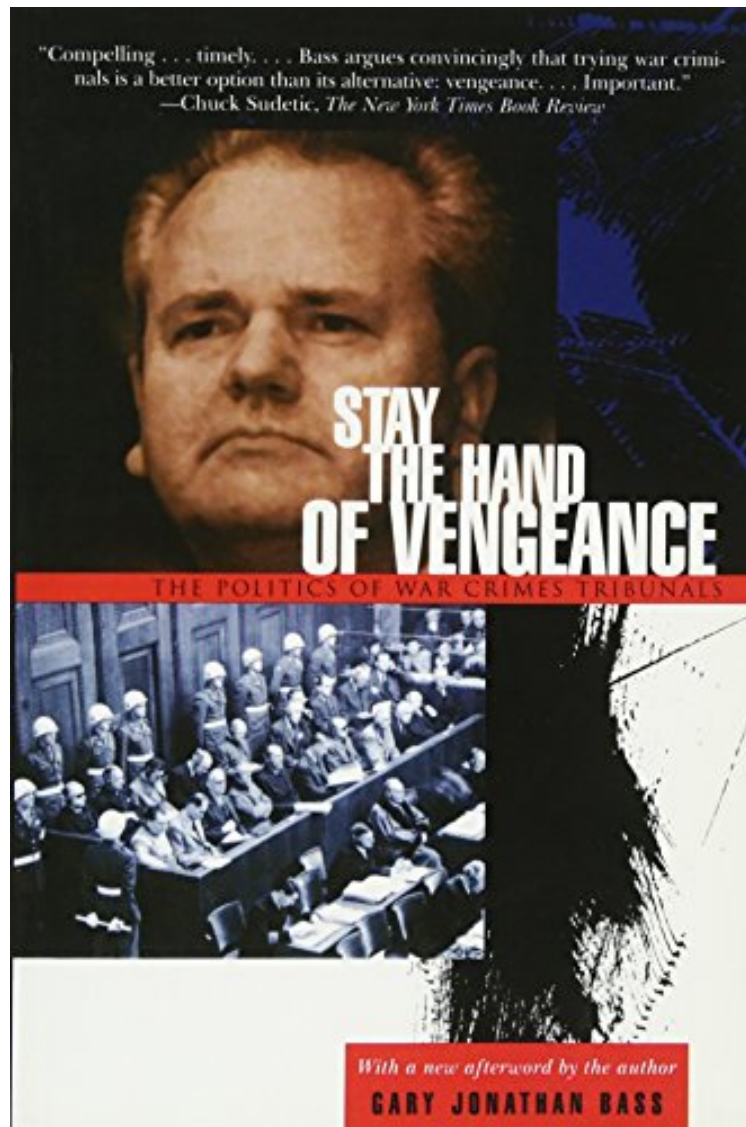


Stay the Hand of Vengeance: The Politics of War Crimes Tribunals

Gary Jonathan Bass

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#356086 in Books Princeton University Press 2002-01-15 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.18 x 1.08 x 6.081, 1.34 #File Name: 0691092788440 pages | File size: 40.Mb

Gary Jonathan Bass : Stay the Hand of Vengeance: The Politics of War Crimes Tribunals before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Stay the Hand of Vengeance: The Politics of War Crimes Tribunals:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The law is greater than revenge By luizhlbarbosa The book is very dense and it is essential that the reader is very aware of the wealth of information. But the great merit of the work is precisely the rich demonstration of why the law should always be chosen instead of violence and revenge. Another

positive peculiarity of the book is to demonstrate the point of view of several states regarding the defendants of war crimes, proving that the solutions are often the "tailoring" of heterogeneous interests of several winners of a war.¹⁰ of 11 people found the following review helpful. well written, fascinating
By John M
This book is thoroughly researched and footnoted and very well written. It culminates in a balanced account of the development of the International War Crimes Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and exposes the role of Western nations in supporting- and in some cases, obstructing the tribunal's work. Bass' thesis is that Western nations value human rights and the rule of law,- but not more than the lives of their own soldiers - thus accounting for the sporadic Western support for War Crimes tribunals. This is provocative book which has many insights into the complexities of international organizations, human rights, and diplomacy.⁰ of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars
By Terry
very good !

International justice has become a crucial part of the ongoing political debates about the future of shattered societies like Bosnia, Kosovo, Rwanda, Cambodia, and Chile. Why do our governments sometimes display such striking idealism in the face of war crimes and atrocities abroad, and at other times cynically abandon the pursuit of international justice altogether? Why today does justice seem so slow to come for war crimes victims in the Balkans? In this book, Gary Bass offers an unprecedented look at the politics behind international war crimes tribunals, combining analysis with investigative reporting and a broad historical perspective. The Nuremberg trials powerfully demonstrated how effective war crimes tribunals can be. But there have been many other important tribunals that have not been as successful, and which have been largely left out of today's debates about international justice. This timely book brings them in, using primary documents to examine the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars, World War I, the Armenian genocide, World War II, and the recent wars in the former Yugoslavia. Bass explains that bringing war criminals to justice can be a military ordeal, a source of endless legal frustration, as well as a diplomatic nightmare. The book takes readers behind the scenes to see vividly how leaders like David Lloyd George, Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt, and Bill Clinton have wrestled with these agonizing moral dilemmas. The book asks how law and international politics interact, and how power can be made to serve the cause of justice. Bass brings new archival research to bear on such events as the prosecution of the Armenian genocide, presenting surprising episodes that add to the historical record. His sections on the former Yugoslavia tell--with important new discoveries--the secret story of the politicking behind the prosecution of war crimes in Bosnia, drawing on interviews with senior White House officials, key diplomats, and chief prosecutors at the war crimes tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. Bass concludes that despite the obstacles, legalistic justice for war criminals is nonetheless worth pursuing. His arguments will interest anyone concerned about human rights and the pursuit of idealism in international politics.

.com Gary Jonathan Bass, of Princeton University, offers a vigorous, liberal endorsement of war-crimes trials at a time when they're coming under close scrutiny in the aftermath of Bosnia, Kosovo, and Rwanda. This book--Bass's first--takes its title from U.S. prosecutor Robert Jackson's opening statement at the Nuremberg trials, following World War II: "That four great nations, flushed with victory and stung with injury, stay the hand of vengeance and voluntarily submit their captive enemies to the judgment of the law is one of the most significant tributes that Power has ever paid to Reason." Nuremberg is, of course, widely regarded as a glowing success; other war-crimes tribunals fall far short of its mark. A strength of this book is Bass's willingness to deal with these realities. His defense of war-crimes trials doesn't rest on head-in-the-sky notions about international justice. He argues, simply, that they're in the interest of democratic, peace-loving nations: "It is not that these complicated and often muddled trials are too noble to question; it is that the other options could be worse." For an advocate, Bass is refreshingly honest: "Do war crimes tribunals work? The only serious answer is: compared to what? No, war crimes trials do not work particularly well. But they have clear potential to work, and to work much better than anything else diplomats have come up with at the end of a war." Apathy and vengeance, which Bass considers the two alternatives to tribunals, are both worth avoiding, he says. The bulk of *Stay the Hand of Vengeance* focuses on how nations dealt with war crimes following the Napoleonic era, World War I, the Armenian genocide, the Holocaust, the crumbling of Yugoslavia, and several other episodes. Bass, who was a journalist before becoming an academic, writes with great clarity and knows how to combine anecdote with argument to make his point. For those interested in the international prosecution of war crimes from both historical and contemporary perspectives, this is required reading. --John J. Miller
From Publishers Weekly
One of the major accomplishments of this impressive scholarly work is to deflate the myth that attempts to stage war crime trials began at the end of WWII. As Bass, a former reporter who now teaches politics and international affairs at Princeton, explains, the Nuremberg trials represent just part of a debate about the legality and effectiveness of endeavors to hold such tribunals, which began at the end of WWI and continues today. Bass judiciously takes a journey through the efforts to hold such trials
Afrom Britain's attempt to try Kaiser Wilhelm II in 1919 to NATO's attempts to try those responsible for atrocities in the Balkans. Despite Bass's obvious support for the trials and what he calls "legalism"
A liberal nations extending domestic laws to the international sphere
Ahe admits that the Nuremberg trials were the only successful venture to try in a court of law those accused of wartime atrocities. And even he says that what took place at Nuremberg, while "extraordinary," was not perfect, just "far better than anything else that has been

done at the end of a major war." Even there, he allows, Britain and the United States were motivated more by a desire for retribution for what was done to their soldiers during the war than by a desire for justice regarding the Holocaust and other atrocities against civilians. The same "selfishness," Bass contends, continues to condemn more recent attempts to bring wartime scofflaws to justice. Balanced and thorough, this book ends on a note of mixed optimism with regard to the future of war crimes tribunals. Do they work? Bass asks. "The only serious answer," he continues, "is: compared to what?" Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Princeton University politics and international affairs professor Bass covered the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia for The Economist ; he has also written for leading U.S. publications. In Stay the Hand of Vengeance , he considers the history of war crimes tribunals from the Napoleonic Wars to Kosovo, placing these efforts in the context of the debate between realists and idealists in international relations, and urging that war crimes tribunals are more than simply "victors' justice." Bass notes that liberal states are most likely to call for legalistic due process for war criminals; his focus here is on the politics of war crimes tribunals, rather than the details of the international law developed to govern such bodies. Why do even liberal states demand war crimes tribunals in some situations and not in others? What political factors explain why some war criminals are vigorously pursued and prosecuted, while others are largely ignored? These are the kinds of questions Bass' history seeks to answer. Mary Carroll Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved