Armenia itself. According to Soviet statistics, the Armenian victims included some 60,000 murdered and 30,000 wounded. Moreover, preceding these atrocities were the massacres in Baku, to which some 25,000 Armenians fell victim between 15 and 17 September 1918. What is so significant about this particular episode is the pivotal role that Şakir is known to have played by coming to Baku from Turkey for the special purpose of organizing the massacres. Vahakn N. Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus*, 7th ed (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), 360, 361–69. For Dr. Şakir’s special mission to Baku in the fall of 1918 and the ensuing massacres, see 429–31.
10. Lucy S. Dazidowicz, *The Holocaust and the Historians* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 13.
11. Leo Kuper, *Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982), 105.
12. Israel W. Charny, “Genocide: The Ultimate Human Rights Problem,” *Social Education* 1 (1986): 447–54, 452.
13. Yisrael Ring, *Are There Laws in Genocide?* (Tel Aviv: Sifat Poalim, 1987), 49 [in Hebrew], quoted in Yair Auron, *The Banality of Indifference: Zionism and the Armenian Genocide* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2000), 16–17.
14. Helen Fein, *Accounting for Genocide: National Responses and Jewish Victimization during the Holocaust* (New York: Free Press, 1979), 4.
15. *Ibid.*, 4–11.
16. Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of European Jews* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1961), 656.
17. Fein, *Accounting for Genocide*, 169.
18. Muammer Demirel, *Birinci Dünya Harbinde Erzurum Ve Çevresinde Ermeni Hareketleri 1914–1918* (Ankara: General Staff Publications, 1996), 54–55.
19. Johannes Lepsius, *Der Todesgang des Armenischen Volkes* (Berlin: Temple, 1930), 195–96.
20. Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1918), 330.

21. Vahakn N. Dadrian, "The Historical and Legal Interconnections between the Armenian Genocide and the Jewish Holocaust: From Impunity to Retributive Justice," *Yale Journal of International Law* 23 (1998): 517–19; Dadrian, *History of the Armenian Genocide*, 395–401.
22. Hilberg, *Destruction*, 12.
23. *Ibid.*, 11, 12.
24. *Ibid.*, 524.
25. Vahakn N. Dadrian, "The Role of Turkish Physicians in the World War I Genocide of Ottoman Armenians," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 1 (1986): 169–92, 175.
26. *The Goebbels Diaries, 1942–1943*, ed. and trans. Louis P. Lochner (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1948), 241.
27. Hilberg, *Destruction*, 266.
28. *Ibid.*, 564.
29. PA-AA/R14087, A53a/1915/4563, report from Walter Rössler, German Consul in Aleppo, to Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg, dated 27 July 1915, trans. Linda Struck, <http://www.armenocide.de/armenocide/armgende.nsf/3a4b0a224f485c26c1256ad8001005f2/7840606dbef28037c12568f30059b1cf?OpenDocument> (accessed 7 January 2008).
30. PA-AA/R14088, 1915-A-28584, Report from Max Erwin Scheubner-Richter, Acting Vice Consul, in Erzerum, to Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg, dated 10 August 1915, trans. Linda Struck, <http://www.armenocide.de/armenocide/armgende.nsf/3a4b0a224f485c26c1256ad8001005f2/bdd0dd438e772a37c12568f30059b1df?OpenDocument> (accessed 7 January 2008)
31. PA-AA/BoKons./Band 170, Militär Mission J. Nr. 3841, Report from Colonel Stange to the German Military Mission in Constantinople, dated 23 August 1915, trans. Linda Struck, <http://www.armenocide.de/armenocide/armgende.nsf/3a4b0a224f485c26c1256ad8001005f2/52e6daece2fb4eccc12568f30059b1f4?OpenDocument> (accessed 7 January 2008).
32. PA-AA/R14089, 1915-A-36184, Report from Wolff-Metternich, Ambassador in Extraordinary Mission in Constantinople, to Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg, dated 7 December 1915, trans. Linda Struck, <http://www.armenocide.de/armenocide/armgende.nsf/3a4b0a224f485c26c1256ad8001005f2/f860f1a7cd668e3bc1256934006c94e8?OpenDocument> (accessed 7 January 2008).
33. PA-AA/R14094, 1916-A-33457, Report from Max Erwin Scheubner-Richter, Acting Vice Consul, in Erzerum, to Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg, dated 4 December 1916, trans. Vera Draack, <http://www.armenocide.de/armenocide/armgende.nsf/3a4b0a224f485c26c1256ad8001005f2/3ae55a79b55f09b4c12568f30059b2be?OpenDocument> (accessed 7 January 2008).
34. Quoted in Ulrich Trupener, *Germany and the Ottoman Empire, 1914–1918* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968), 127.
35. Hilberg, *Destruction*, 216
36. *Ibid.*, 647.
37. *Ibid.*, 655.
38. Morgenthau, *Ambassador*, 345, 347.
39. *Ibid.*, 339.
40. Lewis Einstein, *Inside Constantinople: A Diplomatic Diary* (New York: Dutton & Co., 1918), 126 (this statement is reported in the diary entry for 19 June 1915).
41. Hilberg, *Destruction*, 249.
42. *Ibid.*, 251.
43. L Alexander, "War Crimes and Their Motivation: The Social-psychological Structure of the SS and the Criminalization of Society," *Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology and Police Science* 39 (1948): 176–94, 181–83, 187–92.
44. Hilberg, *Destruction*, 218; also 646.
45. Quoted in Auron, *Banality of Indifference*, 181, 183.
46. Ludwig Schraudenbach, *Muharebe [Warfare]* (Berlin: Drei Masken, 1925), 351–52.
47. AA Türkei, R14097, report, 1 October 1917.
48. Austrian Foreign Ministry Archives, 12 Türkei/380, report, 26 May 1917.

49. Rafael de Nogales, *Four Years Beneath the Crescent*, trans. Muna Lee (New York: Scribner's Son, 1926), 135.
50. Quoted in Vahakn N. Dadrian, "Children as Victims of Genocide: The Armenian Case," *Journal of Genocide Research* 5 (2003): 421–37, 431–32.
51. *Ibid.*, 432.
52. Hilberg, *Destruction*, 645.
53. *Ibid.*, 646.
54. Morgenthau, *Ambassador*, 338.
55. *Ibid.*, 348.
56. Halidé Edib Adivar, *Memoirs of Halidé Edib* (New York: Century Co., 1926), 386–87.
57. Hilberg, *Destruction*, 216.
58. *Ibid.*, 667.
59. For more details on this topic see Vahakn N. Dadrian, "The Convergent Aspects of the Armenian and Jewish Cases of Genocide: A Reinterpretation of the Concept of Holocaust," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 3 (1988): 151–69.
60. Aristotle, *The Politics*, trans. Benjamin Jowett and Thomas Twining (1959), book 1, ch. 2, 6.

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# Guenter Lewy's *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey*

Taner Akçam

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“Listen Muhittin, let them say whatever they want to say. The fact is that I know what I am doing. We are engaged in a war for life or death. Had we been at that time defeated by the revolution and the Russian army, today one would be able to count the Turks in Anatolia with one’s finger. We were not defeated at that time as it was our duty to ensure our right to live. I performed that duty. Perhaps everybody today, and even you, may be blaming me, however, at a later time the Turks with relish will remember my name. Nobody is responsible in this matter; the entire responsibility relative to the severity of the applied methods belongs to me.” Thereupon, I raised my doubts whether he, Talaat, in spite of everything and everybody could have been as brutal in the implementation of the [Armenian deportations] as Dr. Bahaeddin Şakir, who is being mentioned as one of those who have sought such brutality. He responded as follows: “As far as the law is concerned I am the one who is responsible. When promulgating the law, I certainly, proceeded in accord with my colleagues. When it comes to the matter of enforcing that law, however, I assume full responsibility for the severity applied...notwithstanding the fact that plenty of time has elapsed since, I absolutely don’t regret my deed.”<sup>1</sup>

The dust jacket of Guenter Lewy’s *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey: A Disputed Genocide*<sup>2</sup> features Norman Stone’s assertion that this book, “which has Olympian fair-mindedness as well as thorough knowledge of the various sources, now replaces everything else.” Lewy claims, in his book, to be situated outside the parameters of what he describes as “the Turkish view” and “the Armenian view.” Having positioned himself as being above such partisanship, he also claims that his book “subjects the rich historical evidence available to the test of consistency and (as much as the state of knowledge allows) attempts to sort out the validity of the rival arguments” (x).

A book that did not shy away from interpreting the opposing views of the events of 1915, one grounded in a solid knowledge of the historiography and the relevant documents, would indeed prove useful to individuals and circles not knowledgeable about the subject. One could even argue that, with respect to the vast field that is called conflict resolution, the preparation of such an inventory might be considered one of the principal tasks. But Lewy has failed to perform this task, and instead pursues a highly contentious one. Tessa Hofmann of the Eastern Europe Institute of the Free University of Berlin has revealed that

in the summer of 2000 a retiree, resting on my couch, expressed a strange intention. Guenter Lewy, the retired American political scientist, wanted to subject “the Armenian massacres” to a similar revision as he had done before with respect to the Sinti and the Roma. That revision, argued Lewy, had shown that even though their fate in World War II proved tragic, it did not represent a “real” genocide, as there were no centrally organized and state-sponsored premeditation and genocidal intention.<sup>3</sup>

## **The Central Thesis of the Book**

One of Lewy's main theses is that "the Armenians can hardly claim that they suffered for no reason at all. Ignoring warnings from many quarters, large numbers of them had fought the Turks openly or played the role of a fifth column" (109). Perpetrators always have some reason to justify their actions. It is natural, therefore, that the Ottoman authorities felt there were "logical reasons" for the annihilation of their own Armenian citizens. Throughout his book, Lewy explains why the Ottoman authorities felt compelled to exterminate the Armenians wholesale.

After a brief historical introduction, Lewy defines the central problem as follows:

The key issue in this quarrel . . . is not the extent of Armenian suffering, but rather the question of premeditation: that is, whether the Young Turk regime during the First World War intentionally organized the massacres that took place. (ix)

He repeats this assertion several times in the book:

The fact that large numbers of Armenians died or were killed during the course of the deportations can give us no reliable knowledge of who is to be held responsible for these losses of life. The high death toll certainly does not prove in and of itself the guilt of the Young Turk regime. (54)

The argument that the deportations in reality constituted a premeditated program of extermination of the Armenians of Turkey is difficult to square with many aspects and characteristics of the relocations. (251)

According to him, the "incredibly high death toll" was possible "without a premeditated plan of annihilation" (253).

The book's central thesis is this: "no authentic documentary evidence exists to prove the culpability of the central government of Turkey for the massacre of 1915–6 . . . it is safe to say that no such evidence exists for the events of 1915–6" (250). There were undoubtedly deaths, but they resulted from the "harsh climate, the long distance to be traversed on foot, and the arbitrariness of local officials"; furthermore, a

large number of Turkish civilians died as a result of severe shortages of food and epidemics; large numbers of Turkish soldiers . . . perished . . . these results surely do not prove that the Ottoman government—ultimately responsible for all of these conditions—sought and intentionally caused the death of its own civilian population, of its own soldiers. (54)

Lewy similarly explains that Armenians perished "as a result of starvation and disease" or "were killed by Kurds . . . or fanatic Muslims" (256). He argues that "for all these occurrences the Ottoman regime bears some indirect responsibility; but there is a difference between ineptness, even ineptness that has tragic and far reaching consequences, and the premeditated murder of a people" (256). Lewy is convinced of "the absence of Turkish documentary evidence that proves the complicity of the Ottoman government" (246).

In order to provide a basis for these assertions, Lewy declares untrue, invalid, and unreliable the documents and related materials produced by those who characterize the experiences of 1915 as genocide or as a crime against humanity. In this section I list these documents; I will later give detailed information on each of the listed groups.

First among these "questionable" sources are those known as the Naim–Andonian documents.<sup>4</sup> Lewy concurs with the criticisms leveled at these documents by Şinasi Orel and Süreyya Yuca,<sup>5</sup> he believes that these authors "have raised enough questions about their [the documents'] genuineness as to make any use of them in a serious scholarly work unacceptable" (73).

The second group of documents that Lewy considers unreliable is that obtained in connection with the proceedings of the Istanbul courts-martial following World War I. He argues that the documents and the evidence revealed in the course of pre-trial interrogations and trial sessions cannot be taken seriously for the following reasons: the trials were launched for political reasons (74), “the proceedings in 1919–20 lacked many basic requirements of due process” (78) and “suffered from serious shortcomings when compared to Western standards of due process of law” (79); “throughout the trials, no witnesses were heard; the verdict of the courts rested entirely on documents and testimony mentioned or read during the trial proceedings” (80); “in many cases we do not know whether the official gazette or the newspapers covering the trials reprinted all or only some of the text of the documents reproduced. Neither can we be sure of the accuracy of the transcription” (80); and, perhaps most importantly,

the most serious problem affecting the probative value of the 1919–20 military court proceedings is the loss of all documentation of these trials. This means that we have none of the original documents, sworn testimony, and depositions on which the courts based their findings and verdicts. (80)

As far as Lewy is concerned, “the serious violations of due process as well as loss of all the original documentation leave the finding of the military tribunals of 1919–20 unsupported by credible evidence” (82). Accordingly, he characterizes as “alleged documents” those sources dating to the period from 1919 through 1920 (250).

Among the third group of documents that Lewy declares to be invalid are those implicating the Special Organization (SO) in the Armenian deportations and massacres. These charges come to light in the key indictment of the Turkish Military Tribunal that prosecuted the leaders of the İttihad ve Terakki (the Committee for Union and Progress, or CUP), but, according to Lewy,

there is no credible evidence other than the assertion of the indictment of the main trial for the allegation that the SO, with large numbers of convicts enrolled in its ranks, took the lead role in the massacres...there is no evidence anywhere that...any...SO detachment was diverted to duty involving the Armenian deportation. (84–85)

As Lewy argues, in the course of the trials “the defendants denied any connection between the SO and the central committee of the CUP...as well as any role of the SO in the Armenian deportation and massacres” (86).

Lewy casts his suspicious glance elsewhere as well. Reşit Akif Pasha, in a speech he delivered in the Ottoman Senate on 21 November 1918, revealed that the Central Committee of the CUP had ordered the destruction of the Armenians and that the brigands and the accompanying gendarmes were to execute this order by attacking and massacring the convoys of Armenian deportees. As far as Lewy is concerned, however, “the existence of this circular order...must be considered suspect” because Akif Pasha’s “speech was part of the elaborate propaganda campaign.” Moreover, he writes, the fact that Akif Pasha described the CUP as a “tyrannical body” and cursed it is sufficient grounds to be suspicious about the existence of such a document (89).

As can be deduced from the preceding examples, which he dismisses as being of “highly questionable authenticity” and as “alleged documents” (250), Lewy is not satisfied merely to declare that “no documentary evidence exists to prove the culpability of the central government” (250). Proceeding further, he states that “it is also significant that so not one of the many thousands of officials who would have been

involved in so far-reaching a scheme as a premeditated plan to destroy the Armenians has ever come forth to reveal the plot” (250).

Lewy does not stop at declaring the Naim–Andonian documents and the Istanbul court-martial proceedings unreliable and invalid. Inveighing against all other conceivable sources that might be used to demonstrate that the extermination of the Armenians was the result of decisions made by Istanbul’s central authorities (i.e., the government and the CUP), Lewy, as the Turkish saying goes, gives them “the sword treatment” (*kılıctan geçirir*). According to him, the German documents are important, but “they do not prove the responsibility of the central government in Constantinople for these killings” (135). The British “Blue Book” is “based on hearsay” (138) and “contains no evidence proving the responsibility of that government for the massacres that did occur” (139). The reports of missionaries reflect prejudice and one-sidedness, since the Muslims are portrayed as “the terrible Turk” and “Armenians were regularly depicted as innocent victims” (144). As to “survivor accounts,” they are hardly a reliable source of information on the events, for “the most basic problem regarding any survivor testimony . . . is of course that such recollections do not so much reproduce reality or reconstruct history as present a version of reality in tune with the survivor’s personality, perceptions, and experiences” (148). In brief, according to Lewy, all these sources, though some of them are most valuable, fail to prove the Ottoman central government’s plan for premeditated annihilation.

Lewy recognizes that countless reports prepared by American and German diplomats, as well as other foreign observers, attest to the exterminatory purpose of the Armenian deportations, but these, too, are dismissed. As he puts it,

Given the very large number of deaths and the observed complicity of many local officials in the murders, it is not surprising that not a few diplomats, like other eyewitnesses on the scene, concluded that the high death toll was an intended outcome of the deportations. Still, well-informed as many consular officials were about the horrible events unfolding before their eyes, their insight into the mindset and the real intention of the Young Turk leadership was necessarily limited to hunches and speculation. (250–51)

After describing as “hearsay,” “hunches,” “speculation,” and so on and declaring invalid all documents identifying the CUP as the mastermind of a plan of extermination, Lewy presents his thesis in the following words:

I start with the assumption that the various decrees issued by the government in Constantinople dealing with the deportation and its implementation are genuine and were issued in good faith. The Ottoman Government, I am inclined to believe, wanted to arrange an orderly process but did not have the means to do so. (252–53)

If there was a well-intentioned government in Istanbul, how is one to explain the magnitude of the fatalities? On this subject Lewy offers us a model. One leg of this model is “the incompetence and the inefficiency” of the authorities in Istanbul. Despite their good intentions, he says, they did not have the tools or the organization to implement such a gigantic undertaking. We are dealing here, argues Lewy, with a “bureaucratic fiasco” (253): “the government in Constantinople did not approve of these developments but did not do enough to prevent them either” (254). Further, the contention of American and German consuls that if the Ottoman regime could not “guarantee the smooth working of the relocation” they “should have refrained from deporting the Armenians” is in no way tenable, for the Ottoman authorities had “strong illusions and misconceptions about the ability of [the] bureaucracy

to accomplish the deportation of the Armenian community without too many problems" (255).

Besides the matter of Istanbul's clumsiness and inefficiency, Lewy's model has a second leg: local authorities did not listen to Istanbul and acted on their own initiative. Lewy writes that "the ability of the central government to influence the events in the province remained limited" (208); as a result of this weakness of the central authorities,

some of the killings are said to have been organized by CUP fanatics, who in certain towns formed a kind of shadow government. We know that in many cases local officials disregarded instructions received from Constantinople; or interpreted orders of the central government in an especially harsh manner. (231)

There were two reasons for this disobedience. First, "some of these officials were Muslims who had been forced to flee from the Balkans or Russia and therefore hated all Christians with great vehemence" (231). Second, before these local authorities initiated any steps, they would try to find out what the CUP's thinking was; "if the wishes of these men contradicted orders received from the central government, then these orders were disregarded." Hence, the "central government had little or no control" (231).

Throughout the book, Lewy predicates his argument regarding the causes of Armenian deaths upon a single factor: the center's inability to exercise control on local authorities. According to him, for example, one such case was "the tug of war in Erzurum between the constituted authorities and the CUP radicals" (165). Lewy theorizes that in Erzurum, party potentate Hilmi, Bahaeddin Şakir, and many others "had been able to thwart the basically well-meaning intentions of the government, and these people probably were responsible for the harsh measures and the massacres" (164–65). The radical elements of the CUP who were defiant toward the government were able to keep the provinces under their control. The situation in and around Adana was similar. Indeed, in June 1916 "local officials in Adana, under the pressure of the rabid anti-Armenian CUP branch, ordered the deportation of thousands of Armenian railroad workers and their families. Interior Minister Talaat reaffirmed the exemption order on August 4, but the local officials disregarded it" (230).

In the end, Lewy, who is forced to admit the patent reality of the crimes that were committed, is driven to the task of proving that they were not committed on the orders of the central government. According to him, the perpetrators of the crimes were the Kurds, the gendarmes, and the brigands, those *chettes*, volunteers, and irregulars whose true identities he is unable to pinpoint accurately but whom he does not want to identify too closely with the CUP. He writes that "the common element is that chettes [i.e., *çete*] were irregulars who (no matter how recruited, directed, or composed) participated in the robbing and killing of Armenian deportees" (228). For Lewy, the perpetration of the crimes by these elements—and nobody knows who organized, directed, and assembled them—was made possible not by Istanbul's central authority but through local authorities. He claims that "these militia units were usually organized by local authorities, often under the influence of militants in the CUP clubs" (223).

The picture is somewhat confusing, however, in Syria and Iraq. Since such categories of killers as "milis," "brigand" (*çete*), and "irregulars" are no longer operational, leaving only gendarmes and Circassians, it becomes evident that the murders in question were perpetrated by people identified with these two groups.

This puts Lewy in a difficult situation, as Kurds, brigands, volunteers, and irregulars are no longer available to take the blame. Among the German reports there is, for example, the case of Ras-ul-Ain, where the *kaymakam* (county supervisor), on the orders of the central government, organized the killing of Armenians. But, according to Lewy, “whether the massacres had indeed been perpetrated on command from above, and, if so, on whose command, will probably never be known” (210).

Lewy stretches his theory of lack of control to such an extent that, as far as he is concerned, even the gendarmes assigned to protect the deportee convoys, who were under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Interior, were beyond the government’s control. Even Halil Mentese, the wartime Ottoman foreign minister, conceded that anti-Armenian crimes were perpetrated by the gendarmes themselves (225); Lewy confirms this, stating that “Turkish gendarmes and Kurds often cooperated in arranging for massacres and the looting of Armenian convoys” (224). Lewy is unable to explain how these contingents of gendarmes, attached to the Ministry of the Interior, could have operated outside and beyond the latter’s control; he nevertheless maintains, however, that the crimes in question had something to do with the character of the gendarmes and not with orders from the central authorities. He states that “the Turkish gendarmes were known to be ignorant, corrupt, and poorly trained” (224). The wartime release of convicts and their integration into the gendarmerie helped to aggravate the situation. Lewy maintains that these “hardened convicts” were the “men who in many towns murdered the Armenians arrested in the spring of 1915” (225). It is a fact, however, that it was the government that emptied the prisons; it was the government, too, that incorporated the “hardened convicts” them into gendarmerie units. Yet, as far as Lewy is concerned, the behavior of these gendarmes had nothing to do with the disposition of the central government.

Another point most eagerly advanced by Lewy, within the framework of this notion of a “central–local institutional contrast,” also requires attention. It concerns the systematic liquidation of the Armenian conscripts enlisted in labor battalions. By declaring that “in most cases we do not know who was responsible for the killings,” Lewy, who grants the existence of this practice, tries to sidestep the issue (229). For him the aim is to feel at ease when he states that “we know much about events in this province; but many questions, including the ultimate responsibility for the massacres, remain unanswered” (168).

It appears that, for Lewy, the Ottoman Empire of 1915 resembles today’s Afghanistan. Istanbul, as a capital, is just like Kabul; being extremely weak, it is almost entirely bereft of influence. According to Lewy’s understanding, the CUP’s local outfits functioned as shadow governments, just like Afghanistan’s warlords. The regions were controlled by local potentates who defied the central authorities. This is a serious assertion, and, in order to eventually transcend its hypothetical confines, it must be proven. But Lewy has yet to come up with any documentary or other evidence to support his profound belief in the good faith of Istanbul’s Ottoman authorities or to show the existence of a conflict between local authorities and the central government.

In brief, the most serious problem with Lewy’s book is that he has failed to apply to his own thesis the same criteria by which he sees fit to dismiss as “alleged,” “hearsay,” and “hunches” all the documents and evidence demonstrating the primary role of the Central Committee of the CUP in the genocide. His key concept of “center–local conflict,” contradicted by hundreds of documents, is hollow speculation. If, as he claims, the underlying fact of the mass murder of Armenians was the “center–local conflict” and

the lack of central control in the regions in question, such a fact would surely have left traces that could be pursued by researchers.

In none of the conceivable relevant sources can one find any document that shows a center–local conflict within the CUP or between Istanbul and regional party chieftains, nor is there any evidence of any social or political consequences of such a conflict. It is precisely for this reason that, among the many scholars dealing with twentieth-century Ottoman history and among the dozens of works by Turkish and foreign academics exploring the CUP, one is hard put to find any reference to or any indication of awareness of such a conflict. On the contrary, hundreds of documents, memoirs, and scientific studies attest to the fact that the CUP's central body exercised extremely tight control and maintained a formidable influence not only on its own organization but also on the government and the government's central and provincial organs.<sup>6</sup>

## **The Essential Flaws of the Book**

### **Lack of Familiarity with the Turkish Language**

One of Lewy's most important contentions is that a person who does not speak Turkish "can do meaningful work in this subject." Indeed, "a requirement that only persons fluent in the Turkish language be considered competent to write on this topic would disqualify most Armenians, who also do not know Turkish" (xi). Lewy is right on both counts. The criticism leveled against Guenter Lewy in some circles because of his "not knowing Turkish" is unjust, and it is made simply because of his views on the topic: it is obvious that had Lewy advanced some new view as to why the experiences of 1915 ought to be identified as genocide, similar criticisms would have been made by advocates of the official Turkish thesis. If we leave aside the familiar arguments resulting from the exceeding politicization of the Turkish–Armenian conflict, we may be able to state a general rule concerning the languages which are needed in order to make an original contribution to the study of the events surrounding 1915. Researchers, especially historians, can render two types of contributions with respect to the topic they are exploring.

First, using their language skills, they can uncover new documents and new knowledge. In the area of the Turkish–Armenian conflict, with some exceptions such as German military records, we can accept that the Western sources, mainly in German and English, are to a large extent known. But most Ottoman Turkish as well as Russian and Armenian materials are not known, and the information available in these languages has not been sufficiently absorbed by Western researchers. In this sense, a common body of knowledge has not yet been created. The knowledge we will be able to obtain from these sources is destined to substantially deepen, broaden, and even alter our understanding and our interpretations of 1915.

A second type of contribution is the reinterpretation of documents written in languages with which the researcher is familiar. Even though such reinterpretations do not necessarily produce any new proof, they have the advantage of allowing a fresh look at existing documents. Holocaust studies is replete with such examples. If we admit that history and historicism involve interpretation and reinterpretation of lived experiences, rather than merely the "uncovering of new documents," then we must acknowledge the value of such work.

We grant, then, that Lewy, or any other scholar not familiar with Turkish or Armenian, has the potential to make useful contributions by using documents written

in Western languages. Nonetheless, Lewy's qualifications to undertake this study remain problematic.

The fact is that Lewy is not sufficiently informed about the latest research and publications in the Turkish language. From someone who claims to be the bearer of "a new perspective" (xii), one would expect a thorough familiarity with some of the existing Turkish sources and data. It is clear that those who assisted him in translating (xiii) unfortunately did not provide sufficient knowledge about the sources in question. As a result, Lewy has committed avoidable errors. Had he been informed about documents in the volume *The Armenians in the Ottoman Documents 1915–1920*, published by the General Directorate of State Archives in 1995,<sup>7</sup> he would have realized the falseness of his claims about the deportation of Armenian Protestants and Catholics. By the same token, he would have recognized that the warning posted on the walls during the Trabzon deportations, a subject to which he allocates two pages in his book, was not an important document issuing from the central authorities but, rather, was created by local authorities. Equally importantly, he would have learned that Talât later prohibited its use (178–79).

Lewy's ignorance of Nejdet Bilgi's *Ermeni tehciri ve Boğazlıyan Kaymakamı Kemal Beyin Yargılanması* (written to support the official Turkish thesis) is also a major shortcoming.<sup>8</sup> Had Lewy availed himself of the material in this book, he might have paused before offering such entirely imaginary tales as the allegation that defendants in the post-war trials were denied the right to inspect the documentary evidence and that no witnesses were heard during the trial sessions. It is evident that Lewy has not been made aware of the work of some critical scholars relevant to the matter of deportation and exile.<sup>9</sup> For example, he makes claims about Ziya Gökalp's supposed lack of involvement in the matter of deportations (44–45).<sup>10</sup> Had he been aware of the works of Fuat Dündar, he would have learned that, starting in 1913, the CUP showed a special interest in the ethnic make-up of Anatolia and that, as a result, under the leadership of Ziya Gökalp, it had dispatched experts whose task was to research and even to prepare a map of the region's religious and ethnic constituents.<sup>11</sup> He would also have realized that the deportation and exile of the Armenians was not a violent by-product of the war but, rather, was part and parcel of a plan to homogenize Anatolia on an ethno-religious basis. The poor quality of the help Lewy received in the matter of language (i.e., from those who translated for him) seriously handicapped his investigation.

Can it be maintained that Lewy has brought a new approach to the task of examining the existing documents, that he has offered "a new viewpoint," from a new perspective? Claiming that it supports their "official position," people identified with the Turkish Foreign Ministry have distributed Lewy's book free of charge. Likewise, the ASAM, (Center for Strategic Studies<sup>12</sup>)—the propaganda center of the official Turkish denial policy on genocide—has honored Lewy with the High Award for Combating Crimes Against Humanity. It is incumbent upon Lewy, I think, to ponder seriously whether or not his theses are really original.

### 'The Armenian Side' vs. 'The Turkish Side'

Lewy's entire work is predicated upon theses and perspectives that he identifies as "Turkish" on one side and "Armenian" on the other. Lewy not only portrays contemporary parties as "the Turks" on one side and "the Armenians" on the other but also depicts the period of Ottoman decline as consisting of "Turks," occupying one end of the spectrum, and "Armenians," occupying the other. The presentation of

historical and social events, and especially the beginnings of twentieth-century Ottoman history, in terms of "Turks," "Armenians," and "Kurds" as essentialized collective actors misrepresents the complete web of relationships and conflicts and projects today's nationalistic polarization backward onto a period to which they do not properly apply.

A simple case illustrates this point. It is a serious mistake to subsume both an Armenian in a village in Edirne, in western Turkey, and an Armenian volunteer in the Russian army under the uniform concept "Armenian" and to juxtapose such occurrences as the events on the Eastern front or the roles Armenian volunteers played in the Russian army during that period with the experiences of the Armenian peasant in Edirne. To do so is to write a nationalistic history based on an image of a monolithic "other." The net result is that the common ethnicity of the Armenian from the village in Edirne and the Armenian fighting under the Russian flag (most of these, incidentally, were either from Russia proper or from the diaspora) leads to a unitary image in which two disparate categories of Armenians living during that period dissolve and merge into one and the same Armenian.

As a result of this mentality, a swift logical relationship is established between the actions of the Armenian volunteers enrolled in Russian military units, on the one hand, and the deportation of the Armenian from Edirne, on the other; and in no way is such a procedure viewed as strange or wrong. A report would then depict the "other," fictive, and abstractly conjectured Armenian as the source of the problem.

This example epitomizes the overall mentality underlying Lewy's drive to overlook the political, social, and cultural differences separating the many Armenian communities, instead subsuming them all under a single, homogeneous Armenian entity. In Lewy's book, the "homogenous" and "other" Armenian, in the final analysis, is portrayed as someone who always attracted attention through his anti-government activities, his acts of "disturbing the peace," and as someone who, if need be, would not hesitate "to cooperate with foreign powers." This explains the book's total absence of information about the social and political underpinnings of the Ottoman collapse and about the divergent actions of diverse political actors.

In trying to account for the existence of different "Turkish" and "Armenian" standpoints, Lewy argues that the main point of contention between the two sides is the question of premeditation. This assertion is invalid. First, Lewy is mistaken in assigning a central role to the factor of premeditation and in rendering it interchangeable with that of intent. Premeditation and intent are concepts with different core meanings. Generally speaking, for the purposes of the genocide debate, premeditation is not important; genocide can be explored without considering premeditation.<sup>13</sup> The subject of premeditation is less a point of dispute for the "Turkish" and "Armenian" parties than among academics who have agreed that what happened in 1915 was genocide.<sup>14</sup> In any debate over whether or not the events on 1915 should be considered genocide, the question requiring an answer is whether there was an intent to exterminate.

Second, it is not appropriate to identify the arguments made in the debate as the "Turkish" view and the "Armenian" view; it should be an unacceptable attitude for a social scientist to classify the differences of interpretation of these events according to ethnic origin. Naturally, there will be people in every ethno-national group who support the idea that one can examine the history through distinctly Turkish or Armenian lenses. From the perspective of social science, however, such ethnocentric explanations of history can hardly be defined as opposite positions; on the contrary,

they are the reflection of one position and are generally treated as “nationalist historiography.”

Accordingly, when we classify different positions on the subject of mass murder, as in the case of the Holocaust or the Rwandan and Cambodian genocides, we do not categorize these positions according to the parties of the conflict (e.g., the German position, the Jewish position) or according to the ethnic origins of individuals. Rather, we define them according to the arguments, or types of arguments, underlying the various definitions and explanations. In the matter of the Holocaust, for example, the differing interpretations are identified not as “Jewish” or “German” but on the basis of different perspectives, approaches, and methods (e.g., functionalist vs. intentionalist). One would expect from Lewy, a social scientist, a similar analysis of the differences over the events of 1915, and a corresponding classification. Besides it is not technically appropriate to identify the existing parties as “Turkish” and “Armenian.” Evidently, one must grant that the meaning of the term “party” does change as the viewing position of the observer changes. And, speaking of parties, the following is what I am able to observe from where I stand at the moment.

On one side is the Turkish state, which has an official doctrine on 1915; this doctrine is based mainly on repressing historical realities and forcing those who oppose it into silence. The Turkish state is firmly convinced that it is competent to determine what, how, and to what extent a citizen can think on matters of history. For this reason, with the help of various ministries and institutes, it sternly supervises and controls the ways and means by which Turkish society acquires the requisite knowledge of history. It is no accident, therefore, that the first works dealing with the Armenian question were written by diplomats associated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Among the tasks of this ministry is to indoctrinate not only Turkish citizens but other peoples and states about Ottoman-Turkish history, to condition them to think about the subject in a certain way. It might not be too far-fetched to compare the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to an institute of history, and its diplomats to muftis issuing *fatwas* (authoritative opinions).

The official thesis is not shared by the majority of people in Turkey and cannot be considered representative. Despite eighty-five years of induced amnesia and a policy of repression, it is a fact that there exists, especially among the Alevi and Kurdish communities, a narrative—not yet sufficiently written down, as it exists primarily as part of an oral tradition—that is counterposed to the official thesis. To this one may add the recent emergence in Turkey of a powerful democratic movement within civil society. Undeniably an integral part of Turkish society, this group of people, apparently unable yet to express themselves with adequate leverage and consequently not yet sufficiently recognized by the public, consider the 1915 experience as a blot on the country’s history, deserving of moral condemnation.

To restate the matter in other terms, if currently there are parties to the dispute, what divides and separates them is not the question of whether or not to use the word “genocide.” Rather, the parties differ on the issue of whether the ill fate that befell the Armenians can be considered a morally wrong act, a crime that must be condemned accordingly, or whether it can be explained away or excused. On one side of the dispute are those who treat the events of 1915 as morally indefensible, beyond the pale of humanity, and therefore want to place them in the category of offenses. Subsumed in this category of people, whose point of departure is moral condemnation, are (1) those who consider the events of 1915 as a case of genocide; (2) those who prefer to refrain from using that term, even though they may grant that that term does exactly reflect

the reality; and (3) those who describe the act as a crime against humanity rather than a clear-cut case of genocide. These people, anchored on a very powerful moral foundation, are steadily gaining ground, as they proceed on the premise that no mass murder can be justified or excused. Counterposed to this perspective is that of the Turkish state, which posits that the situation under review here does not warrant the use of the term "crime"; even though there were some deaths, a state has the right to resort to such an operation.

The existence of this strong ethical and moral conflict within Turkey renders this subject exceedingly meaningful and important. A widespread segment of Turkey's civil society, which, relative to the events of 1915, has adopted the position of moral condemnation, views the problem as an integral part of a process requiring an open confrontation with Turkey's history, placing 1915 within the framework of Turkey's contemporary pursuit of democracy and human rights. The need to confront the events of 1915 and talk about them is, for them, an absolutely necessary condition for the democratization of that society as a whole. Yet, the other side—which endorses Lewy—the partisans of the official Turkish posture, using the leverage of the state, continues to menace, prosecute, and intimidate with threats of imprisonment those who would like to come to terms with history. The assassination of Hrant Dink cannot be understood except within this context.

### Serious Factual Errors

Lewy's book contains many errors of fact; these errors alone may constitute sufficient warning to readers that this work should be approached with suspicion. The following very limited examples are offered by way of illustration.

First, in an article published as an introduction to the forthcoming book, we find the following:

(1) "The first recorded tribunal began on February 5, 1919, in Yozgat, the province which includes Ankara, charging three Turkish officials, including the governor of the district, with mass murder and plunder of Armenian deportees."<sup>15</sup> Three major errors converge in this single sentence. First, the Yozgat trial series was conducted not in Yozgat but in Istanbul. Second, Yozgat is not a province (*vilayet*), and Ankara is not part of such a province; in fact, Yozgat is a county within Ankara province. Third, Kemal not only was not governor but was not even serving as *kaymakam* (county supervisor) in Yozgat during the period in question; in fact, he was *kaymakam* of Bogazliyan county at the time. Only later did he become *musatarrif* of Yozgat.

(2) "Seven key figures, including Talât Pasha, minister of interior; Enver Pasha, minister of war; and Cemal Pasha, governor of Aleppo, had fled, and therefore, were tried in absentia."<sup>16</sup> This statement contains two errors that appear to be minor but nevertheless ought to have been avoided. At the time of his flight, Talât Pasha was not interior minister but the former grand vizier, while Cemal Pasha was never *vali* (i.e., governor) of Aleppo; rather, he was commander-in-chief of the 6th Ottoman Army deployed in Lebanon and Syria.

Lewy's book corrects these errors that appeared in the introductory preceding article; it is likely that Vahakn Dadrian's exposure of the errors prior to the appearance of the book played a role in these corrections.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, the book is still replete with factual errors, some of which are detailed below:

(1) "German missionary Liparit . . . stated that Talaat was a man 'who over the last six years has acquired the reputation of a sincere adherent of Turkish-Armenian friendship'" (65). This indicates that Lewy is unaware that Dr. Liparit Nasariantz was

an Armenian activist, not a German missionary; he was a member of the German-Armenian Society with Johannes Lepsius and later became a member of the Armenian National Council.

(2) "In January 1916 the Russians, led by advance guards of Armenian volunteers, took Diarbekir" (118). The fact is, however, that Diarbekir was never occupied by the Russians. Moreover, it is common knowledge in Turkey that on 11 March 1916 Mustafa Kemal was appointed to the post of commander in charge of the Diarbekir-Bitlis-Muş front, and that he remained on duty there from 1 April 1916 to the end of 1917.

(3) "The Turkish Historian Kamuran Gürün..." (113); "...the Turkish historian Ahmed Emin Yalman" (249). In fact, neither of these two men was a historian: the former served as a diplomat, while the latter was a journalist.

(4) "Throughout the trials no witnesses were heard; the verdict of the courts rested entirely on documents and testimony mentioned or read during the trial proceedings" (80). This is one of the most important arguments Lewy has advanced in questioning the validity of the proceedings of Istanbul's court-martial. Yet this argument is based on a mistake that should have been avoided. In fact, witnesses were dispensed with only in the trials of CUP leaders and the separately held trials of cabinet ministers, both of which had been subsumed into a conjoined verdict-rendition sitting. Witnesses for both prosecution and defense were allowed, and heard, in all other trial series.<sup>18</sup> In many cases, recourse to witnesses was used simply to prolong the trial. In some cases, witness testimony in favor of the defendant served as grounds to bring in a verdict of "not guilty."<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, some verdicts incorporated certain portions of witness testimony or contained statements attributed to witnesses. A careful reading of the available texts of the verdicts dealing with Trabzon and Yozgat, or of others published either in Turkish daily newspapers of the time or in the official gazette of the government (*Takvim-i Vekâyi*), will reveal plenty of quotations from witnesses.<sup>20</sup>

(5) "None of the testimony, written depositions, and documents put forth by the prosecution were subjected to cross examination by the defense, which makes it impossible to consider these materials conclusive proof" (82). Two separate problems arise here. The first relates to the question of whether or not the method of cross-examination was in use in the Ottoman legal system. Lewy considers the absence of this method a very important liability of the system, and, by extension, dismisses the validity of the verdicts of the Istanbul trials. This is a very strange argument indeed, for the issue is not unique to the Ottoman legal system but extends to European practices and, especially, the French legal system, on which the Ottoman system was based.

The Ottoman Penal Code, enacted in 1858, is a translation of the equivalent French code promulgated in 1810; likewise, the Ottoman Code of Criminal Procedure, enacted in 1879, is a translation of its 1808 French counterpart. It is curious to conclude that since, technically, there is no room for cross-examination, the resulting verdicts and the tribunals issuing them must be the products of a faulty system. Indeed, it is unnecessary and meaningless to make an issue of the existing technical differences between French and Anglo-Saxon legal systems, each of which has its own peculiar advantages and disadvantages.<sup>21</sup>

I consider Lewy's critique of the Ottoman system as lacking legal standards simply because it differs from the Anglo-Saxon system a deprecation of the French system and is a mistake that could have been avoided. Furthermore, although

technically not permitting cross-examination, the courts throughout the trials did allow considerable leeway to the defense. As a result, witnesses were bombarded with questions by defense counsel, who enjoyed sufficient latitude that, during various sittings, heated arguments developed between witnesses, their lawyers, the defendants, and their lawyers. The Yozgat and Trabzon trial series, as the first cases to be prosecuted, became the battleground for such arguments; the daily newspapers of the period echoed these debates, day in and day out, in detail.<sup>22</sup>

A second important point relates to Lewy's assertion that the defendants had no opportunity to inspect and verify the authenticity of the documentary evidence in the possession of the court. This, too, is a major fallacy, as such evidence and witness testimony were, in fact, offered to the defendants and their counsel for examination and response. Here, again, two examples illustrate the point. The first relates to Yozgat. During the ninth sitting of the trial series, on 22 February 1919, Colonel Şahabettin, interior commander of Kayseri's 15th Division, appearing as a defense witness, was caught by surprise; confronted with a batch of coded telegrams produced by the prosecution, he denied that they had originated from him. When the prosecutor asked whether he would like to examine them to be sure, the colonel instantly grasped the risky situation and, reversing himself, said, "No need for it. Certainly, you are correct"—acknowledging that, indeed, the telegrams had originated from him.<sup>23</sup> Şahabettin was subsequently taken into custody so that charges could be laid against him.<sup>24</sup>

The second example is drawn from the proceedings of what is called the Main Trial series, subsumed under which were the trials of CUP leaders and those of cabinet ministers. During the second sitting of this trial series, on 4 May 1919, a document introduced by Colonel Cevad, Istanbul's wartime military governor, was not only read out by Cevad himself but also read into the record through the dispensation of the chief judge, making both acts part of the court transcripts.<sup>25</sup> At the fourth sitting of the same trial series, on 8 May, he was shown a number of telegrams bearing his signature, which he verified.<sup>26</sup> The same Colonel Cevad, at the fifth sitting (12 May 1919), verified the authenticity of these telegrams and that of his own signature at the bottom of four separate telegrams; each of these was shown to him for confirmation, at which point he said, "Yes, this is my signature."<sup>27</sup> A similar procedure was applied to Midhat Şükrü, secretary general of the CUP, who was given an opportunity to inspect and verify the telegrams bearing his signature and who declared, "Yes, sir, that's right, I remember."<sup>28</sup>

(6) According to Lewy, during the trial proceedings "the defendants denied any connection between the Special Organization and the central committee of the CUP" (86). This statement is wrong, as is the assumption Lewy bases on it. During the fifth and sixth sittings of the courts-martial, a number of documents were read into the record that reveal the close links between the SO, the Central Committee of the CUP, the Ministry of War, local party outfits, and units of volunteers. As usual, the documents were shown to the defendants, who then confirmed having issued them. Subsequently, the defendants, who previously had denied any links between the CUP, the SO, and the Ministry of War, admitted to the existence of such links. At the sixth sitting, for example, Şükrü, admitting such a link between the SO and the CUP relative to recruiting men for the purpose of creating contingents of brigands (*çete*), is quoted as saying, "As the SO conveyed to us their need for a special type of people, we accordingly forwarded their request to our provincial clubs." The following set of declarations by other operatives is along the same lines. Atif: "We already designated

Midhat Şükrü as the middle man for these undertakings. He is handling the problem of communications and relaying to us the requisite items of information.” Talât: “Having been in touch with every institution, the CUP might have been likewise in communication with the SO. It is possible that the SO had made a request to the CUP saying, ‘Help us through your party, your organization.’ It is then natural that the CUP’s Central Committee, in response to requests, be they from the Ministry of War or, in its name, from the SO, hesitant to decline such requests, proceeded on the advice of some of the members of its organization to accommodate these requests, whether coming from the War Ministry, the SO, or the Interior Ministry.” Cevad: “From the contents of these telegrams, it is clear that [the link] did exist.”<sup>29</sup> Some of the defendants testified that these links were not “official” in nature. Ziya Gökalp’s response was that, “since there was a war, it was our duty to assist,”<sup>30</sup> and Midhat Şükrü stated, “It was in the service of the fatherland. Anybody can pitch in and assist.”<sup>31</sup>

(7) “There is no credible evidence to support . . . assertion[s] about Stange’s service as an SO commander” (84). This statement is also incorrect. There are three primary sources documenting the German Colonel Stange’s involvement in the SO. First, this involvement is attested by Yusuf Rıza, commander of the SO units headquartered in Trabzon and a cohort of Stange, who testified at the Istanbul courts-martial. In his testimony, after stating that he had worked closely with Stange, he declared that “we were handling our communications through the medium of Stange’s cipher.”<sup>32</sup> Similar testimony was given by a Turkish officer on duty in Stange’s regiment.<sup>33</sup> Second, Bahaeddin Şakir, a member of the CUP Central Committee and the operational chief of the SO, likewise confirmed Stange’s involvement in the activities of the SO. In a coded telegram he sent to the chiefs of SO units operating in the area of Trabzon, Şakir declared, “You, along with your troops, are subject to the authority of Stange,”<sup>34</sup> clearly confirming Stange’s involvement in the SO’s operations.

The third source on Stange’s involvement in the SO is a document from the archive of the General Staff’s Military History and Strategic Studies Institute, or ATASE (Askeri Tarih ve Stratejik Etüd Başkanlığı), in Ankara. An article titled “The Local Administration of the Special Organization in Trabzon Province,” uses an official Ottoman document from the ATASE archive, from which we learn that Stange was appointed chief of the SO units in Trabzon region in March 1915, replacing the above-mentioned Yusuf Rıza.<sup>35</sup>

## The Naim-Andonian Documents

Lewy maintains that the deportation and consequent extermination of the Armenians was not the result of a plan. In order to sustain this assertion, he disputes the validity of three sets of documents that support the opposite claim. The Naim-Andonian documents top this list (see note 4). These are documents published by Aram Andonian in French, English, and Armenian, which are purported to have been issued by Talât Pasha. Orel and Yuca declared them forgeries; Dadrian insists on their admissibility.<sup>36</sup>

The main problem here is that the originals of these documents are missing, and nobody seems to know where they may be. Pending the location of the originals, the doubts surrounding these documents will be impossible to dispel. However, to dismiss them entirely based on our limited information is as unsound as to accept them unquestioningly.

One question that Lewy leaves unanswered is of central importance, however. Should we find any other documents that support the Naim–Andonian documents, or are akin to them, could we then still maintain that their contents are false? Dadrian follows this path in his article on the subject, which he compared several documents with other sources, reaching similar conclusions.<sup>37</sup> This approach enables us to argue that, at the very least, some of the documents published by Andonian—and, perhaps most importantly, the material contained in these documents as a group—is irrefutable.

An example is the work of Ahmet Emin Yalman. He provides a statement from Bahaeddin Şakir whose content is similar to that of a statement appearing in one of the documents published by Andonian.<sup>38</sup> A similar picture emerges from two coded telegrams in which Talât tells the army not to meddle in the matter of the Armenian deportations. We learn from these documents that Talât persuaded the Ministry of War to issue orders to local garrison commanders and to military not to interfere with the expulsions. A circular to this effect was sent to the military authorities in the provinces.<sup>39</sup> We have at least two different sources that verify the content of this document. At the seventh session of the Yozgat trial (11 February 1919), an army officer, Halil Recai, said that he had received orders from Enver Pasha, then minister of war, to the effect that the army was not to interfere in the deportation of Armenians. Recai repeated this statement during the trial's fourteenth session (26 March 1920).<sup>40</sup> At the sixteenth session of the Trabzon trial (5 May 1919), Avni Pasha, commander of the local garrison, claimed that he had received orders from the Ministry of War not to interfere with affairs of the provincial governor.<sup>41</sup>

There is another case of two documents possessing identical content. One is an order, bearing the number 801 and dated of 26 December 1915, attributed to Talât; the other is a document lodged in the Prime Minister's Archive, which orders "the removal and expulsion of the regular and temporary Baghdad Railway workers—except those who previously were already relocated."<sup>42</sup> By identifying the numbers 840 and 860 as belonging to documents published by Andonian whose contents are similar in part to numbered documents found in the Ottoman Archives, Hilmar Kaiser has made a similar comparison.<sup>43</sup>

Another issue is the viability of demonstrating the accuracy of some of the documents reproduced by Andonian based on Ottoman documents. The incident at Aleppo's Baron Hotel may provide an example in this regard. After maintaining that this hotel was a meeting place for Aleppo's high-ranking government officials, Andonian, referring to the owner of the hotel, says, "he was so generous in spending all his wealth on entertaining the people who might any day become the executioners of his nation, that he succeeded in gaining a great influence, which he used in trying to save his compatriots."<sup>44</sup> This is the reason why he suggests that one of the most important tasks of Şükrü Bey, director of the Office of Tribal and Refugee Settlement (IAMM) of the Ministry of the Interior<sup>45</sup> and, as such, responsible for the problems of deportation and destruction in this area was "that the nest should be cleared out."<sup>46</sup>

Two documents in the Prime Minister's Archive corroborate Andonian's assertions. Here the identity of the person who signed the document is as important as the document itself. Having been directly involved in the matter in question, Talât, in a coded telegram containing the same details as those provided by Andonian, requested that an investigation be launched into the officials upon which the Armenian hotelier was exerting influence and that the results of this

investigation be conveyed to him at once.<sup>47</sup> As a result of the investigation, Talât, through a coded telegram directed to Cemal Pasha, ordered the removal of the owner of that hotel from that area.<sup>48</sup> The Baron Hotel incident is important in another respect: this telegram tellingly demonstrates, contrary to Lewy's contention, Istanbul's close oversight over the developments in the various regions and Talât's direct intervention in several instances.

### The Proceedings of the Istanbul Courts-Martial

Lewy advances three main arguments as to why he cannot make use of the documents and related materials produced during the Istanbul courts-martial, which he devalues as "alleged" evidence and thus devoid of usefulness. In addition to arguing that the Ottoman legal system did not operate at the standard necessary to arrive at a judicious verdict, and that the authenticity of the documents used in the proceedings cannot be verified, since the originals are missing, and hence the documents are not reliable, he also claims that the tribunals were merely the product of "victory justice."

The same argument has been made about the Nuremberg trials, which have been labeled as a product of "victor's justice" or as a "high-class lynching party."<sup>49</sup> It is a fact, however, that not only the Istanbul and Nuremberg trials but all other similar courts set up in the wake of World War II, and even the International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, could be dismissed with the same rationale. Of course, one should not ignore the political character of all these bodies.

However, the following examples demonstrate that conditions with respect to both the prisons and the trials were quite lax. The same American and British sources that Lewy uses to invalidate the findings of the Istanbul courts-martial confirm that, to the contrary, the courts were favorably disposed toward the CUP.<sup>50</sup>

The judiciousness of the verdicts issued by these courts is not the subject matter of this essay. Its central objective is not the examination of the verdicts themselves but, rather, the reliability of the documents and of the testimony obtained both from defendants and from witnesses for the prosecution, as well as the validity of all these materials with respect to their documentation of certain historical events. Particularly at issue here are the following questions: Were the testimonies of the defendants and witnesses obtained as a result of torture? Were the accused in any way subjected to pressure before providing their testimony? Did the accused or the witnesses, in the course of the hearings or later in their memoirs, provide any revealing information?

From the Istanbul court-martial proceedings, three different sets of documents are available for study. One set consists of official documents belonging to various state departments and institutions, such as the CUP; another contains testimonies obtained from the accused and from potential witnesses during pre-trial interrogations; the third comprises transcripts of the testimonies provided by defendants and other witnesses during the trials. As far as the first group is concerned, there is strong evidence that the documents are originals. Following an inspection by competent ministerial officials as to their authenticity, each these documents was stamped with the formula "it conforms to the original" or "it is a true replica of the original."<sup>51</sup> Equally and perhaps more important is the fact that, as indicated above, not only were these documents shown to the defendants but the latter verified their authenticity.

Furthermore, it is known that all this evidence was obtained without resort to violence or torture and that it was provided by defendants, as well as witnesses, entirely voluntarily. The terms of oversight of defendants and prison conditions in the period between 1918 and 1921 were exceedingly lax. From the very beginning of their incarceration, suspects were held together at police headquarters and were able to communicate and map out common defense strategies. According to one of these suspects,

The uncovered balcony at the top floor of Police Directorate's prison quickly became a public gathering place...the inmates were offering each other home-made tasty meals...I was witnessing a phenomenon that involved the reckoning of the entire era.<sup>52</sup>

The conditions in Bekirağa prison, where the same defendants were also held, were not much different; there was no strict control of those entering and leaving the prison. A British report provides details about the living conditions of the 112 inmates there:

The arrangements which at present exist at Seraskerat prison are not considered sufficiently adequate to ensure the proper supervision or safeguard of the persons confined therein, owing to the laxity and lack of system of control prevailing there. The following points have been noted: a) All prisoners, of whom there are 112, are allowed to walk about the prison and mix freely together during the day. b) Visiting hours for friends of prisoners are supposed to be between 12:00–14:00 hours daily, but these hours are not kept to, and individuals may be seen going and coming from the prison throughout the day. c) Except for a casual glance at their passes, individuals are not subjected to any inspection on entering the prison, and large packets are often to be seen being carried in by individuals, stated to be food, but might be anything. d) Women are allowed in all times during the day, and are never inspected. e) Turkish soldiers who are detailed to look after the prisoners mix freely with them, moving in and out of the prison at will, and if susceptible to bribery it would be very easy for them to aid a prisoner's escape.<sup>53</sup>

In his memoirs, Foreign Minister Halil Mentеше relates how officials of the commission of inquiry attached to the courts-martial frequently came to the prison to debate with the inmates.<sup>54</sup>

Incredible as it may sound, many of the defendants were able to leave at any time they chose, returning to the prison after several days, and then, as they put it, only to avoid putting the prison director in an embarrassing situation.<sup>55</sup> The external visits and outings of those held in these prisons were reported in the daily newspapers.<sup>56</sup> In his memoirs, Yunus Nadi (himself a CUP man), who had prepared a plan for the escape of imprisoned CUP men, discloses that only two of the latter had agreed to escape, whereas the others had declined, expressing the belief that “we will soon be freed.”<sup>57</sup>

The court proceedings that began in February 1919 were open to the press and to spectators. Among the defendants, there was a very strong sense of solidarity. The defense of Kemal, the county supervisor (*kaymakam*) of Boğazlıyan, for example, was jointly prepared and written down by CUP men, his co-inmates.<sup>58</sup> All these points demonstrate that the evidence presented by defendants and by witnesses for the prosecution were not sought and obtained under conditions of duress or pressure but were solely their personally framed and freely offered testimonies.

Three types of sources are available for the complete or partial texts of these documents—discounting the reproduction of limited excerpts in some personal memoirs. These documents and testimonies are either completely or partially

reproduced in the court transcripts published in *Takvim-i Vekâyi*; it is also possible to get detailed data about them from the daily press. Furthermore, the copies of a significant proportion of these documents and related material are lodged in the archives of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

The important written testimony of Vehip Pasha, commander-in-chief of the Ottoman Turkish 3rd Army during World War I, which Lewy dismisses as “unreliable” and invalid, best portrays the situation. “In the absence of complete original documents,” Lewy writes, “we have to be content with selected quotations...but without the full text we lose the context of the quoted remarks” (80–81). He consequently sees no problem with describing this document as an “alleged” one (250) and thus dismissing its contents. Yet, like Dadrian, he quotes excerpts from this statement by General Vehip, parts of which appear in the key indictment as well as in the Harput verdict (the full text of which was read into the record at the 29 March 1919 sitting of the Trabzon trial series). Vehip’s testimony is available not only in the *Takvim-i Vekâyi* but also in the period’s press. Perhaps more important is a fact of which Lewy is apparently unaware: the entire text of Vehip Pasha’s testimony was published in the daily newspapers of the time.<sup>59</sup> The same document is available in the archives of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem.<sup>60</sup> The text of the Jerusalem copy is identical to that published in the Turkish newspaper *Vakit*, as is true of the excerpts quoted in the key indictment and in the verdict issued by the Turkish Military Tribunal. In other words, the authenticity of Vehip Pasha’s testimony can be determined and corroborated through different sources.

Similar corroboration can be established with respect to practically every other document by way of such sources as the *Takvim-i Vekâyi* and Turkish daily newspapers; in many cases, the archives of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem; and, in some cases, personal memoirs. The set of documents that Lewy rejects, calling them “alleged,” is the very set of documents whose existence and content are verifiable.

By his own reasoning, inasmuch as there is no definite proof that documents related to the deportations were destroyed, Lewy should have qualified his claims of their destruction as “alleged.” Lewy somehow seems persuaded, however, that the important documents were destroyed after all. This being the case, it is incumbent upon him to answer two questions: For what conceivable reasons have those responsible destroyed these documents? Is it reasonable to suppose that those responsible for destroying the documents were attempting to hide their guilt?

In view of his own argument that the incriminating documents have been destroyed by the perpetrators and that we have no original documents to hand, that Lewy nevertheless proposes an explanation favoring those very perpetrators and completely supporting their exterminatory intent is beyond all logic and is difficult to comprehend.

## The Special Organization

Lewy claims that the Special Organization had nothing to do with operations relating to the deportations and mass murders in question. This is evident, he writes, because, apart from some relevant testimony embedded in the key indictment but consisting of mere assertions, there is no evidence or documentation of it whatsoever (84–85).

Here, however, Lewy gravely errs. Beyond the text of the key indictment, a very large number of documents and related pieces of material in the Prime Ministerial

Archive in Istanbul reveal the SO's active involvement in the Armenian deportations and massacres at issue here.

Let us start with the Istanbul trials to see how the defendants in these trials openly admitted the involvement of the SO.

Confronted with some of these highly incriminating documents, Yusuf Riza, a member of the CUP's Central Committee, conceded the principal roles of that committee and of the SO in perpetrating the crimes involved:

Regretfully we have now reached a point where it becomes evident that under the direct orders of the CUP's Central Committee, the Special Organization became instrumental for the commission of all the crimes. I myself am unable, Your Highness, to find and offer to you a satisfactory explanation.<sup>61</sup>

One reading of such documents occurred during the fifth session of the main trial series. Addressing defendant Riza, the chief judge declared, "It is clear from your testimony that among the contingents involved in the matter of deportations and massacres, there also were companies, that is, Special Organization troops." Riza's response was that there were two different types of Special Organizations. One of these consisted of SO units like his own, which operated outside Ottoman borders. On the other hand, local SO units directed by local governors (*valis*) and the CUP's responsible secretaries, did operate within Ottoman territory and thus became directly implicated in the handling of the deportations.<sup>62</sup>

This matter of the SO's direct complicity in crimes was bared especially by civilian bureaucrats, as well as military officers, testifying throughout the trial sessions; their testimonies were reproduced not only in the daily newspapers of the period but also in the texts of the respective verdicts. An example is the testimony of Tahsin, governor general of Erzurum. During the second session of the Harput trial series, on 2 August 1919, Tahsin testified that the SO, led by Bahaeddin Şakir, was directly involved in the handling of the deportations and that "the massacres against the deportee convoys were perpetrated by units subsumed under the name of the SO."<sup>63</sup> The text of the verdict rendered in this trial series includes numerous documents, and ample testimony from Turkish witnesses, attesting to the crimes committed by the SO.<sup>64</sup>

At the 5 April 1919 sitting of the Trabzon trial series, similar testimony was provided by Avni Pasha, who was commandant in the Trabzon province's Lazistan area during the deportations, and stated that "a band of brigands, known as Cemal Azmi's [the Trabzon governor general's] volunteers, and involved in deportations and massacres, were actually SO brigands."<sup>65</sup> Another piece of testimony linking the SO to the Armenian deportations was provided in the affidavit of Reşit Pasha, governor general of Kastamonu province, which was entered into the record on 27 October 1919, during the fifth session of the Responsible Secretaries trial series. In it the governor declared that he had been dismissed from his post through a discharge certificate signed by Bahaeddin Şakir with the title "Chief of the Special Organization." The reason given there was that, as *vali*, Reşit had failed to comply with the order to have the province's Armenians deported.<sup>66</sup> Likewise, at the seventh session of the same trial series on 12 November 1919, the witnesses testified that of the 180 Armenians who were deported to Çankırı from Istanbul, only some thirty survived; that the rest were murdered; and that Responsible Secretary Cemal Oğuz directed the SO brigands involved.<sup>67</sup> The verdict in the Bayburt trials reproduces many statements excerpted from the testimonies of Turkish witnesses attesting to the crimes committed by the SO. Adil, commander of Erzurum's gendarmerie regiment,

stated in his testimony, for example, that, following an investigation he himself conducted and based on written responses he received from the commander of Bayburt's gendarmerie, he had established that "the Armenians were massacred by the recruits of the SO."<sup>68</sup>

The Erzincan trial revealed that the crimes perpetrated in that region were the work of the SO operating in the area. Details about the ways and means of these crimes emerged in the course of the trial. The testimonies of Turkish prosecution witnesses, led by Riza, a staff lieutenant-colonel, played a decisive role in the administration of punishment at various levels against the defendants, including Abdullah Avni, who later, on 29 July 1920, was executed by hanging.<sup>69</sup> Described by the press as the trial covering the "CUP brigands' most important instrument of execution" and as the trial of café owner Necati from Crete, the proceedings that began on 19 July 1919 actually dealt with the brigands operating in the environs of Diyarbakir and Urfa. The accused, Necati, belonged to a group of brigands known as the brigands of Eşref of Diyarbakir. In his testimony the defendant stated, "Your Highness, Pasha. I didn't know our Detachment was identified as one of brigands. Our garments, our crowd, our everything was soldierly; we were soldiers indeed." During the proceedings several pieces of witness testimony and certain coded telegrams dealing with the crimes involved and with wrongful seizures were read into the record.<sup>70</sup> The list extends to several pages.

A second important aspect of Lewy's claim that there is no proof of the involvement of SO units stems from his lack of knowledge about the meaning of the terms "brigands," "irregulars," "chettes," and "volunteers." Lewy, while granting that such groups were involved in massacre operations and, accordingly, discussing them at some length, nevertheless maintains that he somehow was unable to pinpoint the individual identities of their members or the identities of those who organized them. This was the source of some frustration, since he could not precisely relate them to a particular organization and yet acknowledges them as the actual perpetrators, "no matter how recruited, directed, or composed" (228).

From the Istanbul trials we learn that "brigands," "irregulars," "chettes" (*çetes*), and "volunteers" are the official terms used to define and to describe SO units. It should be noted that, based on sufficient available data, we can identify three essential sources supplying the SO's manpower needs: the Kurdish tribes, refugees from the Caucasus and the Balkans (mainly Circassians), and convicts. Approximately twenty relevant documents were produced during the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh sessions of the main trial series.<sup>71</sup> It is natural, therefore, that when describing these brigands, several observers and those possessing a good memory affixed the words "Kurdish," "Circassian," or "convict."

It is astonishing indeed that Lewy failed to recognize the fact that these terms were typically used to describe the SO's brigand contingents (221–32). It may be useful to adduce here some facts demonstrating that all such designations as "chette" (*çete*), "volunteer," and "irregular" were used to depict the SO units and that the founders of SO themselves especially used these descriptive labels. At the fourth session of the main trial series on 8 May 1919, for example, the judge posed the following question: "What was meant by the term *çete* you have been using? Is it appropriate to designate as 'brigands' a detachment that is connected to the War Ministry and is part of the Army?" Colonel Cevad responded that "in the orders issued by the War Ministry," these kinds of different labels were used, adding that "some detachments were called volunteers, others were described as brigands."<sup>72</sup> Similarly, during the fifth trial

session, defendant Arif, another SO official, responded to the chief judge's question, "What was meant by the term *çete*?" by declaring, "Well, sometimes we called these units *çete*, and other times we referred to them as the volunteers detachment. Also, among us, we used the term Committee to describe the chiefs, the leaders, and the units they commanded."<sup>73</sup>

Indeed, throughout the trial proceedings, the telegrams and letters relating to the Ministry of War, the SO, and the CUP's Central Committee that were read into the record identified SO units, time and again, as "the *çetes*," that is, as brigands. For example, a telegram introduced during the fifth session and bearing the signature of SO leader Halil Pasha contained the order to "send off as soldiers some hundred men from among those who are eager to serve as brigands." During the same session was read an official communication, sent to the CUP Central Committee by Samsun's CUP Secretariat, containing the following statement: "A contingent of fifty-five brigands, under the command of Tufan Ağa from Artvin, has just been sent off via motorboat as a fifth group."<sup>74</sup> Testimony was heard during this session, and documents were read into the record, about SO troops who were portrayed as volunteers. A few illustrative examples may suffice.

At the fourth trial session on 8 May 1919, defendants Atif and Cevad, responding to questions dealing with the links established with the CUP in the course of creating the SO units, defined these units as "volunteer detachments" or as "an outfit of volunteers."<sup>75</sup> Cevad offered a similar explanation again at the fifth session when he described the SO units as "volunteer troops" and as "the company of volunteers," reading out the texts of some telegrams in order to prove this point.<sup>76</sup> Midhat Şükrü, in his testimony at the same session, admitted to having sent to CUP provincial secretaries a formal request that "they should help recruit volunteers for the SO and should otherwise render service to the fatherland." For his part, Ziya Gökalp testified that following the declaration of general mobilization, the Ministry of War launched the SO and accordingly set out to organize volunteer bands. Similar testimony can be found in official documents; for example (1) the use of the words "volunteer recruits" (*gönüllü efradı*) in an official Ministry of War document introduced during the fifth session and (2) an instruction that, "the people in question being just convicts, they should be sent off along with the battalion comprising similar type of people."<sup>77</sup>

Since Lewy is suspicious of documents issuing from the Military Tribunal, let us close this section with some documents from the Prime Ministerial Archives in Istanbul that also show the direct involvement of the SO in the deportation of Armenians. One such document is a coded telegram sent by the office of the commander of the Istanbul Military Police (*Merkez Kumandanlığı*), Lieutenant Colonel Cevdet, on 2 June 1915 through the Ministry of the Interior to the governor of Mamuretülaziz. In this telegram Cevdet asks the governor's opinion on sending SO troops against the Armenians in Dersim region, since many Armenians were escaping from the convoys through the cooperation and help of the Kurds.<sup>78</sup>

This archive also contains dozens of documents showing that the Ministry of the Interior was involved in organizing SO units in various provinces and that the terms "Special Organization" and "brigands" (*çete*), "volunteers," and so on are synonymous. For example, in a telegram sent on 26 November 1914 from the Ministry of the Interior to various provinces and provincial districts, we read the following: "We need people for purposes of brigandage in the Caucasus... Try to assemble as many Lazes and Circassians as possible, namely those who are most suitable for brigandage."<sup>79</sup> Similarly, another coded telegram sent by Talât, the interior minister, to Trabzon, uses

the terms “brigands” and “volunteers” to describe the SO units.<sup>80</sup> Among various telegrams with the same content, one deserves our special attention. This is a coded telegram, sent by Talât to the governor’s office of Mamuratül province, in which Talât informs the governor that the 3rd Army is “in charge of drafting volunteers from the tribes.”<sup>81</sup>

I assume that after looking into these documents, Lewy will revise his position regarding the Special Organization.

### **A Marginal Note on the Subject of the Central Government**

In all his arguments, Lewy underscores a single thesis: “No authentic documentary evidence exists to prove the culpability of the central government of Turkey for the massacre of 1915–6. . . . it is safe to say that no such evidence exists for the events of 1915–6” (250). It is beyond the scope of this essay to tackle the subject of the policy of extermination the central government is said to have systematically pursued in targeting the Armenians. However, in the belief that it may prove instructive, some marginal notes, framed in the light of documents from the Prime Ministerial Archives, may be adduced here. Although this may appear at first to be only a technical matter, it must nevertheless be singled out as an important issue. Sufficient material and documents are available on the subject of the central government’s having been rendered inoperative and impotent in the matter of the wholesale destruction of the Armenians, whether with respect to its planning or to its implementation. The operations of deportation and destruction were largely carried out by the CUP, which had gained control over the affairs of the government. In other words, the basic question, within the framework of the present debate, is whether or not the mass deportations and mass murder in which the central government was involved were carried out beyond the knowledge and will of such persons as Talât, Enver, and Halil Menteşe, as members of the government, and of the CUP’s Central Committee, which exercised tight control over the government.

The available documents, together with Talât’s statement, cited above, that “the entire responsibility relative to the severity of the applied methods belongs to me,” starkly sum up the picture.<sup>82</sup> The events in question here did not take place within a few weeks or months but, rather, covered almost two years. Furthermore, it is impossible to confirm that the central government in Istanbul, during all this time, made any serious effort to end the pain and suffering of the Armenians. Lewy’s endeavor to account for this failure through the authorities’ “ineptness,” “misconception,” “bureaucratic fiasco,” or “lack of farsightedness” has no basis in fact. One could show a measure of understanding for such explanatory notions had there been any genuinely helpful efforts that, in the end, proved abortive or inadequate; in fact, however, the available evidence points in the opposite direction. Indeed, there is not an iota of evidence that any policy or plan existed to aid the relocation of the Armenians in the very areas that were announced as their ultimate destination of exile.

For example, thus far there not a single record has been found in the Ottoman Archives that the government even attempted to distribute land, seeds, houses, or money to the “relocated” Armenians, who had left all their belongings behind; nor is there any evidence that the land, houses, seeds, and tools were ever actually granted. By contrast, the cipher office of the Ministry of the Interior is filled with hundreds of documents dealing with the expropriation of the properties left behind. By the same token, there is not the slightest evidence of a policy or administrative initiative

pointing to an effort to remit to the Armenians the revenues resulting from the sale of their properties; yet the same archives contain hundreds of documents showing that these revenues were systematically used to meet the costs of other undertakings: to help finance the war, to create an Islamic bourgeoisie, to relocate Muslim refugees, and to cover the government's expenses resulting from the work of deportation.<sup>83</sup>

The real purpose of the investigative commissions sent to certain provincial regions in 1915–1916 was to check and control the plundering of Armenian properties and to ensure that the ensuing revenues would flow into Istanbul.<sup>84</sup> Moreover, it is common knowledge that throughout this period the offers of foreign countries to extend help to alleviate the plight of surviving Armenians were systematically turned down.<sup>85</sup> It is also known that investigations were launched and arrests made when organizations and individuals tried to extend help to the Armenians languishing in the deserts of Syria and Iraq. Some examples may be cited. When informed that the American embassy had undertaken such initiatives, the Ministry of War, on 12 January 1916, sent a communication to the Ministry of the Interior to the effect that, “through secret means,” it had learned that money and help were being given to the Armenians and that, “following a serious investigation, the results are to be reported back.”<sup>86</sup> On 30 January 1916, Talât dispatched to all provincial authorities a telegram stating that, the fact of delivery of monetary assistance to the Armenians having been ascertained, the matter “should be investigated in an earnest but secret way.”<sup>87</sup> In another order, sent on 6 February 1916, Talât demanded that the moneys the American missionaries were distributing be confiscated, asserting that they “will be distributed through the means of the government.”<sup>88</sup> In a telegram dated 13 February 1916, he relayed the order that “NO permit should be issued to untrustworthy foreigners or to American or non-Muslim Ottoman merchants wanting to travel to areas inhabited by Armenians.”<sup>89</sup> On 23 March 1916, upon learning that monetary and other kinds of help from German and American organizations were continuing, Talât reiterated that “the money delivered by American and German organizations” would have to be distributed by government agencies, demanding the cessation of the distribution in progress. A footnote in that document contains a request that after three days the order be transmitted to all regions.<sup>90</sup>

Another problem besetting the government was the presence among local officials of those who helped the Armenians or condoned such help from others. In an order sent to the regions on 3 April 1916, Talât, invoking one of Enver's orders, threatened severe punishment for these officials.<sup>91</sup> In a telegram dated 24 July 1916, Talât requested the arrest and return to Aleppo of two Armenians, traveling with documentation from the governorship of Aleppo, who had been observed secretly distributing money to the Armenians in Deir Zor in the heat of the summer.<sup>92</sup>

The preceding discussion is not intended to examine the central government's policy on relief work, but it nevertheless demonstrates that the government in question was not a weak entity unable to exercise control over the distant regions. On the contrary, what the evidence shows is a government so keen, and able, to maintain a tight grip that, in order to stop any help from reaching the Armenians, it intervened in the most minute details of such aid operations—even going to the trouble of tracking down two Armenians distributing money in Deir Zor so as to prevent any and all help for the doomed victims. Indeed, some Turkish officials, whom Cemal Pasha had authorized to help resettle the deported Armenians, disclosed in their personal memoirs that the aim of the deportations was not relocation but extermination.<sup>93</sup>

Moreover, the authorities, whom Lewy portrays as feeble and impotent, proceeded harshly against those local officials who really believed that the policy was a genuine plan to resettle the Armenian deportees; some of these officials, as a result, were liquidated in various ways, and others were dismissed from their posts. The murders of at least six such officials are known: the governor general of Basra; the county executives of Lice, Muntefak, Midyat, and Bafra; and the deputy county executive of Beşiri.<sup>94</sup> Approximately twenty local officials were relieved of their posts, and some of them openly stated in their oral and written testimonies at the Istanbul courts-martial, as well as in their memoirs, that they were dismissed because they did not want to get involved in the anti-Armenian exterminatory operations.<sup>95</sup>

Likewise, within the same period a policy of rewards was in place for those who excelled in the performance of their murderous task. The bestowing of such a prize upon Nusret, who in the summer of 1920 was tried, convicted, and executed on charges of having organized the extermination of the Armenians in and around Bayburt, is an example.<sup>96</sup> The case of Diyarbekir province is another example. Through the initiative of Reşit, the governor general, "some of the police and police chiefs of the province were promoted, received monetary rewards, and were decorated with medals."<sup>97</sup> During the Armistice, the press published relevant news stories on the model of the region of Thrace, where such promotions took place.<sup>98</sup>

However, it is necessary to underscore the special importance attached to the case of Diyarbekir: the governor general there did not confine the exterminatory operations to the Armenians but extended them to all Christians. As a result especially of the pressures exerted by the German consul and the office of the German embassy, Talât ultimately sent, on 12 July 1915, a reminder to the Reşit, governor (*vali*) of Diyarbekir that "the extending to other Christians of the disciplinary measures that are being applied against the Armenians is not permitted," thus requesting the termination of this practice.<sup>99</sup> As the news of the crimes being committed in Diyarbekir emerged, Talât felt impelled to send two separate telegraphic warnings, dated 22 July and 2 August 1915. In the latter, after informing *vali* Reşit of the continuing reports that "the brigands are pursuing and murdering the province's Christians," Talât admonished him with the warning that he would be held responsible "for every action and incident imputed to the bandits and brigands."<sup>100</sup>

What is so remarkable, however, is that not even a perfunctory investigation was launched against Reşit. Even more significantly, the ceremonies rewarding the officials of Diyarbekir and its environs took place at the very same time. The glaring fact is that, Reşit was subsequently taken to task not for his murderous crimes but, rather, for personally appropriating the property and jewelry of his Armenian victims, which he had promised to deliver to the party and whose prompt surrender the state demanded. A telegram dated 6 October 1915 and addressed to Reşit reads,

According to information provided by deputies, you have demanded the return without damage of the moneys, jewelry, and other items taken from the Armenians, who in the course of deportation became afflicted, in order to surrender them to the Central Committee and for which purpose you took appropriate measures. It is requested that you indicate the extent of this kind of recovery initiative and the manner in which a record is being kept about it.<sup>101</sup>

The thing that interested Talât was not the fact that the Armenians were being assaulted but, rather, the fate of their valuables.

We do not know Reşit's answer to Talât, but we know that Reşit was appointed governor of Ankara, which can be seen as a promotion. More interestingly,

his appropriation of goods and jewelry would later lead to his being subjected to an investigation and removed from the post of governor of Ankara: Reşit tried to buy a waterside mansion with the confiscated funds, and, upon hearing of this, Talât relieved him of his post. Prominent statesman and publicist Süleyman Nazîf's succinct comment: "Terribly annoyed at this, Talât Pasha dismissed Reşit as a thief, while he adored him as murderer."<sup>102</sup>

### The Excessive Trust Accorded to Talât

Lewy takes too seriously Talât's gesture of rescinding some directives previously sent to the provinces in order to pacify the Germans—an act that was subsequently promptly cancelled. He treats as reliable, for example, the statement that, "as far as possible, Catholic and Protestant Armenians, who on the whole had not participated in revolutionary activities, would be allowed to return to their regular places of residence" (184–86, 206–8), which the German ambassador noted in his talks with Talât. By contrast, he dismisses as "slim" evidence my explanation of Talât's deceptive two-track system of communication (112).

Precisely for this reason, it may be useful to demonstrate here how, by dispatching a subsequent order, Talât cancelled and thus invalidated a series of earlier orders that he had framed for the sole purpose of satisfying the Germans. First of all, it should be emphasized that, when the deportations began, the outgoing orders stated very clearly that without exception, without regard to or distinction of religion, all Armenians were to be subject to deportation. For example, in the text of a telegram dated 20 June 1915 and sent to those provinces held to be of special importance, we read the following:

All Armenians dwelling in the province's towns and villages are, without exception, and together with their families, to be exiled to the province of Mosul and to the regions of Urfa and Deir Zor.<sup>103</sup>

Until the beginning of August, Talât was able to ward off pressure to exempt Catholic and Protestant Armenians from deportation. In the face of growing pressures, however, and in light of the fact that the bulk of these Catholic and Protestant Armenians had already been deported, Talât pretended to favor such requests, and issued orders accordingly. As far as can be determined, the first order, dated 4 August 1915, relates to the Catholic Armenians; it reads, "You are to refrain from deporting and exiling the remaining Catholics."<sup>104</sup> A similar order, issued on 15 August 1915, relates to the Protestants and reads, "You are to refrain from deporting those Protestant Armenians who hitherto have not been deported."<sup>105</sup> It is noteworthy that in both telegrams Talât uses the conditional phrase "do not deport (them) if they are still there," and, as will be shown below, these orders can by no means be interpreted to mean that those Armenians already exiled are to be allowed to return. It becomes clear, however, that these telegrams, sent by Talât in order to mitigate German pressure, quickly became superfluous, as he immediately dispatched another telegram enjoining his subordinates to resume the deportations as before, consistent with the pattern already established. On the same day that the first order was issued (4 August 1915), he ordered via telegram

The complete expulsion and dispatch of the Armenians of Adana city proper, Mersin and Sis proper, as well as the province's residual Armenians, all of whose deportations were hitherto deferred, to the designated areas.<sup>106</sup>

A similar telegram was dispatched the same day to Maraş, the region's other city.<sup>107</sup>

Apparently deeming these individual and separately sent telegrams inadequate, Talât then, on 11 August 1915, proceeded to dispatch to all these provinces a common telegram exhorting recipients that “the Armenian Catholics, just like the other Armenians, are to be sent away and banished. Proceed accordingly.”<sup>108</sup> In another and similar telegram, sent to Ankara on the same day, he requested that “Ankara province’s Catholic Armenians, just like the other Armenians, be deported and banished.”<sup>109</sup> In certain other situations involving telegrams sent to individual provinces, Talât, as reported above, went out of his way to declare that the cessation of deportation did not apply to Armenian Catholics and Protestants already deported. In a telegram sent on 14 August 1915 to the district of Izmit, for example, he forbade the return from exile of the Catholics and Protestants sent to Eskişehir from Izmit.<sup>110</sup> In another telegram, sent to Eskişehir on 30 August 1915, Talât’s order reads,

It is not permissible that those Catholic and Protestant Armenians, who were sent there from Izmit and other localities, be allowed to return. The order does not apply to those who have already returned.<sup>111</sup>

Here, in other words, we see Talât prohibiting the return of Catholics and Protestants to their original localities. The situation reached such a point that it could not escape the attention of the Germans, who began to exert pressure. As a result, Talât felt compelled to send, on 29 August 1915, another directive to the regions, requesting that the deportation of Catholic and Protestant Armenians cease; not satisfied with this, Talât personally went to the German embassy to exhibit these new orders. Trusting Talât’s word, the German authorities promptly notified their provincial consular offices by telephone of this order of cessation.<sup>112</sup>

In fact, the order excluding Catholics and Protestants from exile is but a repetition, in a roundabout, circuitous way, of previous ones. More important is the fact that the order emphasizes its applicability only “to those other Armenians who, unless they are not removed from their places and deported, are still there.”<sup>113</sup> In a further order sent to the regions on 2 September, Talât let it be known that the sense of his 29 August 1915 communication was that the deportation of the Catholics and Protestants must continue, even providing guidelines to local administrators as to how to ward off the pressures exerted by the Germans. As to those Catholic and Protestant Armenians still not deported, through a new directive Talât expressed that he wanted them “exiled together with their families.” This new directive advised his underlings on how to disclaim responsibility by providing the excuse that “the order to defer their deportation came after they were already deported.”<sup>114</sup> From his telegram dated 24 October 1915, we learn the dates and cipher numbers relative to all the preceding orders specifying that all Armenians, including the Catholics and Protestants, are to be deported: (1) 5 August 1915, with cipher no. 4917; (2) 22 August 1915, with cipher no. 2025; and (3) 2 September 1915, with cipher no. 5745. In a further telegram pursuant to this inexorable policy of wholesale deportation of the Armenian population, Talât demanded an explanation for the laxity of officials in Maraş :

Despite the fact that you were informed of the necessity of the deportation of the entire Armenian population of Maraş and their relocation in the designated localities, it is incomprehensible how in Maraş city proper there still are more than 2,000 aggressive Armenians, and more than 3,000 Protestant [Armenians].<sup>115</sup>

Not satisfied with dispatching these telegrams, Talât found it necessary to send inspectors to some regions. Adana is an important example, in that the German consul had shown special interest in the fate of the Armenian population there.

After reporting that Talât had sent Ali Münif to the area as an inspector, and that the latter had declared some of Talât's earlier telegraphic orders to be inoperative, the consul, on 10 September 1915, denounced "the 31 August 1915 assurance of Babiali as a big lie."<sup>116</sup> As the consul continued, "the authorities" proceeded on the basis of Talât's second set of instructions, as pursued by Ali Münif, and "the deportations are being carried out independent of the victims' religious confessions."<sup>117</sup> In his memoirs, Ali Münif indeed confesses that it was he who prepared the lists of the Armenians to be deported.<sup>118</sup>

As a matter of fact, in the month of September, the authorities indicated in a series of telegrams that there were no more Armenians to deport.<sup>119</sup> Another document may be cited here to show how Talât, through a second telegram that is recorded in the registers of the cipher office of the Ministry of the Interior, cancelled a preceding order and declared it invalid. In a telegram sent to Terfurdağ (Tekirdağ) district on 16 April 1914, Talât Pasha used precisely these words:

Disregard the contents of the letter of recommendation given yesterday to a delegation consisting of four to five people that the Patriarchate is going to dispatch for purposes of counseling. . . . The aforementioned people are to be kept under secret surveillance and, without making them aware of it. . . ., you will see to it that the various matters of concern to us will fail to be realized.<sup>120</sup>

This telegram is extremely important. Through it Talât not only asks that his letter of recommendation be disregarded but also demands that the expected delegation be kept under surveillance and that its aims be foiled. From the standpoint of Talât's frame of mind with respect to his dealings with representatives of foreign missions and with minorities, this document is of the utmost importance. In light of the Ottoman archival documents, we can easily understand why Talât, in Turkish sources, is depicted as "a liar." A few examples may be adduced here. "Noted Turkish historian and chronicler Danişmend described Talaat as a man whose special reputation as a liar. . . kept growing progressively (*bilhassa yalancılık şöhreti genişlemiştir*)."<sup>121</sup> The editor of the Turkish newspaper *Sabah* wrote that "Talaat lied like a machine."<sup>122</sup> Following Talât's escape from Istanbul, Süleyman Nazım, a famous writer, publicist, and governor of several provinces, described him as follows: "He, Talât, had no other talent than just being tricky."<sup>123</sup>

It should not be surprising, then, that even Talât's friends did not hesitate to refer to him as a liar. His closest friend, Hüseyin Cahit, remarked that Talât "would lie in both state and political matters."<sup>124</sup> According to Falih Rıfkı Atay, Talât's private secretary, Talât was a person "who did not view lies or cruelty as immoral." Atay relates that the issuance of a second coded telegram nullifying whatever order Talât had just sent by official telegram was an ordinary occurrence.<sup>125</sup> We learn from the memoirs of Henry Morgenthau and Halil Menteşe that Talât, a former telegrapher, had a special private telegraphic line run to his house from which he ran his communications.<sup>126</sup> Rescinding a previously sent order through a subsequent one was a method to which Ottoman authorities often resorted. Hans Von Seeckt, chief of general staff of the Ottoman Armed Forces, reported that the practice of implying that certain earlier official orders and secret decisions were to be disregarded was a common occurrence.<sup>127</sup> Furthermore, the memoirs of Captain Selahattin reveal that Enver, having dispatched some telegrams through official channels in order to placate the Germans, subsequently cancelled them through the use of a telegraphic contraption installed in his home.<sup>128</sup> In light of all this, we can see the fallacy of

fashioning a historical analysis based on a few dubious documents shrewdly framed by Talât and proffered to appease German diplomats.

## Conclusion

In his preface, Lewy states, “Unlike most of those who have written on the subject of the Armenian massacres and who are partisans of one side or the other, I have no special ax to grind” (x). He claims, further, that his “aim has been to deal with this emotion-laden subject without political preconceptions” (x). Because his premises, assessments, and conclusions are based on an incomplete study of the material, and because he is not in command of the subject matter, we can expect, if we take him at his word, that he is ready to revise his position. To make mistakes is normal in our profession, and to admit one’s mistakes is a virtue.

## Notes

1. Excerpt from a long interview with Mehmet Talât, conducted in 1918 by Muhittin Birge, who had succeeded Hüseyin Cahit as editor of CUP’s semi-official organ, *Tanin*, and published as part of Birgen’s memoirs: “Muhittin Birgen’in Anıları,” *Son Posta*, 20 October 1936. Unless otherwise noted, all translations into English are my own.
2. Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey: A Disputed Genocide* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2004). Subsequent references appear parenthetically in the text.
3. Tessa Hofmann, “Serielle Genozidrevision: Buchbesprechung von E. Jäckel,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine faz.net*, 23 March 2006, <http://www.faz.net/s/RubCB85F279145C457C8259D20FF00682A9/Doc~E3E0055D9443C4696B61E5FE37258ABBE~ATpl~Ecommon~Skomlist.html> (accessed 8 January 2008). The original reads, “Im Sommer 2000 äußerte auf meinem Sofa ein Rentner befremdliche Absichten: Er wolle, so der emeritierte US-Politologe Guenter Lewy, die “armenischen Massaker” einer ähnlichen Revision unterziehen, wie er das zuvor mit den Sinti und Roma getan habe. Dabei hätte sich gezeigt, dass deren Schicksal im Zweiten Weltkrieg zwar tragisch verlaufen sei, doch keinen “richtigen” Völkermord darstelle, weil zentrale staatliche Vorsätzlichkeit und Absicht nicht nachweisbar gewesen seien.”
4. Aram Andonian, *The Memoirs of Naim Bey: Turkish Official Documents Relating to the Deportations and Massacres of Armenians* (Newton Square, PA: Armenian Historical Research Association, 1965).
5. Şinasi Orel and Süreyya Yuca, *The Talat Pasha “Telegrams”: Historical Fact or Armenian Fiction?* (Nicosia: K. Rustem and Brother, 1986).
6. Given their numbers, it is impossible to provide here a list of all these works and memoirs. However, mentioning the names of a few individuals who have produced detailed works on this subject may suffice: Yusuf Hikmet Bayur, Şükrü Hanioglu, Şerif Mardin, Tarık Zafer Tunaya, Sina Akşin, Feroz Ahmad, Y.A. Petrosyan, Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, and Ahmed Bedevi Kuran. It is indeed impossible to find a single document or piece of evidence in the relevant and detailed writings of such prominent İttihadist authors as Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, Celal Bayar, Halil Menteşe, and Kazım Karabekir, or in the memoirs of CUP insiders such as Mustafa Ragıp Esatlı, Hüsametdin Ertürk, and Galip Vardar ve Arif Cemil, that might corroborate Lewy’s claim that within the CUP, or in the relationship between government and local power wielders, there was any conflict along the center–region axis. It is useful to add here that there is plenty of material in these sources, especially in the memoirs, on the subject of internal conflict within the central body of CUP, involving, for example, rivalries between Talât and Enver; between these two, on the one hand, and Cemal, on the other hand; and between the civil and military wings of the party. I must especially emphasize the fact that most of these sources are in Turkish.

7. *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeniler (1915–1920)* [*Armenians in Ottoman Documents, 1915–1920*] (Ankara: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1995).
8. Nejdet Bilgi, *Ermeni Tehciri ve Boğazlayan Kaymakamı Mehmed Kemal Bey'in Yargılanması* (Ankara: Köksav Yayınları, 1999).
9. Three such sources are Taner Akçam, *İnsan Hakları ve Ermeni Sorunu, İttihat ve Terakki'den Kurtuluş Savaşına* (Ankara: İmge Yayınları, 1999); Fuat Dündar, *İttihat ve Terakki'nin Müslümanları İskan Politikası (1913–1918)* (İstanbul: İletişim 2001); Fuat Dündar, "İttihat ve Terakki'nin Etnisite Araştırmaları," *Toplumsal Tarih* 16, no. 91 (2001): 43–51.
10. Although his general views on Gökalp are such as to reach beyond the confines of this study, I concur with Lewy's criticism of those who accuse Gökalp of racism.
11. One such work is Nejat Birdoğan (ed.), *İttihat ve Terakki'nin Alevilik Bektaşılık Araştırması*, Baha Sait Bey, (İstanbul: Berfin yayınları, 1995). For Fuat Dündar's work see footnote 9.
12. The ASAM is a semi-official state institution in Ankara. Under the auspices of ASAM, the Institute of Armenian Studies was established in 2001 and was renamed the Institute for the Study of Crimes Against Humanity in 2001. It is the leading proponent of the Turkish state's official denial policy. On 24–26 November 2005, Lewy was honored with ASAM's High Award for Combating Crimes Against Humanity. For more details see the home pages of these organizations at <http://www.avsam.org/> and <http://www.eraren.org/> respectively.
13. "The issue of premeditation should not be confused with the requirement of proof of a plan as part of the circumstances of the crime." William A. Schabas, *Genocide in International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 225–26.
14. For a debate on this topic between V.N. Dadrian and R.G. Suny, see *Armenian Forum* 2 (Summer 1998). For my views on the danger of speculation inherent in the arguments suggesting premeditation, see my general appraisal and critique of the viewpoints advanced by Dadrian: "Taner Akçam, Vahakn N. Dadrian: Ermeni Soykırımında Kurumsal Roller" [The Role of Institutions in the Armenian Genocide], *Virgöl* 76 (2004): 27–36.
15. Guenter Lewy, "Revisiting the Armenian Genocide," *Middle East Quarterly* 12, no. 4 (Fall 2005), <http://www.meforum.org/article/748> (accessed 23 January 2008).
16. Ibid.
17. Responding to Dadrian's criticism, Lewy stated, "I welcome Mr. Dadrian's close reading of my article, which indeed caught a few minor factual errors." These errors were indeed corrected in the text of the book, as follows: "All of the proceedings took place in Constantinople"; "Yozgat (province of Ankara)"; "Seven key figures, who had fled (including Talaat, Enver and Djemal) were tried in absentia" (75–76). For Dadrian's criticism and Lewy's response see Correspondence: "Revisiting the Armenian Genocide," *Middle East Quarterly* 13, no. 1 (2006), <http://www.meforum.org/article/895> (accessed 9 January 2008); "Vahakn Dadrian Responds to Guenther Lewy," *Dhimmi Watch*, 18 October 2005, <http://www.jihadwatch.org/dhimmiwatch/archives/008594.php> (accessed 9 January 2008).
18. I have been able to ascertain sixty-two cases of pre-trial hearings. Eight of these were dismissed as "unnecessary" at the stage of initiating trial proceedings. In thirty-four of the remaining fifty-five cases, the defendants received various sentences; in the other twenty, verdicts of "not guilty" were issued. For details on this subject see Taner Akçam and Vahakn Dadrian, *The Proceedings and the Verdicts of the Turkish Military Tribunal Investigating the Armenian Genocide* (forthcoming in Turkish and English).
19. For example, in the trials of Mehmed Ali and Refik Salih, former key officials in Dolapdere, on the charge of deporting Armenians from Dolapdere and its environs and selling their goods and possessions. *İkdam*, 31 March 1921.
20. Some examples may be adduced here. The formula used in the verdict of the Trabzon trial was "the credibility of the testimony of the witnesses heard." *Takvim-i Vekâyi*, no. 3616,

- 6 August 1919; verdict dated 22 May 1919. That used in the case of the text of the Yozgat verdict was “the persuasive character of the testimony of the witness heard.” *Takvim-i Vekâyi*, no. 3617, 7 August 1919; verdict dated 8 April 1919. The text in the verdict on the *Katib-i Mesuller* [responsible secretaries] contains these statements: “we heard the testimony of the defense witness that we had requested”; “in this connection we heard the sworn testimony of the witnesses and the statement of the victim.” *Takvim-i Vekâyi*, no. 3772, 10 February 1920; verdict dated 8 January 1920. The text of the Bayburt verdict reads, “testimony delivered face to face” and “testimony, on the instance of the Court Martial, was delivered face to face.” *Tercüman Hakikat*, 5 August 1920.
21. For some details see Richard Frase, “Comparative Criminal Justice as a Guide to American Law Reform: How Do the French Do It, How Can We Find Out, and Why Should We Care?” *California Law Review* 78 (1990): 669–74. Dadrian also touches on this subject in his response to Lewy.
  22. During the third session of the Yozgat trial series, which began on 5 February 1919, such an argumentative exchange took place between “private prosecuting attorney” Levon Remzi and defendant Kemal; disputes between prosecutor Sami and Artin, a witness, on the contradictions between the current and previous testimonies of the latter are another example of the same phenomenon.
  23. *Yeni Gazet, Alemdar*, 23 February 1919.
  24. The case of Şahabettin, who was taken into custody and held in prison until 22 October 1919, was dismissed in March 1920 without any act of investigation. The contemporary newspapers that relayed this news described it as “disturbing.” *Alemdar*, 22 October 1919; *Alemdar*, 26 March 1920; *Ati*, 26 March 1920; *İkdam*, 21 October 1920.
  25. *Takvim-i Vekâyi*, no. 3543, 8 May 1919, transcript of second trial session, 4 May 1919.
  26. *Takvim-i Vekâyi*, no. 3549, 15 May 1919, transcript of fourth trial session, 8 May 1919.
  27. *Takvim-i Vekâyi*, no. 3554, 21 May 1919, transcript of fifth trial session, 12 May 1919.
  28. *Ibid.*
  29. *Takvim-i Vekâyi*, no. 3557, 25 May 1919, transcript of sixth trial session, 14 May 1919.
  30. *Ibid.*
  31. *Ibid.*
  32. *Takvim-i Vekâyi*, no. 3549.
  33. Altay Yigit, *Doğu Karadeniz Muharebeleri [The Battles in the Eastern Black Sea Regions]*, vol. 1 (Trabzon: İstikbal Publishing House, 1950), 80–85. This item of information is supplied by Dadrian in his response to Lewy.
  34. A Mil, “Umumi Harpte Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa,” *Tefrika* no. 94, *Vakit*, 6 February 1934.
  35. Sadık Sarısamam, “Trabzon Mıntıkası Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa Heyet-i İdaresinin Faaliyetleri ve Gürcü Lejyonu,” *XIII. Türk Tarih Kongresi* (Ankara, 4–8 October 1999), 513. The author gives us the following archival record number for his source: K: 249, D: 505/1036, f: 21–58.
  36. Vahakn N. Dadrian, “The Naim–Andonian Documents on the World War I Destruction of Ottoman Armenians: The Anatomy of a Genocide,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 18 (1986): 311–60.
  37. *Ibid.*
  38. Ahmet Emin Yalman, *Yakın Tarihte Gördüklerim ve Geçirdiklerim* (İstanbul: Rey Yayınları, 1970), 332; Andonian, *Memoirs of Naim Bey*, 49–52. For a comparison of the statements see Taner Akçam, *İnsan Hakları*, 226–27.
  39. Talât Pasha’s cables dated 3 March 1915 and 20 February 1916 appear in Andonian, *Memoirs of Naim Bey*, 16, 57.
  40. *Alemdar*, 27 March 1919.
  41. *Renaissance*, 6 May 1919; *Hadisat*, 7 May 1919.
  42. Cipher dated 14 February 1916, signed by Talât, Public Security Office (Ministry of the Interior) to the authorities of Aleppo and Adana provinces.

43. Hilmar Kaiser, "The Baghdad Railway and the Armenian Genocide, 1915–1916," *Remembrance and Denial. The Case of the Armenian Genocide*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian, 67–112 (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999), 108 n78.
44. Andonian, *Memoirs of Naim Bey*, 10.
45. The IAMM was established at the beginning of 1913 within the Ministry of the Interior and was transformed by new legislation on 14 March 1916. The new office had expanded authority, comprising many sub-offices, and would grow in power and influence as the years wore on. This new office was called the Directorate of Tribes and Immigrants (Aşair ve Muhacirin Müdüriyet Umumiyesi, or AMMU).
46. Andonian, *Memoirs of Naim Bey*, 11.
47. BOA/DH/ŞFR, 66/56, coded telegram, Interior Minister Talât to the authorities of Aleppo province, 22 July 1916. The text of this telegram is as follows:

From a reliable source we have been apprised of the following facts: An alien Armenian by the name of Baron, and manager of the hotel bearing the same name, is using his hotel more as a gambling venue than a guest house. He is not only providing the means to accommodate high-ranking local and regional officials in terms of their needs for pleasure but offering them ample loans against the debts these people are incurring as a result of their gambling. Owing to these acts, he has not only been able to attain an elevated position for some time now but additionally is said to have succeeded in obtaining favorable treatment by penetrating through a variety of means the inner circle of certain provincial officials. According to other sources of information, it has been confirmed that this person had been exploiting the influence he possesses in the province in connection with the matter of deportations. You are to supply comprehensive data relative to his general standing in the province, the identity of the officials protecting him, and your opinion and judgment on the whole matter.
48. BOA/DH/ŞFR, 66/192, coded telegram, Interior Minister Talât to 6th Army Commander-in-Chief Cemal Pasha, 10 August 1916. The text of this telegram reads as follows:

It is reported that an alien Armenian by the name of Baron is using his hotel more as a venue for gambling, as well as a whorehouse, than as a guesthouse. His way of obtaining fame is said to be infiltration with respect to people with high positions and domination with respect to officials with lower ranks. Being a fanatic Armenian, he will not miss any opportunity to help Armenians. Even though he undoubtedly was aware of the initiative of an insurrection in Aleppo, the investigation nevertheless failed to reveal any clue in this respect; this is based on reliable information. Accordingly, your esteemed thoughts about the relocation of the above-mentioned person will be appreciated.
49. Harlan Fiske Stone, then Chief Justice of the US Supreme Court, used the latter phrase to describe the Nuremberg trials. See Martha Minow, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), 30.
50. For relevant details see Vahakn N. Dadrian, "The Armenian Genocide: An Interpretation," in *America and the Armenian Genocide of 1915*, ed. Jay Winter, 52–102 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 54–56.
51. For details on this point see V.N. Dadrian, Introduction, in *The Protocols of the Istanbul Military Tribunals . . .*, by Taner Akçam and Vahakn N. Dadrian (forthcoming).
52. Yalman, *Yakın Tarihte*, 341.
53. FO 371/4174, no. 149, 28 June 1919.
54. Menteşe even mentions that, following these debates, some of these officials proceeded to tender their resignation. Halil Menteşe, *Osmanlı Mebusan Meclisi Reisi Halil Menteşe'nin Anıları* (İstanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları, 1986), 237–38.
55. Celal Bayar, *Ben de Yazdım*, vol. 5 (İstanbul: Baha Matbaası, 1967), 1529. Dr. Mehmet Reşit, former governor general of Diyarbakir province, was among these who could leave

- whenever they chose. His escape in January 1919 was, in fact, a failure to return to prison after such a departure. Nejdet Bilgi, *Dr. Mehmed Reşit Şahingiray Hayatı ve Hatıraları* (Izmir: Akademi Kitabevi, 1997), 133–34.
56. *Renaissance*, 13 May 1919.
  57. Yunus Nadi, *Kurtuluş Savaşı Anıları* (Istanbul: Çağdaş Yayınları, 1978), 64. For more details on this aspect of the problem see Taner Akçam, *A Shameful Act: Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006), ch. 3.
  58. Menteşe, *Osmanlı Mebusan*, 238; Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, *Siyasal Anılar* (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları), 260.
  59. See *Vakit*, 31 March 1919.
  60. Archives of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Series 7, File H, nos. 171–182. I obtained a copy of this document from V.N. Dadrian, and I take this opportunity to thank him for sharing it with me.
  61. *Takvim-i Vekâyi*, no. 3561, 29 May 1919, transcript of seventh trial session, 17 May 1919.
  62. *Takvim-i Vekâyi*, no. 3554, 21 May 1919, transcript of fifth trial session, 14 May 1919. With a view to exonerating himself, Yusuf Rıza testified that there were two different and separate kinds of SOs: contingents under the control of local governors and responsible secretaries and those under the jurisdiction and control of the Ministry of War.
  63. *Yeni Gazete*, 3 August 1919.
  64. *Takvim-i Vekâyi*, no. 3771, 9 February 1920. The Harput verdict was issued on 13 January 1920.
  65. *Alemdar*, 6 April 1919.
  66. *Atı*, 28 October 1919; *Alemdar*, 28 October 1919. While the daily newspapers reproduced the full text of this statement, the verdict in the responsible secretaries' trials and the proceedings of the main trials highlighted parts of it.
  67. *Tercümanı Hakikat*, 3 August 1919.
  68. *Tercümanı Hakikat*, 5 August 1920; *Vakit*, 6 August 1920.
  69. *Vakit*, 29 July 1920.
  70. *Atı*, 27 October 1919; *Alemdar*, 27 October 1919.
  71. For details on the subject of the SO, see Taner Akçam, *İnsan Hakları*, 169–77, 231–39.
  72. *Takvim-i Vekâyi*, no. 3549, 15 May 1919, transcript of fourth trial session, 8 May 1919.
  73. *Takvim-i Vekâyi*, no. 3554, 21 May 1919, transcript of fifth trial session, 14 May 1919.
  74. *Ibid.*
  75. *Takvim-i Vekâyi*, no. 3549.
  76. *Takvim-i Vekâyi*, no. 3554.
  77. *Ibid.*
  78. BOA/DH/ŞFR, 53/222, coded telegram, Office of the Commander of Istanbul Military Police to the province of Mamuretülaziz, 2 June 1915.
  79. BOA/DH/ŞFR, 47/96-1, coded telegram, Ministry of the Interior to the provinces of Edirne, Hüdavendigâr, and Ankara and the independent districts of Bolu, İzmit, Çatalca, Kaleyi sultaniye, and Karesi, 26 November 1914. Cited in Dündar, *İttihat ve Terakki'nin*, 157.
  80. BOA/DH/ŞFR, 48/155, coded telegram, Interior Minister Talât to the province of Trabzon, 26 November 1914.
  81. BOA/DH/ŞFR, 49/263, coded telegram, Interior Minister Talât to the province of Mamuretülaziz, 13 February 1915.
  82. Quoted in Birgen, "Muhittin Birgen'in Anıları."
  83. For more information on this topic see Akçam, *Shameful Act*, 184–93; Taner Akçam, "Deportation and Massacres in the Cipher Telegrams of the Interior Ministry in the Prime Ministerial Archive (Başbakanlık Arşivi)," *Genocide Studies and Prevention 1* (2006): 305–25.
  84. For details see Taner Akçam, "The Ottoman Documents and the Genocidal Policies of the Committee for Union and Progress (İttihat ve Terakki) toward the Armenians in 1915," *Genocide Studies and Prevention 1* (2006): 127–48.

85. There is much material, especially in German and American archives, on the subject of such relief efforts. What follows is a limited list of works based on this material: Suzanne Elizabeth Moranian, "The American Missionaries and the Armenian Question: 1915–1927" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1994); James L. Barton, comp., "*Turkish Atrocities*": *Statements of American Missionaries on the Destruction of Christian Communities in Ottoman Turkey 1915–1917* (Ann Arbor: Gomidas Institute, 1998); Rouben Paul Adalian, "American Diplomatic Correspondence," in *America and the Armenian Genocide of 1915*, ed. Jay Winter, 146–84 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Suzanne Elizabeth Moranian, "The Armenian Genocide and the American Missionary Relief Effort," in *America and the Armenian Genocide of 1915*, ed. Jay Winter, 185–213 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America's Response* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 232–69.
86. Telegram, Ministry of War to Ministry of the Interior, 21 January 1916, cited in *Askerî Tarih Belgeleri Dergisi* 83 (1983), doc. no. 1923, 161. For an English translation of this document see *Documents on Ottoman Armenians*, vol. 2 (N.p.: Prime Ministry Directorate General of Press and Information, n.d.), doc. no. 1923 (119), 107. For more details on this topic see Hilmar Kaiser, with Luther Eskijian and Nancy Eskijian, *At the Crossroads of Der Zor: Death, Survival, and Humanitarian Resistance in Aleppo, 1915–1917* (Princeton, NJ: Gomidas Institute, 2002), 57–61.
87. Şinasi Orel and Süreyya Yuca, *Ermenilerce Talat Paşa'ya Atfedilen Telgrafların Gerçek Yüzü* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1983), 273–74. The English edition of this work is cited in note 5 above.
88. BOA/DH/ŞFR, 60/281, telegram, Public Security Office (Ministry of the Interior) to the provinces of Aleppo and Mamuretülaziz, 6 February 1916. Also see Kaiser, *At the Crossroads*, 60.
89. BOA/DH/ŞFR, 61/32, telegram, Public Security Office (Ministry of the Interior) to the provinces of Aleppo, Adana, Mosul, and Diyarbekir and the districts of Urfa and Deir Zor, 13 February 1916.
90. BOA/DH/ŞFR, 62/90, telegram, Public Security Office (Ministry of the Interior) to the provinces of Edirne, Adana, Aleppo, and others and the districts of Bolu, Deir Zor, and Karasi, 23 March 1916.
91. BOA/DH/ŞFR, 62/210, 3 April 1916. This document is cited in Kaiser, *At the Crossroads*, 60.
92. BOA/DH/ŞFR, 54-A/71, telegram, Public Security Office (Ministry of the Interior) to the province of Aleppo, 22 July 1916; BOA/DH/ŞFR, 54-A/91, telegram, Public Security Office (Ministry of the Interior) to the district of Deir Zor, 24 July 1916.
93. The following three works clearly delineate this cardinal fact: Aleppo *vali* Celal's memoirs, serialized in *Vakit*, 23–26 December 1918; the memoirs of Hasan Amca, who was on duty in that part of Syria, in *Alemdar*, 19–28 June 1919; and Hüseyin Kâzım Kadri (Şeyh Muhsini Fani), *Türkiye'nin Çöküşü* (Istanbul: Hikmet Neşriyat, 1992), 255.
94. The information about the county executive of Bafra was supplied by Justice Ministry Inspector Kenan during the 10 May 1919 session of the Trabzon trial series. For more information on the others see Akçam, *Shameful Act*, ch. 2.
95. For details about such dismissals of officials see Akçam, *ibid.*
96. Information about the rewards bestowed on Nusret was provided by a Turkish witness who testified at Nusret's trial. See *Tercümanı Hakikat*, 5 August 1919, where the text of the Bayburt verdict is reproduced.
97. The text of the relevant cipher reads, "Having proven helpful in the arrest of the leaders and members of the Armenian Committee in Diyarbekir, some policemen and police chiefs were, in appreciation, rewarded with promotion, monetary awards, and medals." BOA/DH/ŞFR/2042/67/31, 27 July 1915.
98. *Alemdar*, 21 January 1919, provides details about this kind of promotion in Thrace.
99. For the initiatives undertaken by German officials see Akçam, *İnsan Hakları*, 25–27; for Talât's cipher see *Osmanlı Belgelerinde*, doc. no. 71, 69. Perhaps equally important as the document itself is the fact that it is not registered in the catalog of the Prime Ministerial

- Archives. The document's catalog number is 54/406; in the catalog itself, however, the sequential numbering jumps from 545/405 to 54/407, thus skipping the identification of this particular document. Had the document not appeared in the *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeniler*, no one would be aware of its existence. Whether this document was deliberately omitted from the archive catalog remains a matter of serious concern.
100. BOA/DH/ŞFR, /54-A/248, telegram, Public Security Office to the provincial authorities of Diyarbakir, 2 August 1915.
  101. BOA/DH/ŞFR, /56/315, telegram marked "for your eyes only," Public Security Office (Ministry of the Interior) to Diyarbakir province, 6 October 1915.
  102. *Hadisat*, 8 February 1919.
  103. BOA/DH/ŞFR, 54/87, telegram, Public Security Office (Ministry of the Interior) to the provinces of Trabzon, Mamretül-Aziz, Sivas, and Diyarbakir and the district of Canik, 20 June 1915.
  104. BOA/DH/ŞFR, 54-A/252, telegram, Interior Minister Talât to the provinces of Erzurum, Adana, Ankara, Bitlis, Aleppo, Diyarbakir, Sivas, Trabzon, Mamüretül-Aziz, and Van and the districts of Urfa, Canik, and Maraş, 4 August 1915.
  105. BOA/DH/ŞFR, 54/20, telegram, Interior Minister Talât to the provinces of Erzurum, Adana, Ankara, Bitlis, Aleppo, Hüdavendigar, Diyarbakir, Sivas, Trabzon, Konya, Mamüretül-Aziz, and Van; the independent districts of Urfa, Izmit, Canik, Karesi, and Karahisari Sahib; and the districts of Maraş, Niğde, and Eskişehir, 15 August 1915.
  106. BOA/DH/ŞFR, 54-A/271, telegram, Talât to Ismail Hakkı, governor of Adana, 4 August 1915.
  107. BOA/DH/ŞFR, 54-A/272, telegram, Talât to Maraş district, 4 August 1915.
  108. BOA/DH/ŞFR, 54-A/384, telegram, Talât to the provinces of Aleppo and Adana and the chairs of Adana, Aleppo, and Maraş Commissions, 11 August 1915.
  109. BOA/DH/ŞFR, telegram, Interior Minister Talât to Ankara province, 11 August 1915.
  110. BOA/DH/ŞFR, /55-A/55. telegram, Public Security Office (Ministry of the Interior) to the district of Izmit, 14 August 1915.
  111. BOA/DH/ŞFR, /55/321, telegram, Public Security Office (Ministry of the Interior) to the district of Eskişehir, 30 August 1915.
  112. DE/PA-AA/BoKons/170, memorandum, Göppert, German Embassy in Istanbul, 31 August 1915.
  113. BOA/DH/ŞFR, 55/292, telegram, Public Security Office (Ministry of the Interior) to the provinces of Hüdavendigar, Ankara, Konya, Aleppo, Adana, Diyarbakir, Sivas, Erzurum, and Mamüretül-Aziz and the districts of Izmit, Maraş, Deir Zor, Kütahya, Karesi, Niğde, and Kayseri, 29 August 1915.
  114. BOA/DH/ŞFR, 55-A/23, telegram, Interior Minister Talât to Adana province, 2 September 1915.
  115. BOA/DH/ŞFR, 57/96, telegram, Public Security Office (Ministry of the Interior) to the district of Maraş, 24 October 1915.
  116. This explanation made on 31 August 1915 is the one that Talât had provided by going directly to the German embassy. It is important in the sense that it demonstrates how useless Talât's circular to the regions on 29 August had been rendered.
  117. PA/AA/BoKons/170, telegram, Büge, German consul in Adana, to German embassy in Istanbul, 10 September 1915.
  118. Taha Toros, ed., "Eski Nafia Nazırı Ali Münif Yegane'nin Hatırları, İstibdattan Cumhuriyet'e," *Akşam Gazetesi*, 26 October–21 December 1955, part 47.
  119. As examples may be mentioned here the telegrams sent from Diyarbakir on 5 September 1915; from Izmit and Eskişehir on 17 September 1915; and from Niğde on 18 September 1915. All these telegrams appear in *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeniler*, 94–97.
  120. BOA/DH/ŞFR, 40/17, telegram, Talât to Tekfurdağ district, 16 April 1920.
  121. İsmail Hami Danişmend, *İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi* (Istanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1961), 448. This and the following two examples are taken from V.N. Dadrian,

- "The Armenian Genocide and the Pitfalls of a 'Balanced' Analysis," *Armenian Forum* 1, no. 2 (1998): 73–130, 125.
122. *Sabah*, 15 May 1915.
123. *Hadisat*, 5 November 1918. The original reads "... hileden başka meziyeti olmayan Talaat."
124. Yalçın, *Siyasal Anılar*, 148.
125. Falih Rıfki Atay, *Zeytindağı* (Istanbul: Bateş A.Ş. 1981), 24–25.
126. Menteşe, *Osmanlı Mebusan*, 216; Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1918), 143–44.
127. Cited in V.N. Dadrian, "Documentation of the Armenien Genocide in German and Austrian Sources," in *Genocide: A Critical Bibliographic Review*, vol. 2, ed. Israel W. Charny, 86–138 (New York: Facts on File, 1991), 109–10.
128. İlhan Selçuk, *Yüzbaşı Selehattin'in Romanı*, vol. 1 (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1993), 292.

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# “Fear Not, For You Have Brothers in Greece’’: A Research Note

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## Introduction

During the aggression on the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, many volunteers from Orthodox countries fought in the army of the Republika Srpska (VRS). Among them were Ukrainians, Romanians, Greeks, and Russians, to name the most obvious. However, the most interesting are the Greeks:<sup>1</sup> first, Greek fighters took part in the genocide in Srebrenica; second, the Greek government and a large part of the public supported and approved their actions. Orthodox Christian foreign fighters in the VRS are often called “mercenaries,” which is inaccurate, since they fought for ideology and not for money. While this topic is important, it is controversial and has been little investigated so far. This research note aims to explore the role of Greece and Greeks in the aggression and genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## ‘‘We moved in and ‘cleaned up’ the place!’’

The first Greek volunteers arrived in Bosnia in 1993.<sup>2</sup> In March 1995, at the request of General Ratko Mladić, the Greek Volunteer Guard (GVG) was formed, with its base in Vlasenica.<sup>3</sup> It was fully integrated into the Drina Corps of the army of the VRS and was closely connected to Greek intelligence agencies; its activities were closely monitored by the Greek embassy in Belgrade.<sup>4</sup> The unit had its own insignia, a double-headed eagle on a black background. We now know that it took part in the VRS offensive on the UN enclave of Srebrenica. Greek volunteers were also spotted in the Konjic area.<sup>5</sup> A large number of the GVG’s members were also members of Hrisi Avgi, a neo-Nazi organization in Greece, but overall the members represented mainstream Greek opinion.<sup>6</sup> To support the connection between the GVG and Hrisi Avgi, there exists a picture of a few GVG members in Srebrenica saluting in the Nazi style. After the fall of Srebrenica, Serb and Greek soldiers raised four flags on the Orthodox Church in Srebrenica: the Serbian, the Greek, the Byzantine, and the flag of Vergina (the disputed “Greek Macedonian” flag).<sup>7</sup> It is also reported that video footage was shot of this event for propaganda purposes.<sup>8</sup> The Greeks celebrated all night with their Serb fellow soldiers and sang the Greek and Serbian national anthems.<sup>9</sup> The same day Srebrenica fell, the Greek national television station, MEGA, conducted a telephone interview with a Greek volunteer from Srebrenica, who said with excitement, “After the artillery stopped its bombardment we moved in and ‘cleaned up’ the place!”<sup>10</sup>

The primary reason for the Greek presence in Bosnia was ideology. When asked his motives for fighting, one Greek volunteer answered, “I am an Orthodox and I must help my Serb brethren against the Muslims.”<sup>11</sup> Another had greater visions: “We are fighting for a Greater Greece in a Europe free from Muslims and Zionists.”<sup>12</sup> Yet another said,

“The Vatican, the Zionists, the Germans and the Americans conspire against the Orthodox nations. Their next target after Serbia will be Greece.”<sup>13</sup> Four members of the GVG were awarded the White Eagle medal by Radovan Karadžić himself. The Greek volunteers maintained two offices in Greece, one in Athens and the other in Solun, which were used for recruitment.<sup>14</sup>

### ‘‘God and the Greeks’’

The Greek government, the Greek Orthodox Church, and the majority of the Greek public openly supported the Milosević and Karadžić governments during the aggression on the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The roots of Serb–Greek relations run deep. As the famous Greek lawyer Alexandros Lykourezos has put it, Greece’s relationship with Serbia “stems from Greece’s hostile relationship with Turkey, which is also often hard for outsiders to fathom.”<sup>15</sup> During the Yugoslav wars, the socialist Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) and the right-wing New Democracy sided with the Serbs. The socialists sided with the Serbs because of their anti-Americanism, which also explains why Muammar Qaddafi and Saddam Hussein supported Milošević, while New Democracy sided with the Serbs as fellow members of the Orthodox faith. Despite their differences, these two political rivals readily agreed on Serb policies in the Yugoslav wars. One such point of agreement was Radovan Karadžić. Karadžić visited Greece on two occasions, first in the summer of 1993 and second in January 1994.<sup>16</sup> Both times he received the highest state honors. In 1993 he met with high-ranking Greek officials, including Prime Minister Constantine Mitsotakis, PASOK leader Andreas Papandreou, and Archbishop Serapheim of the Greek Orthodox Church. The Greek–Serb Friendship was also helpful in bringing Karadžić to Greece.<sup>17</sup> This organization was formed in 1992 and is still active today, promoting Serb interests in Greece. Its president, Aris Mousionis, was seen together with Karadžić during the latter’s visit to Greece; he personally shared with Serb general Ratko Mladić NATO military secrets concerning the air strikes initiated against Bosnian Serb forces in August 1995.<sup>18</sup> The importance of this organization is shown by the fact that during the war Karadžić awarded the Greek–Serb Friendship the Njegoš medal (Orden Njegoša).<sup>19</sup> The Greek Orthodox Church organized an open-air mass meeting honoring Karadžić at Piraeus Stadium, where among those present were, besides Greek Church officials, Greek politicians Kostas Karamanlis<sup>20</sup> and Akis Tsochatyopoulos, then minister of defense. It was here that Karadžić made the now-famous remark, “We have with us God and the Greeks.”<sup>21</sup> He next visited Greece in January 1994, when he arrived in Athens to attend a medical conference titled “The Effects of the Embargo and the War on the Health of the Serb People.”<sup>22</sup> Even today, Karadžić is still considered a hero and a defender of the Orthodox faith by a large number of Greeks. Recently there have been many reports that Karadžić is hiding in Greece; both Bosnian and foreign intelligence officers claim that he occasionally hides in the Hilandar monastery on Mt. Athos.<sup>23</sup> It is important to note that the Greek Orthodox Church has appointed Karadžić “to the 900-year-old ‘Knights’ Order of the first rank of Saint Dionysius of Xanthe,” declaring him “one of the most prominent sons of our Lord Jesus Christ working for peace.”<sup>24</sup>

The Greek Church, besides supporting Karadžić personally, supported the military actions of the VRS. In December 1993, Greek Orthodox priests visited the ethnically cleansed Bosnian town of Zvornik and conducted a liturgy in the church of Saint Nikolas, the protector of Zvornik.<sup>25</sup> In February 1995, a delegation led by Archimandrite Ignatios of the Diocese of Piraeus visited the Serb-occupied part of Sarajevo and gave blessings to the Serb soldiers who were constantly shelling the city. Numerous reports

show that the Milošević regime had bank accounts in Greek and Cypriot banks. According to the testimony of Radomir Marković, head of the Serbian State Security Service from November 1998 to 2000, the regime used these bank accounts to purchase military equipment from abroad for the needs of the Republika Srpska and the Republika Srpska Krajina.<sup>26</sup> Via these banks, more than €770 million was spent by Serbia to buy arms from Russia and Israel.<sup>27</sup> Greece, probably in return, was allowed to draw large quantities of electricity each day from Bosnia, and the Greek state energy company paid \$20,000 a month to Belgrade for the use of these power lines.<sup>28</sup> The issue of secret bank accounts from the Milošević era is still active, and there is no doubt that it played a role in shaping Greek foreign policy; but, compared to Greek sympathy for Serbs, the economic motive was a minor one. Perhaps one of the most important things Greece did for Serbia was to supply it with much-needed fuel, without which the Bosnian Serb Army could not have mounted their military operations. Greece smuggled fuel to Serbia by recruiting Serb criminals such as Vladimir Bokan, who smuggled fuel on behalf of Greece while in return the Greek government provided him with Greek citizenship and turned a blind eye to his private profit-making activities.<sup>29</sup> In 2000, Bokan agreed to tell his story to Greek journalist Takis Michas. He later agreed to another meeting during which he would provide Michas with the names of Greek politicians and businessmen with whom he had worked and who had also helped break the embargo. A few days after their first meeting, however, Bokan was assassinated by unidentified persons. Other experts, such as Dutch professor Cees Wiebes, who worked on the report of the Netherlands War Documentation Institute (NWDI), claim that in 1994 and 1995 Greece supplied the Bosnian Serbs with weapons and ammunition, which were shipped from Piraeus to Bar, Montenegro.<sup>30</sup> Another way in which the Greek state supported the Bosnian Serbs was by giving NATO military secrets to the VRS. Greece, as a member of NATO, had access to information about planned NATO targets during the 1995 air strikes; this information was leaked to the VRS through Aris Mousionis, president of the Greek–Serb Friendship Association. Once NATO discovered the leak, Greece was no longer allowed access to this information.<sup>31</sup>

## **The Post-Srebrenica Period**

In June 2005, after images of executions of boys and men from Srebrenica by Serb special forces (Škorpion) were shown around the world, a Greek member of parliament, Andreas Andrianopoulos, requested that an investigation be opened into whether Greeks took part in the genocide. No results have been published so far, and it is not even known at what stage the investigation is today.<sup>32</sup> The report published by the NWDI in 2002, which led the entire Dutch government to resign, confirmed that Greek volunteers took part in military operations in Srebrenica and that Greece violated the embargo by supplying the Serbs with fuel and other materials.<sup>33</sup> The Greek government has continued either to deny any Greek involvement in Srebrenica or to state that it is not interested in the matter. In June 2005, a Greek official, Jorgos Kumucakos, said that the Ministry of Justice would cooperate with the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague “if it was requested by them.”<sup>34</sup> At the same time, the minister of justice, Anastasios Papaligras, said that it “is possible that Greek citizens took part in the massacre of civilians in Srebrenica.”<sup>35</sup> There are also unconfirmed reports that Carla Del Ponte gave a list of Greek citizens who were volunteers in Bosnia to a Greek diplomat, Jorgos Papandreu, in April 2003. Unfortunately, Greek officials have not shown the willpower to arrest those suspected of crimes, even when there is strong evidence. One such case occurred in 2003, when police, in an operation to bust an illegal

steroids network, searched the house of a thirty-six-year-old in Athens. While searching for steroids they came up with “something much more horrific[:] 80 photos of slaughtered Muslim civilians in Bosnia.”<sup>36</sup> This man was at first a member of Arkan’s Tigers, then later joined the GVG, but he also served as a trainer for Fikret Abdić’s forces in Krajina. Despite these photographs, he was charged only with selling illegal drugs.

Even though Greece is financing major reconstruction projects in Bosnia and helping Bosnia on its path to membership in the European Union, evidence has shown that some indicted war criminals may be hiding in Greece. In November 2006, *Dnevni avaz*, a leading daily in Bosnia-Herzegovina, published a picture of Stojan Župljanin in the Hilandar monastery in northern Greece.<sup>37</sup> He is shown dressed casually, standing under a cross and inscription relating to Serbia’s fourteenth-century emperor Dušan. This is the most sacred shrine of the Serbian people and is a place where Serbian monks reside—the same place where, in March 1991, Milošević declared that “the spirit that united us during the period of the Turkish rule” once again united the Greeks and Serbs.<sup>38</sup> In June 2007, a former member of the GVG, Kirakos Katharios, published a book titled *The Journey of a Volunteer*, in which he writes about the heroic actions of Greek volunteers in Bosnia and states, among other things, that Srebrenica is a “lie” and that the Greeks did not participate in any crimes: “If they had, the Moslem government of Bosnia would have raised the issue.”<sup>39</sup>

## Conclusion

It can be concluded that the war in Bosnia was pursued with Greek support for Serbian forces. Some believe that this reflects a Greek fear of being surrounded by three “Islamic states.” Greece has shown this attitude on numerous occasions, especially when it banned Turkish flights over Greece which would have helped enforce UN no-fly zones in Bosnia.<sup>40</sup> Most Greeks feel that Turks, Zionists, Germans, and Americans endanger their religion. The reason that most Greeks are so anti-American has to do with the United States’ support of the Greek junta in the 1970s and its support of Turkey. Major Greek institutions manipulated the Greek public into supporting the Serb aggression against Bosnian Muslims. It is enough to say that the Greek state media had correspondents in Pale, Serb-occupied Sarajevo, and other places, but rarely in territories controlled by the Bosnian government.<sup>41</sup> In addition, Slobodan Milošević went on his last holiday to the Greek island of Hydra in 1998, long after he was indicted by the ICTY; he was protected by Serb and Greek bodyguards provided by the Greek government. Alexander Likourezos, a major Greek lawyer, acted as General Mladić’s adviser and has said that he would defend Mladić if he were arrested and brought to The Hague.<sup>42</sup> Although Greece has shown progress, from fully supporting Serb crimes, to denying any knowledge of them, to finally admitting that “it is possible that Greek citizens took part in the massacre of civilians in Srebrenica,” much more remains to be done by the Greek government and the Greek Orthodox Church.<sup>43</sup> Financing the reconstruction of the Serb-destroyed parliament building in Sarajevo will not heal the broken hearts of the mothers of Srebrenica.

## Notes

1. Netherlands War Documentation Institute (NWDI), “Srebrenica—A ‘Safe’ Area: Reconstruction, Background, Consequences and Analyses of the Fall of a Safe Area,” in *Intelligence and the War in Bosnia 1992/1995: The Role of the Intelligence and Security Services*, <http://193.173.80.81/srebrenica/> (accessed 21 January 2008).
2. Takis Michas, “Greece’s Balkan Closets,” *Wall Street Journal*, 4 July 2005

3. Takis Michas, *Unholy Alliance: Greece and Milošević's Serbia* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2003), 18.
4. Ibid.; also see “Grčki dobrovoljci borili su se uz Srbe u Srebrenici,” Croatian Informative News Agency (HINA), 13/14 July 1995, [http://jagor.srce.hr/mvp\\_news/hna/Srpanj95/0714951.hna.html#index43](http://jagor.srce.hr/mvp_news/hna/Srpanj95/0714951.hna.html#index43) (accessed 8 June 2007).
5. According to Amor Mašović. See “Grčka zastava bila u Srebrenici,” 29 June 2005, <http://www.durmitorg.com/opsirnije.php?id=6819> (accessed 5 January 2008).
6. A photo of Greek neo-Nazis in Srebrenica appeared in the daily newspaper *Eleftherotypia* on 16 July 2005, [http://www.enet.gr/online/online\\_fpage\\_text?id=13996864,21821632,8195520%22](http://www.enet.gr/online/online_fpage_text?id=13996864,21821632,8195520%22); Takis Michas, e-mail to the author, 18 June 2007.
7. Michas, *Unholy Alliance*, 17.
8. NWDI, “Srebrenica.”
9. “Grčki dobrovoljci.”
10. Michas, *Unholy Alliance*, 17.
11. Ibid., 18.
12. Ibid. It is important to note that Nikolaos G. Michaloliakos, the founder and former leader of Hrisi Avgi, wrote a book whose title translates as “For a Greater Greece in a Free Europe.” A list of Michaloliakos's publications is available at <http://www.logxi.com/vivlia2.php>.
13. Michas, *Unholy Alliance*, 18.
14. See *Grčki dobrovoljci*.
15. Raymond Bonner, “Greek Lawyer Pleased to Defend Bosnian Serb,” *New York Times*, 4 August 1996, <http://www.nytimes.com/specials/bosnia/context/0804yugo-greece.html> (accessed 6 January 2008). Alexandros Lykourezos is a Greek lawyer and General Ratko Mladić's former advisor. He also added that the “animosity is rooted in centuries past, to the days of the Ottoman Empire, when both the Serbs and the Greeks chafed under rule from Istanbul.”
16. Michas, *Unholy Alliance*, 22, 28.
17. Ibid., 24.
18. Ibid., 38. Mousionis advised Papandreou on the Bosnian war and was his personal intermediary with Karadžić and with Slobodan Milošević.
19. Senad Pećanin & Šeki Radončić, “Na listu odlikovanih zlocinaca i Milorad Dodik,” *Dani*, 28 April 2006.
20. Kostas Karamanlis (New Democracy), now prime minister of Greece, visited Bosnia this year to open the Serb-destroyed parliament building, which is now called the Greek–Bosnian Friendship Building. An unidentified person or persons threw eggs at him.
21. Michas, *Unholy Alliance*, 26; for video footage of this event and more see Ingeborg Beugel, dir., *Op z'n Grieks [The Greek Way]* (IKON, 2002).
22. Michas, *Unholy Alliance*, 28.
23. Šeki Radončić, “Karadžić na Hilandar, Kadijević u Moskvi,” *Monitor*, 2 April 2007, [http://www.monitor.cg.yu/ARHIVA/a\\_858\\_01.html](http://www.monitor.cg.yu/ARHIVA/a_858_01.html) (accessed 21 January 2008); also see Selvedin Avdic, “Niko više ne želi da uhapsi Radovana,” *Start*, 18 September 2007. According to one source, Philippe Rondot, the famous French intelligence officer who participated in capturing Ilich Ramírez Sánchez, shares this opinion and claims that the 2004 fire at Hilandar monastery was connected with Karadžić.
24. Michael Sells, *The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 85. Perhaps in divine retribution, several of the bishops who signed this decree have been humiliated in spectacular fashion; see Helena Smith, “Sex and Fraud Woe for Greek Church,” *Guardian Unlimited*, 19 February 2005, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/religion/Story/0,2763,1418094,00.html> (accessed 6 January 2008). For more on this topic see Abdal Hakim Murad, “The Churches and the Bosnian War,” [http://www.masud.co.uk/ISLAM/ahm/the\\_churches\\_and\\_the\\_bosnian\\_war.htm](http://www.masud.co.uk/ISLAM/ahm/the_churches_and_the_bosnian_war.htm) (accessed 6 January 2008).

25. Michas, *Unholy Alliance*, 21; Serb forces carried out ethnic cleansing in Zvornik in early 1992.
26. Human Rights Watch, *Weighing the Evidence: Lessons from the Slobodan Milosevic Trial*, <http://hrw.org/reports/2006/milosevic1206/index.htm> (accessed 6 January 2008).
27. See NWDI, "Srebrenica."
28. Ibid.
29. Michas, *Unholy Alliance*, 69.
30. "Grčki List 'Eleftherotipija': Kako je Grčka vojno pomagala bosanske Srbe," *Novine Toronto*, 3 May 2002, [http://www.novine.ca/ARHIVA/2002/03\\_05\\_02/svet.html](http://www.novine.ca/ARHIVA/2002/03_05_02/svet.html) (accessed 6 January 2008).
31. Michas, *Unholy Alliance*, 38.
32. Takis Michas has said that he does not accept any results from this investigation. Interview with the author, 1 May 2007. See "Da li će se zaboraviti ovaj priča?" *Preporod*, April 2007.
33. See NWDI, "Srebrenica."
34. "Grčki dobrovoljci i zločini u BiH," *B-92*, 29 June 2005, [http://www.b92.net/info/komentari.php?nav\\_id=171637](http://www.b92.net/info/komentari.php?nav_id=171637) (accessed 21 January 2008).
35. Ibid.
36. This information appeared in the Greek daily newspaper *Eleftherotypia* on 20 November 2003; English translation by Takis Michas.
37. Stojan Župljanin has been indicted for war crimes by the ICTY and is still on the run.
38. Michas, *Unholy Alliance*, 32.
39. Takis Michas, e-mail message to the author, 23 June 2007; English translation of statement by Kirakos Katharios is by Michas. For a full version of Katharios's interview with the right-wing newspaper *Eleutheros Kosmos* and more on the book, see book review, Κυριακος Καθαριος: Πολεμησα Στην βοσνια Πατι Πιστευα Οτι Ετσι βαηθω Την Ελλαδα, *Eleutheros Kosmos*, 13 June 2007, [http://elkosmos.gr/site/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=452&Itemid=59](http://elkosmos.gr/site/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=452&Itemid=59) (accessed 6 January 2008).
40. Salahi Ramadan Sonyel, *The Muslims of Bosnia: Genocide of a People* (London: Islamic Foundation, 1994), 54.
41. Michas claims that there were no Greek reporters in Bosnian-controlled territories at all, while others claim that there were a handful.
42. For more on this topic, see the Dutch documentary *Op z'n Grieks*. Ingeborg Beugel, the director of this superb documentary, says that ever since its release she is on the Greek "black list"; she has not been able to get an interview with any Greek official since.
43. Recently the director of the Athens Stock exchange, Vasilios Margaritis, while in the Bosnian town of Teslić, called Republika Srpska a "friendly country." Nobody reacted to this provocation. See Eldar Dizdarević, "Orlovi sa Atinske berze," *Dani*, 11 June 2007.

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## Book Review

Andrew Wallis. *Silent Accomplice: The Untold Story of France's Role in the Rwandan Genocide*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2006. Pp. 242, cloth. \$44.00 US.

Susan Cook, ed. *Genocide in Cambodia and Rwanda: New Perspectives*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2006. Pp. 299, paper. \$24.95 US. Pp. 299, cloth. \$49.95 US.

Nigel Eltringham. *Accounting for Horror: Post-Genocide Debates in Rwanda*. London: Pluto Press, 2004. Pp. 232, paper. \$24.95 US. Pp. 232, cloth. \$79.95 US.

Reviewed by Gerald Caplan, *Independent Scholar, Toronto, ON*

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New studies of genocide continue to materialize at a modest but regular pace. Of course, there is nothing like the Holocaust publishing phenomenon, with a small flood of books and articles appearing month after month. A long lifetime devoted to nothing but reading about the Holocaust would barely begin to scratch the surface of the available studies. But it is gratifying, if obviously frustrating, to report that it is now quite impossible to keep up with all the literature on other genocides and on genocide as such.

Nonetheless, the universe of those one Israeli on the fringes affectionately calls “genocide freaks” remains distinctly small. It is no fluke that I know, at least as acquaintances if not as dear friends, two of the three authors under review. This leads to the situation that always prevails when a field is so small and intimate—the difficulty of candor and criticism in reviewing the work of peers, if only because there is at least a reasonable possibility that they may one day be called on to review one of your efforts. It is easier to pretend that this is not an issue, but it is. And all we can do is disclose this implicit conflict of interest.

As it happens, I have problems with all three books under review. The author I do not know at all is Andrew Wallis, identified on the jacket flap as a journalist and a researcher in the Department of Peace Studies at Bradford University. Wallis’s book is the most timely of the three, and probably the most important, but it is also the most disappointing. The role of France in the Rwandan Genocide remains a blur to many in the English-speaking world. The division in the field of genocide studies between monolingual French and English speakers is almost scandalously unbridged; the two simply do not share the same universe of information. Nowhere is this more true than in books and articles on Rwanda, where—with notable exceptions, such as Linda Melvern—two solitudes can be said to exist. There is a good deal of writing related to the genocide by francophone Rwandan academics and other francophone writers, including the indispensable Belgian journalist Colette Braeckman, that remains a blank slate to most Anglophones. (Braeckman feels so divorced from the

Gerald Caplan, review of *Silent Accomplice: The Untold Story of France's Role in the Rwandan Genocide* by Andrew Wallis; *Genocide in Cambodia and Rwanda: New Perspectives* edited by Susan Cook; *Accounting for Horror: Post-Genocide Debates in Rwanda* by Nigel Eltringham. *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 3, 1 (April 2008): 153–157. © 2008 *Genocide Studies and Prevention*. doi: 10.3138/gsp.3.1.153

agenda-setting Anglophone world, she told me, that she will never again write a book that is not translated into English.)

Wallis's signal contribution is to pull together the most important work extant in both English and French on France's role in the genocide, from the many reports of Human Rights Watch (HRW) to the writings of Patrick de St. Exupery and François-Xavier Verschave. Noting that the usual criticism of the "international community" is that it has failed to intervene to stop atrocities perpetrated by Africans against each other, he reminds us of the real truth: "genocide often occurs because of too much, not too little, Western interference" (x). Following the lead of HRW, he asks exactly the right question: Would the genocide of the Rwandan Tutsi have happened at all without French President François Mitterrand's consistent support for Rwanda's Hutu extremists and his attempts to undermine the rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) before, during and after the genocide? Unfortunately, *Silent Accomplice* addresses events only up to and shortly after the genocide was ended by the RPF victory, and, as a result, Wallis fails to pose the next logical question: Would the terrible conflicts that have devastated the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for the past decade have happened if the French military had not allowed so many leading *génocidaires* to flee Rwanda for the DRC in the dying days of the genocide?

The RPF invaded Rwanda from Uganda on 1 October 1990. Mitterrand responded to Rwandan President Juvénal Habyarimana's plea for support immediately. From that moment on, there was no aspect of Rwandan life in which France did not intervene—from supplying weapons to training elite soldiers and youth militias to providing intelligence to providing financial support to devising military strategy to acting as international spin doctors to leading the Rwandan armed forces to manning roadblocks and asking for the notorious ID cards that revealed citizens' ethnic origin. Almost no authority believes that the Rwandan army could have held off the rebels for three years without French support, and if the Habyarimana gang had been overthrown, there would have been no genocide.

French politicians, French diplomats, and French soldiers blatantly lied about everything that was happening in Rwanda. George Orwell never had more faithful disciples in turning the truth completely on its head. They said they were in Rwanda only to protect French citizens. They said they were there only as a humanitarian service to Rwandans. They said they were there to protect victims of the genocide. They said the RPF disemboweled children. They said that each pogrom against the Tutsi from 1991 to April 1994 was the responsibility of the RPF. They said that the only obstacle to peace was the RPF.

After the genocide, Mitterrand called Habyarimana a true democrat. He said it was the United Nations, not his government, that had restored the power of a flailing Mobutu Sese Seko. France also did all it could to withhold European Union funds from the new RPF-led government after the genocide. The 1998 inquiry by the French National Assembly documented France's myriad sins in Rwanda and concluded that the chief culprit was the United States. Mitterrand liked talking about "genocides," in the plural, blaming the RPF as much as the *génocidaires*. As late as 2003, then foreign minister Dominique de Villepin spoke of the "Rwandan genocides." To this day, the French government continues to hide accused *génocidaires* and to embrace denial of the genocide.

All this adds up to a deep, vast sickness. France has long seen francophone Africa as its backyard, its *pré carré*, just as the United States saw Latin America as its natural neocolonial turf. Without the support of its former African colonies, under any

number of tyrants and sadists, any pretense of France to be even a second-tier world power would evaporate. That is why language and culture obsess the French establishment so profoundly. But nothing remotely rational quite explains the pathological depths of French hostility to the RPF, or the complicity and villainy that characterize its role in the Rwandan Genocide. In a just world, French officials would be among the very first defendants before the International Criminal Court.

So, while Wallis's book fills a large gap, it is inadequate in too many ways. There are all the obvious errors: Stephen Lewis was not UN Envoy to Africa but Envoy for AIDS in Africa; former chief prosecutor Jean de Dieux Mucyo is not Mueyo. There was no OAU report on the genocide; there was a report by an independent panel appointed by the OAU. A death site is a charnel house, not a carnal house, for heaven's sake! Several references have no relation to the item being referenced, and some key points are supported by no references at all. There is an unacceptable reliance on RPF officials as a source of negative information on France; material relating to 2005 is sourced to a 1994 newspaper story. The writing is often sophomorically heavy-handed and childishly ironic. Foolish liberties are taken to hammer home obvious points—French politicians are said to have been so surprised by a Mitterrand maneuver, for example, that they “no doubt spluttered in their Perrier water” (122). Where have all the editors gone?

Among the slanders French officials heaped on the RPF was the label “Khmer Noir”—the African equivalent of the genocidal Khmer Rouge. The slur offers one connection to Cambodia. So does Wallis's statement that “genocide often occurs because of too much, not too little, Western interference” (x). Note his deliberate choice of the word “often.” He is not speaking only of the French in Rwanda. Just look at the secret bombing of Cambodia launched illegally by Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger, another of their crimes against humanity. It was the destabilization of Cambodia that enabled Pol Pot's troops to take over the country so easily and to impose its demented, deadly ideology.

Academically, too, there is a curious parallel to the Francophone–Anglophone split over Rwanda: by and large, with important exceptions, those who concentrate on either Rwanda or Cambodia usually are not well versed in the other. All the more reason to welcome a collection like Susan Cook's, which explicitly deals with both.

Most edited collections are uneven, but Cook's (*Genocide in Cambodia and Rwanda: New Perspectives*) is more uneven than many. That said, I found most of the contributions more or less worthwhile and informative. But the volume is less than the sum of its parts, when it should be more. Cook claims to be offering a “comparative study of genocide,” but, in fact, many of the essays are entirely stand-alone pieces, lending themselves to no particular comparisons at all. The problem is that they emerged from research done for the Genocide Studies Program at Yale University, and, while all the authors may have asked similar questions of different genocidal episodes, as Cook maintains, there was apparently only a limited attempt to compare specific aspects of the two experiences systematically. Cook herself has published comparative articles on the role of ethnicity in each case, but they are not reproduced in this volume.

A real flaw is the absence of any conceptual comparisons of the two as genocides at all, which surely would have been the place to begin a comparative study of two “genocides.” In fact, because the Khmer Rouge were exactly like those they murdered so blithely, while Tutsi and Hutu were distinguished by ethnicity and modern history, many scholars of genocide question whether the Khmer Rouge in fact

perpetrated a genocide. Some argue that the real genocide in Cambodia was by the Khmer of several small ethnic and religious minorities, not the massive slaughter of the killing fields. For Rwanda, only a minority of outright deniers and their French allies doubt what every authority who has studied the subject agrees: Rwanda's Tutsi stand with the Herero, the Armenians, and the Jews of Europe as one of the purest Genocide Convention genocides in modern history. This book would have been far more valuable had it taken on this defining issue.

Two of the chapters on Cambodia (Dmitry Mosyakov's "The Khmer Rouge and the Vietnamese Communists" and Puangthong Rungswasdisab's "Thailand's Response to the Cambodian Genocide") shed light on the Khmer Rouge's relationships with the Vietnamese Communists and with neighboring Thailand, both of which significantly influenced the course of events in the region. Here is where a real comparative study would have made an important contribution, by examining Habyarimana's relations with other African states and with the rich world, apart from France, before his assassination in 1994 ignited the genocide. In the Cambodian case, two American administrations claimed to fear the "domino effect" in Southeast Asia of a Viet Cong victory in South Vietnam, and perhaps the CIA had, as usual, proffered false intelligence. In fact, Hanoi and the Khmer Rouge enjoyed a poisonous relationship, as did the USSR and China, and, since Russia was Hanoi's ally, China backed the Khmer Rouge. None of these positions had anything at all to do with the bestial nature of the Khmer Rouge government.

What was the Rwandan equivalent? Why did the OAU refuse to condemn the genocide, instead taking the same neutral line as the UN and demanding that both sides cease the fighting? What was Mobutu's role as Habyarimana's mentor? The francophone African dictators showed the expected solidarity. Why did Kenya's Daniel Arap Moi at first refuse to hand over accused *génocidaires* hiding in his country? The makings of a genuinely comparative and revealing study lie in these questions.

Anyone studying the Rwandan Genocide emerges shell-shocked from the behavior of the international community throughout. I have written often about twenty-five things the powers-that-be were responsible for, during those few years, that even today are almost impossible to believe. But nothing that happened to Rwanda can trump the support and recognition given by the West and China to the Khmer Rouge after its ouster by the Vietnamese Communists in 1979. Kelvin Rowley's essay on the subject, "Second Life, Second Death: The Khmer Rouge after 1978," reminds us that there are no apparent limits on the depths to which states will sink in the pursuit of their own self-interest, even if it means embracing one of the most psychopathic gangs of mass murderers the world has ever seen.

On a different but significant editorial note, I must state that to publish such a book with no maps is frustrating and beyond forgiveness.

In the end, Cook's book, like Wallis's on France, reinforces the harsh reality that the struggle to prevent genocide and to find even a modicum of justice in this world will always be a Sisyphean one.

Justice and mass murderers are also among the themes of Nigel Eltringham's short work on Rwanda, *Accounting for Horror*. Eltringham offers a good deal of useful information and a considerable number of insights. But intellectual honesty compels me to confess immediately that I did not understand much of this book. Very likely that reflects my own intellectual limitations. But, as I read through, I often did not know what Eltringham was getting at, became confused when I tried to figure out why he was discussing certain topics and not discussing others, and, to the end, never

grasped how the various issues he deals with hang together. Perhaps there is a special skill to deciphering the jargon and style of anthropologists these days that I have not yet mastered. I was also thunderstruck to find that, like the Cook volume, this one had no map, making the discussion almost impossible to follow in some places. Maybe publishers no longer employ editors.

*Accounting for Horror* was published in 2004 but is based on interviews with Rwandans in Rwanda in 1998 and in Europe in 1999. Since that is about the same time my own work in Rwanda began, I know how very long ago, in relative terms, it was—less than five years after the genocide. In many ways, a different Rwanda exists today than existed seven or eight years ago, and Eltringham's book suffers accordingly. Still, some of the debates that he examines remain both pertinent and highly controversial. He analyzes in great and convincing detail allegations of atrocities and human-rights abuses against the RPF before, during, and after the genocide, finding that they escalated from relatively few to massive. Although the RPF government has long denied any culpability for the crimes against humanity that were committed in the forests of Zaire/DRC, Eltringham goes a long way toward confirming what many of us have feared to be true. But he makes no effort to explain why he spends twenty-five pages dissecting the years between 1995 and 1997 and only one paragraph on the violent, rapacious years from 1998 to 2001. During this period, in the name of fighting the *génocidaires*, Rwandan and Ugandan soldiers plundered the valuable mineral resources of the DRC for the enrichment of their own ruling elites, which the latter naturally denied completely. In the process, as Ugandans and Rwandans engaged in open warfare against each other on Congolese soil, millions of Congolese civilians were displaced or died from violence, illness, or starvation.

Eltringham also deals at some length with the deeply divisive politics of Rwandan history. Official histories are always tendentious, and in Rwanda their purpose proved fatal. Clashing Hutu and Tutsi versions of the past, often based on the work of white missionaries and colonialists, were invoked repeatedly in the past century to justify the most appalling of atrocities, culminating in the genocide itself. Eltringham is at his analytic best in deconstructing the debate over these conflicting interpretations and the malevolent uses to which they were put.

These debates, as well as others, will not soon fade, either in Cambodia or in Rwanda. With a long-awaited tribunal to judge the Khmer Rouge finally about to begin work in Cambodia, with the government of Paul Kagame imposing its own very precise view of Rwanda's past, with the wretched French still attempting to bring down Kagame over the plane crash that killed his predecessor and triggered the genocide, with denial of the Rwandan Genocide rife as ever in France and Belgium, genocide scholars and genocide preventionists will find a rich abundance of material to work on for decades to come.

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## Book Review

**Rachel Kerr. *The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia: An Exercise in Law, Politics, and Diplomacy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. Pp. 239, cloth. \$125.00 US.**

Reviewed by Daniel C. Turack, *Capital University Law School, Columbus, OH*

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In her book, Rachel Kerr presents, through the operation of the International Criminal Tribunal For the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), an integrated study of law and international politics in the maintenance of international peace and security. Although the tribunal was established as a tool of politics, it has administered justice in an apolitical fashion. Kerr's empirical examination explores the necessity of the ICTY's political status for the performance of its judicial function as an independent court.

After delineating the philosophy that led to the unique convergence of legal, political, and diplomatic dynamics, Kerr takes the reader along three distinctive paths: the UN Security Council's role in the areas of international peace and security, the development of international criminal justice through 1993, and the response of the international community to ongoing systematic violations of international humanitarian law—particularly those involving ethnic cleansing.

The ICTY has had to independently manipulate the political context in which it operates in order to fulfill its judicial mandate; hence the need to generate its own momentum. Kerr carefully charts the process of creating this innovative tribunal: its seat, its legal status and personality, its funding, its basic framework, and the transfer and detention of the accused. The core aspects of the ICTY's jurisdiction are explained. Questions answered here are whether the method of establishing this tribunal satisfies the requirement that it be "established by law" (62) and on what basis it is competent to exercise jurisdiction. A discussion of the primacy of the ICTY over national courts, as political or legally motivated, follows. As expected, Kerr assesses the topics of territorial, temporal, and subject-matter jurisdiction issues. She also covers a range of issues not directly pertinent to the operation of the tribunal but still related to its overall success, such as the dissolution of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia and the growth of international humanitarian law. She highlights the consequences of legal decisions in the political arena. She also analyzes the ICTY's rules of procedure and evidence in relation to their impact on politics and on law. Specifically, issues of admissibility and disclosure of evidence and political considerations concerning victims and witnesses are amplified. Kerr's conclusion is that the "administration of justice was fair, impartial and expeditious" (113) but that this result was brought about by certain trade-offs.

To function effectively, the ICTY needed support from the states in the region, from other states, and from both intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. Kerr sets out the legal framework for investigations and for international cooperation and judicial assistance at trial and explores the various levels of cooperation in practice to show the influence of politics and diplomacy at various stages. Interestingly, the examples of non-compliance by states and non-cooperation

by certain government leaders did not ultimately prevent the ICTY from achieving its successes. Politics and logistics apparently play a significant role in obtaining custody of an accused. Relying on national police authorities to make arrests, using international forces to effect detention, and encouraging voluntary surrender are all necessary for the tribunal to perform its functions. This balancing act is adroitly manifest in the role and function of the prosecutor, with a positive result (213).

The exercise of prosecutorial discretion is critical to the successful operation of the ICTY. Accordingly, this study discusses the relative styles of three chief prosecutors—Richard Goldstone, Louise Arbour, and Carla Del Ponte—and their interpretations of how their office was to function in terms of law and politics.

In the short term, Kerr argues, the ICTY has brought justice for both perpetrators and victims; it has accomplished both justice and peace. She also asserts that its activity has fostered reconciliation, but states that the latter aim has “not been fulfilled to the extent desired” (217). The long-term impact of the tribunal’s operations cannot be measured until more time has passed after the completion of its principal task. While the ICTY has performed admirably, it has been unable to apprehend and prosecute two of the primary perpetrators of the atrocities. As long as Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić remain at large, the tribunal will have failed to provide justice.

There is a considerable literature on the ICTY, but Rachel Kerr’s treatment of the subject is innovative, insightful, and definitely worth the read.

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# Contributors

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**Taner Akçam** was born in Turkey in 1953. As the editor-in-chief of a student political journal, he was arrested in 1976 and sentenced to ten years' imprisonment; Amnesty International adopted him as a prisoner of conscience. A year later, he escaped to political asylum in Germany. In 1988 he undertook research in sociology at the Hamburg Institute for Social Research. His first topic was the history of political violence and torture in the late Ottoman Empire and early Republic of Turkey. In 1995 he earned his doctorate from the University of Hanover; since 2002 he has been Visiting Associate Professor of History at the University of Minnesota. Professor Akçam has since lectured and published extensively on the Armenian Genocide; his eleven books and numerous articles in English, French, German, and Turkish include *Armenien und die Völkermord* (2nd ed. 2005); *Dialogue across an International Divide: Essays Towards a Turkish–Armenian Dialogue* (2001); *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide* (2004); and the forthcoming *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and Turkish Responsibility*. He is currently working on a book with Vahakn N. Dadrian, *The Protocols of the Istanbul Military Tribunals on the Investigation of the Armenian Genocide*.

**Gerry Caplan** is an independent scholar and activist who focuses mainly on genocide and African underdevelopment. He has undertaken a series of assignments for the African Union and several UN agencies dealing with the well-being of African children; he was senior adviser to the former UN Special Envoy for AIDS in Africa and chair of the International Advisory Board of the University of Toronto's Special Initiative on AIDS in Africa. He is the author of *Rwanda: The Preventable Genocide* (2000), the comprehensive report of the International Panel of Eminent Personalities appointed by the Organization of African Unity to investigate the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. He has just completed a book titled *The Conspiracy against Africa*, which will be published in 2008 by Groundwood Press.

**Vahakn N. Dadrian** received his undergraduate education in Europe studying philosophy, mathematics, and international law at the Universities of Vienna, Berlin, and Zürich, respectively, and earned a PhD in sociology from the University of Chicago. After serving as visiting professor and professor at universities including Harvard, MIT, Duke, Wisconsin, Florida Atlantic, and SUNY, he retired to pursue full-time research on the Armenian Genocide. That research was supported by grants from the National Science Foundation and the H.F. Guggenheim Foundation, resulting in two monographs published in the *Yale Journal of International Law* and the books *The History of the Armenian Genocide* (now in its seventh printing); *German Responsibility in the Armenian Genocide*; and *Warrant for Genocide: Key Elements of the Turko-Armenian Conflict* (now in its third printing). Currently, he is Director of Genocide Research at the Zoryan Institute.

**Stefanie de Best** received her BSc in biopsychology from the University of British Columbia in 2007. She worked as a research assistant at UBC from 2005 through 2007 on projects related to Holocaust rescuers, affective forecasting, and maternal acceptability for ADHD treatments. Her future research interests include collective

violence, altruism, and resiliency in at-risk youth. She plans to begin graduate studies in psychology in 2008.

**Desmond Fernandes**, of the Campaign Against Criminalising Communities, was formerly a Senior Lecturer in the Geography of Genocide and Human Geography at De Montfort University, Bedford, England. He is the author of *The Kurdish and Armenian Genocides: From Censorship and Denial to Recognition?* (Stockholm: Apec Books, 2007); *The Kurdish Genocide in Turkey* (Stockholm: Apec Books, in press); and various articles on “deep politics” and genocide.

**Maureen S. Hiebert** is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Military and Strategic Studies at the University of Calgary and teaches international relations and comparative politics in the Department of Political Science, University of Calgary. She holds a PhD from the Department of Political Science at the University of Toronto; her dissertation, “The Origins of Genocide: Political Culture, Crisis, and the Construction of Victims,” explores the role played by collective identity construction in the perpetration of the Holocaust and the Cambodian genocide. Dr. Hiebert has presented several papers on comparative genocide theory, social constructivism, and collective identity construction at academic conferences for the International Association of Genocide Scholars, the Canadian Political Science Association, the Canadian Sociological and Anthropological Association, the Midwest Political Science Association, and the Annual MAIR Conference at the Munk Centre for International Studies. She has previously taught courses in comparative genocide at the Department of Political Science, University of Toronto, and has given guest lectures on the Cambodian genocide at McMaster University.

**Hikmet Karčić** is a student at the Law Faculty in Sarajevo.

**Rob McCormick** is Assistant Professor of History at the University of South Carolina Upstate. He has recently published on the Balkan Committee and Croatian sculptor Ivan Meštrović, and is currently working on a manuscript dealing with Ante Pavelić.

**Dr. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas**, Emerita, University of Roskilde, Denmark, and Åbo Akademi University, Finland, has written or edited approximately fifty books and almost 400 articles and book chapters, in thirty-one languages, about minority education, linguistic human rights, linguistic genocide, the subtractive spread of English, the relationship between biodiversity and linguistic diversity, and so on. She received the Linguapax award in 2003. For publications, see <http://akira.ruc.dk/~tovesk/>.

A Holocaust survivor from Hungary, **Peter Suedfeld** was educated at Queens College, CUNY, and at Princeton University. He is now Dean Emeritus of Graduate Studies and Professor Emeritus of Psychology at the University of British Columbia. His research focuses on how people cope with challenging environments and experiences, including high-level political decisions, work in polar and space environments, and genocide.

**Professor Daniel C. Turack** of Capital University Law School in Columbus, Ohio, is noted for his expertise in international law and has published extensively at that area. He taught law in Australia, in Canada, and at the University of Mississippi before arriving at Capital University in 1969. Professor Turack offers his expertise to students in the areas of contracts, admiralty, international law, human rights, and international criminal law. He is nationally recognized for his extensive publication record in the area of international humanitarian law.