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Editor's Note

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Editor's Note

Spring, 2018

Greetings from the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations.

This has been a period of institutional change for the organization, now happily helmed by longtime ISCSC member and genial official, Gen. Lynn Rhodes, as President. Joining her in the Leadership Team are one of the society's most prolific scholars and writers, Prof. Michael Andregg, as Vice President, and our own journal's Peter Hecht, as Executive Director.

Among the many tasks now facing Gen. Rhodes is finalizing details for the upcoming annual meeting. Members are preparing for the June conference in Suzhou and it appears that there will be good attendance at Soochow University from both China and the rest of the world. I'll see you there!

For the journal, as well, this has been a period of adjustment because our vigorous Managing Editor, Peter Hecht, has moved to Morocco. That means that much of our work for this issue has had to travel back and forth over long distances, but, so far, so good. We all wish the Hecht family well during their sojourn in Africa and hope that they find the other side of the Atlantic from Washington a rewarding and pleasant environment in which to work and live. In the meantime, we can render thanks for the wonders and efficiencies of the electronic age.

As you will see from this issue, we are trying to emphasize the great strengths of our ISCSC archival collection housed at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. All those interested in the topic of comparative civilizations will certainly enjoy a visit to the collection. It is housed in a stunning, architecturally attractive building, the Waidner-Spahr Library; when I visited there last month, I was greeted upon entry by Debbie Ege, Reference Associate for Archives and Special Collections. What a kind and thoughtful archivist she is; she made the visit pleasant and the intellectual rewards of the visit tremendous. Ms. Ege works alongside Jim Gerencser, the College Archivist for Dickinson. You can reach them or other members of the Archives team by emailing at archives@dickinson.edu or by calling (717) 245-1399.

When you enter the library, go down a flight to the Archives area. There in the beautiful section devoted to the archives, you can request at the front desk whatever materials you wish, and they are brought out very quickly and in accessible boxes, all placed on a very nice, functional storage cart. It's a great place to carry out research: the study tables, lighting, and environment are all excellent, and there is a student café convenient to the archival area.

How lucky for the ISCSC that our former president, the late Prof. Vytautas Kavolis, was a faculty member at such a terrific college. The organization is indebted to Dickinson College for its protection of our organization's most central documents.

What's more, now you can visit the archives fully prepared. We are carrying the Guide to the Collection in this issue, and it tells you what the contents are and how they are arranged. Future scholars writing up the history of the ISCSC will find this collection the best jumping-off point, I think. Our suggestion: don't hesitate to contact the archivists if you need a document from this organization's past.

Also, we are carrying two articles drawn from the archives, selected from the earlier period of our ISCSC and previously lost to history. You'll find a wide-ranging discussion from 1979 on the topic: "What Must Exist Before You Have A Civilization?" That colloquy was led at our annual meeting in Northridge, California, by Dr. Matthew Melko, one of the ISCSC's outstanding founders, a highly respected scholar and president of the organization from 1983 to 1986. Also, we reprint a wonderful essay by another early leader, the anthropologist Roger Wescott. This is entitled "One Word Synonyms for 'The Comparative Study of Civilizations'." After you read this article, please let us know what your favorite candidate is for the best name of this discipline; perhaps you have an even better suggestion than the many proposed here by Dr. Wescott.

In this issue, we have divided up the contents differently from previous versions. I would like to draw your attention particularly to our rather unusual Special Feature. This has been written by Dr. Ronald French. Dr. French and I met a decade ago in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, where he served as a Vice President for Academic Affairs at Girne American University. The campus is said to be the largest American-style one in Europe, and it is set in a beautiful and lovely part of the island. The university was fortunate to have Dr. French for many years at the academic helm. He lives most of the time these days in Great Britain.

His writing in this issue presents a point of view rarely encountered these days. He is a descendant of a wealthy German family that lived and thrived in the Ukraine for many generations, then fled. When the Revolution of 1917 brought a new order to the dying Russian Empire, the family was in danger; as the Red Army approached southern Ukraine, there was great apprehension on the part of the whites, that is, supporters of the tsarist regime in Russia. This article shows the great extent of what sociologists label "anomie" in a revolutionary situation. It also deals with the clash of many civilizations at once – the Byzantine tradition versus the Soviet regime; the long-time German settlers versus the Ukrainians; the bourgeoisie or aristocracy versus the peasantry; Christians versus the Jews; the various foreign troops, seeking mostly to preserve the dying old order, versus the newly invigorated soldiers of the Bolsheviks.

My own view of the Ukraine varies somewhat from the one taken by Dr. French's ancestors. The country was a killing field for the Jews, and my maternal grandparents were able to escape in time. Thousands did not do so; it is estimated that between 35,000 and 50,000 Jews were murdered in the Ukraine in the four years after the 1917 revolution. As the Special Feature makes clear, however, this did not mean that they were in any way seen as fellow-sufferers by the wealthy classes of gentiles. Quite the opposite.

Comparativist scholars benefit when all sides are presented. It enables a reasonable and well-informed view to be constructed. The territory in which the events of 1919 took place certainly qualifies as a "bloody border" and "historic fault line," to use Huntington's term, between several competing civilizations. Undoubtedly, Dr. French was the perfect person to write such an essay.

We also carry a report, with attractive pictures, that has been written by Dr. Vlad Alalykin – Izvekov. As the ISCSC Representative and Programs Coordinator for Europe and Russia, and as our representative to an important congress held at Moscow State University, Dr. Alalykin-Izvekov recounts the story of the conference but also discusses the great interest he found in Russia in a book he has recently written about a man who was one of the great founders of comparative civilizations as a discipline in the twentieth century, and a founder of the ISCSC: Prof. Pitirim Sorokin of Russia, then Harvard.

There are three refereed articles that were selected for this issue and two other essays, as well. All are well worth reading, providing insights into comparative civilizations. Of course, we have the book review section and our guide for potential authors to round out the contents.

The journal must be doing something right because we can report that thousands of article downloads are occurring each month. During January, for example, we experienced 3284 full-text downloads. And, according to Digital Commons, the three most popular CCR articles for the month were as follows:

- The Causes of Ethnic Conflicts (98 downloads)
<https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/ccr/vol68/iss68/8>
- Globalization vs. Americanization: Is the World Being Americanized by the Dominance of American Culture (94 downloads)
<https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/ccr/vol47/iss47/7>
- Robert D. Kaplan, The Revenge of Geography: What the Map Tells Us About Coming Conflicts and the Battle Against Fate (70 downloads)
<https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/ccr/vol70/iss70/9>

Please let us know your opinions on the organization and contents of the journal. We would be anxious to hear them. In the meantime, let's look forward to an invigorating conference in China during June.

Joseph Drew

Washington D.C.