REFLECTIONS:

NARRATIVES of PROFESSIONAL HELPING

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REFLECTIONS:
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VOLUME 6 Spring 2000 NUMBER 2

Special Issue

Responding to War: Social Workers and War In the Balkans

Special Editors - Michael Dover, M.S.W.; Charles D. Garvin, Ph.D.; Sara Amy Goodkind, M.S.W.; Marilyn A Moch, Ph.D.; Michael S. Reisch, Ph.D.

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Editorial

by Rebecca A. Lopez, Ph.D

In our training of social work professionals, we are conscious of including the promotion of diversity as a quality to be acknowledged and valued. Differences in race, ethnicity, lifestyle and capabilities are realities to be celebrated in our pluralist society. The rights to co-exist "in difference" in our society have been hard-won in our most recent history. We no longer accept the ideal that all additions to our society must be Americanized to fit into the proverbial melting pot. This has been no easy task, and we still struggle with vile factions of oppressive intolerance with sometimes deadly consequences. We define and continue to redefine majority-minority relationships in light of changing demographics and the blurring of cultural lines. Our historical and socio-structural foundations have allowed us our temporary transgressions without the total destruction of our country as we know it.

Yet, many places in our world have imploded under the intolerance of diversity. Intolerance of ethnic and religious difference among Yugoslavia's federation of republics is the focus of this issue of REFLECTIONS. The collapse of the communist system of old brought a splintering of interests clearly along historical ethnic and religious lines. Serbs, Croats and Muslims now asserted their independence with a torrent of brutal nationalism and persecution of "others".

But, who were these "others"? For many, these nationalistic and ethnic lines would seem contrived. Many (including several authors in this issue) can attest to the fact that ethnic boundaries were blurring in the pre-war Balkans. Estimates are that as many as one third of the marriages in Bosnia were mixed marriages prior to the 1992-95 civil war. Families of mixed marriages and people for whom ethnic identity was not a prime consideration were now forced to pledge allegiance to one faction. The ultimate human tragedy was the result when children of intermarriage were forced to choose sides in this conflict. Childhood friends, neighbors and even relatives now became the enemy in a protracted exchange of hostilities whose vehemence produced human suffering on a scale not seen in modern times.

In viewing the escalation of atrocities in the Balkans, many in the helping professions were forced to confront a dilemma of conscience. Senses of incredulity, frustration, even anger at the U.S. role in NATO's bombing campaign were voiced by many who felt they knew where they stood in issues of peace, war and non-violent expression. The need to respond to these events was met in a number of ways beyond intellectual discourse. Some protested. Some volunteered to help with the aftermath of this crisis. Helping professionals were, and still are working with the estimated 400,000 refugees and displaced persons, as well as the family members of the quarter of a million dead and missing. Helping professionals are providing technical expertise to mend families and, hopefully, nations that are still immersed in emotional minefields. And persons in the helping professions have been spurred on to new inquiry in dealing with difference and non-violent conflict resolution, as some of our authors illustrate. It becomes the imperative for all helping professionals to share what they know and believe about the necessity for constant vigilance against devaluation of differences in others.

This, unfortunately, will not be the last time helping professionals will be asked to take on these roles. But we must believe that the lessons we teach about tolerance and appreciation of diversity will have some impact on the tasks the future brings. Perhaps we would do well to recognize the elemental truth posed by Black Elk of the Oglala Sioux nation who envisioned the world as a "whole hoop." The "sacred hoop" of his nation was but "one of many hoops that made one circle, wide as daylight and as star-

light, and in the center grew one mighty flowering tree to shelter all the children of one mother and one father."[a] With the escalation of development in destructive technologies in many parts of the world, failure to recognize this elemental truth that we are all part of that "whole hoop", will bring consequences from which there will be no recovery. ❑

Rebecca A. Lopez, MSW, PhD.
Associate Editor
REFLECTIONS

Reflections welcomes letters to the Editor. Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address and daytime phone number to Editor, Reflections, Department of Social Work, CSULB, 1250 Bellflower, Long Beach, CA 90840. They can also be faxed (562-985-5514) or sent via E-mail to reflect@csulb.edu. Letters may be edited for length and clarity and may be published in the journal.

[a] Black Elk (1988) Black Elk speaks: Being the life story of the holy man of the Oglala Sioux, as told to J.G. Neihart. Lincoln, NB. P. 43.

SPECIAL ISSUE
CALL FOR NARRATIVES

GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN:

FAMILIES FACING CHALLENGE

The reality of today's grandparent role is far from yesterday's "pleasure without responsibility." These days more and more grandparents are assuming major caregiving roles for their grandchildren, either in support of adult children who share a household, or as sole caregivers for their grandchildren. Almost 4 million children were raised in grandparent-households in 1997 (5.5% of children under 18) compared to 2.1 million children in 1970 (3% of children under 18). These increases have resulted from a myriad of social and economic pressures and are the forerunner of powerful and challenging roles for grandparents to come.

As a topic for stories, grandparents raising grandchildren involves the drama of crisis and resolution of renewal or resignation; and perspectives from grandparents, parents, and grandchildren. The topic spans urban and rural issues, and reaches across the generations, encompassing the fields of child welfare and gerontology. Join us in telling the stories of grandparents and of professional struggles to advocate for their needs. We are looking for:

- Episodes of loss, triumph, tragedy, and renewal as told by grandparents raising grandchildren.
- Narratives of initiatives to change law and adapt new welfare legislation in the interests of grandparents.
- Stories of organizations and institutions serving or failing to serve grandparents: the courts, child welfare, public assistance, schools, health and mental health services, and the prisons.
- Narratives telling of efforts to establish innovative programs and to reform old ones.
- Tales told by professionals who help grandparents.

Manuscripts due by October 31, 2000

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Introduction to Special Issue on "Social Workers and War in the Balkans"

by Michael Reisch

For nearly a century and a half, the development of organized social welfare and the evolution of the social work profession in the United States have been closely connected to issues of war and peace. As scholars such as Richard Titmuss and Theda Skocpol have pointed out, from the formation of the U.S. Sanitary Commision and the American Red Cross during the Civil War to contemporary responses to "Gulf War syndrome," wars have stimulated the creation of state-sponsored policies and private sector interventions to address the needs of military and civilian victims of conflict. These programs, in turn, have often served as models for a wide range of peacetime initiatives directed towards the casualties of a largely unregulated market system. Concerns for the well being of soldiers and their families lead to the creation of veterans' and widows' pensions, the forerunners of modern social insurance. For these and other reasons, it could be argued, somewhat perversly to be sure, that wars had a positive influence on the development of 19th and 20th century social welfare.

Wars have also played a major role in shaping the social work profession, particularly in the U.S. During World War I, social workers discovered a need for their services among soldiers of all social classes suffering from shell shock. This enabled the profession to expand its client base beyond individuals and families in poverty and contributed to the growth of psychiatric social work in the 1920's and, some scholars assert, the profession's retreat from social reform. During the same period, outspoken opposition to military intervention among settlement leaders, notably Jane Addams, Florence Kelley, and Lillian Wald, lead to attacks on their patriotism and contributed to the demise of their influence on social policy.

World War II also produced an expansion of both the welfare state and of occupational social welfare benefits. This expansion continued during and after the Korean War despite the maintenance of higher levels of military spending. In addition, wartime experiences inspired a generation of men and women to enter the social service field. Many of the key figures in the 1960's War on Poverty and modern leaders of social work education emerged from this cohort. During the 1950's and early 1960's, fears of global nuclear conflict motivated some social workers to advocate for disarmament and a reordering of national priorities. In the McCarthy era, they were frequently persecuted for such views.

In the mid-1960's, Social Workers for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament (now called Social Workers for Peace and Social Justice) was created under the auspices of NASW. Over the next decade, the war in Indochina produced an outpouring of protest over the senseless waste of human life and the diversion of national resources from human needs to the military-issues that persist today. U.S. intervention in Central America in the1980's and the Persian Gulf in the 1990's provoked similar responses on a lesser scale. Increasingly, concerns about the long-term effects of war on military personnel and civilians prompted social workers to advocate for the creation of services to address war-related traumas such as PTSD.

Ironically, the recent war in the Balkans-the place where the first global conflict of the 20th Century began-produced widely varying responses among social workers. Some actively protested NATO bombing of Serbia. Others supported international action to end atrocities like "ethnic cleansing." Other social workers organized to stop the inhumanity by both opposing the NATO bombing and demanding UN action to protect the human rights of all those in the region. Some social workers became active in humanitarian endeav-

ors, often working in concert with professional colleagues from the region and other nations on behalf of rape and torture victims, and refugees.

This special issue of *Reflections* attempts to capture the voices of some of these social workers and to reflect the variety of personal and professional reactions the war provoked. Despite the different backgrounds of the authors, the narratives echo remarkably similar criticisms of war and its consequences. Authors from the Balkans wrote three of the twelve articles. Five Americans and one Israeli wrote about their work in the Balkans. Three other articles concerned practice and research in the U.S. with refugees from the Balkans. All the accounts, however, reflect themes similar to those that have emerged over the past century.

The narratives focus on the horrible personal consquences of the war--particularly on women, children, and the elderly. What makes these observations so powerful is the awful "everydayness" of the tragedies, even when survivors have struggled to establish a sense of "normal life." Many of the narratives describe the effects of the war on the distribution of scarce resources and on critical organizations and services that address war-related human needs.

Catherine Sexton (a pseudonym) recounts the story ("Psychotherapy in the Shadows of War and Gang Conflict") of an 18-year old client and gang member, Katya, who fled Bosnia with her parents. Through her life, Sexton links the violence Katya experienced in the war with the violence she now encounters daily on the streets. Margaret Oakes's summary of her interviews with Bosnian refugees ("A Trail to Bosnia, War Trauma, and Qualitative Research") expands upon Sexton's observations regarding the lasting effects of the war. Her discussion of the consequences of the war on couples from "mixed marriages" is particularly poignant and her comments on the war's impact on the process of qualitative research underscores the importance of self-reflection. Danica Boskovic-Djukic ("The Experiences, Expectations and Realities of People Treated for Alcohol Abuse During the War"), a Yugoslavian psychologist, focuses specifically on the effects of the NATO bombing in spring 1999 on patients dependent on alcohol. By integrating an account of the therapeutic process with the effects of the bombing, she offers new insights into issues of survival in the face of mass violence.

The themes of survival and violence are also at the heart of Jennifer Erickson's narrative of her work as a volunteer in Bosnia ("Activism in Bosnia: Violence and Feminism"). She, too, describes her shock upon witnessing the magnitude of losses people incurred and her admiration at their struggles merely to survive. By sharing her experiences with other women, Erickson gained new insight into the meaning of the war and strengthened her commitment to a feminist analysis of its causes and consequences.

Three other essays also explore the authors' experiences working with refugees from the Balkan conflict. Eve Weisberg's detailed account of her work in Croatia draws a stark contrast between the beauty of the country and the ugly personal consequences of the war. Shelly Perry, Rene Drumm, and Sharon Pittman ("Three Social Workers and an NGO") present a story of hope among the squalor of a refugee camp in Albania. Like so many contributors to this special issue, they remark on how they learned from the individuals with whom they worked. The themes of hope and education are also at the heart of Nancy Ayer's narrative, appropriately titled "A Journey to Hope." Through the experience of one young Bosnian man and his family, Ayer depicts the everyday horror of war in Bosnia, such as the discovery of mass graves. She also brings the roots of the conflict "home" to the U.S. in recounting an incident of "ethnic cleansing" in Maryland.

Several essays compare the authors' responses to the Balkans war with the personal impact of other comtemporary conflicts. Vered Kater ("Window View from Jerusalem"), a nurse from Jersualem and a war survivor, volunteered to teach nurses in Kosovo how to care for sick children. Her memories of childhood and of wars fought by Israel are interwoven with a journal of her work. Petar Opalic, a physician from Belgrade, uses memory in a strikingly different way in his narrative ("Dreams in Traumatic Reality"). His account of the dreams of Serbian and Montenegran patients provides

vivid images of the insanity of war. By concluding with some of his own dreams, Opalic brings the war's consequences down to the most intimate level.

Like their professional ancestors, several of the authors place the Balkans conflict in broader historical and political context and focus on education as a means to avoid future wars. Ivan Segota, a professor at the University of Rijeka "Ethics Education to Counter War"), describes his efforts in the 1990's to create the field of bioethics in Croatia as a countermeasure to the experience of war. He believes that he has "contributed to the struggle against war. . .[by] introducing my students to ethical issues in their practice and spreading these ideas not only among professionals, but also among the lay public. . ."

Julia M. Watkins, President of the American University in Bulgaria ("Responding to War: An Educational Imperative") also emphasizes the importance of education as a preventive strategy against future wars, particularly with young people. Her diary entries provide a vivid picture of the NATO bombing through the eyes of a neighboring country that feared being drawn into the war. This "dual perspective" gives new insights into the meaning and effects of the war.

Finally, Richard J. Smith, an MSW student at the University of Michigan, incorporates in his narrative ("Peace, the Only Durable Solution to War") accounts of his experiences working for UNICEF in Mongolia during the bombing campaign and in Michigan working with Balkan refugees in its aftermath. Smith's description of people-to-people efforts to build a multi-ethnic community in his home town as the only lasting solution to war is reminiscent of Jane Addam's call to link democracy and peace nearly a century ago. And so, the work continues. ❑

Activism in Bosnia: Violence and Feminism

The author takes us on a journey of, not only her unique experiences as a volunteer in war-torn Bosnia-Herzegovina, but also her journey through a self-evaluation of what it means to be a feminist.

by
Jennifer Erickson

Volunteer/Research Coordinator Medical Infoteka, Bosnia Herzegovina

Eight years ago I had never heard of Bosnia-Herzegovina. At the beginning of the war in the former Yugoslavia, I was attending a small town high school in Minnesota, active in as many school activities as possible. I went to debates, sports practice and games, band and choir concerts, and studied hard. When home, I flippantly changed television channels looking for popular shows or reruns in order to relax. What I saw about the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina on the news was of a seemingly far away country; some black and white shots of people fighting. I did not know for what or whom they were fighting. I changed the channel immediately. I never imagined that one day I would personally meet and become such close friends with survivors of that war, much less live and work with them. I would have called myself active, but not an activist.

During my early years of college, I isolated myself with studies, late-teen fun, and making friends from similar backgrounds. I did not think about the existence of Bosnia. The words "Krajina," "„etnik" "Ustaša" "Srebrenica" "Genocidal Rape" "Prince Lazarus" and others had absolutely no meaning for me. I would not have been able to immediately point out Kosovo, Zagreb, Sarajevo, or Zenica, BH (Bosnia-Herzegovina), my current place of residence, on a map without difficulty and time. I knew fairly little about the Balkans.

I arrived in Zenica as a volunteer for BVS (Brethren Volunteer Service) on November 22, 1998, one and a half years after I received my Bachelor's degree from Luther College in Decorah, IA, and moved to Washington, D.C. I wanted to pursue activism, volunteerism, learn about the world through experience, and search for a way to leave the States. I had studied psychology, English literature, and German. I found BVS. When I first arrived, after reading several books about the area, I had sufficient information, albeit on a very simple level, about the war and history of the region. I could recognize Tudjman, Miloševi*f*, and Izetbegovi*f*. I did not know any of the Bosnian language.[1]

At the beginning, most group conversations were, understandably, not translated for me. At night, I studied the language and by day, I watched and observed facial expressions, tone of voice, and body language. I made friends with those who spoke English or German. I helped to translate and edit texts in English.

I listened, but did not question aloud. I was afraid of what the answers would be and

sensitive to the fact that "they" had experienced a war and I had not. I began putting real names and faces to the places I had read about: Srebrenica, Višegrad, ðepfe, Sarajevo, Mostar...I waited and grew accustomed to a daily routine. I was quieter than I had ever been. After a few months, I was comfortable and began to notice our similarities rather than our differences. Life became "normal" and sometimes I would go for a day or more without thinking about what happened here just a few years ago. I began to rely less on body language and more on words again. My friendships grew closer as we talked about borders of suffering, losses and gains, religion, education, feminism... I began to question slowly, but never forced answers.

I woke up one morning in an exceptional mood for no reason in particular. I saw a woman I had met several times before and we made the usual small talk. I looked at her eyes, her smile, and thought, I bet she's a great friend, parent, and/or partner. She too was in a good mood. I asked her whether she had children. Her face went from the smiling, laid-back expression to which I was accustomed to deep sadness in an instant. She said, "I had a daughter. She died in my arms. Her legs were blown off. She looked something like you. Now I'm alone. Completely alone."

Because I was so unprepared for her answer, because her story caught me off guard on that day, I did not know how to respond. I fumbled with "sorry" and stuttered, "I didn't know." I regretted my silent responses immediately and wished I would have hugged her, asked her out for coffee, anything but mumbling, "I'm sorry."

Medica Zenica Infoteka Project

My transition from full-time student to part-time volunteer to full-time activist and feminist is due in large part to Medica Infoteka, the organization for which I volunteer.

On the 28th of December 1992, Monika Hauser, a German gynecologist, traveled to Zenica from Cologne, Germany. She knew that this city had already taken in tens of thousands of refugees. Monika met committed women who were already actively helping refugees and they immediately began creating a center for gynecological and psychological care of women, specifically in response to the massive war-related rape. Medica opened as early as April 1993. Women making up the Medica teams were and still are from different backgrounds: Bošnjak, Bosnian Croat, and Bosnian Serb (although most of them are Bošnjak.)[2]

Medica consists of a medical clinic, psycho-social support staff, daycare center, two separate accommodations for women and children (Medica 1 and 2, both located in Zenica), workshops for education, a political and research wing (Infoteka), and now a hotline for women and children victims of violence (SOS Telephone). All of its services are free of charge to women and children and are available to the public at large as need arises.

Most of my time is spent in Infoteka, the team that established and maintains networks with other women's and service organizations to share information. Infoteka works for long-term change of the aspects of society that contribute to violence and war and is an advocate for issues relevant to women. Medica has close relationships with many government and non-governmental organizations within BH, as well as Europe. It has remained an active supporter of The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in the Hague in recognizing rape as a war crime, and in the campaign to protect witnesses. Presently, it is working on a campaign against domestic violence.

In Medica 2, fifteen young women live and receive support while they complete their secondary and higher education or Medica's courses (weaving, sewing, furniture upholstery, knitting, and hair styling). Many of these women were unable to attend school for the duration of the war and have just now been able to re-enroll. I spent several months getting to know these young women through English lessons for them and Bosnian lessons for me, or informally over coffee-strong and sweet the Bosnian way. Lessons have technically ended, but the friendships have not. Many of these young women are from Srebrenica or other parts of Eastern Bosnia and are now fatherless, brotherless, and/or have significantly fewer male friends and family members as a result of the ethnic cleansing, which took place there in July of 1995. Srebrenica was the enclave where the largest massacre during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina took place. Approxi-

mately 7,000 men and boys were killed, and thousands of women and children were expulsed. It was this massacre that led the international community to design a more feasible end to the war.

The daycare center in Medica, Kid's House, is open to all children in the community. The children are cared for in a supportive environment in which they can begin to make a recovery from their traumatic experiences, or if they simply need a place to go while their parents are at work. I work in the daycare center a few days per week.

In December of 1998 and January of 1999, the Kid's House hosted children from Kosovo/a. Most came with their mothers from refugee camps in or near Zenica. Some of my most memorable experiences and conversations are from this time as I listened to the mothers and older children explain how life in Kosovo/a had been for the last few years and why they had to leave. One 12 year-old boy had been a Kosovar soldier before they came to Bosnia. Mothers came for coffee and for a brief break from life in refugee camps, and their children had some time away from the adults in their own kid space. Some of the children and mothers provided translation from Albanian for those who did not speak Serbian/Bosnian. We encouraged communication and cooperation among all children in our daily activities. Some of these activities included a large New Year's celebration. Children from Kosovo/a participated in the program. Some of them sang revolutionary songs. There was also a visit from Santa Claus and a gift for every child. One mother cried when she saw her children receive gifts, as she explained to me that of all years, she hadn't thought it would be possible this year.

From March until May 1999, during the bombing of Yugoslavia, children from Sandñak, an area in Serbia where a majority of people are ethnically Muslim, came to the Kid's House. During this time, I taught English to 12 children between the ages of 10 and 14. With the help of my father, a middle-school counselor, I arranged for these children to write kids of their same age in Minnesota. (I translated the letters.) The letters were moving as the children from Sandñak explained that they are refugees from Yugoslavia. Mostly they talked about their friends and their favorite music and sports. One 14-year-old girl wrote that she would like to visit the United States and that she would love if her pen pal could visit her in Yugoslavia one day, when she returns.

"Bajram and the Bombs"

I began to participate in conferences about women, feminism, and youth. I started to travel, including to the International Women's Day conference in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. I was there in early March, just two weeks before NATO. I met feminist activists who had protested the war in Bosnia and other wars around the world. We spoke about feminism, racism, classism, non-violence, militarism, and peace initiatives around the region. While there, I had no problems as an American, a representative of the West, those threatening to bomb FRY (the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia). But the Bosnian colleague I traveled with was not as fortunate. One night we took a taxi. I was not listening to the conversation between my friend and the driver. We left the cab before we reached our destination. She paid him with visibly shaking hands. I asked her why. The driver had had a Serb nationalist symbol tattooed on his hand and when she told him she was from Bosnia he said that Bosnia does not exist. Bosnia is not a country.

My last words to the new friends I met in Belgrade were "I hope NATO doesn't bomb." We laughed.

I had never felt so "American" than during the NATO bombing of FRY. Approximately 85% of Zenica's population are Bošnjak, including several thousand displaced people from Eastern Bosnia who were ethnically cleansed by Serb soldiers. As I walked around this city, I saw cars displaying small United States flags. I saw larger American flags hanging in apartment windows. I think of that first weekend as "Bajram and the Bombs." (Bajram is the Bosnian word for the Islamic celebration of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca. It was coincidentally during this holiday that the bombing began.) Almost everyone in Zenica was overjoyed and I felt as if I was in the only place in the world that not only was supporting NATO's militarism, but was even celebrating it.

It is due to my personal

experiences and contact with people from Bosnia, Kosovo/a, and FRY (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) that I struggled during the bombing. For the first time in my life, I knew people who were being bombed. Unlike the war in Bosnia, I was not hearing the stories after, but actually during the event. After hearing the experiences of how my Bosnian friends survived and are still surviving, I could not completely condemn the bombing as an action against the regime that had attacked Bosnia. I could not help but share in some of their gratification and feelings of compensation.

People in Bosnia are still surviving their war. They are still waiting for peace of mind. Economical, physical, and emotional challenges have not disappeared since the Dayton Peace Agreement in 1995. The most difficult aspect was explaining to myself, my colleagues here, and my family and friends in the States that I supported neither NATO nor Miloševi*f*. I spent a lot of time searching for ways to talk about this with my Bosnian friends, ways that would not awaken terrible memories or provoke analysis of our differences. Our similarities outnumber our differences many times.

Some people in Bosnia did not want to talk about Kosovo/a at all. They said they had been through and heard enough about war and they were tired of it all. After hearing stories of rape and missing family members, in many cases at the hands of Serb soldiers, I did not need an explanation. But I did question, and most of the time their answers were that they do not support violence in general, but that in some cases, in the case of Miloševi*f* and his followers, it is necessary. They wanted the citizens of Serbia to feel what it was like to hear those planes flying overhead, to not have electricity, heating, food, medicine, or security. They did not want all Serbian people to die. They wanted them to know what Bosnia had suffered for almost four years, to feel the fear that some had to die.

One local man, who works for an international organization in Zenica, and I began speaking about the bombing after it had ended. He continues to be the only local person I know who openly asserts that NATO did not bomb Serbia for humanitarian reasons, but that NATO, and more specifically the United States, is slowly buying the Balkans and its people. He feels that NATO bombed in order to have an army base in the Balkans. I was relieved to hear this new perspective from a Bosnian and encouraged him to go on. He then stated that "Americans are smarter than Bosnians." The group around us laughed as I strongly asserted, "We are not!" I wasn't trying to be humorous. He then said, "From my perspective, Bosnia is the most beautiful country in the world, with the stupidest people...I would love to be a slave to America." When I tried to explain the attitude of this man to my Bosnian friends, they once again stated emphatically, "We don't care why NATO bombed, we're just glad they did."

I was at once furious, sad, confused, and frustrated that so many people were toasting the NATO airplanes, which flew over Zenica night and day. I wrote family, friends, and my local newspaper in Minnesota condemning the bombing. I encouraged them to write letters or at least to speak to people about the bombing, that there were alternatives. I wrote about the activists in Belgrade and Kosovo/a who had been protesting their militaristic regime for years and that perhaps more acknowledgment and assistance to these groups earlier or immediately could have eliminated the need to bomb at all. I received several responses, most of which said they respected the work I am doing for "the poor people of Bosnia." They explained that they were not following news about bombing and they hoped I was safe, and they hoped that the bombs and fighting would not spread to Bosnia.

In April, I applied to go to Albania to work with refugees. I later decided to stay in Bosnia, despite the feeling I had had that I wasn't "doing enough." I'm glad I stayed. I heard about and felt my friends' frustration that the West helped Kosovo/a faster than it had helped Bosnia. They felt that the world had forgotten about them. I also witnessed ongoing email and telephone conversations between women in Croatia, FRY, and Bosnia. Women in Belgrade constantly updated us on their work and communication with women's groups in Kosovo/a. My colleagues did support the bomb-

ing, but they did not abandon their friendships with people in Yugoslavia and Kosovo/a. They simply wanted an end to Miloševi*f* and his militaristic regime, just as the activists and many civilians in FRY did. The telephone conversations with their Belgrade colleagues (the same women who had been calling my colleagues to support them during the Bosnian war), using their unbelievable black humor, asked how it felt to hear those planes. Jokes are a source of strength in the Balkans. Before an event is completed, a joke is made to describe it. During the war, a group of comedians made a pun on name-brand tennis shoes with regard to outrunning snipers. No subject is taboo for joke making, including war, hunger, and suffering in general. Especially during the war, new jokes were made each and every day. Dark, witty humor and conversations with coffee and cigarettes are a common form of therapy.

It was during the bombing of FRY that Medica Kosova, with the help of Medica Mondiale in Germany and Medica Zenica, was established first in Albania and then later moved to Oakova, Kosova.

Practicing Feminism

Bosnian patriarchy is visible everywhere. It's present in reactions of the community to Medica's programs; to strangers who very often ask me if I have a boyfriend or whether I will get married and stay in Bosnia, as though not getting married is not an option; to the young boys on the street who make fun of girls and women who pass, shouting comments about height, weight, hair, clothing, and anything else. I see significantly more unhappy marriages here than happy. It is a boxed-in world. And people, like members of Medica, take great risks when they step out of that box and challenge the traditional male roles. While Bosnian feminism has not developed independently from the world around it and there is not yet a "feminist movement," the women I work with are certainly pioneers, and they are feminists in the only way possible, in the Bosnian manner.

Furthermore, "feminism" in BH is often associated with lesbianism with anti-patriarchal values (i.e. anti-society in general). Homosexuality is not visible in Bosnia. Although it does exist, there is no gay movement. There is an underground gay movement in Croatia and FRY (more specifically in Zagreb and Belgrade), but this movement has not, and probably will not, arrive in Bosnia for some time. Due in large part to Medica's friendships and activism with women from these regions and others, they are very accepting of homosexuality and rights for homosexuals. They laugh when people assume that they are lesbians because they are feminists.

My supervisor, the coordinator of Infoteka and President of Medica, Duška Andric-Ruziccic often speaks about feminism in Bosnia. She explains...

"We had a goal: to support women. The only thing we can say is that we have simply been responding to the most urgent needs—where we recognized them. And we recognized them almost always more quickly and more clearly than society and the state, preoccupied as they were with the "higher goals." Their perspective of "higher goals" allows for a perception of women exclusively through roles; that is, she is always someone's mother, sister, daughter, wife or "woman soldier" (who is also always someone's mother, sister, daughter, or wife).

We are asked if we are a feminist project. Have we always been in the feminist movement? This is something we cannot answer. Our Rada Stakif-Domuz, once wrote about feminism in our country, saying that Bosnia and feminism are poles apart. I would like to add that an acknowledged and public feminism and Bosnia are poles apart.

Every woman more or less carries feminism inside herself—this is her woman's nature. My mother will never say that she is a feminist, but I have learned from her much of what I recognize today as being feminist theory and practice. The women of Medica are feminism in practice...By doing what we did, we understood that feminism is just what we have been doing: women for women, women to women, women because of women..." (Ruziccic, 1996)

Feminism is present in Bosnia but it is still a relatively new concept with many of the connotations I mentioned above. The feminists that I know are concentrating on equality with men, the elimination (or at least a significant decrease) of violence against women, trafficking of women, and patriarchal values in general. Infoteka's campaign about violence against women is phenomenal (the only program in BH) which includes educating women (those who work in governmental institutions especially), as well as men, in how to combat and handle gender-based violence.

How could I not think about being a woman as I hear,

read, and speak about genocidal rape and domestic violence every day? One day a fellow BVS volunteer called me from Mostar (a town in Southwestern BH). He and a colleague (also male) had been badly beaten up by a group of about eight men. They were on the wrong side of Mostar at the wrong time. My first thought after I hung up the phone was the unlikelihood that this could happen in a group of all women, that eight women would emerge from a restaurant and beat up two other women. While women contribute to patriarchy and violence, they are not usually the violent perpetrators that men are.

Feminism is practiced differently in Bosnia than what I was accustomed to. As an American feminist, I carry a very different intellectual and psychological perspective and history. In Bosnia, I wake up every morning reminded that here, especially, I am first a woman, second an individual, and last an American. I was told by feminist colleagues, especially at the beginning, to wear more short skirts as my "legs aren't bad," to color my hair, to wear more make-up. They analyze my face, my figure, and my clothing. I have started wearing significantly more black clothing and began smoking cigarettes, neither of which I did much of in the States, in order to conform to at least some parts of this culture. In a positive way, Bosnian feminists challenge me to constantly think about what it means to be a woman.

In the States, however, I considered myself an individual first, a woman, second. I was a feminist and a supporter of women's rights, choice, and equality. I never took to the streets demanding these rights. I lived as I chose, for the most part, and did not think about gender as the most defining characteristic of my person. Most of my activism was for environmental and minority rights. I discovered while working with individuals in these organizations that many of them, like myself, were also feminists, pacifists, or at least advocates for non-violence, and conscious of classism.

Although I was a feminist in the U.S., I became an "active feminist" here in the Balkans, and for this I credit the women of Medica Infoteka as well as those whom I have met from FRY and Croatia.

Maggie Humm (1995) writes that, "A fundamental goal of feminist theory is to understand women's oppression in terms of race, gender, class and sexual preference and how to change it." (p.xii) This sentence sums up the feminist background from which I come, adding non-violence to the list. It is because of this perspective that I do believe in an inclusive movement, one that questions privileges and power on the basis of race, class, and gender.

A constant complaint that flits around Medica is annoyance with journalists, international journalists, who have been coming to or calling Medica since the beginning looking for a good story or statistics. They want an accounting of women who were raped during the war or who had babies as a result of the rape (although I know that men were raped as well, I do not know of anyone addressing this issue, yet). They ask if there is a woman in Medica with "this, this, and/or this qualification that they could photograph/interview?" Members of Medica explain to them that 1.) patient information is confidential and 2.) numbers are not the whole story, that beneath those numbers lie entire lives of suffering and survival and that we are concerned with the individual and not her number. Also, it is impossible to give correct answers for these questions. No number would be correct as no one knows the number of women, men, or children raped during the war. Many of the journalists respond tersely "Thank you. I will call someone else."

Writing this article has been difficult for several reasons. Namely, I have gained the trust of my friends and colleagues and it is because of these friendships that I have excluded some things in this account. I have not written about my Bosnian friends' or colleagues' "personal war stories," about the specific horrors they are still surviving. Listening has been the single most important activity and one which has affected me the most here. It is enough to say I am proud to know them for their strength, humor, and activism. ❑

[1] "Bosnian" was part of what was known as Serbo-Croatian before the war. Most people now refer to this language as Croatian, Bosnian, Serbian, or even the local language. There are a few grammar and vocabulary differences between them, but they are basically the same.

[2] During the war, "Bošnjak" replaced the term "Bosnian Muslims." It is an ethnic and cultural term, not a religious one, as not all Bošnjaks are practicing Muslims.

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Balkan Anecdotes: Voices from Post Conflict Croatia

The monumental tasks inherent in the post-war re-settling of a variety of displaced populations are illustrated by the author through her personal letters.

by
Eve Weisberg

Eve Weisberg, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Mission to Croatia.

Introduction:

The war in Croatia started in 1991, with fighting between separatist Croatian Serbs and newly independent Croatian forces. The result was hundreds of thousands of displaced persons (both Croats and Serbs), widespread destruction of property, and a cease fire policed by the UN. In 1995, Croatia undertook two large-scale military operations that enabled it to take back some of the areas that had been occupied by rebel Serb forces, and drove out over 200,000 Croatian Serbs who had been living in these areas for generations. In January 1998, via a UN-brokered agreement, Croatia regained the last remaining Serb-held sector in Eastern Slovenia (including Vukovar).

I have been working with war-affected displaced populations in Croatia for the past three years. In March 1997, I took a job with the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Office in Split, interviewing Bosnian refugees who had applied to go to the U.S. In September 1997, I was hired by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which was expanding its operations in Croatia. The OSCE is mandated to monitor and assist the Croatian Government in fulfilling its international commitments related to human rights, with a view to eventually enabling Croatia to enter Euro-Atlantic institutions such as the EU and NATO. I worked for the OSCE in Vukovar for 1-1/2 years, then took a position at the Mission Headquarters in Zagreb. During my time in Croatia, I heard the stories of numerous displaced persons, refugees and returnees. The pieces below are taken from letters I sent to friends when I was in Vukovar and Zagreb.

Vukovar Wildlife 9 May 1998

It's a beautiful sunny Saturday, but unfortunately I'm on duty in the Field Office in Vukovar. That's okay, because I'm sitting out here on the balcony, listening to the birds and looking out over the rooftops (some of which are traditional Balkan red roofs, and some of which are destroyed, which I suppose is also now traditionally Balkan). In addition to birds there are also a lot of flying bugs, and somewhere I can hear a sheep baa-ing. Then there are the landlord's ragtag group of dogs and cats running around. The landlord is from one of Vukovar's oldest families, but he lost almost everything in the war. Anyway, things have been interesting here. May 6 was St. George's Day, a holiday celebrated

by Serb families who have St. George as their patron saint. Since this is the case for a lot of Serb families, the day is a big deal here. The food is, of course, heavy on the meat, but there's also delicious soup and good rich pastries. Unfortunately, by the time the pastries arrive you're usually too sated with everything else to enjoy them. My favorite dish is spicy cabbage rolls, called sarma.

I was invited to the Markusica Mayor's celebration during the day, then to a friend's house at night. (Markusica is a small farming village not far from Vukovar. It's about 98% Serb and suffered some damage during the war.) In both places I had conversations that made me realize the pain that is lurking just under the surface for most people here. In both cases, I innocently asked a woman, "Where are you from?" The first woman, who is well respected as the only doctor in Markusica, said that she was a refugee from the nearby Croat town of Vinkovci. She said that in 1991, she had first fled to Bosnia, then to Serbia after the war started in Bosnia, then she came to Markusica. I asked her whether she ever went back to Vinkovci, which is only a 15-minute drive from Markusica. She said she went but she didn't feel comfortable there. I was curious about that, because it's usually just military-age men who feel uncomfortable in areas dominated by the other side. When I tried to press her about it further, a friend of hers told me that the doctor didn't like to go back to Vinkovci because her brother was killed there in 1991, and it reminded her of that. So, although I tried to ask an innocent question and avoid politics there was no getting away from the events of the past 7 years.

The second woman I asked the question to was also a displaced person. She's young (26), pretty, smart and trying to put together a life for herself after fleeing her home elsewhere in Croatia. Her home is destroyed, she has no job, and she is trying to organize an NGO (Non-government organization) to work with children. She feels like a second-class citizen because she is a Serb in Croatia, but when she goes to Yugoslavia she says that people there treat her as pro-Croat. She also told me that the Croat police seem to be singling her out, and even accused her of calling the UN Civilian Police to a recent incident.

One problem in this area is that there aren't many places for young Croatian Serbs to go out. The one disco closed last week, and many of the Serb-owned bars are closing because they are having trouble registering. Young people are driving across the border to Serbia when they feel like going out. It's too bad, because I think this is another small example of how Serbs here are giving up on Croatia and finding what they need in Serbia (like universities, cultural events, many aspects of security). Other young people continue to leave for Denmark and Norway to ask for asylum. My landlady's daughter, son and daughter's fiancé left a couple of weeks ago. So...the situation here is stable, but I think many Serbs are going to make a reasoned decision to leave after the end of the school year. The statistics about school registration for next year are telling: compared to 642 students taking the first-grade Serbian language program this year, only 280 have signed up for next year. People have to get on with their lives, and they're not going to stay in a place where they see little efforts from their government to include them as part of what is supposed to be their own country.

Some new developments: First, we're being approached by more and more frustrated Croat displaced persons, who want to return to their homes but find them occupied by Serbs. Some of the Serb occupants are not displaced persons, but are occupying the houses illegally. The Croats tell us they have gone to various Croatian Government offices (like the Office for Displaced Persons and Refugees), but have not gotten any response. I can sympathize with these people, because the Croatian government bureaucracy and the lack of responsiveness of their bureaucrats angers me at times. I think it's a cultural thing. As an American I'm used to getting all of the information I demand, and service with a smile. In my opinion, Croatia needs some help with its administrative practices. The other new development is that we're seeing more Serb displaced persons "deciding" to leave the Croat villages where they're occupying houses, then moving to empty houses in Serb villages. It's unclear what their rights will be in the new houses they move into. Will they be protected until they return home, like they have been in their former accommodation? The situation is becoming more complicated.... The international community talks about two-way return (Croats to Vukovar, Serbs from Vukovar to the rest of

Croatia), but there are also Bosnian Croats in Croatia, Croatian Serbs in Bosnia and Yugoslavia, Kosovo Croats in Croatia.... The Croatian Serbs in Bosnia are occupying Bosnian Croat houses, and the Bosnian Croats in Croatia are occupying the houses of Croatian Serbs...What a mess...And I'm sure there's a Bosnian Muslim connection as well...like Bosnian Muslims occupying the houses of Bosnian Serbs, who are occupying Croat houses in Vukovar...and maybe there are Croatian Serbs occupying Bosnian Muslim houses in Eastern Bosnia.

On a humorous note, we had a threatened case of PIG eviction on Thursday. Our monitor who went out to investigate reported that a Serb family were keeping their pigs in an empty pig sty, but the Croat owners of the pig sty returned and wanted to evict the pigs. Actually, the Croat owner said that if the Serb owner of the "occupant" pigs did not tell her where her husband was buried, she would kill all of the pigs. The woman's husband was killed (apparently by Serbs) during the fighting here. The local Police and UN Civilian Police were called in as well, so you can see that it was a serious incident. The Serb pig owner is going to try to find another home for her two large pigs. I think that this situation, at least, will be resolved peacefully. Strange things in Zagreb and elsewhere...

21 March 1999

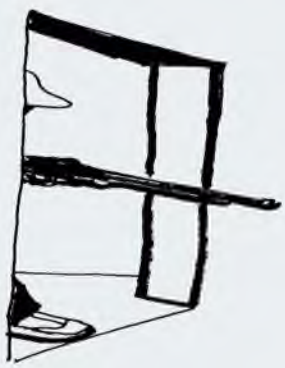
Another weekend gone. I'm sitting here and watching the romantic lights of Zagreb, which actually are lights from the un-romantic apartment blocks of ugly new Zagreb. I've finally learned what the mysterious smokestacks that I see from my windows are. It turns out that they're part of a power plant that supplies this whole section of the city with central heating. This explains why my apartment is so hot. I was relieved to find out what they are, because I was thinking it could be some sort of nuclear reactor complex. I know that's a ridiculous thought, but when the whole plant starts humming loudly you start to worry.... The city authority decides when to turn on the heating for the whole city, and when to turn it off. It sounds very post-communist. My bill is the same amount each month, regardless of how much heat I use. I actually use very little, since the heating from the hall makes it so hot in here. I have a meter that gives exact readings, but the government doesn't seem to have made it to that stage yet.

One thing I've noticed here is that the costs seem wildly out of proportion to people's income, or lack thereof. I often wonder how people can survive here, given the high unemployment rates. In the Vukovar region it's as high as 85%, although the official numbers are lower. You see a lot of people at the central market here in Zagreb, selling old clothes and left-over humanitarian aid. At the same time, there are glitzy stores selling (for example) women's suits for over $300 each. Some sample prices: A DKNY skirt, 50% off, is $150. A ticket to an opera with an international singer is 150 Kuna (about $25). The amount a displaced person can get each month if they don't have any other income, is 250 Kuna (about $40).

I wanted to write something about a field trip I took to central Croatia, to a town called Lipik in Western Slovenia. This area was on the frontlines until it was "liberated" by the Croats during Operation Flash in May 1995. There's a lot of destruction, although not as much as in Vukovar. I went around with the Democratization Officer from our field office there. Our first stop was the Topolik collective center, which is a set of around 15 barracks by the train tracks in Lipik. The residents of this collective center are all Serbs who fled in 1995 and now have returned to get their houses back. Unfortunately, some of them have been there for months, since it's not a priority to the Croatian government that these people reclaim their homes. As we pulled up in our car, we saw a group of men just hanging around. One of them, an elderly bald man with a neat

beard, caught my eye. He recognized me too, and I realized he was a Serb displaced person I had known in Vukovar. His name was Konstantin, and he had come to our office because he was being harassed by the owner of the house he was occupying. Konstantin had fled in 1995, and had subsequently lost his tenancy rights to his apartment near Lipik. We knew it would be extremely difficult for him to get the apartment back, and we told him that he had a right to stay where he was until the Croatian government offered him acceptable alternative accommodation. We told him he could call the police if the owner kept giving him problems, but the place where Konstantin was staying — a summer resort near Osijek — was so remote that there were no phones nearby. Konstantin came in a couple of times, and I felt bad that I couldn't give him any more help than that. The tenancy rights issue is such a mess, and nobody in the international community is really doing anything about it. I guess that eventually Konstantin was tired of being threatened, and applied to live in a collective center closer to his former apartment. I asked him how he was, and he shook his head. But at least he wasn't being threatened anymore. It seemed like it would be really boring for these people in the collective center, since there was little for them to do. We went in and saw a couple of "apartments." It didn't look too bad, but Konstantin showed us some damp mold spots on the ceilings and places where the stairs were rotting away. It didn't seem like a good place to spend the last years of your life. I felt bad leaving Konstantin there, since I knew it would be a long time before his situation would be resolved (if ever). Still, I'm glad that he's no longer in the insecure situation he had been in before.

After driving around a bit, our next stop was Kusonje, a mainly Serb village that was being reconstructed with funds from the European Union. Every time the international community reconstructs a Serb village or Serb houses, the Croats complain about how one-sided the international efforts are. However, I have yet to see the Croats reconstruct anything other than Croat villages or



houses. It's sort of a vicious circle. The best efforts are those programs that try to rebuild mixed communities. But it's a long process. In Kusonje, I decided to track down one displaced person, a woman I had known in Vukovar. The woman (named Helena) , her children and her parents had been occupying a Croat house in the village of Sotin, just outside of Vukovar. Last year when I was working in Vukovar she called us in a panic when the owner of the house came and threatened them. Luckily, she called the Croatian police and the UN police as well. We got there after the Croatian and UN police, so we didn't have to deal with the owner. Apparently, he had come with a gun and had kicked in the bedroom door in the house. The situation in Sotin was (and still is) quite tense. Probably there are few domiciles or displaced Serbs left there. As we arrived, we could see the owner hanging around across the street with a couple of tough-looking guys. We spoke to Helena, who said she was waiting for her house in Kusonje to be reconstructed. After that, she would go home. I told her that she was lucky, because very few people in her situation could say that their houses were being reconstructed. She said she was particularly scared for her daughters, who were going to high school in Vukovar. I heard from Helena once after that. She said that she was almost ready to go back, but that her daughter wanted to stay one more month to finish high school. Helena had arranged for her daughter to stay with a friend, but the woman at the government Office for Displaced Persons and Refugees said that she couldn't register Helena's daughter at that address and that she had to go straight home to Kusonje. I told Helena just to pretend her daughter was going home, and to have her finish high school in Vukovar anyway. We didn't hear from Helena after that, so I wanted to make sure that she had made it home safely to Kusonje. We finally managed to find her mother and father, living in their newly reconstructed house. They said that Helena was now working as a maid in Italy, but that she would be home for

Easter. They invited me to spend Easter with them, but unfortunately I don't think I will be able to.

Reading back over these two paragraphs, I feel frustrated and angry. Things are going so slowly for all of these people, as well as for the Croat displaced persons I know. If they're very lucky, they can get their houses back in the near future. Most people are waiting and waiting and waiting.... In my current job I feel like I'm doing very little to speed up the process. I don't really want to get into higher-level policy stuff, and my other work is basically to support the field monitors who do what I used to do. And when I talk to people in Vukovar, I feel like it's the same story over and over.... Some places you have to write off for a generation. They say that resettlement to places like the US is another form of ethnic cleansing, since it enables people to leave territories where they would be in the minority. Still, I totally understand people taking their families and starting their lives over where they have some hope of having a life. I think most Serbs in war-affected areas of Croatia would agree that they can't have normal lives here.

Orthodox Easter, 11 April 1999

Today is Orthodox Easter, although you would barely know it in Zagreb, the heart of Catholic Croatia. Work goes on as usual. My colleagues and I have been instructed by the OSCE Head of Mission here that we're not supposed to talk about the airstrikes and the events in Kosovo, since we're from many different countries and — after all — we're the OSCE Mission to Croatia, not to anywhere else. Still, it's difficult for those of us who have worked with Serbs here to not feel conflicted about what is going on. This is highlighted for me when I talk to my former colleagues in Vukovar, and when I made a field visit to Petrinja, a town about an hour southwest of Zagreb.

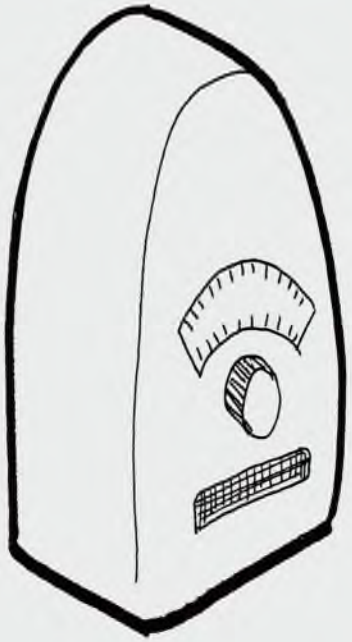
One of the perks of being the "liaison" to the field on return issues is that I actually get to get out of the office from time to time. On Tuesday I drove to Petrinja to visit our field office there. Petrinja was taken over by Croatian Serbs in 1991, and was part of the "Republika Srpska Krajina" (RSK) until the Croatian military operations in 1995 drove the Serb-run government and most of the Serb civilians out. Most of these people had lived in the area for generations, but when the Croats attacked they had no choice but to flee to Yugoslavia and the Serb-held areas of Bosnia. The Croats insisted that the Serbs were leaving voluntarily, and even "invited" them to stay (sound familiar?), but I suppose that actions speak louder than words. Anyway, last year the international community finally got the Croatian government to agree that these Serbs could come back. Starting in the fall of last year, they began to return, both on their own and on UNHCR convoys. The average age of returnees is over 65, indicating that most young Croatian Serb refugees don't see a future for themselves in Croatia.

Our first stop was the OSCE sub-office in a small town called Glina. There, the national legal advisor was holding office hours. Basically, he was sitting around a desk listening to complaints from a group of elderly men. Most of the men had returned recently, but still couldn't get into their houses, which were occupied by Bosnian Croats or even domiciles who had moved in illegally. The men seemed resigned, as if they had gone over their problems many times before. The legal advisor was interesting. At first I thought he was one of the clients, because his hair was messed up and his eyes were sort of wild. However, it turned out that he had been a judge in the Petrinja area, back when Yugoslavia was whole. After the Croatian military operations in 1995, the legal advisor and his family fled to Belgrade. He returned to work for the OSCE, but he goes back to Belgrade to visit his family almost every weekend. He told us that when he tried to return this time, the Yugoslav border guards held him for six hours, and almost wouldn't let him leave. The Yugoslav government is refusing to let men of military age (18-60) leave the country, because they want to be able to mobilize people for the army. Another national legal advisor, who works in Eastern Slavonia, is now stuck in Yugoslavia for this reason. But this legal advisor managed to convince them to let him cross — probably because he has a Croatian passport.

We didn't stay in Glina long, because we had an invitation to attend an Orthodox mass in a small village nearby. We drove to a small church on top of a deserted hill, where a few run-down Yugos and similar cars were parked. We were late for the mass, but Ortho-

dox masses are long and so it was still in progress when we arrived. The church hadn't been damaged much during the war, but you could see that the building was suffering from neglect. Inside were the typical icons and painted wooden screens. There weren't any seats, so we stood at the back. Most of the attendees were older country people. It made me feel sad. The Head of Field Office told me that these old Serbs basically come back here to die. The young people have left, which means that in 10-20 years the area really will be ethnically "clean." The old people in the church quietly lit candles and listened to the priest as he said things about peace and hope (at least that's what I managed to figure out). After the service, an old lady offered us homemade cherry liquor, and the priest talked with us about the numbers of people returning. The priest told me that the church had been badly damaged in World War II, but that in this war the Croats had left it alone. The priest was quite overworked, because he was the only Orthodox priest in the area. He was busy running from church to church, overseeing christenings and funerals, as well as leading holiday services.

We left to go visit a returnee in a remote village near the Bosnian border. To get there, we drove along a long dirt road past deserted houses, with broken windows. They were different from the typical painted brick Balkan houses you see everywhere. These houses were made of dark wood, and you could see faded carvings along the roofs. It must have been a nice, albeit quiet, place to live. The Head of Field Office told me that these had been Serb villages, but that these people had been driven out by Croats in 1995. He said that most of the roads had been closed off by the army, so the people were forced to flee in a long, agonising traffic jam along this narrow dirt road. Some of the people had been sent out on buses, and there were incidents where the Croatian army ordered people off and then burned the buses. We could see some of the burned out buses along the road. It was interesting that the houses were vandalized, but not looted. I've seen plenty of looted houses in Eastern Slovenia, with almost nothing left but the frame. These houses had broken windows and lots of trash inside, but the Croats apparently hadn't wanted to salvage the shutters or window frames. The Head of Field Office told me that as far as he knew, nobody from these villages had expressed a desire to return. The whole area was creepily silent and sad.



We finally reached a little village where several people had returned. Stanko, a returnee who had been living as a refugee in Yugoslavia, was waiting for us in his yard. You could see the Bosnian border from his house. The Head of Field Office told me that when Stanko first returned in 1997, people had stolen his livestock and shot at his house. The local police at first said they couldn't do anything, because the thieves were probably from Bosnia. Eventually, the OSCE managed to convince the police to send more patrols. Since then there hasn't been trouble, but that might also be because most of Stanko's livestock was already gone. Another effect of the crime was that Stanko sent his wife and grandson back to Yugoslavia, because he didn't feel it was safe for them to stay there. He hasn't heard from them (or from his two sisters) since the airstrikes started. Although Stanko came back two years ago, the local authorities still haven't hooked up his electricity or water. We asked him how he followed events in Kosovo, and he produced a wind-up radio. He served us rakija (plum brandy), and coyly asked my age. He did it by wondering aloud whether I had been alive when he visited the US in 1967. I told him that I had been alive for one year at that point. Stanko said that his grandfather had worked in Pennsylvania, but then his father returned to Yugoslavia in the 1920s. At some point his father died, and

Stanko's mother was left with 7 children. During World War II, when the family fled to Bosnia, four of his brothers and sisters died, leaving just Stanko and the two sisters who are now somewhere in Yugoslavia. Stanko told us that he started smoking after his son was killed during this war. Apparently his son was walking near the border, and was shot by a Bosnian Muslim soldier. Stanko said that he also drank more now, so he could sleep at night. It was very sad. What made it sadder was that Stanko asked if we could talk in the house, so nobody would overhear us. He said that sometimes the police came around and asked him why the OSCE came by so often. He said he told the police that the OSCE just came around because it was their job. As we were leaving, Stanko gave us a bottle of rakija and asked us — "Do you know why I came back here? Do you know why I'm here? Because this is my home." That's the whole idea of refugee return, but it's rarely easy or painless.

I left Petrinja feeling sad, but also glad that this field visit put me in touch with reality again. One reason I feel sad in general about the situation in Yugoslavia is because I can see that it means that the people I work with — both clients and local colleagues — have fewer and fewer options. When I was in Eastern Slovenia, most of our local staff went to visit family members in Serbia every weekend. Belgrade was the local metropolis, not Zagreb. People could go there and not be afraid if they had the wrong (Serbian) name and not be afraid to speak with their own regional accent. Displaced persons who couldn't return to their homes in Croatia could always view Serbia as a last option. Now it's as if this exit, this breathing space is being shut off for the Croatian Serbs. It's not even a matter of choice, although the borders are still open. Any military-age Serb man who goes to Yugoslavia might not be allowed to leave. It's as if the roof has suddenly been lowered, trapping people in a dark, dim place where they can't express themselves or live full lives. And the uncertainty about what's happening to their families must be terrible. One interpreter who is originally from northern Croatia (but whose family fled to near Novi Sad when their house was blown up) managed to bring her mother and her sister back to Vukovar before the bombing started. Her father stayed behind to guard their house in Yugoslavia, and now he's stuck there because men can't leave the country. One legal advisor, who fled from Karlovac, can't visit his family in Belgrade because he wouldn't be allowed to return to Croatia. One woman, whose husband didn't get Croatian documents, is visiting him in Novi Sad right now. She's also worried because her son is 17 and might be taken by the army. Another interpreter at our coordination center told me that two of her male friends in Yugoslavia have been drafted and she has no idea where they are. She said that while driving to work one morning, she heard a new Croatian song called "Bombs are falling on Belgrade." I saw the same cassette featured in the nearby market in Zagreb. To me it shows an ugliness lurking under the surface of this calm town.It's obvious that I have a different view on the events going on in Yugoslavia than I would if I were working in the US. There are no easy answers, but I do want to get across — in a personal way — that it's not just one side that's suffering. You see the same things over and over, done in different places and by different people. The really sad thing is that even when the physical fighting finally ends, people still suffer materially and emotionally for years.

On the Edge of War 20 April 1999

I managed to get out of Zagreb last weekend and travel east to my old AOR (area of responsibility) of Vukovar, in Eastern Slovenia on the very edge of Croatia. I was looking forward to going, because I felt kind of like I was on another planet in Zagreb. I would speak to my former Vukovar colleagues on the phone, and if they were Croatian Serbs I would try to express my sorrow and frustration about the NATO strikes on their country just across the border. But talking on the phone wasn't enough. Also, I felt like I needed to see the wide, flat countryside again.

So, I drove out of the city, going east down the smooth, speedy Highway of Brotherhood and Unity. I felt a sense of relief as the buildings gave way to new green fields, and then a sense of familiarity as I passed bombed out gas stations and shells of unrecognizably burned buildings. About an hour into the trip, I finally managed to pick up a Bosnian Serb radio station. I could tell it wasn't a Croatian radio station because they were using certain words specific to both Bosnian and Serbian.

It was a news broadcast, and I tried to listen to understand what the newscaster was saying. I expected to hear blunt propaganda, but to my surprise I heard them quoting American news sources and citizens. At one point they even replayed something Clinton said about how a loss of life was regrettable, but that sometimes that unfortunately happened as you tried to meet your goals. It seemed to me that they were playing this sarcastically, and I was impressed by the sophistication of their propaganda. Then they announced the radio's website: www.voa.gov. So, I had been listening to the Voice of America Serbian language program and assuming it was Serb propaganda. Oops. I've got to keep studying the language. But at least that explained why they were speaking Serbian and not Bosnian language, which they should have been speaking since I was driving along the northern edge of Bosnia.

A couple of hours later, as I neared Eastern Slovenia, I tried to find my favorite Serbian radio stations. The first one, Kosseva (named after a wind — no relation to Kosovo) is owned by Milosevic's wife and plays really trashy techno/disco music. It's a favorite among interpreters who have a lot to learn about music. I managed to find it, but was shocked by what they were playing. Instead of the techno version of "Macarena," they were playing something that sounded like a cross between a U.S. state tourism song ("You've got a friend in Yugoslavia") and the worst of syrupy "old-new" Croatian music. It was terrible. I thought that if my country played pseudo-nostalgic music like this during a war, after two days I would be running to NATO with a white flag. And the second station, which had really been my favorite, had also undergone an unfortunate metamorphosis. Instead of eclectic rock and blues, they were playing strange electronic music (some of which sounded like modern jazz muzak) and — according to my Lithuanian former boss — many Russian songs! The news was the same on both stations. After two years of hearing about "the Serbian aggressor" from the Croats, it was interesting to hear newscasters mention "the NATO aggressor" and "American aggression." Different enemy, same script. They said things like, "The morale of our army is good" and "Despite the NATO aggression there was a soccer game yesterday." It would have been funny, except that there is basically no independent news in Yugoslavia. On the other hand, our own CNN and BBC aren't much better. The propaganda is more sophisticated, but I think we're a less sophisticated audience than the Yugoslavs because we don't expect to hear propaganda.

When I got to my former boss's house, a party was in full swing. I spoke to a couple of ethnic Serb colleagues and realized that their bravado on the phone was only superficial. They were really pretty upset, even if they didn't have family in Serbia. My former boss told me that two of the female interpreters had been joking about their futures, because they didn't have one in Croatia for ethnic reasons and now it seemed they wouldn't have one in Serbia either, given the economic destruction the airstrikes are probably causing. The bombing of just the Zastava plant — certainly a military target — put thousands and thousands of people out of work. The two interpreters decided their best future for them was to be waitresses at a fast food restaurant: "You can work at McDonald's, and I'll work at Pizza Hut." Sadly, once the international community leaves and interpreter jobs disappear, they'll be hard-pressed even to find something like that in a region of over 85 percent unemployment. One of the interpreters, a normally cheerful blond woman, said to me in an upset voice, "I hate Milosevic. Why do they have to bomb us? Why can't they just kill him?" My former boss put on gypsy music to cheer everyone up. She began dancing, and convinced other people to join her. One of the other people dancing was an interpreter whose Croat mother had been injured by flying glass in Belgrade when the bombing first started. She told me her mother was doing better, and kept dancing.

Novi Sad television, which of course is run by the state, showed the same type of resolved gaiety. It was interesting to watch Serbian television and actually see the people standing on the bridges and dancing at concerts in the middle of Belgrade. There were people of all ages, and singers of many genres. I thought about how people in Belgrade had marched for democracy for several months during a cold winter. It didn't seem like they would give up their bridge concerts too easily, especially since they believed they were defending their homes. One interpreter from Vukovar who had

gone through the war here felt differently. She said, "They're feeling the euphoria now, but after a month it will be different. You'll see." In other words, the people will be depressed when reality hits them, when they realize that their lives will for years be worse than they were before the war. This interpreter, who has many friends in Novi Sad, said she was just trying to stay calm and concentrate on her work. She said that having gone through a war here and having had many international friends, she could see how both sides were really one-sided.

This evening on CNN, one of the Pentagon briefers said straight out that the bombing might hurt the people of Yugoslavia, and that it was up to Milosevic whether his people had to be hurt or not. Does this Pentagon guy really think Milosevic will act out of pity for his own people? People are used to looking for "good guys" and "bad guys." However, from what I've seen in the Balkans, none of the leaders have problems with capitalizing on the suffering of their own people to influence world opinion. It's scary to think about the massive Kosovo Albanian refugee exodus in terms of this pattern. Because of the refugee exodus — caused by Milosevic, probably triggered by NATO, and (in my opinion) provoked in part by the KLA – we will have some sort of Kosovar protectorate, policed by our armies.

On Saturday night, my former boss and I sat on her porch while she had a cigarette. The night was quiet and was lit sporadically by a sliver of moon. From time to time we could hear a muted rumbling sound. My boss told me it was the NATO planes flying over to bomb Vojvodina. It was a strange feeling. It made me wish Clinton and Blair could be under the same clouds. It reminded me of a scene from Lawrence of Arabia, when Lawrence and Sharif Ali are riding to Damascus. They can hear the heavy booms of British guns pounding the Turks, not far away. Sharif Ali says, "God bless the men who are under that." Lawrence protests, "But they're Turks." Sharif Ali says emphatically, "God bless them." Something about the darkness of that moment in the movie connected with how I felt sitting on my friend's quiet porch, listening to the distant thunder of my NATO planes above the clouds.

Having met and spoken with hundreds and hundreds of refugees by now, I know a lot about what these planes and other instruments of war mean. They don't just mean damaged buildings or night-time fear. They mean the destruction of normal lives, the sad, painful climb back to some semblance of routine, and the ongoing ache of dreams that can never be realized. Sorry if this sounds sappy, but most of us really don't know how lucky we are. I think anyone who is tempted to use military force as a quick answer should know what it's like to exist in a post-war society. It's not romantic, and it has nothing to do with the strutting and posturing we've been seeing on TV. My former landlady, who also went through the war in Vukovar, expressed it best, "Better one year of negotiations than one day of war." The Hippocratic Oath — "First of all, do no harm," would also be appropriate. Radical surgery isn't always the best solution. The Kosovo Albanians were certainly oppressed before all this started, but I truly believe they're worse off now. You can't go back, and hindsight is always 20-20. Still, this is a principle to keep in mind when considering what to do next. ❑

Window View from Jerusalem

The common conditions of hatred, chaos and pain are depicted here by the author who ventured from Jerusalem to war-torn Kosovo.

by Vered Kater

Vered Kater, RN, MSN, Clinical Nurse Specialist, Jerusalem, Israel.

I was born in the middle of a terrible war, a war based upon hate for people like me, of the Jewish faith. This is the hate that destroyed many people and countries.

I do not remember the bombardments or the results of other destructive actions. Great hearted Gentiles hid me from the eyes of the Nazis and the only pictures that I can imagine from the war are the black and white ones from old films. Perhaps my motivation to go to a war zone and help a people that are not Jewish was because I was saved by people who also did not have the same religion as mine.

Upon arrival at the border of Kosovo, the very first impression is one of total chaos; people pushing and pulling and screaming at the authorities; people on open wagons traveling in both directions; large graveyards and empty buildings in ruins alongside roads full of potholes; tension in the air. I feel as though I am walking onto a movie set, but I am not yet one of the actors. I have the opportunity to see both sides and feel the tensions in the air.

Once I begin work training nurses at a district hospital, I find myself becoming a part of the healing process. At night, I think about my day and the different feelings that go through me. I compare Jerusalem and my teaching there with the teaching here in Kosovo.

Waking up in the morning on a clear day in my house in Jerusalem, I can hear the tits, sparrows, bulbuls, and a lone woodpecker begin their day and mine. Normal city noises intrude – the faint sound of a city bus, someone hooting in the background, children laughing. In Peje, Kosovo, I wake up to the sounds of cawing blackbirds and howling abandoned dogs. Looking outside, I see two empty windows, like large eyes staring at me. Their black "makeup" is irregular, bombed and burnt wall paint. The roofs

are gone and a few crooked chimneys try to cheer up my view. When I open the windows, neither woodpecker nor curious sparrows fly away. A dark cloud of ravens passes by on their way to the next feast on a rubbish heap.

As if I am in a dream I see the red rooftops of Jerusalem, dotted with solar heating panels and hot water tanks,

green pines waving in the wind. I shake my head and wash my face. Now, with my glasses on, the stark reality hits me. I am here now in a country devastated by hate.

My day begins early and before 7 o'clock I am downstairs waiting to be taken to work in the hospital. Not many people are on the streets at that time; work is scarce so there is no need to get out of bed this early. The few people I do meet are dressed carefully in mended clothes, often wearing shoes that are not suited to the weather or the work they are doing. In Jerusalem, strangers pass each other without smiling or talking. Here in Peje, people really look at me, examine my face, perhaps to assess me as friend or foe. Inevitably I receive many large warm smiles.

An attempt is made to start a conversation and even though the language barrier is great, I am always invited to share a cup of coffee. As soon as someone hears that I am from Israel, the whole atmosphere changes and suddenly I am shaking many hands. This feeling of being seen as special is not easy to accept from people who lack everything and ask for nothing but to touch and be near me because I am from Jerusalem.

The driver that takes the interpreter and me to the hospital is unshaven and very depressed. Before this war he had 17 employees and 3 touring cars; now he has to be grateful to be alive, to have one car, and to receive $2 for driving me 10 km. On my way to the hospital I prefer looking up to see the green mountains. The sun rises slowly and everything glows with the early, eager face of a new day. If I dare to look around me, I see broken houses with burnt furniture hanging out of gaping holes, once the curtained windows of a family home. Groups of chattering school children are absent. Instead, long lines of tired looking people with sagging shoulders wait to receive food and goods.

I often grumbled about the red traffic lights and narrow roads in Jerusalem. The traffic lights in Peje do not work and if they do, nobody pays any attention to them. Here I wish for this kind of an obstacle; the piles of destroyed furniture and dirt overflow the area and attract animals as well as hungry and curious children.

The roads are narrow, not because they were constructed that way but because bomb craters and piles of rubble make the passage very narrow and difficult. The rubbish truck in Jerusalem has a habit of totally blocking the road I need to go through to get to work, especially if I am late.

In Jerusalem, I never really thought about the different smells on my way to work: dust from the dry roads, car exhaust, the white Jasmine next to my door. In Peje my nose tries not to smell the smoldering rubbish with the specific additional odor of household goods that are rotting away.

When I arrive at the hospital in Jerusalem, a sleepy looking guard waves me through the gate as soon as he sees my parking permit. In Peje a fierce-looking Italian soldier, flanked by two tanks, examines the car and our papers before letting us in. Once inside, the smell of cigarettes dominates. I wonder if perhaps this is good, as the other attacks on my nostrils may be worse.

The pediatric floor where I teach is not like anything I have ever seen: large rooms with partially broken windows; no sink or a faucet, only the bent water pipes sticking out of the walls; plastic bottles of water everywhere, but patients simply not washed. Sheets are changed only if there is no choice, and the situation has to be really bad for this to happen.

The white ironed uniforms of the nurses are a sharp contrast to the gray sheets. Nurses take their uniforms home because the boilers in the hospital are also destroyed. At home, shoes are white and more or less sensible, no high heels. Here, shoes that are worn during work, are something else, from plastic slippers to anything else one can imagine. (The nurses told me that the Serbs systematically stole all their footwear.)

The traditional 10 o'clock break is also a custom in Peje.

Here, however, I do not see the coffee with bread, cheese and jam. Everyone, including physicians, goes to the dining room to receive the one free meal that is donated by a non-government organization (NGO). I participate in this "feast," but it is so sad that I can hardly swallow anything: a brownish fluid with floating cabbage accompanied by stale bread. This is often the only meal that the workers eat during their long day. Just thinking how much I normally take my food for granted and how much food is thrown away in our hospitals makes me ashamed.

After work I return to the house where I am staying; the owners are there. As the housing situation in Peje is difficult (70% of the houses are destroyed), they continue living there and sleep in the crowded apartment of his parents. The father is sitting on the floor of the bedroom. He is quietly crying in front of a large painting. This is one of a series of six paintings he painted before the war called "The Creation." The whole series was stolen and today people found one painting, with a small tear, buried in the ruins of the church. I sit down next to him, hold his hand. He slowly starts talking in broken French about the birth and death of his creation. I am deeply touched and try to comfort him. We sit for a long time. He hugs me, goes to a drawer, and after a long search gives me a photograph of the painting. Before handing it to me he writes:

"For the respective moment I give you everyday of life. Born reborn this picture of painting, my painting it was wounded and with the painting I feel the pain. Thank you Wolnut Bigolli."

Later in the evening I decide to go out to eat something but I meet Fatmira, my landlady, on the stairs. She speaks only Albanian and I cannot manage more than a greeting in her language. She points at my stomach and her mouth. As soon as she sees that her guess is right, that I am on my way to a restaurant, she takes my hand. She brings me back to her home and brings me her own food from her parents' house. This, again, is so special that I have no words to describe the feelings that engulf me.

How can people that are so full of hate and sadness be so kind and gentle? Speaking to Albanians, I feel the hate they have for the Serbs. They live in their abandoned houses and gleefully tell me how much they would like to kill all of them. On the other hand, I personally only meet friendliness, hugs, and real care.

It will take a long time to digest all that has happened to me in these five weeks. At night I do fall asleep but am soon awakened by the noises that I am not used to hearing: the helicopters that patrol the area, the occasional gunshots, and the mine explosions when a night animal strays from its path.

I spend my last evening with the friends I have made in Peje. I am surrounded by people who speak languages I do not understand, but that is really not important tonight. This feeling of friendship and caring for each other does not need to be expressed by more than a smile or a touch.

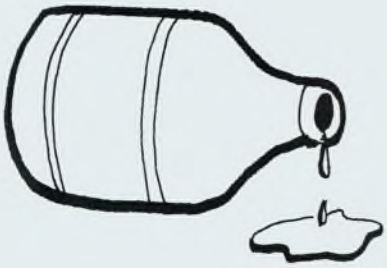
I learned many things from these brave citizens and I think that they learned something from me. But I did not manage to impart what I think is the most important message – that with hate there is no future for anybody. I wonder what will happen to my friends in Peje. I hope they will make the right decisions and will build their future with a balance of love, wisdom, and forgiveness. ❑

The Experiences, Expectations And Realities of People Treated For Alcohol Abuse During The War

The ethical dilemmas of practice are the focus of this narrative by one professional who committed to continue providing services for alcohol abuse amidst the demands of the bombing of the area.

by Danica Boskovic-Djukic

Danica Boskovic-Djukic, MS, Family Therapist Center for Family Therapy for Alcohol Abuse, Belgrade, Yugoslavia.



Setting

To all of you who have an opportunity to read this ar-ticle, I have a wish and a need to share my experience with patients dependent on alcohol, during the bombing of Yugoslavia (March 1999 through June 1999). These patients were treated at the Center for Family Therapy for Alcoholism, an institute for mental health in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, using eco-system marriage-family therapy.

At the same time, I am worried that you will not be able to fully understand and comprehend this story. Why is that, you might ask? Because, I didn't understand when I was presented with similar stories from people seeking refuge from the wars in Bosnia—Herzegovina and Croatia. At that time, I was sure that I would be able to establish an empathic relationship with those people as a base for further therapies. However, in speaking with my colleagues who came from those two former Republics of Yugoslavia, very often I had the feeling that the stories I was being told were exaggerated or false. The statements from those refugees that "we don't understand them," I felt as a "slap in the face." I felt that they didn't have any gratitude for our humanitarian efforts.

NOW, I have the same feeling as they did then. I feel that you will not truly understand the difficulties and stresses that my nation went through, as well as my patients, when the rest of the world enjoys the blessings of contemporary civilization and doesn't need to think about basic survival--personal and national. Even if I set aside these emotions to be able to satisfy a need for authentic information, I fear I am not going to have any feedback from you after you read or listen to this story.

NOW, I understand people who have survived inhuman, stressful situations; NOW, I can talk about them and present their stories to others because NOW I am "in their shoes"! NOW, I can begin my story with my own personal adjustment to the bombing of my country by the NATO alliance.

In March of 1999, I was getting ready to attend the International Family Therapy Association (IFTA)World Congress of Family Therapists, to be held in Akron, Ohio, from April 12th to the17th. I was very pleased to obtain a visa to come to the United States to attend the Congress. Due to many years of economic and social crises, it was a

problem for me to find the financial support to travel to any of the international congresses. Thanks to family members who live in the USA, I was able to overcome that obstacle and to get an official invitation by the committee of experts from IFTA. I had no thought that the air attacks on my country would make my long-awaited trip impossible and would block the road to my professional development.

When the bombing started, I made the decision to stay with my family and my people so that we could suffer together all the trouble brought on by the bombing. Ask yourselves, would you make the same decision as I did, or would you travel into the territory of the country that was attacking your own country? I made my decision without any influence from the Yugoslav government (which subsequently forbade leaving the country). I made that decision because I couldn't imagine myself cheerfully meeting with my colleagues from other countries knowing that my family and my people were suffering from air attacks and imagining them being the target of one of those "smart bombs." Even today, more than six months after the bombing is over, I think that I would make the same decision if I were placed in the same situation again.

From the beginning of the bombing to the end, I couldn't believe what was happening to me, my people, my country. Very often, I had feelings of helplessness, of hate, of disbelief about what was happening. I was minimizing, exaggerating, and having many other emotions. When I recall the faces and stories from patients before the bombing and compare those to what I was feeling, I could see only one parallel--surviving.

Hope that NATO would not start an air campaign against me, my family, and my country was there continuously until it began. Four hours before the bombing began on March 24th, 1999, I had a therapy session with a family in which the husband was an alcoholic. Most of my patients, and myself, were hoping people would prevail who would insist on solving conflicts by communicating and exchanging information without using that radical measure -- the war machine.

It took me some time to accept the reality and to tell my patients that there are times when communication is not the favored technique to solve problems. As a family therapist whose only tools are words (communication), I think that all problems should be solved by communication among parties, as long as you respect the opposite side. Even today, I don't think it was necessary to deploy such aggressive measures toward one man and one nation. If there had been the will, tolerance, respect and two-way communication between both parties, I'm sure that my nation wouldn't have been brought into the catastrophic situation that resulted in thousands of dead people and billions of dollars in damage.

For a fight, you need two parties. Both sides are equally responsible for the conflict, and one side cannot be guarded while attacking and mistreating the other side. The triangle set-up that was created by NATO during the conflict between the Serbs and the Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija did damage to everyone. The model of triangulation is a pathologic formula for reactions and communication in dysfunctional systems -- for people and governments equally. In this model, when two parties are not able to communicate, a third party steps in and serves as the line of communication between the original two parties. In reality, the third party nearly always ends up supporting one of the original parties. Looking back, I ask myself only one question: Why did we, the people

who do humanitarian work, fail to use our knowledge in this crisis? Our experience in treating our families and patients at CPTA (the Center for Family Therapy for Alcohol Abuse) has shown us that communication and tolerance, understanding and respect are the major tools used to confront stresses caused by war. Why did we fail to use this knowledge in this crisis?

Strategy

In the beginning of the air campaign against Yugoslavia, my

colleagues and I had an ethical and practical problem: how to organize and prioritize the needs for medical and psychological help. I asked myself over and over again, can I treat patients for alcohol abuse during a time when the lives of many people are in the most imminent danger, directly or indirectly, or should the experts in our field turn all our strength and knowledge toward the population at large? We were also in a dilemma wondering whether new patients would come for treatment, whether families (patients) would continue their struggle against alcohol abuse, or whether they would use whatever strength they had left to just survive the air campaign. Our concerns—that we would have increased recidivism, a decreased number of new patients, canceled therapy sessions, that already difficult patients would become more complex, that as a reaction to the stress of war, alcohol consumption would increase (as a form of maladaptive behavior)—proved groundless!

What did we find in reality? Research conducted by many of my colleagues showed an important correlation between the cause of the stress (one of those is the war itself with its characteristics--intensity, unpredictability of how long it would last, the unexpected, etc.) and beginning alcohol consumption or increased consumption. Our expectations were that, in the whole population of our country, alcohol consumption would increase as well as the consumption of other psychoactive substances in order to avoid, minimize, forget or sleep through the situations in which the lives of these people were endangered. That kind of compulsive alcohol consumption is caused by stress. After the causal factor disappears, the need for alcohol disappears.

At the beginning of the air campaign against Yugoslavia, information that we were getting on a daily basis, and the situations that we witnessed ourselves were pointing toward such stress-induced consumption of alcohol. A team of experts from my center decided to inform the public regarding misleading information about alcohol consumption (such as its use as a "medicine" for traumas, that friends should be "understanding" regarding over- consumption in cases where a dear member of the family has died, etc.). They formed a team of experts who would visit the bomb shelters and speak directly with people during the air attacks. At the same time, our patients were "ambassadors of goodwill" -- an extension of the CPTA, working on prevention of alcohol abuse in their own surroundings. Did we succeed in decreasing alcohol consumption? We are now doing the research to get some answers.

Conclusion

Years of exposing my nation to inhuman conditions of life at a time of economic prosperity in the rest of the world, when my people live their lives not knowing what the next day will bring, when there is no certainty, no possibility for long-term planning of our lives is the reality of our patients today.

Personally, I have expected that, after ten years of economic/social/political crises in my country, the historical wheel would prove that the quality of life will move in a positive direction. That idea kept me going throughout those horrible moments when bombs were falling down on our heads! Since I cannot see the change in my life, I can truly understand why my people have withdrawn into their own shells, into their own stealth shields, which will protect them from new stresses, and in the meantime, they ask only for the minimum from life so that they can survive!

Do you, my dear colleagues, truly understand how difficult it is for us—me and my colleagues in my country—to specialize in our field? How many extraordinary activities we do to achieve that? We know all modern technologies, but we are short on practical application due to very low standards! However, great enthusiasm and humanity are present with me and my colleagues in our small country when we work with our families.

There is an expression among my people: "A nice word is able to open even the door made of steel!" I would like to add that only the right, honest, and authentic word can and will remove the blinders from my people so they can see and face the problems and difficulties that they have. ❑

Dreams in Traumatic Reality

The author provides a select group of illustrations of the internalized terror of some victims who managed to access professional mental health services.

by Petar Opalic

Petar Opalic, MD, PhD., Professor, Belgrade University, Neuropsychiatrist and Psychotherapist, Institute for Mental Health, Belgrade

All in all, the population of Serbia and Montenegro has been living in chronic stress for nine years. The stress was made somewhat bearable by its emerging and developing gradually over a long period of time. In contrast to the majority of the Yugoslav population, a minor part (not more than 10%) was directly affected by the war in terms of a family members going to the front, taking refugees, famine, or immigration to some other country.

In such an atmosphere, and in such times, I continued my own research, which included research on the dreams of our research subjects, that is patients. Needless to say, these dreams were affected by the war, as were my own dreams. These dreams expressed in a particular way the intensity and the nature of stress-inducing living conditions. The presentation of the dreams in a narrative form, with basic biographical data of the person involved, follows. At the end of this phenomenological presentation of subjects' dreams, I shall present my own dreams related to traumatic experiences that most of the people of former Yugoslavia more or less directly experienced.

The material on dreams was obtained in the following way: The subjects included in a research of psychopathological response to trauma were randomly chosen for this research. The subjects were given two blank pages of paper with given instructions on the top: Describe a dream or dreams you remember from any period of your life. Note the period." The time given for the description was not limited. All dreams are presented in their original form supplied by the subject. I have presented only the dreams that were most obviously affected by the war. As a researcher, I would sit and read these dreams. Presented are also a dream heard from a subject, who is a patient of mine, as well as my own dreams.

The Dreams of Randomly Chosen Subjects

The dream of a 23-year old student, living with his mother and grandmother in a small town near Belgrade:

A catastrophe has happened. I found out that the Moon has fallen on the planet Earth. I can smell sulphur and smoke. I am surrounded by a lot of people, all stunned. There are a lot of dead people. All the time I am running the streets and watching these horrible scenes, until I wake up, very upset.

A 33-year old mechanical engineer, employed, living in

Belgrade with his wife and two daughters:

There are a lot of soldiers. It is the First World War. A lot of dead in pits. The pits are covered with planks, and the soldiers who have survived are crossing the pits and walking between them. They are in Serb army uniforms. Interesting thing is that there are no wounded. Everything is covered with smoke, fog and soot. It is cold. Not a sound is heard. Everything is so silent. Then I wake up.

Below follows a dream of a 34-year-old kindergarten teacher, mother of two children:

I am dreaming of my nephew who was a little boy then. I am taking his arm I have found in a park, torn off. I was very attached to him and I still am. Maybe because he was the first boy to be born in our family after a longer period of time. I usually do not remember my dreams, but that picture with his arm torn off appears very often in my dreams.

Below follows the dream of a 49-year-old clerk, originating from the part of Croatia mainly populated by Serbs until 1995, the part mostly struck by war. He has been living in Belgrade with his wife and two children for the last 20 years. My colleague, who had conducted the poll, told me that the man had consented to describing his dreams reluctantly, and left obviously more dejected following the description he had supplied.

Lately, I've been dreaming relatively often of my birth-place, which is now practically deserted. All Serb population has been expulsed. While the war lasted, I very often dreamt that I was with them there. Later, when the conflicts ended, I dreamt that I am going to my birthplace, I can see all the details, the scenery, even colours, but I feel very unpleasant, and I wake up with these discomforting feelings.

A 22-year-old woman, single, clerk, living in Belgrade, dreamed that her teeth were falling out. It is a common belief in our folklore that losing teeth announces the death of a close family member(Stojanovic, 199):

I have dreamed several times that I am losing my teeth. I am standing in front of a mirror and I cannot believe that they are falling out, one by one. My hand is full of my teeth. I am thinking how I would go out like that, toothless. And in the middle of that chaos, nervousness, sorrow and discomposure I wake up.

A 35-year-old woman, shop assistant, living with her husband, daughter, and son, following

the operation of her ankle she had injured at her working place. Her parents have left the war region in Croatia and are living in a refugee camp near Belgrade:

Couple of days before I injured my ankle, I was dreaming that I am with my parents, in a refugee camp in Despotovac. People are dancing, the music is playing. I want to dance with them, but my mother would not let me and pushes me off. The dancers, the musicians, look like the devils themselves, black haired, horned. When she pushed me off, my mother, together with my sister-in-law, who died 5 years ago, goes to some cellar, and I follow them. When we got there, I see that it is full of children and people. Somehow, I manage to get out, but my mother and my-sister-in-law remain inside the cellar.

Below follows a dream which followed a series of conversations with refugees and their relatives, typical of refugees. It was dreamt by a 34-year-old soldier from Bosnia, with an infected wound in his thigh. According to my colleague, the poll-taker, the subject, in contrast to other subjects, replied to the question in a very detailed manner, adding oral explanations he had not supplied in writing. Other subjects, did not comment while writing about their dreams, inquiring only about the technical aspects of the poll:

I am walking along the streets of a familiar town. It used to be a lively town, full of brightness and beauty. However, today it is utterly different. The streets are deserted, not a living soul can be seen. The war is raging. The enemy is attacking from all sides, but the people are resisting their

attacks. Far off, I can hear the roar of cannon fire. The air I am breathing is full of gunpowder and some kind of danger I can feel. The buildings are tall, and they look so ghastly, in that silence. I stop for a while, and look at myself. I am in my war uniform, little shabby and smeared with blood here and there. In my hand I hold an automatic rifle, with cartridge belt reaching the ground. Then I look in front of me and stop. I can see a fire blazing up, consuming everything on its way. It is blazing up and approaching me. The whole town is consumed in flames, simply disappearing in front of my eyes. I am disappearing too, standing there and watching into the distance.

A 40-year-old worker, father of two children, and a soldier in the Bosnia war, describes and comments on his dreams:

1. *dream:*
When I was wounded, I had many unpleasant, ugly dreams. In one of them I dreamt myself being at the front near Gradacac. We were fighting for a village in the vicinity. There were a lot of dead, wounded and massacred. It disturbed me to such an extent, that I roused from my sleep, almost falling off the bed. I was frightened, but at the same time happy to see it was just a dream.
2. *dream:*
I remember a dream I had in the hospital in Brcko, immediately following the wounding. I dreamed that I had been killed. I dreamed all sorts of horrible things, like in my previous dream. I got frightened and roused from my sleep. For a moment, I was happy it was not a reality, but, following these nightmares, I could not sleep.

It is interesting to note that many subjects dreamed about WW II, a time when Belgrade was bombed twice—in 1941 by Germans, and in 1944 by the Allies. A 60 year old woman, randomly chosen, wrote:

I remember my childhood, very unpleasant dreams of war, bombing, trenches, tanks, which I used to dream very often. Thinking of my dreams as an adult person, I remember only the dreams of flying. My body seems to be flying, and it makes me feel very pleasant.

As a kind of message of this paper, we shall present a dream and the comment of a man who had lost both his legs at the Bosnian front, experienced clinical death, and is a bedridden invalid now. I asked him to describe his dreams. He wrote the following:

This is a dream related to my previous life. I dream that I have both legs, that I work and live decently, that I would never have to go to war and fight for ideas of some other people. I dream that I had a family and children, that I and their mother are playing with them. And now, I cannot do any of these things.

Below are presented the dreams of a man wounded in the Bosnia and Herzegovina war, who was, following several injuries, like the previous subject, hospitalized. This man I visited upon the request of his relative, a friend of mine. Since he was at the same time the subject included in the research, our contact was a very close one, different and emotionally charged, which probably resulted in his elaborate explanation of his dreams and his commenting on them:

Twenty days following my injury, I was dreaming of my birth-place, Mrkonjic Grad, the town where I also lived. The town was occupied by Croatian Army forces, which upset me more than the wounding itself. Thinking of the things that happened there pushed into the background my wounds and my thinking of myself. The Dayton Agreement stipulates the return of Mrkonjic Grad to Serbs, but Croats are burning it systematically, so that it should be completely destroyed.

That night in December, I was dreaming that I was watching my street. It was all bright with sunshine. I could clearly see my house and my granny's house. They were safe and sound, not a little bit shattered. I felt as if something was telling me: "It is good, you are still lucky." With this pleasant feeling, I woke up and the whole following day was very nice. Even the news that our houses had not been destroyed reached us. The news came from our friends, Croats, who had remained in the town.

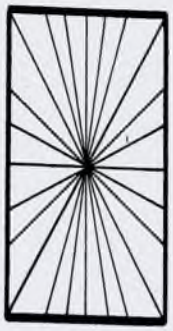
Recently, I've again dreamed that I am in front of our house, in front of the entrance door. Of course, I immediately wish to enter, but I do not want to enter through the front door. Something told me to use the back entrance, through a

room I had turned into my workshop, to see, on the way, if my tools had been taken. The door is closed and it all seems to have been left untouched. When I push them, I feel an explosion and I start, but it does not wake me up. A thought crosses my mind: The door was mined, but I am not injured, even the door is not demolished". When I enter the room, it is all burned and empty. I wake up with this ugly feeling that everything I had was taken away and destroyed. Are my hidden fears justified? Will I ever be able to return anywhere?

As soon as I finished my conversation with the patient, I realised how similar were his dreams to the dreams I was dreaming then. It was then that I made a decision to include my dreams related to the matter later in this paper.

Below follows a dream of a current patient of mine, a woman of 32 years of age, civil servant, single, without any sexual experiences whatsoever, living with her mother and brother in a small rented flat. She is a Serbian refugee, expulsed from Kosovo at the beginning of NATO strikes on FR Yugoslavia. Immediately following the expulsion, after two weeks, her father died, which marked the onset of her psychotic behavior. Talking to me as her psychiatrist, the person she expects help and support from, speaking without any emotional modulations, she told me the following:

I expect you to understand me. Whoever I tell this, I get the same answer: "You have to be treated. You are crazy." Ever since we have been expulsed from Kosovo, I feel that people are manipulating me. I feel that they want to control me when we communicate, that they want me to be some other person. Now I have become three different persons at the same time. More than the others, my former elementary school teacher and her husband are doing it.



During our third session, she told me a dream she had dreamed immediately before her psychotic decompensation:

I dream that I am getting up from a grave. I am naked, all black and blue and wrapped in cobwebs. Somebody must have beaten up on me. Suddenly, I wake up, but I wake up in my dream. Then I dream I am in my room, dressed up. My neighbor, a teacher, sits next to me. She looks like my former elementary school teacher who has been chasing after me, but it's not her. My neighbor is holding a child which I have, in my dream, adopted. The child is a baby of a Serb woman, raped in a concentration camp by a Croat. I felt sorry for the child. I ask her what the child's name is. She replies: A fiend." I take him to be something evil, like a devil himself. Then I wake up. Tomorrow, I think about the dream. This cobweb is some kind of net, it seems I've been entrapped. Before that dream, I read a newspaper article about" Marija 1993," a Serb woman in a concentration camp raped by Moslems. It must have all interweaved somehow in my head.

From the very beginning of her dream-story, I was appalled by its contents. As soon as she told her story, I thought: Only the horror of psychotic dreams contents can make us realize all the reality of dreadful war insanity.

The Dreams of the Author:

My dreams are related to the objective inability to go to the place where I spent 15 years of my life, from 10 to 26 years of age. The inability results from quite bad relations between Serbia and Croatia burdened with a series of unsolved problems:

My father, Dane, then a 71-year-old pensioner, threatened with the loss of his life, was expulsed from Djakovo, Croatia, at the beginning of July 1991. Djakovo is the town where I completed my elementary and secondary school education. I left it for Zagreb, where I began my studies of medicine and philosophy. Following a night of mental torture by two Croatian policemen (who threatened to kill him, searched the house without a warrant, deprived him of his personal belongings, etc.), my father left the house in utmost secrecy

early in the morning, never to return. That he saved his life was confirmed when a couple of weeks later, explosive devices were thrown into his bedroom twice, completely destroying the interior.

The following dream that has been repeated around 20 times for the last 8 years:

I returned to Djakovo, into the suburb we called Chicago, a part of the town across the railway where I had lived. I am standing in front of our house, at the corner of two streets. The house had been built by my father and my late mother, Djuja, with the support of my sister, my brother and me. Something tells me that I must not enter the house. Some other people moved in, or if I try to enter, something terrible would happen. I will be arrested, or taken away, or simply disappear. On the other hand, I crave to enter the house. Sometimes the house is half demolished, sometimes completely changed, with strange, unfamiliar arrangement of its rooms, sometimes all overgrown with vegetation etc. In some of my dreams, I fear to even approach it, and I sneak, from the distance of 7-8 neighboring houses, along the edge of the suburb, and I usually pass by a field we had owned. In others, the houses in the neighborhood are also changed, but I am certain that they are the neighboring ones. I usually do not see any of my neighbors, people I have known from my childhood and youth. There are usually no people, and even if there are, they somehow are avoiding me. The atmosphere is unpleasant, disagreeable, full of tension and expectations, and, at the same time, yearning for the place of my childhood and youth. I usually wake up in similar disposition.

Below follows the dream I had at the beginning of January 2000. In those days I talked on the phone to my cousin living in Djakovo, the person who had spent some time with my family as a young girl, and the person I have been contacting since the beginning of the Balkan wars. She remained with her family in Djakovo.

During our conversation, we exchanged information and many emotions related to our relatives and common friends.

The dream:

I am coming to our house in Djakovo. I am walking along V. Lisinski Street, leading to our house. I am high-spirited. The atmosphere in the street is rather lively. I am passing by a childhood friend who had lived in the neighborhood. It seemed to me that he smiled. I am approaching him to greet him, but he is somehow cold, refusing to shake hands. We are greeting rather coldly. I keep on, and meet another childhood friend. I thought for a moment that we would embrace and greet each other, but he rather disinterestedly passes by me, murmuring something. I become ill disposed, I begin to feel awkward, and give up the idea of greeting. I am standing at around 50 meters distance from the spot where our house is supposed to be, but it is not there. It is tumbled down, like a couple of houses neighboring it and a huge building site has emerged. I am approaching to ask a worker: "What are you building here?" He replies: "We are building a brick plant from Satnica." (My father used to work in the brick plant in Djakovo, while two Croatian policemen, who had tortured my father the night before he escaped, were from Satnica). *Then I notice that a part of our house still stands. I finally dare to enter the house. Full of happiness, I recognise pieces of furniture in the living room and a thought crosses my mind: "Oh, they are still here, we could transport them to Belgrade." I am deeply touched that I have finally found the house, and I for a moment think: "I would like to have a good cry now." Then a woman shows up, allegedly temporarily living in our house, and she invites me for a cup of coffee. But, she leads me out of the house and we are passing by some tables arranged in such a manner resembling an inn. (I then thought: private business initiative has be-*

gun.") But she does not let me sit at the table, she offers me to sit on the bare ground. I accept it, but when I decide to sit and finally drink my coffee relaxed, I can see that everything around me is muddy. I wake up, with mixed

feelings of distress and relief.

Instead of a conclusion

Walking slowly along a railroad track, I am jumping on every second sleeper. Suddenly, a train is approaching at a great speed, but I am not afraid. I am carrying a cage with a bird in my hand. The bird is a very little one, yellow and frightened. I am telling it that everything is all right, that we are not endangered. But the bird does not understand me, which makes me very sad.

Instead of interpretation of the dreams presented in this paper, the dreams whose contents and basic emotion is related to trauma, I have presented a dream of a 28-year-old man, carpenter, father of a child, living in Belgrade, a randomly chosen subject, whose dream in a very picturesque way presents the very essence of what I wanted to say in relation to the topic of dreams in traumatic reality, that is, the topic of the heart of human existence in general. The question every man should answer is the topic raised by the dialogue of the bird from the dream and the man dreaming the bird.

The "bird," if we may interpret it, is a spark of freedom and reason we all feel in our inner self and constantly talk to, thinking if we should let it free from the cage (getting rid of various inner inhibitions and inertness of ours); or keep on watching it frightened (giving in to the outward chaos—the train in the dream--threatening us). Every man is always given a free and rational choice, especially in extraordinary circumstances that the wars and other social cataclysmic events, like those of the nineties in the Balkans, abound in. ❑

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Psychotherapy In the Shadow of War and Gang Conflict

The author is a PhD candidate here in the U.S. who elected not to list an institutional affiliation in order to enhance confidentiality of these detailed cases.

by
Catherine Sexton

It was somewhat unnerving when Katya (a pseudonym) would preface her sessions with "Are you okay?" "Are you sure it is okay to talk about this?" "Is this upsetting you?" "Does this give you bad dreams too?" "I am not sure I can tell you about my life...I think you will get hurt..." I imagined that she had experienced all kinds of horrific experiences, especially in light of the news coverage and her editing of material in the therapy. "Sometimes, after we talk, I feel worse...my dreams, my worries scare me even more than before. Do you get scared sometimes when I talk?" "I want to talk with you. I don't want to lose you too..." And talk we did... Sometimes, she would also ask me directly if she had hurt me—so great was her fear (or, perhaps, her unconscious aggressive wishes).

I want to tell Katya's story, based on some of what she told me in therapy, and I want to tell the story of my therapy with Katya and her relationship with her friend Angel, an African-American teen who had already been in therapy with me.

Katya and Her Journey

Katya is eighteen years old. She and her parents fled to Germany when the war hit their Bosnian town. The military took control of their home. When her father left to find work, she and her mother were separated from him for a long time. During this time, she felt that he had abandoned her mother emotionally. (Katya's insight into her mother's feelings can also be seen as Katya's projection of her own feelings of abandonment by her father.) A bright young woman, Katya understood this and she noted that the separation likely fostered the close mother-daughter relationship and negatively affected her ability to get along with her father. In her father's absence, she was the 'spouse,' her mother's partner and only friend. Even today, she gets angry with him for not being there when they needed him.

Katya is an expert at both verbal and non-verbal communication. She is a polyglot and converses in five languages and writes in three of these languages. When she moved to the United States, she maintained straight A grades. Her parents do not speak English and she is a parentified adolescent who interfaces with our American institutions on behalf of her parents.

Before coming to the United States, Katya went to school as a refugee in Germany. There, she said they treated her

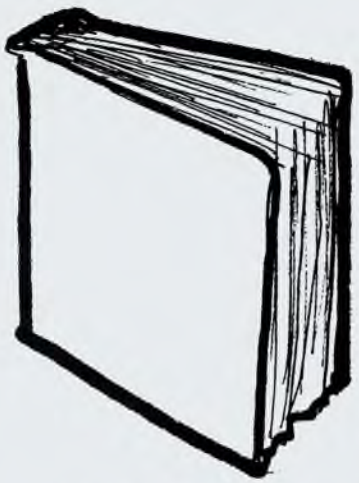
like she "was the lowest form of life. To them, I was nothing. They discriminated against me and set out to hurt me. I experienced severe loneliness. I joined a gang to have friends and to keep myself safe. I was lucky that my mother never knew about my secret life. My gang initiations included sex, violence, drug use, and other illegal behavior. I want to forget about these things. I am so ashamed of my past."

As she told her story in the context of the therapy, she came to a startling realization. The violence she experienced in the gang was the very thing her parents sought to protect her from when they left their homeland. In the United States, she learned not to talk about her past in the gang. She did not want people to think badly of her. She felt that what she had done was wrong. She shared her past with two people, her best friend, Angel, and, to varying degrees, with me during the therapy. Instead, she pretended to be "the smart, good little girl."

Throughout treatment, she would say, "No one knows the real me. If they knew me, I know that they would not have anything to do with me." It was hard for me to know what to say. Sometimes, I would nod to this, sometimes I would feel woefully inadequate, and sometimes I would wonder how much more she had edited.

She and her parents came to the United States looking for a new life. Katya decided that this was her chance "to start all over." She made important decisions. She decided to say no to gangs, sex, and drugs/drug-selling. Although she avoided these things, her new life still included discrimination and pain. She summarized her inner experience eloquently: "It is as if I am living with a war inside of me. Every thing, every encounter, and every person is dangerous. People? They can hurt you—you know? They can break you. They can kill you. I know this. I have done this."

Given this, she decided the best way to deal with life was to do her schoolwork and her store clerk job as perfectly as possible. In that way, she avoided the dangers of the relationships in the outside world. She would not allow herself to need anybody to help her. She said she knew from experience that she would get hurt. She believed if she made mistakes, others would make fun of her, or worse yet, reject her. In all that she did, she tried to be the perfect person. When she was perfect, no one knew the real



Katya. She had to hide her true self. If people liked her, they did not really like her—they liked the person she pretended to be.

Although she learned to pretend all the time that she was "normal," she said that deep down inside she felt she was not normal. Katya once said "I will never be normal. Worst of all, I cannot sleep at night. I am tired, scared, and lonely." In her nightmares, we discovered that her experiences with war and the gang conflict have scarred her for life. At some point, her false presentation was so hard to maintain that even books (her "friends") did not comfort her anymore because she could not concentrate. Her perfect grades were impossible to achieve because she could not focus on what the teachers were saying.

Sometimes people said simplistic things that upset her and that "would get her mind stirred up." When this happened, she just 'mentally checked-out.' To her dismay, she learned that this 'mental check-out' could happen at any moment. In response to this dissociative experience, Katya commented: "I feel like I am like a prisoner in this 'free' world. This life is not a new life—this life is haunted." Indeed, her world was experienced and peopled just like her past life. The only difference was that in some cases, the names and places had changed.

Alone, exhausted, and imprisoned in the real 'free' world, she broke down. Katya's emotional and mental guard weakened. Several months prior to beginning treatment, she met a gazelle-like girl whose name in English means "Angel." They became friends. They shared some

dreams and they realized that their real life experiences had amazing parallels. Her friend had even been in a gang, prostituted, stole, and sold and used drugs! Katya fell in love with her.

Katya's relationship with Angel both confused and excited her at the same time. At times, she wanted to be with Angel as much as possible. When she was with her, she felt special. She had a best friend and she felt she was no longer alone. The war that was going on inside of her was still there, but she felt less scared and lonely. With respect to her relationship with Angel, Katya told me after she entered treatment with me that "until I met her, I wanted to die, but then, she needed me, and I needed her. She saved my life."

Katya discovered that talking with her 'Angel' friend helped her. Like Katya, her 'Angel' friend had serious problems. At some point, Angel told Katya that she thought Katya needed "professional help." Angel told Katya that she went to visit the "talking lady" for counseling in the school-based clinic once or twice a week. She tried to persuade Katya to get counseling. Katya's reaction was "Professional help? No. No, thank you."

As Katya saw her friend get a little better, she felt envious of Angel's renewed joy for life. She too wanted that peace, that inner happiness. However, she did not want to talk with a stranger. She later shared in the therapy that she would have preferred to talk with her 'Angel' friend. In fact, she shared that she felt jealous of the "talking lady" (me) because her 'Angel' friend talked with me about her secrets.

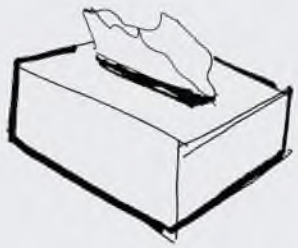
I knew that Angel had a war going on inside of her. Her war was about her experiences in the gang and her abusive and drug-using parents. Angel's father was a pimp and her mother was a mentally ill prostitute who tried to kill Angel in infancy. (They abandoned her.) As Angel grew, Katya spent less time with her. She began to feel alone again. The metaphor for Angel's treatment was "getting back on track." Indeed, Katya's 'Angel' friend was 'back on track.' Angel's gazelle-like legs carried her to some considerable achievements in track and field.

Katya noticed that Angel was feeling and doing better; she decided she too wanted to feel better. Angel's growth motivated Katya to consider therapy.

When Katya asked the secretary in the school-based clinic for an appointment to see her, the secretary said that the 'talking lady' was very busy. She asked Katya if this was for an 'emergency,' and Katya said, "No." Three weeks went by and Katya did not get an appointment. Katya later told me that she feared that I did not want to see her. Feeling rejected (even before the therapy was to begin) Katya acted out. When her appointment arrived, she did not attend. She reminded me of this in the course of therapy. "Back then, when I had to wait, I decided that I did not want to talk. Talking is painful. Talking reminds me of the things I know I need to forget. Talking hurts me. I can take care of myself just fine."

Therapist's Narrative

I am Katya's therapist. As the granddaughter of Irish immigrants, I heard stories of discrimination that accompanied immigration. The "Irish need not apply" signs—they referred to my grandmother and my grandfather when they searched for work.



My experiences with discrimination were peer-related bias (appearance discrimination) and classism. I understood what it was like to feel as though one doesn't quite "fit in." This understanding pervaded my internal and external experiences. As I prepared to see Katya, I thought I might know this small part of her world. We all want to be accepted. We all want to "fit in." We have our humanity; we have our basic emotional needs in common. I think most people experience these needs. Quite simply, when I met Katya, I expected to see myself and the existential struggle of most others in her story, although I recognized that experiencing discrimination as an immigrant is very different from the experience of being a war refugee.

After the missed appointments, I therefore decided to go looking for Katya. Any adolescent who could muster the courage to schedule an appointment with a therapist must be in pain. The very same day that Katya missed her appointment with me, one of Katya's classmates told me she would like me to meet her best friend—Katya. Knowing of the missed appointment, I invited the teen (Angel) to bring her friend to visit me during their lunchtime. Angel eagerly agreed to "share" her session because she believed Katya needed to talk more than she did.

The First Session

Katya's affect was initially constricted during our first meeting. She looked distant and her eyes appeared tired. She was able to 'half-smile' when her friend touched her or said something that was intended to be funny. I did not believe her when she said she was not depressed. After the introductions and connecting began, Angel went to lunch, leaving Katya with me.

Katya was a compelling young woman whose eyes held me in their gaze. She searched my eyes. Her eyes darted from my left to my right eye—as if she read me. Her gaze told me of the pain she has experienced. Throughout the therapy, I wanted to look away, but I knew I could not—to look away would be to abandon her. She challenged me to be fully me when I am with her.

"Katya, can you do me a favor?" She nodded."I am worried about how you are feeling inside. You seem so sad and tired. Will you promise me that you will not hurt yourself?"

Katya drew in her breath. Her narrowed eyes were wide with surprise. She sat up straight and whispered, "How did you know?"
Not wanting to scare her, I replied softly, "Sometimes, when other teens feel sad and tired, they think about things like that. I like you and I want you to be safe and feel better. Katya nodded and whispered, "Yes, me too."

Establishing safety was my first priority. My next priority was to engage her in the process of feeling better. "So Katya, if you were feeling better, how would you know?" "I would be able to sleep like a baby!" Katya smiled as if remembering what it was like to sleep. "I think the lack of sleep is the worst thing. That is what makes me tired. If I could sleep, I think I could concentrate and get better grades..." She was staring at the basket of lifesavers on my desk. Silence.

I took the basket and held it out to her saying, "Which flavor do you like?" She looked at me quizzically. Then, she tentatively reached for the white lifesaver. "Ah...my favorite! By the way, I also like the red and green ones!" I opened my white lifesaver and popped it into my mouth. I was smiling as encouragingly and as warmly as I could. I was conscious of the metaphor my lifesaver proffered. She took one, but would she eat it? I waited. More silence.

Katya cupped the lifesaver in her palm and began tossing it from hand to hand. It was as if she was weighing it...making a decision. Then, she looked into my eyes and opened it. She put it into her mouth and winced at the tart flavor. Then, she began to smile shyly.

After she agreed to a "no suicide safety contract," we spent the rest of our session going over the "list of things other teens do" to get their sleep back. She was right with me, repeating the get-your-sleep-back list verbatim.

"No caffeine, no sugar, and no fast food after 3 p.m."

I saluted her with my hand and said, "Check!"

"No watching the news, no scary or tear-jerker movies—only comedies, adventure, and romances?"

"Check, check, and check!" I replied. I wagged my finger at her and said jokingly, "And, no napping after school!"

"Why?"

"I want you to feel good and tired when bedtime comes."

"That one might be hard..."

I laughed and put my hands on my hips in mock horror. "Katya, say 'Yes, no napping after school.'"

"Okay, I will try."

"Exercise, and lots of it. You can do anything. Walk. Climb the stairs. Whatever you do, try to spend time outside, the fresh air will also help you sleep." She looked at me incredulously.

"No." She was being affectively dramatic. "It will not."

She was looking at a picture of my son on my desk. I

replied that whenever I want my little boy to sleep well, I bring him outside and that it really does work. She asked if the picture on my desk is my son. "Is that him? He sleeps well at night?"

"Yes, like a baby...all night long!" I was conscious of the parent metaphor and I laughed nervously. "Back to business now. No snacks after 8 p.m. No bedtime television. Oh yes, and no reading books in bed."

She whined, "But I like to read." She was getting into this back-and-forth bantering.

"Me too, but if you give me a really good book, I'll stay up until I finish it. Does that happen to you?"

"Yes, I get lost in books. I love them." "Me too, but if you want to sleep, you're going to have to read before bedtime!" Silence.

"Okay." She looked at me expectantly, as if it were my turn to speak again.

"And, most importantly, you need a journal. Do you have one?" She shook her head no and her eyes looked distant again. "Have you ever...?"

"A long time ago, I had a journal...it is gone now."

She then explained how she had lost her journal and how much she missed it. She talked about feeling like she had lost a part of herself when the journal disappeared and how she felt uncomfortable with the thought that someone else might read it and know her thought and feelings.

"You have lost so many things...So many things have happened to you..." I imagined how scary it must be for her to come to my office...how she might fear feeling exposed or fear getting lost herself in the therapy. Silence. I opened my file cabinet and handed her a marble composition book. "At night time, until your eyes get sleepy, you can write in this journal. You can write anything and everything that comes to your mind. It is like free therapy. Sometimes, I like to pretend I am talking with someone when I write. You can write to anyone, God, your friend, me..."

She smiled shyly. "I like to write." "That's great!" Silence.

Then, Katya said "Yes, I want to sleep. I will try all these things. Some will be harder than others you know."

She clutched the notebook to her chest. I imagined the notebook as the prototypical transitional object—the teddy bear. I wanted her to have something to hold onto. I also held out the lifesavers again. She picked the red, green, and white lifesavers.

"You like...ooh, my favorites."

"Mine too." She said shyly. She put them in her shirt pocket for later.

"Since your safety and getting a good night's sleep are our priorities, I would like to see you every school day until we have you sleeping." I smiled. "You need to tell me whether the get-your-sleep-back plan is working! I have other ideas about getting a good night's sleep, but let's see how these ideas work first."

"Okay." She nodded in agreement.

"Anytime during the school day, you need a safe place to come and relax, you're welcome to stop by and see me. Here is my beeper number for emergencies..."

In this first session, I tried, as best as I could, to create a connection and a safe holding environment in my office space. I used my metaphoric, non-verbal, and verbal communication to inform Katya that I would be there to help when she needed me.

Treatment

During the therapy, Katya and I learned that we had much in common, despite our differences. For both of us, school was one way of coping and feeling successful in life. The classroom is a level playing field. An education also offers us opportunity to grow and move forward developmentally. Reading is another way we cope. We learn about ourselves from the characters of the books we read. Words not only soothe us—they take us away. We can retreat inside our minds and they lead us to other spaces. These places and spaces are sometimes preferable to the harsh reality of the outside world. The outside world can be a world in which relationships are conditional and dangerous. We both feel deep in our hearts, that we do not "fit in"—regardless of how hard we try. We both like to write. Writing organizes and legitimates our experiences. When we reread our writing, or others read it, then we are seen and heard. For us, writing is a therapeutic experience; writing

is cathartic.

The next year of therapy focused on more covert issues and interaction patterns. During this second year, Katya rejoiced in her newfound zest for life. I observed her in our sessions and watched her from afar. I felt considerable satisfaction in the therapeutic work. She had grown. I had grown. In one poignant session, she proclaimed herself "cured." She spoke of a blissful feeling of inner peace.

We began the process of termination. Our appointments were less frequent and more like "check-ins." We moved to an "as-needed basis" for emergencies (keeping the door open), with regular appointments every two weeks. One month into this termination process, her nightmares had returned and she was unable to focus in school again. She missed an appointment with me. When we met, she said she went from feeling "cured" to "feeling worse than I felt when I began."

This puzzled me. I wondered aloud if this was related to a fear of ending therapy. She emphatically said no. Then, I began to wonder if she had been traumatized either directly or vicariously. She was sure this was not the case. Instead, she said, "I feel you have lied to me. I got my hopes up that I could live my life and be happy and have peace. This therapy did not work! I can't eat. I can't sleep. I can't think or even talk right! Again, I am scared all the time. When I came here, I thought this would make my past go away. But it hasn't and I feel worse." I wondered if I had misled her somehow.

I focused right away, giving her the permission to feel angry and hurt and trying to learn about the sequence of events leading to this "relapse." Katya was highly resistant to talking about the two weeks prior. It took two weeks to discover that Katya had indeed experienced additional vicarious traumatization. The first vicarious trauma occurred when she was functioning as a volunteer translator for other Bosnian refugees. She would listen to their war stories as she helped them learn to negotiate the United States. These helping experiences were fulfilling, but they were stressful and they reminded her of experiences she would rather not remember, she said.

Then, another war broke out. She shared that this was when her inner peace was "shattered...gone." She talked about how she glued herself to the news and the television. She was looking to see if she recognized any of the places or the people; she wanted to know everything she could about what was going on. Instead, she was remembering her past. Everywhere she went, the war was being discussed. They called the war "the conflict." She was interviewed for the news. We came to the conclusion that volunteering and watching the news should be added to her list of things to "stop doing" in order to get her sleep back. She took the initiative to make elaborate plans for substituting other activities and experiences that would be less traumatic.

In addition, Katya's inner conflict also coincided with an outbreak of local gang conflict and violence. She knew and had met people who had been injured or shot in the neighborhood. Some of the places she used to visit or hang out at were the locations of drive-by shootings. "I could have been shot or hurt." Places that were previously considered safe were now dangerous.

It appeared that Katya was struggling with the internal conflicts that were either triggered or superimposed by the war, the gang violence, and her volunteer translator experiences.

With the shadow of war and gang conflicts hanging over us, we learned how fragile one's inner world can be. We continued on our journey to free her from the past that haunts her present. We learned that as long as there are wars and gang conflicts, she will have relapses. For Katya, the world will remain forever a dangerous place.

This knowledge about how war and conflict in the world could trigger a relapse was an important discovery in the therapy. Eventually, she began to feel safe and her nightmares ended. When the next "conflict" occurs, either internally, local, or abroad, she will be ready, armed with the knowledge that for her, relapse is to be expected. Together, in our journey, we have learned that she will be able to return to a state of relative health and relative inner peace. The operative word is—relative—for her, for me, for you, for all of us. ❑

A Trail to Bosnia, War Trauma, and Qualitative Research

This narrative describes the author's experience conducting interviews in Nevada with refugees from the former Yugoslavia as part of an ongoing research project on the emotional and social responses to war and dislocation.

by Margaret Oakes

Margaret Oakes, Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

History of My Interest in War Trauma

My interest and passion for studying war trauma and perhaps even Yugoslavians had deep roots. Although there are probably seeds of my interest in war in the sixties and seventies political movements, and of my interest in the Balkans in my hitchhiking trip in Yugoslavia in 1968, I think it popped up in my life in the early 1980s, working for Los Angeles County Mental Health, where I heard stories of war told by Central Americans.

In this same time period, I heard a talk by a Nicaraguan playwright. I had been around the solidarity movement, but had been reticent about emotional involvement because of the harsh militant depiction of the struggle I had seen in cultural events. But the playwright showed me another side to revolution; a softer, more creative, intellectual, and emotional one. After the speech ended, a young woman got up and asked if any health workers were interested in working in Nicaragua for a few months.

Soon I found myself in Nicaragua, translating for a New York psychiatrist and seeing the sites of Nicaragua. While the revolution and its intense friendliness and idealism attracted me, war reared its head in the form of a friend of a friend. He suffered from posttraumatic stress disorder brought on by combat. Such intensely painful emotions affected me enough to bring memories of it back to the United States. I wanted to help young people who, because they defended their ideals and revolution by participating in the horrors of combat, began to suffer terrible stress.

When I returned to Nicaragua to work for three years, a friend referred me to a high school attached to the University in Leon, where they needed help with young men returning from war. I soon traveled to Leon for two days a week to hear their stories and help them deal with their pain. The young men, traumatized by war, were also dedicated revolutionaries from the poor, rural north, who had never, ever encountered the material world that had previously surrounded me. Their stories vibrated with idealism and pain, and often made my own ideals and adventures seem timid and unsure in comparison.

Past Research on War Trauma

I also traveled to El Salvador, after the war ended in 1992, with an organized group of lawyers to write the psychosocial section of a human rights investigation to be presented to the United Nations Peace Commission. The

workers in the human rights agency that hosted me decided that I should talk to all the workers there, in hopes that an interview with each might help their stress from years of war trauma. The stories of their losses, incarcerations, and torture seemed overwhelming. One afternoon, while we sat in the living room of the human rights worker in whose house I stayed, she began describing her experience in jail and the torture she received there. The conversation was interrupted by someone entering, and afterwards, I couldn't remember much of what she had told me. What I recall now, some eight years later, was a vague scene of her being marched around naked, with electric wires attached to her breasts. The vagueness was only in my mind, as it distanced itself from the trauma. The intensity of the story, especially coming from a friend rather than a client, caused me to dissociate slightly.

People seemed to need to talk everywhere. I met a psychologist at a visit to a United Nations site for demobilized soldiers who, when I told him about my work, began to tell me about the specifics of his own torture while incarcerated during war. Then came the field visits to the site of a civilian bombing. My first interview with a fifteen-year-old boy who had lost his leg in a bombing, began by his telling me that he wanted to die.

That summer I traveled to San Salvador and, under the auspices of the Catholic University in San Salvador, I collected data in three rural villages on emotional effects of war. In El Salvador, I met people who would get tears in their eyes when I would tell them about my work. I was not so much wanting to discover brand new truths, but to illuminate these stories, so that social workers and others could understand the personal and communal experience of war and its aftermath.

Later when I worked in a Red Cross shelter for a fire in Los Angeles, I did not have the same reactions as my coworkers who talked much of such intense emotional reactions to the stories that they had difficulties containing it. This was no longer happening to me. I had become accustomed to trauma.

The Agency

When I talked to the agency caseworkers directly in charge of the refugees, I began to realize that it was going to be very difficult to interview the Kosovans, who had just recently arrived, spoke no English, and refused to speak Serbo-Croatian, the language of their enemy. Finding Albanian interpreters would be a daunting task. Las Vegas has several thousand Bosnians, many of them having come here as refugees because of an already developed immigrant community. Most had lived here several years and spoke a fair amount of English.

The worker in charge of Bosnians introduced me to both the community at large and individual respondents. Prior to her job with the agency, she had lived in a building filled with Bosnians, and she became immersed not only in their community but in their culture. My first interview was with her friend rather than a client. Then they both began to search for Bosnians, both Serbs and Moslems for me to interview.

The Culture

The worker brought me to my first cultural event, a Slava, a family saints' day feast. A respondent explained their religion, Serbian Orthodox, and the saints' days as being vestiges of pre-Christian times when each family had a personal God. This reminded me of Catholic Churches in sections of Chiapas in Southern Mexico.

A long table filled the small apartment. As I sat down

with others the hostess placed plates of Bosnian food on the table, filo dough pastries filled with meat and vegetables, often topped with yogurt, and dishes decked with fresh pork meat from farms the Bosnians had discovered amidst the harsh southern Nevada desert. The thick Turkish coffee is continuously refilled until you stop the flow by placing your gift, a fresh pack of cigarettes, on top of your cup. The cigarette smoke seemed to be my sacrifice for learning about Bosnian culture and meeting people to obtain interviews. They all seemed to smoke, and after each interview or party, I smelled smoke in my nostrils for two days no matter how I washed.

The next outing to meet the community consisted of a trip to the airport with the agency worker and her sister, to meet the son, daughter-in-law, and granddaughter of one of the refugees. A crowd of ex-Yugoslavs waited in the smoking area of the airport. They formed around the gate as the plane took its time landing. Two families traveled on this plane, one sponsored by their family, and another without a sponsor. The young Bosnians, Serb and Moslem, hanging out together at the airport attested to the reconciliation going on far away from their homeland. When they arrived a few years back, there was much animosity. As they get further and further from the strife that enflamed their country, they have become friends with shared experiences and culture. The worker pointed out one of the women. She had been in a rape camp. She didn't know if she would be willing to be interviewed.

From the airport the crowd moved to the father's apartment where they began another feast, like a Slava with no gifts or offerings of cigarettes. The five-year-old girl received numerous gifts, including two baby dolls. In Yugoslavia, she had only the head of a doll. She ran excitedly around the small apartment, the two dolls in tow. What must it be like for a small child to go from much deprivation of a refugee in her own country, to a place where the first thing she encounters are mounds of new toys?

While they waited in Belgrade, to come to the States, the bombing began. The little girl had to run to the cellar at air raid warnings, dragging her doll's head in tow. All refugee statuses were cancelled. It took the grandfather in the states emailing everyone he knew and didn't know in the former Yugoslavia until he finally got someone in the United Nations and got his son's family's refugee status back. "My son is finally here," he sighed and his English suddenly became much clearer. He had already had a small heart attack a few months ago. He had the girl in his arms since she arrived until he arrived home.

I also met the husband of the woman doctor I had met at the first Slava. I explained my project to him. Then he began to tell me about his experiences in a concentration camp, four years, and how his wife was only a few hundred yards away, working as a doctor, and neither knew it. I had already had an interview with another man who had been in the camps, and had heard details of the near starvation, the beatings, and the close calls he had encountered with death. This man told me about dreams and nightmares that had diminished now to about twice a month, much better now. I asked him about participating in the study. He did not respond, but kept telling me about his experiences, as we rode on the airport tram. I wished I had had a tape recorder.

The refugees talked much of Sarejevo, a cultured city they mourned. Their tales made me also long for a place that began to form in my mind, built from descriptions and photographs and greatly embellished by my imagination; a place that no longer existed in time. I had somehow missed this marvelous city they described. I knew it quite likely existed, as I had seen Dubrovnik and gone to an open air theatre there. I envied their history in this place with the richness of sophistication, culture, and intellectuality that they portrayed as they and I sat in Las Vegas, many light years away.

The Respondents

My first respondent was quite reluctant to have the interview recorded, so we did not record it. In the second interview he consented after I agreed to return the tape as soon as I transcribed it.

Several Bosnian refugees expressed that the worst thing about their dysphoria is that they long for their life and country as it was, one that no longer exits.

They talk much of how rich, full, and easy life was before the war, especially those from Sarajevo. Bosnian culture differed widely from Salvadoran culture, the culture in which my previous research was based. A more developed country, and formerly politically socialist, education seemed to be an important element in the former Yugoslavian culture. As one woman indicated, class in the former Yugoslavia was based mainly on education rather than on material goods. In El Salvador, although a few of my respondents living in the town closest to the capital had a University education, in the rural area where I conducted my interviews, especially in the high war zone, a high school education was considered fairly well educated. In the war zone, third grade was more the norm.

Two college educated Bosnian respondents brought new insights to my examination of the emotional effects of war, in spite of limited English. One woman's father had published a book in Yugoslavia on his experience in a Bosnian camp. The respondent had edited it extensively to include only those experiences that elicited intense emotions. She talked about how difficult it was to find words to describe the intensity of the terror and sadness felt in war. I remembered Elaine Scary (1985) explaining that pain, particularly the pain produced by torture, often results in the disappearance of verbal expression. One reason that it is so difficult for others to understand such feelings of pain is that there are no words that can properly describe it. Verbal ability disappears at this instance of such escalated pain, and only a sharp, stabbing emotion, with no description, remains.

The Yugoslavians could provide me with the intellectual insight into their experiences, while the Salvadoran campesinos, with their simple vocabulary and the literalness of their expression, perhaps best expressed this intensity in a word. *Aflijida* best described their emotional trauma from war, and they lengthened the word to *afflijjjjjiiiiida* to enunciate its intensity (Oakes, 1998). The word took on new timbers as it climbed an octave in a wail, stretching out as it rose up and down another a scale, not so much of music, but of some much deeper, more primitive emotional discharge that related to a howl, a wail, or a melancholy death moan.

Another Bosnian respondent described how his feelings had decreased, so that he could not feel as much any more, and felt less connected to the world. A fairly young man with salt and pepper hair, he indicated that his hair had turned gray from seeing the horrors of war. In El Salvador, in spite of my fluency in Spanish, no one had expressed an awareness of the negative symptoms that trauma caused, the decrease in abilities to feel and connect. That may have been due, in part, to their definition of self as related to their family group rather than individually. Attachment to others was automatic, so that emotional distance did not signify lack of attachment and was not subject to examination.

I discovered that collateral people in the interview process or around it, helped piece together stories in a more complete form. The son and husband of a woman helped to reconstruct her story, translating when her English failed. In another interview, a girlfriend helped translate and added information about dreams, traumas, and events he had told her. My friend, the worker helping me obtain interviews, encountered a Bosnian who had heard that one of the respondents had talked to me. He indicated that the respondent had been forced to fight in the war and had seen many terrible things and had probably killed people. The respondent had not told me about his military duty, perhaps an indication of his shame and/or fear. With the additional information of those around them, stories grew and changed.

Back to the Agency, Moslems, and Mixed Marriages

Back at the agency I met a worker, a Bosnian Croat married to a Moslem, who had married during the war. She began to tell me the story from another viewpoint. Common before the war, mixed marriages became quite dangerous during the war. She had been here only a couple of years, but she had lived as a refugee in Germany since 1993. Yes, she indicated, each side had killed and imprisoned and done terrible things to the other sides, but the Serbs started it, and when someone hurts you, you hurt

them back. Moslems had the greatest number of deaths in the war. The population in Las Vegas, she said, consisted mainly of Serbs, who had their own view of the war, not that of reality. According to Ignacio Martín Baró (1989), war causes such extremes and the lies become everything, so that everyone's reality is suspect. Most of those I had met had never wanted war, were not nationalists, but still, they had become divided by war.

Then she began to add, if I wanted the real story of war, I should talk to those in mixed marriages. They saw both sides, or stood in the middle, a very dangerous spot in war. In Germany, she told me, ten thousand Yugoslavian refugees in mixed marriages lived.

No, her husband would not be interested in participating in the study, but she could connect me to some former Yugoslavs from mixed marriages. These came in all varieties of the three groups, Roman Catholic Croatians, Serbian Orthodox Serbs, and Moslems. When I asked her about the religious level of Moslems, she indicated, well, everyone else talked so much about their church, that Moslems began to come closer to theirs.

Discussion

I have not written much about the contents of my interviews yet, having only interviewed a few respondents, but they included those who had experiences in concentration camps, fought as soldiers, and been refugees in their own country.

One might ask, why would social workers want to know about this wandering tale of research? Examination of what one brings to one's work, of what drives one's passion, is important in our work as social workers. This is also a glimpse into how one person went about attempting to understand a culture and an experience we know only from brief news clips on television, which show only the horror and nothing else, a distorted view which often makes one withdraw from the subject area. This is an attempt to begin to look for a more complete picture. ❑

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Responding to War: An Educational Imperative

The monumental tasks of attempting to maintain the functioning of an academic oasis are recounted here by the author.

by Julia M. Watkins

Julia M. Watkins, M.S.W., PhD., President, American University in Bulgaria

Introduction

The American University in Bulgaria was founded in 1991 as a joint initiative of the Bulgarian government, the U.S. government, the City of Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria, and the University of Maine. It currently has 656 students from 19 countries. It has graduated five classes of students, or 643 individuals. The average SAT score for admission is 1300 and the TOEFL score average is 630. All instruction is in English. The University is supported through a quasi-endowment from USAID, generous funding from the Open Society Institute (Soros Foundation), as well as gifts and grants from private donors, corporations, and foundations. The mission of the American University in Bulgaria is to educate future leaders committed to serving the needs of the region by promoting the values of an open, democratic society.

Prologue

The NATO bombing of Yugoslavia began on the evening of March 24, 1999. We watched and sensed it was coming but found ourselves in disbelief and not fully prepared for the next few months of our existence as an educational institution located 12 kilometers from the Macedonian border and a mere 110 miles from Pristina. Not to mention the fact that we had students from all of the neighboring countries.

On Friday evening, March 26, 1999, I was the only senior AUBG administrator present at the University, or in Bulgaria for that matter. This was due to some poor planning on our part. I contacted the Regional Security Office at the U.S. Embassy in Sofia to determine my steps and be certain that we were secure for the weekend. What should I say, if anything, to the university community? How do I tell our students, staff, and faculty to be extra vigilant, that we have increased security, but don't panic? My administrative dilemma, caught up with personal emotions of fear and frustration as well as fatigue, was nothing compared with the human tragedy unfolding only 110 miles away. What about our students from Kosovo, Serbia, Macedonia, their families, their friends? With their attendance at the American University in Bulgaria, they had been imagining a very different future. They took time to acknowledge their frustration, their fear, and to support one another – truly a miracle in which diversity enhances and young people, being educated for future leadership in the region, cross the boundaries of nation and ethnicity in support of one another. Their optimism speaks most forcefully and dramatically about our future, their future, and their imagining of what could be.

The Educational Imperative

To keep our Board of Directors (one half of whom live outside of Bulgaria) briefed, I composed three "updates" much of which I share with you here. Some comments, however, are taken from my journal and speak more to my own feelings and observations. These entries are noted in italics, and interspersed among the "update" comments.

March 24, 1999 – NATO bombs Serbia! Only administrator here. The burden of responsibility feels very heavy.

March 25, 1999 – Life goes on. Added security. Participants in the Higher Education Support Program of the Open Society Institute arrive for conference. Annual City Officials Evening as scheduled. Special guests from USAID and the City of Auburn (twinning program with Blagoevgrad). There is sure to be a future.

March 26, 1999 – Anti-NATO demonstrators at the U.S. Embassy in Sofia. Security tight. Added security at AUBG. To those in the U.S, even with our close connection, Kosovo is light years away from them and from Blagoevgrad! Reinforces for me the feeling of isolation.

April 6, 1999 – Update to Board
I have taken a few minutes to update you all on the situation here in Blagoevgrad.

As I look out at the plaza in front of our main building, calm prevails and life seems to go on as normal. There is no shortage of goods in the stores and the nice spring weather is bringing people out for coffee on the sidewalks and shopping in the many little stores.

Beneath the surface calm there is a lot of fear on the part of many people. In the newspapers yesterday and today and in one national tabloid there is a very strong anti-American, anti-NATO sentiment expressed, including targeting AUBG (again) as a front for the CIA. AUBG has grabbed the headlines, in part, because of the NATO Forum held last Wednesday. In addition, we are being attacked because of some arrangements we made for the 38 Peace Corps volunteers from Macedonia to stay at the Alen Mak Hotel when they exited Macedonia last week. They were put up at the hotel at our AUBG group rate, which probably was a mistake, but there was a series of miscommunications and we will leave that to the PC to take care of. Our relationship with the Peace Corps is very strong because of past conference work we have done for them. How are our students doing? By all reports they are doing very well. I had a full briefing this morning by staff of our Student Services Office. Our basic thrust is to lessen tensions that have or may develop. The Student Services Office tabs this as a "Stress Release Plan" and is implementing many small things all the way from special food in the canteen, popcorn and fruit available in the residence halls, a continuation of the Friday Flicks, the continuation of intramural and free play sports, with next week marking the beginning of the baseball, softball, tennis, and cricket season. Building managers are providing free telephone cards to affected students and the telephone in Student Services Office is available for direct contact with families.

In addition to these "small" tension relievers, one of our faculty members has held two "Kosovo Forums" in the residence halls, providing a time and space for students to talk through these issues of such importance. Other Forums are scheduled as needed. Another faculty member has especially close ties to the Serbian students and is using his positive relationship with the students to help them deal with the issues of anger and fear and to plan for an uncertain future.

Our Counseling Center is providing "crisis intervention" services by being available with a special room where students can just go and talk with a counselor or be alone in a safe space. The counseling staff is also available at the Kosovo Forums. All students from Albania, Kosovo, and Serbia have been contacted personally by staff of the Counseling Center.

One senior administrator and his wife invited all students from Albania, Kosovo, and Macedonia to dinner on Sunday. About 32 were in attendance. Stress release was provided with games and great food. Politics were not discussed, but the option was available.

Still to be implemented: A safe space room, monitored by the staff of the Counseling Center; weekly non-alcohol dance for the duration of the semester; briefings with Resident Assistants; weekly

"monotony breaker" in the canteen; letters to families and Study Abroad officers at the American Students' home schools and Soros Foundation offices, updating them on safety issues of their students here; weekend swim trips to Sandanski; a continuation of weekend skiing trips; students will develop a "top ten list" of ways to help each other through the stress and post it around the University.

We have had two major forums for presentation and discussion in the past week. On Monday, March 29, Ivan Krastev, a very fine and well-known Bulgarian political scientist presented a lecture/discussion on campus. This was attended by an overflow audience in the Red Room. And on Wednesday, March 31, we held a NATO Forum at which Ambassador Bohlen (U.S.), Ambassador Six (Netherlands), Solomon Passy (Atlantic Club of Bulgaria), Col. William Hall (U.S. Defense Attaché), and Ivan Sotirov (NATO Information Center) were present as a panel. The AUBG auditorium was absolutely packed. Actually, this was a change of program from what we had agreed two months earlier to do as an arrangement for "Days of NATO" being held throughout the country. Questions from our students were direct and to the point. Some persons from the community were present, the UDF MPs from Blagoevgrad region were present, the new Deputy Regional Governor was present, and the press were invited and present. From this Forum, we are getting some negative and highly provocative headline coverage in the national press. However, I think it was good to go ahead with the Forum and to have the opinions expressed and debated. This is, of course, the purpose of a university as I so contextualized in my opening remarks at the Forum.

March 31, 1999 — NATO Day with modifications. I felt such tension over this event. Easy decision would have been not to do it. Lots of risk with security and possible protests. Security was tight, but appropriate balance.

Prior to the Forum, there was a very small demonstration out front with about 6-8 people with a small sign "NATO out of Yugoslavia." As you can imagine, we have increased security around our buildings. We also have asked all of our students, faculty and staff to be extra vigilant during this time of tension.

On the more human side of things, our students—Albanian, Macedonian, Serbian and Kosovar—are fully supportive of one another. They are continuing their normal lives and activities as students in spite of the troublesome distractions. The Serbian students are fearful that other students will dislike them because of what is happening. The Kosovar students are very fearful for their families and friends in Kosovo. Both groups consider themselves Yugoslavian and there is some unity in this.

Two of our students, one Serbian and one Kosovar Albanian, are heading off to the Netherlands to represent AUBG as our debate team in an international competition. They are both in Sofia today picking up their visas.

The weekend of March 26-28, we hosted the program directors of all of the HESP-funded programs throughout the region. 20 participants came from as far away as St. Petersburg, Minsk, Kyrgystan, Slovakia, Warsaw, and Vilnius. (As we were meeting and in a deep discussion about the education of minorities, I heard a lot of noise out front of the building and thought for sure it was a demonstration. In fact, it was a Roma wedding party in full swing). HESP, by the way, is the Higher Education Support Program of the Open Society Institute. This is the agency from which our Soros funds come.

I have asked appropriate staff to plan for the possibility that some of the students from Albania, Serbia, Macedonia, and Kosovo may want to remain at AUBG this summer. You may recall that we made such arrangements in the summer of 1997 when Albania was in such turmoil.

For your information we

currently have 28 Albanian students, 10 Serbian students, 3 Kosovar students, and 6 Macedonian students.

We are in the wonderful position of helping our students work through difficult times and we are succeeding with little or no visible ethnic tensions (in fact, this may be a unifying time for our students). This certainly doubles our commitment to the mission of AUBG. It is a visible demonstration that education within a multicultural environment can work very well to assure a peaceful future. There is absolutely no question in our minds as to the important and successful role of AUBG in these difficult times. It is just the kind of practical alternative problem solving that the world needs.

As I write this report for you, I am mindful that it could all change in a matter of minutes. Keep us in your minds and PLEASE let me know if you have questions or if there is additional information that I can provide.

April 7, 1999 – Still the War!! Always there in the back of our minds. Do we hear explosions in the night, imagination or is it for real or is it thunder across the border mountains with Macedonia? (Was for real)

April 8, 1999 – Still the War!! Does it make any difference? Children playing outside – might as well be Grant Street, Maine, in the USA.

April 28, 1999 – Update to Board

Today is again a calm but rainy day in Blagoevgrad. Our students are very consumed with completing their coursework and preparation for final exams next week. As you can imagine, the computer laboratories and the library are full all day with students doing that last minute course preparation. The Faculty Assembly held its final meeting of this academic year and completed some very important business.

In view of the continuing crisis next door, our staff and faculty continue their tireless efforts in working with students (and the entire university community) to deal with the concern, anger, fear, and frustrations that surround our lives. For those of us who may not be directly affected in a personal way, there is that constant anxiety in the back of our heads about what is taking place, how it seems far beyond our control, and how we can best continue without significant distraction our important mission as an educational institution.

The following evening, students who have formed the "Kosovo Forum" came together and held an auction to raise money for the refugees. They raised a total of 1 250 000 lv. Chuck Grim's necktie and hat were the real winners at auction.

Again, on Wednesday, April 21, Student Government held its elections. A Kosovar Albanian student was elected Student Body President and the newly elected student representative to the Board is one of our Hungarian students. The latter student came as part of our Study Abroad program funded by the Salgo Noren Foundation and transferred to complete his studies at AUBG. He is also the editor of the newspaper VOX.

We have prepared a proposal and submitted it to the Open Society Institute in Budapest that, if funded, will allow students from Albania, Macedonia, Kosovo, and Serbia to remain at AUBG for Summer School. This will relieve a great deal of tension and concern on the part of our students about the immediate future. This extended stay also involves arrangements with the local police for an extension of the "blue passports."

Staff in Student Services continue to provide leadership in assuring that we have the appropriate counseling services available, phone cards available, and monotony breakers in the dining canteens. The "stress room" that I mentioned in the previous update is in use under the supervision of staff from the Counseling Center. Equally, our faculty have responded to the challenge with support, guidance, and an immensely positive role with our students.

Our friends from the Peace Corps in Macedonia have left. The Macedonian program has been suspended and the volunteers released from their service. I met with the director last Friday before her return to Skopie to keep the office there open with its Macedonian staff. They are clearly looking to the future reinstatement of the program.

The arrangements surrounding the Commencement on

May 10 are nothing short of amazing. Much will be decided at the last moment and not by us but in cooperation with security, press, and advance teams from the Department of State. And to think we previously worried only if it would be raining! We have scheduled a Forum of several faculty members and about 15 graduating students to meet with Secretary of State Albright before the Commencement Ceremony.

April 30, 1999 – Albright not coming. Mild depression then relief.

As for the political situation in Bulgaria, be assured that we continue to have the support of City Hall and many others, in spite of the fact that there has been one protest demonstration in Blagoevgrad. On Monday, Stanimir Ilchev did an information session on the situation for the President's Advisory Council. Approximately 70% of the Bulgarian population oppose the war and any involvement of Bulgaria in it. The Socialist Party staged the demonstration in Blagoevgrad on Monday wherein about 4-500 people attended in the middle of the town. One sign said "Americans Go Home. We are thankful to the mayor for insisting on this venue rather than letting the demonstration take place in the plaza in front of AUBG. Last evening, Prime Minister Kostov was in Blagoevgrad and spoke in the Peyo Yavorov Hall next door. Needless to say, there is a great deal of political activity surrounding the Bulgarian Government's position in support of NATO. How we will experience this in conjunction with our Commencement is not fully known or understood.

We look forward to seeing you, Directors and Trustees, at the upcoming meeting and for the Commencement Ceremony. Our attention should and must be on the continuation of our mission as an international, regional educational institution that is preparing a new generation of leaders. The graduation of 120 students and the acknowledgment of their academic achievements will be a glorious day in their lives. We owe them nothing less.

May 10, 1999 – Amid all of our exhaustion from the board meeting, commencement seemed electric. Students so excited. Had to negotiate with border crossings so that Serbian and Albanian parents could come through for the graduation of their kids.

May 21, 1999 – Drive back from Sofia to Blagoevgrad. Head-on accident. Two men killed. But lightening in the sky – was lightening or bombing?? A bit disconcerting to say the least.

May 22, 1999 – Why do we have this stupid, senseless war going on – no exit in sight.

June 3, 1999 – Looks like a peace agreement – didn't believe that this would really happen.

June 4, 1999 – Peace text being published – must be real. Moving quickly on the implementation.

June 9, 1999 – Still no peace in Kosovo.

June 11, 1999 –Peace in Kosovo on the way. A general sigh of relief. Bulgaria made the right choice, this should raise self-esteem and help deal with the inferiority complex. Storks in the fields, in the nests and flying low over the fields.

June 21, 1999 – Update to Board

It should come as no surprise to any of you that we are VERY relieved to have the bombing to our west suspended and to see refugees begin returning to what is left of their homes in Kosovo. We know that the implementation of a just and sustainable peace will be difficult, but there is a general sigh of relief among those of our AUBG Community.

We are awaiting information about the possibility of having refugee students in our third summer session. You'll recall that this was an initiative suggested at the May Board meeting. OS Macedonia as well as OS Sofia are the partners getting this in place—handling the legal issues in both countries. We have been told that with NATO entering Kosovo, they are recruiting English speakers as interpreters—this may mean that many of the student refugees that we would be interested in having at AUBG mid-July to mid-August may take this opportunity to work with NATO. Nonetheless, we continue to plan for the students and as requested by OS Sofia, I have sent a letter to the Deputy Prime Minister seeking his support for this initiative.

A student initiative of the AUBG chapter of the European-wide student association AEGEE (Association des Estates Generaux

des Etudiants de l'Europe) for a conference on the topic "Peace and Nationalism on the Balkans" is of special note. The conference is scheduled for October 1999 at AUBG. Invited are the Ministers of Foreign Affairs from Romania and Bulgaria. We are actively fundraising for this important event and have the support of Dr. Zhelu Zhelev and Ambassador Peter Metzger of Germany to write letters in support of funding for the conference. Dimi Panitza has also committed funds from the Free and Democratic Bulgaria Foundation in support of the conference. Thanks, Dimi.

We have been told by staff of UMaine that one of the University of Maine study abroad students who was with us this past fall semester has returned to Albania to work in the refugee camps this summer. Bravo! Our own Kosovar students frequently cross the border into Macedonia, looking for their friends. Last weekend, however, they were turned back. Jill Rasmussen, our Director of Residential Life, reports that we continue to give free telephone cards to the Yugoslavian students so that as the power permits they are able to keep in contact with their families. Jill also reports that there is a certain relaxed feeling on campus. All summer school students are living in the Skaptopara as are the visiting professors, thus fostering a positive informal dialogue and discussion about the situation in Kosovo.

September 1, 1999 – Update to Board

Monday marked the opening of our 1999-2000 Academic Year—the 9th for AUBG. We have welcomed 158 new students, including transfers, making our total for this semester right around 660. International students number 150 and are from 19 different countries.

We are actively working with USAID on the Kosovo Project. This is a commitment of $1 million for the specific purpose of scholarships for students whose education has been disrupted by the Kosovo crisis and the on-going tensions and for short-term training in English language, computing, business and journalism. Chuck Grim, who has been shepherding this project through, will report on it at the Board meeting.

Epilogue, January 2000

Our lives have settled back into the routine of the academic calendar, but there are constant reminders of the Kosovo Crisis. Students' lives are still disrupted, but they are continuing on their educational journey. We learned the importance of trust in one another in facing the difficult days of NATO bombing and the days beyond.

On November 22, 1999, President Bill Clinton, the first U.S. President to visit Bulgaria, met with a group of 11 of our students in a roundtable conversation that lasted for one and one half hours. Our students were Albanian, Bulgarian, Slovenian, Kosovo Albanian, Romanian, Kazahstani, Macedonian, and Serbian. At the close of the conversation, President Clinton, according to one of the students, "assigned us the high responsibility to come up with practical ideas of how to reach a necessary critical mass in each of our countries. A small group of people dedicated to making a difference would be able to begin carrying out these ideas of democracy, participation, ethnic and national harmony in order to bring about the desired changes." President Clinton said later that day in a public presentation, "Earlier today, I had the opportunity to meet some of Boriana's classmates" (Boriana, an AUBG student, introduced President Clinton at the mass rally in Sofia on the evening of November 22 at the American University in Bulgaria.) "They were from Bulgaria, and from other countries throughout this region. And they were profoundly impressive to me — in their intelligence, in their compassion, in their determination to build a brighter future."

These students are now engaged in the development of a Young Balkan Leaders Program. ❑

Three Social Workers And An NGO

The use of art as an assessment tool in psycho-social evaluation of refugee children are among the activities of this team of professionals who journeyed to Albania.

by
Shelly Perry
Rene Drumm
and
Sharon Pittman

Shelly Perry, MSW, Rene Drumm, Ph.D, and Sharon Pittman, Ph.D, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

"Give me money or I'll kill you right now!" The 15-year-old girl grimaced as she recalled the Serbian soldier's shouting on her last night in her home in Kosovo. "The soldiers lined us up and demanded money," Sylvia continued. "We didn't have any, so we gave them jewelry. We were scared. We said, 'Don't kill us, please, we don't have any more money." Then the soldiers put me in a room with my uncle and his son. They told me, 'We're going to kill you now.' They gave me the gun and said, 'Kill them!' I was crying and said, 'You'll have to kill me and kill us all because I won't kill them!' For almost two hours the soldiers kept badgering me to kill my uncle and cousin, but I couldn't. I was crying uncontrollably. Finally, the soldiers left and I did not have to kill my loved ones. My family fled to the mountains and I saw my village being burned as we left. I remember watching our neighbors running away and one of them was killed."

Sylvia's eyes were full of sadness as she recounted the atrocities surrounding her flight from Kosovo in the Spring of 1999. As we sat with her on a cement stair of a refugee camp in Albania, Sylvia volunteered to talk about the emotional needs of the refugees there. The late afternoon sun was just starting to wane as she shared her skepticism that anything could help her or her people. There were just too many memories, too many horrors invading her sleep. She was sure that these memories would last forever.

This interview came at the end of a long day spent in refugee camps in South Albania. Two weeks earlier, our research team from Andrews University Social Work Department had been commissioned by a non-governmental organization (NGO), Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), to work with the Kosovar refugees. Our program was selected because the chair of the social work department served on the ADRA board. The Danish government (DANITA) had given ADRA a grant to help meet its psycho-social needs. The research team consisting of the program chair, field director, and interpersonal practice coordinator and had experience in needs assessments, qualitative research methodology, and crisis intervention.

Getting Ready

The phone call came, giving us one week to prepare for the assignment. True to the traditions of the academy, our

first thought was, "When in doubt, do a literature review!" With that resolve, our graduate assistants busied themselves investigating every topic closely related to refugee work. We checked out library books, copied numerous articles, and purchased books, rationalizing that there would be a lot of time to read on the plane. We kept abreast of the political and military situation by Internet which offered the information that the refugees, consisting of many elderly persons and traumatized children, were in worse condition than expected. In addition, U.S. citizens were cautioned against traveling to the area. "What do you think? And from the trio of voices: "I'm going." "Me too!" "I'm in." In less than a week, we were on our way, still not quite sure just what the mission would be.

Travel Challenges

The typical route to our destination was to fly to Greece, take a taxi to the Albanian border, and take another taxi from the border to Tirana, Albania's capital city. Because of the language barrier, arranging for a taxi from the airport in Greece proved to be challenging. But about four hours and a hundred dollars later, our driver dropped us off and we pulled our bags, boxes, and books to the border patrol, happy that the first part of our journey had gone uneventfully. Only moments later did we discover that we had arrived at the wrong border. We were at the border of Macedonia, not Albania. With a smirk, the border patrol officer informed us, "You are just one country away." He continued, "Why would you leave Greece and go to Albania? Albania is not as nice as Greece." When we explained that we had come to work with the refugees, he wondered aloud, "How much help can three women give to thousands of refugees? It's better if you go home." We hoped that was not a premonition of things to come and finally convinced him to just arrange a taxi to Albania.

Several hours later, at the Albanian border, we were again dropped off, as the drivers are not allowed to cross the borders without the proper paperwork. As we pulled our belongings through to the Albanian border zone, the sun was beginning to set and the taxi drivers were not eager to make the four- or five-hour trip to Tirana. Spending the night at the Macedonian/Albanian border was not appealing and after about an hour of asking for help and in general being a nuisance, we located a taxi driver and were off again.

Albania is a mountainous country with poor road conditions. The rain that began gently falling that evening made traveling more difficult. Our driver dodged potholes and maneuvered over mountain roads with no guard rails at frightening speeds. Trying to communicate with a non-English-speaking driver presented an additional challenge. We finally reached our destination of Tirana at 9:00 p.m., nearly12 hours after our departure that morning and three days after leaving the United States.

We were thrilled to learn we had finally reached Tirana but had no way of telling our driver where the ADRA office was located. The directions e-mailed to us earlier stated, "Go to the statue in the center of the city, follow the street opposite the horse's tail to the peach-colored hotel and turn left down that side street. Turn right at the next corner and you will find ADRA's banner hanging over the side of the building." Since the directions were in English, they were of no use to our driver. He was obviously not impressed with our lack of knowledge of how to find our destination; however we knew by the landmarks that we could see from the taxi windows that we were close. Miraculously, we looked up and there was the ADRA sign hanging from the building. We were sure the taxi driver was pleased to get us out of his vehicle and we unloaded our belongings quickly onto the dark, wet cement as he drove off. It was only later that we realized that one of our boxes was still in the back seat window. We never saw him or our books, articles, or granola bars again.

We spent the next two days developing our specific mission. Although we had prepared as much as we could, given our short travel notice, ADRA's Albanian office held key information that we needed to proceed. We realized the plan was for us to conduct an assessment focusing on the

emotional needs of the refugees. We coordinated our efforts with other NGOs and contacted the Albanian University Department of Social Work. During a field seminar we attended, we were pleased to discover the students working in many refugee-related field placements. We were also able to gain important insights from a social work perspective. For example, students and professors shared with each other their views on NGO relationships, the psychosocial issues of the refugees, and the environmental differences among the camps.

Learning from the Refugees

Saturday morning arrived and we were ready for the task that brought us to this part of the world. At the last minute, we had decided to take

along some crayons and paper to give to the children in the camps. We found our supplies in a store front at a cost of approximately four times higher than in the States, and made a mental note to equip ourselves before leaving next time, if we were ever asked to assist in a similar effort. As we set out for the refugee camps we were anxious, wondering if there would be enough time to accomplish our goal of completing a thorough needs assessment.

Arriving at the first camp at the top of a hill, we saw what could be described as a typical refugee camp or tent city. The curious children gathered around us, anxious to discover why we were visiting. Although we hadn't developed a complete research plan, we realized that our crayons and paper presented an opportunity to gather valuable information.

"Would you children like to draw with some crayons?" our Kosovar interpreter asked the children. "Anyone who would like to color, come up to the cement area," she added. About forty children followed two team members and interpreters up to the church that housed supplies for the refugees. We hoped the children's drawings would offer a glimpse of their emotional state in lieu of the lack of appropriate time and resources to do a full assessment of them.

The children waited patiently in line for paper and crayons. We could hear their playful conversations as they began drawing. As the children finished, we asked if they would like to tell us about what they had drawn. One by one the children came and explained their pictures. Nearly every child wanted to tell us about his or her drawing and asked that we keep the picture. "What did you draw here?" we asked.

"These are the soldiers. They shot a small child and another small child was watching and crying. They burned my house, but I didn't cry."

Another child said, "I saw a small baby being taken from his mother and killed. They burned everything in our house. It's all gone."

A third child recalled, "The soldiers came and made us march down the road across corpses of neighbors. We were told to kick the dead bodies." The horrifying themes depicted on their drawings were clear and consistent.

The adult refugees also shared their stories. They stated that conditions at this camp were not good. The tents had plastic over the tops of them, making them hot inside. One woman expressed worry over physical illness as she wondered whether her husband and two brothers were dead or alive. A school teacher refugee said that boredom was their current worst enemy. She suggested that simple things such

as books, magazines, and puzzles would help take the children's minds off the suffering. The refugees were wonderful in their giving attitudes, offering to share what little they had with us.

After saying good-bye to the refugees we drove the

twenty minutes back down the hillside to a second refugee camp. This site had six large warehouses which housed 2,000 refugees. We noted a Catholic presence in this camp: nuns leading a group of children in singing. The warehouses were cooler and the refugees described the conditions, in general, as good. One said, "It is better than being in the mountains and not having food." We were shocked to see about six outhouses for the 2,000 refugees, three of which were padlocked.

A young adult female commented on the sound of airplanes in the distance; we had hardly noticed it. She said, "When I hear airplanes I am afraid; it's the same noises I heard as when they were bombing our homes in Kosovo." An elderly couple described their despair: "Very sad, we need you to throw us in the sea, there is nothing left for us." We learned their grandsons were in Kosovo and everything they owned had been destroyed. This camp echoed similar themes of loss and uncertainty.

We then drove thirty minutes into town to visit our third camp which was at an old school. Smells of urine and stale water greeted us as we made our way into the gymnasium housing many refugees. We were surprised to see the children gathered around a television. This single set at the camp also gave the refugees a connection to the outside world.

The sad stories of the long, difficult journey through the mountains, the bombing and/or burning of the houses, and the deaths of family and friends continued as we spoke to the people of this camp. One woman, when asked about rape, recalled that one girl was told, "Put off your clothes. We will kill you with our penis, but won't waste a bullet on you." As we left this camp, we were aware of the fatigue we were feeling from the impact of the collective emotional traumas related by the refugees.

The weariness lifted as our Kosovar interpreter encouraged us with her knowledge of some special qualities of the camp that we were about to visit. This camp had been an Albanian summer retreat; the setting was beautiful, up on the side of a mountain, overlooking the sea. The scene before us contrasted greatly with the tragic experiences of the refugees and with the camps visited previously. The refugees here assumed camp leadership through organized group activities. When we arrived we noticed a game, resembling soccer, going on. It was at this camp the fifteen-year-old related her ordeal with the soldiers commanding her to kill her uncle and cousin. While the stories were as graphic and horrifying as previous camps, we noticed a relaxed atmosphere with more interactive activities taking place. After finishing the assessment interviews, the refugee children, coached by camp leaders, put on a patriotic program for us which included singing and poems.

The Journey of Leaving

As we left the last camp of the day, we noticed that the penetrating sadness and pervasive losses of the hundreds of interviewees had now become ours. One member of the team began to cry and yet, even with two skilled social workers to provide solace, we were at a loss to help each other. Soon, "debriefing" took on a whole new dimension; we no longer saw it as a one time event, but as an ongoing enterprise.

We began talking, first to each other, then with ADRA officials, about what we had seen and heard, our clinical and administrative observations, and short-and long-term goals. Some of our grief and heaviness were replaced with hope as we formulated interventions from the individual to societal levels. Within three weeks of our departure from Albania, ADRA hired two of our

program's recent graduates. These graduates accepted the challenge of leading in the programs initiated by the research team's needs assessment. The baton was passed.

Reflections

As we have presented information from our experience to others, we often wonder about the people who shared their stories and needs with us. We wonder if they have been reunited with their husbands, brothers, fathers, and sons. With the refugee descriptions of the destruction of their homes and neighborhoods, we wonder about what kind of housing and communities they returned to. We have a heightened sense of awareness of the overwhelming challenges facing the restoration of the country. We wonder how such a legacy of historical and cultural differences can be overcome when the issues are so complex and elusive.

Over the months following our visit, the lines became increasingly blurred between victims and persecutors. As the refugees returned home, media reports were filled with stories of retribution by the Kosovars. We began to realize with greater clarity that the real issue was achieving peace. How can diverse peoples live together harmoniously? There were religious, ethnic, and social class differences among the warring factions in Kosovo. We came back home with a greater resolve towards continuing our involvement in research and in international social work. Our social work research agenda must include not only treatment but prevention of trauma, of not only intervening after war but strategies of mediation to prevent conflict.

We've often reflected on how much we take for granted, how we live in abundance and yet are so willing to complain about what we don't have. On our trip to Albania, we complained of being able to take only one small suitcase, while the refugees would be grateful for even that amount of clothing to call their own. We were anxious to get home to our families, while the refugees had no home to return to, and many of their family members were missing or dead. We were tired from our journey and work after the eight-day adventure and looked forward to peaceful rest that we were sure would come. And while most of the refugees have now returned to their homeland, we still wonder how much peaceful rest they will experience until we can all learn the lesson of celebrating difference. ❑

A Journey to Hope

We are inspired by this account of one town's ability to maintain cohesion in light of the attacks on their diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds.

by Nancy Ayer

Nancy Ayer, MSW, Clinical Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, University of New England

Remember...don't smile when we go through the controls, if they see you smile, they will stop us," said Ensar as we approached the Sarejevo Airport. For a year I'd been Ensar's host and advocate in the U.S.; now he was my host and guide to his beloved Bosnia. I could not stop smiling. In minutes, I would be meeting Ensar's mother and father, the people I had thought about daily for the last year, parents who had the courage, perseverance, and selflessness to find a way to get their son out of Bosnia and protect him from the madness that had taken over their country. As our plane descended, I saw buildings riddled with shells from the war, military airplanes, helicopters, and soldiers.

As we entered the airport, we passed through a line of police on either side of us. I was following Ensar's lead. After we moved through the control and our passports were examined, we saw a crowd of people being held back by the police. Suddenly a man and woman pushed through the line; it was Katarina and Mirza, Ensar's mother and father. They ran toward us, arms stretched out. Katarina threw her arms around me; we hugged tight and cried and laughed at the same time. She kept saying, "Thank you, Nancy." Then we switched and Mirza and I hugged while we both talked in our own languages, he not understanding my English and me not understanding his Bosnian. But our faces and eyes and hugs said it all, especially the bond we had developed through our love and commitment to their son, Ensar.

The ride home to Tuzla was unforgettable. Ensar and his Mom sat snuggled in the back of their car, lots of laughter and hugging and catching up, with Mirza and myself joining in. I became aware of what an extraordinarily beautiful country Bosnia is. I could not imagine the ugliness of this war forever scarring this beautiful land and people. Seeing home after home burned out, riddled with bullets, still surrounded by yellow plastic tape with large black letters warning of land mines, provided a sharp contrast to the beauty of Bosnia that the war could not eliminate. As I passed scene after scene like this, I could not hold back my tears, feeling or at least acknowledging horrors truly beyond my comprehension that I imagined occurred in these homes.

The drive from Sarajevo took about two hours. We arrived in Tuzla around 6 p.m. and drove directly to the tennis court where Emir, Ensar's only sibling, was playing in a big tennis tournament. "We are a sports family," Katarina said proudly. Her husband was the captain of Bosnia's national futball (soccer) team 25 years ago and quite fa-

mous in his country, sort of the Larry Bird of futball. I never went anywhere during my visit with Mirza that at least one person didn't stop and salute him. Ensar follows his father's love and talent for futball and is an accomplished soccer player both in Bosnia and in the U.S, which is one of the ways he contributes to his college education here in the U.S.

Emir is a tennis player, who, at age 15 currently holds the title of the 6th best tennis player in Bosnia. We were all eager to see him and maybe catch the last of his tournament. When we arrived at the courts, we learned Emir had won. This was my first time meeting Emir, who spoke excellent English but was too shy to speak directly to me. I felt like I already knew each member of the family since Ensar had told me a year's worth of fond stories. Ensar was in his glory saying hello to many friends he had not seen in a long time and having us all together.

After some delicious Bosnian coffee, Katarina asked me if I wanted to take a walk in the banyan, a park nearby. What I did not understand was we were going to visit the memorial where 78 young people who were killed in Tuzla's city center on May 25, 1995 were buried. I knew the story as Ensar had told it to me many times during his first year in the U.S. Tuzla is known for its long standing commitment to multiculturalism, where Muslims, Croats, and Serbs have lived peacefully together for decades. Tuzla sits in a valley and during the war, the Bosnian Serbs surrounded the city and used snipers and grenades to try and bring the city down. The grenade attack on May 25th was one of the Bosnian Serb's attempts to pull multicultural Tuzla apart by purposely killing the innocent —the children of Tuzla. A grenade attack was timed and aimed at youth attending a handball tournament in the city's center. Ensar had planned to go to the tournament that night, but at the last minute his buddies asked him to play soccer at a field near his home. I think soccer saved his life that night.

At that point in the war, Ensar and his friends had developed the skill of predicting which part of the city was under attack by the sound of the missile. As the grenades whistled into the city that night, they knew immediately that they were aimed at the city's center. They immediately ran into the bomb zone to help their friends. It was chaos and horror beyond belief: rubble, body parts, smoke, screaming, and crying. Ensar was with two friends, specifically hunting for three friends they knew had been in the city's center. Three makeshift morgues were set up near the hospitals. Ensar and his friends went first to the hospitals and then to the morgues looking for their friends. One friend was found in the hospital, still alive although he would later lose his leg. The other two friends' bodies were found in the morgue. The boys identified them by looking for the shoes as their feet hung outside the sheets covering the many bodies. Ensar told me this story many times. Each time he told the story, he shared more details and each time, his painful silences grew longer as he gathered himself with his head in his hands and his eyes filled with tears.

As Katarina and I approached the memorial, we stopped talking and just walked together, slowly. Again, the contrast of the beauty and the ugliness was present. Each grave was truly sacred ground designed and cared for by the families of the murdered children. The bodies are buried above ground and each grave had a marker with the child's name, age, and picture. Beautiful flowers surrounded each burial site, along with a bench at each grave site. Many people were visiting the memorial; some people were sitting in silence, some crying, some talking to their lost child, while some were hard at work gardening and pruning the plants around the graves. Katarina and I continued to walk together in silence and tears. After we systematically visited each grave we quietly walked back and joined the family. There was nothing to say to one another, it was an opportunity to join together and feel and

experience the memorial paying respect to the innocents.

The next day, I joined Mirza and Katarina for a picnic with their dearest friends. They were all about my age and they were getting together to celebrate one of their children's 18th birthday. We drove out of the city and parked the car and then walked about 25 minutes into the woods to the picnic. There was a lamb roasting on a wood fire and endless delicious dishes, salads, breads, desserts—a feast. Everyone seemed to know who I was and rushed to shake my hand and welcome me. As people introduced themselves, Katarina translated and Mirza, who towers over both of us, looked on with a broad, warm smile. "I am Damir and I was a soldier in the war and I am a Croat; I am Adnan and I am a metal worker and I fought in the war and protected our city and I am a Muslim; and I am Igor I am a Serb and I fought in the war to protect Tuzla." One by one they welcomed me. Katarina translated and said, " We were friends before the war, during the war, and after the war, and that is very important to us. They did not succeed in pulling us apart."

Then Katarina talked for a while in Bosnian with her friends and I watched their faces as she talked and then they looked at me and hugged me. Katarina then turned to me and said, " I told them I took you to the banyan yesterday and you cried and they said, "You are one of us." We all hugged and then we ate, drank, talked, and sang for the rest of the afternoon. I felt like an old friend, like I belonged.

That night when I went to sleep, I thought about my first full day in Bosnia. I peeked out my window and gazed at the field where Ensar chose to play soccer on May 25th instead of going to the city center with his friends and reflected on how amazing it was to finally be here. Just think, only 13 months ago the war in Bosnia was just another horrible news event.

I remember being about 12 years old and learning about Hitler's terror for the first time. I asked my mother why she and her family didn't do something about it. I just couldn't understand how 6 million Jews could be exterminated while the world went on with its business. She seemed to struggle with her answer, trying to explain to me that it isn't easy to know what to do when something so big is happening so far away. I remember thinking to myself, "Well... I would have tried to do something." My memory of our conversation came back to me 34 years later.

The war in Bosnia was approaching its second year, people were under siege in Sarajevo, and over 200,000 people were missing and feared dead. Mass graves were being discovered daily. Another extermination of people was underway and here I sat, a 46 year old social worker in my safe condo, feeling bad about the war and wanting to do something more than call my Congressperson. I could hear my mother's words: "It's not easy to know what you can do when it is so big and so far away." Then I saw Edin, a young high school student from Tuzla, being interviewed by my local news network. He was finishing his high school degree in Maine, just a half hour from my home. He was talking about how grateful he was to have a break from the war and how important it was to him and his family to have the opportunity to complete his education and not be stopped by the enemy.

Suddenly, I realized I had an opportunity to do something. I remember feeling an adrenaline rush pour through my body. I immediately picked up the phone and called a social worker I knew in that school system and found out whom to contact to find out more. With a few more calls the next day, I was in contact with a student exchange organization that was successful in getting a few young people out of Bosnia to the U.S. as part of an exchange program. My next obstacle was whether they wanted host families. I am a single person. Would the organization consider using a single person without children as a host? I was so relieved when I learned that they would consider me. I had an extra bedroom and lived only ¼ mile from the high school. My enthusiasm was high, until I learned that they couldn't get any more kids out because the war had intensified. About six weeks later, I got a phone call from the organization saying they had a high school senior from Tuzla that was able to get out of the country and was I still interested. Within 48 hours, I had his entire application packet and they had mine and I was accepted as a host.

Four weeks later, I was on my way to Portland's Airport to pick up Ensar. When I arrived at the airport, I met another family who was there to host a second boy from Tuzla. Fortunately, the boys knew one another and had been friends since their elementary school days. Minutes later, two very tall, nice looking young men approached us, Ensar and Omer. Their English was excellent. I was struck by how thin and weary they looked. It had been a long and dangerous trip. This was their first time away from home. I can't imagine how they must have felt to leave their family for the first time, while their country is at war and their city is under attack. I had a letter from Ensar's mother, thanking me for helping them save their son. At that point in the war, young Muslim men were the primary target of the enemy. The Bosnian Serbs were rounding up young Muslim men and killing them en masse. She explained how to support him if he became sad and weary and invited me to visit their beautiful Bosnia when the ugliness was over.

Ensar and Omer remained especially close to each other for their first year while they were finishing high school. Omer's original host family rejected him six weeks after he arrived. I came home late one evening to find Omer and all his belongings at our home. Omer was terrified he would be sent back to Bosnia after he and his family had made enormous sacrifices to get him to safety in the U.S. Immediately we invited Omer to live with us until we could work things out through the exchange organization. The three of us lived together for about three months until I found another host family for Omer. We found a family close to us; Omer remained a part of our new family and came to our house on weekends and vacations. Both Ensar and Omer excelled in high school and graduated the following May on the Dean's list. Both boys wanted very much to complete their college education in the U.S., which had been their dream before the war. Returning to Bosnia directly after finishing their high school degree also meant immediate enlistment into the Bosnia Army. This prospect frightened and worried all of us, since we were not confident the war was over and the boys did not want any part of learning how to kill or be soldiers. Omer's host family found a very generous benefactor who funded his entire college education. He went on to college in Massachusetts and graduated in May 2000.

I began raising money for Ensar to attend college in the Spring of 1996, realizing too late that scholarship opportunities had passed. The pressure was heavy because of the required enlistment into the army if and when he returned to his country. I think most people I knew didn't believe we would meet our goal and figured we would have to give up. I went into overdrive. As a social worker, I had written grants and held fundraising events before, but this was a very different kind of fundraising. I raised $17,000 in about 3 ½ months, averaging about $1000 per week. We had enough money for his first year of college with less than a week to spare to meet our deadline. I remember this moment vividly. The last chunk of money came in and we made it.

Ensar sat very quietly in a rocking chair in the living room. He looked sad and lost. When I asked him what was going on, he responded, "I think they got me. I should be happy about being able to go to college and I don't feel anything. I think they got me. I don't feel anything. This isn't right." We sat together and he talked and I listened. Finally I suggested, "It might be that your heart is quite healthy and doing the right thing for you." He looked surprised and interested. "You found ways to protect yourself during the war, right? Well, I suppose your heart also needed to protect itself, maybe put up some walls as the ugliness increased so you could get through it. You are a survivor. I believe as you experience being safe again and can start looking towards a future, your heart will begin to thaw and it will take down the walls it needed when it was under attack and you will begin to feel again. Please trust me on this one and give yourself some time."

Ensar and I continued to move ahead on the practical, while we routinely talked about his heart. He was accepted to several colleges and eventually chose a school in Maryland. They wanted him for both his academic and athletic excellence. They promised us a full scholarship for his last three years if we could find the money for his first

year since we had missed their scholarhsip deadlines. We thought our struggles were over. School began and Ensar excelled in the classroom and on the field. He made the varsity soccer team and was a starter for his team.

Ensar's soccer team traveled to Boston to play a few games in the fall of 1996. Of course, I went to see him play. I hadn't seen him for about eight weeks. I remember approaching the field while the team was warming up. I watched Ensar playing for awhile before he saw me. His body moved in a relaxed and confident way that I had not seen before. He had a beautiful broad smile and enthusiasm as he played with his teammates. As soon as he saw me, he ran over to greet us and I thought how much this young man had healed and how grateful I was that he was moving on with his dreams. Finally he was able to exhale, relax, and think about a future. I took him out to dinner before he had to leave and he told me how happy he was and how much he loved his coach.

Three days later Ensar called me and I knew something was wrong. He and two other European students and teammates, all starters on the team and all on the Dean's list, were kicked off the team. His coach demanded they say they were Christian and that they believed in Jesus Christ. Ensar is a nonpracticing Muslim. Ensar and his friends refused and they were all cut from the team. Ethnic cleansing strikes this boy again, but this time it was on the soccer field in Maryland, USA.

Ensar was devastated. He was not willing to enter another battle, understandably, considering the trauma he experienced during the war. At his request we did not file a discrimination complaint. We were strengthened by the crisis and decided the best response was to find a way to succeed and once again for him, this was an opportunity not to be stopped by ignorance and hate. Ensar taught me a lot with this incident. I wanted to go after this coach, but Ensar kept focused on the parts of the coach he loved and talked about how sorry he was that the coach was so limited in his thinking and beliefs and would use his power in this way. He saw him as a small person. In many ways, the war provided Ensar with great wisdom and strength. Ensar maintained his 4.0 grade point and finished his first year of college in Maryland. I immediately began fundraising again. Ensar transferred to a small university in Missouri, where he has excelled and succeeded both on the field and in the classroom and graduated in May 2000.

As a social worker, I purposefully wanted and needed to get involved in the war. I believe that as social workers, we have a responsibility to respond, to be activists. I wanted to put a face on the oppression and the horror we all were tuning into on the news each night and many of us tuning out. I wanted the opportunity to demonstrate to myself that I could do something, even when "things are so big and far away." When Ensar and Omer joined my life and my community and became a part of the lives of my family, friends, colleagues, and neighbors, it changed their lives too and made the war in Bosnia personal.

As a social work educator, I want to inspire my students to be passionate, to get involved and make a difference. Asking Ensar and Omer to be a part of my life has changed all of our lives forever. I am humbled by the support of friends and strangers who wanted to support them. As much as I hated asking for money, it was worth the discomfort and the knot in my stomach to meet these amazing people who were just waiting for someone to ask them to get involved.

For Ensar and Omer, the generosity of new friends and strangers were concrete reminders that the world still has people who are kind and loving, at a time in their lives when it seemed to them their world had gone mad. Their new-found hope defied the memories that haunted them of those who tried to cleanse their beloved Bosnia of some of its people.

Today, Ensar sometimes talks about the war and how he uses his terrifying experiences to give him strength and courage to move ahead. He explains, "When I get scared or nervous about something, I just think about what I went through in the war and that cuts the new problem down to size and I can move ahead." Recently, Ensar said to me, "There was one very good thing that came out of the war—I met you." ❑

Ethics Education To Counter War

Qui tacet, consentire videtur. The paper is a personal account of the attempt of one man—as a citizen and as a teacher - to create the field of bioethics in Croatia as a countermeasure to the experience of war . While acknowledging that ethics education alone cannot make future generations more moral, he believes that such an education should help future professionals to orient themselves in "the forest of contemporary ethical issues and dilemmas, as well as make them more competent to resolve complex moral problems in health care and medicine."

by Ivan Segota

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Introduction

It was the end of the 1980s. Not even ten years had elapsed since Tito died, but his country —Yugoslavia—was disintegrating. Because Tito's Yugoslavia was composed of eight federated units where people belonging to the three major religions of the area, several minor religious groups, and six ethnic nations lived mingled together, they shared a long history of separatism and confrontation. But fifty years of unity under Tito had resulted in many "mixed" marriages and families and other shared experiences. While the fear of war was creeping into people, many were hopeful that war would not break out.

The hope dissolved as politicians, political party leaders, administrative officers and others began to gather at the death bed of the dying country giving war speeches, using the breakdown of socialism and its transition into capitalism in the Balkans in a balkan way by invading "foreign" territory and "privatizing" the former socialized economic resources, but only to the victorious group. The politicians were joined by newspaper reporters and, finally, by radical groups driven by historical revenge. The "survival" of the "nation" called for assembly under national flags.

What were the professionals and the intellectuals to do in these circumstances? Join the powerful and serve them in order to survive? Raise their voices and expose themselves to the dangers of persecution, harassment, or even physical elimination? Or, be silent, sticking to the Latin proverb, "Inter arma musae silent"(In war, the muses are silent)?

The first group prostituted themselves, and I don't want to think about them. The second group, I admire, although their voices could be only a cry of a thirsty man in a desert. The third group, most of those who surrounded me, I joined. My silence gave birth to the topic I am dealing with in this article—ethics to counter war.

The Beginning

In the beginning, I was in a deep moral dilemma. Though I refused to call for war and to prepare for it, "Qui tacet, consentire videtur" (silence gives consent). But when I realized that war cacophony deafened any voice of reason and that war initiators

from all parts of the dying country could use anything I said against me, I decided to keep silent.

That silence came from a fear for the fate of my children and my wife. I have two sons, both of whom were grown enough to be called to war. I had friends and colleagues in all the republics and belonging to all the nationalities whose children were mostly the same age as mine. Our children would meet, and some

became friends. Were our children to be among those young men who were taken by buses to the front lines? Were they supposed to shoot at each other in this senseless war in which everybody fought against everyone—Croats against Serbs, Serbs against Muslims, Muslims against Croats, etc.? The thought made my blood freeze.

And my wife. My wife was born in Bosnia where historical events resulted in an assemblage of Croats, Serbs, and Muslims so quarrelsome they were ready to start a war. Not a Croat, she not only was anxious about the children, but was also afraid of losing her job. Would she be able to get the indispensable document, the Certificate of Domicile, proving that she was a citizen of Croatia where she has lived since her childhood? Some of my acquaintances, senior officers in the police force in the new government, turned their backs on us, refusing to help my wife, as a non-Croat, get the Certificate of Domicile and thus keep her job. I tried to comfort her, but she felt humiliated and lost. She would say, "Where do those who don't want to give me the Certificate of Domicile think I belong? I have here a Croat husband, Croat children, and I don't have anybody outside of Croatia. I have lived in Croatia since I can remember. What other fatherland could give me a Certificate of Domicile?"

She was also hurt by the xenophobia in the streets and homes of Croatia. Speeches of hatred for previous "brothers" in the common country spread nationwide. Even their music was not to be heard on the radio any more. That attitude also entered into some of our friends' homes, and our contacts with friends and relatives were not so frequent.

While my fear was based on concern for my family, my very deep hatred of war was based on my own history. It was only after my marriage and the birth of my first son when I was about thirty years old that I stopped having nightmares of war—bombs whistling in air-raids, corpses, ruined buildings. I would twitch in my sleep and wake up sweating. Perhaps the night crying of the baby and care for his sleep finally suppressed my nightmares which started on a sunny day in the Spring of 1945. It happened like this:

My parents and their four children, myself included, lived in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia. I was not yet seven years old. WWII was nearly over. Only one and a half months passed between that Sunday and the arrival of Tito's partisans in Zagreb, marking the day of victory of anti-fascism over fascism. That Sunday, air raid sirens started to wail about 10:00. I happened to be in my neighbor's yard where I came several times a day to see their little dog, tied to a plum tree. It would always recognize me and jump happily when I came by. Holding the dog's paw, I looked at the sky. Airplanes flew overhead, leaving behind them small clouds of black smoke from anti-aircraft shells and whistling, falling bombs. All at once, a horrible explosion and—darkness. I was covered by the ruins of a house. Rescuers began to dig, and the digging lasted for several hours. During all that time, I lay there,

conscious. I heard yells and the cries of the rescuers as they dug out dead bodies, and then a scream as I was pulled out, the only child who survived on the street where nearly all the houses were destroyed. A man took me into his arms and, walking over the rubble of my former street, took me to a hospital. When we

passed by a corpse or pieces of a dismembered body, he covered my eyes so that I would not see. Nevertheless, I saw a lot. I cried for my mother and called for my sisters and brother, and the man cried with me, saying "They will come, they will come..." I have never seen that man again, nor my dead family, nor many others from my street, nor the little dog. I was among the rare survivors of the last air-raid of Zagreb in WWII. I want nothing like that to happen to others.

Teaching Ethics to Counter War

When the war started, some physicians spoke on television, and what they had to say did not differ basically from what was said by politicians and soldiers who used war rhetoric to present their love of country and to build their images. There was a priest who walked around with a pistol at his belt, and, so armed, would say Mass and preach in churches. Stories from the front lines began to come to my attention. One of my students who came to study in Rijeka from Bosnia told me the following story: His father was a surgeon in a Bosnian village with a colleague of a different nationality. That colleague kept a pistol at his belt under his surgical scrubs. One day a slightly wounded ten-year-old boy of a third nationality was brought into surgery. The doctor became furious, pulled out his pistol, and shot the boy in the stomach. The boy soon died in the presence of a nurse and my student's father.

I was astounded when I heard this story. The student, however, was persistent that it was true and finally gave me his father's telephone number to convince me. When I called a few days later, however, Croatia was already cut off from Bosnia and other parts of Yugoslavia.

Nurses who attended my sociology course told me about another case. According to them, some of their colleagues on the southern battlefield took blood from injured enemy soldiers and civilians to use for their "own" injured, leaving the others to die. I wondered what had happened to their professional ethics, and if any existed at all.

In this way, I became aware of some fundamental ethical issues, and I started to search for answers. I was surprised how poor, or nonexistent, was the understanding of medical professionals when I posed ethical questions. I was even more surprised when I found absolutely no books or articles on ethics, not even a work by Hippocrates, in the library of the Faculty of Medicine, where I work. I couldn't even find literature containing the Hippocratic Oath, which is referred to as the ethical bible not only by Croatian medical professionals, but also by many others all over the world.

When I established that the situation was not basically different at other Faculties of Medicine in Croatia and Yugoslavia, I told myself, "There is some business for you. Future generations of medical professionals should be better acquainted with the ethical issues of their profession than the present ones."

Following this idea, I offered the students of the 1991-92 class a course on "The Hippocratic Oath Today." Since the literature was not available, I asked my students to search for sources of particular topics for seminar discussions, translate them, retell, and make comments. They accepted the challenge enthusiastically, and soon we had the opportunity to get acquainted with numerous ethicists from the USA, England, Germany, and Italy, and with their theses. The classes became so interesting, that I often stayed with my students after class, continuing reasoned ethical dialogues on abortion, euthanasia, transplantation, etc. Writing the textbook for my new course, I felt an enormous need for ethical literature which was lacking in Croatia and which, being in a war, we could not afford to order. Rifles and bullets were more important than books, particularly ones on ethics.

Then I remembered that my wife and I used to send packages of books from our library to newly opened schools in the countryside. Was there a way that, this time, someone else might send books to me?

I wrote the following letter to the USA, Italy, Germany, and elsewhere: "If anything is contradictory to ethics, it is a war. And we - as a nation, as a state, as people, as intellectuals, as teachers, as students, as parents, as our parents' children - we were - and in some parts of the country, still are - at war. People are murdered daily among us and around us. They are murdered in a cruel and most

frightening way, inconceivable to a civilized population on the eve of the 21st century. Why? Among other things, because ethics, not only medical, but every aspect of ethics, is neglected and destroyed."

"One of the ways to fight this all-destructing evil is by resuscitating ethics. That is precisely the aim of my Department of Social Sciences at the Medical Faculty. We have started teaching ethics to our students. However, due to the war, our financial capacity is almost null, and we cannot afford either books or magazines."

"That is why we are applying to you to help us. Even a single book, or a single magazine, will help us in our effort not only to stop this war in Croatia, but to prevent other wars."

The letter had unexpected results. It was published in some American and Italian journals, newsletters, and newspapers. I received numerous replies from American and other ethicists with words of support, books, and journals. I learned that medical ethics was highly developed in Western countries, particularly in the USA and Canada where it is called bioethics. I also came to know about the Hastings Center in New York and the Kennedy Institute in Washington, D.C., and about leading Americans in the field, such as Edmund Pellegrino, Daniel Callahan, Robert Veatch, Tom Beauchamp, James Childress, and others.

I wanted to travel to learn from these scholars and institutes, but it was an illusion when our professors' wages had dropped to several hundred dollars and while faculties could barely afford to buy paper and cover basic costs. However, my dream came true. The German Medical Association Ethics Committee offered me a round-trip plane ticket to New York, and the International Affairs Committee of the New York City Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers offered me a place to stay. This help was crucial for my research and was decisive for the results I, together with my assistants and students, have achieved. I will summarize some of them.

First, the University of Rijeka, Faculty of Medicine, was the first in Croatia and in the whole region of the former Yugoslavia to introduce medical ethics as a course on equal standing with other courses in the curriculum. It referred not only to medical and students, but also to the other students of the Faculty, to nurses, social workers, physiotherapists, medical radiologic engineers, and medical laboratory engineers. If we bear in mind that this has not been realized yet at some older universities in Europe, this fact is even more remarkable.

Second, my students have at their disposal numerous, recent, and valuable literature on medical ethics and bioethics in English, German, and Italian, including dictionaries, encyclopedias, journals, and newsletters, together with a video library consisting of professional films and appropriate documentary and feature films used for the development of the ethics imagination of the students.

Third, in 1996, the leading Croatian journal for social issues, *Drustvena Istrazivanja*, published a double issue dedicated to new medical ethics, which included papers from prominent American and other bioethicists. This double issue finally marked the entry of medical ethics into the wider scientific public of my country, with the result that five scientific meetings on medical ethics have been held in Croatia in the last two years. In 1999, we were successful in establishing a national organization devoted to medical ethics.

Fourth, my students and I started to present our activities in our newsletter, Ethics and Medicine. We have also started to make our own library, with twenty works on particular ethical issues authored not only by me, but by my assistants as well.

Fifth, two of my students and collaborators successfully conducted two studies, one on "Ethics and Abortion," the other on 'Ethics and AIDS," funded by the Soros Foundation. One of these students has graduated and is working as my assistant while she works on her graduate thesis on informed consent. My original assistant is now a lecturer in medical ethics and has completed her doctoral thesis on "Bioethics education: Content, Methods and Models."

Methods of Instruction

We have been developing the medical ethics phase of pre-clinical teaching with great hopes of extending it to become a standard component of clinical education in the near future.

Out of the total teaching hours for a course on medical ethics, approximately 35% are devoted to lectures, with the rest of the time spent in seminars and workshops. We use lectures to provide the information needed for the acquisition of theoretical knowledge, offering conceptual and historical attitudes in medical ethics. We focus on the development of the awareness of the complexity of moral decisions in modern medicine. In addition, we find that lectures work well to provide concrete illustrations to stimulate moral imagination and empathy (The Hasting Center, 2000 pp. 48-49) as an economic use of time, space, and didactic facilities, and as preparation for discussion in smaller groups. We use team and guest lecturers, and lectures are supplemented by documentary or other films covering themes such as AIDS, abortion, transplantation, human organ and tissue procurement, human experimentation, etc.

The goal of the seminars is the "recognition and definition of ethical problems and introducing the skill of analysis to students." In seminars, students acquire an understanding of attitudes and form opinions about the nature of bioethics, bioethics theories, regulations and principles, ethical problems of communication in medicine, duties of doctors and other health-care providers, attitudes to life (one's own personal life as well as the life of others), and cultural and historical distinctions in issues related to traditional and new medical ethics.

In the seminars, we introduce students to the bioethics literature. By interpreting and reproducing ethical topics from the literature, the students gain an understanding of ethics problems and relevant issues and discuss ways of resolving ethical dilemmas. They often perceive the contradictions between what they think about an ethical problem and how it has been dealt with by bioethics scholars. By using the words of the scholars and explaining their own thoughts, students and teachers learn to recognize, define, and analyze ethical problems. In this activity, they also express their own sensibility, and thus they become co-creators of bioethics.

Sitting in a circle and conversing face to face, we proceed with our work in ethics workshops. Creativity, which has always had a special significance in ethics education and has already been initiated in the seminars, develops to its fullest extent in ethical workshops.

To create better group coherence and motivation, we like to begin the workshops with a game. A favorite game is to divide the students into small groups, giving each group a card with the name of a person familiar to all. The students then make up a biography of their person, which they present to the class without naming him or her, and the rest of the class tries to guess who it is. Names commonly used are Hippocrates, Asclepius, and a medical student, for example. In our experience, such an introduction helps to create a relaxed atmosphere in which students talk freely about their ideas.

We establish the rules of the workshop at the beginning. Although the students create the rules along with us, two of them are always that each idea deserves to be discussed, not evaluated negatively, ignored, or laughed at, and that everyone should participate in the discussions. The students then select the topics to be discussed.

For four successive years, students have shown an interest in the following topics and ethical problems: the Hippocratic Oath and Hippocratic tradition in ethics; ethical pluralism and abortion, euthanasia, quality of life and health; ethical issues in transplantation; ethics of human and animal experimentation; ethics in communication with patients; ethical issues of relationship to HIV-infected patients; ethics and genetics; the ethics of addictions, religion and bioethics; the historical development of bioethics in the world and in Croatia; the ethics of death and dying; feminist ethics; bioethics theories, principles, and rules; the ethics of relationship to the handicapped and disabled; ethics regarding the environment; population bioethics; and the ethics of care (The Hasting Center, 2000 p.50).

Students then search for various solutions for the topic and problem, find and research relevant literature, and examine cases to support the current significance of the topic. Taking into consideration the recommendation by American and Canadian teachers of medical ethics not to approach all topics in the same way, we choose the application of three variants of group work:

programmed teaching, conflicting groups, and case analysis.

We usually approach programmed teaching through group study of topics dealt with during lectures. We operationalize the method of conflicting groups by having two groups debate a topic while a third assumes the role of a jury. After the debate, the jury group presents a systematized list of reasons for and against and their observations on the manner of communication within and between the groups. Finally, the group as a whole discusses ethical pluralism regarding the debated issue. During case analysis, we give the students a case, which they have to solve as though they were the doctor and explain which essential components would be involved in their ethical decision.

My colleagues and I mutually exchange our thoughts with the students and analyze critically each of the presented ideas, the possibility of its realization, and ethical problems that would appear with their solutions. In workshop presentations, students' personality is expressed, their sensibility is manifested, their values are illustrated, the beauty and wisdom of human thoughts are transmitted, the ease or difficulty in communication is emphasized, ethical attitudes are opposed, emotions and duties are clarified, and, in the final part of the workshop, students express a wish to act in practice. Thus, in our mutual dialogue, all of us together "developed the feeling of moral duty and personal responsibility and learn to tolerate criticism, disagreement in opinions, and contradictory attitudes" (The Hastings Center 2000 p.53).

We continue to search for appropriate content and methods of teaching. What has been established so far with certainty is the students' assessment of the course as useful and interesting. While student satisfaction is an essential prerequisite for the acceptance of bioethical instruction in Croatia, our ongoing challenge is to find new approaches and methods of bioethics education.

Conclusion

While I avoid political speech and declaration, I am convinced that I have contributed to the struggle against war. I believe that introducing my students to ethical issues in their practice and spreading these ideas not only among professionals, but also among the lay public, and by organizing numerous seminars and workshops where actual ethical issues in medicine and society are debated, I have helped to create a greater ethical understanding among my students and the public. I hope that such reflections will help form the modern ethics conscience and serve as a brake to the drastic cases I mentioned and to war in general.

Maybe, in my case, my work has been more eloquent than anti-war speeches. Nevertheless, I have no illusions that ethics education alone can make new generations of Croatian medical professionals more moral. It is an illusion to set the aim of ethics education as moral training of medical students, as it is an illusion that education in anatomy, physiology, or surgery will make them healthier or more immune to disease. I believe that ethics education should primarily help future medical professionals to orient themselves in the forest of contemporary ethical issues and dilemmas, as well as to make them competent to solve complex moral problems in health care and medicine. Of course, we should not neglect the possible impact of ethics on the moral behavior of students, as it would be logical to expect that their medical knowledge acquired during the course of study would have an influence on their behavior towards health and the choice of lifestyle. That is why we should hope that once an ethical conscience prevails in the heads of medical professionals owing to adequate education, it can, to a certain degree, direct their behavior. Therefore, I hope that my efforts have served the purpose of making peace in the region of the former Yugoslavia and that they will help preserve peace in the future. ❑

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Peace: The Only Durable Solution to War

The cross-cultural experiences of this author provide a unique perspective of conditions abroad and of the refugee policies here at home.

by Richard J. Smith

Richard Smith, MFA, MSW Candidate, School of Social Work, University of Michigan

UNICEF

When the situation in Kosovo started getting serious, I instinctively braced myself because it reminded me of the situation in the Gulf War. I had the same premonitions. It was a very similar script. The ruthless dictator indicted for war crimes by Den Hague. A people struggling for independence from a central power. An American President, champion of human rights and the underdog. Genocide, ethnic cleansing, rape and pillage. Who had the moral courage to say no? Did we really have time for diplomacy in the midst of horror? The script could have been written for either a Republicat or a Demopublican. Thus, the bombing resumed, this time to stop Serb Christians from killing Albanian Kosovar Muslims instead of stopping Muslims from taking each other's lives and land. Trade stopped on the Danube River.

An American In Ulaanbaatar

At the time, I was doing some consulting for UNICEF Mongolia in Ulaanbaatar, the world's coldest winter capital city. It was a strange place to try to understand the war and also try to stop it. Because I prepared a monthly newsletter for donors and partners, I attended weekly press conferences put together by the Mongolian Ministry of External Relations. When asked how she felt about the war in Kosovo, Minister Tuya, Mongolia's first woman Secretary of External Relations, remarked, "We regret the human tragedy of war and hope those involved can reach a timely resolution." She skillfully took no sides against any state, but took a side against war. Indeed, sandwiched between China's population, Russia's land mass and Overseas Development Assistance coming from the US, Europe and Japan, what kind of position could Mongolia take? Although Mongolia is most famous for Chingiss Khan, the man who conquered most of Asia and part of Europe, since converting to Buddhism, they have learned to value peace and are noted for having a peaceful transition from a one party to a multiparty democracy.

I came home one evening and my Mongolian roommate, who had grown up in Russia, had some shocking news.

"Boris Yeltsin was sending troops to Serbia," he said.

"What for?" I asked.

"To help."

"Help who?"

"The Serbs."

He had heard this on the Russian news. I watched CNN and BBC, but there was no mention of this. I asked around the office and my colleagues said that they had heard something about

it in the paper, but they weren't sure. They said it sounded like a rumor, but in an unsettling way, it came true after the bombing stopped and Russian troops arrived before NATO to help keep the peace.

Meanwhile, the Chinese news agency denounced the American bombing of Serbia, but made no mention of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. After the "accidental" bombing of the Chinese Embassy, China was outraged and allowed demonstrations against the United States. Unfortunately for Mongolia, the close proximity of their Embassy in Beijing to the US Embassy resulted in the destruction of one of their vehicles. This fueled the 3000-year-old fire between both sides of the Great Wall, but it did not create many sympathies towards NATO and the United States.

UNICEF consistently takes a stand against involving children in war, opposes land mines and deplores the rampant increase in civilian casualties. Unfortunately, these problems are getting worse. In fact, since 1991 almost a quarter of a million children have had their lives disrupted by the war in the Balkans (Bellamy, 1999). UNICEF also provided emergency relief to refugees that included blankets, oral dehydration salts, basic medicine, safe drinking water and long overdue immunizations for children in the region. NATO refused to issue a mea culpa for civilian or child casualties, chalking them up as an unfortunate consequence of war.

My supervisor, an Italian citizen, was very critical of the bombing. She was concerned that the United States has not learned from the Gulf War, and Iran, and Libya that these bombings only perpetuate the cycle of resentments that lead to violence in the future. I agreed with her, but pointed out that it is easier to hate your neighbor than faceless pilots that bomb from afar. I suggested that the United States knew all too well that carrying out distance campaigns minimized negative public sentiment and led them to commit violence with impunity. It was as if a giant Milgramm's experiment was being carried out, but this time we knew that the bomber would bomb, we only had to confirm that the bombed would not have the strength to hate someone they could not see and touch. We were both pleased that support for the bombing by Italy and Germany were waning, due to pressure from Green and other peace activists.

My American colleague at UNICEF had long since disowned the United States and its foreign policy. He was a committed public health professional who wished he could help children stay healthy in a world free of politics and corruption. The bombing disturbed him.

Yet another colleague, from Sierra Leone had not been able to go home for several years because of his country's brutal civil war. International apathy caused his country's suffering to linger and allowed children to have their limbs amputated by rebels.

With so many voices against war, why does it continue? As a social worker, I know that we learn and teach patterns of violence in the family and community. As an activist, I know that many people and for profit corporations make money selling entertainment that reinforces our worst tendencies and selling guns, land mines and other weapons that rationally increase the injuries and death.

Fire Disco Club

After the bomb dust cleared and relief workers moved into Kosovo, I prepared to leave Mongolia to get an MSW at the University of Michigan School of Social Work. Our Area Representative had been a field instructor at Colombia's program and I didn't have the heart to tell him that I was turning down Columbia's admission for my alma mater, despite the fact that they were making me pay out of state tuition having lived too long in Mongolia. The thought of being in Ann Arbor again and paying out of state tuition for it drove me to Ulaanbaatar's newest nightspot, the Fire Disco Club. I was with one of my Danish friends and he was trying to demonstrate to me that Danes drank as much as the Finns, Mongolians and perhaps even the Russians. A large, inebriated man tapped my companion on the shoulder, "Excuse me, are you American?"

"No I'm Danish."

"Oh, sorry."

At this point I was trying to get away, but it was too late. "Are you American?"

"Uh...yeah, why?"

"America. Like this!" he exclaimed, holding up his pinky.

This meant bad in Mongolian. I just nodded. "America... CIA... Kosovo... Serbia... NATO... Bomb... Bad...you understand?" he held my arm and gripped it tightly.

I kept nodding, but I was angry. I was angry that it wasn't my ambassador or Clinton or Blair stuck at a bar in Ulaanbaatar next to some drunk guy who had his studying in Moscow memories revived by NATO action against the Warsaw pact. I was angry because I didn't even agree with or agree to the bombing. I was angry for being held accountable for the actions of my government that I regularly criticize. I was also angry that this guy expressed no concern for Kosovars, probably because they were Muslim. Finally, I was angry with myself for having gotten out of touch with activism while living overseas.

He continued, "Oh sorry...I'm sorry...I'm just a little bit drunk, okay? You know, my son is going to America to study this fall. He's going to UCLA." My new friend pulled out his wallet and stroked my shoulder. He produced his ID. "See, I'm a pilot for Mongolian Airlines. And I'm a driver. If you ever want to go to the Gobi desert, let me know, I'll take you there."

I couldn't believe that this guy could go off on America and then turn around and let me know how proud he is that his son is going there. There was no thought about boycotting the enemy, only pride in how he could access the education of the powerful. I was also at a loss for myself, because I already was part of the enemy. It's harder to be the enemy of violence in a nation that has perfected it.

Back Home in Michigan

I returned home to Michigan and discovered that my hometown had received 120 Kosovar refugees. The agency responsible for them, Refugee Services, became my MSW field placement. Refugee Services has resettled over 10,000 refugees in the area under the auspices of Catholic Social Services in its 20-year history. The agency has about 40 staff providing resettlement, employment, health care transportation, interpretation, immigration services and ESL. Most of the staff are Bicultural/Bilingual. Some know three or four languages. Many of the staff are refugees themselves.

Refugee resettlement in the United States is more difficult since the end of welfare as we know it. In the old days, refugees had almost a year to learn English before they had to find a job. Now, they have to find work within the first few months if they want to keep their benefits. College cannot be substituted for work but some limited job-training can. This means that they have to find work that doesn't require English, which often means wages ranging from minimum wage ($5.15) to $6.50/hr. Fortunately, many of these jobs do provide medical coverage, but this coverage doesn't always extend to adult family members. Families must work and learn English at the same time, which is difficult while raising a family. Some family members need to work two jobs to pay the bills. This is especially difficult for large families with only one adult who can work. These economic factors make it difficult to culturally adjust, especially with a language barrier.

In order to assist this adjustment process, I decided to work with the community orientation program. As a way to encourage community participation in refugee resettlement, the United States Catholic Conference granted our agency money to develop this program. I work with the Community Orientation Case Manager who is in charge of putting together this program which includes a six-hour orientation in home or at the agency. A Community Orientation Task Force of agency representatives and an Ethnic Advisory Board comprised of clients and other members of clients' ethnic groups helped develop this program. Although some refugees get ESL and cultural orientation overseas, there are many differences among communities in the United States that cannot possibly be addressed. Clients need information specific to the area. In our six-hour program, we explain to them the basics of tenant-landlord relations, the health care system, some information about TANF and Medicaid, and paying bills. We even give them a bus pass and show them how to take the bus. Other community orientation projects include a women's circle, support to single moms and informational workshops open to clients.

Our clients come from all over the world. They are mostly from Cuba, Somalia, the Sudan and former Yugoslavia. Because of intensive media coverage about the arrival of the Kosovars, Refugee Services received several hundreds of calls from volunteers and donors who wanted to help. The response from the community was so great that the newly hired volunteer coordinator became overwhelmed and resigned after being on the job for two months.

When I started in September, many of the Kosovars had already left as per invitation by the State Department to cancel their travel loan and fly them back on government tab. And yet, some were still arriving, often to be reunited with families who decided to stay in the USA as part of a durable solution. For many refugees, United Nations High Commission on Refugees considers asylum in a country of choice as a durable solution. In former Yugoslavia, these refugees include "persons of mixed ethnicity, or in mixed marriages; severely traumatized persons, such as former detainees and victims or witnesses of extreme violence; minority members of the armed forces; potentially stateless persons; Roma (gypsies)" and potential witnesses in an International Tribunal to name a few (U.S. Committee for Refugees, 1999, p. 180). In my agency, many such families meet these criteria, especially the criteria for mixed ethnicity or mixed marriages. In short, in a country that is rapidly becoming heterogeneous, with one village Serb and the next Muslim, for example, there is often little room for mixed marriages. That's why they come to America, a country that grudgingly prizes itself for mixtures.

Although I helped oriented refugees from all over, I particularly remember the two Kosovar groups, especially in contrast to the Somali and Sudanese. The Sudanese were very assertive and had no problem asking for what they wanted. They all wanted winter coats because they came to Michigan wearing dress appropriate for Northeast Africa. They got them. They were quick to point out discrepancies between services they expected overseas and what they actually got in the United States. The Kosovar groups, on the other hand, were untalkative. The translator and I went through the presentation rather quickly and had very few questions to answer. One family in particular reported having a sick daughter with parasites in her GI tract. During orientation, the mother was completely withdrawn and had no expression on her face. The father asked us questions about materials that had just been covered. His adult son took on the role of caring for the both of them. He took careful notes in Albanian for the family.

I didn't hear about them until a few weeks later. While I was taking a shift answering the phones for the receptionist who was on vacation, a man called and said that he was with an Albanian family who had a sick child with a temperature and stomach pains. I transferred the call to the health unit. An hour later, the same voice called. I transferred the call to the health unit, a bit irate and asked someone to deal with the call. Finally, as I was walking out the door at the end of the day, the family called again complaining about their daughter. The health unit coordinator was at my desk signing out and I asked him if he would take the call. When he said no, I told him that I didn't really know what to say to the family, since they had called three times. I was frustrated, because I wanted the client to be served by what I perceived to be an unresponsive agency. I hated being on the phones—not because it was below me, but because it was difficult. I had habit of losing calls when three or four people called at once, each speaking a different language. I was also frustrated with the family for calling so much. As I listened to our coordinator, I learned that Refugee Services had already taken the child to the doctor and the doctor had said that there was nothing wrong with the child and that a fever can be brought down with Tylenol. He spent some time with the client and tried to reassure them. It became clear to me that the family was only acting out of a sense of concern for their daughter in an unfamiliar country. Also, our agency was doing the best it could in a difficult situation where clients really needed emotional support networks in addition to transportation to heath care facilities.

This anecdote illustrates a normal response to a horrible situation. I can't imagine what it's like to survive genocide, war and a bombing campaign. But I do know what it's like to cross cultures and live overseas. Given that I needed an incredible amount of support in order to adapt to living in a new culture, I certain that it would take even more to survive trauma and I'm afraid that clients with symptoms of PTSD are not getting the services they need.

One client from the Balkans diagnosed with PTSD has been placed on Paxil, a medication used for social anxiety, panic attacks, depression and OCD. He has been unable to receive psychotherapy to complement the medication because of the language barrier. In December, he had a suicide call. Since then, he's been calling the office regularly while his roommate is at work just so he could have someone to talk to. The health unit put him on Direct Observation Therapy, the practice of watching the client take daily medication. This situation led the health unit coordinator and I to strategize a solution to this problem.

Previously, I had been given the task of identifying a professional staff trainer to conduct Mental Health training for resettlement staff and counterpart agencies in the health sector. This training and its funding got pushed until August so that it could be part of a statewide refugee resettlement meeting. Meanwhile, we had staff that were suffering different levels of countertransference, burn out and vicarious victimization, but we wore it very well. I did some research on the web and in published literature about PTSD and refugee mental health. As it turned out, Chicago had a Bosnian Mental Health Clinic that had experience with these issues. We brainstormed with some positive actions:

- Because clients have a federally protected right to health care services through a translator, try to identify mental health care professionals willing to work in this situation no matter how difficult.
- Organize a PTSD self-help/support group or "coffee break" to share stories. Should the facilitator be a trained clinical worker?
- Refer hard cases to facility in Chicago or Detroit.
- Continue regular home visits by staff of high-risk clients to do Direct Observation Therapy.
- Investigate complementary therapies: art therapy or massage/body work.
- Involve clients in community activities.

Our Medical Unit coordinator contacted Community Mental Health and set up a meeting with our staff to discuss the first issue, identifying a health care provider. We discovered that in addition to the language barrier, there was a division of service barrier. CMH takes the uninsured, HMOs take HMO Medicaid and anyone can bill straight Medicaid on a fee for service basis. Since are clients have a mix of medical insurance coverages that range from Medicaid, HMO and uninsured, sometimes in the same family, it would be problematic to work with groups or families. Briefly, single adult refugees get Medicaid for eight months or less if they get a job with benefits. Families lose their Medicaid if they start working before three months. Some families have insured children, but uninsured parents. CMH staff agreed that patients had a right to care and encouraged us to work with the administration to identify treatment on a case by case basis. They agreed to look into referral options in state, since Medicaid couldn't be used out of state. They agreed that a support group would be good for adjustment issues, and felt that a licensed clinician would not be necessary as long as you had a plan for emergencies. This meeting was a good initial step in having additional systems of support for clients who need it.

Meanwhile, I worked with another intern from a rival school of social work about organizing a staff training to raise awareness in the staff. She decided to put together a workshop on grief and I planned on PTSD and avoiding burn out. We talked about the long-term needs to train bicultural workers to facilitate self-help groups that took the form of a social event in order to avoid stigmatization. It should be no surprise that our clients, although they want to be able to go to the doctor's office when they need to, they don't want to be treated for a "mental illness."

The Ethnic Advisory Board is another avenue for potential organizing around the well being of our refugee clients. The first meeting, last August, consisted only of staff members who gave

input into the design of orientation. The second meeting consisted of Bosnian, Sudanese, Somali and Cuban clients and community members. Although hey spent most of the meeting evaluating the orientation program specifically and resettlement in general, they expressed continued interest in organizing volunteers if not going to next step to form ethnic associations. Previously, two ethnic groups of refugees, Vietnamese and Hmong, took their own initiative to organize their own multi service community centers in order to meet their own needs. Our new group was pleased with this history, but was not ready to take that step having only been in the country less than two years. The challenge I currently have is to get the Ethnic Advisory

Board to move from providing input into existing services to organize their own actions on their own behalf. Muslim women in the community are especially concerned about the needs of Muslim refugee women, especially in regards to culturally sensitive health care and obtaining halal (traditional) food. Clients organizing can make sure not only that services are provided, and provided in a culturally competent way, but can raise the self-esteem and well being of the participants and help facilitate the cultural adjustment process.

Working with refugees is sensitive because both the right and the left can have a knee jerk reaction to refugee issues, especially in regards to employment. The right may complain about refugees taking American jobs. The left may complain about the exploitation of refugees, who are perhaps less exploited than US born. In reality, the USA accepts only 70,000 refugees a year out of the 12 million in the world identified by the United Nations. This is a small number fraction of our work force. Far from being exploited, our clients in general are well respected by our employers and often find better jobs in their own professions. Furthermore, our landlords acknowledge that they make better tenants, more likely to pay their bills on time and avoid eviction than their native born counterparts. They are neither large enough to take our jobs nor exploited enough to get evicted and end up homeless. They become homeowners and business and non-profit entrepreneurs in the largely forgotten urban center in a place far away from the homeland where they probably can never return.

The real issue is the creation of refugees through war and the creation of war for geopolitical gain. It is also unfortunate that who the United States chooses to resettle often has more to do with politics than with protecting universal human rights or satisfying basic human needs.

A Vision Of Peace

When I was growing up, I felt that the world was safe because of my hometown hero Patricia Coffman, substitute teacher during the school year and peace activist during the summer. Although she had a master's degree in education, she could never get a tenured position. This may have been her police record of trespassing as a result of demonstrating on a local air force base. It is her inspiration that led to my involvement in organizations now called Peace Action and the Social Welfare Action Alliance.

Although we accept refugees as a durable solution, as a peace and justice activist, I assert that the final solution must be a global end to war and a move towards peaceful conflict resolution. This is a tall order, but it is no taller than the charter of the United Nations itself. In regards to the Balkans, one village stands out as a model for reconciliation. In Gornji Vakuf of Central Bosnia, Bosnian Croat, Muslim and a Serbs organized a children's center in the neutral zone of their village. They wanted a place where children could play where they would be safe from land mines. Julia Demichelis, winner of the National Peace Corps Association Shriver Award for Humanitarian Service, facilitated this process. In her acceptance speech, she criticizes the United Nations and

United States for keeping people who have their own strategies for peace separated. About the village of Gornji Vakuf, Demichelis says, "politicians still force [residents] to go to separate schools in different official languages, though kids and their parents join each other daily for educational, recreational and social events on the cease fire line in their private center." In this space, residents of Gornji Vakuf created a three-year integration strategy independent of elected leaders who had a vested interest in separation and continued violence because they are collecting rent from UN peacekeeping forces. Demichelis argues that these community-based interventions are more successful than large-scale projects currently supported by the United States (Julia Demichelis, 1999). Hers is a voice not represented by the violent images of CNN which reinforce the glory of war.

I don't find this too far fetched, because my agency has Bosnian, Croat, Serb, Kosovar staff members who work together for a common purpose. This past week, we threw a baby shower for one of our Kosovar staff members, who is eight months pregnant. Everyone chipped in for gifts and the potluck: Albanian, American, Serb, Croat, Bosnian, Sudanese, Somali, Kurd, Vietnamese, Hmong and Cuban. Our clients may have misgivings about accepting services from the enemy, but the misgivings dissolve when a new enemy at the INS is discovered. Although there is a lot of work to be done to build a multi-ethnic Balkan community in my home town, I am confident that it is possible under the right circumstances, however fragile. In the end, the real solutions are people to people which governments and agencies can choose to support or to ignore. ❑

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