

**Collective Memory and Collective Knowledge in a Global Age -  
An Interdisciplinary Workshop  
17-18 June 2007, London**

## **The Narrative of Genocide as Cosmopolitan Memory and Its Impact on Humanitarian Intervention**

Anna Di Lellio

Kosovo Institute of Journalism and Communication (KIJAC), Prishtinë  
and The New School University, New York City

## The Narrative of Genocide as Cosmopolitan Memory and Its Impact on Humanitarian Intervention

During the first year of its existence, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC gave every willing visitor an identity card that matched her vital statistics with the ones of a victim. I was the German-born Emma Freund, class 1893, a middle class mother from Mannheim, whose family and life were progressively destroyed by the Nazis, as I learned during a painful itinerary. Among the most memorable moments, I remember the physical barrier at an imaginary border with safety that denied me passage and Emma asylum; the claustrophobic space of a real *Karlsruhe* train car used in the deportations; and the hardened soil that replaced the floor at the very end of my visit, and Emma's life in Auschwitz.

If the intention of the Museum interactivity was for visitors to form a bond with Holocaust victims, it succeeded. The era of the invisible memorials, to paraphrase Musil,<sup>1</sup> is over. This contemporary Holocaust memorial museum, like similar other sites, is a reservoir of images and experience that allows a mimetic identification with the object of its memorialization.<sup>2</sup>

It requires imagination to bring home what would otherwise be an unimaginable victimization. Holocaust "memory entrepreneurs" have provided that imagination for a global audience.<sup>3</sup> Engaged in the production of mass culture, beyond individual memoirs and historical studies and also beyond national boundaries, they have made it possible for images of that distant event to be "burned in" and stay, through a mimetic process of recognition and appropriation. As Landsberg has aptly clarified, the Washington Holocaust museum and the enormously popular film *Schindler's List*, both opened in 1993, instill in us "prosthetic memories," "through which we did not actually live but to which we now [...] have an experiential relationship" (2004: 135). The ubiquitous presence of the mass media re-contextualizes this phenomenon and gives it global reach.

Holocaust memories transcend particularities. There was no personal or communal bias in my perception of Emma Freund's suffering (I never knew her, nor am I Jewish), but my immediate reaction was the impulse to do something to stop her suffering, because I felt that it could have been mine. Following Boltanski's distinction (1993), I call this reaction a humanitarian response to a distant suffering, based on the shared humanity of the victim and

---

<sup>1</sup> "There is nothing in this world as invisible as a monument...They are no doubt erected to be seen, indeed, to attract attention. But at the same time they are impregnated with something that repels attention" (Musil 1995: 61).

<sup>2</sup> Like other museums that make use of new technologies, memorial museums are also becoming interactive and nowhere this transformation is more apparent than in the International Coalition of Historic Site Museums of Conscience. This is a network of historic site museums in many different parts of the world, "holding in common – one reads in the coalition's mission statement - the belief that it is the obligation of historic sites to assist the public in drawing connections between the history of our site and its contemporary implications. We view stimulating dialogue on pressing social issues and promoting humanitarian and democratic values as a primary function." <http://www.sitesofconscience.org/eng/>

<sup>3</sup> I borrow, here and elsewhere (Di Lellio and Schwandner-Sievers 2006), the notion of "memory entrepreneurs" from Elizabeth Jelin to indicate those actors who struggle over memories and "seek social recognition and political legitimacy of one (their own) interpretation or narrative of the past" (2003:33-34). I am referring here to a range of actors that includes, as it is clarified later in the paper, public intellectuals, media, politicians, and as well as entertainers who are often based in the United States but have a global reach.

the observer. It is rarer than the communal type of response, elicited by sharing a particular identity. It produces empathy with the victims of unspeakable crimes and invites intervention on behalf of strangers.<sup>4</sup>

The transformation of Holocaust memory from memory bound to history, group or national identity, into global collective memory, as Levy and Sznajder have argued (2002; 2006a), is a complex sociological phenomenon. The issue here is not how universal this collective memory has become (or how resistant to denials it can be). The memory of the 9/11 tragedy, for example, which has reached more directly all corners of the world, is “group specific.” Just to stay in New York, the fierce debate around the building of an International Freedom Center at Ground Zero (the World Trade Center site) had acutely shown how this globally televised – and remembered – tragedy elicits mainly communal responses.<sup>5</sup> The Holocaust has expanded instead from its historical experience to a cogent category of humanitarianism that transcends national interest, partisanship, and identity politics. It is a de-contextualized event, the memory of which is used to dramatize any form of injustice anywhere. It potentially triggers an interventionist cosmopolitan response to a distant suffering (Levy and Sznajder 2006b).

The Holocaust has long been constructed as the moral reference for the expansion of humanitarian law after World War II, with the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide. That Act was the “first liberation of crimes against humanity from any temporal connection with a declared war” (Robertson, 1999: 244). With its call for remembering in order not to repeat, the Holocaust memory provides also the basis for a global moral responsibility and activism, more recently becoming the mobilizing factor or the good cause for humanitarian intervention as a just war (Independent International Commission on Kosovo 2000; International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty 2001; Walzer 1977). It has thus erupted into global politics, posing a reconfiguration of national sovereignty.

As current times produce massacre, ethnic cleansing, and genocide to an unprecedented scale, the above sketched cosmopolitan memory has provided a template for interpreting the present. But how? The reach of this global collective memory is due precisely to the fact that the genocide template simplifies conflicts, by representing them as struggles between good-victims and evil-perpetrators. From the point of view of the spectator, a universal identification with victims is easier, as all other characteristics – and rights – of these latter are bracketed away. But as the victim trope has become a central feature of our time, as Bartov argues, it is also “a dangerous prism through which to view the world” (1998: 811). The discourse of victimhood is not just the basis for transnational solidarity. It is also played in particular contexts, as “competing memories and representations of violence have embedded themselves in the historical consciousness and politics of identity” of national and ethnic groups (ibid.: 812).

---

<sup>4</sup> I am not dealing here with the complex manifestations of this impulse, which is based on a mostly visual experience and include also indifference to suffering. This is clearly and beautifully analyzed by Orwin (1996) and Sontag (2007).

<sup>5</sup> Representatives of the families of the victims strongly objected to the presence of ACLU head Anthony Romero, Human Rights First's Michael Posner, and Columbia professor Eric Foner in the organizing committee for the Center. These scholars and activists, all advocates for the respect of human right and the rule of law in the case of terrorism detainees held by the United States at Guantanamo, were seen as promoters of a political agenda that would not honor the dead.

The political implications for humanitarian intervention of such powerful, but elusive nature of global memory, deserve careful examination. I propose to take the Kosovo war as a global morality play, to quote Levy and Sznajder (2006a: 165-179), where a multiple use of the cosmopolitan memory of the Holocaust, as it is appropriated by different groups, structured their interpretation of the event and the event itself.

The Kosovo war between the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA, the Albanian guerrilla fighting for independence) and the Serbian government developed in earnest in 1998.<sup>6</sup> On the international scene, it played as an echo of the Bosnian tragedy, a connection openly evoked by UN officials and widely broadcast by the world media.<sup>7</sup> Tales and images of civilian massacres recalled the carnages that the Nazis justified as reprisals against *banditen*.<sup>8</sup> They created the space where NATO foreign ministers negotiated their policies, against the background of ‘public outrage’ at home, which at the end gave the necessary support to the 1999 intervention.

By the mid-1990s Bosnia had already turned into a shameful memory of genocide and appeasement. Another painful reminder of inaction was Rwanda, but apparently not with the same impact. Great Powers had deliberately neglected the Yugoslav war until the symbolism of the Holocaust stirred up interest. This happened most notably in 1992, when war correspondents uncovered Serbian-held concentration camps in Bosnia, and the world media published images of emaciated inmates behind barbed wire. US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright writes in her memoir of how those pictures reminded her of “other faces, photographed on their way to other unfamiliar hard to spell places, such as Auschwitz, Treblinka, Dachau” (2003: 177). Albright, who was haunted by the specter of European appeasement politics in the wake of WWII, led the diplomatic offensive against Belgrade and built support for NATO intervention.<sup>9</sup>

Albright was not the only one to make this connection. References to World War II and the Holocaust punctuated the speeches of major protagonists on the international scene, among others US President Bill Clinton, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, German Foreign Minister Joschka Fisher and Defense Minister Rudolph Sharping.<sup>10</sup> Elie Wiesel, the Nobel Peace Prize and Auschwitz survivor, threw all his moral authority in support of intervention in Yugoslavia, both in public speeches and private lobbying of the US administration.<sup>11</sup> Officials of the UN special tribunal set up in The Hague to prosecute Yugoslav war criminals in 1993 felt they were replaying Nuremberg. To explain why a tribunal had been established for

---

<sup>6</sup> I am not entering into the complexity of “new wars” here (Kaldor 1999). My argument is that they are fully understood once they are de-politicized through the prism of the Holocaust.

<sup>7</sup> Kris Janowski, spokesperson for the UN refugee agency UNHCR was quoted by the news agency Associated Press as saying “this is ultimately a very very scary scenario. We have seen it in Bosnia,” in “Despite Growing Condemnation, Serb Police Press Kosovo Crackdown” 6 March 1998.

<sup>8</sup> Like “terrorists,” *banditen* is an all-purpose, blanket definition that refers to a broad range of non-state militant actors opposed to the established order and demands all out wars.

<sup>9</sup> During a meeting of the Contact Group (the countries in constant consultation on Balkan security, including the US, UK, France, Italy, Germany and Russia), when her advisor Jamie Rubin suggested that she compromised with the softer Russian position, Albright retorted, “Jamie, do you think we’re in Munich?” (2003: 382).

<sup>10</sup> See “Germany Liberates Auschwitz in Kosovo,” pp. 166-170 in Levy and Sznajder (2006a).

<sup>11</sup> During his inaugural speech at the opening of the DC Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1993, Wiesel is reported to have said, turning to President Clinton: “I have been in the former Yugoslavia last fall. I cannot sleep since what I have seen. As a Jew I am saying that. We must do something to stop the bloodshed in that country”, quoted in John Darnton, “Does the World Still Recognize a Holocaust?” *The New York Times*, April 25, 1993. Wiesel also argued privately with State Department officials that Bosnian camps and mass murder required intervention, as reported in Powers (2002: 297) and Williams and Scharf (2002: 67)

Yugoslavia but not Cambodia, for example, the first Chief Prosecutor Judge Richard Goldstone listed the following: the Serbian ethnic cleansing recalled “memories of the Holocaust;” images of Bosnia “were reminiscent of World War II concentration camps;” and “political abhorrent events were taking place in Europe that the European powers had assumed could never happened again” (2000: 78-79) His successor Louise Arbour, who during the 1999 NATO bombing campaign delivered the indictment against Milosevic for genocide and crimes against humanity, remarked: “collectively we are linked to Nuremberg. We mention its name every single day” (Hagan, 2003: 18).

To consolidate this “western narrative” of the Kosovo crisis, humanitarian intervention paradoxically brought about further images of genocide. When the bombing campaign started and the country was sealed to foreign observers, Serbian troops escalated their violence against Albanian civilians. Reports of troops separating genders and engaging in summary executions of men immediately evoked the logic and dynamic of World War II’s total attack on civilians, resetting the European clock back 50 years (Paggi 1999: XXXVIII-LX). Then there were the mass expulsions. The April 12 1999 cover of *Times* was the close-up of a woman in traditional rural garb nursing her baby, at the head of a long line of desperate refugees, the ultimate symbol of innocent victimhood.<sup>12</sup> The hundreds of thousands of Albanians who were forced out of their homes and pushed across the borders of Albanian, Montenegro and Macedonia evoked a classic exodus on TV screens across the world. The Albanians had become, very graphically, “Biblical people.”

Albanians were never in doubt of being targeted for extermination by Belgrade since the Serbian Kingdom annexation of Kosovo in 1912 and in all the years since. This war was no different. In the words of writer and analyst Mehmet Kraja, “the victims were the result of genocide and genocide was the product of [Serbia’s] national plan” (2003: 180). But only in 1999 Albanians felt they had been turned into Jews suffering in the Holocaust. Thousands, on rainy nights of April 1999, were ordered out of their homes in the capital Prishtina and led to the train station, where they were left waiting for hours on an overcrowded platform. As many recall, the miserable scene of people trying to hop on the train without knowing where it would take them; the cry of those who in the melee had gotten separated from their families; and the sudden feeling of utter powerlessness, all combined into flashing memories of old films on deportation.<sup>13</sup>

Exactly ten years earlier, Albanians had been symbolically represented as Jewish victims of the Serbian “Nazi oppressors” by Slovenian intellectuals and politicians. They wore badges with the yellow Star of David and the slogan, “Kosovo, my homeland,” in a demonstration of solidarity with Albanian striking miners (Dragović-Soso 2002: 224; Gordiejew 2006: 386). In speech after speech, Slovenian activists compared the plight of Albanians to that of the Jews in the Holocaust, as Kosovo was being stripped of its autonomous status in the then Republic of Yugoslavia, and Albanians residents of their rights. The same badges were sold in the streets in the first and only mass demonstration of solidarity with Albanians outside Kosovo.

---

<sup>12</sup> The headline on the cover was, tellingly, “Are Ground Troops the Answer?”

<sup>13</sup> This observation is based on conversations of the author with several protagonists. On the second week of the war the magazines *Times*, *Newsweek* and *US News and World Report* published the same picture of a train overflowed with refugees and leaving a platform crowded with more people, a clear visual reference to the Holocaust (Kozol, 2004:10-11).



Serbs' reaction to that comparison and explicit identification of Serbia with Nazi Germany was quick and strong. Only a few hours after the Ljubljana's mass rally, broadcast by state television, crowds started gathering in front of the Federal Parliament in Belgrade. It is estimated that in the course of the day one million people showed up to demonstrate their outrage. The response of the elites was also swift. Claiming a real "Jewish identity" of victimhood for his nation, the President of the Writers' Association of Serbia, poet Matija Bećković, denounced Albanians as "false Jews." The Society of Serbian-Jewish Friendship - a group financed by the government and founded in 1988 by prominent nationalist writers such as Dobrica Ćosić and Ljubomir Tadić, together with some Jewish intellectuals -, wrote: "If there is any comparison with the suffering of the Jewish people, then this can be made only in reference to Serbs, Montenegrins and Progressive Albanians, who are in many ways in a similar situation as Jews under Hitler" (Dragović-Soso *ibid.*: 225).

In the mid 1980s the trope of the Holocaust had become central for Serbian intellectuals and leading Serbian Orthodox Church clergy. Current Foreign Minister Vuk Drasković, a writer, was among the first to establish an identity of shared suffering for Serbs and Jews: they were both killed during World War II "at the hands of the same executioners, were exterminated in the same concentration camps, slaughtered on the same bridges, burned alive in the same caves, and disappeared in the same pits" (Dragović-Soso *ibid.*:107-108). In the same years, the suffering of Serbs under Croatian ruling during World War II in the camps of Jasenovac,<sup>14</sup> took center stage in the religious press (Radić 1998: 147-49), in public debates, the media (de la Brosse 2003: 50-53), and history textbooks (Stojanović 2004). Jasenovac became the Serb Auschwitz.

In the campaign for the establishment of the truth on Serb genocide, a broader front of enemies was identified, including Croatians, Bosnians, and Albanians. Whether Nazi collaborators as Ustasha or members of the Skanderbeg Division,<sup>15</sup> or simply Muslims, they were all portrayed as evil, anti-Semitic, and anti-Serbian. When tension escalated in Kosovo, this distinction of camps played as a moral and political justification in a struggle for self-defense from evil. Albanians were constituted in the media, in public speeches by the clergy and politicians, in academic writings, and in petitions signed by thousands of ordinary people as well as intellectuals, as the perpetrators of a genocide that needed to be stopped (Magaš 1993). Appeasement was expressed, in Serbian political mythology, as hiding "behind the mountain of Golech," like the traitor Vuk Branković in the 1389 battle of Kosovo (Jevtić 1991: 132).<sup>16</sup> And it was not an option.

In order to become a dominant form of self-representation, the analogy of the Holocaust for past and current Serb sufferings had to be tied to the nationalist story-line of martyrdom. This powerful combination proved capable of rehabilitating even controversial figures such as Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović, a venerated early 20<sup>th</sup> century theologian and Serbian Orthodox

---

<sup>14</sup> Serbs, Roma, Jews and the Croatian opposition were liquidated by the Ustasha regime in and around the five detention centers that made up the Jasenovac camps.

<sup>15</sup> The special divisions of Nazi collaborators created in occupied Albania and Kosovo during World War II.

<sup>16</sup> The Kosovo option, or the Kosovo pledge, is the story-line for Serb nationalism since the 19<sup>th</sup> century and it is based on an epic and religious interpretation of the 1389 battle of Kosovo, which pitted local forces led by the Serb Prince Lazar against the Ottoman army of Sultan Murat I. The pledge is for Serbs to fight until death, but not at the cost of losing their soul, and to avenge the defeat by the Ottomans. Vuk Branković is believed to have been a medieval warlord in the Serb camp who never joined the battlefield and thus came to embody the figure of the traitor. Bishop Atanasije Jevtić, one of the most prolific and active Orthodox clergy since the mid 1980s in the internationalization of the Kosovo "genocide" of Serbs indicated to *Interview* on December 9, 1988, that justice must be done on Kosovo and nobody should hide "behind the mountain of Golech."

Church leader canonized in 2003. His short stay in Dachau as “honorary prisoner” was turned into an example of modern martyrdom for Serb victims of the Ustasha, as well as Turks in earlier times. This constructed memory of suffering, which apparently is not substantiated by any evidence, helped sideline other elements such as Velimirović’s stated admiration for Hitler, his anti-Semitism and his association with Nazi collaborators in Serbia (Byford 2004: 28).

The canonization of Velimirović is a paradigmatic instance of how the analogy with the Holocaust has served the purpose to relativize and bracket aspects of the Serb nationalist storyline and project, which includes anti-Semitism and territorial expansionism. It took the 1999 NATO bombing to turn the anger of the same supporters of Serb-Jewish friendship against a perceived Jewish-led international conspiracy, all the while reaffirming the Serb Holocaust (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, 2006).

After the NATO intervention, explicitly undertaken to stop a genocide in progress,<sup>17</sup> the Serb story-line of victimhood and martyrdom paradoxically gained traction on the international scene. By transferring Holocaust imagery to Kosovo via Bosnia, international actors had presumed Albanians to be innocent and passive victims. They had temporarily suspended political judgment on the conflict that was pitting the KLA against Belgrade and overlooked the significance of the small guerilla group fighting for independence. They missed the point that although its tactic was not supported by the population, its demand was universally and deeply shared.

International administrators and observers faced a complex post-war reality in Kosovo, characterized by many elements common to any aftermath of a conflict, apart from the particular politics of the local context. In the vacuum of power and law enforcement that followed the withdrawal of Serb government forces and the entry of NATO troops, violence against the Serb population – whether born of a desire for revenge or sheer profiteering – went largely unchecked. For international actors, including UN officials,<sup>18</sup> the subsequent migration of large numbers of Serbs back to Serbia and the unsafe living conditions of those who stayed behind became the evidence of “reverse ethnic cleansing.” No further thought was given to the political homogenization of the Albanian society produced by the trauma of ten years of apartheid and the brutal war on civilians, two events that had involved a substantial section of the Serb civilian population in Kosovo (Dobruna 2006). In the eyes of international actors, the apparent lack of criticism for episodes of reprisal and ethnic intolerance was tantamount to collective complicity. From victims, Albanians had turned into perpetrators.

The enclaves where Serbs lived were quickly dubbed “ghettos,” later “concentration camps,” in the rhetorical escalation offered by the Commander of the NATO troops, General Fabio

---

<sup>17</sup> I am not arguing that the impulse to stop the genocide was the only reason for NATO to go to war with Serbia, but for the purposes of this paper I will focus principally on it. This is one of the two coherent stories that can be told about the Kosovo war; the other, common to left revisionist treatments of humanitarian intervention, recognizes only power politics as legitimate representation of global politics. I believe that Hoare (2003) does a very good job at unveiling the scholarly and political limits of some of the most popular. More sophisticated analyses in the same vein are better taken at a general level, because their reading of the Kosovo conflict is flagrantly uninformed or distorted (Badiou 2006: 62-72; Žižek 2006: 259-266; Zolo 2000).

<sup>18</sup> See UN Secretary General Kofi Annan’s statement (14 October 1999) in [www.un.org/peace/Kosovo/news/99/pct99\\_2.htm](http://www.un.org/peace/Kosovo/news/99/pct99_2.htm) and a KFOR spokesperson’s press release of 1 November 1999 in [www.nato.int/kosovo/press.1999/k991101a.htm](http://www.nato.int/kosovo/press.1999/k991101a.htm)

Mini.<sup>19</sup> International actors' interpretation of ethnic relations in Kosovo came into alignment with Serbs' self-identification with the Jews in the Holocaust. They read the March 2004 riots, an explosion of rage turned into violence against the United Nations and Serb enclaves, as "pogroms." In the attempt to prosecute the public service television RTK for an emotional and unprofessional live coverage of the events that was prejudged as inciting ethnic violence, the OSCE office of the Temporary Media Commissioner (TMC) reached the extraordinary conclusion that this media had behaved like Rwanda's *Radio Mille Collines* and the Nazi publication *Der Stürmer*.<sup>20</sup>

The metaphor of a Serb genocide executed (the post-war migration), but also waiting to happen (the threatened mass exodus once independence from Serbia is declared), still lingers among major powers' foreign offices as well as international organizations. The consequence of this reductionist framework based on a de-contextualized Holocaust has maintained the suppression of any analytical or political assessment of the Kosovo conflict. The Albanian population demanded and demands self-determination, consistently with the legal and political framework of decolonization, while Serbia pursued and pursues territorial aspirations, by rejecting any cooperation with a Kosovo government and thus obstructing minority integration. But international actors do not engage in this dynamic, nor see the local society as having independent agency, because they have constituted it mainly as an object of protection, teaching and regulation.

Framed in this manner, the Kosovo conflict has no history and no politics. Yesterday's perpetrators and victims, who have exchanged roles, have been given new names. They are Orthodox Serbs and Muslim Albanians. In the highly charged post-9/11 context, these are not neutral categories, and are deeply misleading because they essentialize the two groups in terms of their religious makeup. The result of this categorization is that it helps structure Serbs' victimization. It thus give an advantage to Serb nationalist circles that support a dangerous identification of ethnos, religion and territory. It strengthens the same coalition that started the Kosovo crisis in the 1990s, including radical politicians and intellectuals, the Orthodox Church leadership, and state-controlled media.

Albanians, for whom religion has little or no relevance in the public sphere, are completely misrepresented as "Muslim." In the current revival of an apparently outdated distinction between a civilized Christian Europe and a backward violent Islam, they look like an alien body that can possibly be tamed, but never treated as equal. The danger that this marginalization will also cause further homogenization of a subaltern local society is apparent in the lack of any public debate.

The compromise solution for the future status of Kosovo formulated by UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari (2007) is deeply indebted to the above framework of analysis. It presupposes a society divided into ethno-religious communities, which the Kosovo Constitution recognizes as holders of specific rights against an elusive, but apparently threatening majority.

---

<sup>19</sup> General Mini used this language while talking with Serbian media and the immediate translation of his statements in the Albanian media spurred a heated debate. See UNMIK online, local press report of April 1, 2003 <http://www.unmikonline.org/press/2003/mon/Apr/lmm%20010403.htm>

<sup>20</sup> The TMC drafted a legal brief making this argument, but never made it public after RTK agreed to pay 100,000 Euro in journalists' training and accept international supervision. Julius Streicher, editor of *Der Stürmer*, was sentenced to death in Nuremberg for his relentless anti-Semitic propaganda in the wake of the Holocaust. Editors and founders of *Radio Mille Collines* Ferdinand Nahimana, Hassan Ngeze, and Jean-Bosco Barayagwiza are serving life sentences for having orchestrated and led the genocide of Tutsi after the first judgment of the International Crime Tribunal for Rwanda.



If the intention of the Ahtisaari Settlement is to ensure that Kosovo be respectful and protective of minorities, this is a recipe for failure, because it builds walls of separation. Literally. Against the will of local government, but with the United Nations authorization, the Serbian Orthodox Patriarchate in Peja/Peć is currently erecting a high wall of protection from “Albanian Muslims.” Where there should be open communication and dialogue, there will be mutual suspicion and resentment.

More perniciously, the Ahtisaari Settlement, which gives a nod to Kosovo independence, continues to keep the international trusteeship alive, a form of government that only a few years ago seemed to have been shelved.<sup>21</sup> It proposes the transfer of the protectorate from the United Nations to the European Union, a carry-over from Bosnia. The plan is to keep Albanians, the new “majority perpetrators,” under an indefinite international supervision. Kosovo elected officials will continue to be trainees required to learn the rule of law, never mind that their UN and EU wardens have perfected the art of unaccountability. This hybrid type of sovereignty is a further normalization of the Schmittian “state of exception” (Agamben 2003): set up to “civilize” a quarantined “majority perpetrators” (Mamdani, 2007), it places global sovereignty in a local territorial context. But because it conflates emergency politics with the juridical-constitutional order, it produces an authoritarian and anti-political system of government that fails both to import democratic governance and bring stability.<sup>22</sup>

The same template for progressive action just analyzed in the case of Kosovo has been expanded outside Western boundaries by the experience of Rwanda, the memory of which is a mobilizing factor in the growing global campaign to “Save Darfur.” In an excellent criticism of the use of genocide memory to promote humanitarian intervention, Mamdani warns of the danger of simplifying the Darfur’s conflict by loosely categorizing the parties involved as “Arab” and “African.” He concludes that intervention might present challenges analogous to the Iraq occupation, despite Darfur’s apparent moral clarity versus the latter’s messy politics.<sup>23</sup> I tried to show here that there is no need to resort to the Iraqi case, which is certainly not an apt example of humanitarian intervention. Kosovo is a better cautionary tale to test the elusiveness and potential perils of the genocide model for interpreting the world.

---

<sup>21</sup> Tellingly, the UN, an organization that cannot pass any reform, has recently unanimously abolished the Council on Trusteeship.

<sup>22</sup> For a few empirical studies on this phenomenon see Di Lellio (2005); ESI (2002); and the Kosovo Ombudsperson Annual Report (2003-2004: 15).

<sup>23</sup> Interestingly, it was the genocide alert of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in 2004 that first called attention to Darfur. The same year, a group of students at Swarthmore College, energized by the call to never repeat a spectator’s acquiescence to genocide, started the Genocide Intervention Network, with the invitation to “have a hand in stopping genocide.” This is how the network defines the Darfur’s conflict: “Racially mixed tribes of settled peasants, who identify as African, and nomadic herders, who identify as Arabs. “Militia of Arab nomadic tribes in the region against the innocent civilians of Darfur” enlisted by the government.” [www.genocideintervention.net/educate/darfurinfo/](http://www.genocideintervention.net/educate/darfurinfo/)



## Bibliography

Agamben, Giorgio. 2003. *Stato di Eccezione*. Torino: Bollari Boringhieri [*States of Exception*. Chicago and London: Chicago University Press. 2005]

Albright, Madeleine. (with Bill Woodward). 2003. *Madam Secretary: a Memoir*. New York: Miramax Books.

Badiou, Alain. 2006. "On the War Against Serbia: Who Strikes Whom in the World Today?" in *Polemics*. London: Verso, 62-72.

Bartov, Omer. 1998. "Defining Enemies, Making Victims: Germans, Jews and the Holocaust." *The American Historical Review*. 103 (3) June, 771-816

Boltanski, Luc. 1993. *La Souffrance a Distance: Morale Humanitaire, Medias, et Politique*. Paris: Metailie.

Byford, J.T. (2004). "From 'Traitor' to 'Saint': Serbian Bishop Nikolaj Velimirovic in Public Memory." *Analysis of Current Trends in Antisemitism series (ACTA)*, No.22. Jerusalem, Hebrew University: The Sassoon International Centre for the Study of Antisemitism.

De la Brosse, Renaud. 2003. *Political Propaganda and the Plan to Create "A State for all Serbs."* *Consequences of Using Media for Ultra-Nationalist Ends*. ICTY Expert Report. February 4.

Di Lellio, Anna. 2005. "Empire Lite as a Swamp." *Transitions*. XLV (1): 63-80.

Di Lellio, Anna and Schwandner-Sievers Stephanie. 2006. "The Legendary Commander: the Construction of an Albanian Master-Narrative in Post-War Kosovo," *Nations and Nationalism*. 12 (3): 513-529

Dobruna, Vjosa. 2006, "Were Albanians Responsible for Reverse Ethnic Cleansing after the War?" in Di Lellio, Anna (ed). *The Case for Kosova. Passage to Independence*. London: Anthem Press, 135-144.

Dragović-Soso, Jasna. 2003. "*Saviours of the Nation.*" *Serbia's Intellectuals Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism*. Montreal & Kingston- Ithaca: McGill Queen's.

European Stability Initiative. 2002. *The Ottoman Dilemma. Power and Property Relations Under the United States Mission in Kosovo*. Pristina.  
[www.esiweb.org/pdf/esi\\_document\\_id\\_35.pdf](http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/esi_document_id_35.pdf)

Goldstone, Richard. 2000. *For Humanity. Reflections of a War Crimes Investigator*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Gordiejew, P.B. 2006. "Playing with Jews in the Fields of Nations: Symbolic Contents in the Former Yugoslavia," *Social Identities*. 12 (3) May: 377-400.

Hagan, John. 2003. *Justice in the Balkans. Prosecuting War Crimes in the Hague Tribunals*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia. 2006. *Anti-Semitism in Serbia*. Belgrade. November.

Hoare, Marko Attila. 2003. "Nothing is Left," *Bosnia Report*, No 36, October-November [http://www.bosnia.org.uk/bosrep/report\\_format.cfm?articleid=1041&reportid=162](http://www.bosnia.org.uk/bosrep/report_format.cfm?articleid=1041&reportid=162)

Independent International Commission on Kosovo. 2000. *Kosovo Report. Conflict. International Response. Lessons Learned*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty. 2001. *The Responsibility to Protect*. <http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/>

Jelin, Elizabeth. 2003. *State Repression and the Struggles for Memory*., New York: Social Science Research Council.

Jevtić, Atanasije. 1991. *Dossier Kosovo*. Paris: L'Age d'Homme.

Kaldor, Mary. 1999. *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*. London: Polity Press.

Kraja, Mehmet. 2003. *Mirupafshim Në Një Luftë Tjetër*. Prishtinë: Rozafa.

Kozol, Wendy. 2004. "Domesticating NATO's War in Kosovo/a: (In)Visible Bodies and the Dilemma of Photojournalism," *Meridians: Feminism, Race. Transnationalism*. 4 (2): 1-38

Landsberg. Alison. 2004. *Prosthetic Memory. The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Levy, Daniel and Sznajder, Natan. 2006a. *The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age*. Temple University Press.

-----, 2006b. "Sovereignty Transformed: A Sociology of Human Rights." *The British Journal of Sociology*. 57 (4): 657-676.

-----2002. "Memory Unbound. The Holocaust and the Formation of Cosmopolitan Memory." *European Journal of Social Theory*. 5 (1): 87-106.

Magaš, Branka. 1993. *The Destruction of Yugoslavia. Tracking the Break-Up 1980-92*. London: Verso.

Mamdani, Mahmood. 2007. "The Politics of Naming: Genocide, Civil Wars, Insurgency." *London Review of Books*. 8 March: 5-8

Musil, Robert. 1995. "Monuments," in *Posthumous Papers of a Living Author*, trans. Peter Wortsman. London and New York: Penguin.

Ombudsperson Institution in Kosovo. 2003-2004. *Fourth Annual Report*. Pristina: Iliri.

Orwin, Clifford. 2006. "Humanitarian Military Intervention : Wars for the End of History?" *Social Philosophy and Policy Foundation*. Winter: 196-217

- Paggi, Leonardo (ed). 1999. *Le Memorie della Repubblica*. Firenze: La Nuova Italia.
- Powers, Samantha. 2002. *A Problem from Hell. America and the Age of Genocide*. New York: Basic Books.
- Radić, Radmila. 1998. “L’ Église et la ‘Question Serbe’,” in Nebojša Popov, *Radiographie d’un Nationalisme. Les Racines Serbes du Conflit Yugoslave*, Les Éditions de L’Atelier/Éditions Ouvrières, 137-177
- Robertson, Geoffrey. 1999. *Crimes Against Humanity. The Struggle for Global Justice*, London: Penguin.
- Sontag, Susan. 2003. *Regarding the Pain of Others*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Stojanović, Dubravka. 2004. “The Construction of Historical Consciousness. The Case of Serbian History Textbooks,” in Todorova Maria (ed). *Balkan Identities. Nation and Memory*. London: Hurst, 327-338.
- United Nations Security Council. 2007. *Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement*. S/20007/168/Add.1
- Walzer, Michael. 1977. *Just and Unjust Wars: a Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*. New York: Basic Books.
- Williams, Paul and Scharf, Michael P. 2002. *Peace with Justice? War Crimes and Accountability in the Former Yugoslavia*. London, Boulder, New York and Oxford: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Žižek, Slavoj. 2006. “Against the Double Blackmail” in *The Universal Exception*. London and New York: Continuum, 259-266.
- Zolo, Danilo. 2000. *Chi Dice Umanita’. Guerra, Diritto e Ordine Globale*. Torino: Einaudi.