



## INTELLIGENTSIA AND THE DESTRUCTION OF BOSNIA

### *Unfinest Hour of Intellectuals*

(Brendan Simms, *Unfinest Hour, Britain and the Destruction of Bosnia*, Allen Lane the Penguin Press, London, 2001)

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“The best ruler is the one sitting with scholars,  
and the worst scholar is the one sitting with rulers.”

Hasan Kafija Pruscak,  
*“The foundation of the wisdom on constellation of the world”*

In the history of XX century, intellectuals found themselves gravely tested three times both ethically and intellectually. These three turning points, in which the moral capacity - as well as the expertise of wise men were to be asserted - occurred in: Spain, Viet-Nam, and Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH). Two world wars are deliberately not mentioned, for they were not such big temptations to make declarations for the just cause. In the Spanish civil war, intellectuals defended the Republic with weapons in their hands. In the case of Viet-Nam, intellectuals confirmed that they took the side of the People through their critique and protest, including the moral condemnation of the war having come from Bertrand Russell's tribunal. In Bosnia, however, the world's intellectuals, and European intellectuals in particular, only in a few cases recognized Crime and took the side of the



Victim. They remained largely silent, often repeating absurdities or overtly protecting Evil, and some even took shots at Sarajevo! The Twentieth Century was the century of temptation for intellectuals. For the sake of Bosnia, some intellectuals, even among themselves had – not only because intellectuals have often been inciting evil, but because they were not able to recognize it and unable to counter it – disappointedly given up of intelligentsia. I have also, I admit, after Bosnia, become faithless in Mind, science, and critical consciousness.

**A**nd then, something happened that seriously moderated my doubt. A book has been published.

The book *“Unfinest Hour, Britain and the Destruction of Bosnia”* by Brendan Simms brings back the trust in men of knowledge. Perhaps, after all, not everything is lost about us. This is namely a book by an intellectual who speaks critically about the role and responsibility of his own country in the destruction of another country, but above all, it deals with the role and responsibility of the political and scientific Mind for the tragedy of Bosnia. It is hard to find a similar case. The country that has most likely played out (internationally) the most shameful role in the destruction of Bosnia – apart from the actual aggressors - got the opportunity through this book to be the only one which has the right to say that it has intellectuals saving its honour and the honour of intellectuals as such. It had perhaps to be so, and it was perhaps the only possible way. Where shame reached the bottom, one has firstly to achieve honour. It is not only Britain that was disgraced in Bosnia. Nor is the vague syntagma International community dense enough to conceal some other countries and their national intelligentsia. We still know very little about the role of other countries and their intellectuals and experts, both of state and independent. Admittedly, there are two more countries and two more intellectuals who by the critique of their intellectual environment corroborated that not everything is lost for intellectuals, even after Bosnia.

**T**hese are two journalists: Greece's Takis Michas (*Unholy Alliance*, Texas A&M University Press, 2002) and Norway's Kjell Arild Nilsen (*Europas Svik*, Spartakus Forlag AS, Oslo 1996). The books they have written stand firmly alongside Simms' intellectual adventure. Yet, even if the syntagma “critical intelligentsia” is pleonasm, I have



to use it in order to call intellectuals from other countries to critically assess the role of their states and colleagues in the course of the war in Bosnia. After Bosnia, it is not taken for granted that the substantive “intelligentsia” implies the attribute “critical”. As the Simms’ book is not a proscription of those compromised in the case of Bosnia, so too a similar book about France, Germany, Austria, Italy etc., will not be anything other than a contribution to depicting the genuine intellectual and ethical line dividing intelligentsia from “intelligentsia”.

**I**t appears that Simms, along with very few others, has, in the case of Bosnia, guarded what is the best, but so rare, and so often entangled – the independence of intellectuals from the censors of any kind, and the internal censor in particular. The message by Hasan Kafija Pruscak, the Bosnian scholar, 400 years ago, much earlier than the existence of the state of Henry Kissinger, refers to all those countering Bosnian statehood. It is though, seemingly, scholars and philosophies that make decisions about the statehood capacities of peoples - as Hegel maintains, but on the condition that they do not sit with rulers. At least not with questionable rulers and at least not in just any regime.

Simms is overtly on the side of Bosnia and Herzegovina, its multi-ethnic composition, including the Bosnian government from the beginning of the war, about which he, though, claims that it “never entirely lost its distinctive multi-ethnic complexion”. (p. ix) He wanted to say that the Bosnian government had also considerably lost – albeit not entirely – its multi-ethnic complexity. Hence, from the outset he has announced that he disregards the “balanced approach” of the “dialectical” analysts of the Bosnian tragedy. This is his starting point. That is the premise that will also enable him to address Edmund Burke’s warning to his contemporaries that “Wise men will apply their remedies to vices, not to names; to the causes of the evil which are permanent, not to the occasional organs by which they appear. Otherwise you will be wise historically, a fool in practice.” (p. 350)

**T**herefore, from the beginning to the end, he is on the side of the «Bosnian» cause, including the Bosnian government, in spite of all its “foolishness in practice”, and against «Serbian» cause, irrespective of all its “historical wisdoms”. Only the reader who is not obsessed by a “balanced” approach can grasp that the Bosnian cause in practice is not here opposed to the Serbian historical cause, and that this book is, in short, not only - pro-



Bosnian, but also pro-British as well as pro-Serbian. As such, it will find its public in a Belgrade of “another Serbia”, as it finds it in “another Britain” as well. Unlike the “balanced” truths – such as those of Vojislav Kostunica and intellectuals sitting around him that claim that “crimes have been committed by all sides”, – which by justifying the practice, are already preparing the historical foolishnesses for the future, both Serbian and British – and Bosnian. This is the point of view that had recognized genocide in Bosnia long before Srebrenica occurred, unlike the one that even after Srebrenica, balancing, perhaps even unwontedly, thereby prepares the terrain for some future Srebrenicas.

**T**he stance of a “balanced approach”, aiming to minimize the crimes of one side through an optical trick so that the crimes of the other side are enhanced, is just the continuation of the claim – throughout the war – to ensure “military balance” by lifting the arms embargo and enabling the Bosnian side at least the right to defence. As if its intercessors were not aware that justification of the crime is worse than the crime because the justification of a crime is already the preparation for a new crime; because the new crime, is always more egregious as the continuation of previous, than was the previous.

The wise architects of the Dayton accords, of course, should not be exempted. They deserve our gratitude for ending the tragedy and war, but they have virtually divided Bosnia into two (three!) mini-states and made of it “a profoundly traumatized country, a land damaged to a degree unique in Europe since 1945”. (p.xi) Bosnia “made in Dayton” is nothing but a decoy for those obsessed with its division, and cleansing of the «ethnically dirty», to try something similar again. Such a political creation acts as a provocation for those who consider it anachronistic.

**A**lthough Britain is named as the subject of research, as the title indicates, I dare to say – without refuting the author's intention – that the book does not reveal the question of the role, responsibility and guilt of Simms' homeland, but the question of the role, responsibility and guilt of the worlds' leaders for what has occurred, and for what will result in current international happenings. This is not to say that the book does not hit its target, for it does, but that it hits it deeper and broader than the author himself announces in the preface. Even though the tragedy of Bosnia was more profound, i.e. that it was destroyed as a political arrangement and one of its peoples vanished as the victim of



genocide, the feasible tragedy the book points to – the dismemberment of the international community and the principles the world order rests upon, as well as peace itself, if this world continues to be lead by the people who decided on the fate of Bosnia, is much greater.

**I**t is the architects of the Dayton Accords - including those who decided to intervene almost four after the beginning of aggressions towards Bosnia - to whom the author directs his criticism, as laid out in the first chapter “`No Intervention`: Defining Government Policy”. If I am right herein, if in this way Americans also hold responsibility for waiting for so long, listening to Britons and others, to intervene, then it only confirms how immense was the responsibility of the British government, and its entire expert apparatus, for what came about as the policy of non-interventionism. Americans could have thus intervened earlier. They cannot give the blame for their own hesitation only to others, however. The role of Britain and other allies from the banana continent cannot be taken as justification. The fact that Americans did act, and in doing so proved that British cautions of tragic (global) consequences should intervention occur were ungrounded, only increases the level of British responsibility. However, it does not decrease American responsibility for delay. That Simms is so explicit in naming the brightest British political minds responsible for Bosnia, does not mean that he relieved Americans of their own portion of responsibility. In fact, he only calls upon his American colleagues to write a similar book. To this end, the gap that existed between Britain and the U.S., existed within the States as well. “Non-interventionism” and an arms embargo for the Bosnian government were two underlying points of British policy. But, what hindered others to oppose British policy? For the sake of that the question, Simms' decision to call the policy of his own government into question is a manifesto to intellectuals - contemporary historians first of all - to question their own governments in the same manner.

**W**hat about French intellectuals, for instance? Why did France intervene in Rwanda already after eights weeks, but were not prepared to do the same in Bosnia after almost four years of war? One year alone, even in Bosnia, has 52 weeks!

Through his book, Simms has raised the question of responsibility for his government in refusing to recognize the existence of the state of Bosnia-Herzegovina, but he implicitly



obliged American intellectuals to raise the same question of responsibility for their own country in establishing the state of Bosnia in an unsustainable, making it necessary for the government to dismantle it as it is in order to make it possible for it to attain a sustainable shape at all. The dismantling of Dayton's Bosnia is not the obligation of Bosnians, as Richard Holbrooke, its architect, asserts, but the duty of those who made it such. Was this not implicated in Simms' book, as my reading perceives it to be, then his critique of the role of his own state in the destruction of Bosnia would not make sense.

**T**he global message of the book refers to our contemporary intellectual as such, and to the contemporary subject of his ideologized science, and not to any of Simms' anxiety with Britain, or conservatives, or, even the more senseless – Douglas Hurd, The causes of conflicts cannot be in cultures, ethnic identities, or religions. They lay somewhere much deeper. «Islamophobia» does not necessarily squeeze out «Germanophobia» or anti-Catholicism. Moreover, it implies them, or, more accurately, they are its assumption. While the consequences are: overlooking “the distinction between aggressor and victim” (p. 25), “moral equivalence” (p. 26), equation of “a major politico-military crisis in the middle of Europe with more remote African and Asian quarrels” (p. 23), “as much blame as possible on the Bosnian Muslims” (p.29), and eventually, in tune with the theory of “bloody borders of Islam”, an “attempt to force the Bosnian government to accept the Owen-Stoltenberg partition plan” (p. 31). Why would these words by Sylvane Foa, the UNHCR spokeswoman, quoted by Simms in order to question the policy of his own government, relate only for Britain and only for that time: “Does that mean Britain wants only children? Maybe you want only blond and blue-eyed children, maybe only children under six, only orphans?” (p. 36) The Bosnia of Dayton is nevertheless the fruit of fear. But, it is also a source of fear, a scarecrow, and fear is the cause of any aggressiveness and contention. If Bosnia is to be the fruit of the Mind, the mind does not have to be used. It only has to be made to be what it used to be.

**T**he divisions that unfolded in Bosnia (among Western allies) continue even after alliances have been forged in Iraq as well. Madeleine Albright, who was an advocate of the Bosnian cause and of intervention on its behalf, is today opposed to the American presence in Iraq. Al Gore, who besides Bill Clinton was the most meritorious person for the U.S. took the side of the “civilizationally distinctive” Bosnian Muslims, is today supporting



the candidate for American president who opposes the war in Iraq. Margaret Thatcher was opposed to British non-interventionism throughout the tragedy in Bosnia and was inciting Americans to intervene. Those who have just removed the regime of Saddam Hussein did not intervene against Milosevic having been supported by Saddam Hussein in his genocide against Bosnian Muslims. And so on and so forth. Disagreement about Bosnia and agreement about Iraq, are not civilizational, but ethical issues, as well as being questions of expertise and competence. That is what reduces the British-American alliance to “the lowest common denominator” or rises to “the highest common denominator”. The fear of Britons from Huntingtonians' surmises that the intervention of the west on the side of the Bosnian government, and against Serbs, could have provoked Russia to take the side of Serbia, starting a third world war, had its cause in theoretical foolishness. “Russia's alleged Serbophilia” (p. 84) was simply a justification concealing the British lack of expertise on the Balkans' circumstances, as well as a justification for the morally doubtful view about non-interventionism. When they have to choose between Serbia and America, Russians do not care much about the civilization of Orthodoxy. The readers alone are supposed to conclude when the common denominator rests on ethics and knowledge, and when these premises are missing.

**I**t is astonishing to hear from a cynical British intellectual to what extent “Britain, in all her ancestral wisdom” (p. 90) is responsible for restraining America and NATO to intervene in Bosnia. Even the officials at the US State Department (George Kennedy, Marshall Harris, Jon Western, Stephen Walker, Warren Zimmermann) resigned in protest to US non-interventionist policy. Moreover, Simms' critique reminds us of France's role and the responsibility of French intellectuals, some of whom, in the middle of the war, exhibitionistically drove through Sarajevo. Why did their intellectual and ethical interest for Bosnia cease as soon as the war ended? Can the interest for the causes of the war and the role of those guilty and responsible for the Bosnian tragedy abate as soon as Channel 5 and CNN cameras are focused elsewhere? It is true that there were those who deleted the word “genocide” from documents and reports in both the American and British administrations. However, it is also true the word could only be deleted because there were in these governments those who used the word in documents and reports from the very beginning. When will we know from French, American and other intellectuals who was the first in their countries to speak up against genocide in Bosnia, and who disputed it? In the





light of its relationship with Britain, it was not difficult for a civilizationally declared US to give preference to Bosnia versus Northern Ireland, in spite the cleavage between “interventionists” and “isolationists” at home. Nevertheless, why was it so difficult for France? It is true that Britain imperilled even NATO as the American attitude to use NATO forces in halting the tragedy in Bosnia – as a principle and not civilization related problem, but why have not the other NATO member states devoted more attention to the preservation of NATO, thus by complying more to the American intention to use it in Bosnia? Does it mean that these countries were ready to sacrifice NATO for the sake of Bosnia? These questions are not only for the British but are to be raised by intellectuals in many countries. Disappointed in the principles their own alliance rests on, but also in the behaviour and practice of their own civilization, the US in tandem with with Iran (sic) and other Muslim countries, were secretly arming the government in Sarajevo. (p. 121) This provides the room for intellectuals in other countries, by the declaration of which to join NATO has been accelerated because of Bosnia, to examine the role of their governments. In this way, Poland serves as a good example. Previously, NATO isolationism, in the period when intervention was the basic principle, paved a good foundation for engagement, though under American leadership, when principle-related reasons were not present. Today, Poland has a prominent presence in Iraq (at the time of writing - 2004), and it is partly due to the tragic Bosnian experience that Poland is in NATO. Mazowiecki and Michnic are not enough for a country like Poland.

**S**imms has devoted the entire fourth chapter of his book to David Owen. As the author has written the book for the British public, he warns that Owen and others were the public face of Britain. However, the message is much deeper, revealing how someone confident of his own opinion can also be opposed to his own opinion if he becomes a part of – Leviathan. We, having lived in the states on the other side of the iron curtain (fence!) know it very well. But we did not know that it can be so in democratic states as well. Thus, Lord Owen wrote, after he saw “news coverage of Serbs concentration camps” (p. 135) in July 1992, and before he became the EU mediator, a letter to the Prime Minister, the *Evening Standard*, and the Press Association, in which he alleges:

“It is not exaggeration to say that we are witnessing, 50 years on, scenes in Europe that mirror the early stages of Nazi holocaust under the dreadful description of “ethnic





cleansing”. I urge you not to accept the conventional wisdom that nothing can be done militarily...The first essential step is to stop by threat of force the use or movement of any military aircraft, tanks, armoured vehicles or artillery in the former territory of Yugoslavia. It is perfectly within the power of NATO to enforce such a ceasefire...If no action is taken now there will be virtually nothing left of Bosnia for the Muslims population to negotiate about.” (p. 135-6)

**I**mmediately in the wake of having been designated to the post of the EU mediator, and after he went to take his opinion of his government, he sends these words to Bosnians at the Sarajevo airport: “Don't , don't, don't live under this dream that the west is going to come in and sort this problem out. Don't dream dreams.” (p. 138) This perhaps helped Bosnians, Bosniaks in particular, to begin dreaming Americans. But, again, the Simms' chapter on lord Owen is, as I said, much deeper, and the message is addressed to Britons and Americans rather than to Bosnians: “Don't dream that the problems in Europe can be solved without Americans!” Or, more precisely, for it is more deeper, and more actual, if I understood him correctly: “Don't dream that Americans will solve the problems of the world only because you will join them!”

One of the puzzling dilemmas in the course of the Bosnian war was the purpose of the international armed forces' presence there, neither armed adequately nor authorized to intervene. Were soldiers, among them British as well, in Bosnia in order to prepare and assess the probability of intervention or to deter it? This is the crucial question dealt with in the fifth chapter.

**A**s for Britons, Simms is clear as early as the first sentence. As far as the moral side of the international “forces” - including British - is concerned, he is even more explicit: on the front page of the book there is a photo on which general Michael Rose, UNPROFOR commander in Bosnia throughout 1994, cordially shaking hands with general Ratko Mladic, currently indicted for war crimes and genocide. This chapter, however, raises a much more grave question: General Rose, who called the Bosnians “savages” – albeit he himself shook hands with one of them – not only considered himself several classes above them (p. 176), but he also introduced the question of cultural education of British officers in general. If British officers conceive their political and ethical attitudes on “anti-Muslim”



and “anti-Catholic” (p. 178) prejudices, then there must be that some British intellectuals support the same. It certainly implies the opposite attitude and raises an overwhelming question: whether officers in Catholic and Orthodox NATO member states pass through the strategic briefings that fill them with anti-protestant prejudices? If this is so, as I understood the message from the chapter, then the world should be afraid of those who are supposed to safeguard us, no matter whether we are Muslims, Catholics, Protestants, or Orthodox. Perhaps, those who should be most afraid are those who are designing what NATO is. “Indeed, Rose`s memoirs are peppered with Natophobic statements which sound extraordinary on the lips of a British general.” (p. 203)

**T**he most entertaining part of the book is the one I hold the most essential as well: the chapter on experts!

If Americans stand behind the political monster, made in Dayton, and called – today Bosnia and Herzegovina, if behind the Dayton' constitution of BH stands the good will of Americans to halt the war, if behind their will stands the four-year belated intervention, if behind the late American intervention stands NATO, and behind NATO stands Britain and behind Britain stands the government of John Major and Minister Douglas Hurd, then it must be that experts, i.e. intellectuals, stand behind the government – just as behind the Serbs' genocide in Bosnia stand Serbia's intellectuals. The case of Bosnia, and proved by the role of Britain in its destruction, has compromised what is an 'expert' and an 'intellectual'. Simms directs his critique of the role of Britain towards the Prime Minister and his Minister of Foreign Affairs, but he does not neglect to highlight that behind their decisions stand experts – and research institutes. Whereas the concentration of power (and money) in the military sector in the country, moves towards the concentration of expertise in this sector, it is logical to presume that this expertise ensures relevant premises for political decisions.

**W**hen John Major asked his experts how many soldiers are needed to separate the three parties in Bosnia, the answer was – 400.000. (p.224) It is correct that experts are often used by people of power to justify their faulty decisions, but it is also accurate that experts are often more anxious about power than they are about truth. As intellectuals cannot be justification for politicians' catastrophic moves, so intellectuals



cannot remain without moral and competent responsibility for their ideas on the basis of which someone in power acts, or – does not act. Moreover, their ideas are perhaps more responsible than the moves ensuing from them.

If I were the citizen of a political arrangement protected by NATO, and using the knowledge of experts such as those who were deciding of the fate of Bosnia – as I might become one day - then I would feel as insecure as when I was assaulted by the army that was supposed to defend me, for that army was advised by the intellectuals who were supposed to be wise – and moral. The case of Omer, alias John, alias Jovan Zametica, the lecturer at the British government training courses, and afterwards the adviser to Radovan Karadzic, speaks for itself. Perhaps “the lack of sensitivity in official circles” (p. 228) for the Balkans' nationalisms does not deserve such Simms' irony, but I do understand him when it comes to the “prestigious International Institute for Strategic Studies” and its deputy director Michael Dewar. Opposed to any intervention in Bosnia, the expert for Strategic Studies, colonel Dewar, estimates that such an effort would require 500.000 soldiers. (p. 229) “He did not say how many troops it would take to defeat Greater Serbia, but, extrapolating from the Bosnian case, he must have had a truly astronomical figure in mind...One would naturally assume that he knew what he was talking about.” (p. 229-231)

Of course, we know now where Major's impressions of the Balkans and “ancient hatreds” came from. Charles Dick, lecturer at the Royal Military Academy offers an expert's assessment: “The Slavic nationalities of former Yugoslavia are tribal societies, governed more by their emotions than their intellects.” (p. 231) It is difficult to understand that South Slaves, even after a period of very emotional governments, would now choose the government of Dick's intellect. John Keegan, lecturer of military history and journalist, also “anthropologizes” the war in Bosnia naming it “a primitive tribal conflict, of a sort known to a handful of anthropologists”. (p. 234) If the genocide in Bosnia was a tribal conflict, then civilized people indeed must be afraid of conflicts in which civilized societies are supposed to take part. As the advisor to Lord Owen, the former ambassador to Belgrade, Sir Peter Hall, writes to the Prime Minister: “Prime Minister, the first thing you have to know about this people is that they like going around cutting each other's heads off.” (p. 241) Sir Hall, the Balkan expert, of course, had not to know that the homicide rate in his then host country (Yugoslavia, including Serbia), while he was at the post in



Belgrade, according to the UN data (John B. Allcock , *Explaining Yugoslavia*, Hurst, London, 2000, p. 383) had been lower than in his own country.

While American experts were either resigning based on the continued American policy of non-interventionism, or were continuing to stand for the intervention, there were no such cases in the Foreign Office.

“**T**he advent of the Bosnian war found the Foreign Office unprepared...There was also a shortage of regional expertise...Those regional experts who were available tended to be pro-Serb, supporters of engagement with Milosevic (i.e., appeasement), or at least equally sceptical of all sides.” (p. 240-241)

Nothing more could have been expected from British experts in Belgrade: “The Serbophilia of the Belgrade embassy and the 'old Balkan hands' was something remarked upon by visiting journalists.” (p. 241) These few lines are to be read in a mere book! No interpretation would be enough. “Ivor Roberts himself (ambassador to Belgrade from 1994, Dz. S.) – who was only executing government policy – claims that he was engaging in 'analysis' not 'apology'. Roberts was instructed, as he put it, 'to get inside Milosevic's head and find out what his real bottom lines were'.” (p. 242) In the next sentence, however, the point of Simms' critique is contained – not the critique of Roberts himself, but the critique of the British “analysis” of the Bosnian question and the critique of “analysis” of experts as such, those who were grasping nothing. “Yet the criticism – and the defence – both miss the point. The problem was not the apologia, or the morality, but the analysis, which hinged on the assumption that Milosevic – who was primarily responsible for the wars in Croatia and Bosnia – *could* be corralled into some sort of acceptable behaviour, and that he *might* be part of a stable solution, however unjust.” (p. 242) Look out! Milosevic is not mentioned as responsible for the war in Slovenia, but is entirely responsible for – after the war in Slovenia - the totally unnecessary, illegitimate and illegal wars in Croatia and Bosnia. For this type of analysis, neither the American, and certainly not the British, administrations were capable. Most British experts and their institutes for strategic studies were incapable of this sort of analysis. Milosevic may even be considered less responsible for the dismemberment of Yugoslavia and the Slovenian “blitz-Krieg” than others, and yet he was the principal offender for wars and war crimes in Croatia and Bosnia. In contrast,



British and American experts strove to include him in a solution and to preserve him by non-intervention, as well as indirectly aiding him via the arms embargo. Eventually, they included him – among the architects of the Dayton Accords. One day, when this review is published, it will be written – depending on whether it will be published before or after Milosevic's sentence in the Hague, that the Dayton Accords, and that means the Bosnia of Dayton, is the result of the person himself charged with, and possibly sentenced with genocide – & company!

**F**or another distinctive approach to the solution of the Yugoslav question, one needs intellectuals to whom truth will be more important than political will. The same expert and deputy director of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, Colonel Michael Dewar, who was opposed to intervention, strategically advising that it was necessary to deploy a half million troops in Bosnia alone, in October 1992 said: “My view is that military intervention is perfectly feasible from a military point of view and that Douglas Hurd and others, for entirely political reasons, are fighting shy of saying that it is viable. What they mean is that it is not politically desirable.” (p. 272) Simms, ironically, adds: “This time, he knew what he was talking about.” (p. 272) The question is whether (not including Dewar (!), who lives already with his questions and conscience) British intellectuals have to say something for themselves in the aftermath of Bosnia.

Diplomats, journalists, and professors all knew that military intervention was viable, and knew that politicians were aware of this as well. They also knew that such an option was not advisable, for it was not desirable politically. However, does this mean that they desired what was happening in Bosnia? Today in The Hague, one is tried not only for the sake of crimes committed by them, but also in terms of command responsibility as well. Will experts ever be tried for the sake of their expert responsibility – in their expert associations at least? Has any expert association raised the question of expert responsibility of its members – for genocide?

**S**imms' seventh chapter is devoted to the role of the Parliament and media in the destruction of Bosnia. It is taken for granted that politicians are intellectuals. Members of parliaments, therefore the legislative part of the Montesquieu's tripartite authority, are meant to be the *crème de la crème* of the political creation called the state.



Other than, if it is about the Parliament of the state made by the Dayton Accords known as Bosnia-Herzegovina. In Bosnia, namely, people are entertained and amused by their MPs and the proceedings in their meetings, because the laws they are meant to make enter into force mainly made and implemented by the High Representative. Admittedly, people should, at least according to Jefferson, laugh at itself, when the people itself elected and mandated those MPs to spend lavish amounts of money stemming from their taxes. Since I read Simms' book, however, I see that the British people could also laugh at their own MPs and – at itself.

**A**nd while “American lawmakers” (p. 273) in Congress corroborated “the strength of their beliefs on Bosnia” and that “Bosnia was no small far-off country for them”, “no such debate took place in Britain”. (p.274) On the contrary, in spite of some honourable exemptions (Sir Patrick Cormack), it was Bob Wareing, known as “Slob-a-Bob”, who was making the atmosphere in the House of Commons. Although he strove, by his later pro-Croatian attitudes, to alleviate his “pro-Serb” image, he undoubtedly confirmed by his trip to the part of Bosnia under Serb control, immediately after the massacre in Srebrenica, and in a meeting with Mladic and Karadzic, what a British legislator thinks about genocide and ethnic cleansing. For comfort, but only to British tax-payers, he was suspended in 1997 because of monies paid to him by Serbian companies. (p. 277) It is hard to believe in democracy after one witnesses the “developed democracies” having executed such fatal errors as these witnessed in Bosnia. I beg readers not to resent that I do not cite all that has been said in the Parliament regarding Bosnia, and specifically Bosniaks. I invite you to read Simms' book, or at minimum, the seventh chapter. As a person who is Bosnian, and to this end, specifically Bosniak, it is beneath my dignity to quote such prejudices and ignorance. After all, perhaps these are “interacting tribal affaires and ancient rivalries” between British MPs and a handful of British intellectuals such as Simms is. (p. 283)

**F**or the Bosnian public it is of special importance to learn a bit more about the then attitudes of Paddy Ashdown, the now High Representative, a man playing now a very hard role in which he has to play act that he is not the governor of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Although welcomed by Bosnian liberals as the friend of Bosnia and one of their personal friends (whereas liberals has mainly one member, though there are two liberal parties(!)),



Ashdown not earlier than “1995 became an advocate of 'lift and strike' (along with almost everybody else)”. (p. 296)

“**U**nlike the United States, the British government did not come under sustained and irresistible pressure from the press.” (p. 300) In spite of exceptions, such as the *Independent*, media were trying to ensure “moral equivalence of the antagonists”. (p.302) Moreover, it seemed at times that one tempted that the Croatian and Bosnian sides made mistakes so that the reality on the ground provided support to the already-made preconceptions regarding «equal responsibility» of the warring parties. When Croats did commit crimes, it was as if it supported those who were claiming from the beginning that “all are the same there”. The pivotal point of who started the war, who perpetrated crimes and of what sort were these crimes, and who had no interest in a peaceful and just solution had lost all importance. It seemed that the carriers of this «balanced approach» were only more eagerly awaiting news of Bosniaks' crimes against Serbs and Croats than of the Croats' crimes. And they got them. Senseless preconceptions about Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks, and indestructible prejudices about the eternal historical responsibility of some, coupled with the eternal heroism and legitimacy of others, were nurtured by the mistakes on both the Croat and Bosniak sides. The refusal to support the idea of intervention, while there was still time, or to support the idea of Bosnians being allowed to defend themselves was simply not familiar to the British press. There was not any moral dilemma about that. Only the *Daily Telegraph* was capable of assessing analytically the consequences of the arms embargo as the direct support to the “Serb aggressor”. (p. 304)

**D**isappointed in intellectuals, Simms consoles himself with the fact that this is not the first time intellectuals betrayed themselves. He quotes Julien Benda and his “*La Trahison des clercs*”, about intellectuals who “abandon the universal values of the Enlightenment in favour of nationalism, racism and the exaltation of the strong over the weak”, and adds: “Similar criticism might be made of the response of many British intellectuals to aggression and ethnic cleansing in Croatia and Bosnia... 'Treasonable clerks' were to be found on the left, on the right and in the centre of the political spectrum... The result of this was a kind of renewed Grand Alliance between intellectuals of the left and the right... The fact that some intellectuals – especially on the left – were prepared to 'understand' Serb aggression and ethnic cleansing in the light of 'history' is a striking





example of the 'treason' described by Julien Benda some seventy years earlier: the abandonment of universalist values for a worldview based on 'custom, history, the past...in opposition to the rights of reason!.' (p. 306, 307, 311, 312)

**T**he last chapter, under a metaphoric-ironic title “Reckoning”, is a caution to the political (in spite of all) Mind about the consequences if it is based in prejudices. Britain's relationship with Bosnia, and Serbia respectively, could have cost her her partnership with America. “By early 1995, British policy on Bosnia has reached a complete dead end...Indeed, the Major administration insisted that Britain should not only abandon the legitimate Bosnian government to its fate, but that it should do all in its power to prevent the Americans from coming to its aid, even at the price of a catastrophic transatlantic rift.” (p. 314)

Today, while listening to the debates about the role of the UN, the then Secretary General, the unfortunate Dutch battalion, and the distressed Japanese Yasushi Akashi, the revelation that perhaps events surrounding Srebrenica had been known for months before it took place comes as a sort of relief.

**T**he British officer C.A. le Hardy warned that “Srebrenica has to be dealt with before the situation further deteriorates”. (p. 316) If the writer of these lines would be reduced to the level of prejudice, from which Britain and Europe by and large looked on the Bosnian tragedy, then I could shout: they all knew about everything! Or even better: they are all the same there! Or, the best: we are all the same! Clearly, if the political Mind on which current Europe rests has so low either expert or moral standards, or both, then Srebrenica and the genocide in Bosnia should worry EU more than the Spanish Civil War worried the League of Nations. Otherwise, few anarchistic letters, having recently been sent to the addresses in Brussels, will be more important for Europe, than the arrest of Karadzic and Mladic. The dreams of genocide, ethnic cleansing and great political neighbours “will not simply go away. It needs high level attention.” (p. 316) Let us learn from these words of an experienced intelligence officer.

The moral consequences of the international community's failure, from which Britain should not be exempted, are even more catastrophic. Lonely voices were meaningful, but



were not decisive. Newt Gingrich, the Republican leader, maintained that “the entire world's honour” was being ruined in Bosnia; the former Prime Minister to Poland Tadeusz Mazowiecki, and the then UN rapporteur on Human Rights, resigned after Srebrenica; Tony Lake, the National Security Advisor, reiterates that “This is larger than Bosnia...Bosnia has become and is the symbol of US foreign policy.” (p. 324-5) However, what decided American policy to finally intervene was, nevertheless, Srebrenica.

**T**housands of Bosnian Muslim boys and men had to be executed in a single massacre in order for the west to decide halting the genocide. Two questions which inevitably arise from this are: First, why were 200.000 victims before Srebrenica not moral reason enough for an intervention in Bosnia? Does it mean that 200.000 people were being killed systematically in the course of few years is less morally questionable than 8.000 men and boys killed in few days? Second: What would have happened if Srebrenica had not happened? Would the genocide go on in a morally more acceptable way, systematically, in consecutive portions of time, and in respective numerical portions acceptable for European moral standards? To the point of utter extermination and ethnic/religious cleansing of Bosnian Muslims/Bosniaks? I know there are no answers to these questions, but, that it is not a reason not to raise them.

I am not sure that intervention (the opponents of intervention do not deserve to be mentioned from an ethical point of view), provoked by a crime that cannot be compared even with Guernika, released from moral responsibility even those who intervened. Srebrenica also stands as an ethical warning for those who changed their opinion after it.

**N**or does the new stance release France from the responsibility after Jacques Chirac condemned the west's hesitation and compared it with Chamberlain's and Daladier's talks with Hitler in Munich. Srebrenica remains shameful for the French, as well as the entire world, as much as for the British, in so far as there is still honour in politics. It must be so, for only those who share the virtue of shame can deal with politics. (Protagora) Otherwise, neither Britain nor France will have a chance bigger than the one Bosnia had.

Interventions, in Bosnia, as well as the latter one, in Serbia for the sake of Kosovo, were not adequate responses of the west to what was happening and is still going on in Serbia. The



perpetrators of genocide in Bosnia must by no means be rewarded by the division of this unhappy country. The bombardment of Serbia must by no means have as a goal the establishment of a protectorate for Kosovo only. The removal of Milosevic from power is not the solution of the problem, for Milosevic is not the clue to the problem. The problem of the Balkans is nationalism. There is only one solution for its deepest, fascist layer. The moment for it to be applied has been missed. That is why the balkanization is still on the agenda in both Europe and the Balkans.

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I would happily say of Brendan Simms' book that it is a good book on Bosnia, but I cannot. This is the *best* book on the Bosnian issue I have ever read! I would also very gladly say that this is an excellent book for patriotic reasons, but I cannot. This is the best book not because of its content and subject, but because of the methodology applied in it. If deduction and induction are modes or methods used by our mind in comprehending and elucidating of reality, then a deductive-inductive method is the peak of this mode we pass on the way toward truth. However, without the intention to declare what in this syntagma is primary – the deductive or the inductive – for I do not know, I have to say that it is the most important in the mere deduction, no matter how non-scientific it might sound to someone, to start not from the theoretically general, but from what is the base of theory: the philosophically general, in this case, the ethical. Simms' uses an ethnical starting point in his exploration of Bosnia. Moreover, he uses a general ethics point, only owing to which the author can reach the truth, or allow it to fall away, even when considering an elementary cube of the mosaic called Bosnia. The book is thus historiographical. Moreover, this is a textbook of historiographic science. I would recommend it to every MA or doctoral student, and in particular to those who in their search for impartial, balanced approaches, depart from the facts that corroborate that in Bosnia all were doing crimes, and arrive to the conclusion that in Bosnia all committed crimes. (sic!) Nonetheless, the book is something much higher methodologically. Because of its starting point it is also – a philosophy of history. I do not know if there is – after G.W.F. Hegel, and his philosophy of history – anything similar, but I propose this book to be proclaimed the basis of a new discipline – the philosophy of modern historiography. This is indeed a philosophy based on facts, or, even better, the book is the textbook on facts that can not be understood



without philosophy. Simms' book proves that science is not any morally neutral *l'art pour l'artism* – and that morality is the assumption of truth. If science is anxious about the truth - something I do not have any doubts about, even in the case of those justifying the crime by equalizing the victim and criminal - then it has to start from morality in order to make morality the purpose of the truth, i.e. its own purpose. Otherwise, it will – and it is pretentious – serve only itself. Or, more often – Evil.

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