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Editor's Introduction

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Editor's Introduction

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