

Zitierhinweis

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fendants are the martyrs who resist the new world order and the capitalist, imperialist "West", transforming the whole narrative of the past into the memory of the defeated' (188). Whereas in Bosnia decisions were made after everything was known, in Serbia ignorance and confusion prevailed. Ristić states: 'The incriminating prosecution's narrative was largely criticized and rejected as being false, and another interpretation of "the past" was offered. The accused and the public jointly stood up in defence of the commonly shared image of the conflict, created during the war [...] and cultivated during Milošević's rule' (221). Thus, the ICTY trials provoked strong rejection, and the ICTY itself was demonized. Caught between charges for the Srebrenica genocide on the one hand, and the defeat in Croatia on the other, denial and constant self-victimisation created the Serbian memory of the 'defeated'.

Although the book's overall style makes it something of a difficult read, and her efforts to represent most of the scholarly works on transitional justice and memory creation cause Ristić occasionally to lose thematic focus, it is nonetheless convincing in its analysis of how media in Croatia, Bosnia, and Serbia have used and framed the ICTY trials to create three substantially different memories of the war. In pointing out too how political elites misuse transitional justice mechanisms to promote their own agenda just as readily as the media do, the book neatly addresses the problems and deficiencies of transitional justice, both as discourse and as toolkit. Written in the hope that justice will prevail, the book offers valuable insights to scholars, journalists or diplomats who deal with the ICTY and the processes of memory formation, especially in the light of current events in 2016. I would argue too that the book contains an important warning for all of us,

that we should not simply believe what the media say and blindly follow it, but that we must be careful of imaginary narratives, especially in the present time of global conflict.

Marieke Oprel (Amsterdam)

Matthias Fink, Srebrenica. Chronologie eines Völkermords oder Was geschah mit Mirnes Osmanović, Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2015, 992 pp., ISBN 978-3-86854-291-2, € 45.00

Twenty years after the Srebrenica massacre investigative journalist Matthias Fink has written the first authoritative account of the event in the German language. He spent years researching the topic both in Bosnia and The Hague, where he covered the trials at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Almost a thousand pages long, the volume provides a wealth of information, even for readers familiar with the horror story of Srebrenica. This is the first attempt to construct a detailed narrative using the vast amount of evidence produced by the ICTY over the last fifteen years, which itself runs to hundreds of thousands of pages of transcripts and exhibits. Although the trials of the two most important and infamous suspects, Ratko Mladić and Radovan Karadžić, are yet to be completed, it may be assumed that by now the ICTY has released most of the available evidence, so that it is possible to begin a detailed historical reconstruction of events.

This body of evidence has yet to be extensively studied by academics but Fink has now taken the lead. He is an academically trained journalist who has written a great deal of political reportage and produced documentaries for German public

television and radio, and his work here forms an excellent foundation summary of what is currently known of the Srebrenica massacre on the basis of the ICTY proceedings. In addition to the mass of ICTY evidence Fink has made use of the factual basis previously established by the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (NIOD) and the war crimes trials that took place in Bosnia, and he also refers to the work of well-known journalist colleagues like Roger Cohen and Chuck Sudetic who have written extensively about what happened in eastern Bosnia. However, he has left out the numerous but in many cases propagandistic and partisan accounts of the war at local level, as well as the memoirs—mostly apologetic in tone—written by Dutch officials or UN army personnel, or others implicated in or witnesses to the events in Srebrenica. Indeed Fink may be forgiven for that, for the amount of literature available is practically impossible for a single individual to digest, and so his choice to take stock of the 'hard facts' produced by the ICTY, already a Sisyphean task, is perfectly legitimate. Fink has collated those materials and woven from them a narrative, demonstrating great precision and good judgment in dealing with ICTY sources many of which are recalcitrant. In spite of the book's weaknesses, which are few—its prohibitive length and lack of an index being the main ones—the result is impressive.

The lengthy narrative is arranged chronologically, and is framed by a prologue and epilogue which describe the story of Azem Osmanović and his teenage son Mirnes, neither of whom survived the massacre, and whose remains were found and identified only many years later. Their story puts at least two names to what most otherwise remain an incomprehensibly large number of victims.

The rest of the book is divided into seven parts. Part I describes the first year of the war when Serb ethnic cleansing led to the formation of an effective Muslim resistance in and around Srebrenica. After a year, the Bosnian Serbs almost conquered the town, only to be halted by the UN Security Council's declaration of Srebrenica as a UN 'Safe Area' in April 1993. Part II offers a comprehensive account of the Serb take-over of Srebrenica between 6 and 11 July 1995, when thousands of Muslim men and boys fled into the forests and attempted to walk to the Muslim-held town of Tuzla, which they saw as their only chance of survival. Part III tells the story of the separation and internment of those males who decided to remain in Srebrenica and of the deportation of the women and children; it also describes how most of the men who had taken to the forests were unable to escape and were captured. Part IV provides a detailed chronicle of the killing of around eight-thousand Muslim men and boys, executed in a matter of just a few days at half a dozen sites in eastern Bosnia; we learn that only nine individuals survived. The available evidence suggests that the massacre had not been planned long in advance, with the fateful decision to dispose of Muslim prisoners reached most probably on 12 July, and then quickly expedited by high-ranking security officers who gave orders to the lower echelons of the Bosnian Serb Army. Bosnian Serb police units too did their share of the killing. In addition, Part IV includes the story of the attempt in the months following the massacre to cover up the crimes by re-burying the victims in so-called secondary mass graves.

Part V focuses on what the ICTY has termed the 'joint criminal enterprise' of organisers, perpetrators and helpers, most of whom, apart from the very few who pleaded guilty at the ICTY, have stayed silent

about the massacre. Part VI discusses the responsibilities of other relevant protagonists, for example the Bosnian government, the Dutch Battalion, the UN, and Serbia. Finally, Part VII describes the aftermath of Srebrenica's 'liberation', documenting the efforts of the Bosnian Serb Army to put an end to the orgy of violence it had itself unleashed, in the chaos and looting in Srebrenica immediately after it fell.

This is a chilling and rather eerie account. Reading it one feels like a fly on the wall, a secret and distraught onlooker, there reluctantly and by chance to witness these horrible crimes but unable to fathom what is going on in the perpetrators' minds. In fact, that is primarily because of the nature of the evidence produced by the ICTY (with almost all suspects pleading not guilty), so that Fink has some difficulty in providing answers to what remains the key question, why did Bosnian Serbs decide to eradicate and not expel the Muslim population as they had done before? Why carry out mass executions on a scale unheard of during the Bosnian war? Such questions have not particularly preoccupied the ICTY prosecutors and their investigators, who had to establish, before everything else, that these war crimes had been committed and that suspects who denied involvement were implicated. Work needs to be done here, and only after seven-hundred pages does Fink offer a few elements of explanation (in Part IV). First, he says it is always possible to find willing executioners in such situations; second, the violence was promoted from the top by a series of statements and decisions issued by Bosnian Serb leaders, starting with the ominous threats against Muslims uttered by Karadžić in 1991 and followed by the formulation of the Bosnian Serbs' strategic war aims in 1992. Finally, Karadžić's Directive Number 7 issued on 8 March 1995, amounted

to an order to make life in Srebrenica so unbearable as to bring about a sort of 'final solution'. In the process, Muslims were completely dehumanised, as can be gleaned from the fact that Serb commanders in their coded communication referred to them as 'parcels' to be distributed and disposed.

The nature of the judicial process at the UN court pushes the author to adopt a top-down approach, but that fails to explain why, for example, local Serbs and ordinary soldiers were so easily drawn into participating. Fink gives examples of locals turning up essentially to spectate in places where Muslim men and boys were kept before being executed, showing themselves depressingly keen to assault the prisoners (for example on page 641-2). Only a few Serbs refused to participate in the executions or dragged their feet, absenting themselves from the execution sites (examples given on pages 513, 531, 765). A recurring theme in the book is revenge, seen as a moral imperative by the Serb population, an obligation — at the risk of being labelled a traitor — to avenge previous wrongdoings against the Serbs dating from World War Two and 1992 and 1993 when Muslim forces from Srebrenica attacked surrounding Serb villages. It is likely that a defining aspect of the Srebrenica massacre is that, in Serb eyes, the Muslim 'enemy' here was of a different calibre and more 'evil' than elsewhere. Muslims in Srebrenica had been capable of organising fierce resistance and seizing considerable territory from the Serbs, killing many Serb soldiers and civilians. To avenge such humiliation seems to have been the main motive for Mladić to create the Drina Corps, commanded by intransigent nationalist officers from eastern Bosnia (142). As soon as they gained victory they set a killing machine in motion by ordering executions and removing

all remaining inhibitions. As Fink writes, at that point it became possible to change the situation from 'us-against-them' into 'us-without-them'. He argues that mass violence could indeed have been envisaged, that Slobodan Milošević himself had already had a premonition of it in 1993 when Mladić almost overran the enclave for the first time (205). Even if the massacre was started spontaneously on impulse (the sudden massacre in Kravica's agricultural warehouse on 13 July being the main example), Bosnian Serb military leaders quickly realised that it was easy to kill thousands of men in a matter of hours, with a handful of soldiers and helpers doing the dirty work of murder. The victims could quickly be thrown into mass graves, which all imparted momentum to the genocidal intention to 'finish the job' and continue with mass executions at other sites. Aware that their acts represented a blatant violation of the laws and customs of war, the Bosnian Serbs re-buried their Muslim victims in secondary graves, in a follow-up operation carried out in great secrecy and in the dead of night.

Readers might take issue with Fink's misgivings about use of the word 'genocide', that is, *Völkermord* (in German): a term which he suggests has undergone considerable inflation (34). Nevertheless it does figure in the title of the book, an incongruity perhaps due to the author's or his publisher's acceptance of the term simply to avoid controversy (always easy to cause in the case of Srebrenica) or to avoid contradicting the ICTY verdict and its high threshold of judicial proof. The absence of an index is a sizeable drawback of the book, especially given its length, which would have made it easier to navigate the wealth of detailed information. But those are minor flaws, and in spite of them this book is a significant achievement and a must-read

for anyone interested in what happened in Srebrenica in July 1995.

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Robert Donia, Radovan Karadžić. Architect of the Bosnian Genocide, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014, 360 pp., ISBN 9781107073357, \$ 90.00 (paperback ed. \$ 32.99)

After a manhunt lasting more than a decade, Radovan Karadžić was captured in July 2008, on a bus in Vračar, a suburb of Belgrade. One of the world's most wanted war criminals, wanted for inciting the Bosnian Serbs to commit genocide, by then Karadžić had re-invented himself as a medicine man complete with long grey hair and large unkempt beard—but an oddly forbidding-looking one. Going by the alias of 'Dragan Dabić', practitioner of alternative medicine, he had managed to remain under the radar for more than thirteen years, but soon after his arrest in 2008 he was handed over to the ICTY, where he first appeared on 31 July 2008 before Judge Alphons Orie. Robert Donia was called an expert witness for the prosecution, providing the historical background and context of the wartime events in Bosnia. Donia had often given evidence against former Yugoslav leaders, but the case against Karadžić was different, as Robert Donia describes in this comprehensive biography.

Donia appeared as historical expert witness in fifteen war crimes trials at the International Court Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague, including those of former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milošević and, precisely, Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić. In his biography of Karadžić, Donia describes the flamboyant former psychiatrist as a bully