

the U.S. economy's significance to Australia and to the world economy will increase in the coming decades. He called Australia's relationship with America "the most important we have with any single country," resting not only on U.S. might but on shared values and aspirations. And none of those values would preclude Australia from seeking closer economic ties with China.

The "seemingly perpetual symposium on our self-identity," as Howard has termed the debate, ended in 1996 with his landslide victory and the defeat of the Keating government. Howard has won three elections since, the most recent in 2004. "Giving back to Australians the legitimacy to believe about themselves and their country what Keating had tried to deny them and consistently pitching his policies in these terms," writes Darwall, "have provided Howard his political equity."

OTHER NATIONS

Was It Genocide?

THE SOURCE: "Revisiting the Armenian Genocide" by Guenter Lewy, in *Middle East Quarterly*, Fall 2005.

NINETY YEARS LATER, THE MASS slaughter of Armenian men, women, and children driven from their homes by the Ottoman government during World War I remains a hotly disputed issue. Armenia even demands that an official apology from Turkey be made a condition for Turkish membership in the European Union. But were the deaths the result of genocide, as Armenians charge? Guenter Lewy, an emeritus professor of political science



A photograph taken in eastern Turkey documents a tiny fraction of the deaths inflicted on the Armenians.

at the University of Massachusetts, is skeptical.

Much about what happened those many years ago is murky, but no one denies that huge massacres took place. During World War I, the Ottoman Empire feared that the Christian Armenians within its borders were supporting Russia. During 1915–16, the Ottoman Turkish government forced hundreds of thousands of Armenian civilians from Anatolia across mountains to the Syrian desert and other points. Hundreds of thousands perished on the trek, with starvation and disease claiming those who were not murdered outright. There are no authoritative figures on the total number of Armenian deaths.

The key question, writes Lewy, author of *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey: A Disputed Genocide* (2005), is, Did the Young Turk regime in Constantinople (now Istanbul) organize the massacres? The case that it did, he argues, rests on three shaky pillars. The first is the actions of the postwar Turkish military courts, which convicted officials

of the Young Turk government of the crime in postwar trials demanded by the victorious Allies. The verdicts were based entirely on documents. In one deposition, the commanding general of the Turkish Third Army testified that "the murder and extermination of the Armenians . . . is the result of decisions made by the central committee of *Ittihad ve Terakki* [Committee on Union and Progress]," which had seized power in 1908. But the courts heard no witnesses, and there was no cross-examination of testimony. Even the Allies considered the trials "a travesty of justice," says Lewy. And all the original documents have been lost.

The second pillar of the argument for genocide has to do with the Special Organization (*Te kilat-i Mahsusa*). Historian Vahakn N. Dadrian, a leading proponent of the genocide thesis, claims that the Special Organization's "mission was to deploy in remote areas of Turkey's interior and to ambush and destroy convoys of Armenian deportees." But Lewy says there's no evidence for that. An American scholar, Philip H. Stod-

OTHER NATIONS

How to Talk European

THE SOURCE: “Manifesto” by Thierry Chervel, at *signandsight.com*, March 1, 2005.

WHEN THE FRENCH CELEBRITY-intellectual Pierre Bourdieu died in 2002, he left behind a slim, partly autobiographical volume, with strict instructions designed to thwart the celebrity-mad French press: The book must be published in Germany first. The scheme worked far better than Bourdieu could have imagined. When his *Esquisse pour une auto-analyse* [Outline for a Self-Analysis] appeared in Germany in 2004, the French seemed utterly unaware of its existence. Only when it was published in France did the expected brouhaha erupt.

For all the talk of a new, united Europe, writes Thierry Chervel, the Bourdieu tale is typical of a much less exalted European intellectual reality. Each nation is increasingly absorbed in its own affairs, living in ignorance of significant political and cultural developments beyond its national borders. “The ignorance is greatest in large Western European countries where public debate is little more than self-contented thumb-twiddling. Talk is of national issues—political leaders, late-night comedy stars, and football scandals.”

European intellectuals do share one thing, according to Chervel: a “morbid fixation with America.” In their obsession with the United States as the source of all problems, they spare themselves the need for self-examination. “Is it really the fault of

Bill Gates or Steven Spielberg that the French are learning less German, and the Germans less French?” asks Chervel, who is cofounder of the German magazine *Perlentaucher* and the Web site *www.signandsight.com*, which features English-language summaries of articles by German public intellectuals.

To intellectuals such as Bernard Cassen, director-general of the antiglobalist French monthly *Le Monde Diplomatique*, the English language itself is an instrument of American imperialism, and its spread is part of a program to establish “domination of the mind, of cultural signs, frames of reference.” Cassen has proposed to stop the rise of English by promoting language groups within Europe: The “Romanophones” in the Romance-language countries, for example, would learn one another’s languages, while the Germans, Dutch, and Danes would form another group.

That’s just a recipe for more provincialism, in Chervel’s view. And “Cassen is wrong to maintain that the English language conveys only one ideology or the exclusive interests of a single country.” In criticizing America, for example, few can outdo the English-language al-Jazeera network or the Indian magazine *Outlook India*. After 9/11, the best news and background on Islamic terrorism and Afghanistan was in English, notably in *The New York Times*. “There was very little information in German or French.”

If Europeans are to talk to one another—and help save the English-speaking world from its own provincialism—they will have to have their conversation in English.

dard, concluded in 1963 that the Special Organization played no role in the Armenian deportations. Lewy believes that the killings of the minority Christians were “more likely” the work of “Kurdish tribesmen and corrupt policemen out for booty.”

“The most damning evidence put forward to support the claim of genocide,” says Lewy, is the documents reproduced in Aram Andonian’s *Memoirs of Naim Bey* (1920). Andonian, an Armenian who had been deported from Constantinople, claimed to have obtained the memoirs of a Turkish official that contained many official documents. “Particularly incriminating,” says Lewy, are telegrams from the wartime interior minister, Talât Pasha, showing that he “gave explicit orders to kill all Turkish Armenians—men, women, and children.” But the documents—for which Naim Bey, an alcoholic and gambler, was paid, Andonian later revealed—may well be fake. Most historians and scholars regard them “at best as unverifiable and problematic,” Lewy says.

All in all, the charge of genocide has not been proven, he concludes. The Armenian partisans—like the Turkish nationalists who with equal fervor and certitude assert the Young Turk regime’s innocence—“have staked claims and made their case by simplifying a complex historical reality and by ignoring crucial evidence.” It would be better, as some Armenian and Turkish historians have suggested, for both sides to back off from the high-volume debate about genocide and instead join in seeking to establish and enlarge “a common pool of firm knowledge” about the tragedy.