

Blood on Our Hands: The Most Brutal Crime committed during the past Decade has been the Invasion of Iraq

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The most massive and brutal crime committed on this planet during the past decade has been the invasion and occupation of Iraq. And we're seeking to wash the blood off our hands without so much as an "Out, damn spot!" Nowadays "looking forward, not backward" is supposed to take care of everything, even as the crimes continue. What that takes care of is the leading perpetrators who begin to sense that the coast is clear and creep out of their holes to declare, as did Karl Rove this week, that their biggest mistake was not more aggressively attacking those who pointed out their crimes.

If there's anyone who knows where that path leads, it's probably Benjamin Ferencz, who served as Chief Prosecutor for the Einsatzgruppen Trial at Nuremberg in 1947 and who has just published the forward to a new book by Nicolas Davies called "Blood on Our Hands: The American Invasion and Destruction of Iraq." It's a useful moment in which to be handed this masterful account of what we've done, not just because the liars have been ceded the floor, but also because the crime is ongoing and we will require the proper frame of mind as each deadline for withdrawal from Iraq is violated, and because the Washington Press Corpse has begun to notice the utter irresponsibility of the people we pay to tell us what is happening in the world (not to mention to spy on us, overthrow governments, kidnap, imprison, torture, and assassinate), and because we will not end the endless war in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, and other places unless there is accountability.

This is also the moment in which the International Criminal Court has done something Ferencz had long worked for, and determined that it will prosecute the crime of aggressive war. Even if the ICC cannot go back now and prosecute the most serious such crime of recent years, it can prosecute numerous US war crimes committed during the past decade, and we can address the invasion and occupation of Iraq through courts and legislatures in such a manner as to make its repetition elsewhere more likely to result in criminal charges.

Ferencz has the highest praise for Davies' book, as do I. Davies lays it all out: the planning and commission of the criminal war on Iraq from its earliest stages through to the current phase. If the Iraq occupation lasts another 50 years, it's doubtful a better account of it will be produced than this one. Davies puts the invasion and occupation of Iraq into a framework not only of history but also of law. "Blood on Our Hands" is packed with critical information that never made it into the so-called first draft of history, the U.S. media. This is a thoroughly documented account of the motivations, launching, and the conduct through several stages of the Iraq War, a war that any one of these periods shows to have been,

above all else, a massive crime.

One of the few journalists whose reporting on Iraq I trust entirely is Dahr Jamail, who says “‘Blood on Our Hands’ is a must read. For anyone wanting a full review of U.S. involvement in Iraq from the early 20th century to the present, this book is mandatory. From U.S.-backing of a 22-year-old Saddam Hussein, to the more recent role the U.S. government played in orchestrating death squads in Iraq, Davies nails it.”

Think Dahr and I are exaggerating? Here’s 27-year CIA veteran Ray McGovern: “Nicolas Davies’ well-documented yet fast-moving and highly readable book packages the pieces into the best account so far of the Iraq War — how it happened and why.”

Ray doesn’t tend to overstate things, but just in case you have doubts, listen to Staff Sergeant Camilo Mejia, the author of “Road from Ar Ramadi”: “Davies has dissected the invasion and occupation of Iraq with such precision that even the most knowledgeable reader will be amazed. This book should be read and kept in every Congressional office, in every public library, in every school and in every household. It’s an absolute must-read.”

I could go on with the enthusiastic statements from people who know, but I think I’ve made the point. “Blood on Our Hands” is the best documented, most powerful, most legally actionable account in existence of the worst crime currently being committed in our names, which makes its title fitting indeed. Davies wrote to me about his appreciation for Ferencz’s assistance with the book, writing that Ferencz “completely ignored my lack of formal credentials and took my work on its merits from the moment he read my first article about Iraq. When I think about Ben, I only hope that he can feel some peace and satisfaction for all that he has accomplished in a lifetime of total commitment to peace and justice. He still seems more concerned with fighting this fight to his very last breath, and my reason for dedicating the book to him was partly to try and let him know that there are new generations taking up the torch he carried so heroically.”

Brothers and sisters, take up that torch.

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