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Editor's Introduction

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Editors' Introduction

The field of genocide studies is concerned with all aspects of the crime of genocide (including pre- and post-events). It is a relatively new (some thirty-five years old) but burgeoning field. Its scholars come from diverse fields: political science, history, sociology, psychology, law, literature, anthropology, philosophy, education, and even medicine. Most genocide scholars publish their research in their respective disciplines' journals as well as journals that primarily focus on genocide.

As one can readily imagine, the field of genocide studies is radically different today from what it was in the early 1980s when it was just beginning to be formed. Prior to that period there was no field to speak of. Individual scholars were largely working alone, producing works and reports on various facets of genocide and/or case studies of various acts of genocide (e.g., the Armenian Genocide, the Holocaust, the Genocide of the Aché, the Cambodian Genocide). It was not until a small group of scholars—Israel Charny, Vahakn Dadrian, Irving Louis Horowitz, Leo Kuper, and Lawrence LeBlanc—wrote key monographs or books on genocide in the late 1970s and the early 1980s, followed by a major international conference planned and hosted by Charny, that the concept of a field of genocide studies garnered widespread attention and began to attract other scholars. In the early to mid 1980s, Helen Fein and Barbara Harff joined the effort.¹ By the late 1980s the coterie of genocide scholars had expanded further. In addition to Kuper, Charny, Fein, and Harff, among those conducting research into genocide, teaching about genocide, and publishing works on genocide were such individuals as Roger Smith, Herb Hirsch, Henry Huttenbach, Eric Markusen, Frank Chalk, Kurt Jonassohn, Yves Ternon, and Samuel Totten.

In the early to the mid 1980s, if one looked up the term “genocide” in a Dewey Decimal System catalog in search of works available (yes, that was before library catalogs were online) one would generally find a half dozen or so books with “genocide” in the title and a listing of numerous other books on the Holocaust that included the term “genocide” in their titles. Today, literally ten times more books and articles are published each year than the cumulative amount produced through the mid to late 1980s. Many issues addressed by genocide scholars today were not even conceived of in the early days of the field.

Taking Charny's landmark Tel Aviv conference in 1982 as a key point of coalescence, the field is about to enter its fourth decade. Given its continuing vibrancy, the proliferation of conferences and organizations, and its greatly increased public prominence over the past decade, the editors of *Genocide Studies and Prevention (GSP)* decided that it was an ideal time to take stock of the development of the field and consider where it has been, where it is today, and what possibly lies ahead.

As the editors of this special issue, we decided early on that a key goal was to solicit articles from as diverse a set of genocide scholars as possible in order to include as many perspectives and as broad a range of issues as possible. At the same time, we did not specify or attempt to determine what each contributor would address in his/her article, as long as he/she focused on the “the State of Genocide Studies.” That meant soliciting articles from “old hands” who had been in the field from the outset, “big names,” “up and coming scholars,” and newly minted PhDs

from different disciplines. We aimed to include those adhering to different theories of genocide and with different research agendas. An effort (not always successful) was also made to include scholars from each continent.² Ultimately, the contributors focused on vastly different issues (causes of genocide, early warning, gender and genocide, prevention and intervention, research methodologies, lacuna in the field, the aftermath of genocide, etc.).

For many readers of *GSP*, it is no secret that the relationship between some members of the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) and the International Network of Genocide Scholars (INoGS) has been tense over the years and that attempts at rapprochement have not been successful despite the efforts of various leaders in both organizations. The key difference between the philosophies of each organization is also well known, with IAGS committed to the notion that scholars have an ethical obligation not only to develop accurate analyses and insights into genocide, but to support the application of such developments through direct work against potential and ongoing genocides and against the denial of past genocides, while INoGS emphasizes the importance of a purely academic, non-political approach in order to preserve scholarly objectivity and prevent what they perceive as political agendas from compromising scholarship. Both approaches have their merits and come from a genuine concern for scholarly responsibility, and each position exposes the limits of the other (distance from political realities can devolve into an exploitative use of genocide for academic careers without benefits for past, present, or potential victims and a forced suppression of rational and legitimate engagement by scholars, while direct engagement can ensnare scholars in supporting political forces and trends, such as humanitarian military intervention, whose ultimate goals or effects could, at times, be far from the promotion of human rights and can even entice some scholars to compromise their scholarly responsibilities in favor of political and legal influence and relevance). Both perspectives, it seems, might be critical to the health of the field as a whole, and herein we are committed to representing both perspectives. As readers will see for themselves, IAGS-oriented scholars are as concerned as any with methodological issues and the objectivity of their research, while INoGS-oriented scholars often follow their moral principles to work with United Nations and other organizations on genocide issues and also weigh in on policy debates regarding genocide and issues of denial. The fact that some contributors belong to both organizations is indicative of the dynamic and complex nature of the differences discussed above when they play out in the moral deliberations of committed scholars. We are especially pleased that a number of prominent INoGS members, some of whom have significant roles in its journal (the *Journal of Genocide Research*), accepted invitations to contribute articles to this special issue.

Given the length constraints of each issue of *GSP* we had no choice but to split the articles over two issues: volume 6, issue 3 and volume 7, issue 1, both devoted to the topic of “the State and Future of Genocide Studies.” Issue 6:3 begins with Samuel Totten’s overview of the field to date, providing context and background for many of the articles included, along with what he perceives as critical issues vis-à-vis the prevention of and intervention in genocide. Totten’s article is followed, in turn, by articles presenting the broadest topical or historical analyses of the field and then by those with a more specific, specialized focus. The specifically focused articles continue in 7:1, which concludes with Henry Theriault’s consideration of new directions for the field and their role in the broader struggle against genocide and for human rights. It is interesting that, without orchestration, a number of the articles complement and/or respond to one another in interesting ways. To bring those inter-

esting connections and contrasts into relief, we have placed such articles together in a sequence that seems to make most sense.

In what follows, we briefly sketch the contents of 6:3. Samuel Totten examines five concerns, each of which is related to the issue of the prevention of and intervention against genocide. First, he discusses what he perceives as four major impediments to the prevention of and intervention against genocide; second, he argues that while many speak about the need to involve more diverse voices and perspectives in the field of genocide studies, experts on a host of issues related to prevention have been marginalized; third, he critiques the viability of the Crimes Against Humanity Initiative in relation to issues of prevention and intervention; fourth, he discusses the idea of genocide scholars monitoring “hotspots” on the ground; and finally, he addresses the scholar-activist divide that has resulted in not a little enmity between and among members of IAGS and INoGS.

Colin's Tatz's contribution provides an important historical and conceptual overview of central areas of disagreement and conceptual challenges in the field. He brings into view often under-analyzed issues, such as race and genocide complicity, laying the groundwork for interesting future treatments of these issues. His work is grounded in an Australian perspective, developed in the struggle against the denial of Australia's own genocidal past.

Dominik Schaller offers a tightly written, witty, and incisive historical analysis of a number of key issues, including the use and overuse of the term “genocide,” the circus-like atmosphere that has grown up around the fight against genocide and the emergence of what he has termed “genocide tourism,” Eurocentric attitudes and approaches inherent in the field of genocide studies and the problems that they pose for the field, how and why genocide has become a contested concept, and genocide and memory politics. In addition, he engages the life and work of Raphael Lemkin in interesting ways, highlighting the important implications of Lemkin's work for the contemporary development of the important concept of “colonial genocide.”

Daniel Feierstein analyzes the Eurocentrism of the field which, he argues, results in the exclusion not only of certain cases based on their geographical location or their methods or structure, but also of the insights and concerns of scholars and methodologies from the Global South. This seriously weakens the field, he argues, in that it not only prevents voices that deserve to be heard on behalf of constituencies whose suffering and efforts against mass violence deserve recognition, but prevents new and unique perspectives and research findings from being considered by other scholars and from impacting and enriching the field.

Adam Jones discusses the relationship between Holocaust studies and genocide studies, which he argues has become more and more distant to the detriment of both pursuits. Jones highlights the need for more attention—and, indeed, an ethical commitment to that attention—to the many marginalized cases of genocide that are known but neglected in the field as well as a focus on fostering gender and regional equity in the field. He concludes by discussing new opportunities that the prominence of genocide studies has created for input from genocide scholars into human rights concerns and issues germane to the prevention of and intervention against genocide.

Robert Melson, past president of IAGS, focuses on what he categorizes as “modern genocide.” He locates modernity's tendency toward genocide in the cultural plurality of modern states in tension with the need for legitimacy of governments of unstable states. He also critically engages the recent trend toward viewing modern genocide in general as a function of imperialism, arguing against seeing all genocide in this way.

At once complementary to and slightly at odds with Jones's analysis and push for an improved Holocaust studies-genocide studies relationship, A. Dirk Moses challenges the recent reassertion of the Holocaust uniqueness view. He argues that the approach resists many new and highly productive trends in genocide studies, especially the focus on imperialism that historicizes the Holocaust within a broader historical period of imperialist genocide. Moses's critique, in a sense, serves as a nuanced defense of the new imperialism school of genocide analysis and thus as an implicit response to Melson's article.

Issue 7:1 contains the next ten articles in this special issue on the "State and Future of Genocide Studies," by Alex Hinton, Sheri Rosenberg, Jacques Semelin, Hannibal Travis, Evgeny Finkel and Scott Straus, Uğur Ümit Üngör, Ernesto Verdeja, Elisa von Joeden-Forgey, Israel Charny, and Henry Theriault.

Henry Theriault and Samuel Totten,
GSP Co-editors

Notes

1. It is important to note, of course, that the foundational work on genocide was produced by Raphael Lemkin, beginning in the 1930s, most notably in his *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944). Another foundational work was produced in 1959 by Pieter N. Drost, *The Crimes of State* (Leyden: A. W. Sythoff).
2. Unfortunately, despite repeated attempts, we were unable to obtain articles from scholars in Africa and Asia.