

December 2006

Editor's Introduction

Herb Hirsch

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/gsp>

Recommended Citation

Hirsch, Herb (2006) "Editor's Introduction," *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal*: Vol. 1: Iss. 3: Article 2.

Available at: <https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/gsp/vol1/iss3/2>

This Editorial is brought to you for free and open access by the Open Access Journals at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* by an authorized editor of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact scholarcommons@usf.edu.

Editor's Introduction

This is the third issue of Volume 1 of *Genocide Studies and Prevention*. It is the first non-topical or general issue and, therefore, contains articles covering a wide variety of topics. The lead article by Professor David Scheffer, formerly US ambassador at large for war crimes issues (1997–2001) and currently the Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw/Robert A. Helman Professor of Law and director of the Center for International Human Rights at Northwestern University, is an exciting and interesting call for a new genre of human-rights law. Arguing that the term “genocide” has imposed limitations on action to protect human rights, Scheffer calls for a new category of international law, “atrocity crimes.” The purpose here, as he argues, is to “simplify and yet render more accurate both public dialogue and legal terminology describing genocide and other atrocity crimes.”

Scheffer's proposal is so interesting and innovative that we, the co-editors of *GSP*, have invited ten of the foremost scholars and international lawyers in the field to comment on his proposal. We will publish their reactions as a symposium in the first issue of volume 2 (February 2007), along with Scheffer's response to the commentaries.

The second article in this issue, “Labeling “Genocide” in Sudan: A Constructionist Analysis of Darfur,” by William F.S. Miles, professor of political science at Northeastern University, adopts a theoretical framework of constructionist analysis to demonstrate that the “severity of political problems,” including genocide, “is a function of the socio-linguistic processing and naming of them.” Miles marshals empirical data to trace the use of the term “genocide” “in the print media with respect to Darfur” and finds that “avoidance of the signifying label ‘genocide’ in the media leads to a downgrading of attention to, and salience for, Darfur among the public at large, their elected representatives, and policy makers.”

The third article, by Edward Paulino, assistant professor in the Department of History at CUNY/John Jay College of Criminal Justice, examines a potentially genocidal situation that has not attracted the attention of genocide scholars. In “Anti-Haitianism, Historical Memory, and the Potential for Genocidal Violence in the Dominican Republic,” Paulino points out that in 2005, after the murder of a Dominican woman near the Dominican–Haitian border, Haitian communities were deported and their homes were attacked by revenge-seeking Dominicans. He notes that this was part of a historical pattern of anti-Haitianism that goes back to the nineteenth century. In conclusion, Paulino warns that there exists a potential for an “escalation of mass violence against the largest ethnic and racial minority in the Dominican Republic.”

The fourth article is a departure from the social-science and historical forms of analysis usually manifested in the study of genocide. In “The Restless World of Leonardo Alishan (March 1951–January 2005): A Burnt Offering on the Altar of the Armenian Genocide,” Rubina Perroomian, a research associate at UCLA, demonstrates the importance of literary analysis as a tool to help understand genocide through a study and description of the work of the poet Leonardo Alishan. Perroomian's moving portrayal is an important departure from the typical genre of genocide literature, since she expands the discussion from the usual fields of history, political science, sociology,

and so on to the area of literature and, in this case, poetry. Poets often convey what social scientists are at a loss to express. Listen as Peroomian describes Alishan:

His longing for beauty, his quest for perpetual harmony and order, remained in stark contrast with the chaotic world that engulfed him, the world of genocide, where order and harmony had no meaning. As an artist in pursuit of beauty in art, Alishan faced that impossibility and declared his failure to overcome the challenge. He was not able to resolve, and no one has resolved, the dichotomy between fragmentation forced upon his art as the characteristic of genocide literature and coherence as a condition of beauty in art.

Peroomian's moving account of Alishan's life and poetry offers us a view into the heart of the artist as he attempts to deal with the atrocity of genocide. Alishan becomes, in the end, according to Peroomian, "a burnt offering on the altar of the memory of genocide."

In the fifth article, "Deportation and Massacres in the Cipher Telegrams of the Interior Ministry in the Prime Ministerial Archive (Başbakanlık Arşivi)," Taner Akçam, visiting associate professor of history at the University of Minnesota, once again uses new source material to refute denial of the Armenian Genocide. Using official Ottoman sources, Akçam confirms that the CUP intended to kill, not relocate, the Armenians, reconfirming the duplicity of the CUP and using these official sources to construct his thesis.

The final contribution, "'Native Christians Massacred': The Ottoman Genocide of the Assyrians and Chaldeans during World War I," by Hannibal Travis, assistant professor of law at the Florida International University College of Law, examines a largely unknown genocide that took place at the same time as the Armenian Genocide. The Ottoman Empire's persecution of Assyrian and Chaldean civilians during World War I was, according to Travis, "a form of genocide." He argues that "Ottoman soldiers and their Kurdish and Persian militia partners subjected hundreds of thousands of Assyrians and Chaldeans to a deliberate and systematic campaign of massacre, torture, abduction, deportation, impoverishment, and cultural and ethnic destruction." By bringing this forgotten episode to public consciousness, Travis contributes another important case study to the growing literature on the sad cruelty of the last century.

We hope that you, the reader, will find this third, general issue interesting and exciting.

Herb Hirsch
Co-Editor

Notice of Errata

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* 1:2 (Fall 2006): 127–48, contained the following errors: (a) p. 137, para. 2, l. 7, "pre-ordained" should read "premeditated"; (b) p. 137, para. 2, l. 3, "Tekdid-i Seyyiat Komisyonu" should read "Tetkik-i Seyyiat Komisyonu," and should be translated "Committee for the Investigation of Misdeeds" (as also on p. 141, para. 4, l. 2, and p. 142, para. 1, l. 2); (c) p. 138, para. 3, l. 6, "Dr. Holleg Mordtmann" should read "Dr. Johannes Heinrich Mordtmann"; (d) p. 140, para. 3, l. 6, "newly formed Assembly" should read "newly formed Senate"; (e) p. 141, para. 2, l. 12, "secondary criminals on the side" should read "accessories to the crime"; (f) p. 142, para. 4, l. 3, "Teş-ı Mahsusa" should read "Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa"; (g) p. 143, para. 2, l. 3, "Second Precinct" should read "Second Department"; (h) p. 147, n. 69, l. 2, "Foreign Minister Javo" should read "Foreign Minister von Jagow." *GSP* and the author regret these errors.