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. 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. 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.


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.
The State and Future of Genocide Studies and Prevention: An Overview and Analysis of Some Key Issues

Samuel Totten
University of Arkansas

In addition to providing a succinct history of the field of genocide studies, this article examines such issues as the critical need to address the toughest barriers to the prevention of and intervention against genocide (e.g., realpolitik, the lack of political will, and the reform of the UN Security Council, including the make-up and operation of the Permanent Five members [Great Britain, US, France, Russia, and China]); whether the Crimes Against Humanity Initiative will make a real difference vis-à-vis the prevention of and intervention against genocide; the critical need for the field to be more inclusive by welcoming and nurturing a strong working relationship with international relations and peace studies scholars; the need for genocide scholars to more closely monitor “hot spots” (areas where crimes against humanity and genocide are likely to erupt or have already erupted); and the activist/non-activist divide in the field of genocide studies.

Key words: history of the field, prevention, intervention, UN Security Council, Permanent Five, Crimes Against Humanity Initiative, peace studies, monitoring hot spots, activists

While genocide is the intent to destroy in whole or in part a particular group as such, the stark reality is that individual human beings suffer the torment, cruelty, and brutality meted out during the genocidal period. While individual members of the group are frequently killed in horrific ways, survivors often live out the rest of their existences on earth bereft in about every way imaginable. Undoubtedly, it is my human rights background and various experiences (including incidents and situations that I have witnessed during my stints in Africa) that have driven me to keep the individual at the forefront of my mind as I delve deeper into the maw of genocide.

Over the past eight years I have spent an ever-increasing amount of time in Africa—the Nuba Mountains in Sudan and refugee camps in Chad, conducting research into the government of Sudan’s genocidal actions against the people of the Nuba Mountains in the late 1980s and early 1990s and Sudan’s genocidal actions against the black Africans in Darfur, respectively—and in doing so, I have seen the results of atrocity crimes up close. It changes one forever, as it should. In my case, it redoubled my dedication to focusing on the welfare of targeted groups and the individuals who comprise them. What has been most evident during the course of my research into the government of Sudan’s propensity for mass violence is that when serious human rights violations are allowed to go unchecked and perpetrators are allowed to continue to perpetrate atrocities unabated, the seeds of future crimes against humanity and/or genocide are likely being sown. For me, this underscores
the fact that as soon as there is evidence that serious human rights violations are about to be perpetrated, or are underway, it is imperative that they be halted immediately. It is unconscionable to ignore them, and it is nonsensical to wait to see if they are going to eventuate in crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, and/or genocide. Ideally, at the first signs of serious conflict between groups, efforts should be made to ameliorate them through the good offices of the United Nations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and specialists in conflict resolution. Yes, the world is huge and rife with problems, but nothing short of ameliorating conflict and stanching serious human rights violations early on is going to prevent genocide. To date, far too many genocide scholars, intergovernmental officials, and leaders of individual states have been content to play the waiting game before setting into motion serious attempts to ameliorate such conflicts.

After presenting an overview of the genesis and evolution of the field of genocide studies, I will limit my comments to five issues: (1) three major impediments to the prevention and intervention of genocide (realpolitik, lack of political will, and the composition, operation, and power of the Permanent Five [P5] of the UN Security Council); (2) the critical need to bring other disciplines into the field of genocide studies to help develop efficacious means of prevention and intervention; (3) the Crimes Against Humanity Initiative; (4) the value of genocide scholars working in areas of potential and actual conflict; and (5) the scholar/activist divide.

An Overview of the Field of Genocide Studies

Before 1980, very few individuals—with the exception of international law experts analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (UNCG) and journalists covering such tragedies as the Bangladesh Genocide (1971) or the closing off of Cambodia by the Khmer Rouge (1975–1979)—thought about, let alone wrote about, genocide as a broad, general issue (as opposed to individual cases, such as the Armenian Genocide, the Holocaust, the Bangladesh Genocide). If that sounds like hyperbole, one should search through the works on genocide—books and refereed journal articles—published before 1980, or, for that matter, before 1990.

The names of those who laid the groundwork for the development of the field are now well known. Above all, of course, was Raphael Lemkin, the Polish jurist who was forced into exile by the rise of the Nazis. He coined the term “genocide” and fought tirelessly for the establishment of the UNCG. Among those who followed in his footsteps and virtually created the field of genocide studies are illustrious names such as Leo Kuper, Irving Louis Horowitz, Israel W. Charny, and Helen Fein. Without their pioneering efforts and the efforts of the scholars who followed shortly thereafter, it is probable that the field of genocide studies would never have developed, or at least not as early as it did. That too may sound like hyperbole, but had they not individually and sometimes collectively organized the first conferences dedicated to the subject of genocide, presented papers at conferences hosted by their respective disciplines or universities, written the first books, developed the first research tools, and created the first institutes, there certainly would have been no foundation for second-, third-, and fourth-generation scholars to conveniently step onto, as they now can and do, and proceed apace as if genocide studies had existed forever.

Not only did Kuper, a political scientist (University of California, Los Angeles), write two key texts—Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century and The
Prevention of Genocide—but he also co-founded International Alert Against Genocide and Massacres in 1985 with Martin Ennals. If Kuper had lived longer (he passed away in 1994), he would have likely been at the forefront, with Charny, of developing and implementing a slew of innovative projects with the aim of forming a rock-solid foundation on which to build the new field of genocide studies.

Charny, a psychologist at Tel Aviv University, founded the Institute on the Holocaust and Genocide in 1979 with Shamai Davidson and Elie Wiesel. In 1982 he organized in Tel Aviv the first large-scale conference on genocide. From that point forward, Charny devised numerous innovations in an effort to build a foundation and then solidify the field. He founded and edited a newsletter, The Internet on the Holocaust and Genocide (1985); established a bibliographic series entitled Genocide: A Critical Bibliographic Review, first published in 1988; co-founded (with Helen Fein, Robert Melson, and Roger Smith) the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) in 1994; created and co-edited the first encyclopedia of genocide in 1999; co-founded (with the IAGS and the Zoryan Institute) Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal in 2005; and, most recently, developed Genocide Prevention Now: A Holocaust and Genocide Review on the Internet for All People (2010). Throughout, he conducted research into various facets of genocide, including that which drives humans to commit mass murder.

Fein, a sociologist, served for many years as the Executive Director of one of the earliest scholarly organizations focusing on genocide, the New York City—based Institute for the Study of Genocide (ISG), which has over the years produced an informative newsletter (ISG Newsletter) that contains reports on ongoing atrocity crimes as well as overviews of research by scholars in the field. ISG has also hosted a number of colloquia on a wide array of issues. Not to be overlooked is the fact that for the past thirty years she has continued to produce thought-provoking and timely research into an array of genocide-related issues.

In addition to his own research on genocide, Horowitz, a sociologist and founder of Transaction Publishers, was one of the first publishers to earnestly publish works on genocide. To date, Transaction’s Series on Genocide has published works by Israel W. Charny, Richard Hovannisian, Ben Kiernan, and Samuel Totten, among others, including the scores of scholars who have contributed to Genocide: A Critical Bibliographic Review.

While there are others who contributed to the growth of the field and were innovators in their own right, the aforementioned scholars are the ones who truly led the pack. If not for them, it is hard to imagine the field of genocide studies being as robust as it is today.

When I entered the field of genocide studies in 1986 there were, literally, no more than just over a dozen scholars worldwide focusing on genocide—that is, on genocide theory, the prevention of and intervention against genocide, and/or comparative genocide—and a couple of dozen or so who focused on individual cases of genocide other than the Holocaust. The first group was made up of the previously mentioned individuals (Kuper, Charny, Horowitz, and Fein) as well as Roger Smith, Herb Hirsch, Barbara Harff, Eric Markusen, Frank Chalk, Kurt Jonassohn, and a few others. The latter category included, for example, Richard Arens (genocide of the Ache in Paraguay); Jon Bridgman (genocide of the Hereros in southwest Africa); Robert Conquest, James Mace, and Roman Serbyn (the Soviet Manmade Famine in Ukraine); Craig Etcheson, David Hawk, and Ben Kiernan (the Cambodian Genocide); and Vahakn Dadrian, Richard Hovannisian, and Yves Ternon (the Armenian Genocide).
Essentially, over the past 30 years the field has expanded from that small coterie of individuals to hundreds of scholars and graduate students who are broadening the focus of the field and enriching it in ways that were only dreamed of years ago.

During the early years, most scholars focused on one or more of the following: building theoretical constructs in regard to the causes of genocide; developing case studies of genocide; wrestling with the definition of genocide in the UNCG and/or developing their own definition of genocide⁵; collecting first-person accounts of various genocides; analyzing issues germane to prevention and intervention; and creating tools for scholars and students to use in their study of genocide.

As the field of genocide studies slowly began to attract new scholars, the 1980s and 1990s saw the establishment of new genocide centers around the world: the Institute for the Study of Genocide, New York City (1982); the Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies (1986); the Institute for the Research of Crimes Against Humanity and International Law, University of Sarajevo (1992); the Genocide Studies Program at Yale University (1998); the Uppsala Programme for Holocaust and Genocide Studies in Sweden (1998); and the Australian Institute for Holocaust and Genocide Studies (1999). Such centers generally published and disseminated newsletters, conducted research, issued reports and published monographs, established archives, and/or offered courses on different facets of genocide.⁶

Beginning with Charny's *Genocide: A Critical Bibliographic Review* series, various research tools have been developed by genocide scholars over the years, including, for example, the *Encyclopedia of Genocide* edited by Charny and the *Encyclopedia of Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity* edited by Dinah Shelton, *The Dictionary of Genocide* edited by Samuel Totten and Paul Bartrop, and *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies* edited by Donald Bloxham and A. Dirk Moses.⁷ These and other works have been particularly useful for instructors who teach courses on genocide and for students attempting to familiarize themselves with various facets of it.


In addition to those mentioned above, there has been an explosion of books, refereed articles, and book chapters on an eclectic array of topics and issues, including genocide theory, causes of genocide, cases of genocide, the impact of colonialism on indigenous groups across the globe, “forgotten” genocides, comparative studies of genocide, prevention of genocide, intervention against genocide, genocide and international law, court cases of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, the aftermath of genocide, and denial of genocide.

Finally, an innovation worth mentioning is French scholar Jacques Semelin’s *Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence* (OEMV). Initiated in 2004 by Sciences Po
Paris, Center for International Research and Studies, the OEMV “is a regularly updated electronic database focusing on massacres and genocides of the 20th century...[It] documents and classifies...knowledge by continent, country and historical period.” In doing so, the OEMV presents “reliable historical description and interdisciplinary analysis of both well-documented and less well-known 20th century massacres.”

Over the years, the increased attention to the subject of genocide resulted from a variety of factors, including:

- Interest piqued by the earlier works of genocide;
- Dissolution of the Soviet Union and end of the Cold War;
- Efforts of the genocide institutes around the globe;
- The 100-day genocide in Rwanda in which between 500,000 and one million people were slain;
- The ongoing concern throughout the 1990s that genocide had been and was possibly continuing to be perpetrated in different parts of the former Yugoslavia;
- The establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in 1993 to try the alleged perpetrators of crimes (i.e., genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes) committed during the course of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia;
- The establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in November 1994 “for the prosecution of persons responsible for genocide and other serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the territory of Rwanda between 1 January 1994 and 31 December 1994”;
- The establishment of the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) in 1994 and its subsequent conferences;
- The massacre (which was ultimately deemed a genocide) of 8,000 Muslim boys and men in Srebrenica in July 1995;
- The adoption of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court in 1998;
- An ever-increasing number of university courses being taught on genocide;
- University-based institutes of genocide studies that offer degree programs (primarily master’s degrees) in genocide studies;
- Summer institutes with foci on a combination of human rights, crimes against humanity, and/or genocide;
- The creation of the Journal of Genocide Research in 1999;
- The development of the concept of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P);
- The establishment of the International Criminal Court in 2002;
- The explosion of violence in Darfur, Sudan (2003–present);
- The establishment of the International Network of Genocide Scholars (INoGS) in 2005;
- The creation of Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal in 2005; and
- The indictment of Omar al-Bashir on 12 July 2010 on charges of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.

Increasingly, genocide scholars have presented testimony at tribunals and trials, taken part in UN meetings and governmental hearings germane to crimes against humanity and genocide, and served as investigators into suspected crimes against
humanity and/or genocide. For example, William Schabas has testified at the ICTR and served as one of three international members of the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Committee (2002–2004). Ton Zwaan, a professor in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at the University of Amsterdam and a research associate with the university’s Centre for Genocide Studies, presented expert testimony at the ICTY. Martin Mennecke, professor of international law at the Royal Danish Defence College, has served as an advisor to the Danish Government on the International Criminal Court since 2004 and continues to participate in diplomatic meetings in The Hague, at the European Union, and at the United Nations. In 2004, Eric Markusen and Samuel Totten served as investigators on the US State Department’s Atrocities Documentation Project and conducted interviews with black African refugees from Darfur who had fled to Chad following scorched earth attacks by the government of Sudan and Janjaweed (the express purpose of the project was to collect data so that they could be analyzed by the US State Department to ascertain whether genocide had been perpetrated or not by the government of Sudan).13

Today, the field of genocide studies is at a major turning point. As the pioneers of genocide studies enter their 80s and begin to slow down, the second-, third-, and fourth-generation scholars, with new research agendas and, in certain cases, new methodologies, are taking over the field. In addition to conducting new research into old cases of genocide (and revising findings that had largely been accepted as givens), they are, for example, examining cases of atrocity crimes that were rarely if ever examined through the lens of genocide (e.g., the atrocities perpetrated during the Dirty War in Argentina between 1976 and 1983) and raising new and critical questions about key issues (e.g., whether interventions to halt gross human rights violations might result in an escalation of atrocities and potentially genocide), and in doing so they are broadening, deepening and enriching the field. As a result, over and above macro-studies of genocide, we have micro- and meso-studies (and their various relationships), transnational genocide studies, critical genocide studies, the ramifications of colonialism and genocide, and the propounding of new theories regarding the causes of atrocity crimes, and so forth.

Some second-, third-, and fourth-generation scholars have begun scrutinizing previously overlooked archives in search of primary documents about genocides perpetrated a century or more ago in order to glean new insights into the antecedents, processes, and ramifications of such genocides. A small number of others are traveling to refugee camps and areas of conflict to carry out research. The upshot is that the boundaries of genocide studies are being stretched, issues delved into more deeply, and old conceptions revised. Not only is that as it should be but it is healthy and bodes well for the future of the field.

The Critical Need to Address the Toughest Barriers to Prevention and Intervention

The Issues of Realpolitik and the Lack of Political Will

Over the past decade or so, both a court decision and a wide array of reports by various organizations have spelled out the need for the international community and individual states to be more proactive in addressing situations that are moving toward genocide or have already descended into genocide. Among such organizations and their respective decisions/reports are the International Court of Justice (Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro: Case Concerning the Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide)14; the International Com-
mission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, commissioned by the United Nations and established by the Government of Canada (Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty)\textsuperscript{15}; the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the US Institute of Peace (Preventing Genocide: The Report of the Genocide Prevention Taskforce)\textsuperscript{16}; and Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government/Carr Center for Human Rights Policy (MARO: Mass Atrocity Response Operations: A Military Planning Handbook).\textsuperscript{17} All of these documents share the view that the responsibility to protect those in danger of being subjected to mass violence trumps state sovereignty. That is, a state is responsible for protecting its own citizens and if it does not or cannot do so, then other nations across the globe have the responsibility to intervene and protect the individuals in danger of being seriously harmed or killed. The emergence of the concept of R2P represents a sea change vis-à-vis the long-held perspective of the sacrosanctness of state sovereignty. Essentially, the concept of R2P runs counter to a state’s claim that state sovereignty prevents other nations from interfering in their so-called “internal affairs” when it is grossly mistreating its citizens or allowing a renegade group to violently harm its citizens.

R2P complements a rather remarkable judicial decision in regard to state responsibility to prevent genocide. What was addressed in part dealt with the issue of whether states are legally obligated to attempt to prevent genocide. More specifically, for over five decades (roughly from 1948 to 2000) scholars and others debated whether the UNCG legally obligates states to attempt to prevent genocide. Most asserted that while there is an inherent moral obligation to do so, there was no concomitant legal obligation. However, in the International Court of Justice’s (ICJ) case of Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro, the ICJ held that states do, in fact, have a legal obligation to prevent genocide.\textsuperscript{18}

While the new paradigm of R2P is still emergent, it offers at least some hope for the future as it seems to suggest that the international community is beginning to take the seemingly ubiquitous perpetration of mass atrocities more seriously. Still, it is much too soon to be jubilant. It is one thing to create and support such an approach and quite another to act upon it. It is impossible to forget that the very nations that welcomed R2P have been many of the same ones that ratified the UNCG and then brazenly ignored, time and again, their promise to prevent genocide. Realpolitik, the lack of political will, and economic interests all played a part in the lack of timely and effective action.

Realpolitik, of course, drives decision making at the national and international levels, including at the UN Security Council and among the members of the P5 (i.e., United States, Great Britain, France, China, and the Federation of Russia). Until it can be overcome, realpolitik will override many, if not most, of the good intentions behind R2P and the new perspectives and approaches previously mentioned regardless of how ardently supported they are.\textsuperscript{19} To believe otherwise verges on naivétè. That is not to say that such decisions and conceptual frameworks do not contribute by chipping away at the dominance of realpolitik, but when the impediments to timely and effective action (i.e., realpolitik, a lack of political will, and economic interests) are as ingrained as they are, it is going to take much, much more than a single concept to alter them in any real way.\textsuperscript{20}

So, while R2P is an effort in the right direction, when push comes to shove, what is going to prevent nations from resorting yet again to realpolitik when a genocidal crisis erupts? Any entity? Will there be any consequences? Or will it simply result in some finger pointing and a little embarrassment?
In the end, any reaction or consequence will likely be inconsequential. Nothing that will rock or threaten a government or nation’s well-being. Nothing punitive.

This is exactly why those who are vitally concerned with preventing and intervening against genocide (scholars, human rights activists, non-governmental and intergovernmental personnel, etc.) need to zero in on addressing how realpolitik can at least be increasingly softened as it relates to stanching crimes against humanity and genocide. The same is true in regard to the lack of political will. And a purported lack of resources for prevention and intervention missions must be overcome. Period.

To avoid focusing on such issues and impediments will simply prolong their effects when the time comes once again, and it will, to act to save the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. Right now, the lack of significant work on this front plays directly into self-deception and willed blindness, both of which make a mockery of much of the assembly-line-like churning out of reports, books, and articles that we, genocide scholars, are so prone to producing.

**Reforming the Operation and Procedures of the UN Security Council and the Make-up and Operation of the Permanent Five**

Over the past couple of decades many have looked askance at the make-up (and privileging) of the P5 of the UN Security Council, the power of the veto wielded by each member of the P5, the way in which realpolitik drives the decisions of each member of the P5, and the Council’s extremely poor record when it comes to the prevention of and intervention against genocide. The P5 of the UN Security Council constitutes an elite club made up of the US, Britain, France, China, and Russia. Important benefits that members enjoy include (1) being the only permanent members of the Security Council (all other members serve on a rotating basis) and (2) a special veto power over votes on any and all matters. In regards to the latter, if one of the P5 vetoes a resolution, it is automatically defeated, regardless of how pressing the issue may be or how ardently other members might support it. Thus, in a body composed of 192 nations, a single veto by a single member of the P5 can prevent an intervention to attempt to halt crimes against humanity and/or genocide.

Questions abound as to why those five countries should be privileged over all other countries in the world. While they are certainly among the most powerful and richest nations in the world, some have argued that in this day and age other countries, which have gained a toehold on power, wealth, and influence internationally, should be considered for potential membership in the elite club. In fact, for years, Germany, France, and India have called for reform to the UN Security Council and for an increase to the number of permanent members on the Council. Since at least since 2007, German Chancellor Angela Merkel has campaigned for a permanent German seat on the Security Council. In November 2010, US President Barack Obama entered the fray, asserting that India should become a permanent member of the Council.

Still others abound that permanent membership should be more diverse, including at least one state from Africa and one from Central or South America. They argue that such inclusivity might result in the Permanent Members of the Security Council being more concerned, and thus proactive, when it comes to crises in third-world nations. Maybe, but it seems dubious. After all, each permanent member would still wield the all-powerful veto, which would allow it to squelch any motion or resolution that it perceived as counter to its own or its allies’ interests.
Adding grease to the fire, many, if not most, of the P5's votes regarding intervention in genocide in the past have been driven by realpolitik. In other words, the P5 have not been concerned primarily with the fate of the potential victims of genocide but much more focused on whether intervening would be good for themselves or their allies. As the cliché goes, nation states do not have consciences. Concomitantly, the type of mission—Chapter VI (peacekeeping) or Chapter VII (peace enforcement) of the Charter of the United Nations—is largely dictated by the P5 as well. Thus, instead of sending a robust mission in a timely fashion with a mandate that allows the mission’s troops to handle a job properly, the P5 play politics and often approve missions that are sorely inadequate for the job. This is true for a whole host of reasons, but the main point here is that the P5 virtually take on the God-like role of deciding who will live and who will die.

It is also a fact that when the UN Security Council actually chooses to act in the face of genocide, it is more apt to do so after the genocide has broken out—that is, after a great deal of killing and other destruction has occurred rather than at an earlier point when the killing and destruction could have been prevented. That hardly honors the promise stated in Article 1 of the UNCG: “The Contracting Parties confirm that genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and to punish.”

Those who think or claim that reform to the Security Council and the P5 is an intractable issue could not be more wrong. Sooner or later everything is subject to change; it is only a question of how long it will be until the change is made, who will be behind the change, and how it will be made. With this in mind, genocide scholars need to begin to focus on the reformation of the Security Council with an eye toward making recommendations to the UN Secretary General and UN General Assembly. Certainly a team comprised of astute political scientists, international relations specialists, international law specialists, and ethicists, among others, could make a strong case for reform and develop significant ways to help reorient the UN Security Council so that it would at least be more open to the possibility of preventing mass atrocities before they break out and, in the event of an outbreak of genocide, be more proactive and conscientious in developing more timely, efficient, and effective missions. At a minimum, it seems, the following should be the focus of analysis and, ultimately, action: whether a Permanent Five (or any other number) should remain part and parcel of the UN Security Council; whether any member of the Security Council should hold an all-powerful veto; if the concept of the Permanent Group remains in place, how it could be made more diverse and fair so that third-world nations do not remain second-class members of the UN; how can the UN Security Council (and/or the UN General Assembly) be made more proactive in addressing gross human rights violations, crimes against humanity, and genocide; and a re-examination of the need to create a strong, well-trained, and well-resourced UN rapid-action force whose specialty would be stanching crimes against humanity and genocide. At one and the same time, such an analysis should include serious consideration of the analysis, insights, and suggestions posited in recent scholarly works and reports on the need to reform the UN Security Council in particular and the UN in general. An excellent starting point would be the host of issues that Michael Barnett examines in Eyewitness to a Genocide: The United Nations and Rwanda. Barnett analyzes how the make-up and operation of the UN bureaucracy contributed to the decisions, and lack thereof, to halt the Rwandan Genocide and how those working at the UN approached the issue of Rwanda not as individuals.
concerned with saving lives but rather as members of a bureaucracy,\textsuperscript{27} which basically caused decent human beings to adhere to institutional norms that militated against their zeroing in on the genocide as something that needed to be halted immediately.

**Crimes Against Humanity\textsuperscript{28} Initiative**

In 2008, the Crimes Against Humanity Initiative was established by a group of international law specialists to "study the need for and to ultimately elaborate a comprehensive international convention on the prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity."\textsuperscript{29} In August 2010, the group completed its work on the development of its *Proposed International Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against Humanity*. Meetings then ensued with academics, diplomats, and members of civil society to discuss the proposed convention and seek support for it.

The proposed convention comprises "three core pillars": prevention, punishment, and effective capacity building to facilitate such prevention and punishment. Prevention, then, is purportedly an essential component of the proposed convention.\textsuperscript{30}

Ostensibly, those who developed the proposed convention on crimes against humanity believe that it can replace the UNCG for, some of them argue, it covers virtually the same crimes as the UNCG and would do away with the need to engage the thorny issue of intent. That is, unlike the UNCG, where the intent of the perpetrators to destroy in whole or in part a particular group, as such, must be established in order for an act to be considered a case of "genocide," intent is not needed (or, put another way, not a factor) in determining whether one act or another constitutes a crime against humanity.\textsuperscript{31}

Time and again in the recent past, both individual states and the international community sat and watched as mass atrocities unfolded before deciding whether they would act to stanch them. Reportedly, officials were either not sure (1) whether the actions constituted genocide rather than civil war, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity, or something else altogether and/or (2) whether the actual intent of the perpetrators was to destroy in whole or in part a particular group protected under the UNCG. As a result, state and/or international community officials often insisted on waiting for additional evidence, even as tens and hundreds of thousands were slaughtered, before making a decision one way or the other. Essentially, officials seemed to be saying, "Well, if it's not a case of genocide then we do not have to act, and since genocide is so difficult to ascertain, if not prove, we'd better take our time and be absolutely sure before we make our final decision."\textsuperscript{32} A classic example of such wavering and dithering took place during the 1994 Rwandan Genocide. Not only did the UN fail to act, but the US also used its "confusion" and "lack of certainty" as a convenient excuse to do nothing. The fact is, the US knew full well what was happening in Rwanda but wanted to avoid, at all costs, sending troops to intervene. Those proposing the new convention seem to be saying that since crimes against humanity are easier to establish than genocide is, once the International Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against Humanity goes into effect neither states nor the international community will be able to hem and haw, at least not legitimately, over what to call atrocities before choosing to intervene or not. Neither will they be hampered by the need to establish intent.

If the proposed convention results in states, individually and collectively, actually becoming more proactive in addressing atrocity crimes and carrying out preventive and interventive efforts in a timely and effective manner, then that would certainly constitute a watershed event. But that is a huge if.
It seems as if realpolitik will come into play just as strongly as ever when a nation or the UN (here I am thinking of the UN Security Council, particularly the P5) is faced with a potential or actual outbreak of crimes against humanity or genocide. Unless I am missing something, it seems as if the steering committee and its supporters are being rather naïve when it comes to their belief in the efficacy of their proposed convention. Why, pray tell, would the international community suddenly lose its ostensible aversion to carrying out preventive and interventive efforts (and particularly those that are timely and effective) solely because of a new convention? And why would states suddenly succumb to readily carrying out preventive measures and interventive missions that, as most seem to fear, could cost them dearly in a variety of ways: politically at home, politically internationally by possibly angering both allies and enemies, militarily as a result of soldiers coming home in body bags, and monetarily? And why would countries all of a sudden be more willing to join preventive and interventive efforts when many already fear potential quagmires (here, the United States’ disastrous intervention in Somalia in 1993 comes to mind), including those from which they might not be able to extricate themselves for years (and here US involvement in Vietnam comes to mind along with the more recent examples of Iraq and Afghanistan)?

Indeed, one has to wonder why those proposing the new convention believe that much of anything will really change as a result of the convention. It is understandable why they may believe that it will be much easier to prosecute atrocities as crimes against humanity than as genocide, but prevention and intervention are something altogether different.

The major point here, again, is that a tremendous amount of work needs to be done to overcome realpolitik and a lack of political will. To not face this fact is sheer folly. Sadly, the enactment of additional human rights law is not enough to accomplish material change in global politics.

A Critical Need to Be More Inclusive

Just as the number of scholars in the field of genocide studies has increased exponentially over the past decade and a half so has the number of topics, issues, and cases that are now being addressed by these scholars.33 What is rarely addressed by genocide scholars, though, are issues such as conflict resolution, mediation, conflict prevention, conflict management, peacemaking, peacebuilding, peace maintenance, peace enforcement, two-track diplomacy, multi-track diplomacy, sanctions, sanctions regime, humanitarian assistance, and international development (e.g., environmental sustainability and sustainable economic and human development). Each of the aforementioned concepts—generally studied by those in the fields of international relations (IR) and peace studies—merits serious consideration by genocide scholars. By overlooking, or outright ignoring, the research and practical applications of such issues, genocide scholars may be overlooking concepts, research, and effective means to detect and head off conflict that may have the potential to explode into crimes against humanity and/or genocide. By focusing on such issues, the field could potentially move from its heavy emphasis on intervention to one more geared to prevention. The most salutary effect would be saving tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of lives.

Furthermore, by becoming conversant with select concepts and approaches studied by researchers in other fields, both through research and application, genocide scholars can begin to address conflicts and cleavages that, if left to fester, could once again burst into crimes against humanity or genocide. While some research on post-genocide societies exists, much more needs to be done.
It would also behoove IAGS and INoGS to extend personal invitations to peace and IR researchers and practitioners involved in theoretical work and research germane to conflict and conflict resolution to (1) join IAGS and/or INoGS, (2) co-conduct research, (3) publish in Genocide Studies and Prevention and the Journal of Genocide Research, and (4) attend and present at IAGS and INoGS conferences. Such trans-disciplinary collaboration has the potential to enrich both fields and lead to significant breakthroughs on prevention and intervention.

Genocide scholars should also collaborate more with international human rights organizations, scholars, and activists. Here one thinks of the important work of Human Rights Watch (HRW), and particularly Dr. Alison des Forges, in Rwanda in the early 1990s as HRW tracked, analyzed, and reported on new violations of human rights infractions, including test massacres, as they took place. At the time, only a tiny number of genocide scholars had a clue as to what was happening in Rwanda, and that could have been avoided if genocide scholars had either been more astute, more tuned into the significance of the ever-increasing violations of human rights of the Tutsi, or had been working side-by-side with human rights specialists in monitoring the situation. While genocide scholars certainly appreciate the value of tracking such violations, very few did then, just as very few do now, and certainly not as assiduously as HRW or Amnesty International.

**Monitoring “Hot Spots”**

For well over two decades various scholars, and particularly first-generation genocide scholars, have talked about the need for and value of genocide early warning signals and genocide early warning systems. Early on, there was a flurry of activity along those lines—plans, papers, and talks—but to date all the good intentions have resulted in naught.

Both the UN and individual states, including the US, have also addressed the need for a genocide early warning system and have actually put in great amounts of time, thought, and energy toward developing one, but such a system remains more of an idea than a reality. One has to wonder, though, just how valuable such a system would be in the hands of, say, the UN Security Council. After all, there was no dearth of information about the 1994 Rwandan Genocide or the outbreak of violence in Darfur and yet the responses of the UN and individual states to each were anemic, apathetic, and pathetic.

Some have suggested that reports by journalists could more or less serve as early warning signals. While some have, it is also a fact that journalists are neither trained to decipher potential early warning signals nor in the business of doing so. It is also a fact that journalists have misjudged and misinterpreted outbreaks of violence. That is not surprising, nor is it an indictment of them.

That said, with their expertise and abiding interests, genocide scholars could serve the double duty of monitoring conflicts and ascertaining whether outbreaks of violence are cases, for example, of internecine fighting, crimes against humanity, genocide, or something else. To do this in the most effective manner possible, scholars would need to be on the ground in “hot spots” where conflict is brewing or violence has already broken out. To date, though, very few genocide scholars have made the effort to travel, live, and conduct research in such places.

By being on the ground in hot spots, researchers are likely to glean information that is not readily available from other sources. Over and above the locals, I am thinking about such individuals as locally based reporters, non-governmental personnel, intergovernmental personnel, local and regional leaders, and possibly even rebel groups and military personnel. While collecting valuable data, genocide scholars...
could monitor political tremors in the country, assess the reactions of the people to such tremors and the reactions of the government to the reactions of the people, obtain information that could serve as genocide early warning signals, and act as early warning signalers. Indeed, if scholars were to provide key information and daily, if not hourly, updates to media sources across the globe, international human rights organizations, government officials in different countries, the UN, and fellow genocide scholars, it would be virtually impossible for UN officials or individual states to feign ignorance about such events. They certainly would not be able to make absurd statements about not knowing, as US President Bill Clinton did, some four years after the 1994 Rwandan Genocide, as he spoke with a small gathering of survivors on the tarmac of the Kigali International Airport in Rwanda:

> It may seem strange to you here, especially the many of you who lost members of your family, but all over the world there were people like me sitting in offices, day after day after day, who did not fully appreciate the depth and the speed with which you were being engulfed by this unimaginable terror.\(^{37}\)

With today’s technology—satellite (SAT) phones, Internet, mobile phones, social media sites (e.g., Twitter), and so forth—it is possible to provide regular updates to those outside the region of conflict and relay key information and insights that might not otherwise reach the outside world. Not infrequently, the international media might not have a presence in a specific region prior to the outbreak of violence, might not be able to get into the country or access the region once violence has broken out, or might not be able to get in until violence is well under way, and thus an individual on the ground who relays information to outside actors can be invaluable.\(^{38}\)

The safety of individuals or a team would be a major concern in such situations, but there are always individuals who are willing to risk their lives to help others. And it is true that they may end up getting killed, but that is a risk that they would have to be willing to take.\(^{39}\)

**Is Activism by Genocide Scholars Counterproductive or is a Lack of Activism by Genocide Scholars Telling in Its Own Way?**

Over the past several years, a coterie of genocide scholars have criticized certain other genocide scholars for what they refer to as “their activism” (e.g., co-authoring resolutions calling on the international community to act to stanch contemporary crimes against humanity and/or genocide, signing resolutions, writing editorials about governmental and intergovernmental actions or inactions during periods of crimes against humanity and/or genocide, speaking at rallies and anti-genocide conferences, etc.). Basically, the former claim that scholars who engage in activism around the issue of genocide automatically call into question the validity of their scholarship. Some have gone so far as to wonder in print whether such individuals even merit the title of “scholar.”

Henry Huttenbach, a historian and early genocide scholar, is one of those who look askance at so-called “scholar activists.” In an article entitled “Can Genocide Be Prevented? No! Yes? Perhaps,” he asserts,

> A primary purpose of Genocide Studies is, of course, the hope that policy makers will be assisted by the insights of researchers. But theirs is to be activists, the opposite mindset of disinterested scholarship. The two—research and public policy—must be carefully kept distinct. Their blurring leads to scholar-activists, a slippery slope to polemics and the loss of credibility. It is a position held by Genocide Research (sic), a stance that clearly and unambiguously distinguishes it from other journals dealing with genocide but tempted to opening the door to partisan prescriptions.\(^{40}\)
Here, Huttenbach clearly shows that he readily accepts—no questions asked, no doubts pondered, no exceptions envisioned—the traditional perception of the scholar as one who can be, should be, and is wholly “disinterested” vis-à-vis his or her subject of research. So be it. That is his opinion, his prerogative. And no doubt there are many who likely agree with him and decry so-called scholar activists. But, speaking for myself and only myself, assuming that for all of eternity I have one life to live on this planet, I am not about to stand by and be silent in the face of mass murder. It is as simple (and profound) as that. Period.

Interestingly, certain leaders ofINO GS have repeatedly criticized and mocked the title of IAGS’s journal, *Genocide Studies and Prevention* (*GSP*). In doing so, they insinuated that neither IAGS members nor the editors were serious scholars since they ostensibly mixed activism (read: prevention) with scholarship. One has to wonder whether such critics also hold in contempt those physicists, chemists, and engineers who founded and/or wrote for *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, an activist journal if there ever was one.\(^{41}\) The journal’s past and present board members read like a Who’s Who of some of the world’s most renowned scientists.\(^{42}\) Over the years, its regular contributors include such luminaries as Bernard T. Feld, a key member of the Manhattan Project who served as an assistant to Enrico Fermi and later became a professor of physics at MIT; Philip Morrison, who served as the group leader and a physicist on the Manhattan Project at the laboratories of the University of Chicago and Los Alamos and later became a professor of physics at MIT where he conducted research on quantum electrodynamics, nuclear theory, radiology, isotope geology, and, since the 1950s, cosmic-ray origins and propagation, gamma-ray astronomy, and other topics in high-energy astrophysics and cosmology; and George Kistiakowsky, chemistry professor at Harvard who was a member of the Manhattan Project and later served as US President Dwight David Eisenhower’s Science Advisor. The point is, every single scientist mentioned here (and in the Endnotes) was concerned with and spoke out about the dangers of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and yet continued to produce high quality research and, in some cases, made world-shaking discoveries.

A blanket statement that genocide scholars who are vitally concerned with the prevention of and intervention in genocide are dubious scholars, cannot disentangle their activism from their scholarship, and are lesser lights because of their activism is ludicrous. Indeed, such remarks call into question the logic and moral compasses of those who utter them. One has to wonder how an individual can work in the field of genocide studies and not be vitally concerned with preventing genocide and, when crimes against humanity and/or genocide are about to or do actually erupt, avoid at all costs registering one’s dismay and concern and avoid issuing criticism if the international community does not act to stanch such atrocities in a timely and effective manner.

**Conclusion**

Only time, of course, will tell how the field of genocide studies will evolve from this point forward. Personally, I hope the field works toward and has a positive impact on bringing about a regime of prevention and intervention in which prevention is a given and intervention, when needed, is quick, efficient, and effective. At the same time, I hope that the field continues to attract new scholars who are committed to producing outstanding scholarship while simultaneously acting on their humanity to help others in dire need. Finally, I hope all remember, and act upon the fact, that suffering does not end once the killing has ended.
Notes

1. I sincerely thank Henry Theriault for his close reading of this article and various editorial suggestions.

2. I also believe that a lack of caring on the part of various intergovernmental and governmental officials also constitutes a major impediment to genocide prevention and intervention. This is an issue that has not been researched but one that demands it.


   Each volume of *Genocide: A Critical Bibliographic Review*, the most recent of which was published in 2010, consists of a set of critical essays and a critical annotated bibliography. The volumes have addressed an eclectic array of topics and issues (e.g., the plight and fate of women during and after genocide, the genocide of indigenous peoples, the impediments to genocide prevention and intervention). Among the contributors to *Genocide* are Howard Adelman, Alex Alvarez, M. Cherif Bassiouni, Israel W. Charny, Frank Chalk, Vahakn Dadrian, Christian Davenport, Nicole Hallett, Barbara Harff, Maureen Hiebert, Herb Hirsch, Robert Hitchcock, Kurt Jonassohn, Richard Hovannisian, Leo Kuper, Judy Ledgerwood, George Lopez, Cyanne Loyle, James Mace, Eric Markusen, Ivana Macek, Martin Mennecke, Valerie Oosterveld, Dominik Schaller, William Schabas, Gregory Stanton, Roger Smith, Colin Tatz, Henry Theriault, Samuel Totten, Hannibal Travis, and Lawrence Woocher.

5. See A. Dirk Moses, “Lemkin, Culture, and the Concept of Genocide,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies*, ed. Donald Bloxham and A. Dirk Moses (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). In this chapter Moses asserts, “To a great extent, genocide studies has yet to break out of its self-imposed isolation. Part of the problem is that Lemkin’s revealing correspondence and invaluable manuscripts languish in archives…. This problem is compounded by the priorities of the self-proclaimed ‘pioneers of genocide studies’—those social scientists writing about genocide in the 1980s and 1990s—who paid Lemkin lip service for ‘discovering’ genocide by presuming to improve his definition without undertaking the necessary systematic reconstruction and explication of his ideas” (20). First, such snarky comments are, unfortunately, typical of some of the third-generation genocide scholars. Second, perhaps Moses would prefer the term “first and second generation of genocide scholars” rather than “pioneers of genocide studies,” but then again maybe not since he also seems to have a problem elsewhere with the term or notion of “genocide studies.” Third, interestingly, well over half the individuals highlighted in *Pioneers of Genocide Studies*, ed. Samuel Totten and Steven Leonard Jacobs (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2002)—with whom and with which, respectively, Moses seems to have a problem—are referenced (most more than once) in *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies*, which Moses edited (including Israel W. Charny, Helen Fein, Herb Hirsch, Ben Kiernan, Irving Louis Horowitz, Kurt Jonassohn, James Mace, Eric Markusen, R.J. Rummel, Roger Smith, and Samuel Totten). The point is, perhaps some of their work is actually worthwhile. Tellingly, some contributors to *Pioneers* are acknowledged for their pioneering efforts by contributors to the *Handbook* (and the word “pioneer” is actually used to describe them). Fourth, Moses does not appear to understand that the “social scientists” were not criticizing Lemkin or his definition but rather taking to task the compromised definition that eventually made it into the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide. Finally, Moses is incorrect when he suggests that the early scholars in the field did not thoroughly examine Lemkin’s writing.
and ideas. Furthermore, to say they simply paid “lip service” to him for “discovering” genocide is nonsensical. Many, in fact, revered, and continue to revere, Lemkin; and none of them, and I know or knew them all, ever thought Lemkin “discovered” genocide. Such an assertion is not only outrageous but ludicrous.

Over the years, various INoGS leaders have had a propensity to make self-congratulatory comments—often couched in what they must think are clever subtleties—about IAGS, its membership, and its journal, Genocide Studies and Prevention. For example, in his introduction to the March 2006 issue of the Journal of Genocide Research (JGR), Jürgen Zimmerer wrote, “[T]he generational, geographical and thematic widening of the field is reflected in the goals of JGR, the principal if not sole voice of a global community of genocide scholars.” Jürgen Zimmerer, “From the Editor: Towards Transnational Genocide Studies: Recent Trends and Future Development in Genocide Research,” Journal of Genocide Research, 8 no. 1 (2006): 3–5; emphasis added. Such self-congratulatory, highly incorrect, and arrogant assertions have no place in the field of genocide studies.

6. Additional genocide research centers continue to be established across the globe. Two notable centers established relatively recently are Rutgers University’s Center for the Study of Genocide and Human Rights in the United States and the Center for Genocide Studies, Universidad Nacional de Tres Febrero in Argentina.


11. Among such institutions are Kean University, New Jersey (MA in Holocaust and Genocide Studies); Richard Stockton College of New Jersey (MA in Holocaust and Genocide Studies); Kingston University in London, England (MA in Human Rights and Genocide Studies); European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (MA in Human Rights and Genocide); University of Amsterdam (master’s degree in Holocaust and Genocide Studies); Uppsala University (master’s program in Holocaust and Genocide Studies); Rutgers University (MS in Global Affairs with a concentration in genocide, political violence, or human rights); and the National University of Rwanda (MA in Genocide Studies). In 1998, Clark University (Worcester, MA) established the first PhD program in Holocaust and Genocide Studies to be offered anywhere in the world.

12. A unique program that is remarkable both for the eclectic nature of the students it attracts and the quality of its faculty is the Zoryan Institute’s International Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies. Initiated in 2002, over the course of the past decade, graduate students from around the globe (e.g., Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Canada, the Czech Republic, Germany, Holland, Italy, Lebanon, Turkey, the United
Kingdom, the United States, and Uruguay) have taken part in its comprehensive two-week, 65-hour graduate-level seminar. Program faculty have included Taner Akcam, Joyce Apsel, Yair Auron, Doris Bergen, Vahakn N. Dadrian, Maureen Hiebert, Alex Hinton, Herb Hirsch, Richard Hovannissian, Jacques Kornberg, Eric Markusen, Robert Melson, Simon Payaslian, William Schabas, Roger Smith, Gregory Stanton, Scott Straus, Samuel Totten, and Ernesto Verdeja. To date, some 250 students have completed the course.


19. If the concept of the responsibility to protect becomes widely accepted and automatically acted upon when humanitarian crises arise, realpolitik will have been overcome. But how likely is such a scenario? Not likely, I fear.


21. Even if a state feels pressured by the international community to act, it could easily manufacture a slew of excuses to cover its commitment to realpolitik, lack of political will, and so forth: financial issues, a lack of adequately trained personnel, a military that is already over-stretched protecting its own borders, fighting its own wars, or committed to other UN missions, and so on.

22. Ten non-permanent members are elected to serve on the Security Council by the General Assembly for two-year terms. They are not eligible for immediate re-election. The number of non-permanent members was increased from six to ten by an amendment to the UN Charter which came into force in 1965.


28. Murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, or forcible transfer of population; imprisonment or other severe deprivation of physical liberty in violation of fundamental rules of international law; torture; rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity; persecution against any identifiable group or collectivity on political, racial, national, ethnic, cultural, religious, gender as defined..., or other grounds that are universally recognized as impermissible under international law...; enforced disappearance of persons; the crime of apartheid; and other inhumane acts of a similar character intentionally causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or to mental or physical health.


30. Crimes Against Humanity Initiative, Proposed International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against Humanity, Article 2 (Object and Purposes of the Present Convention) reads, in part: “1. The States Parties to the present Convention undertake to prevent crimes against humanity and to investigate, prosecute, and punish those responsible for such crimes,” and 2. “To these ends, each State Party agrees: (a) To cooperate, pursuant to the provisions of the present Convention, with other States Parties to prevent crimes against humanity; and (b) To investigate, prosecute and punish persons responsible for crimes against humanity fairly and effectively.”

31. For the UNCG’s definition of “genocide,” see UNCG, Article II, http://www.preventgenocide.org/law/convention/text.htm (accessed 3 August 2011). William Schabas writes: “Once crimes against humanity had been cured of its great shortcoming, the link with armed conflict, it quickly occupied the territory that had been reserved for genocide since 1948, namely attacks on minorities committed during peacetime. Moreover, crimes against humanity also adequately covered all those atrocities that lie on the fringes of ‘pure’ genocide, such as ethnic cleansing. Thus, nobody saw any practical need for reform, and the Rome Conference’s confirmation of the enduring nature of the 1948 genocide definition was little more than perfunctory. History helpfully explains why the distinction between genocide and crimes against humanity was once so important, and why it is no longer so.” See Schabas, “Genocide and the International Court of Justice: Finally, a Duty to Prevent the Crimes of Crimes,” Genocide Studies and Prevention 2, no. 2 (2007): 101–22, 117.

32. On a different but related note, during the perpetration of atrocity crimes various officials (be they members of the Permanent Five, presidents, prime ministers, or others) have often seemed to suggest, nonsensically, that crimes against humanity are not as horrific as genocide. This, indeed, was the case during the early weeks and months of the 1994 Rwandan Genocide and the early years of the Darfur Genocide.

33. Issues include everything from the strengths and weaknesses of the decisions and judgments at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) to distinctions between knowledge-based and legal-based interpretations of genocide; from the strengths and weaknesses of UN missions in atrocity zones to the pros and cons of charging individuals with genocide
and crimes against humanity while a conflict is ongoing; and from the strengths and weaknesses of so-called safe corridors and safe areas to the impact of climate change on conflict and mass violence.


35. During the early days of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda there was genuine confusion among various actors in regard to what was taking place. For example, the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) initially thought a coup d’État was under way, while others initially claimed that it was an outbreak of violence among antagonists who had a long history of feuding as far back as the pre-colonial period, and some expatriates who had been working and living in Rwanda for years thought it was the outbreak of chaotic killing by extremists. Both the US government and the United Nations, though, had received ample information cum warnings that crimes against humanity and possibly genocide were under way.

36. A scholar on the ground generally has ready and ongoing access to individuals who are often quite willing to speak at length about the local culture, the personalities and motives of key actors, the ins and outs of local and regional politics, antecedents to the conflict, how the conflict evolved over time, and even plans for the future. Furthermore, being on the ground provides a scholar with the means to seek different perspectives; to monitor daily, if not hourly, incidents (rallies and protests, violent events, movement of troops and weapons); seek statements and warnings (rumors, declarations by politicians, bulletins posted on walls, memoranda intercepted by rebel forces, etc.); and observe concerns (e.g., fears of the locals). Informal conversations are often as instructive and informative as formal meetings.

Not even taking into account what one can ascertain from the locals, the views and insights of NGO personnel (particularly those who have been in country for years and are often responsible for writing weekly reports about the status of the country and region in which they are working, the concerns of the locals, the concerns and positions of local and regional politicians, speeches given by government officials, statements in the press, and even rumors afloat) are frequently invaluable.


39. By sheer coincidence, some two weeks after this article was submitted to the University of Toronto Press, I was contacted by an organization called Our Humanity in the Balance and invited to become a board member. Its mission statement reads as follows: “Our Humanity in the Balance is an international group of volunteers developing innovative strategies to protect civilian populations in conflict areas, beginning in Darfur. We also intend to partner, where and when possible, with community groups in those areas to leverage our efforts.” Its “motto” is: “We will go where we need to go to protect civilians in conflict zones and to prevent genocide.” After checking out the organization’s Web site and communicating via e-mail with three of the leaders of the organization, I readily and heartily chose to accept the invitation. Our Humanity in the Balance, http://www.ourhumanityinthebalance.org/ (accessed 19 October 2011).


41. The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists was established in 1945 by scientists, engineers, and other experts who had created the atomic bomb as part of the Manhattan Project. “They knew about the horrible effects of these new weapons and devoted themselves to warning the public about the consequences of using them. Those early scientists also worried about military secrecy, fearing that leaders might draw their countries into increasingly dangerous nuclear confrontations without the full consent of their citizens. The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists informs the public about threats to the survival and development of humanity from nuclear weapons, climate change, and emerging technologies in the life sciences. Through an award-winning magazine, our online presence, and the Doomsday Clock, we reach policy leaders and audiences around the world with information and analysis about efforts to address the dangers and prevent catastrophe.” See Bulletin of Atomic Scientists Website, www.thebulletin.org/ (accessed 27 June 2011).

42. Past board members include, for example, Albert Einstein, 1921 Nobel Laureate in Physics; James Franck, 1925 Nobel Laureate in Physics; I.I. Rabi, 1944 Nobel Laureate in Physics; Linus Pauling, 1954 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry; Hans Bethe, 1967 Nobel Laureate in Physics; and W.K.H. Panofsky, Director Emeritus of the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center. Current board members include, among others, Freeman Dyson, 1984 Nobel Laureate; Richard Garwin, Philip D. Reed Senior Fellow for Science and Technology at the Council on Foreign Relations, New York; Marvin Goldberger, President Emeritus at the California Institute of Technology; John Polanyi, 1986 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry; Frank von Hippel, Co-director of the Program on Science and Global Security at Princeton University’s Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs; and Steven Weinberg, 1979 Nobel Laureate in Physics.
The burgeoning field of genocide studies is faced with several concerns. Foremost is the challenge of finding a space for encompassing and embracing the Holocaust with some comfort. The Judeocide is an ally, not an enemy, and not on the margins. Our maturing discipline needs to find a sense of collegiality, consensus on terminology, and yardsticks with which to measure scales, dimensions, and degrees of the crime. Several other themes also need attention: wider perspectives on the prerequisites of genocide, starvation as a genocidal weapon, a clear separation between motive and intent, genocide by omission, the elusive concepts of “worthy” and “unworthy” victims, the vexed question of why nations and people want or do not want to intervene in the case of endangered peoples, the race factor in all genocides, the educative value of trials, and, a topic least addressed, the complicity of populations whose leaders are the perpetrators.

Key words: Judeocide, genocide terminology, genocidal starvation, motive and intent, genocide by omission, victims, race

The growth of our field is impressive. Scholarship spans the alphabet, from the Armenian and Bangladesh genocides to those perpetrated in the former Yugoslavia and in Zimbabwe. Definitional, theoretical, and conceptual issues are addressed, analyzed, aired, and argued. There are two international associations—the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) and the International Network of Genocide Scholars (INoGS)—albeit at some loggerheads while still talking about a merger. There are two quality refereed journals—Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal (IAGS) and the Journal of Genocide Research (INoGS)—in addition to the admirable and quintessentially Holocaust-oriented Holocaust and Genocide Studies. We have abundant Web sites, prevention and intervention forums, biennial conferences in the United States and abroad, a proliferation of studies in universities and high schools, two major encyclopedias, volumes of annotated bibliographies, eyewitness accounts, curriculum designs, e-mail discussion lists, and vigorous doctoral scholarship. There is also a modicum of advocacy, and resolutions of protest.

Advocacy warrants brief mention. I recall the nonsense of Brewton Berry’s insistence that his textbook on race and ethnic relations would view the subject with the same detachment with which a zoologist looks at kangaroos and the same dispassion with which a paleontologist examines fossils. There is no neutrality and no disinterest in what we study, and there can be no view among us that is pro-genocide. Often the subject matter, and certainly the accompanying denialism, makes us all advocates to varying degrees, establishing, arguing, and sustaining a case.

The fissure rather than fracture between IAGS and INoGS that began to surface in 2005—essentially over what was said to be the American-centric membership of IAGS—arose much earlier in the life of genocide studies than in the long-established disciplines of history, political science, anthropology, and sociology. The latter group

experienced a few schisms about direction or philosophy or methodology, exhibited paroxysms of self-examination and self-doubt, debated their validity as art or science, science hard or soft, orthodox or radical, applied or “pure,” relevant or passé. All took years, even decades, to settle down; we will do this much sooner, and with better grace.

Shadows
The “disunion” between Holocaust and genocide studies is neither in the past tense nor irrelevant. There is a quite visible separation of the two, hardly self-evident or self-explanatory to the next generation of scholars. Some may dispute this state of affairs, but the chapters and the verses are highly visible.

By the 1970s, Randolph Braham, Harry Cargas, Jacob Robinson, Yehuda Bauer, and Philip Friedman had published, severally and in some cases jointly, comprehensive listings of Jewish life leading up to and including the Holocaust. By the 1980s, Holocaust study was substantial enough for David Szonyi to marshal the essential materials into a comprehensive bibliographical resource guide. In the shadow of that Himalayan range of material, genocide studies was gestating, with impetus from Leo Kuper’s broader Genocide in 1981. Prior to that germinal overview of the twentieth century, we had important books and documents on the Armenian Genocide, several major volumes on Stalin’s “Great Terror,” and papers on Bangladesh, Burundi, Indonesia, Nigeria, Paraguay, Sudan, Uganda, and Ukraine. Seldom mentioned, though, was (and is) Yvan van Garsse’s Bibliography of Genocide, Crimes against Humanity and War Crimes, published in Belgium in 1970. Within a short time, Richard Hovannisian published an annotated bibliography on the Armenian genocide and Israel Charny produced a critical bibliographic review, an essential tool that Samuel Totten has extended to eight comprehensive volumes.

Holocaust literature is vast. Profound and meticulous histories deal with its antecedents and descendants, painting huge canvases of the mass destruction of European Jewry. Broad and specialized studies cover topics as varied as the baleful influence of Richard Wagner and the misuse of Friedrich Nietzsche, the nature of Nazi ideology, the Nazi state, the SS, the T4 euthanasia program, the bureaucracy of trains and their timetables, the Einsatzgruppen and their record-keeping, Judenräte (Jewish councils), camp life, medical experiments, rescue attempts, resistance, the role of the churches, Nuremberg and the thousands of trials that followed, the righteous among the nations, memoirs, survivor trauma, and post-event memorials and museums. The big pictures are there, and we are now at a stage where a doyen like Yehuda Bauer can reflect on and rethink the Holocaust. A student would be hard put to find something really new, unless it were in an unexpected Vatican or similar archive, or an aspect requiring intense micro focus.

Genocide studies has yet to achieve that kind of exhaustive and overarching state. Since World War II especially, most disciplines have engaged in increasingly narrow specialization; genocide studies has perforce become increasingly holistic, much more generalist than specialist. Of necessity, it needs lenses ranging from accountancy, administration, and architecture through biology, chemistry, and engineering to medicine, philosophy, politics, psychiatry, psychology, religion, social and physical anthropology, sociology, and zoology. One, or two, or ten scholars cannot surmount a genocide case study in this way, though a few seem to want to do so. Attempts at an Everstian view of a case must be collegial, built on aggregations of study. The templates and tools of Holocaust analyses are there, and genocide scholars
cannot ignore, avoid, or abjure them, as a few seem inclined to do. Single-author over-
views have begun with Ben Kiernan’s bravura and commendable history of genocide
and extermination from Sparta to Darfur.7

Dichotomy is perhaps too strong a word, but a cleft between Holocaust and geno-
cide studies is apparent in both conference agendas and journal content. Few genocide
scholars have attended the eleven biennial Lessons and Legacies conferences run by
the Holocaust Education Foundation since 1989, and few Holocaust historians have
presented at the eight IAGS biennial events held since 1995. Holocaust and Genocide
Studies began publishing in January 1986, and between then and spring 2011 it
published some 349 articles. Despite the journal’s title, only thirty-seven items—
some 10.6% of all contributions—focus on either comparative genocide theory or spe-
cific cases of genocide other than the Holocaust. Genocide Studies and Prevention,
born in July 2006, has a less balanced portrayal of cases: by my count, only five of
102 articles, or just under 5%, can be seen as Holocaust focused. The Journal of
Genocide Research, launched in 1996, has published just over 250 articles to date,
of which some 22% are Holocaust related or centered. Some imbalance is clearly evi-
dent, but the question is why. How do we explain this inclination to stand alone or
(largely) stand aloof, and should a dedicated symposium examine the issue?

Language and Subdivisions
No sooner has genocide studies come close to coherence than a peculiar splintering
has occurred. “Genocide” has taken some sixty years to become indelibly part of the
political and social lexicon. Yet within the past decade we have all manner of sub-
divisions, giving an impression that we have discovered a new species of behavior or
a new crime. Scholars use words like democide, ethnocide, famincide, feminocide,
gendercide, linguicide, omnicide, econocide, and politicide, seemingly intent on aggrand-
izing the suffix to draw attention to the seriousness of their subject matter.

Do we need such proliferation? Does such specialization suggest new academic
appointments or new journals in these ostensibly discrete fields? English is often
deficient. For example, some commonly used terms such as racism and anti-Semitism
are flat words that can convey anything along a spectrum ranging from the plain
silly to the fatal. Each needs an extra word to modify or qualify the subsequent
noun. So too the matter of genocide. Surely we can get by with adjectives—ethnic
genocide, political genocide, famine genocide?

Norman Naimark rightly points to the reality that ethnic cleansing “bleeds into
genocide.”8 Can we ever say that ethnic cleansing never results in genocide? No—so
why keep using that term? Is it considered a softer one, implying a lesser crime?
Language has always assailed the history of Jews. The term “holocaust,” from the
Greek holokauston and in lower case, was first used by J. Castell Hopkins (1896)
and Marion Harland (1897) to describe the “Mahometan cruelty” of Sultan Hamid
II in the context of the Armenian massacres.9 “Holocaust,” with a capital H, was
Elie Wiesel’s chosen term because he wanted the Jewish destruction to be tied to
God (the word derives from a sacrificial offering wholly burned by fire in exaltation
of God). Arno Mayer has called it a “religiously freighted word concept.”10 The
Hebrew words for “catastrophe” and “destruction,” shoah and churban, suggest a
more human, secular realm of death, and rightly so. There was no Jewish ritual
or offering, as in Abraham’s binding of Isaac. No angel of mercy intervened on
God’s behalf to offer an alternative sacrificial body. There was only the total, sys-
tematic annihilation of the Jewish collective existence. That, says Arno Mayer, was
Judeocide—a more pointed and pertinent term, despite my critical comments above about the surfeit of “-cides.”

Definitions, Typologies, and Categories

We have been saddled with a deficient definition of the crime since 1948; efforts to rectify it have come from, among others, Raphael Lemkin, Pieter Drost, Irving Louis Horowitz, Henry Huttenbach, Steven Katz, Helen Fein, Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn, Jennifer Balint and Israel Charny, Levon Chorbajian, and Ward Churchill to no avail. The 1998 draft of the (2002) Rome Statute on the International Criminal Court adopted verbatim the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (UNCG). I asked an American delegate to Rome why this impaired definition was left intact. Opening the discussion, she explained, had led several major power delegations to state bluntly enough that should the definition be revised and possibly broadened, they would not ratify it. Hardly a surprise—but we will now have to live with the present wording for perhaps the next half-century. What will it take to bring about an acceptable rethink? Chipping away by academics may not be the answer.

Scientists thrive on systematic classifications of types that have common characteristics. We are not botanists or geologists, and we don’t need the “clarity” and certainty of definition that some scholars seek. A rough sketch or guide is enough to enable one to locate a domain, decide on an area to pursue, set limits on time and place, and minimize grotesque comparisons. What is useful is not so much finding echoes and analogies from a few cases but analyzing similarities and differences in relatively similar contexts to arrive at the essences involved. Chasing down Australia’s genocide through Holocaust prisms is hardly a useful or fruitful exercise.

Lemkin provided a typology based on some forty cases, ranging from Carthage to the Holocaust, in his as yet unpublished *History of Genocide*. Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn provide a useful perspective on motivation: to terrorize or eliminate a real or potential threat, to acquire wealth, or to implement an ideology. Helen Fein offers a sociological perspective that suggests ideological, retributive, developmental, and despotic preconditions for genocide. Mark Levene gives us a heuristic view of the war contexts of genocide in the age of the nation-state, whereby a state wages war against other states, against states that appear “illegitimate,” or against groups within a state that appear “illegitimate.” Barbara Harff and Ted Gurr furnish a descriptive and analytical categorization of hegemonic and xenophobic genocides and of retributive, repressive, revolutionary, and hegemonic politicides. William Rubinstein proposes a time frame that begins with genocide in preliterate societies and proceeds through genocide in pre-modern empires and states (600 BCE–1500 CE), colonial genocides (1500–1914), genocide in an age of totalitarianism (1914–1975), and contemporary “ethnic cleansing” (1945–2002).

These models are but tools for examining problems, especially enduring ones like genocide. They are not laws of social physics. They enable our scholarship—and in that pragmatic sense it may be profitable to consolidate the extant typologies for students. We can do better than such broad labels as the “ancient” or “pre-modern” world when it comes to researching the fates of the Jebuzites, Perrizites, Gergashites, Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, Canaanites, Hittites, and all those other “-ites” who vanished in what are today Israel, Jordan, and the Sinai Peninsula. And while the Seleucid king Antiochus IV may be pre-modern, there is something to be gained by looking closely at the first serious attempt at Judeocide, in 168 BCE.
Western civilization has always insisted on rankings—biggest, highest, longest, fastest, richest—in all endeavors. Much effort has gone into assessing genocides as the “biggest,” “most unique,” and so on. We don’t need this kind of competitive comparison. But we do need a model, a genocide Richter Scale, that enables a student to distinguish, however roughly, events that differ so widely in compass, scope, scale, technique, time frame, outcome, accountability, and the ensuing effects on regional and global relations. The case of Australia’s treatment of the Aborigines is genocide, but it has hardly any features comparable with, say, the Armenian, Jewish, and Rwandan cases. Some order of magnitude (though hardly a number, as in earthquakes), some general indicators, would be helpful. Criminal law systems often distinguish levels of murder and manslaughter.18

Prerequisites for Genocide
Yehuda Bauer and Richard Dekmejian19 have outlined the fundamental ingredients of a genocide. Their wording is a little different, but the essence is that genocide occurs where there is (1) an ancient hatred or an ideological imperative; (2) a war setting, such that things can be done, literally, under a smokescreen; (3) a brutal dictatorship; (4) a compliant bureaucracy; and (5) the use of technology. Neither would claim rigidity for these models, and both would concede that their representation derives from European and Near Eastern experiences in the twentieth century.

Genocide studies allows a wider landscape. Not every case conforms to these useful templates. Some ideological imperatives are not so ancient, as in Burundi, Rwanda, and Darfur. Not all genocides occur in wartime, and in some cases—Rwanda again—machetes and crystal radio sets represented the most advanced use of technology. Starvation is the most ancient and efficient of techniques, as in German South-West Africa, but is not given the attention it warrants.

The complicity of Western states in genocides is under scrutiny, as noted in an anthology edited by Adam Jones,20 but we need much more study of genocide within democratic states. A sharper look at the fate of native peoples in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand—undertaken by Samuel Totten and Robert Hitchcock in their recent edited volume on the genocide of indigenous peoples21—is warranted. Many aspects of Belgian, English, (Wilhelmine) German, Dutch, and French colonial administration also demand scrutiny.

A stark dedication to a totalitarian explanation is shown in Samantha Power’s 2002 book A Problem from Hell.22 Power describes and analyzes American inertia, lack of political will, absence of morality, and crass expediency when the United States could have acted in several ways to ameliorate, or even halt, the killings of Armenians, Jews, Kurds, Bosnians, and Rwandans. Americans, she insists, must face that history; but she doesn’t once mention their practices against Native Americans, nor once refer to Ward Churchill’s “little matter of genocide” in the Americas.23

The term “genocide” has only recently come into the Australian vocabulary vis-à-vis its own nation, causing anger, dismay, and, inevitably, denialism. There has been no desire to look at the physical killings of Aborigines that ended in the late 1920s, or the forcible removal of children that began in the late 1830s and ended in the 1980s.24 Denial of this dark history arises from a strong belief that “Australianness” is an inherent prophylactic against, or an antidote to, such bad, homicidal, let alone genocidal, behavior. A recent foreign minister argued that Australia can’t possibly breach international treaties on child, sex, and race discrimination because we are Australians. Like their American cousins, Australians regard themselves as a moral people, as decent colonists and quintessential democrats.
Motive versus Intent
Several analysts have asked the pertinent question of whether there can be genocide without a special or specific intent to commit that crime. In September 2011, the University of Leicester in England dedicated a conference to genocidal intent and its significance. Airing the issue of intent is timely. We have long been socialized to “motive and means” as prerequisites of criminal acts. Genocide is a crime, a heinous one; intent is the key, not the reason why. It is a reasonable assumption that the 1948 UNCG, emerging as it did from the vortex of World War II, was born out of the conviction that intent to destroy a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group must, by evidence and intuition, be accompanied by male fides, bad faith and evil intent. The UNCG says nothing specific about the nature of intent, and this makes Australian, American, New Zealand, and Canadian defenders of child removal (from allegedly baleful tribal connections) a fascinating area of study. Governments of these states still contend that “good” has come out of these practices and that many removed children have made outstanding contributions as activists, actors, artists, athletes, professionals, and writers. While the analogy may be a little far-fetched, it echoes here of the controversy surrounding the useful things that arose from Nazi medical experiments. We give a name to such beneficial outcomes as the better understanding of shock and hypothermia: “the fruits of the poisoned tree.”

There are some strong legal arguments in Australia that the motivations for this crime are irrelevant. A pertinent legal view is that “it can be (misguidedly) committed ‘in the interests’ of a protected population.” Or, as the moral philosopher Raimond Gaita contends, “the concept of good intention cannot be relativized indefinitely to an agent’s perception of it as good.” If this were the case, he writes, then we would have to say that Nazi murderers had good but radically benighted intentions, since most of them believed they had a sacred duty to the world to rid the world of the “race” that polluted it.

Omission and Commission
Most commonly, genocide is a crime of commission. Commonly enough, however, failure to feed people is an efficient way to destroy people. “Hunger as a low technical weapon” is the phrase used by Jonassohn in a 1997 essay; “Famine Crime in International Law” is the title of an analysis by David Marcus published in 2003. We have major studies of Soviet and Ukraine famines by James Mace, Robert Conquest, and Stephen Wheatcroft, among others, and several key works on the Irish potato famine by Cormac Ó Gráda and James Donnelly. Mace is crystal-clear on the question of the Soviet government’s genocidal intent in seizing Ukraine’s food production. Yet the works on Ireland and on some African examples (Sudan apart), such as Ethiopia, Malawi, Nigeria, Somalia, and Tanganyika, sometimes lack the genocide studies focus that many would want to see. In classrooms it is easy enough to point students to a genocidal framework, but these case histories sometimes escape the “hook” of genocide with suggestions that they were instances of “something else,” some other and less malevolent category, often with an inference that famine is but a “natural disaster.” I am not sure whether this is because these authors are not steeped in the genocide studies mode or whether it represents a conscious evasion of the ultimate word in the lexicon. A few years ago I visited the local potato famine museum in Skibbereen, in Ireland’s County Cork. A fine building, with much captioning about the blight, Phytophthora infestans, but not about the British; a stove for a remedial soup-kitchen recipe that was worse than the hunger regimen; and images
of a lot of dead people. Genocide is nowhere mentioned and, it would seem, was never in question.

One hitherto neglected or overlooked aspect of genocide by omission warrants attention: the matter of wanting and not wanting. In social science generally, in history and philosophy, we always look for (usually) complex explanations in ideology, in administrative and organizational behavior, in social physics, in procedure and mechanics, in psychological states of mind, in individual or group behavior, and, all too often, in what we call “grand theory.” Sometimes explanations are so simple that we can’t bring ourselves to believe that something so plain, so unadorned, can answer the big questions.

We are well versed in the role of bystanders, those whose indifference allows perpetrators to “deal with” victims. We need to look specifically at what Bauer calls “hostile indifference.” The 1938 Évian Conference in France purported to deal with the crisis of German Jewry. Of the thirty-two nations present, thirty-one offered some technical explanation for not taking any Jewish immigrants. Australia’s delegate, Lieutenant-Colonel T.W. White, said, “It will no doubt be appreciated also that as we have no real racial problems, we are not desirous of importing one…” Only the little Dominican Republic said it wanted 100,000 Jews. “Wanted” is misleading—what General Rafael Trujillo wanted was salvation for his sullied reputation—but in the end he took 500. And not enough has been written about the attitudes of Churchill and Roosevelt toward Jews in crisis, about their not wanting to take in a clearly imperiled people.

Reams have been written about the bombing of the railway lines to Auschwitz—about the British, who said that, technically, they could not do it so it had to be the Americans, and the Americans, who could not do it because of this, that, and the other. Sir Martin Gilbert has analyzed the many rationalizations in his *Auschwitz and the Allies* and his documentary film of the same title. In the end, the answer is relatively simple: the Allies didn’t want to. More reams have been written about Pope Pius XII and his overt inaction. In a recent book, Paul O’Shea asks why this shy and cloistered man, this complex and convoluted man, in so many ways a good man, was so voluble on the Church and so silent on the Jews. Why, when he had the chance, did he agree to mention atrocities in general but not atrocities against Jews and Poles? The answers are complex, at one level; at another, the key level, the answer is simple: because he didn’t want to. He wanted to confront the satanic Communist menace, and he did so with vigor; he didn’t want to confront the National Socialists, even though he saw them as thugs. Bill Clinton has admitted that the greatest failure of his presidency was his not wanting to hear the word “genocide” about Rwanda. His underlying reasons may well have been highly complex, but “not wanting” was the phrase he used in an emotional and forthright television interview in Australia a few years ago. And most churches, mosques, and synagogues don’t want to hear, let alone speak out, about genocidal events as they occur. The difficulty, of course, lies in diagnosing the reasons why people don’t want to hear, see, intervene, or seek accountability.

One speculative area is the elusive concept of “worthy” and “unworthy” victims. We need to recall historian Saul Friedländer’s conclusion that whatever motivated the world’s passivity before and during the Holocaust, “it always resulted from a choice in which the Jew was always less than whatever other consideration he was weighed against.” Robert Wistrich has given us the most insightful account yet of why this is so in *A Lethal Obsession*, a massive *catalogue raisonné* of twenty
centuries of Jew-hatred. In the end, Jews don’t weigh, or they weigh in the wrong way. So, who weighs what? Who—or, more particularly, what—warrants intervention, military intervention, genuine sanction? Intuitively we know the answer, but who is brave enough to try to capture, document, and sustain a case on the basis of such indefinable and intangible evaluations?

**Neglected Articles**

We rail at the defining of genocide in the UNCG, but it remains our only justiciable and actionable yardstick. To lessen any sense of confinement or constraint, we should venture more into the very broad base given by UNCG Articles II (b) and II (c) and the conspiracy, complicity, and attempted genocide set forth in Article III.

Article III of the UNCG is as flawed as Article II. On the face of it, the convention equates what seem like incommensurate acts of genocide—for example, physical killing with forcible removal of children (both hallmarks of Australian genocide). The document does not list the five acts of genocide as co-components leading to the overall destruction of a specific people; each act can be legally construed as a distinct and culpable genocidal activity. Article III makes criminal the seemingly unequal acts of actual genocide and the attempt to do so, conspiracy to do so, and complicity therein. Western criminal law systems always distinguish between an actual crime and the attempt to commit it; the UNCG does not do so. Historian Henry Reynolds insists that while there was a state conspiracy and an attempt to eliminate the Tasmanian Aborigines, the “plot” failed and thus no genocide occurred. Lack of fruition or completion of intent is not a negation of genocide. Article III is explicit, and scholars could well pay more heed to cases like this one.

Australia is a strong case for a wider approach. Lemkin’s draft chapter on Tasmania was published posthumously in 2005. It focuses on the brutal treatment of the remnant people on Flinders Island, on the way in which kidnapping, prostitution, and economic exploitation of women led to an inability to reproduce. Lemkin also saw the stealing of children as a form of genocide. Had he lived to complete his three-volume case study, he might well have found that Australia’s answer to the era of physical killing—namely, protection by means of rigidly segregating and isolating Aborigines from their predators—in turn became its own form of genocide. Protection—segregation, as I have shown elsewhere, placed Aborigines under special (and often unchallengeable) laws and administrative systems that were outside mainstream institutions; were conducted in secrecy; abnegated what we understand by the concept of “the rule of law”; made Aborigines perpetual wards of the state; deprived them of mainstream social services, welfare benefits, wage awards, and trade-union rights; imprisoned or punished them for offenses that only they could commit; exiled or separated families for indefinite periods; and eroded, outlawed, and often eliminated cultural and social practices.

Lemkin would have judged that this “misguided kindness” (to use his phrase), this incarceration on remote government-run settlements and Christian-run mission stations, led to a systemic “destruction of the essential foundations” of Aboriginal societies, certainly to the “destruction of personal security, liberty, health, dignity, and even the lives of individuals belonging to such groups.” UNCG Articles II (b) and (c) are perhaps too broad, but they offer more scope for study.

The courts are our likeliest avenue out of the UNCG’s definitional deficiencies. The Akayesu case in Rwanda—which resulted in a life sentence for rape as an act of genocide—is of the utmost utility. The tribunal’s decision also declared that it
is possible to deduce a genocidal intent in a particular act from the general context of other culpable acts directed against a particular community—in short, evidence from the circumstances. We always see criminal courts as one response to the génocidaires. Why not civil suits, in which the burden of proof is less but the trial of the issues is just as forensically keen and the outcome just as painful for the defendants? Three descendants of Armenians killed during World War I have now brought civil suit against Turkey for the restoration of, or damages for, parcels of land to which they have deeds, acreages now occupied by Turkish air bases. Cases like this can be as effective as political resolutions and the flurries of international diplomacy. (The draft report of the Armenian Genocide Reparations Study Group has pointed some of the ways forward using legal, constitutional, and geopolitical arguments.)

The Matter of Complicity

Societal complicity in genocidal events is perhaps more painful than the political variety. Merely knowing is a form of complicity; one need not actually do something to be complicit. Few studies have examined the connivance of people. For me, the most startling illustration of the complicity of a populace is Hans Hellmut Kirst’s 1968 novel, The Fox of Maulen, in which National Socialism attracts, enthralls, and involves an entire German village except one man—the Fox—who resists.

The Nazi Impact on a German Village (small, rural, mainly Catholic Oberschopfheim in southwest Germany), published in 1993, and What We Knew (analyzing terror, mass murder, and everyday life in Nazi Germany) open up a perspective that most people, including scholars, don’t want opened, namely the prospect of having to indict whole nations, societies, or peoples, even if only morally. We need much more searching works than Daniel Jonah Goldhagen’s overblown portrait of an “eliminationist” Germany. I believe we have one such work in Peter Fritzsche’s Life and Death in the Third Reich, an extraordinary insight into how Germans made deliberate, self-conscious, and knowledgeable political choices during the National Socialist era.

Is such community complicity a moral nursery, a necessary preparatory seedbed in which legal-criminal activity can occur later? Yes. And this poses difficulties for those who seek responsibility and accountability in one man (Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot, Milosevic, Karadzic, al-Bashir), a small coterie of “true believers,” a 50,000-strong body such as the SS, a special unit like Eichmann’s Bureau IV B 4 (Jewish Affairs and Evacuation), or “only” the civil service.

Genocide scholarship has done well in establishing cases of genocide and, for the most part, in distinguishing that crime from genocidal massacres, mass murder, atrocities, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. We now know a great deal about what occurred in many places, the times and places of those events, the actors and factors involved, and the motives, or ostensible motives, for their behavior. We now know much about how genocide is committed by states ideologically, politically, economically, militarily, and technically, but we know little about how genocide is humanly possible.

How is genocide possible at the individual level? Holocaust analysis has attempted to address this question, but has not arrived at any really satisfactory answer. Bureaucracy is one answer, as Raul Hilberg insisted in his many volumes. While bureaucracy almost always displaces the moral responsibility of its individual operatives, we all remain curious about the “transmission belts” that drive men and women in these events. The common ground seems to be one or more of such forces...
as demonizing a victim group, dehumanizing them, “insectifying” them, obeying authority, and, more latterly, Christopher Browning’s compelling case of “conforming.” though this is one that derives from the insights of social psychology and the experiments of Stanley Milgram. Psychologist James Waller has addressed “how ordinary people commit genocide and mass killing.” He rightly leaves us with the “painful recognition that the persistence of inhumanity in human affairs is incontrovertible,” yet he has some optimism about prevention, intervention, and punishment.

Of all the strategies to defeat both group and individual evil-doing, Waller sees education as having “substantial humanizing effects” as an “antidote to our collective inhumanity.” Scholars always see (and always want to see) education as the answer to the unreasonable and the irrational, as the way to get to the hearts and minds of would-be evildoers. As a long-time student of race relations, I can only conclude that the educational route has never been able to deliver the results expected of it. But there is evidence enough that where racial incitement and overt vilification are dealt with by criminal sanction, rather than treated as social diseases that require “therapy” and “counseling,” some demonstrable deterrence occurs. Penalty (and all else) cannot stop the mindset, but it is often the only way to stop the overt act necessary to commit the crime.

Much Else
The race factor is too often avoided, downplayed, or oversimplified in case studies. It is true that there are no “races,” as in the “science” of nineteenth- and twentieth-century anatomy and physical anthropology, but there certainly is racism. Race-ism is but shorthand for any set of beliefs, real or imagined, that the anatomy, color, clan, geography, history, language, or religion of “others” produces ineradicable and undesirable social characteristics and that such beliefs justify acting against the defined groups. In this sense, nearly all genocides will have a “race” factor. We need more precision when talking about victim groups, avoiding such overly broad sweeps as “Africans,” “blacks,” “Native Americans,” and so on. And “ethnic conflict” is not a sui generis category of thinking and acting, one that doesn’t involve “race.” We still have no definite conclusion about the real basis of the Armenian Genocide: Racist in the narrow sense? Religious? Linguistic? Chauvinistic?

We would do well to look again at the meaning of resistance. Movies give us stereotypical visions of the French Maquis blowing up railways and garroting gray guards. Resistance to genocide takes many forms. Sheer survival is one form, and at Yad Vashem—the Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Authority in Jerusalem—we are taught that survival was more a matter of luck than of any other phenomenon. We need some comparative studies, more on active versus passive resistance, and more analyses like Keith Watenpaugh’s assessment of the League of Nations and Armenian rescue.

Impunity for perpetrators gets less attention than it warrants. Even if we traverse the What if? path, it is still worth asking what went so awry with the Turkish court-martial in 1919 and the subsequent British abdication of responsibility when they abandoned trials in Malta; what went wrong with the domestic Leipzig trials after World War I; what have been the effects of the thousands of trials in East and West Germany and in Austria since World War II; and what can and should be said of the three aborted war-crimes trials in Australia in the 1980s. Can trials be educative and not simply punitive? In the face of immense denialism and evasion of culpability,
trials in a public arena, and those that produce indelible records, have incalculable value in documenting that “something happened.”

Elazar Barkan has dealt with the guilt of nations, and Roy Brooks has assembled a consensus among victims that “sorry isn’t enough.” Why is it that nations are sometimes willing to intervene in humanitarian or military modes, to prosecute or deport perpetrators, to make apologies for the “problem from hell,” but refuse to entertain the idea of making even miserable reparations? Democratic Australia is a case in point. In 1992, Labor Prime Minister Paul Keating admitted the murders of Aborigines, the disposessions, the diseases, the removal of children, the smashing of traditional life, and their exclusion from society and its benefits. This was one kind of balm for the victim people. John Howard’s Conservative government (1996–2007), however, saw this moral inculpation as a slide toward costly economic reparations, and refused any admission or apology for exactly that reason. Kevin Rudd’s Labor government apologized in 2008, with some reluctant bipartisan support, but everyone was happy enough that the rider to the apology was that there would be no reparations. Ironically, the Australian state said to have been the most murderous in the nineteenth century, Tasmania, is the only one to have initiated financial restitution. In November 2006, the Tasmanian Parliament passed the Stolen Generations of Aboriginal Children Act. In January 2008, Tasmania’s premier, Paul Lennon, declared that the lives of 106 claimants had been “deeply affected by this flawed policy of [forcible child] separation.” Of these, 84 were paid approximately US$54,000 each, and each family of a deceased claimant received approximately US$4,600. Germany’s Forced Labor Compensation Program, set up tardily in 2000, paid out to each of 1.7 million survivors sums ranging from US$3,000 to US$9,900. Such mindsets and value systems are more than ready for examination.

Genocide remains undiminished in human affairs. The study of genocide is clearly an unfinished project. Controversies will continue, and many unanswered questions may well be resolved. The cleavages discussed are real, but they are soluble, certainly not fatal to collegiality or intellectual inquiry. Above all, we are on the same side, and we pursue these ventures into the continuum of death and destruction with a high degree of moral dignity.

Notes


34. See Michael Neufeld and Michael Berenbaum, eds., The Bombing of Auschwitz: Should the Allies Have Attempted It? (New York: St Martin’s, 2000).


42. Tatz, With Intent to Destroy, ch. 4.


46. The draft report, prepared by Dr. Alfred de Zayas, Dr. Jermaine McCalpin, former ambassador Ara Papian, and Dr. Henry Theriault, was discussed at a forum held at the University of California—Los Angeles in October 2010.


53. Ibid., 271.


From Lemkin to Clooney: The Development and State of Genocide Studies

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The study of genocide has become one of the most attractive fields of research since the end of the Cold War. A productive and vibrant scholarly community has come into existence and professional associations compete with each other and foster international exchange by regularly organizing major conferences. Several scholarly journals contribute to a multifaceted research landscape. Similarly impressive is the progressive institutionalization of genocide studies. For most students and scholars, the study of genocide is more than just an academic or intellectual occupation. They see their roles as scholar-activists, but the will to stop genocide is not only prevalent in the ivory tower of academia. A whole plethora of actors in the realm of civil society are running stunning campaigns against genocide that attract both media and public attention. But is the evolution of genocide studies a single success story? This article highlights some methodological and ideological problems inherent in genocide studies (e.g., Eurocentrism) and discusses their consequences for our understanding of mass violence.

Key words: genocide studies, Eurocentrism, Lemkin, genocide prevention, Save Darfur movement

When Raphael Lemkin (1901–1959) coined the term “genocide” in 1944 he brought about a paradigmatic change in both international law and the social sciences. Already, in the interwar period, Lemkin had been struggling to establish international protection for minorities. The tragic fate of the Ottoman Armenians, in particular, had confirmed his opinion that an international law ought to be created to make the deliberate and systematic extermination of national or religious minorities by a state a punishable offense. However, Lemkin’s proposals were rejected at the Fifth International Conference for the Unification of Penal Law in Madrid in 1933. It was only after the horrors of World War II that politicians and international lawyers recognized the importance of new paradigms. In April 1947, the secretary general of the newly founded United Nations commissioned Lemkin and two other leading specialists in international law to prepare a draft for a criminal code against genocide. The coming into effect of the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (UNCG) would likely not have been possible without Lemkin’s tireless commitment to lobbying for his convictions. The great innovation of the UNCG consisted of the juridical abolition of the principle of sovereignty. Before the adoption of the UNCG, states had been able, in principle, to persecute and annihilate parts of their population without being punished.

Lemkin left his mark not only on international law, but also on social and historical sciences. With his first definition of genocide, Lemkin revolutionized our understanding of mass violence:

By “genocide” we mean the destruction of a nation or of an ethnic group. Generally speaking, genocide does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation, except when accomplished by mass killings of all members of a nation. It is intended rather to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves.\(^1\)

Lemkin asserted that the destruction of national, ethnic, or religious groups was often carried out through non-lethal forms of violence. Consequently, genocide is more than a large-scale massacre. According to Lemkin, the perpetration of genocide has to be understood as a total social practice that affects all aspects of group life.\(^2\) As such, “genocide” is a useful analytical tool for the study of mass violence. After the adoption of the UNCG, Lemkin’s interest in genocide became more and more social scientific. He dedicated a great deal of his creative power to the compilation of a global history of genocide. Cases of genocide, from ancient times to modernity, attracted his interest. Lemkin can thus be regarded as the father of genocide research.\(^3\)

In many ways, the UNCG shared Lemkin’s fate and became largely forgotten and, during the period of the Cold War, was an ineffectual statement of intent. Although the superpowers had the means to prevent and punish the crime of genocide, they preferred not to intervene in their allies’ domestic affairs. Moreover, the accusation of genocide became an efficient instrument of propaganda. The opponents of the Cold War regularly accused one another of committing acts of genocide. Lemkin, for example, was an ardent anti-Communist and had close ties with Eastern European émigrés in the United States. He was convinced that the creation and cohesion of the Soviet Union were based on acts of mass violence against ethnic minorities and a policy of cultural genocide.\(^4\) As a result of this political exploitation, the term “genocide” degenerated into a rhetorical weapon, and the UNCG suffered from a lack of legitimation and credibility. The UNCG was further weakened by the absence of a monitoring and control system in effect. Tellingly, it was the end of the bipolar world order that led to significant changes regarding the significance of the UNCG. The appointment of the ad hoc tribunals for the wars of secession in the former Yugoslavia and the systematic murder of up to 800,000 Tutsi in Rwanda in 1994 as well as the adoption of the Rome Statute on the establishment of an International Criminal Court (ICC) in 1998 were impressive examples of a new international policy toward the punishment and prevention of mass violence. The deadlock of the Cold War period had finally been overcome.

Unsurprisingly, this development has had a profound impact on the academic study of genocide and other forms of mass violence. Whereas only an obscure circle of scholars dealt scientifically with genocide in the decades before 1989, genocide studies has become one of the most attractive fields of research in the past years. The literature on the subject is growing incessantly and, even for experts, it is difficult to keep an eye on all the different developments. Furthermore, Lemkin’s early writings on genocide have been rediscovered,\(^5\) and he has finally gotten the recognition he deserves and is celebrated as the pioneer of genocide studies.\(^6\) “Genocide” has become an acknowledged term in the social sciences and is commonly used without reluctance. This can easily be proven with the aid of a tool developed by the Internet company Google. The Google labs Books Ngram Viewer allows us to examine the frequency of words or phrases over time. Over 5.2 million books scanned by Google (a total of 500 billion words) constitute the empirical foundation of this instrument.\(^7\)
Figure 1 supports the assumption that the usage of the term “genocide” has rapidly increased since the end of the Cold War. Even more interesting is the fact that “genocide” has been used more often than the related term “massacre” since the late 1990s. This discovery suggests that “genocide” has become an expression synonymous with mass violence.

The triumph of the term “genocide” is reflected in the development of a productive and vibrant scholarly community. Two professional associations, the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) and the International Network of Genocide Scholars (INoGS), compete with each other and foster international scholarly exchange by regularly organizing major conferences. Several scholarly journals (e.g., Journal of Genocide Research (JGR); Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal (GSP); Holocaust and Genocide Studies) contribute to a multifaceted research landscape. Similarly impressive is the progressive institutionalization of genocide studies. Research institutes can be found on all continents except Antarctica and, considering the enormous growth of this research field, it is only a matter of time until a genocide center will be founded on the perpetual ice. More and more universities offer attractive genocide studies programs that enjoy great popularity among students. For most students and scholars the study of genocide is more than just an academic or intellectual occupation. They see their roles as scholar-activists. It is largely accepted that only a better understanding of the causes, mechanisms, and dynamics of mass violence can contribute to an efficient and sustainable policy of genocide prevention. Therefore, a majority of scholars consider genocide studies to be an applied science. The will to stop genocide is not only prevalent in the ivory tower of academia. A whole plethora of actors in the realm of civil society are running stunning campaigns against genocide that attract both media and public attention. The Save Darfur campaign has been described as the largest international social movement since anti-apartheid. School children, students, politicians, and Hollywood celebrities like George Clooney are united in their wish to stop the ongoing genocide in the Western Sudanese province. It is considered good manners these days to support fund-raising campaigns for the innocent victims of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir’s cynical policy of extermination, organize protest marches, and circulate petitions that urge politicians to act. The Darfur movement reached its peak when activists under the leadership of film stars Mia Farrow and George Clooney called for a boycott of the “Genocide Olympics” in China in 2008.
because of Beijing’s close economic ties with the regime in Khartoum. All these efforts have paid off as the media and the international public pay much more attention to the events and developments in Sudan.

The international community’s reaction to the mass violence in Darfur differs significantly from the hesitant and ineffectual international response to the Rwandan Genocide in 1994. Representatives of the US government have declared the murder of the Fur, Masalit, and Zaghawa in Darfur to be genocide. Moreover, the UN Security Council referred the case to the ICC. As a consequence, the ICC issued an arrest warrant for the Sudanese president for the crime of genocide in Darfur. Omar al-Bashir is thus the first sitting head of state ever indicted by an international organization for genocide.

If one considers the developments I have just described and compares them to the difficult beginnings of the UNCG and the tragic fate of Raphael Lemkin, one has to come to the inevitable conclusion that the evolution of genocide studies is a pure success story. No one can deny that this is true in many respects. However, this narrative of constant and linear progress in genocide studies is delusive. It prevents scholars of mass violence from critically dealing with the results that have been achieved in the past years and from questioning traditional paradigms. Moreover, too much self-satisfaction allows us to ignore some shady trends in the realm of genocide studies. As welcome as the fact may be that Clooney and company support the fight against genocide, it is nonetheless regrettable to see that a veritable “genocide circus” has emerged. The sneaking suspicion that celebrities are publicly committed to preventing mass violence in order to raise their public relations value cannot be dismissed lightly. Genocide prevention has become a modern and highly efficient form of charity for the rich and the beautiful. Furthermore, it has become a lucrative business for dubious racketeers. The Save Darfur movement, for example, has been criticized for spending donated funds almost exclusively for public relations and lobby activities and not for needy Africans on the ground in Sudan.\(^\text{10}\)

More than 10 years ago, Norman G. Finkelstein asked whether there is a “Holocaust industry” and launched a provocative, and in many ways problematic, discussion.\(^\text{11}\) This debate was spoiled by anti-Semitic arguments and conspiracy theories. When I speak about a “genocide industry” this does not mean I want to continue or reanimate the Finkelstein debate. However, the expression is appropriate since it cannot be denied that genocide sells. Book manuscripts related to mass violence need to carry “genocide” in their titles in order to be published and sold. “Genocide” and “prevention” are indispensable key terms that enhance the status of any research proposal. Another disturbing and morbid phenomenon is “genocide tourism.” Genocide memorials and former killing fields are more and more commercialized and exploited for tourism. “Genocide” is even a sales argument for holidays in the “third world.” The churches in Nyamata and Ntarama, where the skulls and bones of hundreds of victims are kept, are the main tourist attractions in Rwanda besides the mountain gorillas.\(^\text{12}\)

How should researchers deal with these and other excesses related to the “genocide industry”? Without doubt, many scholars are tempted to benefit one way or another from the attraction and dark fascination of their subject. This is a rational reaction since scholars are dependent on public interest and good will. However, the reputation of genocide studies as such would sooner or later be irretrievably damaged if researchers did not manage to keep a critical distance from both activists and profit-oriented actors in the field. The most important task is to elude instrumentalization in any form. The best way to achieve this goal is to constantly scrutinize the terms,
concepts, categories, and methods that are commonly used in genocide studies. Although the study of mass violence has gained a high degree of seriousness, maturity, and scholarly respect in recent years, there are still some methodological and ideological problems that cast a cloud over the further development of genocide research. These problems will be discussed in depth below.

**Eurocentrism**

Although genocide research is conducted worldwide, the field is still dominated by Eurocentric attitudes and approaches. Genocide is commonly understood as a phenomenon that can only occur either in totalitarian regimes or in failing states in the so-called third world. According to this assumption, the best way to prevent mass violence would be the global spread of Western-style liberalism, capitalism, and democracy. The Australian historian A. Dirk Moses has subsumed these ideas under the term “liberal theory of genocide.” This concept is closely linked to modernization theory and to Francis Fukuyama’s thesis of the end of history since the Western way of development is regarded as the only path that can lead to peace, prosperity, and international security or, in other words, to a world without genocide. As a consequence, adherents of the liberal theory of genocide see Western democracy as a kind of redeeming power that has to prevent or stop genocidal violence once it occurs in societies that lack democratic institutions and Western ideals of human rights.

Of course, this does not mean that the West is perfect or without guilt. Western support of dubious dictatorial but anti-Communist regimes in Latin America and Africa during the period of the Cold War is now regarded as a moral mistake, and the ineffectual international reactions to the genocide in Rwanda and the wars in the former Yugoslavia are regarded as sins of omission. But the idea that Western democracies could themselves become perpetrators of mass violence contradicts the worldview of the liberal theory of genocide and is therefore rejected.

This is obvious when it comes to a discussion of the genocidal qualities of European colonialism. In traditional genocide studies, the history of European expansion and colonial rule is often depicted as a humanitarian triumphal procession. The colonial narrative of the *mission civilisatrice* is accepted without criticism, as the following quote from a general world history of genocide reveals: “the effect of the European presence was manifestly ameliorative, as were the long-term effects of the introduction of Western medicine, education and legal and customary practices, and the inclusion of these places in the modern global economic system.” In recent years, several historians have started to question the bias of the liberal theory of genocide studies and to examine the genocidal outcomes associated with the rise of the West. Although some scholars of mass violence still feel uneasy about the term “colonial genocide,” many cases of imperial violence have been thoroughly researched recently. The best-known case is the murder of the Namibian Herero in former German Southwest Africa (1904–1908), which is portrayed in almost all recent books on the history of genocide and ethnic cleansing. It is of no surprise that there is huge interest in this particular incident of genocide. Although imperial Germany was a Western power, it was far from being a liberal democratic state. But what interests genocide scholars even more than the social and political structures of the German empire are alleged ideological and personal continuities from the systematic extermination of the Herero to the Nazi Holocaust less than 40 years later. These facts are consistent with the idea of the liberal theory of genocide studies that mass violence occurs mainly in dysfunctional and/or undemocratic states, which explains why the murder of the Herero is regarded as the ideal type of a colonial genocide. Colonial violence in Namibia
is thus often understood as the result of the often-cited German Sonderweg (special path) and not as the logical result of colonial rule as such.

The neglect of colonial violence in genocide studies is astonishing if one considers how much importance Lemkin attached to colonialism. Lemkin dealt intensively with the genocidal consequences of European rule in the Americas and in Africa. Manuscripts on the Spanish genocides against the Aztecs and the Incas, the murder of the Herero, and the atrocities in the Belgian Congo can be found in his unpublished papers. Although Lemkin believed in the imperative for and advantages of the European civilizing mission, his original concept of genocide is a useful methodological tool for identifying the genocidal tendencies inherent in colonial rule. As I have already shown in the introductory part of this article, Lemkin’s first definition of genocide does not exclusively describe the immediate extermination of a targeted group. Lemkin understood genocides as processes aimed at the destruction of a certain group’s essential foundation of life and identified specific methods of group annihilation: political (cessation of self-government and destruction of political institutions), social (annihilation of national leadership, attack on legal system), cultural (ban on the use of language), economic (destruction of the foundation of economic existence), biological (decrease in the birth rate), physical (mass murder, endangering of health), religious (disruption of religious influence, destruction of religious leadership), and moral (creation of an atmosphere of moral debasement).

These techniques of group destruction characterized European colonial rule in many parts of the world. Indigenes were normally not ready to abandon their subsistence economies and to work as cheap laborers on European owned plantations or mines. The indigenes’ reluctance thus threatened the establishment of a “modern” European economic system in the colonies. To break indigenous resistance and unwillingness, Europeans embarked on the strategy of devastating the indigenous populations’ economic independence. This objective was achieved through the deliberate destruction of indigenous cultures and traditional ways of life. The colonizers thus understood the forced settlement of nomadic groups and the persecution of hunter-gatherer societies as a necessary contribution to modernization. Christian missionaries were commissioned to inculcate European ethical values and a colonial working morale among their subject populations. European colonial officials and missionaries thus must be seen as agents of cultural genocide.

Great Britain and France were the leading imperial powers at the end of the nineteenth century. Despite their rhetoric of humanitarianism and progress, both states—liberal and democratic—committed several large-scale massacres as well as genocidal violence in their colonial realms. It is Eurocentric and therefore untenable to claim that only failing or totalitarian states are capable of resorting to genocide.

Genocide: A Contested Concept

Although Lemkin’s initial use of “genocide,” as laid out in Axis Rule in Occupied Europe, constituted the basis of a draft for a new international law, his colleagues at the UN took vastly different views regarding some crucial points. As outlined above, Lemkin considered the deliberate destruction of a group’s culture to be a form of genocide. His colleagues, however, deemed this proposal to be an unacceptable extension of the term. Ultimately, as a result of international pressure, political groups and social classes were not accorded protection under the UNCG. What constitutes “genocide” was thus contested from the beginning.

Most genocide scholars try to remedy these shortcomings by redefining the term “genocide” or by creating new concepts. By now, a great variety of definitions of
genocide and competing concepts exist: politicide, ethnocide, ecocide, gendercide, democide, autogenocide, genocidal massacre, and so on. As a consequence, “genocide” has degenerated into a collective name for mass murder. The popularity of the term confirms this (see Figure 1). The lack of a generally accepted definition as well as the vagueness of the term results in heated debates over which cases of mass murder should be classified as “genocide.” I will come back to this point when discussing the impact of memory politics on genocide studies.

Further methodological problems stem from the origins of the concept of genocide. Transferring this concept from international law into the social and historical sciences has been rather difficult since lawyers and social scientists conceptualize and categorize differently. I wish to address the most eminent problems below. The definition of genocide by the UN identifies the express intention of perpetrators as a constitutive feature. In international law, only proof of this subjective component of the offense can result in a conviction on the count of genocide. Such an intentionalist view is problematic to reconcile with the findings of empirically oriented historical research. Studies on the Holocaust, the Armenian Genocide and other instances of mass murder have shown that extermination policies usually constitute complex processes of radicalization that depend on a range of situational factors such as military defeats, panic, or shortage of food during war. Empirical studies have further revealed that most cases of mass violence have not been exclusively organized by central authorities or carefully planned long before the actual crime. Moreover, a clear cut distinction between perpetrators and victims, as suggested by the legal definition, cannot be observed in all cases of genocidal violence. The agency of persecuted groups should not be completely ignored. Threatened minority groups often manage to defend themselves more or less successfully and thus provoke even more violent reactions from their persecutors. Of course, this does not mean that victims are to be blamed for their fate. Nevertheless, genocidal violence is not always a one-sided process determined by unequivocal role allocation. The examples of Rwanda and Darfur are illustrative: Many of the perpetrators of the Rwandan Genocide 1994 were themselves victims of mass violence or expulsion. In Burundi, the Tutsi-dominated army had committed large-scale massacres against the Hutu in 1972 and 1988. Pogroms and the assassination of Melchior Ndadaye, Burundi’s first Hutu president, led another wave of refugees to Rwanda in 1993. Many of these unwelcome, deprived, and radicalized refugees supported the exterminationist anti-Tutsi policy of the Rwandan Hutu extremists in order to take revenge and benefit from the dispossession of the victims. While the international community failed to prevent mass violence in Central Africa, Paul Kagame and his Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) defeated the Hutu extremists and halted the genocide. Western media and politicians have celebrated Kagame as a savior and perceived the new Rwandan regime as a reliable ally in an unstable region. The international appreciation of Kagame ignores the fact that the RPF committed grave war crimes in 1994 and launched a war of plunder and exploitation in Eastern Congo. The example of Rwanda shows that victims can become perpetrators and vice versa. The same can be said for Darfur: Civil war and state failure in Western Sudan have fostered the development of warlordism and markets of violence. The social anthropologist Georg Elwert has defined a “market of violence” as “a field of activity which is mainly characterized by economic aims, in which both robbery and barter and the related activities of collection of ransoms, protection money, road tolls, etc. feature.” Warlords do not only pursue political aims but are, above all, entrepreneurs or managers of violence. International relief supplies are one of the most important and contested resources
in a market of violence. The actors’ original political or ideological motives take a
backseat in long-standing civil wars and interfere with economic interests. Changing
alliances are not unusual. As a result, the belligerents are not interested in a stop to
hostilities since the war offers them considerable freedom of action. The situation
in Darfur is thus much more complicated than the way in which it is generally
portrayed in Western media. It is difficult to get an accurate overview of all the para-
military organizations and their splinter groups fighting one another. But what
is certain is that the general population is victimized by both “Arab” and “African”
militias benefitting from the crisis in one way or another and committing crimes
against humanity.

The example of Darfur clearly shows that the perpetrators of mass violence do
not rely on a single motive. Therefore, the distinction between ideological and utili-
tarian genocides, which can be found in much of the literature on genocide, does not
make too much sense.24 Such typologies of genocide are rather artificial and useless
for historical research as most génoticides pursue both ideological and economic
interests. Expropriation, expulsion, and mass murder are thus often intertwined
and part of the same process of annihilation.

Equally problematic is the traditional assumption that genocide is in the first
instance a state-sponsored crime ordered and implemented by governments. Such
an understanding overestimates the strength of state structures and the power of
extremist governments in times of war and crisis. Furthermore, a state-centered
focus ignores the participation of diverse social groups and local actors in mass
violence. This aspect is crucial to an understanding of the dynamics of genocidal
violence, as the following examples show: Broad sections of German society benefited
from the dispossession of the Jewish population and, therefore, supported the anti-
Semitic policy of the Nazi government. When Omar al-Bashir claims he has no
control over the infamous Janjaweed militias in Darfur he tries to minimize his own
responsibility. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that Sudan is a weak state and the
government enjoys only limited influence at the periphery. Local warlords and militia
leaders successfully fill the vacuum of power and pursue independent strategies.
Finally, the expulsion and annihilation of the Ottoman Armenians during World
War I could not have been carried out as smoothly as it was without the assistance
of autonomous Kurdish tribes.

In a nutshell, there are many methodological problems and inadequacies inherent
in the concept of genocide as it is used in the social sciences. For this reason, some
scholars reject its application outside the realm of international law.25 But are there
any reliable alternatives? Mark Levene has brought forward the concept of “zones
of violence.” This approach implies a geographical focus and aims to examine the
violent exchange between several population groups in so-called borderlands in the
longue durée. This framework’s innovative potential lies in its transnational orienta-
tion. The dynamics of mass violence can only be adequately understood if broader
regional contexts are taken into account. Refugee flows, famines, epidemics, and
environmental degradation are phenomena that cross national borders and often
contribute to political tensions and outbreaks of mass violence.26 Christian Gerlach
has recently suggested another alternative to the concept of genocide: “extremely
violent societies.” Gerlach aims to overcome the methodological problems inherent
in the concept of genocide, namely intentionality, mono causality, and above all
state-centrism. Gerlach is therefore in favor of a much more dynamic and flexible
model:
By extremely violent societies, I mean formations where various population groups become victims of massive physical violence, in which acting together with organs of the state, diverse social groups participate for a multitude of reasons. Simply put, the occurrence and the thrust of mass violence depends on broad and diverse support, but this is based on a variety of motives and interests that cause violence to spread in different directions and in varying intensities and forms.\textsuperscript{27}

But when does a society become “extremely violent”? Gerlach argues that modern mass violence often occurs during periods of socioeconomic transition and in the context of violent transformation of non-industrialized regions. According to Gerlach, extremely violent societies witness struggles between elites and the emergence of a new economic and political leadership. Redistributive processes such as revolution, war, famine, or inflation are radicalizing factors.\textsuperscript{28} Gerlach asserts that his concept is more descriptive than analytical. Insofar as his approach is problematic, it is rather broad and encompasses too many disparate cases. And is it appropriate to blur the distinction between different forms of mass violence? A great majority of scholars do not see the necessity to abandon the genocide concept and reject Gerlach’s alternative suggestion because it underestimates the role of the state and the significance of ideologies and racism.\textsuperscript{29} Even if the last word has not been spoken yet, Gerlach’s proposal has caused a much-needed methodological debate in genocide studies.

**Genocide Studies and Memory Politics**

Gerlach’s insistence on the fact that genocidal violence is usually targeted at various population groups is one of the key virtues of his model. The extermination policy of the Nazis is almost exclusively associated with Jewish victims in public memory. The victimhood of other groups such as Sinti and Roma, Poles, mentally disabled persons, and homosexuals is generally neglected.\textsuperscript{30} It is true that the Young Turks were especially obsessed with the destruction of the Armenians. However, the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire affected other minorities such as Greeks, Assyrians, and certain Kurdish groups as well.\textsuperscript{31}

Why are some victim groups forgotten and others not? Or, more generally, why are some cases of genocide remembered and others buried in oblivion? The answer is related to a disturbing phenomenon: Different victim groups compete with each other in an arena of memory politics.\textsuperscript{32} The degree of recognition of a victim group’s fate depends to some extent on the power of respective lobbies and their ability to mobilize public opinion and raise international pressure. Genocide is the worst possible crime. Therefore, victims of mass violence want their fate to be recognized as genocide. They see international recognition as a form of symbolic reparation. The most important arenas of memory politics are international bodies, national parliaments, national and international courts of justice, and, most notably, historiography. Lobbies of different victim groups compete on these fields in order to gain media and scholarly attention. Armenian activists have been very successful in this respect. Although the Turkish government still practices a cynical policy of denial, the murder of the Ottoman Armenians is no longer a forgotten genocide. Its public denial is more and more constrained. In Switzerland and France, for example, the negation of the Armenian Genocide is prohibited. But whereas the Swiss “anti-racism law” of 1994 prohibits the general denial of genocide, French legislation considers only the denial of the Holocaust or the Armenian case as punishable offenses. This is a highly problematic approach because it attaches great importance to these
two cases of genocide and plays down other instances of mass violence. Either unconsciously or consciously, genocide scholars often contribute to hierarchies of suffering by using biased terms such as “the first genocide of the twentieth century” and categories like “modern genocide,” “pre-modern genocide,” “ideological genocide,” or “utilitarian genocide.” Of course, this does not mean that it is impossible to make distinctions. Indeed, there is a wide range of forms and methods of mass violence. However, categorizations should be guided by scholarly principles and contribute to analytical insights, not to politics of memory.

Concluding Remarks: Is There a Future for Genocide Studies?
Genocide scholars from all around the world have contributed to a deeper understanding of mass violence in the past decades. So far, the development of genocide studies has proved to be a success story. However, severe methodological and ideological implications hamper the further development of the field. Historians and international lawyers prefer different approaches that are in many ways difficult to reconcile. There is no consensus on how to define genocide. Moreover, genocide research is a victim of its own success. Activists and profit-oriented actors have entered the stage and dominate the external perception of the field. To be sure, the struggle for human rights and the prevention of mass violence are important and respectable tasks. But activists and scholars pursue different strategies. Whereas scholars are bound to scientific standards and objectivity, activists want to mobilize public opinion through the spread of simple truths.

As a result of these developments it is legitimate to ask if there is a future for genocide studies. The answer is definitely yes. The field of genocide studies has much potential: Interdisciplinarity, though sometimes difficult, is the primary advantage genocide research offers. A complex phenomenon like mass violence cannot be studied by historians alone. The methods and insights of social psychology, sociology, and many other disciplines are indispensable. But we need more Lemkin and less Clooney. In other words, the influence of activism in the realm of genocide scholarship must be clarified.

Notes
3. However, Lemkin was a tragic figure. During his lifetime he never got the recognition he deserved. He was nominated numerous times for the Nobel Peace Prize, but never actually received the honor. Neither his autobiography nor his works on the history and sociology of genocide were published. He died as an impoverished and isolated man in 1959.
15. This narrative is prevalent in Samantha Power’s award-winning work. Samantha Power, “A Problem from Hell”: America and the Age of Genocide (New York: Basic Books, 2002).
22. According to the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 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.


28. Ibid., 266–89.


Leaving the Parental Home: An Overview of the Current State of Genocide Studies

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This article examines current developments in genocide studies, focusing specifically on three main areas of conflict and debate between different perspectives: the question of how to define genocide, causal models and comparative studies, and prevention. Further, this article presents an analysis of Eurocentrism in the field, arguing that genocide studies needs a broader scope to include new and unique perspectives from all areas of the world. What is needed, in fact, is genuine intercultural dialogue, which can transform the field of genocide studies into a broad, culturally diverse field.

Key words: genocide studies, genocide prevention, social sciences

Genocide studies, in its broad sense, emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s from a fertile intersection of law, history, psychology, and social science. Most early work was published in English in the United States, Great Britain, Canada, and Israel. Since the early 1990s, however, genocide studies has grown in two parallel directions. First, it has become more interdisciplinary, bringing fresh insights from political science, anthropology, philosophy, aesthetics, and psychoanalysis. Second, it has become more intercultural. Works are now being published in many languages, including Slavic languages (Russian, Serbo-Croatian, and Bosnian), Spanish and Portuguese (from the Americas as well as the Iberian Peninsula), French, Italian, and Hungarian. In short, a new generation of scholars is beginning to contribute to the field while also engaging in debates over critical issues with the founding fathers.

In this article I examine three main areas of conflict and debate between different perspectives: (1) the question of how to define genocide, (2) causal models and comparative studies, and (3) the link to prevention.

In doing so, I hope to clear the ground for genuine intercultural dialogue. In my view, such dialogue is vital to transforming genocide studies from a minor sub-discipline into a broad, interdisciplinary, and culturally diverse field for exploring and modifying social practices.

The Question of Definitions

Genocide studies first emerged largely as a result of legal and sociological debates about the adequacy of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948 (UNCG). Most early work highlighted the serious shortcomings in the legal definition of genocide (especially the exclusion of certain groups) and proposed new definitions. Examples of this approach can be found in the work of Vahakn Dadrian, Irving Louis Horowitz, Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn, Helen Fein, Israel Charny, Barbara Harff and Ted Gurr, and Ben Kiernan, among others. One of the few exceptions

was the pioneering work of Leo Kuper, who finally accepted the legal definition with the following reservations:

This is not to say that I agree with the definition. On the contrary, I believe a major omission to be in the exclusion of political groups from the list of groups protected. In the contemporary world, political differences are at the very least as significant a basis for massacre and annihilation as racial, national, ethnic or religious differences. Then too, the genocides against racial, national, ethnic or religious groups are generally a consequence of, or intimately related to, political conflict.³

Disagreements over definitions led scholars to develop a rich variety of concepts based on alternative definitions of genocide. However, there is no consensus about which of these definitions should or could replace the one accepted by the 1948 UNCG.

The disagreements have been reflected in the wide disparity between scholars in regards to which cases of mass killing merit the label of genocide. A classic example of paradigmatic and contradictory views is the opposing views of Steven L. Katz and Israel W. Charny. Katz argued that the Holocaust is the only genocide that has occurred in modern history, while Charny proposed a “generic definition” of genocide, which allows a much greater number of cases of mass killing to be identified as “genocides” and may include even the destruction of the environment (ecocide) or other types of human losses. This discussion typifies the wide conceptual gap between exclusivism and inclusivism and has aptly been dubbed the “Katz-Charny conundrum” by Henry Huttenbach.⁴

During the negotiations that led up to the Rome Statute for an International Criminal Court (ICC) in 1998, all attempts to introduce a broader definition of genocide failed and the formal definition of the 1948 UNCG was adopted.⁵ At the same time, though, the Rome Statute introduced a new, extended definition of “crimes against humanity.” This persuaded many scholars to change their approach and accept the inadequate definition of the 1948 UNCG as the only possible way of establishing common ground within the academic community.

In this regard, Matthias Bjornlund, Eric Markusen and Martin Mennecke argue, [I]t is widely recognized that the prevention of genocide depends mainly on political will, and the definition of genocide that politicians rely on is an authoritative interpretation of the UNGC [United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide]. Less authoritative and widespread definitions cannot be expected to impact significantly on decision makers.⁶

Further, they claim,

It is impossible to find a workable definitional core that completely satisfies every scholar, but hopefully exclusivists as well as inclusivists are able to see the advantages of sharing some widely recognized common ground. Perhaps, genocide scholars who have given up on the UNGC might be well-advised to reconsider it, at least as a workable alternative to the present anarchy in definitions.⁷

Indeed, William Schabas, a legal scholar, has suggested that the debate over definitions should be closed. In his view, “instead of enlarging the definition of genocide in order to accomplish this [i.e., fill the gaps in the law], the international community should opt for an expanded view of crimes against humanity instead.”⁸

Previous to this, Schabas had advocated for relegating “the concept of genocide to the more general and more easily applicable concept of crimes against humanity.”⁹ While this position has been accepted by some pioneers of genocide studies, this mainly
juridical “consensus” has been, and should be, strongly questioned for two primary reasons:

1. The concept of crimes against humanity often refers to the indiscriminate killing of civilians and so lacks the explanatory power of the concept of genocide, which refers to the attempted destruction of a group.

2. The wording of Article II of the 1948 Genocide Convention violates the principle of equality before the law by placing some target groups under its protection and not others. The law defines the crimes as actions, not allowing us to distinguish between those who suffer from these actions. Homicide is the killing of a person, any person. If genocide is the intention to annihilate a group as such, it does not matter which groups are targeted, and it is contrary to the principle of equality before the law to decide otherwise. Any group that might be targeted should also be protected. International law allows the principle of equality before the law to take precedence over other particular laws. To violate this principle is to violate the concept of law itself.10

There have been alternative proposals proffered within sociology and anthropology. Harff and Gurr (1988), for example, developed the concept of politicide to refer to the destruction of political groups.11 However, the distinction between politicide and genocide is difficult to apply in practice, and Harff and Gurr themselves concluded that most of the cases they had examined were geno-politicides. In addition, the term politicide has not been widely accepted by legal experts and courts and does not resolve the legal problem of Article II of the 1948 UNCG, that is, its violation of legal principles and its use of different legal definitions for the same practice directed at different victims.

The geopolitical dimensions of the debate over definitions should not be underestimated. As Schabas suggested, in the current century international criminal courts have treated nearly all human rights violations as crimes against humanity and few as genocide (that is, the sentences of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and cases filed by the ICC). The treatment of most human rights violations as crimes against humanity blurs the distinction between, say, sporadic instances of violent repression and campaigns of annihilation.

This leveling of differences has then been used to justify the need for “intervention” (particularly, military intervention) in all kinds of cases, as the current situation in Libya has illustrated. Thus, outrage at the Nazi Holocaust or the Rwandan massacres can be capitalized on to justify military interventions all over the world, from Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya to possible like cases in Korea, Iran, or some Latin American democracies that threaten US interests, such as Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador.

Of course, scholars who argue for this type of conceptual leveling would not necessarily support military intervention in any of these countries. But this is how their work has been used by politicians who are willing to override established legal principles and definitions. We will return to this issue later under the discussion of prevention.

Suffice it to say for now that there are currently two positions on the problem of definitions. On the one hand, a significant number of researchers now follow the definition of the UNCG, including many of the Anglo-Saxon pioneers who had formerly rejected it before the Rome Statute of 1998. Of course, not all these scholars
think alike, and there are many exceptions and nuances, such as Israel Charny and Barbara Harff, among others.

On the other hand, most scholars outside the Anglo-Saxon world—for example, in Argentina, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, Colombia, or Uruguay—are still struggling, even in courts, to find an acceptable definition for genocide. They avoid using the definition of the UNCG for historical and sociological purposes because it violates the principle of equality before the law. At the same time, they are concerned that, for want of a satisfactory definition, international condemnation of any human rights violation, severe or otherwise, could be used to justify the violation of a state’s territorial sovereignty.

It should be noted that many states have, in recent years, adopted much better legal definitions of genocide than that of the UNCG. This has provided fresh impetus to continue the struggle for a more precise international definition in keeping with the principle of equality before the law.

Causal Models and Comparative Studies
The debate over causation has been one of the richest and most productive in the development of genocide studies. Work in this area is characterized by a wide range of explanations about the causes and origins of genocides. It is true that most historians have been reluctant to consider the common features of different processes of annihilation, preferring to emphasize the uniqueness of each historical process. But the levels of analysis applied to each specific historical situation have been both numerous and diverse.

For example, a bewildering variety of approaches has been called upon to explain the Nazi genocide, including studies of the development of Nazi ideology, the role of racism and/or anti-Semitism, the role played by anti-Communist and counter-revolutionary struggle, the importance of the confiscation of Jewish property, the role of bureaucracy in organizing the extermination, the genealogy of Nazi violence, and the importance of Jewish identity as something complex, ambiguous, and at odds with the hegemonic idea of a Europe built on the nation-state. A similar mixed set of approaches has been applied to Rwanda, Cambodia, and other genocides.

On the other hand, there have been far fewer comparative studies, and those that have been conducted are largely from the past fifteen years or so. The reason for this is, as was previously mentioned, that many historians feel that a search for shared features and causal explanations would deny the historical uniqueness of different instances of genocide, particularly the Nazi annihilation of the Jewish population in Europe. Some of the comparative studies, however, deserve special mention (in particular those that examine the similarities and differences between the Armenian and the Jewish genocide) as certain key works have formed the basis of other comparative studies.

One of the best-known authors in comparative genocide studies, the US-Armenian genocide scholar Vahakn Dadrian, has argued in several works that it is both possible and desirable to compare the genocide of the Armenian and Jewish peoples. His work, in fact, has traced lines of convergence and divergence between the Jewish and the Armenian genocides. Among other factors, similarities include the minority status of both peoples and their history of persecution, their vulnerability in the territories where they lived, the presence of the necessary social conditions and structures for their annihilation, and the crucial roles played by political parties—the German National Socialist party and the Ittihad party of the Young Turks. More recently, Dadrian has included the 1994 Rwandan experience in his comparative analysis.
of genocide. In his 2004 article “Patterns of Twentieth Century Genocides: The Armenian, Jewish, and Rwandan Cases,” Dadrian traces a thread through three genocidal processes in which the victims were chosen because of their ethnicity, even though ethnicity is a questionable concept in the case of Rwanda, where tensions between Hutu and Tutsi—groups that shared the same language, culture, and religion—were exacerbated by Belgian colonialism in the twentieth century. Be that as it may, such discussion does not diminish Dadrian’s argument.

Another example of comparative genocide studies can be found in Ben Kiernan’s work. Like Dadrian, Kiernan began by specializing in a particular instance of genocide, the Khmer Rouge genocide, before moving on to comparative studies. His aim has been to situate the Cambodian massacres within a historical sequence of mass killings, including, of course, the most emblematic case of the twentieth century, the Holocaust. Unlike Dadrian, however, Kiernan had to come to terms with the fact that the Cambodian genocide was carried out essentially for political reasons, while the UNCG expressly excludes crimes against political groups. Accordingly, Kiernan compares the Holocaust and the Armenian genocide not with Rwanda but with three cases where the political-ideological nature of genocide is obvious: Cambodia, where state-sponsored killing was carried out in the name of radical Communism; Indonesia, which suffered a vast anti-Communist purge in the mid 1960s; and East Timor, where a dispute over self-determination with the colonial power, Portugal, was followed by 25 years of brutal Indonesian military occupation.

After analyzing the discourses surrounding these different genocides, Kiernan concludes that racism is always used to construct the “enemy.” However, Kiernan argues that racism should be construed in a broad sense as focusing on ethnic, religious, or political affiliations. In fact, racist ideology gives meaning to the processes of stigmatization and subsequent annihilation, regardless of the actual concepts used to describe and identify the enemy in any specific case. Kiernan also claims that territorial expansion plays a fundamental role in genocidal states, as do various ways of idealizing a peasant population that is supposedly “less civilized” and, therefore, less exposed to the “evils of urban life,” both material and moral.

Kiernan and Dadrian make different assumptions about causation, and these assumptions are implicit in their choice of examples. Thus, Dadrian tends to emphasize ethnic hatred, while Kiernan emphasizes ideological factors. This is true even when they are discussing the same genocides—the Armenian Massacres and the Nazi Holocaust. Although these are mostly differences in emphasis rather than substance, they have the potential to create different and potentially contradictory explanations of genocidal social practices.

A third example is the case of Enzo Traverso, an Italian historian who proposes an interesting and unorthodox historical sequence that takes the Holocaust as its endpoint rather than its starting point. In his 2003 book, The Origins of Nazi Violence, Traverso traces the legacy of European violence that created Nazism, especially genocides committed under European colonialism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He thus examines the German annihilation of the Herero and Nama peoples of Namibia at the beginning of the twentieth century, and Mussolini’s use of poison gas against tribesmen during the Italian conquest of Abyssinia in 1935, which Henry Huttenbach has seen as a precursor to the Nazi gas chambers.

Working outside of the English-speaking world, Traverso rejects the notion of common totalitarian threads between Nazism and Stalinism. This is in sharp contrast to the approach of conservative historian Ernst Nolte, who sees Nazism as a
European response to the Bolshevik terror from Asia. In Traverso’s view, Nazi genocidal policy is linked to the legacy of colonialism through the concepts of total war and conquest. Traverso shows that the Nazi atrocities that so shocked European public opinion after the Second World War had been committed without causing much moral concern. This approach has much in common with those of Dirk Moses, Donald Bloxham, Juergen Zimmerer, Dominik Schaller, and a group of Anglo-Saxon and Australian scholars devoted to exploring the link between genocide and imperialism.

In France, Jacques Semelin has also mapped out a comparative study of Nazi Germany, Rwanda, and former Yugoslavia. He highlights the discourses used to stigmatize otherness, the international context, the role of the media, and the dynamics of mass murder, among other factors. Finally, in analyzing the political uses of massacres in these three case histories, Semelin distinguishes between “destroying to subjugate” and “destroying to eradicate,” adding a third possible category: “destruction to revolt.”

This review of comparative studies is necessarily incomplete, and I have omitted some studies because of their questionable ideological legitimacy. I would like to add some comments on my own comparative work, in which I set out to account for the similarities and differences between the Nazi genocide and state terrorism in Argentina. While recognizing the obvious differences between the two in terms of size, scale, and method of implementation, my work emphasizes some striking structural similarities, including the central role played by concentration camps in destroying subjectivity. I have also created the concept of genocidal social practices to account for shared features of the concentration camp system in different historical contexts. I define genocidal social practices in these cases as “a technology of power that is intended to destroy social relations based on autonomy and cooperation by killing a significant portion of society (significant in numbers or influence) and that then attempts to create new social relations and identity models through terror.”

One of my main concerns has been to show the different ways in which annihilation has served to transform social relations. Genocide is not the only way to transform societies, but, together with revolution, it has been a very successful method during the twentieth century. However, although revolutions have also destroyed and reorganized social relations, they have not necessarily done so through mass annihilation. This is the main difference between revolution and genocide. In such a perspective, what many modern cases of genocide have in common (and Nazism and Argentina share) is that the perpetrators sought to annihilate their enemies both materially and symbolically. Not just their bodies but also the memory of their existence was supposed to disappear, forcing survivors to deny their own identity. In this sense, the disappearances outlast the destruction of war, and the effects of genocide do not end but rather only begin with the deaths of the victims. In short, this kind of objective view of genocidal destruction is the transformation of the victims into nothing and the survivors into nobodies.

To sum up, our understanding of the causes and consequences of genocidal processes is far from complete. But we can also look on this as a strength, not a weakness, given that all historical events have multiple causes, including the different motives of the various actors involved, and multiple consequences. The rich profusion of recent publications has brought new perspectives to bear on the logic of mass annihilation of populations and the political, social, symbolic, and conceptual consequences generated by destruction and terror in the societies in which genocide has taken place.
Perspectives on Prevention

An important feature of genocide studies over the last twenty years has been an increased emphasis on applying academic theories to preventing genocide. However, the predominant thinking in the Anglo-Saxon world has tended to oversimplify the relationship between theory and prevention, which is tricky and dangerous.

Since the late 1990s, there have been various attempts to establish early warning mechanisms capable of recognizing potentially genocidal situations from a number of variables. One of the most sophisticated is that of Barbara Harff and Ted Gurr, which uses six key variables (among many others) to predict genocide: (1) degree of political conflict, (2) existence of previous genocide, (3) ideology of the ruling elite, (4) regime type, (5) ethnic situation, and (6) openness to trade. It also identifies a number of genocide “accelerators.”

Beyond the problems of statistical inference and the potential discussions surrounding each of the variables, the core questions are:

1. Is it indeed possible to identify common features of genocides, and, more importantly,
2. What is the next step in identifying potentially genocidal situations?

In the twenty-first century there have been a number of publications on prevention by US-based scholars and officials putting forward the hegemonic view. This type of work lacks the seriousness of Harff and Gurr’s and focuses only on the political will of the different actors—notably the US—to intervene in potentially genocidal situations.

Two well-known examples of this widespread and banal approach are the reports Preventing Genocide, which appeared under the Bush administration in 2008, and MARO: Mass Atrocity Response Operations, which was published under the auspices of the Obama administration in 2010.

These kinds of perspectives reflect a point of view that is clearly discernible in Samantha Power’s A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide, which focuses on genocide in Cambodia, Rwanda, and the Balkans. Power, a freelance war correspondent during the crisis in the former Yugoslavia, has done perhaps more than anyone else to shape the way in which US citizens view their country’s relationship to genocide. Power’s book can be seen as a denouncement of “failure” on the part of the United States to prevent, slow down, or hinder the development of genocidal processes when it has had the power to do so.

The authors of these perspectives have not fully thought through the implications of their ideas. For example, a key idea running through such works is the need to limit national sovereignty in order to prevent genocidal practices. But, simultaneously, no one points out that the US has refused to sign different international treaties on the grounds that to do so would limit state sovereignty. Indeed, the US has been so determined not to sacrifice an inch of its sovereignty that it voted against the ICC Statute at the Rome Conference in 1998, which was established precisely to prosecute individuals for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.

Moreover, these perspectives do not make it clear to whom the alleged perpetrators of such crimes are supposed to surrender state sovereignty. There is no suggestion in these perspectives that greater powers should be vested, for example, in the United Nations, in regional organizations, or in international courts. So, in the absence of any clearly defined international body with powers to determine that...
genocide or other heinous crimes are being committed and to intervene accordingly, charges of genocide could easily be manipulated. From here it would be a short step to justify unilateral diplomatic, economic, or military intervention anywhere in the world. Conversely, no international, regional, or US organization would have the power to intervene if US citizens committed similar crimes at home or abroad. Immunity would very quickly become impunity.

An early critique of interventionist policies can be found in Thomas Cushman’s article “Is Genocide Preventable?” Cushman argues convincingly that these approaches to preventing genocide rest on two unproven assumptions: (1) that advance warning of genocide would lead to effective measures to prevent it and (2) that modernity and genocide are opposing forces. The second of these assumptions, of course, implies that with sufficient political will genocide could be eradicated by “modern” methods.

Cushman calls this a “naturalistic approach [that] favors structural forces over human agency in the explanation of genocide.” Referring to “expressions of ideological commitment to the idea of prevention to genocide,” he notes that “[t]here is ... a rather glaring discrepancy between such ritual statements and the magnitude and complexity of the phenomenon of genocide itself.”

Cushman’s solution is much less developed than his critique. However, his intuition that modernity and genocide are not necessarily at loggerheads suggests that useful contributions to prevention could come from researching those modern features that actually facilitate the processes of genocide, thus developing a kind of work similar to the Frankfurt School scholars such as Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, or Max Horkheimer or the work of Zygmunt Bauman, among others. This is likely to lead to much farther-reaching changes than political will could.

Once we understand genocide as process, a series of actions occurring over time, we cannot fail to notice that many of its early stages (stigmatization, harassment, isolation) exist in virtually all modern states and not just in sub-Saharan Africa or the Middle East, as ethnocentric “interveners” believe. Current examples range from the persecution of Roma in France, Italy, and Spain and limitations on the civil rights of Muslims in Germany and France to the anti-immigration laws of Arizona and a battery of discriminatory measures against Latinos in the US generally.

The issue of prevention has tended to divide genocide scholars into those who hold more ethnocentric and discriminatory views on the causes of genocide and who call for economic sanctions and US military intervention in order to “civilize the savages” of third-world Africa, Asia, and Latin America, on the one hand, and those who resist these positions by retreating to their ivory towers in an attempt to separate their academic work from its political consequences, on the other hand. There are, of course, other scholars who criticize and reject this use of ethnocentric humanitarianism to legitimize new ways of imperialism.

Perhaps human rights activists from different cultural backgrounds will be able to use academic research to draw different political conclusions. I am referring to members of organizations further away from the hegemonic powers’ places of decision making, organizations such as the World Social Forum, the Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal, and African and Latin American regional organizations, all of which include a large number of academics. They are perhaps more likely to take into account the complexity of genocide and the necessarily complex nature of any political strategy of prevention.
A Cultural Issue

Numerous studies have shown that language affects thought processes. There are huge differences, for example, between philosophical works written in English and works written in other European languages, and these differences are even greater when works are written in Hebrew, Chinese, or Arabic. Each language imposes certain conditions, restraints, and directions on both the form and content of thought, giving rise to different—and rewarding—academic approaches.

Unfortunately, although many academic fields have been victims to the steamroller of globalization, this is particularly true of genocide studies, which is a relatively recent discipline and has developed almost entirely in the English-speaking world. Also, genocide studies have been more permeated than most by the hegemony of English in the twenty-first century. As a result, cultural exchanges, where they exist at all, are nearly always one-sided. For example, work produced in Slavic or Romance languages—two key areas of development in the twenty-first century—discusses, cites, and questions the literature written in English or German, but not so the other way around.

There are many reasons for chronic Anglo-centrism in our field. One problem is the absurd editorial policies of the Anglo-Saxon world, which have eliminated funding for translations since the 2008 economic crisis, arguing that the lingua franca of academia is English and that work should be submitted in English only for evaluation prior to publication. This effectively limits those authors who have learned to write in English because of family, educational opportunities, or other contact with the English-speaking world.

Another problem is that even where funding is available, specialized journals, the backbone of academic research, have no policies prioritizing the translation of work produced in different cultures. Again, this contrasts with developments in Latin America and East Asia, where there are policies for the more or less systematic translation of classic and contemporary works from English, German, or French.

And now for a cautionary tale. There has been a wealth of articles published in Spanish and Bosnian, among other languages, in recent years.

Their treatment of genocide is broader than that found in English and yet they will remain forever inaccessible to monolingual scholars unless publishers and journals provide updates on developments and discussions that occur outside their own cultural context. This one-sidedness will continue to compartmentalize genocide studies, with the more ethnocentric scholars believing that genocide happens precisely where “no one speaks English” (whether this be North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, Southeast Europe, the former Soviet Union, or Latin America).

As a result, most researchers—Anglo-Saxon or otherwise—are forced to examine different cases of genocide through the distorted lens of work produced by the Anglo-Saxon world. The authors of this work frequently have a poor command of languages—Slavic languages, Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, Swahili, or African dialects—and must enlist the help of local translators and interpreters in an attempt to overcome cultural barriers, such as ignorance of the history and traditions of the place, the logic of language and genealogy, the way that conflicts are structured, and so forth.

Often, as happened in nineteenth-century anthropology, they end up trying to make an incomprehensible reality fit Anglo-Saxon models of understanding, thus distorting or changing the data. With regard to Latin America, a clear and amusing example is Oliver Stone’s film South of the Border, which contrasts the US media view of Latin America with the voices of twenty-first-century democratic presidents.
from the region (characterized in the US political mainstream as “populists,” “demagogues,” “paranoics,” etc.). Latin America is the closest region in geographical and cultural terms to the US parent culture. What will researchers from the self-styled parent culture make of the worldviews of Slavic, Oriental, or African cultures? If Semitic, Slavic, and Oriental cultures are often misunderstood and even demonized, African cultures are still considered by some as a missing link in human evolution—a primitive state that would be better left behind.

**Conclusions**

In the cycle of life, young people become adults when they leave their parents’ house and set up their own homes elsewhere. This involves exposure to the outside world which is often a frightening but also refreshing and infinitely rewarding experience. Using life cycle as a metaphor, it can be argued that the field of genocide studies emerged from an attempt to work through a trauma in the heart of Europe. Nevertheless, it was adopted by Anglo-Saxon parents and grew up in a cozy American home frequented by German relatives and visited occasionally by French neighbors.

After nearly half a century of existence, it may be time to get out of the parents’ house and live a truly independent life. This does not mean denying the parents’ legacy. On the contrary, unlike adolescents, adults are able to question what needs to be questioned and salvage the legitimate and important parts of tradition. To my mind, this is the greatest challenge for genocide studies in each of the three main problem areas outlined in this article.

**Notes**

1. Translated from Spanish by Douglas Andrew Town.
5. According to the UNCG, 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.

7. Ibid., 28.
12. Such discussions are present in the trials in national and international courts concerning the current cases of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Argentina, Colombia, Cambodia, and Uruguay.
13. Political groups (and wider terms such as “any group” or “any community” as well as sexual groups, health groups, and others) have been included in definitions of genocide contained in the penal codes of a number of states, including Bangladesh, Colombia, Ivory Coast, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, France, Finland, Lithuania, Panama, Peru, Portugal, Romania, and Uruguay. This trend has increased in recent years. Argentina has not yet included genocide in its penal code, but all of the bills presented in its history—including one under discussion in parliament in 2011—protect political and other groups.
16. For a key work on this topic, see Arno Mayer, *Why Did the Heavens not Darken? The “Final Solution” in History* (New York: Pantheon, 1989).

24. This point was made by the International Criminal Tribunal that tried the crimes in Rwanda, and Dadrian has conceded it as well. It has also been well received by Eric Markusen and Alison Des Forges, among others. See Prosecutor v. Georges Anderson Nderubumwe Rutaganda, Judgement (6 December 1999), International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda; Bjornlund, Markusen, and Mennecke, “What is Genocide?”; des Forges, Leave None to Tell the Story.

25. For Kiernan’s most complete work on Cambodia, see Ben Kiernan, The Pol Pot Regime. For a comparative analysis, see Ben Kiernan, “Twentieth-Century Genocide: Underlying Ideological Themes from Armenia to East Timor,” in Gelatelly and Kiernan, The Specter of Genocide, 29–50.


30. Among those I have omitted because of their questionable theories and politics are Ernst Nolte and Andreas Hillgruber. See Ernst Nolte, Der Europäische Bürgerkrieg, 1917–1945: Nationalsozialismus und Bolschewismus [The European Civil War, 1917–1945: Nazism and Bolshevism] (Munich: Herbig, 2000); Andreas Hillgruber, Zweierlei Untergang: Die Zerschlagung des Deutschen Reiches und das Ende des europäischen Judentums [Two kinds of ruin: The fall of the German Reich and the end of European Jewry] (Berlin: BRD, 1986). Nolte portrays Nazism as a “European reaction” to “Bolshevik terror,” comparing the repressive methods of Nazism and Stalinism in order to establish causal connections between the two and minimize the role played by Germany’s—and Europe’s—ruling classes in implementing genocide. Thus, the Nazi genocide, in Nolte’s view, was simply a “defensive” response by civilized Europe, shocked at the “barbarism” of the “Slavic” Russian revolution. In other words, it was Communism that unleashed total war in Europe. Hillgruber shocked German and European scholars with his analysis of the “end” of European Jewry and the “tragedy” of the German army on the Eastern Front at the end of World War II. Hayden White has insightfully pointed out that
Hillgruber pushes discourse to its limit by describing the sufferings of the German army as a “tragedy” while referring to the sufferings of European Jews with the neutral and impersonal term “end.” Answering calls for a ban on Hillgruber’s work, White argues that Hillgruber’s was just one more way of “emplotting” a historical discourse. The real question was how to account for the ideological implications of different discourses. For White’s approach to the Holocaust, see Hayden White, “Historical Emplotment and the Problem of Truth,” in Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the “Final Solution,” ed. Saul Friedlander (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992). A more acceptable but clearly conservative approach is found in the work of Eric Weitz, who attempts to link Nazism, Stalinism, and genocide in Cambodia. Weitz suggests revolutionary upheaval as the main explanation for the appearance of genocidal social practices in these three political and social experiments. As can be seen very clearly from these examples, the ideological implications of any given approach may be more or less obvious, more or less explicit, but they cannot be eliminated and are always implicit in the historical examples chosen for comparison. See Eric D. Weitz, “The Modernity of Genocides: War, Race and Revolution in the Twentieth Century,” in Kiernan and Gelatelly, The Specter of Genocide, 53–73.


36. Ibid., 533, 530.

37. There are several examples of such works: the different works published by the teams under the direction of Smail Cekic in the University of Sarajevo; different scholars working in Colombia like Alejandro Castillejo Cuéllar or Andrei Gomez Suarez; the works by Gabriel Gatti, Manuel Reyes Mate, Alberto Sucasas, and other authors in Spain; Alvaro Rico Fernández, Oscar López Goldaracena, and Carlos Demasi in Uruguay; Luis Alegría, Cristian Gutiérrez, and Elías Padilla Ballesteros in Chile; my own teams of scholars in different universities in Argentina (Buenos Aires, Tres de Febrero), which include Guillermo Levy, Lior Zylberman, Emmanuel Taub, Tomas Borovinsky, Eva Camelli, Perla Sneh, Adriana Taboada, among many others.

Genocide studies has never been more diffuse an enterprise. And rarely since its inception, if ever, has it been as exciting a field of inquiry. I offer here a few comments on the state of this rapidly evolving field, and try to isolate some present and medium-term trends.

The comparative study of genocide underwent something of an explosion in the first decade of the twenty-first century, particularly the period 2004–2008. A raft of excellent contributions appeared, both theoretically sophisticated and thematically diverse. Institutionally, the field not only widened but deepened, and it was rendered politically more complex by the appearance of the International Network of Genocide Scholars (INoGS). INoGS inherited the Journal of Genocide Research as its flagship to stand alongside the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) and its journal, Genocide Studies and Prevention, established in 2006, to which I am glad to contribute these words. Two distinguishable academic “circuits” have evolved around these organizations: IAGS’s center of gravity is on the US east coast and in central Canada,1 while INoGS is anchored in the United Kingdom for Western Europe and Australasia. As an outlier in this scheme—based in Western Canada, and therefore mostly riding the IAGS circuit, but serving on the editorial board of the INoGS journal—I have come to appreciate the opportunity to bestride the institutional poles of genocide studies. But the field’s division, which maps to some extent onto the scholarship, remains a division. Attempts to merge IAGS and INoGS broke down in 2010–2011, amidst some acrimony.

The occasional pettiness of such exchanges has in no way impeded the flood of intellectual contributions during recent years. A pair of essential works, Martin Shaw’s What Is Genocide? (2007) and Mark Levene’s Genocide in the Age of the Nation-State (two volumes so far, 2005), encapsulate major lines of interest and investigation in the field.2 Shaw’s work presents the most nuanced portrait of genocide as social destruction—returning to the roots of the concept in Raphael Lemkin’s work, and participating in a broader “return to Lemkin,” a significant trend of recent
years. I have expressed skepticism toward a concept of cultural genocide independent of mass killing, suggesting a couple of cases in which erosion of a group’s identity or expulsion of its members, in the absence of a large-scale murderous component, seemed unlikely to qualify as genocidal. But Shaw’s richly sociological vision of genocide, presented in a compact and clearly argued form, will resonate through the field in the coming years.

Levene’s epic project, *Genocide in the Age of the Nation-State*, overlaps with Shaw’s in that Levene is deeply committed to an exploration of modernity and its particular destruction of social identities, subsistence strategies, and indigenous worldviews. Of all the canonical works of genocide studies, Levene’s is the most eclectic in content, apart perhaps from Ben Kiernan’s *Blood and Soil* (2006). Despite Levene’s commitment to a genocide-as-modernity thesis, the breadth of his analysis may leave us with a global-historical understanding of what is essentially the same phenomenon—that is, while modernity may have reconstructed the institution of genocide, it did not invent it. Nonetheless, Levene’s books stand as the greatest works of genocide studies yet published. They and their successors in his four-volume project will reverberate for as long as we have a field.

With his expert grasp of Central and Eastern European dynamics of genocide in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—captured in many of the book reviews he has published in the *Journal of Genocide Research* in recent years—Levene exemplifies the increasingly symbiotic relationship between genocide studies and Holocaust studies. The evolution of a comparative field of genocide studies necessarily displaced the Holocaust case from its *sui generis* position. But Holocaust studies remains amazingly vital today, perhaps more than ever; for that reason, most genocide scholars keep a close eye on it.

A combination of factors and a series of iconic works have shifted Holocaust scholars’ focus, both historiographically and geographically, from the death camps and gas chambers of Poland to the killing fields of the “Holocaust by bullets” in the eastern occupied territories, notably Ukraine, Belarus, and the Baltic states. In these territories between 1941 and 1944, upwards of 1.5 million Jews were exterminated, along with millions of Soviet prisoners of war (2.8 million during an eight-month period in 1941–1942 alone). These mass atrocities occurred in the zone that Timothy Snyder has dubbed “the Bloodlands,” in a book that has commanded considerable attention over the past year or so. The core framing of Snyder’s book is not wholly original. The “bloodlands” that he identifies (roughly, the region between what are today eastern Poland and western Russia) were much the same borderlands and “shatter-zones” studied in the interdisciplinary Borderlands Project, sponsored by Brown University’s Watson Institute beginning in 2003. The existing studies pointed to *interlocking* genocides and repetitive genocidal iterations—inflicted by Nazis, Soviet Communists, and miscellaneous others—during the first half of the twentieth century. But, Snyder’s work, lodged with a major publisher and granted a significant publicity push, “branded” this zone of mass slaughter and helped to popularize the notion of Hitler’s crimes in Europe as constituting only part of an escalating series of mass atrocities inflicted alongside those perpetrated by Stalin’s USSR (and eventually in league with it). The seething cauldron of genocides in the bloodlands during the 1930s and 1940s has now been described in dozens of monographs in several languages, most of them published in the last decade. This literature will anchor the new studies of genocide in Europe during its bloodiest paroxysms from 1914 to 1945.
The continuing vitality of Holocaust studies also derives from the links forged with a dominant trend in genocide studies over the last decade or two. I refer to the growing inclusion of native peoples and indigenous genocides—not merely as contributions to the case-study literature, but as foundational to understandings of genocide in the modern (post-1492) period. To Raphael Lemkin’s credit, the more we learn about his genocide research, the more we gain an understanding of his deep empathy for indigenous peoples who were trampled and destroyed by Western colonialism; among the first generation of comparative genocide scholars, Colin Tatz’s contributions also stand out. The quincentenary in 1992 of the colonization of the western hemisphere spawned a set of important works by David Stannard, Ward Churchill, Richard Drinnon, Russell Thornton, and others. A qualitatively new stage of analysis was reached with works linking indigenous genocides to the unfolding of the Nazi Holocaust in the east—against the “redskins” and “barbarians” that Hitler and his henchmen identified and targeted (citing the American “clearing” of the Great Plains as inspiration). A proposed “missing link” in the chain, and the subject of much recent study, was the German genocide in South-West Africa, waged against the Herero and Nama peoples between 1904 and 1907. There was a notable overlap between some leading German South-West African personnel (administrators, ideologues, and pseudo-scientists) and those prominent in the early stages of the Nazi movement. Likewise, the death camps of Europe, or at least the Nazi slave-labor camps, seem presaged by Shark Island and the other now-notorious killing grounds of Namibia’s native people.
Whether or not strong connections between these two eras of German expansionism are accepted, the understanding that Hitler saw his eastern conquests in rather traditional imperial terms is now held by many scholars (among the most significant are A. Dirk Moses, Dominik Schaller, Jürgen Zimmerer, Ann Curthoys, and Benjamin Madley). This emphasis on the holocausts of Western colonialism may well prove the most prominent theme in the literature in the coming years.

Mention of the Namibian genocide reminds us of an enduring project of genocide studies: the unearthing of little-known, often conveniently forgotten atrocities from the past. (The bloodlands/borderlands literature is relevant here as well.) It is my view that a kind of Hippocratic oath should prevail in our field, proclaiming the right of all victims and survivors of genocide to receive due consideration and concern. Apart from extensive work on the Namibian genocide, we have benefited from important investigations of cases as diverse as Patagonia, Tasmania, East Timor, Circassia / the Caucasus, and North America. Madley, for example, is not only unveiling the full dimensions of the Yuki and Tolowa genocides of the nineteenth century but charting a US-wide record of the massacre of native populations. His work shows not only how case studies are proliferating but how the genocidal record is deepening in its regional and local dimensions. To this trend should be added a reframing of the “classic” genocides—not just the understanding of the Holocaust as colonialism, already noted, but the reconfiguring of the Armenian Genocide as one of a number of intertwined anti-Christian genocides under the Ottoman Empire and the growing study of the Rwandan Genocide in a regional and macro-historical context.

Do these investigations truly hew to the Hippocratic ideal? Are all victims and survivors receiving their due? To a considerable degree, I think the answer is yes. Genocide scholars, beginning with Lemkin himself, have been extraordinarily open to a geographically and historically broad framing of genocide. But until very recently it was a geographically narrow range of scholars—mostly North American, Western European, and Australasian—who generated the vast majority of academic contributions. Journalistic and public discussion of genocide has likewise been heavily concentrated in the developed West. It is questionable how much this has changed in the last decade or two, but there is certainly a resurgence evident in the UK / Western European / Australasian nexus, centered on INoGS and its Journal of Genocide Research. The introduction of a distinct “Argentinian school,” spearheaded by Daniel Feierstein and his colleagues in Buenos Aires, has significantly influenced the discussion of genocide and modernity, as well as making a strong case for Argentina under the junta (1976–1983) as a case of genocide. Several African and African-American scholars, including Mahmood Mamdani, Charles Mironko, and Chile Eboe-Osuji, have made prominent contributions; Bosnian scholars and activists were decisive in shaping the content of the 2007 IAGS conference in Sarajevo.

Overall, though, it must be acknowledged that a gulf exists between the global-historical reach of genocide studies as an intellectual project and its geographical reach as a field. One can hope that as interest in the subject spreads further in Latin America (including Brazil and Mexico), and as scholars in the Global South increasingly assert themselves, we will see more of the internationalization of the discussion that the field requires.

Will we also hear more female voices? Several have been foundational to our field and to closely related ones. Best known is Hannah Arendt, with the controversy evoked by her Eichmann in Jerusalem and, more recently, the attention paid to her groundbreaking study of Nazism as a culmination of Western imperialism, The Origins
of Totalitarianism. Probably no book in the history of genocide studies has been more widely read, and more influential on the policy front, than Samantha Power’s A Problem from Hell. Helen Fein’s contributions over many years are also significant; while Barbara Harff, in cooperation with Ted Gurr, has published a number of canonical and methodologically rigorous studies. Analyses of gender and genocide have established Joan Ringelheim and Elisa von Joeden-Forgey as influential figures.

One hopes that a greater gender balance will also soon be evident in an institutional sense. The ballot for the latest (2011) elections for the IAGS executive featured no woman candidate above the (lowest) level of the Advisory Council. The other leading scholarly grouping, the INoGS, is likewise something of a boys’ club. The executives of both scholarly journals in the field display a similar pattern, though both have been commendably open to female contributors. Overall, the unusually diffuse and eclectic character of genocide studies as an intellectual enterprise contrasts strongly with its still rather staid and traditional professional structure.

Fortunately, there seems no sign that another of the field’s key attributes, its remarkable disciplinary pluralism, is ebbing. This was evident from the start, in Raphael Lemkin’s field-defining blend of historical, anthropological, legal, and philosophical strains, overlaid with a moral-entrepreneurial stance. The tendency in genocide studies since its “rebirth” in the late 1970s is to draw ever-wider circles of academics and individuals into the discussion. From an initial array of historians, legal scholars, sociologists, political scientists, and psychologists, genocide scholarship has moved to absorb influences from anthropology, cultural studies, indigenous studies, gender studies, and moral philosophy, to cite only a few. Artists, poets, and playwrights have also moved to the fore, and now we see the natural sciences beginning to assume greater prominence, with the high profile accorded to forensic investigations and exhumations of genocide victims as well as Russell Schimmer’s recent application of remote-sensing satellite technologies to genocide prevention and intervention.

One inevitable result of this laudable “all hands on deck” approach is that it leaves the field in a constant state of evolution, exploration—and confusion. Sometimes the proliferation of alternative definitions of “genocide” seems almost surreal (I include literally dozens of examples, spread over three and a half pages, in my genocide textbook). I think we had better accept that genocide will forever be an “essentially contested concept.” Yet it remains one that can spur individuals to outrage and action, bind together a diverse and diffuse community of knowledge and practice, and underpin an (albeit weak) prohibition regime. Aside from being inevitable and probably perpetual, the definitional and conceptual debates may actually help to keep people more honest and modest. With no “school” of genocide studies really dominant (or aggressively pushed, à la “rational choice” in political science), egos are likelier to be checked at the door. There is less rivalry and one-upmanship in genocide studies than in some other academic fields I have known.

In closing, let me stress a final inclusive aspect of our field: its activist and praxis-oriented component, which has been present from the outset and is today more powerful than ever. In this globalized age, genocide scholars are increasingly likely to mix with representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations (IGOs and NGOs, respectively), peacekeepers, religious representatives, and media and cultural figures, all commingling in real-world projects of genocide prevention and intervention. This is something to be praised and promoted.

In the days before I wrote this piece, I was contracted by the United Nations to deliver seminars to IGO and NGO personnel in Sarajevo and Geneva. David Simon of Yale was my co-presenter for a series supervised by Norul Mohamed Rashid of the
UN Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide (OSAPG). I learned from Norul that a number of other genocide scholars have recently participated in similar OSAPG-sponsored projects, in locations such as Juba (South Sudan), Kyrgyzstan, Cambodia, Bogotá, and New York City, where the UN Special Adviser, Francis Deng, has his office. Sometimes these delegations have featured a fact-finding and report-drafting component, which strikes me as another important contribution that scholars can make to the work of international organizations.\textsuperscript{22}

The UN’s genocide-prevention office is currently being restructured to encompass the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), a concept and political initiative that likewise typifies the closer relationship between academics and practitioners. R2P arose from a Canadian-government-sponsored project that solicited input from scholars, politicians, and field workers; it has since R2P been closely associated with the Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies (MIGS) and work there by Frank Chalk and his colleagues on generating a corresponding “Will to Intervene” (W2I). For my part, the opportunity to move formally and informally in UN circles helped me to discern where the current “best practice” lies in the humanitarian sphere. I also learned more about the political constraints that hamper international organizations, keeping enforcement of the Genocide Convention relatively weak. As a scholar, I felt that my own contributions were heard, respected, and perhaps even learned from by those on the front lines of the genocide-prevention endeavor.

Such interweavings of academic expertise and international organizations will increase in coming years, perhaps exponentially. We genocide scholars and students should honor the legacy of our field’s founder, Raphael Lemkin, who cultivated links

\textit{Figure 2. Ruins from the ferocious 1993–95 Croat–Bosnia conflict in the Bosnian city of Mostar, seamlessly joined to a new apartment block (photo: Adam Jones, June 2011)}
with national and international practitioners and thereby founded his enterprise in a broader community of action. The torrent of scholarly literature in recent years seems to be settling back to a more manageable flow—so let us nurture these institutional linkages, perhaps above all, in the coming years. Lemkin knew, and those who have inherited his mantle also know, that the main task is to defuse genocide—not merely to diffuse genocide studies.

Notes

1. Editors’ Note: GSP has had, and continues to have, editorial advisors based in Australia, Argentina, Cambodia, Denmark, England, Ireland, the Netherlands, Rwanda, and Scotland. Contributing authors have hailed from Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bosnia-Hercegovina, Canada, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, the Netherlands, and Sweden.


3. On a visit to the Newark campus of Rutgers University in spring 2011, I learned of anthropology professor and genocide scholar Alex Hinton’s coordination of a team of undergraduate and graduate students, all of them conducting original research on Lemkin’s writings in the archives held by the New York Public Library. For another example of a return to Lemkin’s more cultural/social framing of genocide see Kurt Mundorff, “Other Peoples’ Children: A Textual and Contextual Interpretation of the Genocide Convention, Article 2(e),” *Harvard International Law Journal* 50, no. 1 (2009): 61–128.


7. Catholic priest Patrick Desbois’s activism and “honest witnessing,” as a forensic documenter of the “Holocaust by bullets” in Ukraine and Belarus, is Nobel Prize–worthy and should be acknowledged here. See Patrick Desbois, *The Holocaust by Bullets: A Priest’s Journey to Uncover the Truth behind the Murder of 1.5 Million Jews* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).


12. Something of this reframing trend is conveyed by separate editions of my textbook, chapter 4 of which evolved from “The Armenian Genocide” in the first edition to “The Ottoman Destruction of Christian Minorities” in the second, to give due consideration to the other Christian groups (Pontian and Anatolian Greeks, Assyrians) swept up in the Ottoman holocaust. This reframing was buttressed by the decision of the IAGS to officially recognize the Greek and Assyrian genocides alongside the Armenian one, in a resolution passed in December 2007 (see http://www.notevenmyname.com/9.html). For the third edition of Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction, I plan to replace the Rwandan Genocide chapter with a chapter titled “Genocide in the African Great Lakes Region,” covering 1959 to the present, to do greater justice to the regional interweaving of ethnicities and genocidal atrocities over several decades.

13. Editors’ Note: The same is true, but in a different way, of the IAGS and its flagship journal, GSP, which began with a US/Israel nexus but have now expanded to span the United States, Israel, the United Kingdom, Western Europe, Australia, and South America. Tellingly, a recent issue of GSP was co-edited by Argentinian scholar and current IAGS First Vice-President Daniel Feierstein.


20. For information on the important work of the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP) see their Web site at http://www.ic-mp.org/.

Critique of Current Genocide Studies

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The present article critiques the views that (1) modern genocide does not substantially differ from its historical predecessors, (2) that all genocide is a product of imperialism, and (3) that the study of genocide can be reduced to a study of perpetrators and collaborators, while the testimonies of victims and survivors need not be taken into account. In contrast, this article suggests (1) that there are significant differences between modern or contemporary genocide and the mass murders of the past, (2) that there is no single explanation for genocide since there are different types of genocide that require separate explanations, and (3) that the testimonies of victims and survivors must be taken into account in order to better understand the motives of the perpetrators and bystanders and give victims and survivors a voice in the narrative of destruction.

Key words: modern genocide, imperialism and genocide, victim and survivor testimonies

Raphael Lemkin initiated the field of genocide studies in large part as a response to the Armenian Genocide of the First World War and the Holocaust of the Second World War. Judging from membership to the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) and other associations like it, such as the International Network of Genocide Scholars (INoGS), there are today hundreds of genocide scholars working in many fields of knowledge. A main reason for all of this activity is that genocide did not end with the Holocaust and other mass murders of the Second World War. To the contrary, with the emergence of the “third world” and the break-up of the Communist world, instances of genocide have proliferated. Genocide scholars, working in many areas, want to know what explains all the violence and how it can be prevented.

The editors of this special issue have asked us to critique genocide studies as it currently stands and to provide some suggestions to strengthen it. Given the complexity and rich variety of the field, it is difficult to give a detailed assessment of the whole. To facilitate my task I have narrowed my comments to three problem areas. In what follows I critique the following views: (1) modern genocide does not substantially differ from its historical predecessors, (2) all genocide is a byproduct of imperialism, and (3) the study of genocide boils down to a study of perpetrators and collaborators while the testimony of victims and survivors—except insofar as they lend color to the narrative—need not be taken into account.

My primary suggestions are (1) that we need to be more aware of the difference between modern or contemporary genocide and the mass murders of the past, (2) that we resist the temptation to come up with a single explanation for genocide since there are different types of genocide that may require separate explanations, and (3) that we should integrate the testimonies of victims and survivors into our accounts, in part to better understand the motives and behavior of the perpetrators,
but also to give victims and survivors a voice in the narrative of destruction—a voice that the perpetrators intended to silence.

Modern Genocide
Massacre, ethnic cleansing, and genocide are not limited to our own times. Throughout history, populations were wiped out as part of invasion, war, imperialism, and colonialism. The victims were usually foreigners, viewed as external enemies of the state and stigmatized as “barbarians” or “savages.” However, in our own times what was rare in the past has become common. In modern genocide, some states perpetrated mass murder by turning against communal groups within their own borders. Entire ethnic, religious, or racial categories that had once been viewed as belonging to the community were annihilated as a planned final solution to a supposed political problem or in pursuit of a bizarre ideological vision. This is what makes modern genocide different from its historical predecessors and also makes it so puzzling.

During the twentieth and twenty-first centuries the world experienced four tidal waves of national and ethnic conflict and modern genocide in the wake of collapsing states and empires. These were punctuated by the First and Second World Wars and by the postcolonial and post-Communist eras. During the First World War and its aftermath, the Ottoman Empire collapsed and committed the first total genocide of the twentieth century against its Armenian minority. In the same period, the disintegration of the German and Austro-Hungarian empires set off nationalist and fascist movements that repressed minorities and precipitated the Second World War. In the context of that war, the Nazis attempted to exterminate Jews and Gypsies and committed partial genocide against other peoples. Following the Second World War, as former European colonial empires—notably Britain and France—withdraw from their possessions, they left behind fragile regimes that lacked legitimacy. Such “third-world” governments frequently ruled over culturally plural societies and tried to impose the hegemony of one ethnic group over the rest. In reaction, minorities rebelled and sought self-determination. This led to ethnic wars and genocide in places like Indonesia, Rwanda, Burundi, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Iraq. In the wake of the collapse of Communist regimes in the Soviet Union and former Yugoslavia, the world witnessed the fourth wave of nationalist upsurge, ethnic conflicts, and genocide. Meanwhile, in Africa and elsewhere, the third wave of postcolonial genocide has not yet spent its force.

In the past, empires were culturally plural (think of the Hapsburg and Ottoman Empires) but they were either unconcerned with deriving their legitimacy from those whom they governed or they derived it from God. At times the emperor was viewed as a god. Such empires could be brutal and murderous, but they were likely to practice mass murder and genocide against “barbarians” or “savages” who opposed their rule, not against peoples who had submitted to their rule. That kind of destruction seems to have been invented for our more modern, “enlightened” and democratic era.

What is it about the modern world that makes it so conducive to genocide? I would suggest that most modern states are both culturally plural and derive their legitimacy in some ways from the peoples whom they govern. Both can be preconditions for genocide. In stable democracies genocide against domestic groups is unlikely. Nevertheless, starting with the Athenian destruction of Melos in 416 BCE, stable democracies are perfectly capable of committing genocide abroad or of supporting genocidal regimes as the United States did in Guatemala and elsewhere.
during the Cold War. However, stable democracies are unlikely to exterminate their own citizens, unlike contemporary failed or revolutionary states.\footnote{2}

When a contemporary government needs to derive its legitimacy from a culturally plural society in a failed democracy like Weimar Germany, Ottoman Turkey under the Young Turks, or a failed communist state like Yugoslavia after Tito, it is apt to identify only a subset of the ethnically or racially plural society as constituting “the real Germans,” “the real Turks,” “the real Serbs,” or, for that matter, “the real Rwandans” in Rwanda after 1959. The “others” are labeled as “minorities,” not quite constituting the “real people,” even if they are legally citizens. Such divisions—often deepened and even created by democratic elections—can lead to violence, but they need not yet become catastrophic. They can become so if and when those who are stigmatized as not constituting “the real people” become identified as internal enemies in alliance with the states’ external mortal foes in wartime. It is then that internal problems become ripe for “final solutions.”

The field of genocide studies might want to pay greater attention to what makes democracies and other states fail, starting with the early Turkish parliamentary failure preceding the First World War and the democratic Weimar Germany preceding the Second World War. Such starting points would avoid reducing the causes of genocide to cultural variables. It was not Ottoman culture or Islam that created the Committee of Union and Progress; nor was it nineteenth-century German anti-Semitism alone that produced the Nazis.

**Imperialism and Genocide**

Some leading contemporary scholars of genocide, such as Donald Bloxham, Alexander Hinton, and A. Dirk Moses, have turned to imperialism as a framework for the analysis of contemporary genocide, including the Holocaust. A representative statement of this approach is Moses’s important essay “Empire, Colony, Genocide: Keywords and the Philosophy of History,” which appears as an introduction to an edited volume that was recently published.\footnote{3}

The main thesis of the essay and the book in which it appears, *Empire, Colony, and Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History*, is that genocide is a product of colonialism and imperialism, and Moses approvingly discusses Raphael Lemkin’s contention that “genocides are intrinsically colonial and that they long precede the twentieth century. The history of genocide is the history of human society since antiquity.”\footnote{4} Indeed, colonialism and imperialism have been implicated in genocide since antiquity and through the early and later modern eras. One can readily think of many examples from antiquity, such as the conquest of Canaan by the Israelites, the destruction of ancient Israel by Assyria, the destruction of Melos by Athens, and the destruction of Judea and Carthage by Rome. Furthermore, the Spanish conquest of the New World and the European colonization of North America precipitated a demographic disaster for indigenous peoples. The depopulation of the New World, including North America, was in large part caused by the spread of diseases such as smallpox and settler-promoted ethnic cleansing and genocide on a continental scale. At approximately the same time, the British settlement of Australia and New Zealand had similar effects on the native peoples of those regions. In the nineteenth century, Belgium’s King Leopold II and his agents’ barbaric exploitation of the Congo—verging on genocide—and German imperial massacres of the Herero and Nama were but episodes in the European “Scramble for Africa.”
These were all instances of conquest and colonialism, conducted under imperial regimes, leading to mass destruction and genocide. However, the strong argument claiming that genocide is always a byproduct of colonialism and imperialism presents at least three problems. First, there are many instances of colonialism and imperialism that did not lead to genocide; second, there are important cases, such as the destruction of the European Jews and Roma that were occasioned by Nazi imperialism but had their origins in other historical and ideological sources; and third, as noted above, the claim neglects a major cause of genocide in the modern postcolonial world, namely ethnic nationalism and the failed democratic state. Most of the states that inherited colonial rule governed culturally plural societies, while trying to base their legitimacy on majority support. This promoted ethically based conflicts over power, leading to failed democracies and genocide in Asia and Africa.

British imperialism and colonialism can certainly be implicated in the physical and cultural destruction of native peoples in North America, Australia, and New Zealand, but the same argument cannot be made for large swathes of British West or East Africa or India. British colonialism was violently imposed and even imposed through massacre, as in India at Amritsar. It cannot be argued, however, that the British practiced wide-scale genocide in their other colonies. Nigeria under indirect rule (1860–1960), for example, did not experience genocide. Massive violence during the Biafran War (1967–1970), especially against the Igbo, occurred after independence from Britain and after the Nigerian nationalist movement took power and splintered along ethnic lines. Significantly, the Biafran crisis developed after the national elections of 1966.

Nazi imperialism in Eastern Europe and Russia provided the context and the cause for the partial genocide, ethnic cleansing, and enslavement of the indigenous Slavic peoples. The East was designated as the area for Lebensraum and German racial expansion, and its Slavic peoples, especially the Poles and Russians, were deemed to be natives who were expendable and destined for slavery in a future German imperium. However, the Nazis did not view the Jews as natives whose lands and labor could be exploited; they viewed Jews as their supreme racial enemies who were destined for extermination. Indeed, when the Jews of Lodz calculated that they might be able to survive by becoming useful slave workers for the Wehrmacht they were nevertheless deported to Auschwitz. By the same token, the Nazis viewed the Roma as racial undesirables, better exterminated or sterilized than employed. War and imperialism certainly provided opportunities to expand Nazi extermination policies to Jews and Roma, but such policies had their roots in anti-Semitism and racism that had origins independent from Nazi imperialism, and it is those origins—the pariah status of Jews dating to the Middle Ages, for example—that are overlooked in Empire, Colony, and Genocide.

Moses, in his introductory essay, and Furber and Lower in their chapter are aware of this distinction between Nazi views of Jews and Roma and Nazi views of Russians and Poles, but the authors try to preserve imperialism as the primary cause of genocide even in these instances by arguing that the Nazis viewed themselves as a form of subaltern resistance to Jewish imperialism. According to this thesis, the Nazis viewed the Jews as colonizers who threatened Germany with extinction. That the Nazis held a bizarre conception of Jews is not in question. The question rather is, Can the Nazis be conceived as a form of subaltern resistance? To express their hatred of Jews, Nazis relied on a mix of metaphors. The Jews were said to be “maggots in a rotting corpse,” “a plague akin to the Black Death,” “a parasite sucking the blood of Germany,” “a cancer in Germany’s body” that had
to be excised in order for Germany to live, and so on. Jews were also portrayed as agents of capitalist exploitation and Communist subversion, and the Nazis saw themselves as the leaders of an exploited people rising against Jewish imperialism. However, there is an important distinction to be drawn between what the Nazis felt and perceived in their paranoid visions and the reality of the situation: Jews, whether German Jews or Eastern European Jews, were not organized into a movement to colonize and exploit Germany, and if the Nazis felt as if they were leading a subaltern movement then they were seriously deluded. When Frantz Fanon joined the Algerian resistance against French colonialism he had a right to write a book about “the wretched of the earth” and their revolt against imperialism.7 The Nazis had no right to make similar claims as they murdered the Jews of Europe. Thus, imperialism is not a sufficient explanation for the Holocaust or the destruction of the Roma. It cannot account for Nazi ideology and psychopathology.

Finally, in the contemporary world, genocide seems to be less a byproduct of imperialism and colonialism than of ethnic nationalism and the global spread of the democratic nation state. Indeed, some of the worst instances of genocide, as in Nigeria, Cambodia, Rwanda, Sudan, and the Congo, have occurred not when these areas were under colonial rule, but when they were supposedly liberated by nationalist movements.

Such movements often privileged one ethnic group over another in a culturally plural context, leading to ethnic conflict and genocide. Although imperialism and colonialism may have inadvertently created some of the conditions that later led to genocide, it was often its opponents, and not the imperial state as such, that committed mass murder.8 In some noted instances nationalist movements that had been previously opposed to colonialism and imperialism, once in power, turned against groups in their own society and committed genocide.

The thesis that all genocide can be traced back to imperialism and colonialism is flawed. Indeed, many instances of genocide can be traced directly to such causes, but some important instances cannot. It would seem that genocide, like murder, occurs in many contexts for many reasons, and these need to be investigated from a comparative historical perspective before we can arrive at a convincing explanation of types of genocide, including imperialist genocide.

**Victims and Survivors**

When genocide scholars take down the testimony of victims and survivors or read memoirs, they are likely to confront details of brutality, depravity, and horror. Perhaps this explains one of the psychological obstacles to including victim and survivor testimonies. I know that was true for me when I wrote *Revolution and Genocide*, and it still is. However, there are scholars who have argued that victim and survivor testimony is deeply flawed and should be avoided in historical explanations. Such scholars purposely avoid basing their analyses on victim and survivor accounts or even referring to them. I have chosen Raul Hilberg’s *The Destruction of the European Jews* and Scott Straus’s *The Order of Genocide* as two illustrative cases.9 I have done so because they are justly praised, excellent works, exemplary studies of perpetrator behavior, spanning two generations and two paradigmatic instances of genocide. Yet, both neglect victim and survivor testimonies.

In the preface to his magisterial history of the Holocaust, Hilberg makes clear that his is going to be a study of the perpetrators and their collaborators, not of the victims:
We shall not dwell on Jewish suffering, nor shall we explore the social characteristics of ghetto life or camp existence. Insofar as we may examine Jewish institutions, we will do so primarily through the eyes of the Germans: as tools which were used in the destruction process.\textsuperscript{10}

Although in the preface he had announced that he would not discuss the victims, some 600 pages later Hilberg does just that in a brief section labeled “Victims.”\textsuperscript{11} As a counterpoint to the brilliant institutional analysis of the Nazis that had gone beforehand, Hilberg’s account of the motivations and behavior of the Jewish victims is a superficial failure.

His argument is that the Nazi success in killing millions of Jews so quickly and relatively easily derived in large part from Jewish passivity, lack of physical resistance, and complicity in their own destruction. He finds an explanation for this apparently puzzling behavior in the cultural conditioning of Jews who had survived many years of oppression in European ghettos from the Middle Ages onward by becoming weaned from violent resistance and toward accommodation with their persecutors. They took the Nazis to be the latest in a long line of oppressors and reverted to traditional modes and strategies of compliance that played right into their killers’ plans.

This is a kind of psychocultural reductionism that Hilberg wisely avoids when discussing the German perpetrators. When it comes to the Jewish victims, however, he completely neglects contemporary developments and differentiation in Jewish culture, religion, class structure, nationality, and institutional frameworks that created deep fissures among Jews and left them deeply divided at the moment of their gravest peril. For example, when it comes to Poland, he neglects the rise of a Polonized secular Jewish middle class and an active working class that had broken with medieval traditions and mores. There is no discussion of the socialist Bund, Jews in the Polish Communist Party, or the various branches of the Zionist movement, all of which were in conflict with each other and with religious parties such as Agudat Israel.

He hardly notes that in no occupied country were the Jews organized or united. Nor were they armed or led by persons with military experience who could organize armed resistance. He dismisses the Warsaw Ghetto Rebellion by noting how few were the German casualties, but he neglects to see how extraordinary it was for a starved, persecuted, terrified, and fragmented collectivity—not a people—to launch a revolt against insurmountable odds in the first place.

Finally, he completely overlooks the Zionist movement and the founding of modern Israel. He cannot possibly explain how it is that the same generation of Jews that had supposedly been conditioned by centuries of ghetto culture and oppression to be so passive and accommodating to persecutors was able to organize a modern state and successfully resist with military force the Arab invasion of 1948—three years after the end of World War II.

Hilberg’s analysis of victim and survivor motivation and behavior will not do, but more importantly, by neglecting victim testimonies, his perspective, methodology, and choices limit what he can say about German behavior, the subject of his study. For instance, Hilberg can neither describe nor document the excesses of cruelty practiced by perpetrators in the roundups, transport, and killing operations.\textsuperscript{12} Such excesses against women and children in particular need to be documented and explained. Why, if the perpetrators wanted to destroy the Jews, did they not simply kill them? Why did they expend so much seemingly unnecessary effort in torturing and humiliating their victims, often going beyond their police and military orders? What ideological and/or psychic needs did such excess cruelty satisfy? Such questions
are most likely to arise from victim/survivor testimonies, not from the self-serving
documents and testimonies of the perpetrators.

With some notable exceptions, most Holocaust and genocide scholars have
followed Hilberg’s path. They too have purposely focused on the perpetrators and
collaborators, assuming that understanding their motives and actions did not entail
talking to survivors or studying extant accounts left by victims. An implicit assump-
tion for such scholars is that victim history and testimony is not essential to an
explanation of genocide. A recent case in point is Scott Straus’s important study of
the Rwandan Genocide.

Straus’s singular contribution to the discussion of the Rwandan Genocide is
based on his interviews with 210 Hutu prisoners who had been incarcerated in
fifteen different prisons and who had confessed to active participation in the genocide
of 1994. From these interviews he concludes that the perpetrators of the genocide
were not driven by ethnic hatred or racialist ideology, as others have suggested, but
by obedience to government authority and fear of Tutsi reprisals in wartime.

That fear had been engendered by the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) invasion
of Rwanda in 1990, wherein a guerilla army led by Tutsi, originating from Uganda,
invaded Rwanda and threatened to establish a new regime. By a process that Straus
labels “ethnic categorization” all Tutsi living in Rwanda, even those far from the
front, were labeled by the government, as well as by most ordinary Hutu, as being
in league with the RPF and therefore as mortal enemies that had to be eliminated:

Ethnic and racial categories preexisted the genocide, and awareness of those categories
was widespread and resonant in Rwandan society…. But the switch that led many
ordinary Rwandans with little apparent preexisting hatred to categorize Tutsis as
dangerous “enemies” happened only in war and only after the state made that claim.

What is methodologically striking about this study is that it is based only on
perpetrator testimony, which may be self-serving and self-exculpatory, and that not
a single Tutsi survivor was interviewed for this book. Apparently Straus reckoned
that such survivor testimony was immaterial to explaining the motives and behavior
of Hutu perpetrators. However, if fear and hatred of Tutsi was primarily engendered
by the invasion of the RPF in 1990, how does Straus explain the extensive violence
against the Tutsi that started with the Revolution of 1959 and recurred again in
1962–1964 and 1973 and subsequently led to the mass flight of Tutsi to neighboring
countries, including Uganda from where the RPF originated?

Straus may not have wanted to interview Tutsi survivors, but he had the respon-
sibility to account for the work of other writers who did. Chief among them is Philip
Gourevitch, who describes in disturbing detail the pervasive racial hatred and perse-
cution that ordinary Tutsi experienced on a daily basis years prior to the genocide.

Indeed, in 2001, at a conference in Kigali organized by Ibuka, a Tutsi survivors
organization, speaker after speaker recounted how the genocide of 1994 had started
in 1959 when Hutu leaders had organized a Hutu ethnocracy and commenced to
persecute the Tutsi minority.

Thus far, my critique of scholars who neglect victim and survivor testimonies has
been largely methodological. The argument is not that genocide studies should be
based only on victim testimonies. It is a plea that victim narratives be included in a
process of triangulation that juxtaposes them to perpetrator and bystander testimonies.
The history that emerges from such a triangulation may be less neat, but it may be
more accurate. Finally, genocide is not only about killing people. It is also about seizing
their property, destroying their culture, denying their memories, and silencing their
voices. It is incumbent on us as genocide scholars to give voice to the victims and not to cooperate, even if inadvertently, with their persecutors.

In this article I have focused on three problem areas, but I have necessarily neglected many other important topics that need to be discussed in an assessment of genocide studies. Among these are the extraordinary evolution of international human rights law, on the one hand, and the efforts to devise methods to prevent genocide, on the other hand. Violence persists, but so does our commitment to understand its causes and to prevent its damages.

Notes


4. Moses, _Empire, Colony, and Genocide_, ix.


11. Ibid., 662–69.

12. See Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, _Hitler’s Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust_ (New York: Knopf, 1996), 376–415. Documenting such “excess cruelty” is a strength of this controversial book. Unfortunately, Goldhagen falls into a similar psycho-cultural reductionist trap when discussing the German perpetrators as Hilberg does in discussing the Jewish victims. He views the Germans as motivated by “eliminationist anti-Semitism,” a murderous ideology embedded in German culture in the same way that Hilberg views the Jews as in the grip of ghetto mentality and passivity. Each scholar fails to view his subjects as multifaceted and reduces their behavior to one overriding factor.

13. A Holocaust scholar who has made a point of integrating victim accounts into his history is Saul Friedlander: “The present study will attempt to convey an account in which Nazi policies are indeed the central element, but in which the . . . victims’ attitudes, reactions, and fate are no less an integral part of this unfolding history.” See Saul Friedlander, _Nazi Germany and the Jews_ (New York: Harper Collins, 1997), 2.

14. Straus, _The Order of Genocide_.

15. Ibid., 225.


Revisiting a Founding Assumption of Genocide Studies

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Genocide studies has come a long way over the past decade, having attained a level of intellectual sobriety, academic credibility, and public recognition virtually inconceivable forty years ago. At the same time, there have been signs of convergence between the fields of genocide studies and Holocaust historiography and studies. This development can be challenging for those in Holocaust studies and historiography because the relationship between the two disciplines is complicated by genocide studies’ claim to incorporate the Holocaust into its object of inquiry, whereas the reverse does not hold. There is a potentially subordinate situation here, or at least it can be experienced that way, even though Holocaust studies and historiography is a field with a substantial center of gravity, evidenced by the journals, book series, and research institutes devoted to the subject, such that it hardly needs to gesture to the relatively younger and smaller sibling, genocide studies. This article analyzes a recent critique of this convergence by revisiting the founding assumptions of Holocaust studies and genocide studies.

Key words: genocide, Holocaust, uniqueness, comparison, Lemkin

Introduction

Genocide studies has come a long way over the past decade, having attained a level of intellectual sobriety, academic credibility, and public recognition virtually inconceivable forty years ago. Universities around the world feature it in their curricula and host genocide studies centers.1 Whereas the initial monographs, anthologies, and encyclopedias on the subject were published mainly by minor houses, now any publication bearing the title Genocide is eagerly sought by the leading university presses. Two new and large anthologies—The Oxford Handbook on Genocide Studies and The Historiography of Genocide—take stock of the field, while three English language journals and an online encyclopaedia now serve to inform the scholarly community of the latest research advances.2 These developments were accompanied by a new interest in genocide in colonial and imperial contexts and the recovery of Raphael Lemkin’s original, broader definition of genocide.

At the same time, there were signs of convergence between the fields of genocide studies and Holocaust historiography and studies. One example is the work of Donald Bloxham, the author of important monographs on the Nuremberg Trials, the Armenian genocide, and the Holocaust. All too rare were scholars like Bloxham and Jürgen Zimmerer who, on the basis of archival research, can operate as experts in both fields that seemed to have developed along parallel and rarely intersecting trajectories over the past twenty or thirty years. Here are signs of maturation, when those working in one field peer over the edge of the plate to see and learn how others are asking and answering questions posed of their particular case studies.

This development may not be welcomed by those in Holocaust studies and historiography, because their relationship to genocide studies is complicated by its claim to incorporate the Holocaust into its object of inquiry, whereas the reverse does not hold. There is a potentially subordinate situation here, or at least it can be experienced that way, even though Holocaust studies and historiography is a field with a substantial center of gravity, evidenced by the journals, book series, and research institutes devoted to the subject, such that it hardly needs to gesture to the relatively younger and smaller sibling, genocide studies.

Unfortunately, though, this means that colleagues in Holocaust fields may not feel like they are being addressed by a call for papers for a genocide studies conference. Given that we are all interested in similar questions and, I presume, motivated by similar moral imperatives, the continuing cleavage between the fields is regrettable.

The most recent expression of resistance to the direction of genocide studies is the Israeli-American historian Omer Bartov’s 2010 keynote lecture and publication. Delivered at academic meetings in the Great Britain and the United States, his paper criticized some of these developments in genocide studies. In particular, Bartov criticized Donald Bloxham’s *The Final Solution: A Genocide*, my anthology, *Empire, Colony, Genocide*, and, briefly, Mark Mazower’s monumental *Hitler’s Empire*. A number of issues vexed him: (1) the proposition that discourse about the Holocaust screens out attention to other genocides, (2) the shift in focus to colonialism (or empire) in genocide studies, which he fears subsumes the Holocaust into the logics of an imperial role at the cost of anti-Semitism’s central dramatic role, and (3) Holocaust and genocide history that omits or marginalizes victims’ perspectives and experiences. All these concerns were linked with palpable alarm about the implications for Israel, although the country features marginally at most in these books. Be that as it may, Bartov was signaling disquiet with the direction of genocide studies: there is “no room in the broad sketches of comparative genocide studies and the generalized overview of events,” he lamented, for “the uniqueness of [victims’] experiences as individuals, as members of communities, of groups, of nations.”

As it is impossible to address all of Bartov’s contentions herein, I will address his points (1) and (2) as a way of revisiting two founding assumptions of our field that were articulated by Leo Kuper in his justly famous 1981 book, *Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century*. I do so because Bartov resorts to Kuper to buttress his contention that the centrality of Holocaust memory makes, rather than reduces, space for other genocides, and to advance his case against the colonial (actually imperial) frame for genocide studies. I proceed by assessing each point in turn. It will become apparent that Bartov is trying to update the Holocaust-uniqueness claims of previous decades that genocide studies has left behind for pluralist research agendas. In this way, his project is regressive as well as empirically unsustainable.

**The Holocaust and Other Genocides**

The relationship between the two concepts, Holocaust and genocide, and between the two fields, Holocaust studies and genocide studies, is unstable, and necessarily so. Although “genocide” actually preceded “Holocaust” as the master concept of human destruction, Holocaust gradually supplanted genocide as the main signifier of evil, especially in North America. But because the Holocaust is also a genocide, it cannot totally dominate a discursive terrain that has to name and respond to contemporary atrocities; the Holocaust was in the past, but genocides are all too current. At the very least, the two concepts coexist in a complex—part enabling, part competitive—relationship.
Bartov, by contrast, sees the relationship in simplistic, linear terms: “other genocides came into public and scholarly view thanks to the emergence of the Holocaust as a major historical event and not despite it”; and “the Holocaust was the event that crystallized the most complete definition of genocide and motivated its legal adoption.” He cites Kuper as an authority for these propositions for, as he quotes Kuper, it was “the devastation of peoples by the Nazis which provided the impetus for the formal recognition of genocide as a crime in international law.”

The slippage in Bartov’s reliance on Kuper is immediately apparent: like Raphael Lemkin, Kuper wrote about “the devastation of peoples by the Nazis” in general, not only about the Jews. And that is how United Nations delegates regarded the matter, rejecting the Soviet attempt to link genocide intrinsically to fascism and Nazism, let alone the Jewish experience. The term “Holocaust,” or a synonym for it, was not current at the time; as Bartov knows, consciousness of the centrality of the Jewish question was less apparent to contemporaries then than to historians now. In other words, “the Holocaust”—the genocide of the Jews—was not the stimulus for the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (UNCG).

Kuper was certainly correct that the shock occasioned by “the devastation of peoples by the Nazis” spurred along deliberations for the UNCG, but on no reading of the evidence can the ensuing definition of genocide be said to be “the most complete.” For as Bartov himself admits, the UN delegates ultimately omitted political groups as a victim category and cultural genocide as a crime, contrary to Lemkin’s dogged advocacy of the latter concept. Genocide was limited to its physical and biological aspect. My reading of British diplomatic documents about the UN deliberations between 1946 and 1948 indicates that many contemporaries found the suggested cultural dimensions of genocide to be a distorting dilution of what they regarded as the real crime, mass murder. That was the transgression that the Nazis had committed. So, most contemporaries concluded, genocide must mean mass murder: that was what “shocked the conscience of mankind.”

The growth of Holocaust consciousness intensified the association between genocide and mass murder in the public mind and is probably the inspiration of the “special intent” (dolus specialis) provision in genocide jurisprudence, although that stipulation is barely mentioned in the travaux préparatoires (preparatory work) of the UNCG, thereby making it extremely difficult to prove the crime. Bartov himself writes that “the Holocaust [is used] as a template against which other genocides can be measured and assessed,” echoing Barbara Harff’s earlier observation that “The Jewish Holocaust … is employed as the yardstick, the ultimate criterion for assessing the scope, methods, targets, and victims of [other] genocides.” This is where Bartov’s desire to have his cake and eat it too comes unstuck, for it is illogical to suppose that the Holocaust is singular, unprecedented, special, and so forth, on the one hand, and maintain that its use as template or yardstick does not occlude other genocides, on the other. Based on this logic, a genocide must resemble the Holocaust to become visible. But what of mass violence that does not resemble it?

Many genocide scholars and political leaders continue to define genocide as a crime of the state entailing mass killing motivated by racist ideology, even though neither Raphael Lemkin nor the UN definition limited genocide in this way. Thus, when the president of Turkey brushed off criticisms of his meeting with Sudan’s leader with the statement that Muslims do not commit genocide, he was saying that genocide is a non-political hate crime committed against hapless civilians that has nothing to do with the legitimate right of a state to suppress a violent rebellion. The UN’s 2005 Report of the International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur effec-
tively agreed with him in determining the absence of genocide by the Sudanese state in Darfur. If mass violence does not resemble the Holocaust in being a massive racial hate crime, it is screened out as non-genocidal.

To understand how and why the Holocaust became the template and yardstick, we need to dig beyond the usual clichés. The sociologist Jeffrey C. Alexander has explained how the Holocaust became “cultural trauma” of universal appeal through a complex process of symbolic transference and inversion. “The Holocaust” did not exist as a discursive category when the concentration camps were liberated. Western, largely Christian, publics were appalled by Nazi crimes, but regarded them simply as a very large atrocity and identified with the Allied soldiers rather than the liberated Jewish survivor inmates. Nazism, not the Holocaust, was the symbol of evil, and its polluting presence was to be expunged by the worldwide victory of liberal democracy. In this way, Nazi crimes were narrated into a progressive philosophy of history and left behind.

The inner logic of symbolic association, however, undermined this smug narrative, Alexander continues. For if Jews had been Hitler’s primary target, as became clear in the post-war period, then they must be of a piece with liberal democracy, and therefore the task is to expunge anti-Semitism and racism from Western societies. Moreover, by deriving abstract moral criteria from the Second World War experience, the ethical foundation of the West could be held up to scrutiny by domestic critics. And in doing so, elements of Nazism could be found there by analogy, a process that Alexander calls “symbolic extension”—that is, identifying apparent analogies between Nazism and situations, circumstances, and policies that obtained in one’s own polity. Simultaneously, with the acculturation of the Jewish community and the popularization of “accessible” Jewish Holocaust victims like Anne Frank, psychological identification with Jewish victims became possible for non-Jews. Consequently, what enabled the Jewish experience to be singled out from that of other victims of Nazism (and other demographic calamities, such as the policies of Stalin and Mao) and invested with “extraordinary gravitas,” so that it became considered a “radical evil” and a unique “world historical” event, is that it can function as a “trauma drama” for everyone. The drama of Jewish victimization was de-historicized and became an emblem for the disastrous consequences of racism and intolerance generally. Henceforth, the Holocaust was a proper, not a common noun—the “archetypal sacred-evil of our time.” The progressive narrative was supplanted by a tragic one of innocent victims and damaged survivors, the memory of whose fate must be kept alive to prevent such suffering from recurring.

The insistence on the Holocaust’s uniqueness brought with it an inescapable dilemma, Alexander observes. For it to be sacred, the Holocaust needed to be protected from profanation by contamination with “normal” evil although, as the ultimate standard of evaluation, it would inevitably be associated with other events. There was no avoiding symbolic extension, then, and those who were thereby associated with its evil are automatically polluted and needed to undergo ritual cleansing: “One must do justice and be righteous,” notes Alexander. “This performative purification is achieved by returning to the past, entering symbolically into the tragedy, and developing a new relation to the archetypal characters and crimes.” The Holocaust was universalized in this way.

Since his first influential article on the subject in 2002, Alexander has produced a book—Remembering the Holocaust: A Debate (2009)—in which he restates his argument, allows his critics to respond, and then concludes with a rejoinder. Now, he is less convinced that Holocaust memory is so salutary after all. Particularistic
uses of the Holocaust violate “the universalizing moral principles that the memory of
the Holocaust calls upon all of us to sustain.”20 Alexander’s belated recognition—
others have been making such points for some time—is resisted by Bartov, who
claws to a heroic narrative of Holocaust memory by attempting to discredit, without
refuting, those who complicate this simplistic morality tale.21

Instead of keeping up with the debate, Bartov recurs to Kuper’s point that the
UN’s criminalization of genocide was the product of a “western liberal worldview”
(Bartov) that, according to Kuper, finds “that massive slaughter of members of one’s
own species is repugnant to man.”22 It is questionable whether Bartov’s conscription
of Kuper into such a Western-centric perspective is plausible; after all, arrogating
morality to the West was hardly thinkable for someone who devoted his career to
the struggle against apartheid.23 And the point that consciousness of genocide is a
particularly Western virtue needs to be related to the UNCG’s blindspots—namely
the excision of cultural genocide—and genocide’s later equation with mass murder
and the Holocaust. Far from being the moral breakthrough that Bartov contends,
the genocide and human rights regimes that developed after the Second World War
offered minorities less rather than more protection than they enjoyed, at least
legally, under the League of Nations. The UNCG and the Declaration on Human
Rights could be passed by the great powers and a small number of member states
at the time because they did not entail mechanisms to interfere with state rights,
as Kuper, never naive, understood.24 A founding assumption of our field, then, that
the Holocaust opens rather than closes vistas, needs to be revisited.

The Causes of Genocide

Bartov similarly conscripts Kuper for his assault on the colonial orientation in some
recent genocide scholarship, because Kuper, he notes, criticized Jean-Paul Sartre’s
wholesale equation between genocide and colonialism. Recent scholarship of the
“colonial turn” has also distanced itself from Sartre’s simplification, but Bartov has
not read much of it, preferring to reduce the debates of the 2000s to those of the
early 1970s, to which Kuper was responding. The slippage is apparent when Bartov
summarizes our positions, accurately, as contending “that the Holocaust itself was
largely part of a greater German and European colonial undertaking and logic from
which it cannot be isolated,”25 which is not the same thing as casting Israel as a
settler colonial purveyor of genocide or reducing the Holocaust to a mere case of
colonial genocide, the intellectual and political crimes that he insinuates some of us
have committed.26

Kuper was alive to ambiguity and complexity, by contrast, and Bartov finds him-
self forced to adduce quotations attesting to the prevalence of genocide in Western
colonial history.27 What he does not ask is why, besides the work of few scholars
who were brushed aside as provocateurs and outsiders, there was virtually no research
on this topic until a new generation of scholars, mainly outside North America, began
to ask hard questions in the later 1990s and 2000s about genocide in their countries or
their former colonies.28 Here were cases that did not resemble the Holocaust, and that
is one reason why they were ignored, and often still are. When claims are advanced
attesting to genocide in settler colonialism, they are met with the answer that they
could not be genocide because genocide must resemble the Holocaust or the attributes
of genocide that are copied from the Holocaust, genocide’s “template.”29

Happily, the consensus has changed, and now research on colonial genocide is
legitimate in our field, as evidenced by the excellent special issue on the subject in
this journal.30 This development suggests that Bartov’s intervention represents a
backlash against the pluralization of research questions by attempting to return to the Holocaust-uniqueness assumptions prevalent between the 1970s and 1990s, albeit in a more genteel version. He thereby wants to revive a problematic foundational assumption of the field that would discount the recent progress made in understanding the causes and consequences of colonialism and indigenous genocides. As noted above, Bartov draws on Kuper in his case against the colonial orientation in genocide studies. Kuper (1908–1994), we know, was a Lithuanian-born Jewish South African lawyer and sociologist and expert on racism and decolonization, so it is no surprise that his work displays profound knowledge of postcolonial affairs.31 His emphasis on ethnic cleavages in postcolonial societies, which he regarded as the root cause of most genocides, led to a peculiar distinction, namely between genocides as “a phenomenon of the plural or divided society, in which division persists between peoples of different race or ethnic group or religion, who have been brought together in the same political unit” and those produced by what he calls “totalitarian political ideologies, of absolute commitment to the remaking of society in conformity with radical specifications, and a rooting out of dissent.”32 Kuper was distinguishing postcolonial conflict, like the Biafran Civil War in Nigeria in the second half of the 1960s, from the Holocaust.

The salient distinction is “between situations in which there is some threat, however slight, to the interests of those who perpetrate or plan or incite massacres, and situations devoid of such threat.” He insisted, further, that “one can distinguish between massacres of a weak defenseless hostage group used as a scapegoat, and massacres arising in the course of a conflict in which there is some realistic threat or challenge to the interests of the dominant group in the host society.”33 In the latter, then, political considerations are salient, but not in the former, which are purely ideological, and the Holocaust is the most striking example of it.

This distinction was at once constitutive of Holocaust studies and genocide studies. To underline my point, let us recall some examples of how genocide has been defined. According to Israel Charny, genocide is “the mass killing of substantial numbers of human beings, when not in the course of military action against the military forces of an avowed enemy, under conditions of the essential and defenselessness and helplessness of the victims.”34 More recently, Jacques Semelin was telling the same story when he distinguished between destruction for subjugation, which is political and partial, and genocide for total eradication, like the Holocaust, which is driven by the delusional, paranoid, and non-political considerations of ethnic purity and aesthetics.35

What these scholars are suggesting is a hierarchy between types of human destruction. The latter type is worse because it targets innocent victims of paranoid and ultimately inexplicable racial hysteria, while the former type of destruction is an explicable outcome of interethnic conflict, often in civil war, in which the victims are not passive and therefore not completely innocent. (Below, I elaborate on why this construction of “the victims” is untenable.)

To summarize, whereas most mass violence is the byproduct of ethnic/national conflict over “real” issues like land, resources, and political power, no such conflict is discernible in the Holocaust of European Jewry, whose victims were passive and agentless objects of the perpetrators’ “hallucinatory” ideology.36 This ideology sets the Holocaust apart in another way: Because it posited a global Jewish conspiracy, all Jews, irrespective of their proximity to Nazi-controlled territory, were fated to die for the sake of redeeming Germany and European civilization, whereas victims of prosaic genocides were confined to the spatial and temporal extent of actual conflict over pragmatic questions. The Holocaust—and by inference, genocide—was
ideologically driven, limitless, and total; "normal" mass violence is politically explicable, limited, and partial. In this way, the Holocaust was a massive hate crime in which agentless, innocent victims were killed purely for who they are and not for anything they had done. They were placed beyond the "universe of obligation," to use Helen Fein's term. This is what Norman Cohn meant when he wrote, "The Jews were hunted down with a fanatical hatred which was reserved for them alone," although they "did not constitute a belligerent nation, or even a clearly defined ethnic group, but lived scattered across Europe from the English Channel to the Volga, with very little in common to them all save their descent from adherents of the Jewish religion." To explain this, he continued,

I began to suspect that the deadliest form of anti-Semitism, the kind that results in massacre and attempted genocide, has little to do with real conflicts of interest between living people, or even with racial prejudices as such. What I kept coming across was ... a conviction that Jews—all Jews everywhere in the world—form a conspiratorial body set on ruining and then dominating the rest of mankind. Kuper's distinction between racial, ideological, and non-political genocides, on the one hand, and partially political genocides, on the one other, conceals a number of problems that have been highlighted by Martin Shaw in his work on war and genocide. What Kuper, Bartov, and so many others are eliding is the combatant/civilian distinction within such groups. They are ignoring the fact that both categories of genocide contain massacres of civilians who pose no objective threat to perpetrators in actual conflicts. After all, what kind of agency can we ascribe to such victims, like the women and children who were marched into the Mesopotamian desert by Ottoman authorities in April 1915?

Now Kuper and others might respond by conceding this point but insisting that the distinction between European Jews and, say, Ottoman Armenians was that members of the latter group were engaged in a nationalist armed rebellion in wartime while Jews were not belligerents in the same sense or, indeed, in any sense. How does one answer this commonly made argument in the field? The answer that I provide is necessarily inadequate because of space constraints but the basic points will be apparent:

1. We need to replace this stark dichotomy of ideology and paranoia on the one hand and political rationality on the other with a spectrum that recognizes that ideology and paranoia are present in all genocides.
2. The current distinction fails to recognize how prejudice against groups is generated and works, and how paranoia is present in this process, and it fails to understand that the construction of "enemy peoples" who must be destroyed is not uncommon in world history.
3. Security imperatives and fear, rather than race hatred, are the operative logics of genocide. Far from being a massive hate crime, as commonly supposed, genocide is an extreme form of counterinsurgency or security measure, marked above all by pre-emption and collective punishment as well as the destruction of groups suspected of insurgency and collaboration with enemy forces. It is therefore governed by political logics, rather than solely by racial logics.

All too often, a minority group is held collectively guilty and is collectively punished for the actions of some of its members. The group as a whole is seen as a security risk—a potential fifth column—and so it can be interned, deported, or otherwise
destroyed in toto for reasons of state. Consider why virtually all Armenians and other Ottoman Christians were condemned as collectively guilty for the actions of a tiny minority of nationalists? Just as “the Jews” had not betrayed Germany or Hungary at the end of the First World War, neither had “the Armenians” betrayed the Ottoman Empire in 1915 although a number of Jews and Armenians had participated in subversive activity. On the whole, these communities were loyal. What this dynamic tells us about the distinction with which we began—between genocides based on real and hallucinatory conflict—is that genocides generally are driven by traumatic memories of past events in which, for various reasons, a group is construed as disloyal and held collectively guilty and then collectively punished, deported, or destroyed pre-emptively to prevent the feared repetition of the previous traumatic experience. Kuper’s tidy distinction, inspired by the social-scientific tendency to categorize phenomena rather than account for complex processes, ignores the difference between the loyal and disloyal within such groups—the victims to whom Bartov thinks we should attend—for signs of exterminatory ideology by potential perpetrators.42

Accordingly, it is largely fruitless to search for “real” interactions between victim and perpetrator as many Turkish historians do when claiming the Ottoman state was provoked by Armenian nationalists. The element of pre-emption means that groups are attacked before its members can subvert the state. Moreover, pre-emption is based on a temporal slippage, that is, on particular memories of past interactions, however unreasonably interpreted, which essentially entails attacking groups because of what some or many of its members might do. Genocide, I repeat, is governed more by fantastical security imperatives than by the aesthetic of racial purity. Paranoid threat assessments leading to pre-emptive strikes against collectives are present in genocides generally. To that extent, all genocides can be placed on this spectrum with the Holocaust rather than be separated into a distinct category. Kuper’s distinction, a foundation of our field, should be revisited.

The Field of Genocide Studies
Where did these assumptions of our field come from? We need to briefly consider its founders’ biographies and the intellectual and cultural context of the 1970s. Predominantly of Jewish and Armenian backgrounds, they understandably thematized the genocidal victimization of their own families as a motivation for their endeavors.43 Some, like Robert Melson, a child survivor of the Holocaust, first worked in postcolonial area studies—Nigerian labor movements, in his case—while the Holocaust, for him, loomed in the background. He comments, “As did so many of my generation growing up in the late 1950s and 1960s, I had hoped that Africa, the Third World, would avoid the recent horrors of Europe.” The genocidal massacres and famine of the Ibo people in Nigeria in the late 1960s spurred his interest in genocide generally: “From then on I knew I had to return to the Holocaust to try to make sense of it both at the level of personal emotion and in some broader comparative intellectual perspective.”44 What is more, the Holocaust functioned as a traumatic memory, making contemporary events that were felt to resemble what the Jews suffered under the Nazis literally unbearable. Thus, Melson writes of his shock at hearing about the Ibo massacres, “I felt as if the twenty-some years after the Second World War had been compressed into a few minutes. The Holocaust monster was on the prowl again, and it was no use trying to escape its implications in Africa or elsewhere.”45 Europe’s traumatic past had led to a commitment to postcolonial reconstruction and then back to the Holocaust and comparative genocide after the genocidal failure of that optimism in these new nation-states. Others like Helen Fein moved
to genocide studies after writing about the Holocaust, though, like Melson, she had previous interest in imperial history. Jack Nusan Porter came to it from his work on Jewish radicalism. Irving Horowitz was also rooted in the Jewish left and, like Porter, combined his growing attachment to Israel, as a survivor community, over the years with a broad concern for political violence and the persecution of minorities and small nations. It is apparent that, for many, the genocide concept expressed the moral impulse to universalize the lessons of the Holocaust in light of post-war history. Israel Charny spoke from the heart when he stated that he was committed to the ideal that understanding the processes which brought about the unbearable evil of the Holocaust be joined with the age-old Jewish tradition of contributing to the greater ethical development of human civilization, and that a unique memorial to the Holocaust be forged in the development of new concepts of prevention of genocide to all peoples.

Perhaps it is the case, as Daniel J. Goldhagen observed recently, that “because of the Holocaust, Jews are more prone to identifying with the victims of genocide. Their empathy thus roused, they can more easily mobilize their emotions, including outrage, behind the acknowledgment of seemingly dry and abstract moral principles.”

The founders’ humanistic generosity of this spirit can be best appreciated against the background of the debate in the 1970s in which some claimed that the terms Holocaust and genocide referred only to the Nazi destruction of Jews and could not be “shared” with others. To their immense credit, genocide scholars (as they styled themselves) always opposed the proposition that the Holocaust was the only genocide in human history, though many seem to have regarded it as the most extreme, and even unique, genocide. For that reason, they often founded institutes for Holocaust and genocide studies rather than solely for genocide studies.

For these reasons, an important conclusion that Melson—and the emerging field generally—reached was that the Holocaust differed signaly from the Biafran case because there was no intention to murder every last Ibo. They were permitted, indeed encouraged, to reintegrate into Nigeria after the end of the civil war in 1970. This did not really look like genocide because it did not resemble the Holocaust: “The Nigerians were not Nazis, and the Ibos were not Jews.” Analogously, as Kuper posited, it was necessary to distinguish between violent attacks on innocent civilians on racial grounds that resembled the Holocaust, on the one hand, and civil war on the other. These are the problematic identifications I am talking about: For a genocide to occur, the perpetrators must resemble Nazis and the victims must resemble Jews. And it is such conflations that I think the field should cease making because they insert a distorting lens into our understanding of what is transpiring in any particular violent conjuncture.

**Lemkin’s Approach**

A number of scholars have been inspired by Raphael Lemkin’s unpublished world history of genocide, about which I am writing in my forthcoming book, *Genocide and the Terror of History*. He approached the Holocaust as he would any history and any genocide; he seems not to have invested the Holocaust with any metahistorical significance despite his own close brush with the Nazis and his family’s murder. Taking the perspective of the *longue durée* naturally told against such investment. He observed patterns of immanence rather than transcendence, the quotidian rise and fall of nations and empires rather than moments of world historical significance. His own assumption was that the norm of diversity resisted the imposition of homogeneity. Note how he included the Nazi regime in this list of homogenizing empires:
At different stages of history some cultures have been stronger, some have been weaker, but the diversity of cultures in the world has been aspired to from earliest times. And once a tendency was felt to impose one culture upon the rest of the world, like in the case of Greece, Rome, Assyria, France (under Louis XVI), Nazi Germany under Hitler, this tendency was always broken up by counter-forces which ultimately secure the principle of diversity.\(^{55}\)

He saw his own efforts as one of these counter-forces. He was no cultural relativist, firmly believing that the West, as the origin of humanitarian international law, was the motor of civilizational development. It drove the transition from the barbarism of total warfare and wars of extermination of antiquity and the Middle Ages to the modern laws of war and occupation with their distinction between civilians and combatants. If this view, shared by other liberal Jews of his generation like Norbert Elias, has been challenged by critics who associate genocide and the Holocaust with modernity, Lemkin's nascent theory of cultural learning processes is worth recalling. The memory of genocide spurs the effort to prevent it, perhaps a secular manifestation of the Jewish notion that “the secret of redemption is memory.”

Lemkin did not want to limit that memory to the Holocaust or place genocides in a hierarchy. That is why he coined the term genocide as a “generic” notion.\(^{56}\) While the genocide of Jews (including 49 members of his family) was understandably an unbearable trauma for him, he was an unusually sensitive person whose conscience was shocked by genocide in world history well before the Holocaust. It is undoubtedly true, as Bartov writes, that many Europeans were existentially shaken by the Nazi camps and, like Theodor W. Adorno and others, regarded the Holocaust as an event of world historical significance that transformed European culture. No one denies that. What Bloxham, Mazower, and I are saying—and we are hardly original here—is that it is significant that it took the Nazi treatment of Europeans as colonial subalterns to shock Europeans. When the United Nations prefaced its post-war declarations with statements about events that “shock the conscience of mankind,” we need to ask who defined that conscience and which events were excluded. Why had Europeans not been more shocked by their own colonial violence? If Bartov is not surprised by the implied racism in this selective shock—a selectivity noted critically by non-European intellectuals like Aimé Césaire—then surely it is important to subject this construction to scrutiny rather than celebrate its alleged universality.\(^{57}\) Inspired by Césaire's insight, Mark Mazower has shown that many Europeans were prepared to participate in the Nazi anti-Bolshevik reconfiguration of the continent and were only pushed into non-cooperation or resistance by the Nazis’ policies of plunder, which he suggests were experienced as colonial; in other words, Europeans were only shocked by Nazism when it treated them—including Jews—as colonial subjects to be exploited, enslaved, and murdered at the occupier’s whim. This experience and later memory was screened out by depicting the Nazi genocide of Jews as a massive hate crime divorced from the paranoid security imperatives of German authorities trying to win an imperial war of conquest and occupation. Far from providing insight, as Bartov thinks, it promoted blindness to genocidal episodes around the world because they did not resemble the Holocaust.

**Conclusion**

It is not that insightful reservations or objections to large-scale and broad-range comparison and contextualization have not been made. They have. As A.G. Hopkins noted,
Historical comparisons that detach states or societies from their chronological location enable similarities and differences between particular features, such as military resources and ideology, to be closely observed. But they also run the risk of minimizing or even overlooking important shifts in the global context within which the comparison is set.58

For that reason, he argues, definitional specificity is imperative.

Very broad definitions support broad conclusions and allow comparisons to be drawn from a wide variety of regions and eras. Their spaciousness is attractive, but their value is limited because conclusions drawn at a very high level of generality are unlikely to be illuminating. Poorly specified definitions, and the comparisons that accompany them, may also produce dubious results.59

What he says about comparing empires obtains equally when comparing genocides:

Comparing like with like is a principle that can be applied more easily in distinguishing apples from pears than in categorizing empires. All empires must share some features if they are to retain the name, but what they share may be less significant than what separates them.60

These are sage warnings against overreaching or hasty generalizations based on insufficient research and reflection on the methodological rigor of comparing certain cases. They should be heeded by genocide scholars. These are not the objections made by Omer Bartov. To point to the presence of imperial logics in the Holocaust is not to suggest that it is “just like any other genocide in world history”—the dreaded and feared relativization of the Holocaust. It is to note, as Lemkin did, that genocides, for all their variation, share some recurring features that congeal in different constellations in different conjunctures. Far more, such an exercise is intrinsic to the program set forth by Lemkin, namely to advance immanent rather than metahistorical explanations for its occurrence. This is how the Holocaust can be made relevant to world historians who are more interested in themes like demography, migration, and state-formation. To be of genuine global interest, the Holocaust needs to be deprovincialized from its signification within an exclusively Jewish and Western narrative about the achievement of human rights and genocide prevention, the sentimental narrative expressed and enjoined by Bartov. That narrative is simply implausible for large sections of the global population, shows no genuine interest in world history, and is not in accordance with the evidence. Careful attention to the facts “dispels all pretentious rhetoric and forms a space for analysis unobstructed by ideological posturings.”61

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Notes


9. See, for example, British National Archives, F0 371/72692; FO 371/67573; FO 371/72693; HO 45/25308; CO 936/19/2; CO 936/19/4.


17. Ibid., 31.

18. Ibid., 30–33; emphasis original.


23. Kuper, Genocide, 84.


26. Tellingly, where Bartov makes such claims, he writes in the passive voice because he cannot find any evidence of them in the writings of Bloxham, Moses, or Mazower.


32. Kuper, Genocide, 17.

33. Ibid., 92–3.


42. This is of course what Bloxham was arguing in his book, a point Bartov repeats when it suits his purposes.


55. Raphael Lemkin, “Part I, Ch. II, Sec. II: The Nature of the Group Concerned,” American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Collection 6, Box 7, Folder 7/2, 3.


59. Ibid., 403.

60. Ibid., 403–404.

A Plea from International Scholars of Genocide and Human Rights Studies

We, the undersigned scholars, wish to express publicly our great appreciation for the International Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies and its parent organization, the Zoryan Institute ("the Institute"), for their thirty years of academic work in the field of genocide and human rights studies. In the face of the continuing problem of genocide in the twenty-first century, the Institute is to be commended for its service to the academic community and is recognized by scholars for providing leadership and a support structure in promoting the cause of universal human rights and the prevention of genocide.

We urgently call upon all foundations and organizations worldwide concerned with these issues, as well as individuals committed to preventing this heinous crime, to provide financial support for this world-class academic institution. If the Institute is to continue its invaluable scholarly and educational undertakings (see below), it must secure its financial foundation by raising funds for an endowment and its annual operations.

For the past thirty years, the Institute has maintained an ambitious program to collect archival documentation, conduct original research, and publish books and periodicals. It also conducts university-level educational programs in the field of Genocide and Human Rights Studies, taking a comparative and interdisciplinary approach in its examination of the Jewish Holocaust, the Cambodian Genocide, and the Rwandan Genocide, among others, using the Armenian Genocide as a point of reference. In the process, using the highest academic standards, the Institute has strived to understand the phenomenon of genocide, establish the incontestable, historical truth of the Armenian Genocide, and raise awareness of it among academics and opinion-makers.

For the past ten years, the Institute has run an annual graduate-level university course on genocide and human rights, now offered in partnership with the University of Toronto. The course provides training and support for younger scholars entering the field and helps to prepare the next generation of genocide specialists. This program fills a big gap in the university curriculum. It is unique in treating genocide not only as a historical, political, legal, and psychological study, but also by centering it within the study of human rights and by focusing on prevention.

During the last six years, in partnership with the International Association of Genocide Scholars, the Institute has published Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal (GSP). Its mission is to deepen our understanding of the phenomenon of genocide, create an awareness of it as an ongoing scourge, and promote the idea of the necessity of preventing it. This highly respected journal has quickly become a leader in its field. GSP is co-published as the voice of the International Association of Genocide Scholars. This interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed journal is a resource for students, researchers, educators, practitioners, and governmental policy makers and a significant forum for scholarly discourse.

The Institute also publishes the award-winning Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies, now in its twentieth year, dedicated to the multidisciplinary study of the history, culture, social structure, politics, and economics of both the traditional

diasporas—Armenian, Greek, and Jewish—and those transnational dispersions which in the past three decades have chosen to identify themselves as “diasporas.” These encompass groups ranging from the African-American to the Ukrainian-Canadian, from the Caribbean-British to the new East and South Asian diasporas.

In an era of rapid globalization, the formal and informal power of border-crossing civil society networks is increasingly pertinent for policy makers, business leaders, scholars, and civil society. In this context, diasporas matter a great deal. They include a range of ethnic communities formed from various categories of people, such as political and war refugees, (im)migrants, and ethnic and racial minorities that have maintained a sense of collective identity away from their homeland, and they operate exemplary transnational networks between host states and homelands. While the present and potential importance of diaspora communities is gradually being recognized, the challenges they pose and the opportunities they represent for both their host countries and homelands are neither well enough understood nor sufficiently addressed. Diaspora strives to address these issues and more.

It is amazing that such an enormous effort and so many tangible results have been achieved by this institute over the past thirty years without the resources of a large university or government backing. The Institute draws heavily on volunteer efforts—all the editors of its journals are volunteers, for example—but the costs of publishing and printing are unavoidable. This work can only be achieved through the systematic and continued efforts of independent scholars, teachers, professional editors and translators, and support staff, which requires an organizational structure and appropriate financial resources. The challenge now is to guarantee the continuation of the Institute’s invaluable scholarly and educational work. This will happen only if the Institute secures the required funding from those most concerned, worldwide.

We, the undersigned scholars, therefore, appeal to the global community, foundations, organizations, business leaders, and national and international institutions to show their tangible and generous support for this highly respected academic institution. We are keenly aware that the Armenian Genocide has not seen justice done, and the truth of this genocide continues to be denied. It is thus a moral responsibility that academic work continues to shed light on the Armenian Genocide and promote awareness of it through publications and university courses. It is equally a moral responsibility for the Armenian community worldwide, whose heritage of suffering has always driven the concern for other groups across the globe, to support this work generously. What better way to honor the victims of the Armenian Genocide than by bringing out the truth of this history; what better way to redeem their great suffering than to prevent other groups today from bearing the same horrific burden.

Please show your support by sending your donation today to the Zoryan Institute, which is a registered charity in both the US and Canada. Donations will receive official income tax deductible receipts. We thank you in advance for your generosity and support.
I hereby declare that the permissions to list the names below are on file in my office. Affiliations are provided for identification purposes only.

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