

All The Missing Souls: A Personal History of the War Crimes Tribunal  
by David Scheffer.

Princeton University Press, 2012.

As David Scheffer's book, written more in sorrow than in anger, bears witness, the assertion of 'never again' after the Nazi genocide has been repeatedly betrayed in the nearly seventy years that have passed since those heinous crimes were uncovered.

Scheffer was instrumental, at the behest of the then US Ambassador to the UN, Madeleine Albright, for investigating and trying to bring to justice the perpetrators of war crimes committed during the terrible Balkan Wars of the 1990s by all sides; this led to the creation of similar tribunals to judge the genocides in Cambodia and Rwanda, and atrocities committed in Sierra Leone. In the end this led to the creation of the International Criminal Court, a bench that was ironically viewed by the USA with a great deal less than enthusiasm.

In the course of fourteen chapters divided into four sections, David Scheffer gives an insider's account and perspective not only on the political and judicial machinations but also of the ways in which terrible events in other countries impact, or fail to impact on the corridors of power.

His contempt for many of those making political judgements entirely separate from the moral demand for justice is clear and entirely reasonable given the circumstances, and he reserves his strongest bile for the administration of George W Bush who, in amoral pursuit of his chosen enemies, 'went over to the dark side of torture'.

This is an important book, its final chapter being, perhaps, the most important, because it points a way forward to new categories of crimes against humanity, such as atrocity crime, which need to be on the statute book if the ICC is to have even sharper teeth.

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