

## **FROM RATKO MLADIC TO ANDREAS BREIVIK: EUROPE AND ITS MINORITIES**

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Several seemingly disconnected events occurred recently that were uniquely timed. At the Hague, the Netherlands, General Ratko Mladic, the Serb Army Chief of Staff in the Yugoslavian civil war that broke out in the early 1990s, is facing trial for atrocities allegedly committed under his command. In Oslo, Norway, Andreas Breivik was found guilty and sentenced to many years in prison for the massacre he committed in Oslo in July 2011. Academic and media debates, as well as the events mentioned here, raise an important question. Without expressing a pro - or - anti - immigrants perspective, it is worth asking if there is a chance that Europe will behave differently with its minorities today and in the future, different than the way with which it acted in relation to minorities throughout history, including modern times.

It is not necessary to be part of the Jewish minority during the Holocaust to realize that Europe acts aggressively against those who are different; the 1990s and the 2000s supply other examples. The July 1995 massacre of Srebrenica during the war in Bosnia, to which Mladic is allegedly connected, included the murder of 8000 men. The latest carnage, Breivik's, is similarly shocking: 70 young Norwegians were murdered not because they were part of a minority, but because they favored minority rights, i.e. the rights of immigrants in their country.

In Srebrenica the devastation took a rather unique form – the massacre of the men in an almost biblical style ("thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword", **Deuteronomy**, 20-13), leading to the feminization of the population in the city as it was left without its men. The war in Bosnia can also be used to understand another form of feminization, namely: the systematic rape of thousands of women, thus implying that their men were weak. Culturally men are supposed to protect women with all their power. In failing to do so, and thus demonstrating their weakness, these men reveal a feminine lack of physical strength. There is also a clear aspect of genocide connected to raped women – the removal of these women as potential future mothers with whom their community's men will willingly have children. Traditionally, women who have been raped are forbidden to men and it is prohibited to parent children with them in many communities. This further impacts the demography and reduces the community's overall population. The rapists from the civil war in Yugoslavia who had been caught and prosecuted were also charged with genocide.

The recent European civil conflicts demonstrate some aspects from the Continent's modern history. The European trauma from the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), a Spanish internal war that spilled over to Europe and brought about the Second World War (the civil war nicknamed the "dress rehearsal for World War II"), led the Europeans to respond minimally to the civil war in Yugoslavia. It was enough that the war did not go beyond that state's borders; it enabled Europe to avoid intervening massively there. A Dutch Army battalion that was supposed to ensure the safety of the civil population in Srebrenica chose not to intervene in the city. Rumor has it that the battalion followed the guidelines of a workers' committee [i.e. a sort of a trade union] that was apparently established in the Dutch Army. Complaints by American NATO commanders also said that the decision not to intervene in the city was decided by democratic vote [!] of both soldiers and officers. If this is true then we have before us an example of new codes for the behavior of a military or security unit. The only other known example of a similar democratic vote was in September 1972, during the Olympic Games. German police snipers decided by democratic vote not to shoot at the Palestinians who kidnapped and later murdered the Israeli athletes to the Games.

In an almost "traditional" maneuver, the civil war in Yugoslavia finally ended only when the U.S. intervened. It was the bombing by the U.S. Air Force of Belgrade in the summer of 1995 that ended the civil war there. The term "traditional" is truly appropriate here, because it is similar to the two World Wars: in both it was American intervention that saved Europe from its inability (or unwillingness) to end vicious conflicts taking place on the Continent.