SURVIVING THE GUILT: A PSYCHOANALYTIC RETROSPECT ON THE ISSUE OF COMPENSATION OF FORCIBLY CONSCRIPTED REFUGEES IN SERBIA

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SUMMARY

This work contains a brief review of a conference about the forcible conscription of refugees in Serbia in 1995, and we offer a psychological analysis of the discussion group in a psychoanalytical framework. The material here represents just a fragment of the psychological reality of posttraumatic communities in the ex-Yugoslavia. The lack of empathy with the victims of forcible conscription and the hostility to the idea of their compensation are indicators of post-war psychological confusion, where denial of a traumatic reality and externalization of complex feelings onto an isolated group are used as defense reactions. This paper stresses a particular feeling – guilt – which I believe is crucial for the maintaining of complex interactions between these two apparently completely separate groups: "participants" and "observers". The material I analyzed indicates an arrested process of social soul-searching in Serbia which is, domestically, followed by an arrest of the development of democratic institutions, and internationally, by the lack of real reconciliation between the formerly belligerent ex-Yugoslav nations. Psychologically, it indicates an impossibility of a normal process of mourning, which is an individual process, but is, nevertheless, trapped in the Serbian social field due to a lack of social institutions (or an institutional framework) that could ensure adequate mourning, integration of all that is lost and continuation of a normal development of the individual and community.

INTRODUCTION

Precisely ten years before the editing of this monograph (or more precisely, from June to August 1995), the police crisscrossed Serbia, intercepting men and arresting those who had just fled Croatia after the "Flash" and "Storm" operations[1] or those whose identity cards somehow linked them to the combat zone.[2] The lists of the refugees had been made by the Serbian Red Cross and the Commissariat for refugees. The individuals were arrested in their homes, in the presence of their families, with no possibility of taking elementary personal effects or informing others about their whereabouts. They were first transferred to provisional assembly centers (most frequently, police or fire stations) and then further on (in an organized manner and under armed escort) to "training" camps (where they faced various forms of abuse, humiliation and torture) or directly to some of the combat zones in Croatia and Bosnia. In the paramilitary-run camps, where humiliation and torture were focused and carried out in an organized fashion, many of these unwilling soldiers were beaten and systematically humiliated ("Mr. Discipline" and being tied to a kennel are just two of the frequently recurring bizarre details in many stories from Erdut). They were called traitors, cowards and deserters. This happened even to the individuals who had spent all their time on the frontline[3] and who, afterwards, fled the pogroms of civilians by the Croatian Army and sought shelter for their families in the "motherland", the promised land of Serbia. Needles to say, some of these people were later killed in the war in Bosnia.

The individuals who had undergone such experiences began contacting IAN CRTV, first occasionally and then ever more frequently. In August 2004, IAN initiated the project "Redress in Action", focused exclusively on forcibly conscripted refugees. Gradually, we could reconstruct a picture of a coordinated action, systematic roundup and subsequent abuse - all disguised by a patriotic narrative and utterly senseless (as many other actions in that war). The main idea of the project was, first of all, to help these people, and then back their efforts to gain moral and material compensation for torture and abuse. Still, in spite of the things these people had been through, we frequently encountered a complete lack of empathy with them and their experiences. I believe that this lack of understanding,

1 Offensive military actions whereby Croatia gained control over the entire ex-Republic of Serbia Krajina, in May and August 1995.

2 It is a well-established fact that the police were ordered to apprehend all persons whose identity cards were marked with the letter "T". However, we cannot speculate here on what this mark stood for ("transit" or something similar). It is, however, certain that the mark meant that the person in question had to do something with Croatia or Bosnia & Herzegovina.

3 At least four years, i.e., until Operation "Storm" began.

occasional hostility towards the idea of compensation, and depreciation (or downplaying) of the question of possible psychological consequences in war victims[4] reveal the incapacity of Serbian society to face war consequences in the posttraumatic period.

This paper contains a review of a conference on forcibly conscripted refugees – the confrence in which I presented our project. I will try to demonstrate how the material I collected on the occasion indicates a certain pattern of representations of war victims and their life context and, especially, a certain pattern of representations of the war that happened in the 1990s. In a further text, I will try to put those representations into a theoretical perspective.

LAW OR JUSTICE?

My analytical material consists of some of the statements put forth in the conference *Forcible conscription of refugees in Serbia – legal and psychological consequences*, held in Belgrade on April 4, 2005. The conference, which rallied representatives of various NGOs and governmental agencies,[5] was characterized by an open and confrontational ambiance in which many various views were put forward. The very nature of the discussion provided a good opportunity to analyze the statements presented for some of the frequent attitudes towards victims in this country. What was said there?

First of all, much attention was paid to the theme of the *reality* of traumatic events and their consequences, which were either downplayed, devaluated in their importance or compared/measured with some other consequences. To the judges who had experience in compensatory lawsuits, psychiatric opinions about clients seemed phony, "somehow all identical, as if copied one after another". This view was followed by a questioning of the very validity of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a diagnosis ("if there are so many who have PTSD, then everybody has it"). A question was also raised about "whether those three or four days in Erdut" could produce such consequences. If such a "small" event (several days in a "training" camp) could produce PTSD, then all traumatic experiences could be made relative. Indeed, one of the female participants said that then she too could "sue the state for esthetic deterioration, for all those years of stress". Somebody also asked "how could one compare those who spent a day or several days in Erdut with those who spent months in a detention camp", while someone else remarked that those "couple of days" surely could not be so terrible as months spent on the frontline. Then the discussion moved toward the proposal/conclusion to "measure the intensity of infraction of rights by the number of hours or days spent in a particular place". There was also a question of why the charges were filed "just

4 The consequences I have seen in the last couple of years.

5 In total, 34 experts in various fields.

now", ten years after the forcible conscription, i.e., why our clients did not file their charges earlier. We explained that the majority of the clients spoke about their fear of seeking assistance before (in the previous period), and that they felt encouraged only by the fact that the number of those seeking compensation was by now considerable, but this explanation did not meet understanding. There was also a denial of the fact that many of the forcibly conscripted had inferior education, were unaware of their rights and unable to get the necessary information, aside for the fact that they frequently lived in collective refugee shelters, very much isolated from the rest of the population. Instead, we were told that "they could have informed themselves had they wished, so that this is not a justification for their tardiness".

The discussion became especially bitter when we considered the issue of the money to be paid as compensation. One of the female participants compared the value of the compensation sought by the forcibly conscripted refugees with the value given to a mother who had lost her son in war, thus clearly suggesting that the forcibly recruited demanded too much. At that point, the discussion turned into a competitive bidding on the adequate values for compensation, as well as into a measurement of the relative gravity of various experiences. It was also stated that "the Hague tribunal does not pay too much, since, for instance, one person who had been mistakenly arrested was compensated with 3 000 euros".[6] By that time, the excited participants took completely opposite positions. All in all, the debate resulted in a conclusion that "you can try to help, but not seek assistance in courts". Or, as one of the lady judges stated, "you cannot get justice in a court; you can only get the law" (we will return later to this otherwise true sentence).

If I were to recall the round table in terms of group dynamics, I would say that everything looked very explosive. The group quickly split in two camps: those who advocated compensation and those who opposed it. However, the intensity of discussion did not correspond at all to a relatively simple formal pretext: submission of a petition to the Supreme Court of Serbia (the second part of this monograph contains more details about this initiative). The feeling I had at the beginning differed considerably from the one I had at the end. Initially, I was quite thrilled to see judges, lawyers who represented our clients, state officials and members of large Serbian NGOs, all sitting around the same table (a picture I dared not dreaming of a few years ago). However, after the end, we drank coffee in two separate groups, again feeling bitterly that there were still "us" and "them" - the cleavage being much bigger, deeper and more senseless than I thought. In that particular place as well, I realized how still impossible it was in this country to think about the war that took place some time ago. Briefly, there were simple black-and-white images, a simplified, split understanding of justice and compensation, suspicion, an impression of being attacked, followed by a need to

6 This was said in the conference but not verified afterwards.

defend personal opinions, and the occasional sentiment of being overwhelmed by the images of war that surfaced from descriptions of other victims. All this meant that the war was still alive in our thoughts, and that it was not possible to integrate the traumatic events we all had experienced.

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE GROUP: METHODOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS

The denial of compensation of people who were victimized by members of their own ethnic group has to be understood in a practical context. Possible explanations of various attitudes have to shed light on the interaction between victims and spectators, but they also have to elucidate the psychosocial context in which our clients live. The goal, thus stated, demands a much more serious study which would largely surpass the present text. Instead, I will offer a brief review of relevant attitudes. A justification for such a procedure could be found in an immediate, non-theoretical need: support of concrete efforts to protect people who suffered harm. The explanation that will follow will not be possible without some historical and political references, and I will consequently make a short digression in order to explain some methodological difficulties.

Psychoanalysis has frequently made an effort to explain conflicts, wars and totalitarian regimes from the dynamic point of view, i.e. by analyzing unconscious motives, defenses and conflicts. Still, I find it difficult to translate terms of individual psychopathology into the "psychopathology" of mass or large groups, first of all because these group phenomena are complex and cannot be explained only psychologically[7]. Secondly, omission of a more complex social, economic and political context almost inevitably leads to simplified parallels between the development of an armed conflict and mental illness. This, in turn, produces impressions of "sick" vs. "healthy" nations, which is an oversimplification that has never produced anything valuable. There are two paradigmatic (partially overlapping) psychological explanations: regression of large groups and the so-called "posttraumatic explanation". The first explanation basically develops Freud's original explanation of mass psychology (Freud, 1921), and was used by Volkan in his analyses of the ex-Yugoslav conflict (Volkan, 1997; Volkan, 2002; Volkan, 1999). His account contains several premises that deserve critical consideration. The first one postulates the existence of "the identity of a large group", which is a part of the "core identity" and has its roots in early development. Building his explanation of this identity on the basis of Erikson's works and Kernberg's work on borderline personality structures, Volkan puts

7 "The understanding of even larger social group issues cannot be achieved through psychoanalytic understanding alone and doubtless requires interdisciplinary contributions from social psychologists, economists, historians, etc." (Blum, 1986).

national identity within the same category, automatically ascribing to it core characteristic as well. In his opinion, a large group in a crisis situation passes through regression, which may be stimulated by politicians or political regimes, with resulting involvement in a violent conflict, instigated by the impulse to preserve identity, because the threat of losing identity equals the threat of death[8]. The second explanation, also founded on a pathological pattern, is the "posttraumatic explanation" (which has recently became a frequent approach in Serbian professional community as well). It postulates that the 1991 conflict in the ex-Yugoslavia represents some sort of continuation or reenactment of the 1941 conflict, while its shocking intensity is explained by a long period of communist repression and interdiction of discussion about inter-ethnic conflicts in the Second World War.[9] The "posttraumatic explanation" also implies a generational transfer of the trauma of genocide from the Second World War. According to this view, the second (and third) generation of victims takes upon itself the duty of revenge.[10]

The explanation that makes the fear of losing one's (group) identity one of the organizing factors in conflict situations represents a rough analogy with psychotic fears of identity loss and fragmentation in disturbed persons. When speaking of the psychological causes of war, I think that the organizing factor of every group is not the fear of losing group identity but rather the fear for one's

8 "The loss or threat of losing one's core identity creates extreme anxiety, even terror, in an individual"

9 Volkan partially uses this explanation in the context of the chosen trauma, when speaking how Milošević reincarnated the trauma of the defeat in Kosovo in 1389 and thus set off combat against Muslims (Bosniaks and Albanians) in the former Yugoslavia. If we were to analyze the role of the Kosovo myth in modern Serbian culture or Serbian understanding of national identity, we would incline more towards the sociological concept of "cultural trauma", which stresses the cultural memory of trauma in the imagination of a group (for example, the memory of slavery in Afro-American cultural products (Eyerman, 2001). Cultural trauma does not include the necessary immediate direct group experience, nor does it in any final sense correspond to aspirations or convictions of some homogeneous group.

10 In a short passage, Glover offers some facts: "One boy of twelve came close to death at the hands of Ustase. A killing squad led by their closest neighbour had come to murder the family. They escaped because they were out. That boy's son, Milan Babic, led the Krajina rebellion against Tudjman's government. General Adzic, the Yugoslav national army chief of staff, who planned the war against Croatia, had hidden in a tree as a boy, while Ustase troops hacked his parents to death. General Mladic's father was killed by the Ustase. Milan Kovacevic, who ran a string of Serbian concentration camps around Prijedor, had himself been born in the Croatian camp at Jasenovac" (Glover, 2001). However, as Blum says when speaking about the relationship between early individual traumatic experience and later behavior of the perpetrator: "The danger in this line of thinking lies in simplistic explanation in the generalization from individual to mass disturbance, in a genetic fallacy that may offer illusory continuity and comprehension." (Blum, 1986)

life.[11] On the other hand, nationalistic narrations, which inevitably contain historical references as well (when we omit analysis of particular contents), essentially come down to the rhetoric of "blood and soil", national "founding myths", the elaboration of national exclusiveness or superiority ("Serbs are people of heaven") and, simultaneously, the creation of existential threats that a nation faces. Moreover, special attention is paid to the righteousness of war ("Serbian land is where Serbian graves are") and dehumanization of the adversary, and this sequence can be found in many wars throughout history. In the Yugoslav case, similar fears and pre-fabricated answers, projected by a powerful propaganda machine at the end of the 1980s, gradually became the official history and official politics. But what (and how) can we infer from individual narrative: conclusions about the identity of a large group (which is supposedly determined in early development), or only conclusions about the person who (re)produced the narrative?[12] How can we speak about the "core" national identity of entire nations, while setting aside the heterogeneity and complexity of these groups?[13]

I will try to focus here on an analysis of feelings and attitudes of *individuals*. I will analyze individual representations of a particular group, while trying to demonstrate how these representations are distorted by unconscious attitudes. No matter what group we take into account, attitudes towards it will

11 There is one Glover's elegant, simple and, I think, true psychological metaphor about "The trap of Hobbesian fear" (Glover, 2001), which he described by a Tukidid's sentence about the cause of the Peloponnesian war: "What made war inevitable was the growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta". What Milošević did at the end of the 1980s (creation of a personal, absolutistic regime in Vojvodina, Kosovo and Montenegro) must have stirred up fear and nationalistic rage in other ethnic groups.

12 A. Vučo (Vučo, 2002) wrote about ethnic stereotypes in the pre-war Yugoslavia, systematizing them on the oral, anal and genital level (stereotypes about nutritional habits, hygiene and sexual behavior of other groups), but he also stressed their universal character, which denies their determining effect in conflict development. A subtler relationship between the individual and the social element was described by Traub-Werner (Traub-Werner, 1984): "The process of prejudice is constituted by faulty or arrested development that leads to the formation of pathological defensive structures. The defensive structures can only take the form of prejudice within a historical framework and against a cultural background that will provide the ideational content to the process of prejudice. This content is culturally bound and will determine 'who I hate', while the defensive structure of the process will answer the question 'why I hate'. Last, but not least, the interaction between the individual psychopathology and group psychology will determine the form that the process takes, i.e., 'how I hate'."

13 A still unpublished survey carried out on persons exposed to the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina revealed that premorbid personality characteristics (including indicators of criminal behavior, family relations, attitudes toward parents, school achievement, peer behavior, problems in early development, etc.) predicted not only the development of PTSD, but also war-related experiences, such as the place and the role a person had in the war (Jović, 2005).

express the unconscious processes (conflicts, defense mechanisms or capacities for thinking) of the persons advocating these attitudes. It will be an analysis of the individual elaboration of external (social and political) circumstances, born out of the human need to find an epistemological framework for unbearable experience. Unfortunately, it is always easier to borrow this framework from the already available pool of simple explanations. Much like simple splitting is more economical than some more sophisticated defense, we can expect that individuals will more often accept explanations replete with simple representations of the self and others. The popularity or acceptability of a particular variant of group experience will depend on the possible psychological benefits it may bring to the individual. However, the importance of these indices lies in their possible destructive value for the people we work with and whose interest we protect, even when they themselves are victims of similar simplified patterns.

This paper purports to demonstrate that the difficulties of understanding of war victims' needs - and especially the lack of empathy with their need to obtain compensation for their suffering - are a consequence of a complex and largely unconscious mechanism. This explanation can be broken down into several statements: 1) the root of the lack of empathy with this group is a denial of complex feelings related to the denial of war trauma carried out through isolation or negation of traumatic experience and projection of these feelings into the people who participated in war, which seemingly creates an insurmountable barrier between "participants" and "spectators"; 2) this mechanism is not one-sided and is made possible by the fact that "participants" unconsciously accept the projected role; 3) the reason for splitting and denial is a trauma-related persecutory guilt, either guilt for things done (or guilt for the wish to have them done) or survival guilt; 4) social mechanisms of denial of persecutory guilt include control mechanisms which are especially revealed in attitudes toward ill veterans; 5) the raising of the issue of compensation of victims sets off and inflames these processes because it touches the question of guilt ("*Who* is guilty?"), to which neither individuals nor institutions are willing to respond. Refusal to face this question, in fact, arrests the social process of reexamination of things done and hinders development of mechanisms and institutions that could, first of all, empower individuals to mourn their losses, but also equip society with an efficient protection from the repetition of the same in the future. But let us start with the first assumption: what feelings are contained in the representations of this group, given the fact that they arouse such strong emotional reactions?

DANGEROUS INDIVIDUALS

There are several characteristics that distinguish forcibly conscripted refugees from other war victims in the former Yugoslavia and transform them into a suitable container for various feelings. First of all, they are men of Serbian nationality and

are, as such, traditionally *expected* to be recruited to defend the people they belong to. The question of *how* this mobilization was carried out seemed far less important. Second, they were abused and tortured by members of their own ethnic group, which "spoils" the stereotypes of the good and bad side in this war, especially because this opens the unpleasant story of the role of paramilitaries in this war. Third, their claim for monetary compensation places them outside of empathic understanding. Fourth, they come forth with psychological and psychiatric expertise showing that many of them suffer from stress-related disorders and thus take on themselves a part of the stigma reserved for the mentally ill. Fifth, the whole context in which they were arrested and abused indicates an organized and direct involvement of the Serbian police in the war in Croatia and Bosnia & Herzegovina.[14] Sixth, they are a part of a defeated army and a symbol of a defeated national policy. And lastly, we should not forget the cumulative effect of all these factors.

Since the beginning of the war in the former Yugoslavia, the media have for years talked about the persons who suffered from psychological consequences of war, but they mentioned them almost exclusively in the context of some violent event (suicide or murder) committed by persons "who had come from the frontline" and who were immediately supposed to suffer from the "Vietnam syndrome".[15] The media are still willing to report these unfortunate events in a sensationalizing manner, and the same goes for the cases where the mentally ill were somehow involved in violent acts. This further stigmatization in the media favored the formation of an image of a dangerous, mentally disturbed warrior who is to be cured, controlled or put away from society by all possible means.

14 The question "why compensatory claims of the forcibly conscripted refugees have been filed just now" seemed particularly important, since it opened a Pandora's box of various political meanings. It has been ten years since the forcible conscription took place; the limitation period for filing compensatory claims for forcible conscription is five years, while the limitation period for unlawful arrest is ten years. Our petition to the Supreme Court of Serbia proposed a prolongation of the limitation period for filing compensatory claims by tying them to the limitation period for unlawful arrest. If forcible conscription of refugees was treated as a war crime against civilians (unlawful transfer to concentration camps and other unlawful transfer – covered by paragraph 142 of the Criminal law of Yugoslavia), it would not be barred by the statute of limitations, so that our petition, in fact, turned out to be a kind of compromise for abandoning insistence on this act as a war crime (which would also entail the questions of whom Serbia was in war with, as well as the question of reparations to be paid to Croatia and B&H, etc.).

15 In fact, from the "post-Vietnam syndrome"; the term itself appeared originally in New York Times in 1971, on a similar occasion (after the death of Lieutenant Johnson, who had been decorated for exceptional merit in Vietnam and was killed in an armed robbery of a convenience store in Detroit). This was one of the events that initiated the strong political movement which led to the opening of more than 200 centers financed by (but independent of) the Veterans Administration (Shatan, 1997).

Simultaneously, much less attention was paid to the problems of refugees and warriors, their adjustment and their needs for systematic assistance. Briefly, these themes seldom made headlines in the country "that produced much more history than it could digest" (to use the famous Churchill phrase about Yugoslavia). That is how a large group of individuals simply "disappeared" from the public eye, or were mentioned seldom and then only with negative connotations. Let us try to understand this.

M. Foucault once said that we inherited from the Middle Ages two patterns of dealing with "dangerous individuals": exclusion (as with lepers) and inclusion (i.e., control and surveillance, as in quarantines for plague sufferers) (Foucault, 2002). The mentally ill have for centuries been seen as dangerous, which led to the "Grand confinement", i.e., the foundation of asylums whereby hundreds of thousands of individuals were permanently excluded from society. Grinberg speaks about "mentally ill persons as depository of the persecutory guilt of the family and society" (Grinberg, 1992). Lévy-Strauss described two types of society – *anthropophagous* ones, which "swallow" people, transforming them into persons without identifiable existence, and *anthropoemic* ones, which "vomit" them (in: Grinberg, 1992). Using this description as a metaphor, I could say that the rebellious Serbs in the breakaway, independent Croatia (whose ruling elite maintained itself in power by advocating an ideology of national identity) had to be thrown out ("cleansed"), while Serbia swallowed and forgot them. In Serbia, this group - a quarter of a million of refugees - never became a clearly recognizable political or social factor with a clearly defined agenda of protection of its interests.[16] For the majority of them, integration meant abandonment of the past and "old identity", while repatriation was not feasible because of the various obstacles set by Croatian authorities, and a strong feeling of insecurity. Fourteen years after the beginning of the war in Croatia, there are still collective refugee shelters in Serbia, usually outside larger settlements, while refugee issues have been neglected or abused for years, depending on the current political needs. Moreover, aside from a couple of attempts, there are still no specialized services for treatment and rehabilitation of persons suffering from stress-related disorders, while numerous programs of education never resulted in systematic changes of curricula in schools and universities. So far, no systematic epidemiological

16 It is interesting that the leaders of the former regime blazed the trail in that creation of the impression that refugees from Croatia and Bosnia & Herzegovina were dangerous. For example, they blamed refugees for the 1996/97 winter protest and, according to one report, Milošević himself considered them as "political nuisance and economical albatrosses", thus alluding to some kind of voracity (Milka Ljubičić, "Oluja, deset godina kasnije - pitanja koja čekaju odgovor: Stradanje u ime 'vožda i oca domovine'", Danas, 05.08.2005.). We have to remember that the big war-mongering campaign at the beginning of the 1990s was initiated precisely for the protection of their interests. I will not delve here into assessment of political statements of various groups in Serbia.

research of the prevalence of mental disorders has been carried out, although the results of some preliminary research on isolated groups reveal very high rates (Tenjović et al. 2001; Tenjović et al. 2004; Jović et al. 2005; Lecic-Tosevski and Draganic-Gajic, 2004).

The other players in the drama were "swallowed" as well: there is a complete public denial of the issue of the soldiers and policemen from Serbia who participated in the war in Croatia and Bosnia. The official line says that Serbia did not take part in the war and that the only individuals who engaged themselves "on the other side of the Drina" were volunteers. In Croatia, the Serbs who participated in the war as members of the Army of the Serbian Republic of Krajina are deemed rebels and terrorists and are therefore denied the status of legitimate combatants. The active YNA[17] soldiers were granted the status of "war participants" at the beginning of the conflict, while afterwards, they were registered as volunteers in the units of the of the Army of the Serbian Republic or the Army of the Serbian Republic of Krajina. Forcibly conscripted refugees, however, had their documents taken away before being sent off to the frontline, in order to conceal their identity in the case of imprisonment or death.

In the meantime, nothing in fact has been "brought to an end"; there has not been any reflection on the national level, any reexamination of the national position after a series of disastrous wars, crimes, bitter defeats and humiliations. Almost no step, even a symbolic one, has been taken towards reconciliation with the other ethnic groups we fought with. In the psychological sense, the barrier between those who participated and those who observed ("spectators") has only been reinforced. I call them "spectators" because I am inspired by descriptions of the large corps of officials, bureaucrats and common civilians who worked in Nazi death camps (or around them), and who, during the Holocaust, were indifferent to the sufferings of prisoners, although they themselves did not commit any direct crime. We all could watch pictures of the "conquest/liberation" of Vukovar (the bombardment of this town lasted longer than the NATO bombing campaign), or the bombardment of Dubrovnik; we all could know about Srebrenica or many other crimes. Nonetheless, all the officials who spoke in public were surprised after the broadcasting of a film about the execution of a group of Bosniak boys by a paramilitary group that called itself "The Scorpions".[18] We all knew about the killings of Serbian civilians in Osijek, Vukovar, Split, Gospić and other places, but the Croatian public was nevertheless shocked when this issue surfaced (15 years later), through a confession of a man who had killed several Serbian civilians under orders when he was 16. I sincerely hope that the crimes against Serbs and other "non-Muslims" in besieged Sarajevo will soon become known – the crimes I came to know of directly through the stories of my clients who had survived them. When

17 The Yugoslav National Army - the old, legitimate army of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

18 Documentary footage broadcast by the Belgrade-based B92 TV station, in June 2005.

I speak about "spectators", I speak not only about those persons (or those parts of us) who have intimately justified these misdeeds while espousing the national project, "national interest" or whatever other rationalization that had been offered by the media. I have in mind that big group of individuals - in all warring sides - who did not commit any crime, nor directly participated in war, but who, nevertheless, identified themselves with leaders and their solutions and succeeded in hating their erstwhile neighbors, thus finding a libidinous relation with such projects, while ensuring for themselves a safe psychological position of belonging, a peace of torn representations and a freedom from the unbearable deliberation of the absurdity of war. This is presently a big group which is still in the gray zone (in the area where the war is seemingly over and, as such, not worth mentioning), and which easily switches to every new ideology provided it offers distancing from the reexamination of war crimes. I distinguish this group from one much smaller (but still alive) group of persons who have succeeded in resisting group stereotypes and the siren song of paranoid rhetoric, and who never intimately acquiesced to the dehumanization of other nations. These people are at least aware that a war happened and that it is an immutable fact that changed our lives forever. The second group, I believe, has much bigger chances of mourning its losses and continuing life by integrating war experience into some new form of sense.

However, the war remains alive because it is split and "transferred" onto others – the ones who "participated" and whom "that misery befell". The question of a clear dividing line between participants and spectators becomes a hot psychological question, because a clear separation ensures distance and safe denial of one's own hostile and nationalistic aggressive feelings (among others), but it also does the same with the feelings of frustration, deprivation, resentment and anger provoked by defeat of grandiose nationalistic visions. Unbearable feelings must be severed and displaced. The war took place outside of Serbia, much like it seems that it happened only to those who were in the combat zone, while the fact that it happened to *all of us* is completely denied. Thus, the group containing the war reference has to be kept at a safe psychological distance, and if it appears in public, it takes form of "dangerous individuals", war-maddened warriors who can destroy (kill) non-contaminated peaceful citizens.

However, hostile and aggressive nationalistic rage is not the only emotion displaced onto this group; similar externalizations enable us to maintain self-love and the remaining social bonds[19], but also serve as the ultimate defense against depression[20]. They contain all that has been contaminated by war, all the things we

19 "Self love and social bonds were protected by externalization of what was despised in the self and objects, to alien groups and scapegoats" (Blum, 1986).

20 In a study of anti-Semitism, which was carried out immediately after the Second World War, Ackerman and Jahoda (Ackerman and Jahoda, 1948) demonstrated that anti-Semitism was only (negatively) correlated with depression and deep self-recrimination: "The existence of an anti-Semitic reaction presupposes a tendency to

cannot stand within ourselves or cannot mourn or get over: ten years of poverty, fear, insecurity, misery and humiliation, all that culminating in the complete helplessness during the NATO bombing campaign, when all could we do was listen to planes and explosions and stare at destroyed buildings and dead bodies. If the boundary between the "participant" and "spectator" group was disrupted (as I believe happened for a moment in the discussion I described), then one could indeed raise the question: "Who has not been traumatized?" The whole package of war-related emotions and political and economic insecurity will explode in our faces, repeatedly and with a renewed feeling of impossibility of understanding experience and forever setting aside suffering in order to continue living. That is why war stories leave such a strong aftertaste of (psychological) mutilation, of deep psychological scars that did not or could not heal.

SURVIVAL OF GUILT

An additional characteristic that can be observed in forcibly conscripted refugees - which, I believe, makes them particularly suitable for the "deposition" of the unconscious contents we spoke about - is their *personal* feeling of guilt. Numerous contacts with these individuals have made me aware that what made them suffer most was the fact that they had been labeled as "traitors" or "deserters", or accused of "the ruin of the state". These feelings were equally disturbing for individuals who never before had been in war, as well for those soldiers who had spent four years on the frontline before escaping to Serbia. In conversations, the theme of "fleeing" or abandoning one's birthplace was something that very rarely appeared in spontaneous associations. But their dreams spoke otherwise and I could frequently obtain contents relating to the home or the place that in reality was abandoned or destroyed, themes relating to the responsibility towards one's family or soldiers from the same unit - repetitive dreams about the killed or deceased or persons who had the same experiences in detention camps.

Simultaneously, one finds material about combat participation, which is almost always subject to avoidance (I will try to offer a more detailed description later). Here I cannot give a systematic review of the characteristic material, but I can say that guilt significantly determines posttraumatic adjustment of a large number of these individuals. I believe that this guilt is crucial if we are to understand why these people almost inexplicably accepted the humiliation they were exposed to during forcible conscription or, more precisely, if we are to understand the way most of them speak about these experience, and which, most frequently, is characterized by a bland tone of fatalistic acceptance. I think that this

blame the outside world rather than one's self, and dynamically, such a tendency is in contradiction to the overtly self-destructive trend of a genuine depression. When the focus of hate is directed against the self, the basis for an externalization of aggression in anti-Semitism no longer exists."

guilt explains why so few of them protested publicly against the violation of their rights, and why so few of them continue demanding some sort of compensation (no more than 10%, as far as I know), or are willing to speak publicly about it.

Many authors hold that guilt is an inevitable part of the dynamics of persons with traumatic experiences. The importance of this fact varies over time. The initial description of diagnostic criteria for the clinical picture of PTSD included guilt in two forms: guilt for things done and survival guilt (American Psychiatric Association, 1980), but this criterion was excluded from the subsequent version of the classification (American Psychiatric Association, 1987). Defenses against guilt are very strong and it is not unusual for survivors to deny guilt in their accounts, interviews and self-assessment tests. However, work on guilt represents the very core of psychotherapeutic work and the main marker of any progress in therapy.

The process of integration of traumatic experience represents a complex process of mourning. In other words, mourning is a lifelong, complex psychological mechanism whereby one abandons old relations, bonds and patterns and adopts and develops new, more sophisticated psychological structures needed for normal functioning. Or, as Grinberg said: "Living implies passing through a succession of mourning experiences" (Grinberg, 1992). Development is hampered when the normal process of mourning is arrested, most often when defense mechanisms (which paradoxically serve to attenuate anxiety) begin obstructing integration of new experience. In the pathological organization of personality, these mechanisms include splitting, denial and projective identification, and they are all focused on avoidance of the unbearable feeling of guilt (Steiner, 1990). In the etiopathogenesis of stress-related disorders, the most frequently mentioned theme was dissociation of (traumatic) parts of personality (i.e. traumatic experience), which thwarts integration of that experience and thus precludes an adequate process of mourning. I believe that these two processes are basically very similar, and constantly intertwined, since persecutory guilt plays a capital role in posttraumatic pathology as well.

However, there is a specific quality of guilt in traumatized persons. It frequently reveals itself through negation ("Just don't think I feel guilty..."), but, still, I have seen many ex-warriors who came with a conscious feeling of guilt and spoke about it very clearly. But even in cases where it was apparently completely absent yet revealed itself in secondary contents, we cannot speak about depressive guilt in the strict sense of the term (with self-recrimination, apathy, mourning, lack of will and physical weakening, with feelings of helplessness and despair). The guilt in traumatized persons comes in the persecutory form, most often in the form of externalized hostile objects that must be kept at bay, or in the shape of a concrete traumatic reenactment without guilt but with the realization of a concrete

punishment. In fact, it seems that defusion[21] of instincts (as one of the decisive consequences of traumatic experiences) is simultaneously accompanied by the regression of internal objects that form the super-ego and that trauma, in fact, leaves the individual at the mercy of guilt that is no longer a psychological content but "the pure culture of Thanatos".

The further discussion of this theme will be left for some other occasion. What I wanted to stress here is importance of the (unconscious) feeling of guilt in trauma survivors, but also their susceptibility to the (again unconscious) acceptance of the projected contents in the form of reliving persecutory guilt. Or to put it simply: the psychosis of the crowd that wants to make them scapegoats is experienced in internal space as a realization of persecutory guilt. It looks as if the torture they bore in "training" camps was welcomed with a certain fatalistic longing.

HEROES AND DESERTERS

It seems that medical history has seldom offered such controversies as the one about traumatic neurosis, or PTSD now. The questions of the real existence of difficulties, possible motives for financial compensation or psychological gain, and personal responsibility in traumatic experience have kept recurring for decades in the professional community, regardless of the victims (sexually abused women, combat veterans or victims of industrial, traffic or other accidents) (McFarlane, 2000). The issue of traumatic neurosis in soldiers seems particularly complex. Ben Shephard's impressive monograph about psychiatric attitudes towards warriors and war neurosis in the 20th century (Shephard, 2001) offers a grim picture of modern societies (torn with internal conflicts), military hierarchies (occupied with their simple goals), and doctors (psychiatrists and psychiatry in the service of conflicting interests).

A soldier is expected to be courageous, generous and ready for self-sacrifice. In the popular consciousness, these characteristics are intimately related to patriotism and the role of men in the family and nation. Simultaneously, it is just these characteristics that should testify to one's maturity and morality. The lack of courage and the unwillingness to sacrifice oneself reveal a lack or decrease in morality, or "the weakness of the will", as it was termed in some armies in the 20th century. This attitude was not limited to the military organization alone; it is deeply rooted in the European tradition and one could find several elaborations of these ideas in the history of philosophy. Descartes stated that free will is a mark of the divine in human nature and human beings can be praised or condemned on the basis of their use of it. A person is good only if he/she freely acts for the sake of the common good and this generosity is seen as a paramount virtue. In the First World

21 The opposite of "fusion".

War, German military doctors explained cases of war neurosis - popularly called "*Kriegszitterer*" or "war shakers" because of the tremor that dominated the clinical picture - as "the lack of will-power". The therapy aimed at "the raising of will-power" basically consisted of a series of exhausting physical exercises that, in fact, represented a form of unbearable torture. Consequently, the soldiers preferred to be sent to the frontline. Another way of handling the problem was to label them as deserters.[22]

When describing the "old army" of the British kingdom prior to the First World War, Shephard stresses that a person could be "either sick, well, wounded or mad; anyone neither sick, wounded, nor mad but nonetheless unwilling to or incapable of fighting was necessarily a coward, to be shot if necessary" (Shephard, 2001). But there was also another escape. In the course of time, military medicine made use of various diagnoses that covered the symptoms of what later became known as PTSD, but those diagnoses pointed to organic damage – from the "irritable heart" to "shell-shock"[23].

A specific kind of violence against soldiers was organized in medical institutions as well. The First World War saw a growing interest in therapy by "shock" or "active methods", of which Kaufmann's became the most popular one. Basically, the method consisted in the application of electrical current during long intervals (2 to 5 min.), which caused great pain. Quick initial successes led to wrong conclusions, durability of recovery was low and there were unwanted side effects. However, as time went by, "recovery" demanded ever-longer applications of ever-stronger current which, eventually, resulted in some fatalities. When examining the conditions in which these incidents took place in the Austro-Hungarian army, a special task-force also demanded an opinion from Freud

22 According to Shephard, during the First World War, 306 British and Commonwealth soldiers were executed on account of desertion, insubordination and cowardice. After the end of the war, General Haig affirmed that all the soldiers had been medically examined and that those without a medical indication had not been not executed. It was not until the 1990s that the families of the executed organized and initiated a public campaign to rehabilitate them and compensate the families, but British Prime Minister Anthony Blair rejected the compensatory claims. The families justified their action by claiming that those soldiers, in fact, had suffered from "shell shock", that they had not been examined and that the medical indication had not been taken into account, even in the cases where it had been present. It has to be remarked that, in the same period, the Germans executed 25 soldiers, while the Americans carried out no execution at all.

23 As van der Kolk (van der Kolk et al. 1996) says: "Ascribing an organic origin to traumatic neuroses was particularly important in combat soldiers. Such an attribution offered an honorable solution for all parties who might be compromised by people breaking down under stress: The soldier preserved his self-respect, the doctor did not have to diagnose personal failure or desertion, and military authorities did not have to explain psychological breakdown in previously brave soldiers, or bother with such troublesome issues as cowardice, low unit morale, poor leadership, or the meaning of the war effort itself".

[included in the Standard edition as the "Memorandum on the electrical treatment of war neurotics", appended to the introductory paper on war neuroses (Freud, 1919a)].

This approach, however, was not exclusively limited to that particular time and place. Our generation as well could hear lectures on the treatment of war neuroses with electric shock in our hospitals after the Second World War. The therapy was primarily meant to frighten the patient and thus prevent the appearance of symptoms in the form of crises. During the Second World War, posttraumatic symptomatology (which had a specific manifestation known as "Kozara illness")[24] was detected in 1943 and was reportedly "contagious" in character. At the end of the war, experts spoke about thousands of combatants with these symptoms. It seems that military doctors were extremely doubtful of these symptoms, seeing them mainly as "feigning" and "imitation" (Dojč, 1946). Immediately after the end of the war, Josip Dojč, a medical corps major, divided them "on the basis of... experience... consisting of almost 2000 personally observed cases" into "neurotics, imitators and malingerers"[25], and concluded: "In all three groups, there is no question of a disease but of phenomena which could be suppressed, provided they genuinely try to act with self-discipline and collect their mental energy in order to suppress this phenomenon" (Dojč, 1946). Consequently, he recommended "the most energetic disciplinary and educational measures". Quite differently, the psychoanalyst Hugo Klajn offered a more complex image of young partisans whom he had observed in a specially isolated center near Belgrade (Klajn, 1995). It is quite probable that his complex portrayal of an army deemed heroic delayed the publication of his work for ten years (Trebješanin, 1995)[26]. After the end of the

24 Kozara, a mountain and a region in western Bosnia, universally known in the countries of the former Yugoslavia as the theater of one of the most dramatic battles in the Second World War, when the communist Partisan movement faced near extinction by technically and numerically superior German and German-allied forces. Kozara became a symbol of agonizing escape from death.

25 He gives them high-sounding diagnoses in Latin: psychoneurosis convulsiva belli reactiva (which covers a "relatively small group", made of "psychopaths and hysterics"), psychoneurosis convulsiva belli imitatoria (found in "young, infantile and primitive" persons; imitation is unconscious), and psychoneurosis belli convulsiva simulatoria (denoting the group of persons who consciously simulate attacks because "they realized they could get something thereby").

26 If we again take a look at Klajn's monograph, we will observe two facts that are important for my text: a) all the patients described had exceptionally stressful experiences (from a very short description of 22 cases, it could be seen that 5 were Nazi camp survivors, 5 had a part or the totality of their families killed, while 10 were wounded (most often several times); b) the explicit stress on guilt in descriptions of "defensive attacks" in 4 patients who participated in executions of enemy soldiers. Klajn's explanation of their attacks deserves to be quoted here: "In those attacks a neurotic a) defends himself from (unconscious) self-recrimination, stressing that the enemy deserved to be punished - because he tortured him, killed his family, and so on; b) satisfies his wish for

Yugoslav conflicts of the 1990s, several military psychiatrists confirmed that Klajn's understanding of war neurosis helped them considerably (Špirić and Čabarkapa, 2002).

Through centuries, the soldier has always been considered as a person without identity or, alternatively, with an identity based on a complete identification with the community. Foucault's explanation of the successes of the Prussian army (Foucault, 1997) is based on "the breaking of the body" and the construction of the basic military acts as a series of simple and uniform corporal movements. The procedure aimed, among other things, at the annihilation of any individualistic act and that remained part and parcel of modern military training. There are also some additional factors that may explain the changed role of the soldier. First of all, as the latest wars show, soldiers fight less and less frequently at the borders of their states, with clearly proclaimed goals, which was a usual characteristic of wars since the "nationalization of conflicts" at the end of the Middle Ages (Foucault, 1995). Power and military institutions have become centralized, placed under the state's jurisdiction, when wars began to be waged at the borders of modern states. This has produced an important differentiation in the process of the production of the professional army: distinction between soldiers and civilians, i.e., persons who have been prepared for military action (instructed to kill), and persons who are expected to do just the contrary, who must not be warriors and who subjugate their personal aggression to the demands of social relations. However, it seems that in the last few decades this process has fallen prey to a certain regression – the limits of military action are blurred, as demonstrated by the "War against terror", for example. Nevertheless, defining the role and legitimacy of combatants remains an important legal and psychological question. Every new conflict poses the important question of how to draw a (inevitably very strong) dividing line between "warriors" and "civilians" (Watkin, 2005).

When analyzing these conflicting attitudes we could say that the conflict lies at the core of the definition of interests: the old ideology of submission of individual interests to the state was dramatically changed in the 20th century which, in spite of all the bloody conflicts, witnessed the birth of the individual and the elaboration of an ethics of protection of individual rights. Presently, states in war are faced with internal conflicts which are not easy to resolve, especially when there is no clear definition of the threat to national interest (Abrams, 2000). Soldiers continue to be subject to training that aims at their depersonalization and the dehumanization of the enemy who becomes easier to kill. There still remains a possible frightening moment when military structures and armed individuals detach themselves from the political context of war and start committing senseless crimes

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revenge, by carrying out punishment of the enemy - by shooting him, hanging him, slaying him in an attack; c) punishes himself, through identification with the victim - by executing on himself all possible torture, inflicting pain and injury to himself or hitting, biting, scratching, tearing himself" (Klajn, 1995) (italics in the original).

- the moment when crimes are committed consciously, systematically, deliberately, with an ingenuity that defies the sickest imagination. It seems that there is a certain "body limit", a psychological barrier outside of which the body of the other is no longer seen as a human object, [27] and this is something that resembles a deeply set barrier or taboo against murder. The consequence of wars are veterans who are a symbol of the antithesis to orderly society based on the interdiction of violence and the violation of the rights of others. Thus, these individuals (and their war neuroses) represent persecutory depositories that society has to encapsulate, enclose, isolate – or control by therapeutic means.

MALINGERERS OR PATIENTS?

The establishment of a link between psychological symptoms and claims for compensation for the harm caused is often seen as malingering aimed at some sort of benefit. In fact, the story of traumatic neurosis begins with debates on "railway spine" – pain in the back that occurred after railway accidents. Some of the persons suffering from these disturbances pressed charges against railway companies (and gained considerable indemnities). Lawyers operated in high gear (Hacking, 1995), while doctors took mutually opposite positions in this debate.

In 1867, the English surgeon John Eric Erichsen explained these symptoms by inflammatory processes in the spine marrow (chronic mielomeningitis) (Weisæth and Eitinger, 1991), thus distinguishing them from hysteria – a diagnosis reserved for women at that time. The first one to bring attention to the psychological origin of the symptoms was an another English surgeon, Herbert Page (Ellenberger, 1970). When examining these patients, he found hemianesthesia, which in that time was considered as pathognomonic for hysteria. His explanation that this disorder was not different from classical hysteria was considered as valid in Great Britain and the USA. In Germany, Robert Thomsen and Hermann Oppenheim opposed the idea that hemianesthesia was a proof of hysteric origin. They demonstrated that in "railway spine", hemianesthesia was much harder, depression much deeper and therapeutic response much weaker. They described inorganic cases as "traumatic neurosis", which was the first known use of that term. Charcot, the most influential European neurologist at the time, joined

27 In a previous analysis of the types of torture that the clients of the CRTV had survived (Jovic and Opacic, 2004), we have obtained two distinctive factors: "All cited types of torture from the first factor still seem to belong to an area in which the victim recognises himself/herself as 'other', as another living person, while the torture described in the items of the second factor could be ascribed to treating the body of another as an object over which full and ruthless control has been established. Torture can then represent a triumph over the body (and the barriers of prohibition to inflict injury to others), after which the very killing of the victim is not only possible, but also easy".

the discussion by denying the existence of traumatic neurosis or, more precisely, by introducing the notion of traumatic hysteria. He demonstrated that hypnosis as well could produce results identical to traumatic paralysis, which led French psychiatry to start making a distinction between *classical hysteria* (the etiology of which is mainly determined by heredity) and *traumatic hysteria* (in which heredity has a small or no role at all).

This short story has to be told because it is paradigmatic for the perception of "traumatic neurosis" among the public, since there is still a conceptual cleavage that characterizes the impression of traumatized persons we analyze: the disturbance is either "real" (physical, physiological, with clear corporal, i.e., organic correlates), or "hysteria" and "simulation", given the fact that these two terms have somehow become fatefully linked. In fact, it was not until psychoanalytical explanations after the Second World War that we gained a better understanding of the nature of this disorder. [28] In a paper on war neuroses, Abraham also tackled the question of compensation (Abraham, 1955). Presenting the case of a person who demanded an enormous amount of money as compensation for a wound, he pointed to the deep unconscious meaning that the compensation had for the survivor: "The pension compensates merely for the reduction in earning capacity which can be objectively assessed, and not for that which is far more important in the eyes of the patient, his impoverishment in object love, for which he cannot be adequately compensated".

During the last few years, much effort has been made to understand the question of the gravity of symptoms, their aggravation and malingering in veterans, and their relations to the question of compensation (Smith and Frueh, 1996; Arbisi et al., 2004; Constans et al., 2004). One of the relevant findings says that since 1980, more than 200 000 American veterans claimed benefits on the basis of disability, with PTSD being the most frequently invoked psychiatric grounds (Arbisi et al., 2004). The question: "How is it possible that there are so many traumatized people?" expresses the impression that there is the possibility to deliberately feign psychological consequences of traumatic experiences in order to ensure financial reward. But when we speak about American veterans, we also

28 Before the very end of the war, and after a couple of years of mutual isolation, psychoanalysts rallied at the Fifth international psychoanalytical congress, held in Budapest, on September 28-29, 1918. The congress also included the seminar "Psychoanalysis and war neurosis", which opened with three works of Sándor Ferenczi, Karl Abraham and Ernst Simmel. These works, together with a work of Ernest Jones on the same subject (which had been presented in London, in the Royal Society of Medicine, somewhat earlier on, in April 1918), were published together a year later in a monograph (which should have been the first one in the newly-established series Internationale Psychoanalytische Bibliothek»), with a foreword by Freud, also included in the Standard edition (Freud, 1919b). One of the conclusions of the seminar was opening of centers for treatment of war neuroses, but the plan was abandoned because of the Revolution and the end of the war.

have to keep in mind another kind of statistic: according to the most meticulously (as far as we know) designed epidemiological study of the psychological consequences of war (*National Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Study*), the number of veterans suffering from PTSD in the period after the war was huge.[29] It is a fact that many individuals who were exposed to wars develop some sort of psychological problems later on. This finding has been obtained in this country as well, in a study of 1500 refugees, returnees and local inhabitants which was simultaneously carried out in Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina and Serbia (Jović et al. 2005). On self-assessment instruments, all three groups in all three countries revealed similar values of symptoms of stress-related disorders: elaborate statistical analyses ascertained that 35,7% of refugees, 35,3% of returnees and 27,4% of local inhabitants revealed the values on the Impact of Event Scale (IES) that correspond to the existence of stress-related disorders at the time of study. When these huge percentages were compared with the same respondents' answers to some simple questions (such as "Do you take tranquilizers now?"), we obtained similar percentages: 29,2% for returnees, 29,8% for refugees and 27,0% for local inhabitants. I have to stress that the survey was carried out in a manner that could in no way suggest to the respondents that they would obtain any external incentive if they aggravated their symptoms. Whatever conclusion we may draw from these data, we have to remember the consequences of a very brutal war that included a very large strata of population, whose consequences will continue to be felt for decades. Does the question "How come there are so many traumatized persons?" represent a repeated attempt to turn a blind eye to "the real price of the political projects of the 1990s" (Jović et al. 2005)?

In our case, there is something else: our clients *do not demand* compensation on the basis of psychiatric diagnoses, or evidence that physical or psychological pain was inflicted on them, but on the basis of unlawful arrest and transfer to army units outside of the Republic of Serbia, in a period in which they enjoyed the internationally recognized status of refugees. Their encounter with a psychiatrist was just a part of the regular procedure, and what I saw most often

29 The research did not include only the target group (Vietnam war veterans, the so-called "theater veterans"), but also two control groups: 1) soldiers who had been engaged in the army in the period of the war but had not directly participated in it ("era veterans") and 2) civilians. The research demonstrated that 15.2% of American soldiers who had participated in the Vietnam war had PTSD at the time of study, which makes about 480 000 cases out of 3.14 million men who had participated in the war. Life prevalence was double: 30.9% of all respondents. This percentage was much higher for soldiers who had been exposed to high stress in the combat zone (35.8%, PTSD prevalence rate at the time of study). Higher risk of disorder was directly correlated to higher level of combat exposure, which partially explained the significant difference of PTSD rate in Caucasians (13.7%), Afro-Americans (20.6%) and Latin-Americans (27.9%).

differed strongly from the usual representation of a soldier who aggravates or feigns his troubles. [30]

RECOMPENSE OR RECOGNITION?

The question of compensation for the victims of forcible conscription opens, in turn, several other political, social and moral questions in our posttraumatic society characterized by denial. Compensations of the Holocaust victims begun long after the end of the Second World War. The victims' unwillingness to talk about their experiences is an important psychological factor; the second and third generation opened the question of the Holocaust and reparations.[31] The question of

30 In a period of ten months, I examined 22 of the 150 forcibly conscripted refugees who had contacted the CRTV during a period of more than twelve months. The majority of the clients I saw did not spontaneously talk about their symptoms. In fact, they sought a psychiatrist not of their own but because, as I said, they understood it as an obligatory part of the regular procedure. A few of them were symptomless (4 in total), while another 7 spoke of the troubles that had disappeared in the meantime. The troubles typically corresponded to PTSD symptoms, and the clients regularly reported them as "dreams" or "pictures"; additional examination yielded the complete picture followed by symptoms of avoidance and hyperirritability. However, a considerable number of the examinees still revealed PTSD symptoms at the moment of examination. Almost typically, they denied the "troubles", but when I started asking more direct questions, the outlines of posttraumatic reactions began to appear. We have to bear in mind that some of these people had spent much time on the frontline, with varying degrees of traumatization. Before "Flash" and "Storm", the front in Croatia was relatively calm during a long period of time, but we can say that some of our clients had participated in direct combat. They had difficulty talking about it, thus similarly avoiding pain, but also trying to suggest that the experience of forcible conscription and imprisonment overshadowed the war experience. As if "the things that happened there" were somehow expected and bearable while "the things that happened here" were both unexpected and especially hurtful. It is impossible for me now to give a full account of the complex interactions of various traumatic experiences. The types of torture these people have been exposed to will be analyzed in the second part of this monograph, but it has to be stressed here that, in difference with close combat experience, the experience of "training" camps was one of the genuine torture and clearly distinct from other war-related experiences, as it included complete helplessness and a series of psychic humiliations.

31 This is how Huber (Huber, 2002) describes the so-called "generational factor": "Following the Second World War, Holocaust survivors were not ready and not in the position to talk about their fate. They consciously and unconsciously avoided their past; besides this, they were too busy building up new lives, for the most part in Israel or the USA. What is more: revelations about the concentration camps did not correspond with the real horror, and in the USA of the 1950s one was more worried about the misery of anticommunist refugees than about Holocaust survivors. Even the Jewish establishment in the USA 'forgot' about the Holocaust, since West Germany was a crucial ally in the confrontation with the Soviet Union. To put the past in the spotlight did not serve any purpose; it

compensation can also be regarded as a social movement, much like the compensatory claims of Afro-Americans (for the period of slavery), or the demands of Japanese-American who were interned in concentration camps during the Second World War. However, these actions demand a framing, or a decision about *who* is the malefactor, *who* is the victim, *what* wrong has been done and *what* is the reparation desired (Howard-Hassmann, 2004).

Compensation is not money. It is a reparation of the damage done, and international law informs us of different kinds of reparation: "National authorities should therefore facilitate access to a variety of reparations, including judicial, compensatory, rehabilitative, restitutive, declaratory and commemorative forms" (Dalton, 2003). A clear decision to admit to the victims that they suffered a crime is much more important than the type of reparation or the amount of money. That is what I clearly heard from a client who had been arrested as teenager and brought to Erdut. During the next ten years he experienced fears and nightmares, and now offers a chronic picture of a traumatized person, with all the secondary disorders and a failing family and professional life. When we touched on the issue of compensation, he said clearly: "Frankly, I don't care about it at all; what's important to me is the fact that there is *someone* who, after all these years, still remembers what they did to us". In the psychological sense, it is important to define the type and the just measure of compensation. Otherwise, the chaos of compensation bidding will continue and the very idea of reparation will be rendered meaningless, with victims remaining a potential target for manipulation by various interested parties (doctors and lawyers) who, already, offer promises and huge money (while charging for their services, for sure).

But before recognizing victims, there has to be a broader, clearer political will to name the deeds by their real name. The public has to take a stand on these crimes and the war. On the social level, the question "Who is guilty?" has never found an answer in this country, while institutions behave as if they are trying to ignore the question and continue with life while attempting to deny the reality of the past. This creates a social ambiance that precludes confrontation with the war while, on the individual level (for victims and others alike), it hinders the integration of traumatic experience through the process of mourning. The individual process will be caught in the social framework that thwarts it, much like a sick family thwarts the normal development of a child (to use a slightly rough analogy). First of all (but not exclusively), that particular social framework has to be founded on legal mechanisms that can ensure not only victim compensation, but

complicated things. Both the Eichmann trial (1961-62), which caused a public debate about the 'Final Solution' in Israel, and the 'Auschwitz trials' in Germany (1963-65), opened up the taboo. Personal stories by Holocaust survivors (Elie Wiesel, Primo Levi, Jean Amery) in the 1960s and 1970s represent the first attempts to bring the Holocaust closer to a wider public. But both the perpetrators and victims in general remained silent about the past. Only a genuine development within Jewish circles in the USA opened the debate".

also the naming and punishment of the culprits. The system's institutions, which are supposed to protect the people from the state, and not the state from the people (as I said at the conclusion of the round table), are not independent, free (or mature) enough to enforce "the law". As long as this does not happen – ideally, through a lengthy reform of all state institutions, social soul-searching and the development of mechanisms for protection of the weak - we can do nothing else but demand "justice" through various mechanisms, movements, actions and projects.

The reasons for this situation far exceed the interests of one particular group. "Because we live in the first period in history in which there is such full awareness of cruelty and killing as they happen, our response is particularly important. We can start to establish a tradition that, based on our knowledge of the atrocities, we find them intolerable, and will do what we can to eradicate them" (Glover, 2001). Or we can help continue another tradition that accepts them fatalistically. In this affair, there can be no "participants" and "spectators".

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