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Transgenerational Transmissions and Chosen Traumas

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Transgenerational Transmissions and "Chosen Trauma":
An Element of Large-Group Identity

Ladies and gentleman, dear colleagues:

It is a great honor and pleasure for me to give this opening address at the 13th anniversary meeting of the International Association of Group Psychotherapy. Although the focus of much of your work is on small groups, my talk today will instead concern large groups such as ethnic, national or religious groups. After colonial powers retracted their direct control over Africa and the Indian subcontinent, as well as other overseas territories, and after the collapse of the Soviet Union, many large groups became involved in an exaggerated process of defining or redefining their identity. Sometimes bloody struggles of differentiation within and between states ensued, and some continue today. The recent and current events in the Balkans provide only one example. Unlike the nation-state wars that characterized much of the previous three centuries, the wars of today seem to increasingly occur within rather than between states, and involve groups that have many similarities yet insist that they are inherently different.

I recently returned from the Republic of Georgia, for example, which regained its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. However, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, two regions within the territory of Georgia, simultaneously declared their own independence. Brutal warfare between Georgians and Abkhazians and Georgians and South Ossetians ensued that remains unresolved seven years later, and threatens to reignite today. People who lived together for decades were quickly transformed into bitter enemies who have fought to the death to preserve what they perceive as their group's threatened identity.

We, group therapists, psychoanalysts, and others concerned with mental health, are very familiar with the concept of individual identity. Our understanding of this concept has increased in the last few decades through our work with those who lack

integrated identities such as borderline and narcissistic patients. We began to evolve theories to understand their inner worlds and to develop new techniques for their treatment. Given the widespread use of the term identity within the mental health profession, it is interesting that it was not a word that was used frequently by Freud. When he did use it, it was in a colloquial sense. One well-known reference to identity is found in a speech delivered by Freud to B'nai B'rith. In the course of his talk, Freud wondered why he was bound to Jewry since, as a non-believer, he had never been instilled with its ethnonational pride or religious faith. Nevertheless, Freud noted a "safe privacy of a common mental construction," and "a clear consciousness of inner identity" as a Jew (Freud, 1926b, p. 274). It is interesting that Freud referred to a link between his individual and large-group identity.

Erikson (1956), one psychoanalyst who focused on identity, first used the term *ego identity*, and then dropped the word "ego" and used simply "identity." He described it as "a persistent sameness within oneself ... [and] a persistent sharing of some kind of essential character with others" (p. 57). What Erikson was describing is the individual's "core identity" which is different than social or professional subidentities that are condensed in the core identity at a later time. Unlike character and personality, which are observed and perceived by others, core identity refers to an individual's inner working model—he or she, not an outsider, senses and experiences it. Some authors, like Kernberg (1975, 1976, 1984) and myself (Volkan, 1976, 1987, 1995) use the term *personality organization* and differentiate it from the simple word "personality." Personality organization refers to the analyst's theoretical and metapsychological explanation of the inner experience and construction of a patient's self representation and the nature of this individual's internalized object relationships (person and thing images). Personality organization parallels the concept of identity, which is sensed by the patient himself, and is used to describe whether the latter is cohesive or unintegrated.

Following Erikson's description of individual identity, I define large-group identity—whether it refers to religion, nationality, or ethnicity—as the subjective experience of thousands or millions of people who are linked by a persistent sense of

sameness while also sharing numerous characteristics with others in foreign groups. In this presentation my focus is not on phenomenological divisions between various types of large groups, but on the psychodynamic factors belonging to all of them.

If a person is born into a family in which parents come from different large groups, or if a person becomes an immigrant voluntarily or is forcibly relocated to a country or region dominated by a different large group, his or her sense of large group identity may be confused and complicated. But, here I am focusing on large group identity as it is felt by human beings under routine conditions.

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Having described briefly what I mean by large-group identity, I will now try to illuminate its role in the overall psychology of large groups.

Freud's (1921) well-known theory of group psychology reflects an oedipal theme. The members of the group sublimate their aggression against the leader in a way that is similar to the process of a son turning his negative feelings toward his oedipal father into loyalty. In turn, the members of a group idealize the leader, identify with each other, and rally around the leader. What Freud described is not a full explanation of large group psychology; he was only speaking of regressed groups (Waelder, 1971). However, Freud's concepts on group psychology are nevertheless relevant, and the behavior he described can be seen in regressed groups today. In November 1997, Iraq temporarily expelled United States inspectors who were assigned, along with other United Nations experts, to dismantle Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. Saddam Hussein responded to the increased tension and possibility of renewed warfare by creating a "human shield" around his palaces and other important sites, as he had earlier done during the Gulf War: Iraqis by the hundreds, including many women and children, rushed to various strategic locations to offer themselves as sacrificial lambs. Their aim was to deter military attacks since it would be politically damaging to the U.S. if numerous civilians, especially

women and children, were among the casualties of a bombing raid. Although coercion and propaganda partly precipitated this activity, most policy analysts also indicated that a majority of the Iraqis genuinely volunteered themselves as human shields. Hussein's efforts to promote group cohesion were successful—his followers were exhibiting, in a literal sense, the ritual of rallying around the leader under stressful conditions.

Nevertheless, during the last decade or so, there clearly has been a shift in psychoanalytic approaches to large groups from an emphasis on the leader as an idealized father to the leader as an idealized, nurturing mother, For example, Anzieu (1971, 1984) and Chasseguet-Smirgel (1984) perceived unstructured and regressed groups as representing an idealized, all-gratifying early mother ("breast-mother") that repairs all narcissistic lesions. The members of such regressed groups, when given an opportunity, choose leaders who promote such illusions of gratification. The members become violent and try to destroy external reality that is perceived as interfering with this shared illusion. Abse and Jessner (1961), Abse and Ulman (1977), and Volkan and Itzkowitz (1984) observed both feminine and masculine qualities in the "charismatic" leaders.

Kernberg's (1980, 1989) observations on small groups, mobs, and large groups led him to consider that the regression in such groups poses a basic threat to the member's personal identity. In group situations, primitive object relations (i.e. those that predate object constancy), primitive defensive operations, and especially primitive aggression appear. In his re-examination of Freud's theories on group psychology, Kernberg states that Freud's description of libidinal ties among the members in a group in fact reflects a defense against preoedipal conditions. Furthermore, he says, "there is always an implicit primitive leadership in the fantasy of small as well as large group formation, a leadership closer to the primitive maternal ego ideal than to the father of the primal horde, but even granting this fantasy structure, it already would seem to defend against the basic threats to identity and from violence in the large group" (Kernberg, 1989).

My formulations on large-group identity have evolved from my participation as a facilitator, now for over 20 years, in psychopolitical dialogues between representatives of large enemy groups such as Arabs and Israelis, Cypriot Turks and Cypriot Greeks, Estonians and Russians, and Croatians and Serbians. Such dialogues take place within small group settings and the psychodynamics of small groups are present (Volkan, 1997). However, my focus has been on the way that these participants become spokespersons of their large groups. This occurs because of the "task" (Bion, 1961) that is given to them in these gatherings: negotiating ethnic or national issues with the members of the enemy group. In these dialogue series, the participants from large groups in conflict appear to wear two layers of garments. The first one fits them snugly and is their individual identity that is the basis of their inner sense of sustained sameness. The second layer is a loose covering made of the canvas of the large group's tent (the large-group identity) through which the person shares a persistent sense of sameness with others in the large group—it provides comfort, belonging, and protection. But because both are worn every day, the individual hardly notices them under normal circumstances. At times of collective stress, however, such as economic crisis, drastic political change, social upheaval, or war, the garment made of the tent canvas may take on greater importance, and individuals may collectively seek the protection of, and also defend, their large-group tent, which is held erect by the group's leader (the tent pole).

Freud's theory on group psychology described the latter relationship between the tent pole/leader and the people under the tent, i.e. the followers. I consider the canvas as the large group identity. In fact, what I have observed in international dialogues is that the main task of a large group is to protect the large-group identity. The more stress they have, the more they become involved in repairing the wear and tear on the canvas and feel entitled to do anything, sadistic or masochistic, to protect their large group identity against a threat.

As I indicated earlier, some authors such as Anzieu, Chasseguet-Smirgel, and Kernberg have implied that the canvas is more important than the pole--they referred to it as "breast-mother," "primitive maternal ego ideal" and other similar terms. To describe

this canvas with such terms is not enough. We should consider the canvas as the outcome of may threads woven together, not only one. A simple metapsychological explanation that the large group functions as a nurturing mother will not allow us to explain complicated large group processes, conflicts between neighbors, the role of leaders, warlike conditions, and the rituals that accompany such conditions. It will not explain why large groups are different from one another or the impact of the fact that large groups are "born" in different ways and have different histories. Furthermore, we will have nothing to offer political analysts and diplomats but an abstract metapsychological concept which they cannot use.

Nevertheless, the concept of the large group as an idealized mother image is not incorrect, but only incomplete. Mother Russia, the Statue of Liberty, the Queen of England, and many other examples certainly support the idea that a nation functions to absorb externalized "good" self and object images of those protected under its tent in a way that is parallel to the relationship of a nurturing mother and a satisified child. The canvas of the large group tent, however, is made of components other than idealized self and object images.

At the same time, the metaphor of a canvas tent is obviously not a metapsychological psychoanalytic construction -- it simply illustrates an idea in a useful way. Psychoanalytic metapsychological concepts are required, however, to fully describe each of the threads that are combined to form large group identity.

I have identified seven threads that when woven together create the canvas.

[slide 1: The Seven Threads of Ethnic Identity]

1. “We-ness” established in childhood

2. Children’s shared identifications with parents and significant figures in the group

3. Projections that define the group in terms of the “other”
4. *Chosen glories*
5. *Chosen traumas*
6. Influence of leader and ideology
7. Symbols that come to life

I have listed all seven of the threads to illustrate that large group identity is far more complex in both theory and reality, and to clarify that there is far more to it than a simplistic and reductionist notion of a tent.

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I can only cover one thread today, though it is a very important one, which I call a *chosen trauma*. This thread can be clearly seen in a groups' tent when one combines the study of history and psychoanalysis, and it is woven through the transgenerational transmission of a mental representation of a traumatic historical event.

I will begin examining the concept of chosen traumas by focusing on individual responses to traumatic events. Most of us are probably familiar with the pioneering work of Anna Freud and Dorothy Burlingham (1942) and their observations on the unconscious “messages” passed between mothers and children during the German bombing of London during World War II. Sullivan (1962) also provided important material through his own study on the way in which a mother’s anxiety is conveyed to her child. Mahler’s (1968) observations concerning the symbiotic phase of child development indicate that the early mother and her child function almost as one psychological unit. I will not bother with further references to our clinical knowledge that there is a fluidity between a mother’s and child’s psychic borders and that the mother’s anxiety, unconscious fantasies, and perceptions and expectations of the external world and the child pass into the child’s developing sense of self. It is also known that psychic

borders are also permeable in a relationship between a grown child and parent, or between two adult individuals, when they relate to one another under regressed or partly regressed states.

I would like to offer my own example from a recent trip to the Republic of Georgia while it is still fresh in my mind. A few months ago I was in a suburb of Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, called Tbilisi Sea that is so named because it is next to a huge man-made lake. Three large resort hotels near the lake now house about 3,000 of the 300,000 Georgian refugees who remain homeless seven years after the wars with Abkhazia and South Ossetia. I and two of my colleagues from our Center were privileged to get to know three generations of one refugee family housed in a Tbilisi Sea hotel. I use the word privileged because to meet people who suffered so much and were able to keep their dignity is a privilege.

[slides 2, 3, 4: Georgian refugees]

Doli, a woman in the middle generation, is married and has three children. The youngest is a 17 year old girl named Tamuna. Tamuna and I talked alone for some time on the cluttered hotel balcony that is part of their cramped home. She told me that, as is typical within refugee families, she and her mother keep their worries to themselves. "Silence" is a frequent mode of communication, as if talking about painful things will hurt the other, and therefore must be avoided. Nevertheless, as again is typical, Tamuna knew of her mother's recurring yet unspoken worry: Each night Doli went to bed wondering how she would be able to buy food the next day and be able to feed her children. This worry was reflected in the fact that Doli had lost weight since becoming a refugee. Tamuna, conversely, was a little heavier than she should be. While Tamuna was telling me the story of her awareness of her mother's worry, Doli came to the balcony and told me to do something about her daughter--she would not exercise and was getting too fat. "Please tell her to exercise," Doli pleaded with me.

I felt I could offer some insights into their relationship, and suggested that Doli ask Tamuna if she knew of her daily worry about being able to feed her children. The two talked and afterwards I told Doli that Tamuna had to stay overweight, at least for now, because I believed that by being overweight, the daughter was trying to tell her mother, "Don't worry about finding food for your children. See, I am overfed." I suggested that Tamuna was an intelligent 17 year old and that mother and daughter could share their worries through open and direct communication rather than indirectly and unconsciously through bodily expression.

I believe this simple but moving vignette is an illustration of the intergenerational transmission of a mother's worry to her daughter and the daughter's attempt to "repair" and reassure her mother. Though it is useful in illustrating my point, there are certainly more developed clinical cases of transgenerational transmission in relation to a variety of far more severe problems and disorders, such as bulimia and anorexia, transsexualism, and schizophrenia.

There is still another type of transgenerational transmission that is more directly relevant to identity issues on the individual level, and offers more direct parallels to group identity. This form of transgenerational transmission involves the depositing of an already formed self or object image into the developing self representation of a child under the premise that there it can be kept safe and the resolution of the conflict with which it is associated can be postponed until a future time. The “deposited image” (Volkan, 1987, 1997) then becomes like a psychological gene that influences the child's identity. The best example of this process is seen in so-called "replacement children" (Green and Solnit, 1964; Cain and Cain, 1964; Legg and Sherick, 1976; Poznanski, 1972). Replacement children’s self representations include the image of a dead sibling or other dead or lost relative that is transmitted to them through their interaction with the mother or affected caregiver. This "foreign" psychological gene influences or modifies the child's identity, and manifests in "tasks" the child is unconsciously impelled to perform, such as conducting the mourning that the mother cannot perform, or repairing the mother so that she will regain psychological health.

Thus, through psychoanalytic inquiry, we have come to realize that there is far more to transgenerational transmission than a child mimicking the behavior of parents, or developing his or her own ideas based upon the stories told by the older generation. It is the end result of mostly unconscious psychological processes that influence the child's identity and unconsciously give the child certain tasks.

Extensive clinical work has also been conducted on transgenerational transmission beyond the level of the individual patient. Through studies of the children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors (Kestenberg and Brenner, 1996), it is now widely accepted that traumatic experiences of death camps and genocide were passed down to many thousands of members of one large group. However, when many members of a group experience a severe and collective trauma, it is not simply a matter of many individuals of that groups sharing similar symptoms of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, utilizing similar defense mechanisms, or exhibiting symptoms of similar psychological problems. Such traumatic events affect all those under the ethnic or national tent, and all are subjected to societal processes, many of them unconscious, in response.

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With the above introduction completed, I now return to the concept of chosen trauma and its transformation into an ethnic or other large group marker.

[slide 5: definition of chosen trauma]

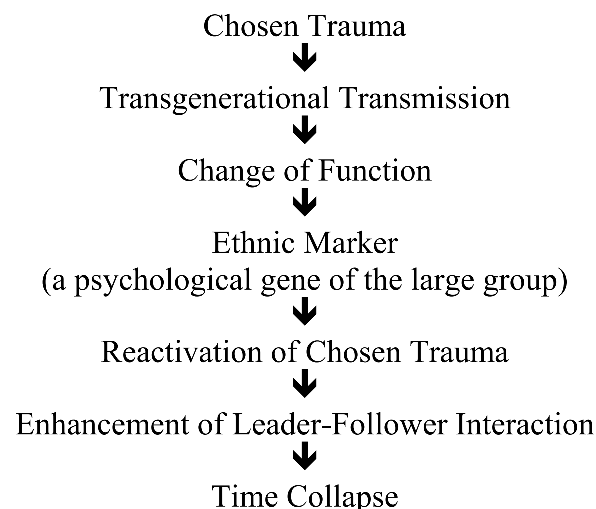
> The image of a past event during which a large group suffered loss or experienced helplessness and humiliation in a conflict with a neighboring group.

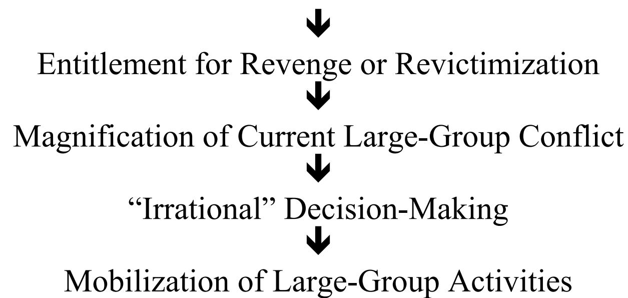
This term refers to the mental representation of an event that has caused a large group to face drastic losses, feel helpless and victimized by another group, and share a

humiliating injury. Since a large group does not choose to be victimized or suffer humiliation, some take exception to the term "chosen" trauma. I believe that it reflects a group's unconscious "choice" to add a past generation's mental representation of an event to its own identity, and the fact that while groups may have experienced any number of traumas in their history, only certain ones remain alive over centuries. A chosen trauma is linked to the past generation's inability to mourn losses after experiencing a shared traumatic event, and indicates the group's failure to reverse narcissistic injury and humiliation inflicted by another large group, usually a neighbor (Volkan, 1991, 1992, 1997; Volkan and Itzkowitz 1993, 1994).

While each individual in a traumatized large group has his own unique identity and personal reaction to trauma, all members share the mental representations of the tragedies that have befallen the group. Their injured self images associated with the mental representations of the shared traumatic event are "deposited" into the developing self representation of children in the next generation as if these children will be able to mourn the loss or reverse the humiliation. Such depositing constitutes an intergenerational transmission of trauma. If the children cannot deal with what is deposited in them, they, as adults, will in turn pass the mental representation of the event to the next generation.

[slides 6, 7, 8: Chosen Trauma--Processes and Functions]





As the chosen trauma passes from generation to generation it changes function. The historical truth about the event is no longer important for the large group, but what is important is that through sharing the chosen trauma, members of the group are linked together. In other words, the chosen trauma in woven into the canvas of the ethnic or large group tent, and becomes an inseparable part of the group's identity. This thread, however, may or may not be readily evident at all times; it may become intertwined with other threads or it may lie dormant for a long period of time, yet can be reactivated and exert a powerful psychological force. Leaders intuitively seem to know how to reactivate a chosen trauma, especially when their large group is in conflict or has gone through a drastic change and needs to reconfirm or enhance its identity.

Time collapse typically occurs when a chosen trauma is reactivated. This term refers to the fears, expectations, fantasies, and defenses associated with a chosen trauma that reappear when both conscious and unconscious connections are made between the past trauma and a contemporary threat. This process magnifies the image of current enemies and current conflicts. The sense of revenge becomes exaggerated. If the large group is in a powerless position, a current event may reactivate a sense of victimization.

Time collapse may lead to irrational and sadistic or masochistic decision making by the leadership of the large group and in turn members of the large group become psychologically prepared for sadistic or masochistic acts, and in the worst case scenario, perpetuate otherwise unthinkable cruelty against others.

My discussant today, Anne Schützenberger (19??), has contributed a great deal on the importance of anniversary reactions. Chosen traumas are similarly recalled during the anniversary of the original event, and the ritualistic commemoration helps bind the members of the large group together. Czechs commemorate the battle of Bila Hora in 1620 which led to their subjugation under the Hapsburg Empire for nearly 300 years. Scots keep alive the story of the battle of Culloden in 1746 and the failure of Bonnie Prince Charlie to restore a Stuart to the throne. The Lakota indians of the United States recall the anniversary of their decimation at Wounded Knee in 1890, and Crimean Tatars define themselves by the collective suffering of their deportation from Crimea in 1944.

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An excellent example of the activation of a chosen trauma in this decade can be seen among the Serbian people. The Serbs' chosen trauma played a major role in the atrocities in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and anniversary reactions associated with one event, the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, featured prominently in uniting Serbs against those they perceived as enemies.

After becoming independent from Byzantium in the 12th century, the kingdom of Serbia thrived for almost 200 years under the leadership of the Nemanjić dynasty, reaching its climax under the beloved Emperor Stefan Dušan. Dušan died in 1355, and the Nemanjić dynasty came to an end a short time thereafter. In 1371, Serb feudal lords elected Lazar Hrebeljanović as leader of Serbia, though he assumed the title of prince rather than tzar.

The decline of Serbia that followed is primarily attributed to the expansion of the Ottoman Empire into Serb territory, culminating in the Battle of Kosovo on June 28, 1389 at the Kosovo Polje (the Field of the Black Birds) in the southern part of today's Yugoslav Federation.

There are various versions of the "historical truth" of the Battle of Kosovo (Emmert, 1990). We know that the Turkish Sultan, Murat I, was fatally wounded by a Serb assassin during or after the battle. We also know that the wounded Sultan or his son Bayezit ordered the execution of Prince Lazar, who had been captured during the battle. Chroniclers have disagreed on other outcomes of the battle. Lazar's body was then mummified and he was canonized.

Seventy years after the Battle of Kosovo, as the Ottomans consolidated their control over Serb territory, Lazar's body was moved from its monastery near Kosovo to a safer location in the north near Belgrade. During this same period the Battle of Kosovo slowly began to evolve into a chosen trauma for the Serb people. Mythologized tales of the battle were transmitted from generation to generation through a strong oral and religious tradition in Serbia, perpetuating and reinforcing Serbs' traumatized self images.

There is ample evidence to support the fact that the "interpretation" of events at the Battle of Kosovo among the Serbian people went through various transformations over the centuries. I have described these transformations elsewhere in detail (Volkan, 1996). Briefly, under Ottoman rule the Serbs held onto an identity as "perennial mourners." The image of Lazar as it appeared in icons and folk songs was Christ-like. Lazar, a true martyr, had died for his people, and Serbian victimhood was idealized.

[slides 9, 10, 11: Icons of Lazar]

With the awakening of nationalism in Europe in the 19th century, Lazar's image was transformed from martyr, victim, and tragic figure to hero and then ultimately to avenger.

[slide 12: Avengers of Kosovo]

In 1878, after much political scheming as well as many wars, the Serbs (as well as Montenegrins) were declared independent from the Ottoman Empire by the Treaty of

Berlin. The treaty placed them under the control of Austria-Hungary, which in turn tried to suppress Serbia's Kosovo spirit. Serbia soon found itself in the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913, through which it was finally able to "liberate" Kosovo after over 500 years. A young soldier later recalled this liberation:

> Each of us created for himself a picture of Kosovo while we were still in the cradle. Our mothers lulled us to sleep with the songs of Kosovo, and in our schools our teachers never ceased in their stories of Lazar and Milo□.
>
> My God, what awaited us! To see a liberated Kosovo .... When we arrived on Kosovo ... the spirits of Lazar, Milo□ and all the Kosovo martyrs gaze on us (From *Vojincki Glasnik*, June 28, 1932, reported in Emmert [1990, pp. 133-134]).

Less than two years after Kosovo's liberation, on the 1914 anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo, a Bosnian Serb named Gavrilo Princip assassinated Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his pregnant wife in Sarajevo, thereby signaling the beginning of World War I. What is known about Princip is that as a teenager he, as most other Serb youngsters, was filled with the transformed images of Lazar as avengers (Emmert, 1990). Although Serbia was now free, the Austro-Hungarian empire exerted significant influence over much of the region after the Ottomans. In Princip's mind, it is possible that the old and new "oppressors" were condensed, and the desire for revenge was transferred to the Austro-Hungarian heir apparent.

Time does not permit me to give you a summary of Serbian history between the liberation of Kosovo and the collapse of the Soviet empire. Many people are already familiar with the history of this part of the world between World War II and the end of the Communist era. I will therefore focus on the reactivation of the Serbs' chosen trauma in the 1980s.

In April 1987, Slobodan Milosevi(, present president of the "new" Yugoslavia (the Serb-Montenegro federation) and then a Communist bureaucrat, was attending a meeting of 300 party delegates in Kosovo. At the time only 10 percent of the population

in Kosovo was Serb. The majority, as they are today, were Albanian Muslims. During the meeting a crowd of Serbs (and also Montenegrins) tried to force their way into the meeting hall. They wanted to express their grievances about the hardships they were experiencing in Kosovo. The local police blocked and prohibited the crowd's entry into the meeting hall. At that moment, Milosević stepped forward and said: "Nobody, either now or in the future, has the right to beat you." In a frenzy, the crowd spontaneously began singing "Hej Sloveni," the national anthem, and shouted "We want freedom! We will not give up Kosovo!" In turn, Milosević was excited; he stayed in the building until dawn--a 13-hour period--listening to the tales of victimization. Serbs living in Kosovo complained that the Muslims of Kosovo were treating the Serbs badly.

Milosević came out of this experience a transformed person, wearing the armor of Serb nationalism. In a speech, he would later declare that Serbs in Kosovo are not a minority since "Kosovo is Serbia and will always be Serbia."

One story in particular illustrates how Milosević and a few others in his circle unleashed Serb nationalism. In 1889, the 500th anniversary of Kosovo, plans for moving Lazar's mummified body back to the Kosovo region were discussed, but never materialized. As the 600th anniversary approached, Milosević and others in his circle were determined to bring Lazar's body out of "exile." Lazar's mummified remains were placed in a coffin and taken "on tour" to every Serb village and town, where he was received by huge crowds of mourners dressed in black and religious leaders dressed in their religious costumes. As a result of the time collapse of 600 years initiated by Serb leadership, Serbs began to feel that the defeat in Kosovo had occurred only yesterday, an outcome made far easier by the fact that the chosen trauma had been kept alive throughout the centuries. As they greeted Lazar's body, they cried and wailed and gave speeches saying that they would never allow such a defeat to occur again.

What interests us here is that Milosević apparently reactivated Lazar's image in Serbs' minds so that grieving his defeat at the Battle of Kosovo could at last be accomplished, and the reversal of helplessness, humiliation, and shame could be

completed. In any case, affects pertaining to traumatized self images were felt freshly; sharing this invisibly connected all Serbs more closely, and they began to develop similar self images in which there was a drastic change: a new sense of *entitlement for revenge*, although it is unclear whether this is what Milosević intended.

Nevertheless, Milosević continued to stir nationalist sentiments. For instance, he ordered the building of a huge monument on a hill overlooking the Kosovo battlefield. Made of red stone, representing blood (Kaplan, 1993), it stands 100 feet over the "grieving" flowers and is surrounded by artillery-shell-shaped cement pillars inscribed with a sword and the dates 1389-1989. On the tower is written Lazar's battle cry that every Serb man come to the Field of Black Birds to fight the Turks. If a Serb fails to respond to this call, Lazar's words warn: "He will not have a child, neither male or female, and he will not have fertile land where crops grow." By building the monument and linking 1389 with 1989, Milosević was re-sending Lazar's ancient message in the present. The message to Serb men was clear: "Either you fight against the Turks or lose your manliness!"

On June 28, 1989, the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo, a helicopter brought Milosević to the Field of the Black Birds. He "took the podium from dancing maidens in traditional folk costume and transported the crowd to heights of frenzied adoration with a simple message: 'never again would Islam subjugate the Serbs' " (Vulliamy, 1994, p. 51). In one photo of this rally I noted that Lazar's ancient call to battle against the Turks was imprinted on the T-shirts of many of those present. Riding this wave of nationalism, Milosević's prominence increased. In 1990, the six Yugoslav republics held elections in which the Communists were defeated everywhere except Serbia and Montenegro. In Serbia, the Communists were now called the Serb Socialist Party, and Milosević was elected as party head. In 1991, Milosević summoned Radovan Karadzić, the then Bosnian Serbs' leader, and others to meet with him to discuss the future of the Serbs. Like my knowledge about Slobodan Milosević, what I know about Radovan Karadzić is not extensive. Therefore, I will limit my comments about Karadzić

to those that relate to one of the themes of this chapter--to the internalization of a past trauma in a person who is born in a generation after the original trauma took place.

In 1998 in Croatia I spoke with a group of psychiatrists who had known Karadzić as a student or classmate. As you may know, he was trained as a psychiatrist. Except for some comments on the uniqueness of his physical appearance, no one I spoke with sensed anything unusual about him.

In 1985, Karadzić was convicted of fraud (misuse of public funds) and was put in jail where he remained for eleven months until he was freed by a Serb judge. He is also a poet, and after his prison experience he published *Crna Bajka (The Black Fable),* a collection of new poems in 1990. In one of his poems entitled "A Man Risen from the Ashes" one can detect the effect of imprisonment on him (Deklava and Post, 1995). In another poem in the same book he refers to Serbs being trapped in a fortress surrounded by advancing Turks and waiting for the Tzar (Lazar) to come to their rescue. I suspect that his imprisoned self image was condensed with the imprisoned self image of his ancestors which had been transferred down through the generations. Karadzić was not immune from being a carrier of the Serbs' chosen trauma.

In June 1992, after disposing of his "friend" and mentor Ivan Stambolić, then the State President, whom he had accused of betraying the Serbs in the province of Kosovo, Milosević was elected president of the third Yugoslavia.

Before the ethnic cleansing and systematic rape of Bosnian Muslim women began, Serb propaganda increasingly focused on inflaming the idea that the Ottomans, now symbolized by the Bosnian Muslims, would return. Serbs even referred to Bosnian Muslims as Turks. There is, of course, some basis of truth to this perception since Bosnian Muslims played a significant role in Ottoman Turkish history. As part of the Ottoman system of taxes and tribute known as *devşirme*, teenage boys were taken away from their families, indoctrinated as Ottomans, and trained as soldiers that were named janissaries. Modern Serbian propaganda warned of a return of janissaries, their rape of

Serbian women and propagation of non-Serbs, and their ultimate goal of recapturing Serbia. This fantasized threat was countered by the Serbs' own tactic of raping Bosnian Muslim women in which a conscious strategy of intimidation was condensed with an unconscious one of reversing the *dev≡irme* through the underlying assumption that the child produced by the rape of a non-Serb woman would be a Serb, and not carry any of the traits of the mother. Questioning this belief, Allen (1996) noted, "Enforced pregnancy as a method of genocide makes sense only if you are ignorant about genetics. No baby born from such a crime will be only Serb. It will receive half its genetic material from its mother" (p. 80). This fact hardly seems to need explanation, yet the author clearly was focusing on logical thinking and biological reality, although in the case of inflamed ethnic animosities, it is the "psychological truth" that is more important. Thus Serbs sought to both kill young Muslim men and replace them with new "Serb" children and truly avenge Kosovo. Fact and fantasy, past and present were intimately and violently intermingled.

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By speaking of Bosnia-Herzegovina I do not mean to reduce what happened there only to the reactivation of a chosen trauma. I wanted, however, to give a detailed account of a chosen trauma, and how it becomes an inseparable ethnic marker. Today the Battle of Kosovo continues to exert an influence over Serbian people and their policies toward the Albanians who today comprise a majority of the population of the Yugoslav province of Kosovo. Awareness of the chosen traumas of groups in conflict can enlarge our understanding about how they may become the fuel to ignite the most horrible human dramas and/or keep the fire going once hostilities start. I also hope that my talk today will encourage some of you to apply your experience with small groups to the understanding of large-groups psychology and how it effects relationships at the individual, group, national and international level. As political scientists and diplomats are struggling to understand this thing called ethnicity—the large group identity—I hope

that those who understand psychodynamics can contribute to mutually interesting and useful discussion on such important interdisciplinary subjects.

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