

# America's "Cultural Matrix" Is Severely Damaged. Political and Academic Corruption, Laxity of Performance, Professional Integrity...

By [Stephen Karganovic](#)

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Swiss philosopher [Henri-Frédéric Amiel's](#) famous description of the spirit of what we call today the Collective West, "le culte de la chose bien faite," sounds sadly hollow nowadays.

Once upon a time, Amiel's words referred to a palpable, vibrant, reality. In countries associated with the civilisation of the West, and as noted by Weber in particular where the Protestant ethic prevailed, doing things right and efficiently used to be a fanatical cult, just as Amiel observed. The beneficial results, especially by comparison to the performance of civilisations and cultures rooted in different principles, were plainly visible and indisputable.

Amiel lived in the nineteenth century. There is a contemporary French philosopher, Emmanuel Todd, who has noted processes that are markedly different. He has the reputation of a prescient analyst and uncanny forecaster. His recently published book, "[The Defeat of the West,](#)" will unsettle many. Its tenor is in sharp contrast to Amiel's self-confident and optimistic view that the West has got the winning combination with its defining characteristic of "doing things right." According to Emmanuel Todd, the West no longer retains its perfectionist edge. Its fundamental task now is merely to avert the impending downfall, if it still can. As Todd cogently argues, the West has not only passed its "active stage," which is reflected in Henri-Frédéric Amiel's cited remark, but also the ensuing civilisation-on-auto-pilot "zombie stage". It now finds itself in the terminal "stage zero," the religious mainsprings whence its civilisation drew its vitality being completely sapped. In the West, [there is no longer a cult of efficiency and perfection capable of nurturing and sustaining a corresponding cultural articulation.](#)

The [implications of such a view, if correct, are monumental.](#)

As encapsulated in Curzio Malaparte's deliberately chosen raw Germanic expression, [that would mean that the once fabled West has gone kaputt](#).

Todd has an enviable track record. In the mid-1970s he published a remarkable and at the time incredible volume, "The Final Fall," where he predicted the collapse of the Soviet Union. This writer's reaction to Todd's arguments when they were put forward 40 years ago was deeply sceptical; they were enticing, yet also seemed unrealistic. To most contemporaries, [the Soviet Union appeared to be an unshakable, enduring reality](#). Todd's meticulous analysis of Soviet demographic data in support of his thesis was impressive, but seemed unconvincing as a cause capable of producing an effect of such magnitude. Few could imagine then that barely a decade later processes would commence that eventually led to precisely the outcome that Todd had predicted.

It would be unforgivably simplistic to attribute the implosion of the Soviet Union mainly to unfavourable demographics. That was a complex operation in which a multitude of factors played a role. But the virtue of the diagnostic investigation conducted 40 years ago by Emmanuel Todd was that he demonstrated how seemingly minor yet tell-tale signs could point to undercurrents and important processes that unjustifiably may have been overlooked.

And indeed, it is in the West now that tell-tale indications of disarray are increasingly emerging, to the consternation of those who have eyes to see and historical perspective to make comparisons. These signs point to a variety of breakdowns, only some of which are purely mechanical. They appear mostly to be cultural in essence, and therein lies the danger. A few recent random examples will serve to make the point.

### **Exhibit A: Political corruption.**

Arizona Republican Senate candidate Kari Lake, who many suspect was cheated out of victory in the race for governor in 2022, [is again the subject of political controversy in her state](#). A few weeks ago, she published the tape recording of a disgraceful bribe offer made to her by the state chairman of her own party. After requesting a confidential tête à tête conversation, that individual visited Lake in her home to inform her that wealthy and powerful "people back East" (in America that is a universally understood metaphor for deep state power centres) were prepared to satisfy Ms. Lake's financial requirements if she would withdraw from the Senate race, presumably [to make way for a controllable Establishment candidate](#). She only had to name her figure. To her credit, [she flatly refused](#).

Readers from "third world" countries will be nonplussed by these revelations. But the matter should be viewed in context. In America political corruption is not unknown, but the brazenness of this particular proposition made in Arizona is a quantum leap into moral turpitude by comparison to previously recorded outrages of a similar nature.

### **Exhibit B: Academic corruption.**

Harvard University President [Claudine Gay was compelled to resign](#) because of multiple plagiarisms discovered in her thin scholarly opus. Harvard was the flagship of the dozen leading Ivy League academic institutions in America. Its reputation for integrity is unimpeachable and sacrosanct. The appointment of the scarcely qualified Ms. Gay, apparently selected for her politically correct external characteristics rather than serious scholarship, was sufficiently problematic. But now her fall from grace, [triggered by the](#)

[embarrassing charge of plagiarism](#), gravely compromises not just Harvard but inescapably the American academe as a whole.

And if that were not enough, [also at Harvard another academic scandal is brewing](#). Credible allegations have been put forward, and are being investigated, that researchers at the Dana-Farber cancer institute affiliated with Harvard Medical School had manipulated images and research data. One of the papers under review was authored by Dana-Farber CEO Laurie Glimcher. [Molecular biologist Sholto David suggested Adobe Photoshop](#) was used to copy and paste images in some of the papers. If correct, it is quite an adolescent way of cobbling together an academic research study.

“We are committed to a culture of accountability and integrity. Therefore, every inquiry is examined fully to ensure the soundness of the scientific literature,” and so on and so forth without missing a single platitude, responded Dana-Farber’s research integrity officer Barrett Rollins in a statement issued after the embarrassing allegations were made public. But big words cannot hide the damage that had been inflicted nor suppress questions about the implications. Merely alleging such academically unbecoming trickery would have been unimaginable a very short time ago.

### **Exhibit C: Mechanical breakdown.**

Aviation does not seem to be fairing much better either. Boeing is an iconic American corporation. It is to industrial manufacturing roughly what Harvard is to higher education. That is a very important fact to remember when assessing the implications of several unprecedented Delta and Alaska Airlines incidents which occurred recently, involving Boeing commercial airplanes on which inadequately secured exit doors had been blown off in-flight. To make matters worse and disturbingly indicative of the quality of workmanship in the new normal, when these incidents occurred the airplanes ([minus the critical plug bolts](#)) were in mint condition, having come off the Boeing assembly lines just weeks before. Providentially, no one was sucked out into the surrounding stratosphere, but there is no guarantee that next time the passengers and crew will be as lucky.

The implications of these failures, [that are only on the surface mechanical](#), may be colossal. They go to the [core of Amiel’s observation about the cult of excellence](#) that once upon a time reigned in the West. The question is: what has happened to it, what explains its disappearance?

Granted, in some parts of the world such examples of sloppiness and misconduct would be commonplace. Most likely they would not be noticed nor would portentous significance be attributed to them. The matter under consideration however is different in an essential respect, and cultural context is the key to understanding why. The trends we have surveyed are emerging in a society, a civilizational realm to be more precise, where within living memory the banner of professional integrity still stood exceptionally high and where laxity in the performance of duty until recently was neither common nor casually tolerated.

The suspicion that a sea change may be under way is therefore neither unwarranted nor is it at all extravagant.

It may be premature based on these random examples, to which many more could of course be added, to draw bold conclusions about an imminent *chute finale*. But a compelling *prima facie* case for decadence can certainly be made. The cultural matrix is severely damaged,

whether or not irreversibly we shall soon see. Previously inconceivable departures from long established cultural canons, in this case of efficiency and professional integrity, are now becoming increasingly common. Their impact is felt from Ivy League academy to manufacturing plants, and presumably encompasses much that lies in between.

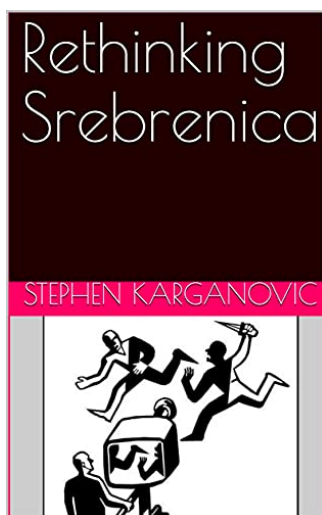
Emmanuel Todd said that his latest book would be his last. He should perhaps reconsider. It seems that there still are plenty of interesting topics to cover, and we are rightfully entitled to expect from him a worthy sequel.

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Featured image [source](#)



## Rethinking Srebrenica

By Stephen Karganovic

Rethinking Srebrenica examines the forensic evidence of the alleged Srebrenica “massacre” possessed by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague. Even though the ICTY created more than 3,500 autopsy reports, many of these autopsy reports were based on bone fragments, which do not represent complete bodies. An examination of the matching femur bones found reveals that there were only about 1,900 complete bodies that were exhumed. Of these, some 1,500 autopsy reports indicated a cause of death consistent with battlefield casualties. Only about 400 autopsy reports indicated execution as a cause of death, as revealed by ligatures and blindfolds. This forensic evidence does not warrant the conclusion of a genocide having taken place.

Karganovic examines the events that took place in Srebrenica in July 1995 in a wholistic manner instead of restricting it to a three-day event. The ten chapters cover:

- 1) Srebrenica: A Critical Overview;
- 2) Demilitarization of the UN Safe Zone of Srebrenica;
- 3) Genocide or Blowback?;
- 4) General Presentation and Interpretation of Srebrenica Forensic Data (Pattern of Injury Breakdown);
- 5) An Analysis of the Srebrenica Forensic Reports Prepared by the ICTY Prosecution Experts;
- 6) An Analysis of Muslim Column Losses Attributable to Minefields, Combat Activity, and Other Causes;
- 7) The Genocide Issue: Was there a Demonstrable Intent to Exterminate All Muslims?;
- 8) ICTY Radio Intercept Evidence;
- 9) The Balance Sheet; and
- 10) Srebrenica: Uses of the Narrative.

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