

## A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Ethel Tobach, *Editor*

**Final solutions: Biology, prejudice, and genocide**, by Richard M. Lerner. Pennsylvania State Press, University Park, PA, 1992, 238 pp. + xxii.

This issue presents commentaries on a controversial book. As the topic relates to the scientific and societal significance of extant theories about behavioral evolution, it is appropriate for a journal of comparative psychology that includes in its goals the explication of fundamental concepts of human evolution to provide a forum for the ongoing discussion of the relationship between genetics and behavior, between scientific concepts and public policies. As the responses by the various authors indicate, there are many issues that are unresolved and still require examination. Perhaps some member of the community of comparative psychologists who read the journal and have read the book might want to develop material for another issue of the journal on these topics, or some aspect of them.

The inclusion of the article by Sokolov and Baskin offers further material for consideration in the above discussion. The article came about through a discussion I had with Dr. Baskin on one of my trips to the former Soviet Union. In my several trips and discussions with senior researchers, faculty and students engaged in the study of behavioral evolution and genetics, most of whom termed themselves "ethologists," I was not surprised to find that, as in the United States, most of them had no knowledge of Lorenz's personal history. In the course of one such discussion, I was told that there had been an article in one of the popular science journals in the Soviet Union about Lorenz and his experiences as a prisoner of war. Whether or not the story is apocryphal remains for elucidation by historians. According to the story told me, while imprisoned, Lorenz made ink out of various materials available to him, and was writing his book on toilet tissue (a detail that is surely to be questioned in light of the article by Sokolov and Baskin) when a guard discovered this. Because of the guard's respect for Lorenz, he did not report Lorenz's activity to the authorities. A time came when an official visited the camp to inspect its activities. The guard warned Lorenz that he might have to hide what he was doing from the official. However, when the official met Lorenz and became impressed by his scientific background,

the guard told the official what Lorenz had been doing. As a result, Lorenz was transferred to a hotel in Moscow where he was allowed to write his book in comfort with suitable materials. I asked the scientist who told me about this article in the popular journal if it would be possible to obtain a copy of this article. He apparently did not follow through on my request, but when I told Dr. Baskin about the story told to me, he and Dr. Sokolov went about the task in a laudably systematic fashion, with the results published here. There is still a need for a historian who is interested in this issue to make use of the many documents that until now were kept hidden and are now available.

The resolution of other issues raised by the book, the commentaries and the article also remains for historical processes that, as Lamb says, are probably not in the control of the scientific community.