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Editors' Introduction

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Editors' Introduction

Here we are again, and it feels only a few short days since we published 16.1 when, in fact, some months have passed. I think this reflects our ever-busy state of being as weeks disappear all too quickly.

This edition is what our Editor, Fiza Lee Winter, calls a “mixed bag,” inasmuch as there is not a theme per se, other than engagement with the study of genocide and with it a hopeful step towards its prevention. But with this bunching of content comes possibilities, as noted in the edition’s eclecticism of voice, perspective, and genre.

To begin, I would like to draw your attention to the roundtable discussion about one of our own editor’s books, *Raphaël Lemkin and the Concept of Genocide* (2017) by Douglas Irvin-Erickson. This submission speaks to our varied backgrounds, revealing many avenues of scholarly reflection and opinion. The roundtable takes us in all directions yet is grounded by a discussion about Lemkin and his legacy (and the myth of his legacy), including reflections on the Genocide Convention with its strengths, weaknesses, and its problematic enforcement.

As a response to Irvin-Erickson’s book, Dirk Moses poses the question of whether Irvin-Erickson “thinks a new intellectual history of genocide needs transcend the assumption about its humanization of domestic and international affairs.” Moses speaks on, as he phrases it, the impotence of international institutions and the complication of stateless peoples when considering the Genocide Convention. Sarah Federman shows how Irvin-Erickson’s approach to Lemkin diverts from other histories and she poses several pertinent questions about the Genocide Convention. Scott Straus also poses questions while delving into the relevance of Lemkin to the study of genocide and, more pointedly, whether Lemkin’s opinions about genocide have relevance given his complex involvement in advocacy and how this might have undermined some of his intellectual integrity. Lastly, Max Pensky speaks to similar complexities, drawing on a quote from Hannah Arendt to question the legitimacy of international law and, in turn, the relevance of Lemkin himself with regard to the Convention’s legacy.

Responding to discussants, Irvin-Erickson displays his passion for the topic, in doing so proving his ability to put pen to paper. His responses to those partaking in the roundtable give considerable insight into Lemkin and his legacy. My thanks go to our book editor, JoAnn DiGeorgio-Lutz, who spent hours collating the roundtable material—it is no easy task corralling a group of academics and getting them to keep to some semblance of editorial rulebook.

I would also like to draw your attention to the essay by Professor René Lemarchand. An important contributor to our community of genocide scholars for some decades, Lemarchand takes this opportunity to reflect on his journey as an academic who was at the forefront of understanding violence in the countries of Rwanda and Burundi. While the history he writes about is interesting, the essay takes us on a personal journey, and he explains how that journey shaped his career. This is a remarkable essay in that we are privy to the contemplations of one of our esteemed colleagues who looks back on an esteemed career. Here, my thanks go to our Arts and Literature Editor, Sabah Carrim, for approaching Professor Lemarchand,

and to the author himself who kindly accepted the invitation to reflect on his years of study. Through his essay we come to understand Lemarchand and his personal drive as much as we are, once again, made aware of his scholarly expertise.

We are also fortunate to publish an article by long-standing IAGS colleague Deborah Mayersen who, again, changes research direction (last time I worked with Deborah she published an essay on graphic novels). This time she investigates modes of resistance during the Hamidian massacres, crimes that were committed in the lead-up to the Armenian genocide. Mayersen discusses some of the obvious forms of resistance by local Armenians, such as a call to arms, yet includes forms of resistance that are complicated and have themselves been the topic of much debate, such as suicide and religious conversion.

Sean Sidky's submission offers insight into the education of the Holocaust, and his essay is aimed at pedagogical practitioners in our field. Sidky looks at the employment of victim and survivor voices, and how best to incorporate these into the classroom. Using an example of a teaching tool he developed from his experience at the 2021 Curt C. and Else Silberman Seminar, organized by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), Sidky reveals pedagogical approaches available to help students (and educators) navigate these difficult memories once they have been collected on film.

Together, this "mixed bag" reflects the vast array of voices and opinions that we encounter when studying genocide, and with that I leave you to read and contemplate.

Kirril Shields
Editor-in-Chief, GSP

The editorial team wishes to thank all the authors in this edition of GSP, and believe the content mirrors the ongoing quest of scholars and practitioners to study genocide and, in doing so, help to understand and thereby prevent the crime. In this edition, we welcome new voices to GSP, and we are pleased to publish some more established voices. We think readers will enjoy the eclecticism of the edition and hope this diversity inspires others to submit similarly thought-provoking articles and essays.

Jeff Bachman
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Shannon Fyfe
Deon Janice
Douglas Irvin-Erickson
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