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## Intergenerational Aspects of the Conflict in the Former Yugoslavia

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### INTRODUCTION

The war on the territory of the former Yugoslavia surprised almost the whole world. It began with the 4-day “war operetta” in Slovenia in the summer of 1990, then extended into a heavy war in Croatia, and reached its climax in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We often ask ourselves whether we could have foreseen such development. It is not easy to answer that question. Serbs, who had prepared for that war, did foresee it. Among victims, only Herzegovinians (part of the Croatian population in Bosnia and Herzegovina) anticipated a war and began preparing for it. Historical memory in western Herzegovina probably helped people to expect the worst. So we have come to the possibility of understanding the intergenerational transmission of emotion that might warn us that something awful might happen. In this chapter, I try to consider the remote historical events in these regions and their influence on transmission of emotions from generation to generation, which, at a certain moment, produces an explosion (i.e., a terrible conflict). The interpretations I offer can only be in accordance with my work and education, so they will necessarily be psychoanalytical and group analytical.

The collective psychosis that seized people in the former Yugoslavia was in fact a generalization of paranoid projections onto another nation and religion, with no chance for critical judgment and rational consideration of the facts. Destructive slogans could be heard, such as “Only a dead Chetnik” (pejorative name for Serbs) or “a dead Ustasha” (pejorative name for Croats) “is a good Chetnik or a good Ustasha” or “All Serbs are the same; there are no loyal Serbs,” and so on. Collective paranoia overcame all social strata. Thus, for instance, each member of the “enemy” nation was a suspect with whom it became dangerous to associate or work. Such collective projection has also very real repercussions for people who lose apartments, jobs, and so on. The old prejudices were aroused, and new ones were created, or, as Di Maria (1995), writes,

Nations break down, barriers fall, everybody can freely move from one place to another. We mingle together, change position, “confuse” roles. However, prejudices still rule the world,

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*International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma*, edited by Yael Danieli. Plenum Press, New York, 1998.

often latent, but ready to violently explode in moments of crisis. So, when we talk about barbarians, foreigners, people's moves from one country to another, we are entering the field of prejudice and the crossbridge to racism is an easy one. It is the hatred versus any difference. It is ethnocentrism, and the use of diversities to gain advantages against the others, as it is in any colonization (pp. 2–3).

The whole history of humanity is in fact the history of waging war. Most often, wars were being waged against somebody or something like a neighbor, someone richer, or people of another faith, another ideology. Rare were the wars for improvement of living conditions, for freedom, for justice, and so on. One such imperialistic war in which racism was one of predominant driving forces was World War II, which had an enormous impact on the relations among people in the former Yugoslavia, and which was, I dare say, the strongest link in the chain of intergenerational transmission of emotions. I wrote about this in the book *Psychology and Psychiatry of a War* (Klain, 1992a):

The Second World War was an ideal occasion to realize all the destructive aggressions in Yugoslavia suppressed from the moment that the new state was born. Paranoid projections prevailed with the help of external groups, i.e., the warring European states. The destructive–cannibalistic needs of different ethnic groups dressed up as projections (revenge) were realized during the war. What happened in that war was something that is latent in us at all times and that, under normal conditions, only psychotic patients realize: as Freud warned us, the very thin layer of human culture and civilization broke and groups clashed like primal hordes. The group superego manifested itself only within the framework of its aggressive and destructive component. The libidinous component of the loving superego was deeply suppressed. In Bion's theory, only the fighting situation of the group was realized. The end result of such group developments was the destruction of human life and of family groups. The most important consequence is the memory of scenes of separation in the minds of the surviving members of these groups: the killing of their parents before their eyes, forced separation of mothers and their children in concentration camps, etc. Such frustrations influence the group memory of the aggression perpetrated by members of the other nation. The transmission of wartime memories also takes place in groups, leading to a transgenerational remembrance of injury, murder and destruction laid at the door of the enemy nation. All this is crucially important for an understanding of the current ethnic and other confrontations among the different groups in Yugoslavia (pp. 77–78).

## HISTORICAL ASPECTS

In his book *The Evil of the Great Spleen: History and Non-History of Croats, Montenegrins, Muslims, and Serbs* (1996), Ivan Rendić-Miočević, a professor of history at the Faculty of Philosophy in Zadar, who had studied the distant history of the peoples of Illyricum, connects the remote past of the peoples who lived in these region with present-day events. One of his fundamental theses is that the patriarchal society developed in these regions has not changed throughout their history. Rendić-Miočević writes, "If we can say that this society, usually called patriarchal, has not changed for centuries, or has changed very little, then we must conclude that, in fact, it has no history" (p. 53). V. Dvorniković (1939) emphasized this problem long ago:

Yugoslavs, like other Slavs, were non-historical people of space for a long time, and on entering the history—when they came to the present-day south—historical fate and nature of their new habitation made them turn back into non-historical people of the space. We could even say that the life destiny of Yugoslavs as a whole consisted in permanent struggle for that transformation from people of space into people of time. And this struggle is still go-

ing on. The Yugoslavs are still struggling with the space, the geographic dominant of their lives. They have not surmounted this dominant, although they have reached the crucial point towards political synthesis and against geographical spacial forces which have not favoured this synthesis (p. 114).

Rendić-Miočević (1996) includes within the traditional patriarchal territory Montenegro, mountain regions of Serbia and Bosnia, Herzegovina, Dalmatian hinterland, Lika, and Macedonia. This is very important, since in these regions live Serbs, mostly Bosnian and Croatian Serbs, Croats, and, in smaller part, Muslims. These tribes that lead patriarchal lives are called Dinaric by Dvorniković. According to him, a patriarchal man hates work, for work is the death of heroism. This will remind the reader of the Serbian President Milošević's saying, at the beginning of the present-day Serbian aggression: "We don't know how to work, but we know how to fight" (speech given at the meeting of the Serbian Assembly in 1990). Dvorniković also emphasizes morality and sanctity of revenge: "A patriarchal man can not forgive because he equates forgiveness with self-defeat. In this ethical dilemma, he always remains a fighter, a Balkan, and not a Christian soul. The ethos of fighting and solidarity of a patriarchal person has two poles: On one side, undoubted virtues developed through ages of family life, but on the other side, brutality and robbery in their worst forms" (p. 798). However, not everything is so bleak, as can be seen in the following citation of Ivan Rendić-Miočević (1996): "Besides tribal society, there are other models like the Mediterranean one and the cooperative one in Croatian Zagorje. In the Serbs, besides the "Dinaric" model, there is also a "Moravic" one, tending to compromise and rationalization" (p. 125).

Dubrovnik is an example of an ambivalent relationship between the hinterland and the coastland. Historical sources mention the attacks from eastern Herzegovina (Serbian territory) in the second half of the 15th century and the first half of the 16th century, when people in Konavle and Dubrovnik were robbed and killed. In 1896, when Dubrovnik was under French control, Russians attacked the French. The Russians were supported by Montenegrins who robbed, killed, and set fires. They impaled the head of the French commander and showed it to the French soldiers. The French ambassador in Dubrovnik, the commander of the Russian army, and the writer Vojnović described these atrocities, wondering how such a thing could happen in civilized Europe. The year 1991 witnessed very similar pictures when Konavle and Dubrovnik were attacked barbariously by these same Montenegrins and Serbs from eastern Herzegovina, and when there were also appeals to the world. The reaction was the same as in 1806: none. According to my own experiences from World War II and the present-day war against Croatia and Bosnia, and Herzegovina, a more primitive population exhibits more hatred and envy than better-educated and often richer populations. After World War II, the communist rulers, most of whom were uneducated and came from poor regions, confiscated the property of rich people in towns and arrested them. Unfortunately, there are similar examples today. One can see constant conflicts and confrontations among people from certain regions (e.g., Dalmatia, Zagorje, Herzegovina, continental Croatia, etc.). This is an important element that influences the aggressive and destructive behavior of individual persons and groups, and is transmitted transgenerationally.

## BIRTH AND DEATH OF YUGOSLAVIA

Yugoslavia has been unfortunate since its beginning. It was set up after World War I, under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, and after World War II by agreement of the Allied powers, created to meet the needs of foreign parties (i.e., the great European powers) rather than in response to the needs of its peoples and the nations into which they had divided. From

the outset, it was made up of very heterogeneous peoples who were forced to live together. In a sociopolitical context, one way to make very heterogeneous people live together in a state is through the use of authoritarian repression carried out under the aegis of an idealized or demonized supreme leader who relies on a small ruling group to execute his orders. This was the formula according to which a large group of 20 million people, still called Yugoslavia, functioned (Klain, 1992b, 1995).

From 1918 to 1941, the supreme authority in Yugoslavia was the Serbian king, which meant that repression was carried out by the police, and power was vested in the majority people (the Serbs). The remaining two large nations in the state (Croats and Slovenes) played a subordinate role, while other nations and ethnic minorities were denied their identities as groups. The mutual rivalry of the three main groups (Serbs, Slovenes, and Croats) caused them to act out from time to time, while the repression established a false cohesion behind which destructive aggression, accompanied by projection of the archaic instinctual needs, was hidden.

Yugoslavia as a monarchy disintegrated in 1941, only a week after its leadership, the king and everybody around him, fled the country. World War II provided an ideal opportunity to release the destructive aggressions suppressed in the Yugoslav subgroups since the formation of the union.

Perhaps most important at present is that the surviving members of these groups, as mentioned earlier, carry memories of awful scenes of separation derived from World War II. The Nazis occupied all of Yugoslavia. Both Croatia and Serbia were created as puppet states with quisling regimes. Minority extremist groups in Croatia (Ustashas) and in Serbia (Chetniks) sided with the Nazis and carried out atrocities against the peoples of other nations. Such traumatic scenes also influenced group memories about aggression perpetrated by the "members of the *other* nation." The transmission of feelings engendered by war experiences was carried by particular national groups as their history, leading to transgenerational memories of insults and destruction, the blame for which was laid upon the "enemy people" as a whole. The consequences of this transmission of affects and memories are of utmost importance for understanding present-day confrontations among the various ethnic groups in Yugoslavia.

The second Yugoslavia was formed in 1945. The repressive authority of the tyrannical leader relied on two groups: members of the leading, and only, party (somewhat less than 10% of the population) directly, and the dominant Serbian nation indirectly, through the group that called itself the federal administration (1–1.5% of the population). The number of competing national groups increased in the new state, because new nations and ethnic minorities were accepted, thus further reducing the country's overall cohesion and increasing the intragroup tensions. The number of "enemy groups" as potential targets for negative and destructive projections also increased. The functioning of the contesting subgroups could only be achieved by the organization of repressive forces in the two hierarchically dominant groups—the police and the army—that were actually unified, since they were conducted from one and the same center. A difference in the later organization and administration of the police and army resulted in the different behavior of these groups in the war to come.

We are considering the prevailing influence of groups of people whose common characteristic is their nationality. In all crisis situations in Yugoslavia, groups form around the symbols of "nation" and "religion," two cohesive attractors that are so highly correlated in the Balkans as to be often (but not always) functionally synonymous.

The Serbs have been in the majority, and have ruled the country directly in the first Yugoslavia and indirectly (through the Communist Party and the federal state administration) in the second. They have a warlike tradition, transmitted from generation to generation: Elders tell children about Serbian heroes of the past. A cult of warriors and military leaders has been

cherished. Group cohesion is formed around a leader-warrior: a king, a duke, or a Marshal Tito, rather than around the church and religion, although the Serbian Orthodox Church is autochthonous. (The Orthodox churches are not only national but also independent; that is, they are autocephalous.) In summary, the church is a cohesive factor, but more as an aspect of Serbian national identity and less as a religious symbol.

The Serbs as a group have long considered themselves the leading nation in Yugoslavia because they are the strongest, and because they founded Yugoslavia. As a people, they have idealized certain external groups, in particular the former U.S.S.R. and France (the latter was the cultural cradle of the Russian czars). In relation to the national groups in the western part of the country, however, the Serbs may be described as harboring feelings of inferiority because they perceive their own culture as being at a "lower" level. They try to rid themselves of these feelings by means of various defense mechanisms, such as negation, projection, denial, and ambivalence, but the destructive element remains. The heightened Serbian militancy suggests a defensive group tendency to view the world from a "schizoid-paranoid" position (Klein, 1946) in which whatever is "good" is felt to come from within and whatever is "bad" to come from the outside. This seems especially so when the Serbs are compared to the Croats who, as discussed next, are more prone to Klein's "depressive" position.

The Croatian nation is the Serbs' greatest rival. Due to very different external and internal influences upon the development of this group, they have built their own cohesiveness based on labor, dialogue, obedience, and an expectation of understanding and justice. Their religious idealizations are more pronounced than those of the Serbs. As a result, they have more readily accepted authorities from outside their national group and developed dependency on them. Compared to the Serbs, the Croats as a group may be said to express the "depressive position" described by Klein (1946). This position is characteristic of personalities that are more prone to feelings of guilt about their self-perceived destructiveness than fear of anger vis-à-vis hostile or threatening assaults from the "outside world." These feelings of guilt, no matter how irrational they may be, are expressed by, among other things, the notably stronger Croatian tendency to rely on prayer to resolve conflict and bring about relief from pressing problems.

The Slovenes, the third nation-building component in the first Yugoslavia, have, as a group, always been a little outside the interactions of the main groups. Very homogeneous as a national group, they benefited over the years from the continuous confrontations between the Serbs and Croats, and were able to develop as a group relatively undisturbed. They succeeded in reaching a more mature capacity for political interaction and developing political communications without any great need for authoritarian leaders (as will be elaborated later in the analysis of the war in Slovenia). They succeeded in integrating the Catholic Church into their group concept at a more mature level. For instance, if we compare the Slovenes and the Croats during the recent years, we can see a difference in their need for religious and national symbols accompanied by national euphoria. As distinguished from the Croats, the Slovenes had no need for coats of arms and flags, or frequent cardinal masses and processions, in order to create their group identity, thus proving that regressive processes are less marked in their group. Having a more mature group identity, the Slovenes also have no need of charismatic group leaders. They are able to use, in a more mature way, their group self to realize the needs of the whole group, and not the needs of a charismatic leader.

The Macedonians were recognized as a nation in the second Yugoslavia. As a group, they are ambivalently linked with the Bulgarians, Greeks, and Albanians. In the interaction with these neighboring peoples, they try to prove their identity as a nation, which these same neighboring peoples have denied. As the Macedonians consist of ethnically heterogeneous people,

their group cohesion is rather loose. On the other hand, like any newly formed group, they have a need to idealize their group identity.

While the Montenegrins were given their minirepublic in the second Yugoslavia, they had already existed as a nation for centuries. Historically, they felt connected with Russia, a nation into which they project the libidinal (desirable) parts of their group self. They are split into two subgroups: one which values their separate identity from Serbs more than their kinship ("greens"), and one which does not ("whites"). They have an extremely heroic-militant tradition. They possess a libidinal (loving) and rigid (harsh, punitive) superego, which manifests itself as pride and honesty. Their economy is rather backward and has had a limiting effect on their societal and cultural development in spite of their long history.

The Bosnians live in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, together with Serbs and Croats. They are essentially a Slavic people who, after occupation by the Turks, converted to Islam. They have no intrinsic relationship, tribal, or blood ties with other Islamic nations. As a nation, they were recognized only in the second Yugoslavia. They refer to themselves as *Bosniacs*, a term that bears an ethnic rather than only a religious connotation. This subgroup comprises the majority of the population of Bosnia and it differs socioculturally from the Croatian and Serbian subgroups. They are very traditional and conservative, with the father's authority being sacrosanct. They live in large families in which sexual differentiation is marked by the absolute predominance of the male.

The Albanians form the majority in the former Kosovo Autonomous Province, "annexed" by the Republic of Serbia in 1989. As mentioned earlier, a large group of Albanians live in Macedonia. Most of them are Muslims, and the majority of the population is engaged in agricultural work and has not assimilated Western technology and culture to the same extent as other Yugoslav regions. At present, Albanians are exposed to destructive, genocidal acts by the communist Serbian government. Using their usual formula of announcing that they were endangered as a national minority, Serbs began to kill, arrest, and expel people from their homes. The same scenario was seen in Croatia, and now in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Kosovo, they have abolished Albanian autonomy.

There are many other ethnic minorities in Yugoslavia, but those mentioned here provide an insight into the group map of Yugoslavia, which consists of numerous national and religious groups, all intermingled and opposed to each other. These are groups of different and mutually alien cultures and influences (not only from the Islamic countries, Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, Albania, but also from Hungary, Austria, Germany, Italy, France, Great Britain, the United States, and the former U.S.S.R.).

This conglomerate of heterogeneous groups, formed on the basis of a variety of external and internal influences, has few homogenizing factors but much that is confrontational and destructive in its structure. Thus, it was inevitable that Yugoslavia would disintegrate, given the presence of destabilizing conditions.

Most of the members of these large national groups were not aware of very serious economic and political realities. They were protected by idealization and projection, dynamics that are often observed in large groups (Kreeger, 1975). This balance was disrupted in 1980 by the death of the great leader. His cult continued through numerous rituals, beginning with a great show at his funeral, followed by pilgrimages to his tomb and the establishment of a (still another) museum. A large number of people needed all this for the mourning process, which lasted for years. However, the space for idealization narrowed with time. The illusion of a good, giving breast began to collapse. Economic difficulties arose, and variously organized groups began to split apart. The weakest link (i.e., the Communist Party of Yugoslavia) was the first to break down. This process was supported by the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The

rigid rules that governed the Communist Party hierarchy deteriorated, the group lost its clear boundaries, and subgroups formed, confronting one another. At the same time that the split within the Communist Party took place, the large group, the state, split into subgroups as well. This process was slower and resulted in the war launched by representatives of one political idea against the other.

From June 27 to July 2, 1990, the Yugoslav army waged war against Slovenia. The Yugoslav army initiated this war to demonstrate its strength, but for various reasons it gave up Slovenia. Unrest in Croatia began in the summer of the same year. It is interesting that Serbs rebelled first in Knin and its vicinity, a very undeveloped region, where people were poor and marginalized. In 1992, the most bloody part of the war began: the occupation of Bosnia by Bosnian Serbs and Serbia, which caused the greatest number of victims. During that war, a conflict between Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats also took place.

## MEDIATORS OF “INHERITED” EMOTIONS

### The Patriarchal Family

A product of a patriarchally organized society, the patriarchal family is most important for transmission of emotions from one generation to the next. As mentioned already, in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, such a family appeared mostly in mountainous and poor regions. It represented a source of petrified rules that would not allow any development or progress, but, on the contrary, imposed severe sanctions on everyone who violated the rules. Former Yugoslavia was not the only place with patriarchal families, where rigid rules and numerous prejudices were transmitted from generation to generation. In his study on the Mafia, Lo Verso (1995) presents his thesis that the patriarchal family is present in the “south.” Referring to the south anthropologically rather than geographically, in addition to southern Italy, he includes in it Northern Africa and Latin America, among others, and states that all of them have underdevelopment and poverty as common characteristic. In a patriarchal family, the mother plays the dominant role in transmitting various emotions and rules. Lo Verso writes, “From the psychodynamic point of view, transmission of values, culture, models of object relations, symbolism and emotionality goes through mother. From this point of view women have an important role in the Mafia” (pp. 117–118). In patriarchal families, transmission of emotions and other rules, both preoedipal and oedipal, has also been mostly through the mother. The relations between father and child, which also means father and son, are less frequent and appear in a later phase of upbringing. Also, we should not neglect the intergenerational transmission of oedipal envy of the son in relation to his father which, ever since the primal horde, leads to killing the father and possessing the mother. Through generations, Laius’s revenge pervades, which in the modern form means sending the sons to war to be killed, wounded, and physically and psychically mutilated. It is especially important to point out the meaning of psychic mutilation. Young people have been reeducated for killing, and their oedipal fascination with arms and power has brought about psychological disturbances and inability to adapt to civilian life afterwards. Destructive as well as identification needs have extended from the patriarchal family to the tribe, then to the nation, which, in fantasy, has taken on the meaning of the group, which is linked by blood ties to the primitive patriarchal family. There are examples in the former Yugoslavia, when Tito tried, through his behavior, dress, and pompousness to become an important identification object. In the beginning of this war Rašković, a psychiatrist, the leader of Serbian rebellion in Croatia, wore a long beard and

played the role of the good Father of his nation. The Croatian leader, Tudjman, behaves in a similar way.

### Superego

In his work, *The Ego and the Id*, Freud (1923) presents his thesis that many habits, cultural manifestations, ideals, ethical principles, and the like are inherited through the superego. In his opinion, a child's superego is formed not according to its parent's ego but according to its parent's superego, and all precipitates of general principles that are in the superego are thus transmitted to future generations. When we try to understand the behavior of people in war, this thesis is very important, because we know that in certain subcultures, there are rules and regulations that do not fit into European and North American civilization and culture. We can mention here superego of a *haiduk* in former Yugoslavia, superego of a pirate, superego of a hired killer, and so on. The similarity is with the superego of a mafioso described by Lo Verso (1995). A primitive patriarchal family will often develop through identification a similar superego in children, who are marginalized, exposed to their father's rage, beaten and abused, and, in fact, marginalized in their own families. Such a superego will help to choose people for special tasks in a war, such as liquidating civilians. It would be wrong to think that these persons do not experience conflicts within their personality after committing acts they were ordered to do. Along with destructive and aggressive elements, guilt feelings also exist in their superego. In a group, their most frequent reaction is projection, which is being shifted from the enemy to the government. Such aggressive manifestations are associated with paranoid projections that they will be liquidated because they know too much. Freud's idea expressed in his letter *Why War* (1933) can be applied to them: "The death instinct changes into destructive instinct when it is turned to the outside, to the object. In this way one keeps his own life by destroying another person's life" (p. 203). In a group of war veterans, a patient stated that his only problem was aggression. This veteran had attacked a man who entered his shop only because he was blond; his jailor, who beat him, was blond. He slapped two Albanians because they spoke Albanian, a language he could not understand. Later, he became aware that his behavior is aggressive, but he could not prevent it. His death instinct and his unconscious guilt feeling are so intense that he is not able to stop these aggressive behaviors.

### Folk Songs and Literature

Folk songs and literature have remained, unfortunately, generators of transmission of interethnic hatred, especially in Serbs and Montenegrins. For example, the epic *Death of Smail aga Čengić*, which has been included in all textbooks for schoolchildren, is presented as a historical truth and has for generations produced hatred toward Muslims. In that epic, a Turkish aga tortures people and takes away all their crops, then kills them. Grmek, Gjidara, and Šimac (1993) mention *Gorski Vijenac*, a well-known Montenegrin epic, a breviary of interethnic hatred and generator of its transgenerational transmission. In Serbian and Montenegrin epics and legends, the greatest hatred is directed toward Turks (i.e., Muslims). It is therefore not surprising that in this war too, the Serbs manifested their hatred toward Croats and Muslims in decasyllables. The following verse was thus created after the fall of Vukovar in November 1991: "Slobodane (Milošević) šalji nam salate, bit će mesa klat ćemo Hrvate" [Slobodan (Milošević) send us salad, there will be meat, we shall butcher the Croats]. (The song was sung by Serbian military groups in Vukovar on November 19, 1991.) In 1992, Serbian soldiers sang:

Pored doma na selo kidišu Dušanovi rafali ih zбриšu. Medo kaže povlači se brate ko će po-bit tolike Hrvate. Dule reče čeka još ovoga da osvetim djeda voljenoga, jer za svakog našeg Srbina treba ubit bar dvadeset psina.

After the house they attack the village, Dušan's bursts of fire destroy them. Medo says, with-draw, my brother, who can kill so many Croats. Dule says, wait, just one more, to avenge my beloved grandfather, because for each of our Serbs, at least twenty dogs should be killed.

Such poems seem strange in Europe at the end of the 20th century, but if we know the *haiduk* tradition, according to which slaughter, robbery, and abduction were no offenses, we can un-derstand these "popular poems." Cvijić (1922) explains the function of folk songs for the Di-naric Serbs in the following way:

To kill many Turks means for a Dinaric man not only to avenge his ancestors, but also to re-lieve their pains of which he, too, suffers. It is significant that all Dinaric Serbs—from those in the northern Croatia along the border with Kranjska, to those living at Skadar—know the main events of Serbian history, which have been conveyed through folk-songs and narra-tives from one generation to the other. National morality and national idea are heritage of a long history (p. 83).

Thus, we can conclude that the motifs of folk songs live in Serbian people and can easily in-spire instrumentalized aggression stimulated by Serbian rulers.

## Church and Religion

In the former Yugoslavia, there have been three main religions: Catholic, Orthodox, and Muslim. In Communist Yugoslavia, religions were suppressed by the government. The people of the nations of the former Yugoslavia felt, as members of these religions, although relatively few were true believers adhering to religious principles, that the Communist regime persecuted primarily the Catholic Church because it was the best organized and a part of the Vatican. The Orthodox church, and especially the Muslim Church, were less active and therefore minor threats to the Communist regime. Thus, for example, celebration of Catholic holidays was for-bidden, while customs connected with the Orthodox Church and Muslim faith were tacitly al-lowed. In the current war, accusations have been revived against the Catholic Church, which, allegedly, baptized Serbs during World War II. The fact is that many people, in order to save their lives, converted to the religion that was welcomed in their territory. The aggressiveness of the Orthodox Church was manifest during this war through abandoning its own people by the priests, accusing the entire Croatian population of genocide, and through advocating myths and stirring up revenge toward Croats and Muslims. The Orthodox Church has never apolo-gized for the crimes committed by its believers. On the other hand, the Catholic Church pleaded for peace, apologized for the crimes committed by its believers, and has never accused the whole Serbian nation of genocide. If we follow the events in Yugoslavia between the two world wars, we can see that the traditional attitude of the Serbian Orthodox Church was closely connected with the state, along with incitement and direct calls for hatred. Along these lines, S. Pribičević (1990) accuses directly Serbian orthodoxy:

For the whole period since 1918 up to the present day, there has never been heard a patriarch's sermon about religion and church, relationship of man towards God, about love for one's neighbor, about the needs of soul, about morality and goals in life, but always about questions of national and political meaning in the sense of imperialism and megalomania (p. 87).

The autonomy of the Orthodox Church makes it more closely connected to the nation and state, while the Catholic Church, because of its internationalism, seems to be at some distance from the nation and state. The lives of the Orthodox priests and their families are intimately ingrained in the lives of their communities. Their educational level is also not much higher than their people's. All these elements influence their reactions to difficult war situations.

## Myths

Throughout their history, the Serbs cherished two myths: one about their heroism and courage, the other of committing genocide of the surrounding nations.

It is known that the Turks defeated the Serbs in 1389, in the Battle of Kosovo. The saying goes (not a historical fact) that the Turks, after their victory over the Serbs, killed all male children and raped all young Serb women so that they would give birth to Turks. In the Eastern religion, the father determines the child's religious identity. He is the seed, while the mother represents only the earth into which the seed is placed. This myth about Turkish behavior after the Battle of Kosovo has remained vivid in Serbian people up to the present day, and in this war, it has been the generator of revenge against the Muslims because of the events that had happened 600 years ago. During the last 10 years, the Serbs have been celebrating the Battle of Kosovo as if it were their victory, not defeat. In the nationalistic euphoria that seized both the Croatian and Serbian ruling classes, the Serbs have turned back to the czar, Lazar, who was defeated at Kosovo, and carried his bones triumphantly around Serbia. Their myths about heroism have been transmitted also through popular songs. The most characteristic hero is Prince Marko, who is described in a series of poems as an extremely courageous man who always conquered the Turks, especially his rival Musa Kesedžija. But the truth was quite the opposite. Marko was a Turkish vassal who served them obediently. From 1945 to the present, the Serbs have been spreading propaganda throughout Yugoslavia and all around the world about the Croats as genocidal, equating them with Hitler's minority of 50,000 Ustashas. These people, who originated from the patriarchal regions of Croatia (Herzegovina, Dalmatian hinterland, and Lika) were extremely brutal and destructive. They killed and tortured members of other nations, primarily Jews, as did also the Serbs (Chetniks) and the Communists. The Ustashas had a concentration camp in Jasenovac, in which, according to the historians, about 50,000–70,000 Serbs, Jews, Gypsies, and Croats were killed. But in Serbian propaganda, Jasenovac was the grave of 700,000 Serbs.

## WHAT IS BEING TRANSMITTED FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION?

### Hate and Rage

Unfortunately, the most frequent emotions that have been transmitted in the ways described are deep hatred and rage, accompanied by aggression and destruction. So, for instance, the methods of torture and killing have not changed since the Roman and Turkish times. It is difficult to believe that at the end of the 20th century in Europe, people get crucified, impaled, barbecued, skinned alive, their ears and noses cut off, and so on. Only if we remember that the patriarchal tribes have no history, and that in their destructiveness, nothing has changed, can we try to understand such reactions. The wave of hatred and rage overflowed the churches, cultural monuments, cemeteries, and homes. As mentioned several times already, one of the main

reservoirs of hatred and rage, but also of revenge, was World War II, when the Croats and the Serbs committed the greatest crimes first, followed by the Communists belonging to different nations. Significantly, some of the future generals of the Yugoslav national army were children of people killed by the Ustasha's knives or torn away from arms of their mothers, who were taken to prison camps. It is not easy to find out why, of all the nations in the former Yugoslavia, hatred and rage were most manifest in the relationships between the Serbs and Croats. True, they were two dominant nations, their languages are almost identical, and they are very alike. Diatkine (1993) applied Freud's concept of narcissism of small differences to the relationships between these two nations: as brotherly rivals as to which is better, stronger, more cultured, or more prominent internationally.

## Revenge

Revenge includes many emotions such as hatred, rage, and guilt. Its character is projective, and it is primitive and archaic in its manifestations. Both the Serbs and the Croats emphasize their need for revenge, but the Serbs aim it toward the Muslims as well as Croats. The Serbs lament that they have always been endangered, that, particularly in the period before the Serbian attack and uprising in Croatia, they have always lost at the negotiating table, even though they conquered on the battlefield. They also felt they were losers during the Communist regime, despite having ruled in almost all the republics of the state. The Croatian feeling of neglect and injustice was manifest between the two wars, when the Ustasha movement was founded. The maxim of revenge, of "revolution by blood and arms" was emphasized from the very beginning, in 1932. In each issue of the journal *Ustašah*, one could read, "Knife, gun and bomb are idols that have to give the peasant back the fruits of his land, to worker his bread, and to Croatia freedom" (printed on the first page of each issue of the journal *Ustašah*). These who drink blood of Croatian people should be slaughtered, so that no such evil appears ever again in Croatian territory (see Jelić-Butić, 1978; Kavran, 1944). After World War II, Croats felt endangered, and the militant among them emigrated and prepared for revenge.

The ever-present need for revenge in the national groups resulted in the heavy crimes in this war. First, Serbian rebels and the Serbian army imprisoned not only a large number of soldiers but also civilians. They not only tortured soldiers and policemen, but also children and old people. For example, it is known that four old men were beaten to death in the prison camp "Manjača." They also killed an 80-year-old woman, whose only crime was that she had given birth to, as they said, an Ustasha. The Serbs exhibited special cruelty toward Muslims. Raping women and sexual abuse of men were only one kind of torture and humiliation. Earlier, I mentioned the myth of the Battle of Kosovo and the alleged Turkish rape of Serbian women. In this war, the Serbs performed mass rape of Muslim women, along with other kinds of torture. They then kept many of the pregnant women in prison through the eighth month of their pregnancy, so that the women had to bear these children. The following describes our first field experience with a rape case:

M. is a 21-year-old Muslim from a village near the Bosnian town of Ključ. When the Serb forces occupied her village, they began by physically and psychically maltreating the local people. They took their crops and cattle, restricted their movements, and finally took them to the Manjača detention camp. M.'s father, as well as all male members of her extended family, including adolescents, was also taken. Some were killed. As the oldest child in the family (M. has two younger sisters and two younger brothers), her mother sent her to pay some obligatory taxes at the local Serb-held community offices. Upon her arrival, two soldiers grabbed her and called another soldier. All three of them raped her on the premises and then let her go. She did not dare to tell her

mother anything. When she realized that she was pregnant, she attempted to conceal it by wearing large clothes. She could not eat or sleep and lost 15 kgs. She became depressed and had suicidal thoughts. She felt guilty and was too ashamed to tell anyone about her troubles. After the whole family was expelled from the village, they came to a refugee settlement near Zagreb. They were soon joined by their father, who was exchanged as a prisoner of war with another member of their extended family. As her term was coming, she felt worse and progressively more suicidal, and confided in an old aunt, who was a dominant person in the extended family. The aunt helped her to get professional medical help, and she gave birth to a child in one of the Zagreb hospitals, where one of our psychiatrists talked to her. M. did not want to see the child. Her major concern was how to get back to her family, who considered her pregnancy a sin.

The psychiatrist realized that M.'s parents had to be prepared for her return and went with a colleague to talk to them. Despite long-term psychiatric experience and work in psychiatric institutions, they were anxious. M.'s parents and her extended family greeted them warmly and talked in detail about their traumatic experiences. Each individual described his or her experiences, but nobody said anything about M. After several visits to the settlement, the family accepted M.'s return, but her trauma was never discussed in front of them. M. had 15 regular sessions. She married a young man from the settlement after 1 year.

The negation of rape was a basic finding in all clients in the beginning. In cases where the women delivered a child after rape-induced pregnancy, the child was usually abandoned and left for adoption (Arcel *et al.*, 1995).

The revenge of the victim is seldom spoken about. The tortures and killings by Serbs have brought about similar reactions by Croats and Muslims. The victim's revenge is, in fact, one of the hardest blows to the victim by his or her persecutor and tormentor, because in this way the victim becomes like him or her.

## **Guilt and Shame**

Our knowledge about intergenerational transmission of guilt comes from analyses of Holocaust victims and from the therapies of the members of the second generation. While we cannot speak yet of transmission of guilt feelings from this war, we can imagine which people and which traumas will bring about transmission of guilt feelings. One such victims group is of the wives and mothers of men missing in the war. They could neither elaborate their losses, nor go through the usual mourning process, because they still do not know the fate of their missing loved ones.

The very rigid and punitive superego of some groups of war victims makes rather difficult any therapeutic approach and elaboration of psychic trauma. First are the raped women and sexually abused men. They developed strong, unconscious guilt feelings because of what had happened to them and suffer especially from narcissistic injury, shame, and loss of self-respect. The suicides in this group, in my opinion, are a consequence of a "deserved" punishment by the superego, because the ego could not endure the heavy reproaches from the superego. We know that rapes in this war were a planned action to humiliate the victims and an effective method to force them to cleanse themselves ethnically (i.e., to leave their homes). Knowing each other's subculture, the torturers knew that by raping a woman they, in fact, degraded her husband and, in a symbolic way, killed him. Therefore, these women often refuse to speak of such experiences, which results in psychosomatic reactions, depression, and suicide. In a study comprising 55 men who were sexually abused, the researches found out that all of these men developed depression, and most of them manifested symptoms of psychic impotence and had much difficulty in socialization. The predominant emotions in these sexually

abused men were guilt and shame because they experienced their suffering as degradation to the female level. It is interesting and characteristic that they very seldom seek or accept therapy for their disturbances.

### Transmission of Authority

Transmission of the father's authority in a patriarchal family from one generation to another is important for understanding certain events in the countries of the former Yugoslavia over the last 5–6 years. In a patriarchal family, the father's power is an untouchable authority that is transmitted from generation to generation. Family members are afraid to move out of its group, because everything strange is dangerous and hostile. Arrival in town from the country is an enormous change, and in these families, young people who come to town look for their fellow tribesmen and often call them "cousin" and "countryman," which reflects belonging to the same group.

Authoritarian education encourages the development of numerous projections onto the enemy and idealizations as well as identifications with authoritarian figures. These mechanisms spread onto the large group, which may be the neighborhood, the town, or the state. Persons thus brought up need an inviolable authority and are lost without it. Examples in the countries of the former Yugoslavia are Ante Pavelić in the Ustasha state, Tito in Communist Yugoslavia, and Tudjman and Milošević in the present. For example, Tomšić (1942) wrote,

Leaders, authority and sovereignty of the Independent State of Croatia are embodied in the person of Dr. Ante Pavelić, whose official title was *Poglavnik* (Chieftain). He was the source of all the power and his was the last word. The Ustasha state was conceived as a widened family of patriarchal type in which all the authority was in the hands of its superior. Most of the leaders and ideologists of the Ustasha state come from the country in the Dinaric part of Croatia, where peasants are still living in large families of the strictly patriarchal type (p. 341).

The present situation in Croatia and Serbia is very important for both the future generations and the development of democracy. The authoritarian behavior by Croatian leaders, compared with that of Serbian leaders, is less explicit. Autocratic and repressive tendencies are attenuated in Croatia by freer and louder opposition groups in Croatia, and by the media, who were themselves partly responsible for having removed governmental controls on democratic processes in the first place. Also, the parliamentary elections in Croatia did help the people realize a considerable amount of freedom.

Both Serbian and Croatian leading groups demonstrate a penchant for supporting charismatic leaders. Dr. Franjo Tudjman of Croatia, while proclaiming democracy, manifests a similar authoritarian style and shares traditional family origins similar to those of Josip Broz Tito. They both come from peasant families in Hrvatsko Zagorje. The small group around the Croatian ruler is entirely dependent on his direction, having little opportunity to mature as autonomous political individuals. It seems as if the electoral victory brought about an oceanic feeling of bliss in this small group (marked by carelessness and self-satisfaction), but it did not last long, because they were soon faced with enemy groups from within their environment. As if awakened from a pleasant dream, they reacted aggressively and regressively, not allowing anyone to oppose them, thus increasing resistance and hostility in other groups, especially in the Serbs in Croatia, who actually had for years been persistently indoctrinated through propaganda directed from Belgrade.

## MITIGATING THE CONSEQUENCES OF CONFLICT IN THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

### Current Situation

In various parts of Yugoslavia, especially those stricken by the war, which means Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the victims are still full of hatred and wish for revenge. Hatred exists also on the other side. It has stimulated this war, and today, when, according to the Dayton agreements, they must surrender some territory, that hatred is even more obvious. Once again, the Serbs seem to have lost at the negotiating table what they had won on the battlefield. In many people's minds, there still echo the last words of their fellow soldiers when they died under torture or were killed by destructive shells: "Avenge me," which left a permanent impression on the survivors. Particularly vulnerable is the group of families of the missing and persons taken away by force. In order to further torture psychologically their families, the Serbs refuse to give any information about them. Hatred in families of the killed prevails, as well as wish to avenge. The war victims themselves, like the disabled, released prisoners of war, refugees, and displaced persons, also suffer serious scars and wish for revenge. As far as we could observe, the atmosphere in the groups of war victims is less aggressive and revengeful today than it was 2 or 3 years ago, due perhaps to the conciliatory attitude of the Catholic Church, which lectures on forgiveness. But there is still rather frequent and dangerous inducement of children by their parents, primarily mothers, to avenge their killed or missing parents. This reminds us of the mother, wife of a killed Mafia chief, who used to wake up her son every morning with the words: "Go and kill the murderers of your father."

Distrust in the "enemy" is the most widely spread reaction both in the war victims and in those persons all over the former Yugoslavia who did not suffer as much. A good illustration comes from the refugee camp in The Netherlands. Children of Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian refugees played together. When they quarreled, they would insult each other, calling each other by pejorative names: "Ustasha," "Chetnik," and "balija" (for Muslim). Similarly, the relationships in the group of adults in the same camp depended on the situation on the battlefield. Distrust and separation of nations were constantly present. An example of much distrust between Croats and Bosnian Muslims is the current situation in divided Mostar. Inability to come to an agreement about fixing administrative boundaries is, in fact, an inability to agree on making the city unique, so its citizens can live in the same groups as they were living with before the war. A poignant example of distrust, due to the irrational fear that they will all be killed, is the emigration of Serbs from those parts of Sarajevo that belonged to the Bosnian-Croatian federation. It is difficult to gauge the extent to which this fear is the result of unconscious guilt feelings because of what they had done in Sarajevo during the war. Their digging up their dead, putting them into coffins, and taking them away was especially archaic.

Another dangerous situation that will generate intergenerational transmission of hatred is the tendency to generalize responsibility and guilt. Serbs will neither confess their crimes nor ask for pardon. When they talk about the causes of this war, they neglect the fact that they themselves attacked Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, but use the maxim: "All are equal." It would be more correct to say that "all have become equal."

Equally dangerous for future generations is the opinion of Croats when they say: "All Serbs are criminals, there are no loyal Serbs." One has yet to see how much the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in the Hague can do to help reduce the destructive projections and contribute to the feeling that justice has been satisfied.

What we can observe today in the countries of the former Yugoslavia are idealization and demonization of the government occurring at the same time. The refugees and the displaced persons regressively expect to return to their villages and towns. They hope that not everything has been destroyed, that something has been left. They expect the state to give them back everything they lost and to enable them to have a normal life in the future in the places where they had lived before the war. Return of the displaced and the refugees is psychologically a most complex operation, and one cannot avoid being afraid that it will provoke aggressive and destructive impulses that will be transmitted to children and future generations. The best example is the town Mostar, where Muslim Bosniacs and Croats expect all their problems to be solved by the European Union-appointed administrator, Hans Koschnik, performing magic. Here, of course, each side has in mind the solution desired and suggested by itself.

The actual situation in this war brought about new "victims." So, for instance, in Croatia, members of Serbian nationality, besides being "suspicious" citizens, are exposed to being thrown out of their homes, losing their jobs, and the like. The situation in 1945, when families of the Ustasha officers and soldiers were brutally thrown out to the street without any means for living, is repeated. Many of the innocent Ustasha and *Domobran* officers were sentenced to long imprisonments, and their families were left without any means of subsistence.

### How to Help?

To help the situation in the long run, we will have "to break the chain of intergenerational transmission of hatred, rage, revenge and guilt." I am already aware of the utopian nature of this sentence. I would like only positive emotions of love to be selectively transmitted. This sentence reminds me of the experience of a female colleague who lives and works in one of the countries of the former Yugoslavia not directly exposed to the war's destruction. She has been engaged in helping child refugees from Bosnia. She explained to me that an important motivational factor of her activity was the fact that she, herself, as a Jewish child, was hiding during World War II and well treated by the peasants of that country.

What would breaking the chain of intergenerational transmission of "negative" emotions mean? In our case, this would mean that a patriarchal family transforms into a modern family, that people outgrow their need for an absolute authority, and that there are no more uncritical nationalisms connected with xenophobia. It would mean, in fact, creating a dynamic group matrix characterized by cohesion and coherence, as in a good analytic group. This may be an illusion that might never come true. As is the case in some countries, perhaps it will be possible to create a democracy in ethnically mixed groups. But we are aware that these democracies, too, are not free of much that has been written in this chapter. Therefore, a change of identification objects is necessary. Only when the group and its goals replace the authority as identification objects can a real change of identity and ideals in these groups occur. Then, for example, it will be possible to isolate an individual criminal from his or her group, or in our case, from his or her nation.

A refugee psychiatrist talked with a child complaining of some psychological disturbances. The child and his mother were expelled from their home and maltreated by Serbian soldiers. The doctor, a refugee himself, said angrily, "Serbian mothers will also cry." The eight-year-old boy replied, with tears in his eyes, "No, don't let Serbian mothers cry." Recently I met a female doctor, a refugee from Bosnia, who has participated in a team offering psychosocial help to displaced persons. She told me: "Earlier I used to say that all I have gone through should never happen to anybody again, but now I tell everybody, let all this happen

to everyone.” I responded to her: “This is not good for you, because it makes you full of bitterness and hatred, which destroy you.”

There are experiences around the world in which different people or ethnic groups are brought together to talk, such as groups of black and white persons (Ferron, 1992), Germans and French (Heenen-Wolff & Knauss, 1991), and Germans and Jews (Heenen-Wolff, 1992; see also Chapter 5 in this volume). Most of these groups have the very important common characteristic of having been formed many years after the actual conflict between the nations or races ceased. Notably different are the groups for Israelis and Arabs. In the territory of the former Yugoslavia, the situation is still very fresh, which makes it extremely difficult to establish a dialogue. Recent attempts to gather a group of members of different nations failed. Nevertheless, we will continue in this direction, because I think that it is very important.

I believe that adequate work with children war victims could best mitigate the intergenerational transmission of pathogenic emotions. Their parents should also be included in that work. Thus, the priority of psychological work in the countries of former Yugoslavia should be psychotherapeutic work with children who could then speak, express, and integrate their feelings and suffering connected with this war. I am sure that this would help to relieve the emotions that are transmitted.

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