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The text combines major textual contributions by Mikloš Biro, Marina Blagojević, David MacDonald, Tatjana Perić, Falk Pingel, Cynthia Simmons and Margaret Smith. It also benefited from comment and criticism from other team members.

Although the team was not part of the original project, it was added at the suggestion of Marina Blagojević, during the June 2002 SI meeting in Sarajevo – by which time NED research funds had already been apportioned among the previously established ten teams. Nonetheless, David Bruce MacDonald organized the team in 2004, which was inspired by Blagojević’s work on “positive history”. The research and writing was apportioned among the seven authors, each of whom contributed to an initial 35,800-word draft that was then reviewed by all SI participants in September-October 2007, after which Prof. MacDonald revised and abridged it for publication.

LIVING TOGETHER OR HATING EACH OTHER?

◆ David MacDonald, Editor ◆

Introduction

After years of research by the Scholars' Initiative, much of the history has already been documented and discussed by the other teams. Team 10 has argued that "if the Scholars' Initiative has a role to play . . . it must go beyond an aspiration merely to debunk local mythologies, and embrace the task of furthering a more objective general understanding of changes that affect us all." We take this role seriously and aim to promote efforts to dispel negative myths about the past while exploring ways of gaining an objective or at least more neutral understanding of the 1990s and before.

Whereas the first ten chapters examine the events that led from dissolution to a decade of armed conflict, we conclude this volume by revisiting a central justification of the nationalists: that the peoples of former Yugoslavia could not live together in a single state—at least not in a democratic setting. Certainly the events of the 1990s and the current cultural landscape would appear to bear out this stark judgment. Yet we propose to challenge this fatalism by reexamining the state of interethnic relations on the eve of Yugoslavia's demise. We also intend to consider the feasibility of strengthening confidence in the viability of multiethnic coexistence within the newly formed successor states after one decade of "socio-cide"¹ and another decade of nation-state building by advancing a more balanced representation of the past that affords equal space to the positive experiences of life in a multiethnic society.

Living Together

The efficacy of multiethnic coexistence is supported by scholarship across the historical and social sciences. Western scholarship has led the way, examining for

almost a century the unfortunate and oftentimes catastrophic effects of the post-World War I world of nation-states. This has been especially true of the plethora of postmortems of the multiethnic Habsburg monarchy, where a dozen national groups coexisted and prospered under the umbrella of constitutional government, parliamentary institutions, and the rule of law, which were applied with equity by a professional judiciary and bureaucracy. Of course, many multiethnic societies coexist today, both worldwide and within the narrower geographical space of central Europe, including new EU members Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, and the Baltic states, which host significant national minorities. In virtually every instance, there exist below the surface fissures among socioeconomic groups, including finite levels of separation and discrimination that can occasionally manifest themselves in violence. It is no different outside the Balkans, whether in the U.S., Canada, or France, although in most settings conditions rarely reach levels of mass violence like that experienced until recently in Northern Ireland. There are places and periods in which “antagonistic tolerance” must stand in for the ideal of “brotherhood and unity.”

For whatever reason, outside of the literature tailored to the study of multiculturalism,² we rarely speak or write about the success stories of peoples living together in harmony, if only because their experiences are not deemed newsworthy. There is often a disconnect between what people experience and what they are all-too-often told by journalists, politicians, and even academics like ourselves, who prefer to focus on national awakenings, riots, and revolutions rather than on the unremarkable chronology of everyday life.

This can certainly be said of life in Yugoslavia prior to 1987. Arguably, the history of Communist Yugoslavia was marked by cooperation and ethnic and religious tolerance. By the 1970s, discrimination against minority ethnic groups was a relatively rare phenomenon. Data from the 1981 census demonstrate that almost nowhere in Yugoslavia did individual upward mobility depend on ethnic origin.³ For the majority of the population, regardless of ethnic origin, there was a high probability that individuals born after 1945 could live their lives without experiencing ethnic or religious discrimination. This was especially true in urban settings, of which Sarajevo was a prime example.

Moreover, former Yugoslavs shared common assumptions propagated by the state of successful Partisan resistance, of “brotherhood and unity,” of Yugoslavia’s leadership role in the nonalignment movement, and finally, of the country’s unique socialist self-management economic system. Compared to the dangers of wartime, and compared to the situation faced by peoples in other Communist countries, cold war-era Yugoslavia appeared relatively tolerant, free, and prosperous. Until the mid-1980s ethnic distance was stable, low, and even decreasing.⁴ A further study in 1990 showed that nationalistic value orientation in Serbia was manifested by less than 30 percent of the population, whereas extreme national-

istic attitudes were exhibited by about 15 percent.⁵ Yugoslav society of the 1980s could hardly have been called a “nationalistic time bomb.”

Ethnic distance is obviously much higher now, as recent studies from 1997 to 2003 suggest. To the question, “Would you accept a member of ‘x’ nationality to be your son- or daughter-in-law?” only 21 percent of Croats from Croatia would accept such a relationship with Serbs, only 23 percent with Bosnian Muslims.⁶ Conversely, only 20.5 percent of Bosnian Muslims would accept such a relationship with Serbs, 25.1 percent with Croats.⁷ This willingness is somewhat higher among Serbs in Serbia: 49 percent would accept such relationships with Croats, 36 percent with Bosnian Muslims,⁸ but among Bosnian Serbs, only 13.9 percent would accept this relationship with Bosnian Muslims, and only 15.9 percent with Croats.⁹ Such views vary according to education level and age. A young age and low education level seem to produce higher ethnic distance, perhaps because young people grew up during the conflict and were educated in a spirit of mistrust, even hatred.¹⁰ Clearly there is much work to be done to attain prewar levels of interethnic relationships.

Hating Each Other?

Nonetheless, in contrast to the other SI teams that have studied the history of what went wrong, we wish to explore potential solutions for many of the negative legacies of the 1990s. To some extent this relies on addressing unresolved trauma and anger from the 1940s. We argue that war developed for two primary reasons. The first reason was a result of manipulation of the population by political, intellectual, and media elites, facilitated by the lack of institutional power to stop conflict. Elites fed the collective consciousness with explanations and justifications for the “necessity” and “inevitability” of war; the weaker the “real” reasons for war, the stronger the propaganda. The media played a key role in this process. Without this mobilization of propaganda, ethnic conflict simply made no sense for most of the social actors, who were and remain the main losers. The process of manufacturing war began first with the deconstruction of the commonalities among peoples, the promotion of divisive ethnic cultures, and the demarcation of nonnegotiable differences that required physical separation. Demands were made that “something must be done” to justify concrete political acts and military actions.¹¹

The second contributing factor to conflict was unresolved trauma from the past, which helped create an emotional climate where negative myths could be promoted and readily believed. Older people in the former Yugoslavia continued to remember the atrocities of World War II. As their memories of suffering were suppressed by the state, traumatic experiences were passed from generation to generation and remained unresolved. Fear and anger made the escalation of vio-

lence substantially easier. While a process of truth telling and positive history will be a crucial step in promoting healing and reconciliation, acknowledgement of past trauma and the ability to promote collective mourning will also play a key role in this process.

In a climate of economic and political instability, a power vacuum at the center allowed nationalism to rise to the surface. Economic crisis during the 1980s and 1990s helped heighten a sense of ethnic and religious difference, giving rise to the search for scapegoats to explain social and economic problems. The authoritarian legacies of the Communist era, coupled with earlier traditions of patriarchy, permitted thinking and acting only in accordance with the official ideology. Former Communist leaders changed into neonationalistic clothes and, by controlling the media, abundantly took advantage of people's readiness to obey authority uncritically.

A key conclusion of our team is that, although "nations" can be seen to have committed atrocities against other "nations" in the Yugoslav conflict, both perpetrator guilt and the suffering of victims are primarily individual experiences. Justice for perpetrators and victims may involve decoupling ethnicity from the crimes and citing the importance of victimization at an individual level. As Karl Jaspers observed decades ago, "there is no such thing as a national character extending to every single member of a nation. . . . A people cannot perish heroically, cannot be a criminal, cannot act morally or immorally; only its individuals can do so."¹² Realistically, any sort of healing or progress can only come about when a shared understanding of individual traumatic experiences cuts across national and ethnic boundaries.

Another important consideration is the ideal of "rehumanizing the other." As Halpern and Weinstein argue, "The dehumanization of specific groups through concomitant stereotyping does not stop when conflicts end. The inability to see former enemies as real people impedes reconciliation. While much attention has been paid to the reconstruction of infrastructure and the establishment of rule of law, little thought has been given to what is required at the day to day level in order to restore a sense of interpersonal security." Reflecting these authors, we strive for a "process of rehumanization."¹³ Precisely how this is to take place is not easy to say. Contributors suggest that a potential (if not partial) solution could be in challenging the exclusiveness of dominant negative national narratives by introducing more positive experiences of living together through a positive history approach. This could be done by depolarizing education systems, promoting tolerance and reconciliation by religious communities and churches, and privileging other voices (women's groups for example). It is also important to support stronger independent media, truth and reconciliation commissions, and mourning. These and other initiatives can be interpreted as steps forward, even if some seem overly optimistic or even utopian at this stage in history.

We hope to show how reconciliation and healing, at least over the long term, may be possible. However, this report is but a first step—an exploration of what went wrong with some of the solutions attempted to date. More time, funding, and energy on the part of the academic community, civil society, and church and political leaders, will be required before any long-term solution can take root. Working together with other members of the Scholars' Initiative, this report lays out some of the major themes and ideas involved in promoting a positive history approach in the interpretation of a shared past and arguing for the future of living together and the necessity of healing. The concluding section features a series of recommendations for further discussion.

Toward a Balanced Narrative¹⁴

The basis of this report lies in engendering forms of what might be termed “positive history”—a narrative of cooperation and tolerance that cuts across ethnic and religious divisions, stressing the commonalities of people during the existence of the former Yugoslavia and their shared experiences of hardship, powerlessness, and victimization during the succession wars of the 1990s. Such a narrative would not replace or cancel the heretofore dominant narrative of national consciousness, competition, and conflict but deserves to be placed alongside it in any recounting or analysis. Its presence alone challenges the notion that these conflicts were logical and inevitable simply because they occurred. This is achieved by stressing the undeniable periods of cooperation and association among the peoples of the former Yugoslavia and the resistance to the wars by many, which, due to various limiting factors, was insufficient to actually prevent the conflicts. This chapter highlights two aspects:

1. Prewar practices and experiences of living together in multicultural, functional, and functioning communities; intergroup mixing in everyday life practices; and building supranational identities as a part of belonging to the former Yugoslavia (from 1945 until the 1980s)
2. Open resistance to the succession wars of the 1990s, resistance and opposition to different expressions of hatred toward others, including positive actions such as mutual help, sacrifice, and sharing

Central to this approach is the questioning of the idea that war was a natural and inevitable outcome of life in the former Yugoslavia.¹⁵ Hence our focus is on those admittedly weaker parties in the wars who were not powerful enough to stop it. Their weakness, however, did not stem from objective factors, such as small numbers, unwillingness to intervene, or “eternal hatreds.” Instead, weakness was a consequence of the paradox that wars could not have been prevented

because they were not expected, with the result that no strong internal or external structures had been established to empower peaceful solutions.¹⁶ On the other hand, there existed powerful agents (local political elites, arms producers and smugglers, journalists and intellectuals) who brought about a negative spiral of destruction. The fact that the weaker, peace-loving side did not stop the wars and did not prevail does not prove that the wars were objectively inevitable. It only proves that those agents who produced the wars were stronger and that Yugoslavia's chaotic environment and the international community lacked adequate mechanisms to prevent the escalation of violence.

Ethically, the presentation of a more balanced narrative that accommodates more positive evidence helps create knowledge that will support healing and reconstruction because it avoids assigning collective guilt and imposing ethnicized interpretations. It also emphasizes the relevance of agency and free choice on both sides: those producing the wars and those resisting. By revealing and documenting numerous practices and discourses opposing the wars, we can reaffirm that history is always a choice, although not for all social agents in the same way and to the same extent. Responsibility largely depends on social positioning; responsibility and power are interconnected. At another level, positive history reconnects pieces of former Yugoslav society through a narrative that might be widely shared by most of the ordinary people from all sides who perceive themselves as victims. This could be a ground for new solidarity and healing beyond the boundaries of newly formed states and ethnic affiliations. By countering narratives of civilizational and other forms of conflict, images of living together can offer evidence of equally (if not more) important practices—examples of cooperation and tolerance across ethnic, religious, or any other divisions among human groups.

New Narratives and Negative History¹⁷

Although we recognize the role that a more positive, balanced narrative can and should play in promoting healing and reconciliation, the prevailing pattern of negative history is not easy to overcome. Although accounts based on myths of persecution and victimization may have been manipulated by cynical elites for their own purposes, they play an identity-defining role for many individuals, and they do rely on strong evidence for support. However, the problem is not with the evidence, which exists and should be always taken into account, as much as with an overall interpretation that tends to mythologize and sustain the victimization narrative. In the long run, it will take more than the work of critical historians to defuse the power of national myths and falsified memories. This is not simply because politicians recognize the capital to be made by spreading myths but,

more fundamentally, because individuals become dependent upon them. Myths, by their very nature, are deeply rooted in the psyches of individuals and groups.

We generally think of history as a repository of information about the past and a source of explanations about the present. But history and memory serve a variety of functions in a society. History and its interpretation are critical to the development of ethnic groups and nations, given that shared past experience, or the perception of shared past experience, is the strongest rationale for the existence of the group. History texts, monuments, museums, and other forms of public commemoration provide a sense of stability and tradition that assist the legitimation of the existing regime.

Prevailing history interpretations and the institutionalization of negative memories supply the facts of injustice and grievance, both of which can be powerfully mobilized by political leaders. The capacity of historical memories to coalesce politicized groups cannot be understood fully without recognizing that, at the same time, historical memories play several critical roles in the lives of individuals. The prevailing historical tradition is a way of recording and remembering the traumatic events of past generations that have an emotional or physiological impact, and possibly a material impact, on their descendants. Because of the individual's dependence on the group that supports him or her, the individual will often identify with the group in order to receive what is offered to group members, absorbing cultural elements and a shared sense of the past. Introducing a different historical narrative means challenging psychological and sociological patterns that are often of long duration and that are perpetuated by institutional design and the existing power structures.

Psychoanalysts argue that group experiences of catastrophe are carried psychologically from one generation to the next and, whereas memory of that event is likely to be maintained in the public arena through rhetorical history, the personal effect can be understood as separate and profound.¹⁸ Vamik Volkan's "chosen trauma" describes the collective memory of a calamity. Chosen traumas reflect an unconscious decision to define identity through transgenerational transmission.¹⁹ A group's interpretation of a trauma goes through various transformations. As the years pass, legends develop. Rituals reinforce particular aspects of the event. A group's chosen trauma can lie dormant for a time, in which case a political leader may play a role in igniting the dormant group memory.²⁰ The overall process may distort the group's perception, causing new enemies to appear as old enemies. Mobilization by elites can recharge historical memories, but this is only possible because some imprint from the past is already in place.²¹

This process however is not inevitable, nor is it irreversible. As Biro and Milin have shown, the presence of trauma or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) does not necessarily prevent people from seeking reconciliation.²² Their 2004

study of refugees from Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina living in Serbia demonstrates that the presence of PTSD as such did not impede “readiness for reconciliation.”²³ However, the greatest obstacle to reconciliation was the presence of nationalistic/xenophobic and ethnocentric attitudes, with negative stereotypes of the opposing nation. Crucially, the experience of being discriminated against by the other nation (while feeling that the discrimination was ongoing) was the biggest problem.²⁴

Postwar psychological studies thus demonstrate that traumatic experience as such is not a serious hindrance to the reconciliation process at an individual level. This certainly does not mean war crimes and material destruction should go unpunished or that apologies from national leaders are not important. Indeed, punishment of perpetrators will have great significance for guilt individualization, whereas apologies will help change the perceptions of victimized groups. At the individual level, the biggest obstacle to the reconciliation process is value orientation, not the experienced war trauma *per se*.

Based on their findings, Biro and Milin argue that friendly relations with members of other ethnic groups represent one of the major predictors of readiness for reconciliation. Media acknowledgement of the positive aspects of Yugoslavia’s history, especially interaction between members of conflicting nations, can significantly contribute to changing views of formerly enemy ethnic groups. This will be facilitated by the fact that all three warring groups speak essentially the same language. As Hewstone and Brown suggest, intergroup contact can help reverse the cycle of negative generalizations and stereotypes and help promote positive attitudes.²⁵ Citing examples of neighbors of different nationalities helping each other during the war could help decrease prejudice and negative stereotypes about other nationalities. Institutionalizing such an approach by educational systems would broaden the effects and ensure the sustainability of reconciliation efforts.

Rewriting history, therefore, entails bringing truth into the open. Telling the truth, first of all, means acknowledging painful and controversial events. But a society grounded in truth telling gains for other reasons. When freedom of speech is limited and political ideologies encounter minimal criticism, leaders can expand their mythologizing to employ lies or gross exaggerations. A society that fails to challenge the lies of its leaders will soon experience other kinds of oppression.²⁶ Our most essential contribution to the post conflict countries of the Balkans must be to model a professional methodology of truth seeking. At the same time it would be a mistake to dub such accounts of the wars an achievement and thereby overlook the fact that this history will be contested immediately and continually. The point is that a higher standard of scholarship and collaboration is being set for future debates.

Everyday Resistance to the Dissolution of Yugoslavia²⁷

In everyday life, people faced a number of limitations in trying to resist the politics of war. There was a lack of institutional channels to express attitudes against war. Too many people had the overwhelming feeling that it was not “we” who wanted the war, but “they”; therefore, we could not do anything except defend ourselves. Limited material resources severely curtailed the activities of those who were trying to oppose the wars, and for many the very effort to survive during the wars exhausted all of their human resources. Nevertheless, there is much evidence of both political resistance and mutual help across ethnic lines during the wars. Even in the chaos of the war, there are many cases where individuals acted with bravery and tolerance in dangerous situations to counteract animosity, hatred, and destruction. Individual testimonies collected by Svetlana Broz, for example, disclose many cases where ordinary people helped each other in life-threatening situations. For participants, war was actually perceived as some kind of natural catastrophe over the heads of normal people, causing spontaneous solidarity. Broz demonstrates that the war situation was extremely chaotic on the ground, exactly because the texture of society was so interwoven, so interconnected.²⁸

Building a more positive, balanced narrative will require acknowledging that, even if largely invisible, there were numerous initiatives, actions, organizations, and individuals who attempted to speak out against the wars. These included peace and antiwar organizations, autonomous women’s groups, organizations for the protection of human rights, and a number of outstanding intellectuals and artists. In the beginning of the 1990s in Serbia, the term *Other Serbia* was coined by the Belgrade Circle, an antiwar organization that gathered some of the intellectual elite of Belgrade to demonstrate that “Another Serbia” strongly opposed the wars. However, even before the wars there were different political initiatives that aimed to promote the democratic transformation of Yugoslav society and to prevent its violent dissolution.

Some of the most important initiatives included Yugoslav-wide political parties committed to a peaceful transition to democracy and the peaceful resolution of hostilities. A prime example was the Association for a Yugoslav Democratic Initiative (a coalition of thirty civic-oriented parties, movements, and associations), founded in Zagreb in 1989. It was both a party and a movement, combining the idea of Yugoslavism with democracy.²⁹ Among its initiatives, the UJDI insisted on the nonviolent resolution of the Kosovo dispute.³⁰ Its members proposed that the federal assembly pass an amendment to elect a constitutional convention that would determine the fate of Yugoslavia. UJDI also created a roundtable of government representatives and members of the opposition. This met six times in 1991–1992 and culminated in a peace proposal that was not implemented.³¹

Another example of positive mobilization for peace was the formation in the summer of 1990 of the all-Yugoslav party—the Alliance of Reformist Forces of Yugoslavia (SRST). This party was defined as a “nucleus for the growing pan-Yugoslav movement for reform.” The Reformists proposed a program of economic and political reforms that included democracy, economic recovery and the overhaul of the banking system, and a market economy and unfettered competition based on knowledge and ability. They wanted to abandon the practices of classical political parties and to strengthen individual initiative.³² In 1991 UJDI and SRST together published a program of political and economic reforms.

Other groups included the European Movement in Yugoslavia (EPJ), which was founded in March 1991 as a recognized member of the European movement,³³ and the Civic Alliance (GS), which was formed in the summer of 1992. In July 1991, the Center for Anti-War Action was founded immediately after the outbreak of hostilities in Slovenia and comprised the UJDI, Women’s Parliament, the Women’s Party, the Helsinki Assembly of Yugoslavia, and the Helsinki Citizens’ Parliament. The center’s major premise was that everybody has the right to life and civil disobedience. The center initiated several peace activities and demonstrations, such as the Walks for Peace. In September 1991, the Helsinki Citizen’s Parliament organized a Caravan of Citizens of Europe, which traveled throughout the former Yugoslavia and started the *Yugofax* publication.

After the bombardment of Sarajevo several antiwar groups organized the citizens of Belgrade in a procession that carried a 1,300-meter-long black ribbon. The column stretched from the Albanija Building in the city’s central Terazije Square to Slavija Square, with up to 50,000 people participating. Early in 1994 activists from various alternative groups came together in support of a group project called Living in Sarajevo. Other groups included the Civic Resistance Movement, launched at the beginning of the war, and the 1992 Fund for Humanitarian Law.

To these initiatives we can add a variety of women’s groups dedicated to peace and tolerance.³⁴ Women were particularly targeted during the wars. Gender identities in public discourses in times of conflict were mostly constructed to fit to the oppositional model of identity formation, where the Other, being an ethnic or gender Other, was seen as an enemy. Gender difference was also ethnicized, a notable example being Serbia. In the Serbian public discourse of the 1990s, for example, women were seen as Westernized Others, whereas Serbian ethnic identity and Serbian male identity were tied together and essentialized. Misogyny, which exploded in the 1990s, was an ideological answer to the “implosion of patriarchy” at the everyday level.³⁵

The Belgrade Women’s Lobby was founded in 1990 with the aim of organizing pressure against the regime, the institutions of the system, and the political parties “so that women’s experiences and women’s demands would no longer re-

main below the threshold of social visibility and sensibilities.” There was even an initiative by some women to create a women’s parliament because so few women were elected to the National Parliament of Serbia. In 1991, Women in Black was founded in Belgrade during the Dubrovnik campaign. They gathered every Wednesday to express their opposition to the war. Dressed in black, they had as their slogan, “Let us banish war from history and from our lives.” They called for the establishment of an international court for war crimes. Also in 1991, a women’s party was created in Belgrade with an antiwar program and policies advocating regional restructuring of the federal state. The idea was that regions as smaller units of republics would enable peaceful democratic transformation, contrary to the strengthening of the nation-states.³⁶

Why Did these Initiatives Not Work?

Despite the best efforts of their participants, these and other initiatives failed to prevent the successor wars. A number of reasons account for their failure. First, these initiatives did not have sufficient institutional, financial, or human resources to play an important role, especially not in comparison to the war machinery they were opposing. There was no widespread support from the international community, and antiwar activists and peacemakers were initially isolated. Later, the appeal of being isolated and ghettoized was used as a means of seeking outside funding, so many NGOs became more outwardly than inwardly oriented. This also weakened their position on the local political scene.

Moreover, peace activists were not homogeneous—they had different backgrounds, political views, expectations, and explanations of what was happening. Most peace initiatives were not democratically organized, and often had strong, even authoritarian leaders, whose international promotion became the most important *raison d’être*. As the conflict progressed, outside support increased the competition among leaders, contributing to the impossibility of defining a necessary metanarrative that would be acceptable for all opponents of the wars. The problems associated with antiwar activism also led to a high degree of burnout because many found themselves in very difficult conditions and without adequate organizational infrastructure. And finally, the actual number of people involved in antiwar and peace activism was very small. Many activists circulated between different initiatives, thus creating an illusion of much more activity and larger numbers than was really the case.

However, it would be wrong to judge the success of these initiatives by the fact that they did not stop the wars. Another, more adequate gauge of their effectiveness was the buildup of antiwar feeling among the general public. Resistance to war gradually gave rise to a coherent civil society and the spread of civil initiatives. For example, in Serbia, civil resistance was taught, developed, and dis-

seminated through the protests against Milošević. But methods, communication models, and organizational know-how used in small antiwar and feminist groups were quite successfully transported and extended to new political movements.³⁷

In producing a more positive narrative, a key goal must be to offer a focus on those who did resist the spiral of ethnic hatred and who did demonstrate against the rise of ethnic conflict, either openly or more clandestinely. This metanarrative remains underexplored in contemporary literature on the Yugoslav conflict, yet it is necessary in order to deconstruct nationalistic mythologized narratives and pave the way for reconciliation.

Media, Ethnic Conflict, and the Resolution of Conflict³⁸

In Serbia and Croatia the media became an active participant in the escalation of nationalist violence. At times it became a mouthpiece of the government. At other times it promoted more radical interpretations of the nationalist message, spurring national leaders to greater excesses. At first, much of this did not seem to have much to do with everyday life. As Slavenka Drakulić described this early period: “Long before the real war, we had a media war, Serbian and Croatian journalists attacking the political leaders from the opposite republic as well as each other as if in some kind of dress rehearsal. So I could see a spiral of hatred descending on us, but until the first bloodshed it seemed to operate on the level of a power struggle that had nothing to do with the common people.”³⁹ Fortunately, in both Serbia and Croatia some excellent media acted as critics of the regimes under which they operated. They included the weeklies *Borba*, *Vreme*, *Republika*, and *Feral Tribune*; television stations NTV and Studio B; and Radio B92.

This section evaluates the role of the media in escalating the level of fear in the former Yugoslavia, with an emphasis on both Croatia and Serbia. Communist Yugoslavia consciously differentiated itself from the Soviet Union by promoting open media, although they were hardly free. Promoting the official party line was important throughout the Communist era. The period until the 1974 constitution was largely marked by central control of the media from Belgrade. Thereafter it devolved to the capitals of individual republics. Eventually, “Media outlets accustomed to one-man, one-party rule merely followed a new, local man and party in Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia.”⁴⁰ As such the media continued the centralization that characterized the Communist period, but the mission changed from selling “brotherhood and unity” to manufacturing hatred for one’s neighbors.⁴¹

In both Serbia and Croatia control of the media was crucial to underpinning support for the nationalist regimes of Milošević and Tudjman. In Serbia, new provisions under the Serbian penal code made it an offense to criticize the government or cast doubt on the country’s leaders. Government ministries of information and the interior now had a mandate to censor, delete, or change any

aspect of reporting found to be at odds with official government accounts.⁴² The government-controlled Serbian Radio-Television (RTS) soon gained a broadcasting monopoly. The Milošević regime also did its best to limit if not destroy independent print media by imposing high taxes while cutting supplies of newsprint and fuel.⁴³

Media control was stricter in Croatia. Within two months of the 1990 elections, the Croatian Radio-Television Act was rushed through Parliament, changing the name of Radio-Televizija Zagreb to Hrvatska Radio-Televizija (HRT), while submitting it to government control.⁴⁴ Print media were a favored target. HDZ faithful replaced journalists and editorial staff at HINA (formerly Tanjug). Independent papers, such as the Vjesnik Group, were slowly taken over by the government. Magazines owned by this group were often scuttled if they ran stories contrary to government interests.⁴⁵ The satirical weekly *Feral Tribune* was also harshly treated, with a 50 percent sales tax in 1994 and constant defamation in the government press, while its editors were drafted into the army after criticizing Tudjman.⁴⁶

Certainly the media's role in the promotion and escalation of conflict was crucial. There were, however, differences in the two countries. The Croatian government had a hands-on approach to the media and brooked little dissent.⁴⁷ Things seem to have been slightly less controlled in Serbia, perhaps because Milošević was more interested in promoting the *idea* of media freedom. The media were also more assertive and creative in avoiding the government. When Milošević took B92 Radio off the air during the 1999 NATO bombing of Yugoslavia, the station defiantly made use of the Internet to cover the effects of the bombing. In other cases, Belgrade's Studio B asserted its independence by aligning itself with opposition leader Vuk Drašković. In Serbia, independent media outlets helped erode Milošević's popularity, especially B92 and members of the Association of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM). After the elections in September 2000, coverage of official vote fraud by the independent media brought outraged citizens to the streets, eventually bringing down the regime.⁴⁸

Yet after Milošević and Tudjman, the legacies of violent nationalism continued. For example, there is an almost complete lack of remorse among individual nations for their own group's actions in precipitating the violent dismemberment of Yugoslavia. In the Serbian case, the media aligned themselves with Koštunica with almost dazzling speed, suggesting that rather than abandoning their tendency to follow the leader, they had merely switched leaders. In Bosnia, forms of "media apartheid" continued, with a wide variety of exclusivist nationalist-oriented media outlets giving a very narrow perspective on current and historical events.⁴⁹ Serbs continue to see themselves as victims. Even now, the Serbian Ministry of Information promotes Serbia as the victim of history rather than an aggressor. Its online encyclopedia perpetuates the claims that the 1974 constitution was at the

root of the 1990s conflict and that the bloodshed was the fault of Slovenia and Croatia's illegal separation from the federation.⁵⁰

Despite the ICTY and massive media coverage of the events in Yugoslavia, the Serbian public remains ignorant of Serbia's role in the conflict. Public opinion polls conducted in 2001 revealed that over 52 percent of respondents "could not name a single war crime committed by Serb forces in Bosnia, Croatia, or Kosovo. Nearly half, however, could name at least three crimes committed against Serb civilians by other forces." Furthermore, Karadžić and Mladić continued to be heralded as the two "greatest defenders of the Serb nation."⁵¹ The 2003 elections demonstrated clearly the memory problems still present in Serbia, as have more recent elections.

Currently, the media have become a vehicle for promoting the transformation of the nation into something more palatable for the West. However, neither Serbia nor Croatia has fully engaged with the history of atrocities in the 1990s. Few media institutions feel inclined or empowered to explore national guilt too far. Nevertheless, outside assistance in promoting media objectivity can help. For example, B92 was able to continue its activities thanks to support from the Media Development Loan Fund, which helps fund independent media in emerging democracies.⁵² This is in line with Jack Snyder's work that suggests that outside funding must target media with cross-national appeal, which resists the allure of exclusivist nationalism. NGOs must strive to "attract a politically and ethnically diverse audience, invite the expressions of various viewpoints, and hold news stories to rigorous standards of objectivity."⁵³ Such media sources are not always easy to find but are necessary if any sense of identity that cuts across ethnic boundaries is to be found.

NGOs like the International Press Institute in Vienna help train journalists from newly democratized countries and help with the costs of equipment, newsprint, and logistical support.⁵⁴ The Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) sets high journalistic standards while providing training for journalists in media objectivity. IWPR places emphasis on collaboration between international and local journalists. Integral to the role of IWPR is its desire "to break down rather than reinforce grievances across ethnic, national, tribal or other conflict lines . . . to build cross-community confidence, support collaborative projects and develop regional and international information sharing."⁵⁵ IWPR works to develop collaborative projects throughout the region, including investigative reporting, and publishes articles in the *Balkan Crisis Report* that focus on issues of human rights and democratization.⁵⁶

The International Federation of Journalists' organization Media for Democracy in South-Eastern Europe covers Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, and FYROM. Its work has involved such activities as building trade unions and journalist associations, offering legal assistance to defend media free-

dom, and promoting public-service broadcasting. They also encourage the professionalization of journalistic standards when reporting on conflict and human rights abuses, and they promote basic safety standards for journalists.⁵⁷

The situation will certainly be improved in the states of the former Yugoslavia as the region becomes more affluent and is able to access alternative media such as the Internet.⁵⁸ As this medium of communication spreads, there is reason to hope that the situation will continue to improve, although Internet access does not guarantee more informed opinions. It can sometimes simply lead one to search for nationalist-oriented sites that buttress one's own viewpoint. Accepting the official line was easy during the successor wars. The challenge now is to give people the opportunity to access and appreciate alternative media sources that may tend to criticize as much as praise the government. NGOs willing to play a constructive role in promoting journalistic objectivity can make a difference. We, therefore, recommend that efforts to promote media objectivity, the training of journalists, and the promotion of cross-ethnic reporting be further encouraged and funded.

Finally, both Serbs and Croats need to be receptive to critical viewpoints that may raise unwelcome questions about their national pasts. A change in attitudes will slowly evolve, but the space for an independent media depends not only on government acquiescence but also public support. Although after 2000 the main Serbian state TV station started broadcasting a serial on Serbian crimes in Srebrenica, "great pressure from the public" stopped this broadcast after the first episode. Similarly, after the broadcast of the popular talk show "Latinica" on Croatian TV, which treated the subject of Croatian war crimes, there was so much public reaction that after a few days Croatian TV broadcast a short film on Serbian war crimes in Croatia in order to establish "balance."⁵⁹ Ultimately improving the media will help reshape civil society, but the public must also be persuaded that open and objective media serve their individual and collective interests. This process will take time and will need to be underwritten by other initiatives.

Religious Reconciliation⁶⁰

Although the role of religion during the collapse of Yugoslavia was sometimes divisive, the evolving political climate after 2000 provided a more conducive environment for the development of relations among religious communities and their congregations. This section reviews recent efforts to promote religious reconciliation, while offering some tentative conclusions.

The postnationalist era has arguably seen some effort toward bridging religious and national divides. The depth and strength of this cooperation vary from case to case. Ecumenical efforts appear to be present in the work of the Roman Catholic Church in Serbia. Ecumenical cooperation on all levels was backed by

strong support from its authorities and was a matter of regular discussion in the local Roman Catholic press in both Croatian and Hungarian languages.⁶¹ There have been frequent visits by Roman Catholic dignitaries to their counterparts in the Serbian Orthodox Church. In May 2002, Cardinal Walter Kasper, president of the Pontifical Council on Christian Unity, met with Patriarch Pavle of the Serbian Orthodox Church and extended the Vatican's invitation for a visit to the Holy Synod.⁶² In his later meetings with representatives of the Serbian state, Cardinal Kasper also expressed the Vatican's support for the integration of Serbia into European institutions.⁶³ Additionally, representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church took part in a number of conferences and meetings with the Roman Catholic Church outside Serbia.⁶⁴

The general attitude toward Muslims in Serbia has admittedly improved, at least on the part of formal authorities.⁶⁵ However, there remains considerable work to be done. Widespread intolerance toward Muslims remains firmly present in Serbia. According to research conducted in late 2001, Islam tops the list of "dangerous religions" in the minds of 15 percent of Serbs and 17 percent of Montenegrins.⁶⁶ NGO sources have pointed to evidence of harassment of Muslims by Serbian police in Novi Sad in 2002,⁶⁷ the use of hate speech, and registered cases of torture of persons of Muslim origin.⁶⁸ Members of the Islamic community in Vojvodina face the additional hardship of having no place of worship because there are no mosques in the entire region.⁶⁹ The situation in Serbia is closely intertwined with that of Republika Srpska, where violent attacks against Muslims continue.⁷⁰

Other religious communities in Serbia are also not immune to intolerance. The Jewish community in Serbia was subject to public verbal attacks from Žarko Gavrilović, a retired priest of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the spiritual leader of *Obraz*, an ultranationalist association of university students.⁷¹ After his words drew protests from Israel and the Yugoslav minister for foreign affairs, the Serbian Orthodox Church issued a public statement in which it clearly disassociated itself from Gavrilović's remarks.⁷²

On the positive side, a draft for a law on religious liberties was crafted in April 2002; it proposed that there would be no state religion and that all religious communities would be equal. Furthermore, the draft law guaranteed freedom of belief and introduced noticeably shortened procedures for the registration of new religious groups. Beyond these legislative changes envisaged for the future, the government has done little to improve the situation of smaller religious communities.

At the other end of the spectrum are instances of interreligious dialogue, though these are rare and almost by definition initiated by NGOs. Examples of such initiatives are the Novi Sad School of Journalism, with its series of seminars open to the public on topics related to religion and society, and the research proj-

ects of Women's Studies and Research, also based in Novi Sad.⁷³ Exceptionally, there are initiatives such as that of the Novi Sad-based Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization, the only interchurch charity in Serbia. Additionally, the Interreligious Center of Yugoslavia, founded in Belgrade in March 2000, includes, *inter alia*, the members of authorities of the local Roman Catholic Church, the Islamic community, and the Jewish community.⁷⁴ Together with the Belgrade branch of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the center organized a conference on religion and conflict in May 2002.⁷⁵ Such initiatives remain isolated. Generally religious communities can reach a much higher level of cooperation when they are not addressing issues related to their relations with one another but rather the relations of all religious communities toward the state.

Of course, it is important to ask where the power to effect change actually lies. That is, how much actual power do religious leaders have over their (real or alleged) congregations? Estimates vary, but a public poll of April 2002 clearly indicated that the Serbian people have a very high level of trust in the Serbian Orthodox Church, with as much as 79 percent of those interviewed stating that the church is where they would turn for truth.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, the power of influence of religious leadership is often disputed when compared with other, perceivably stronger centers of power, principally political.

Human rights, rarely mentioned by the church in the Serbian context and then mostly in a negative sense, are quickly raised when the rights of Serbs are at issue. At its session in May 2002, for example, the Holy Synod noted the "essential necessity of the protection and improvement of human and religious rights and freedoms." It emphasized the necessity of acting so that "the voice of the Church is heard in international organizations which deal with the protection of human rights." However, the synod clarified that this referred particularly to the rights of Serbs in Kosovo, displaced Serbs, and Serbian refugees from all parts of the former Yugoslavia.⁷⁷ It is most unfortunate that the Serbian Orthodox Church did not use this opportunity to address and call for the respect of the human rights of others as well.

The Serbian Orthodox Church participated in two major interreligious initiatives in December 2001, both of which ended with detailed joint public statements. After the first initiative, participants concluded their joint declaration with a note on the "firm belief that, in a long-term perspective, only those churches and religious communities in SEE [Southeastern Europe] will be affirmed, which respect freedoms of people in a pluralistic society and deepen the spirit of reconciliation, co-operation and stability of their followers and other citizens."⁷⁸

The second interfaith conference, on the topic of Peace of God in the World, was held in Brussels in December and sponsored by the EU. It was attended by Patriarch Pavle and other representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church and also by the highest representatives of the Islamic and Jewish communities

in Serbia. The concluding declaration addressed the responsibility of religions and religious leaders in conflict: "It is the responsibility of religious leaders to prevent religious fervor from being used for purposes that are alien to its role." It affirmed the constructive and instructive role of religions in the dialogue between civilizations, rejected all forms of discrimination, and supported the foundations of mutual respect, human rights, religious liberties, peaceful coexistence, and interreligious cooperation. The declaration ended with a set of recommendations for religious communities in their peace-building work.⁷⁹

The role of religious communities remains problematic. Issues of truth and reconciliation do not often make the agenda. In fact, religious communities in the main deny their responsibility for wrongdoing during the recent wars or have only accused each other of contributing to war efforts. Interreligious relations have witnessed some improvement on a formal level; however, there is still intolerance of and attacks against non-Serb religious communities, particularly Muslims, Jews, and members of small religious communities. Some contend that the actual influence of religious communities is not so great after all, but this runs contrary to popular opinion: citizens of Serbia have considerable trust in their religious institutions. Through their own improved cooperation, the religious communities could serve as a coexistence model for the rest of Serbian society, especially given their apparently respected role. We feel that religious institutions can and should take more initiative in promoting dialogue and peace-building initiatives. This is, of course, a long-term objective.

In the interim, special emphasis internationally should be placed on supporting the work of faith-based NGOs (such as Relief Services, World Vision, the United Methodist Committee on Relief, and the Center for Strategic and International Studies' Center for Religious Dialogue), which continue to play a crucial role in promoting interfaith dialogue and reconciliation. Local initiatives like Bosnia's Interreligious Council should also be encouraged. In 2004 at the behest of the U.S. Institute of Peace, Branka Peuraca concluded a fifteen-month study of Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox Christian, Muslim, and Jewish NGOs operating in Bosnia. She found their work was largely positive in promoting dialogue and forms of reconciliation.⁸⁰

Although some Muslim organizations were suspected of having links with terrorist organizations, most NGOs have played a positive role and should be encouraged in their efforts. As such, "enlightened action by faith-based NGOs can contribute to inter-religious reconciliation in places where religion is a source of conflict. These NGOs can bridge religious divisions, diminish the level of animosity, and focus attention on the shared responsibility to rebuild society."⁸¹ We can be heartened by the USIP's Religion and Peacemaking program launched in July 2000; it promotes faith-based NGOs as a key to building peace.⁸² Another avenue is for the European Union to strongly encourage religious organizations

in Croatia and Serbia to take an active role in the reconciliation process and even in accession negotiations. The EU's Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana began this process in 2003 when meeting with religious leaders in the Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, and Bosnian capitals.⁸³ In promoting religious reconciliation, outside intervention and encouragement will prove invaluable in the medium term as civil society develops anew.

Textbook Revision in the Former Yugoslavia⁸⁴

Education is crucial to the development of a more tolerant and cooperative society. However, it can also be used in the wrong hands to perpetuate stereotypes, intolerance, and even violent ethnic chauvinism. In general there are positive and negative examples from the Yugoslav region. In Slovenia, the government had been decentralizing its school system, albeit cautiously, since the 1980s. It also consulted extensively with Western European institutions when reworking school curricula and textbooks.⁸⁵

After the war, Croatia also made progress in the textbook sector. The curriculum did stress the continuity of a Croatian-Catholic national history from the Middle Ages onward. Yet textbook revision also spurred historical and political debate. Although nationalists and conservatives wanted to force schools to follow their interpretations, multiperspectival, even critical interpretations were also integrated into textbooks, with crucial input from experts at the University of Zagreb. The Croatian case indicates that if scientific and academic circles offer no encouragement and support for new approaches, the initiatives and endeavors of schoolbook authors will rarely come to fruition. The fact that the history faculties in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania, and Macedonia are virtually isolated from more recent international research is one of the main reasons why schoolbook reform in these countries has not gathered speed.

State-controlled revision of schoolbooks in Bosnia is concerned with subjects that deal with the concept of nation, or nationhood, namely language and literature, history, geography, the environment, and society, as well as religion, and to some extent music. These subjects have a special status because, in contrast to other disciplines, they concentrate much more on the traditions and specific cultural features of each of the three "constituent ethnic groupings." The need for a revision of schoolbooks resulted from the war of 1992–1995 and the subsequent peace agreements, which established the sovereign state of Bosnia but at the same time organized education on a federal principle. The war not only destroyed the political structures of a united Yugoslavia but also disrupted the relatively uniform education system that had previously existed.

The Serb-dominated regions forming the Republika Srpska orientated their curricula on books that came from Serbia, whereas the areas with a predomi-

nantly Croat population were mainly Catholic and influenced by the curricula and schoolbooks from Croatia. The Bosniaks were the major political factor in the movement toward unity. Because the government in Sarajevo had no direct links with another nation or state, it had already decided during the war to produce schoolbooks that espoused the idea of a Bosnia that transcended ethnic differences and conflicts. After the war each of the three regions developed new curricula and teaching schemes with materials that it felt were appropriate. Unfortunately, these curricula served only to cement the differing cultural outlooks rather than to promote the idea of integration.⁸⁶

Textbooks continue to perpetuate national rivalries over and above a sense of common regional identity. This problem is best exemplified by the rivalry between Croatia and Serbia. The two countries have initiated very few bilateral educational projects in the field of history and the social sciences. For this reason the European Association of History Educators (EURUCLIO) programs, which aim to produce teaching materials for use in both countries, are a highly welcome development. However, these will be additive rather than core materials, so their effect will be limited. Teachers and the relevant authorities agree that new textbooks can only be introduced after the curricula have been revised and, conversely, for revised curricula to be successful there is a need to develop new textbooks.

One obstacle in overcoming this dilemma lies in the fact that educational reform receives scant support from both the public and the teachers themselves because the social status and the remuneration of teaching staff are comparatively low. The dissolution of the socialist system saw a sharp decline in the respect that teachers had traditionally enjoyed. Many schools, especially those in a rural environment are poorly equipped to deal with the challenges of technology and the advances in modern communication.

Since 1998 various revision bodies have been engaged in “defusing” the content of textbooks to ensure that they contain no passages that could hurt the national and religious feelings of another ethnic community or incite pupils to hatred and violence. The subject that led to the most contention was history. However, the books of all three ethnic groups display a shameful and consistent attempt to justify the present divisions and social structures by tracing them back through history. Bosniak books tend to paint a rosy picture of a tolerant Ottoman Empire, failing to stress the manifold social and political hierarchies that granted only a lower status to the non-Muslim communities.⁸⁷ Experts from Serb and Croat regions insist on using *Islamic subjugation* to describe the process of forceful proselytizing under the Ottomans; the Bosnians, in turn, refuse to accept this term.

A common platform for the representation of the modern national movements is still beyond reach. Serb and Croat books either stress their own expan-

sive nationalism or an exclusive ethnicity. In both cases they neglect a separate Bosniak identity, and the Bosniaks, as well as Bosnia as a whole, receive scant attention. On the other hand, Bosniak authors face problems whenever they stress that Bosnia-Herzegovina is a unified and sovereign state with its own identity. They are moderately pro-Ottoman and pro-Yugoslavian because both of these systems espoused the goal of a mixed Bosnian society. But this is the very reason why they seem to be unpatriotic and retrogressive from a Serb or Croat point of view. To compensate for this, Bosnian Muslim authors are now writing their own national history and see themselves as a distinct group striving for a multiethnic society with roots that go back centuries.

The interventions of the revision commissions have—more by chance than intention—ironed out many of the problems concerning content and visuals, as well as neutralizing the treatment of disputable issues. However, they have been unable to clear up or end fundamental differences. It seems quite impossible to harmonize the various interpretations. Proposed changes would first have to be incorporated in the common core curriculum before they could be implemented in all syllabuses throughout the country. Such a framework was formulated by the Conference of Education Ministers in August 2003. Working in parallel with the parliamentary consultation process, an interministerial committee compared all the existing syllabuses and filtered out what they had in common. In mathematics and the sciences, surprisingly, this amounted to 70–90 percent of the teaching content. In the “national subjects,” the percentage was much lower, around 50 percent or less. The common core curriculum for history is almost exclusively limited to international developments and delegates the history of the different ethnic groups completely to the syllabuses of the cantons and the entities. In its present form it still fails to meet the requirements of the law, which states, firstly, that pupils must be offered a consistent education of a high quality, secondly, that changing from one school to another must become easier and, thirdly, that pupils must be encouraged to develop a positive relationship and commitment to Bosnia-Herzegovina. For this reason there is an urgent need to expand the common core curriculum.

Parallel to the inclusion of a comparative approach in the syllabuses, textbooks must also incorporate a perspective that takes the three ethnic groups into account. In 2004, on the basis of a proposal made by the OSCE, the education ministers established a new and independent commission of textbook experts for geography and history. Their task is to develop recommendations for future authors, to make possible a comparative representation that is balanced, multi-perspectival, and based on different interpretations. Although there is much work ahead, some of it extremely challenging, the end goal of creating impartial curricula and textbooks needs to come about for any real healing to occur in the next generation.

In consultations at the Georg Eckert Institute, the education ministers somewhat unexpectedly proposed that the last decade of the twentieth century, and thus the war from 1992 to 1995, should be covered in the classroom. However, under the prevailing circumstances this can hardly be achieved by subjecting pupils to a lecture, for example, on the siege of Sarajevo. Teachers must adopt a different approach to the topic, perhaps for instance modeled on an American organization, the Children's Movement to Creative Education (CMCE).⁸⁸ The CMCE brings together pupils from the three constituent ethnic groups living in Sarajevo and its surroundings and offers them various possibilities to express their own experiences of the war or to talk about the stories that they have heard in their own families. These can be expressed through artwork or drama, both of which play an important role. In a second phase these experiences undergo an objective analysis through the introduction of documents and reports from external sources, with the result that a new narrative is constructed by combining subjective experience with objective information. The aim of such a project is to enable the pupils to communicate about the war and not to teach an "authorized and exclusively valid" version.

As far as schools are concerned, teaching correct or sanitized history will not be enough. School textbooks and teacher training, while significant, are only one part of the task. Children, and older students and adults, will have to be helped to confront the narratives that have taken hold within themselves. Some ways this could be done are by getting students to undertake research of their own on debated topics; by discussing, and thus raising awareness about, ways that historical ideas are used in the present; or by putting students in safe but also challenging situations where they can discuss contested histories with others of differing points of view. The truly creative educators of the future will find many more approaches, and as they pursue them, they will join with many others in becoming the midwives of the new narrative.

Overall Solutions: A Truth and Reconciliation Commission?⁸⁹

Truth and reconciliation may be helped by the creation of public commissions bringing together government, churches, NGOs, and other institutions of civil society to come to terms with the crimes of the 1990s, promoting memory, justice, and healing. The following section details the highs and lows of the truth and reconciliation commission (TRC) process in Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In Serbia, the first key conference dealing with truth and reconciliation was organized in March 2000 by B92 and the Fund for an Open Society. Here, conference participants had an opportunity to meet with and learn about firsthand experiences of former members of truth commissions from Argentina, Chile, and

South Africa.⁹⁰ It was followed by another conference organized a month later by the Association for Independent Media (ANEM).⁹¹ In October 2000, Koštunica became the first president of a new democratic Yugoslavia. At least nominally, the change of administration removed restrictions on public debate on the issues banned from the agenda during the Milošević regime, including the responsibility for war crimes committed in armed conflicts in neighboring countries and in Kosovo.

The only formal response in Serbia to the calls for truth and reconciliation was the establishment of the governmental nineteen-member Commission for Truth and Reconciliation in March 2001. The commission was not empowered to grant amnesties,⁹² nor did it have power to subpoena witnesses.⁹³ It met very different responses from the start. There were claims that it was founded only under strong pressure from the West because ongoing foreign aid had been made conditional on progress in this area. Another view held that the commission might be an attempt to avoid responsibility for war crimes.⁹⁴ There was also public criticism of the decree-like manner in which Koštunica formed it.⁹⁵ A further problem was the fact that the commission was mandated to address events outside Serbia that were the results of actions by the Serbian people but it did not have members from outside Serbia.

One of the methods in which the commission was supposed to gather information was through public hearings with regard to the most significant events from the armed conflicts in Bosnia, Croatia, and Kosovo. The first hearing, focusing on Srebrenica, was initially scheduled for May 2002, then postponed for the fall of that year. The reason stated for the postponement was that the commission did not consider that there was enough trust on behalf of the Bosnian Muslim war victims' associations to come and testify in Serbia.⁹⁶ Eventually, Bosnian Muslim witnesses definitively refused to testify when they heard that Serb victims from the Srebrenica region would be invited to testify as well. The Srebrenica hearings—or any other hearings—never took place.⁹⁷ Some commissioners considered that state sponsorship of the commission rendered the independence of the institution questionable.⁹⁸ There was also a concern that the “state sponsored Truth Commission’s reconciliation domains would not provide for the inter-ethnic reconciliation.”⁹⁹ Scholars warned that the commission was monopolized, becoming “a political tool of only one political party and person (President Koštunica and his party).”¹⁰⁰ On the other hand, “legal, moral and material” support from the state was necessary to protect witnesses and make the process viable.¹⁰¹

A better form of dealing with the past came with a conference on truth and reconciliation titled “In Search of Truth and Responsibility: Towards a Democratic Future.” This was organized by B92 in Belgrade on 18–20 May 2001 and gathered an impressive group of participants, including the presidents of Serbia and Yugoslavia. However, there were no participants from Kosovo or from Mon-

tenegro.¹⁰² The conference ended with a set of recommendations for the TRC, including the extension of the commission to involve a higher number of representatives of minorities and religious communities.¹⁰³

A TRC for Bosnia-Herzegovina

Following the Dayton Peace Agreement, the formation of a Bosnian TRC seemed moot.¹⁰⁴ This idea was not followed up by either the former Yugoslav authorities or any of the external powers involved. The first actual discussion on forming a TRC dates from July 1997 and was the outcome of the Roundtable on Justice and Reconciliation in Bosnia-Herzegovina.¹⁰⁵ Among other conclusions, participants agreed that the three existing separate commissions investigating war crimes might result in three conflicting versions of history and that a single, joint Bosnian truth commission should be formed. However, by 2000, little had been accomplished. In that year, around 100 participants, mainly from local NGOs, gathered at a roundtable on truth and reconciliation in Sarajevo to discuss how a commission should work.¹⁰⁶ This roundtable was followed by a similar conference in Banja Luka. Although both events were criticized for the lack of young people and women in the discussion, the Sarajevo roundtable resulted in the birth of the nongovernmental organization association Truth and Reconciliation.¹⁰⁷ More than a year after the association was founded, a draft law on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Bosnia-Herzegovina was prepared,¹⁰⁸ and it was expected that it would be submitted for adoption to the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia-Herzegovina in June 2001.¹⁰⁹ Although this did not come to pass, the principles of the draft law are sound and could lay the future basis for an effective TRC.

As envisaged in the draft law, the commission would examine events in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the former Yugoslavia from November 1990 to December 1995. It would examine *inter alia* the circumstances that produced ethnic mistrust and lack of understanding that resulted in unprecedented human rights violations; the political and moral responsibility of individuals, organizations, and institutions for the abuse of human rights; the role of the media, political parties, religious communities, international nongovernmental actors and other relevant sectors as determined by the TRC; and acts of individuals who refused to take part in the abuse of their neighbors.¹¹⁰

The commission would also attempt to establish the numbers “killed, wounded, missing, tortured, raped, imprisoned without a just cause, and forcefully displaced”; the numbers of religious objects destroyed or attacked; and the location of mass graves.¹¹¹ Unlike the majority of truth commissions so far, the Bosnian commission would not need to discover any hidden truths because the war in Bosnia was carefully followed by the media, nongovernmental organiza-

tions, and international institutions around the world. Instead, it would need to dispel the “multiple truths, each with a distinct ethnic coloration,” where each ethnic group portrayed itself as a victim and denied any abuse committed by its own ranks.¹¹²

Special groups of victims required particular attention. One such group was the women of Bosnia. Sexual violence was used as a weapon to punish the victim’s entire ethnic group, and the extent of the gravity of that abuse is reflected in the ICTY judgment defining mass rape as genocide.¹¹³ Abuses against Roma, who were also victimized during the wars, were also to be investigated.¹¹⁴ The participation of minorities in the process would not merely pay lip service to political correctness but rather would pave the way to real state-building in Bosnia-Herzegovina.¹¹⁵

At the time of this writing, the TRC has yet to be created. Scholars have argued that, because the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina was resolved by outside military intervention and not by Bosnians themselves, it will be much more difficult for the people of this country to make a clean break with the past, which is a prerequisite for a successful TRC.¹¹⁶ Much mistrust among Bosnia’s different ethnic groups remains, and nationalist parties are still strong. Research has shown that there is no general agreement on whether or not it is a good time to launch an inquiry into the abuses of the recent past.¹¹⁷ In that case, should not sooner be better than later? Team 11 recommends that the draft law be implemented to allow a TRC to be created in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Further we recommend the continuation and extension of NGO efforts to document and come to terms with crimes committed in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Association of Truth and Reconciliation continues to coordinate efforts to establish a truth commission. Outside organizations like the USIP have been assisting. At the same time the International Center for Transitional Justice has convened discussions with representatives from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, and Croatia to discuss further the development of truth commissions.

We also advocate increased cooperation with the ICTY. The Hague Tribunal is set to continue until 2008 with appeals allowed until 2010. Thereafter, the ICTY will hand over the remaining cases to domestic courts, which are currently unable to handle even routine matters, let alone war crimes trials.¹¹⁸ So far cooperation has fallen short of the ideal, and as Team 10 has cogently outlined, the ICTY has not promoted reconciliation. The Tribunal is seen in most quarters as favoring the “other side” rather than one’s own nation. Although Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić have been handed over for trial, it is our belief that continued pressure must be put on Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina to cooperate fully with the ICTY. Pressure is clearly producing results. In the future, organizations like NATO, the Office of the UN High Representative, as well as

the OSCE can all play a more constructive role in rounding up suspected war criminals and obliging EU aspirants to cooperate more fully with the Tribunal.¹¹⁹

The Role of Mourning¹²⁰

If justice is the outward means of addressing the ills of the past, mourning is its internal counterpart. The lingering memory of trauma suffered by individuals or groups does not fade with time. It can place burdens on individuals and become the chief source of meaning-making in groups. Collective responses to harms and injustices of the past are a frequent underlying contributor to the next battle or war. A society that wishes to move beyond its past must seek ways to lay that past to rest. Trauma psychologists advise against repeated discussions of the traumatizing event with recent victims of trauma.¹²¹

Although postconflict societies may be capable of addressing some aspects of their immediate past, timing is crucial. It seems clear that time has to pass before these societies will be able to talk about what happened and thus to begin to mourn in public as a group. It may not be possible to discuss the past until new political realities are in place. However, those who have been involved in a conflict have a need to talk about it, and people on all sides must find a way of listening to each other. Talking and listening are needed even if the traumatic event occurred several generations previously.¹²²

What is being described here is a mourning process.¹²³ Mourning is a necessary reaction to loss and change. A group's inability to mourn can have political outcomes. If mourning can occur, the next generation creates a new version of the event, strengthening the group's self-esteem and moving into the future without having to carry the burden of the past.¹²⁴ Beyond talking about the past, societies can mourn their past by building monuments or museums, creating days of remembrance, or using music, art, theater, literature, or film creatively and collectively to remember.

Many argue that joint mourning processes are an essential prerequisite for effective peace negotiations. Montville speaks of an act of "letting go" that is needed on both sides, where victimizers accept responsibility for their acts, recognize injustices done, and ask forgiveness. Likewise, victims may also have been victimizers and may have to recognize their own acts of injustice.¹²⁵ Mourning is better understood as a continuing experience that extends well into the postconflict period. Thus, in addition to recommending the promotion of a more positive, balanced narrative; the reform of media and educational institutions; and the promotion of religious reconciliation, we conclude by also encouraging collective and individual mourning as a crucial alternative to resentment, hatred, and the desire for revenge.

Proposals¹²⁶

Based on the sections presented in this report, we advance a series of recommendations extracted from the themes elaborated herein that can form the basis for further debate and discussion:

1. Narrate a new history with the following elements:
 - Encourage a more positive balanced history of the pre-1990s wartime era, focused on experiences of cooperation, exchange, tolerance, and diversity.
 - Encourage a narrative centered on the experiences of the common people during the 1990s conflict. This can deal with forms of victimization that are shared by groups not bound by ethnicity—for example, residents of a particular community, such as Sarajevo.
 - Emphasize the history and struggles of peace movements and opposition parties and NGOs working for peace during the conflict and against the rise of nationalist extremism.
 - Stress the victimization of women across ethnic boundaries and their special suffering, as well as their role in promoting peace and countering violence.
 - Highlight the role of ordinary people and communities who stood up against violence and hatred and saved lives, not unlike Yad Vashem’s commemoration of the “righteous” who saved Jews during the Holocaust. These and not the belligerents should be seen as the heroes of the successor wars.
 - Signal the duplicity (where appropriate) of national governments, journalists, intellectuals, nationalist leaders, novelists and other cultural figures, as well as religious leaders. However, equally important will be signaling the contributions of some leaders who spoke out courageously against nationalist extremism and violence.
2. Promote more international support for and training of independent non-nationalist oriented media, media committed to fostering pluralism and a diversity of opinions. Such media must have the mandate to critically examine the past and present actions of their own governments. Part of the process of creating a freer and better informed civil society must also include support for alternative media like the Internet.

3. Encourage efforts of international and domestic religious leaders from all faiths to work toward reconciliation. This not only must include striving for cooperation and peace but must also involve exploration by religious leaders of what people of one's own nation have endured, both as victims and as perpetrators. The current political climate may not be favorable for such initiatives, but one can hope that in the future it will be. In the interim, special emphasis internationally should be placed on supporting the work of faith-based NGOs, which have played and continue to play a crucial role in promoting interfaith dialogue and reconciliation. Local initiatives like Bosnia's Interreligious Council should also be encouraged.

4. Continue the revision of school textbooks, with an effort to unify the curriculum across ethnic divides. New education can and should include the privileging of individual stories and experiences to which students can relate. As much as possible, history should be taught in an impartial and objective way. This will not be easy, but it must be an end goal of current efforts.

5. Continue international support for a Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Bosnia-Herzegovina and for similar TRCs in Serbia, Croatia, and the other warring republics. This can be a crucial step in allowing victims and perpetrators to speak publicly of their experiences. Information gathered in the process of such trials can create a crucial body of information for historians and the general public to draw upon. Further support from the UN, NATO, the EU, and the OSCE is crucial in rounding up war crimes suspects.

6. Emphasize the role of mourning for individual victims and families but recognize that this cannot be hurried.

7. Encourage international support for increased trade with the former republics of Yugoslavia, with a view to securing their entry as members into the European Union. This is well beyond the scope of this report, yet having a positive end goal in sight may help embittered individuals and communities to set aside their enmities and focus on a brighter future. It was to some degree instrumental in Hungary's, Poland's, and the Czech and Slovak republics' efforts in embracing a peaceful approach to post-Communist transition. As a precondition for entry into the EU, state governments must be obliged to issue apologies for the crimes committed in their name and to attempt to publicly engage with the legacies of the 1990s. This means stopping the propagation of myths of righteous victimization. It also means a concerted campaign in conjunction with media and educational institutions to investigate and lay the facts of the government's complicity in mass murder before the population.

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