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STRENGTHENING PEACE. QUEST FOR THE TRANSFORMATIVE ENERGY AND PROSPECTS FOR CHANGE

Jačanje mira. Potraga za transformativnom energijom i izgledi za promenu

ABSTRACT *This paper considers possibilities of postconflict societies to move forward and to assure stable and long-standing peace in spite of different psychological and structural obstacles. Author, from the positive psychology standpoint, proposes that human energy and envisioning of a better future for all could be the main engine in overcoming existing problems. Special attention has been addressed to the problem of how to find appropriate visionary leaders, what their desirable characteristics are and how to enhance their existing features as well as initiate the development of others. An educational course aiming at combining the acquisition of both knowledge of different aspects of postconflict problems and virtues like devotion and compassion, has been proposed. Prospects for expected outcomes and challenges on the way have been discussed in light of the approaches developed within positive psychology, as well as of the ever broader influence of globalization. The proposed solution has been confirmed by the results of a recent empirical research from the postconflict region of the Balkans. The paper ends with the optimistic conclusion that positive transformation is possible.*

KEY WORDS *future leaders, hope, peace strengthening, education, justice*

APSTRAKT *Ovaj rad razmatra mogućnosti da postkonfliktna društva napreduju i osiguraju stabilan i trajan mir uprkos različitim psihološkim i strukturalnim preprekama. Stojeći na stanovištu pozitivne psihologije, autor sugeriše da bi ljudska energija i zamišljanje bolje budućnosti za sve mogli biti glavni motor za prevazilaženje postojećih problema. Posebna pažnja poklonjena je problemu kako naći odgovarajuće lidere-vizionare, koje bi bile njihove poželjne osobine, te kako razviti njihove postojeće odlike i pokrenuti razvoj novih. Predložen je kurs čiji bi cilj bio sticanje kako znanja o različitim aspektima postkonfliktnih problema, tako i vrlina kao što su posvećenost i saosećanje. Izgledi za očekivane rezultate i teškoće na tom putu razmatraju se u svetlu pristupa razvijenih u okviru pozitivne psihologije, kao i rastućeg uticaja globalizacije. Predloženo rešenje našlo je potvrdu u rezultatima jednog nedavnog empirijskog istraživanja obavljenog u postkonfliktnom regionu Balkana. Članak se završava optimističnim zaključkom da je pozitivna transformacija moguća.*

KLJUČNE REČI *budući lideri, nada, jačanje mira, obrazovanje, pravda*

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It has been almost two decades since the end of the unfortunate war conflict with great number of casualties in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Approximately so much time has passed since the signing of the peace agreement, after the long conflict in Guatemala and stopping endless killings in Rwanda. However, many grave consequences of these conflicts continue to influence negatively lives of the citizens with the same intensity. Great human death suffering are irreversible and the only thing that can be done is to pay respect to the hundreds of thousands victims of wars. Anyhow, there are the other consequences of war which continue to have the negative impact and make lives more difficult for millions from these countries and other post-conflict regions. Subjective, psychological obstacles, like distrust, disappointment, anger, helplessness and hopelessness, greatly disable the progress in all the other spheres: economical, political, legal, cultural and the sphere of security. This is the manner in which wars continue their destructive path, many years after the peace agreement signing.

As it is stated in the first sentence of the preambula of the UNESCO constitution "That since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed", for the real and longstanding peace, the mere signature on the peace agreement is not enough. The peace itself demands the peace culture. The General Assembly of UN defined the culture of peace as "Values, attitudes and behaviors that reject violence and endeavor to prevent conflicts by addressing their root causes with a view to solving problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups and nations" (UN, 1999).

In order to achieve this marvelous goal, it is necessary to go through the reconciliation process, in its broadest sense. This is such a process in which, contrary to war, one side should not defeat the other in order to achieve its own goals. Instead of this, such conditions should be created so that they will, at first, ensure permanent and stable peace, i.e. that great suffering will not repeat, and secondly that people on all sides can heal traumas and wounds caused by war and continue to live the most meaningful and fulfilling lives possible, and create the better world for themselves, their surroundings and their own offspring.

There are several terms connected with striving to achieve long lasting peace. They could be considered in chronological order. Peacemaking implies interventions, diplomatic or sometimes armed, during the main stage of conflict. Peacekeeping usually takes place when a ceasefire has been negotiated, but conflict remains, to reduce tensions between parties and to prepare them for peace agreement. The most frequently used term, and probably the most relevant in this area is peacebuilding. Peacebuilding consists of a wide range of activities associated with capacity building, reconciliation, and societal transformation, according the United Nations document An Agenda for Peace (Boutros-Ghali, 1995). Peacebuilding is a long-term process that occurs after the signing of a peace agreement. Thus, that phase takes place after peacemaking and peacekeeping. It is

connected to peacekeeping, and often involves demobilization and reintegration programs, as well as immediate reconstruction needs. Indubitably, peacebuilding is also considered more broadly on structural, relational and personal dimensions. Although "scholars have devoted relatively little attention to analysing the concept of peace-building itself, including its underlying assumptions" (Paris, 1997, p. 55), that leads to many different intellections and definitions of the concept, it must be acknowledged that this concept is the most relevant and most comprehensive in the field.

However, it is impossible to deny that today peace exists in Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Rwanda or Guatemala. Thus, in the region that consisted Yugoslavia, there is no new armament, national parliaments provided amnesty long ago, for all soldiers who did not make war crimes, almost no one young man wants to serve in military garrisons, as never before, there are national courts for war crimes, there is common cultural space, common trade agreement – CEFTA, possibilities for free travel and cooperation for everybody who wants to do it, even there is a common basketball league, almost whole population can watch TV programs from the other neighboring states – which is important factor in rehumanization and personalization of people from the other side, and one of good ways to reduce prejudices and balance social categories. Unfortunately, all those improvements are not enough to declare that reconciliation process is finished. However, the situation is quite different from the situation just after war in mid 1990s, or today's situation in Afghanistan or DR Congo. The term peacebuilding, certainly, can cover all phases from negotiations on ceasefire to the establishment of stable society and state able to promote nonviolent mechanisms that eliminate violence, foster structures that meet basic human needs, and maximize public participation (Lederach, 1997). Yet, the terms peacemaking and peacekeeping have proved beneficial in specifying conflict or postconflict phase, and avoiding confusion of different meanings of peacebuilding for different authors (Haugerudbraaten, 1997). For the same reason, we put the term peace strengthening in the title of this article, consider it as a fourth phase in mentioned line of dealing with conflict and peace, the phase that appears after many years of relative but still weak security.

However, let's continue from one step back. Many authors, experts in legal field (e.g. Hayner, 1994; Tetiel, 2003; Roht-Arriaza & J Mariezcurrena, 2006), political science (Kohen, 2009; Philpott, 2012), social psychology (Bar-Tal, 2001, 2002; Coleman & Deutsch, 2000), conflict resolution (Galtung, 2001; Kriesberg, 1998), criminology (Tomuschat, 2001; Braithwaite et al., 2010), diplomacy (Montville, 2001), etc, especially in the previous two decades, analyzed the numerous problems of overcoming the troublesome legacy of the past. Some of them (e.g. Hayner, 1994) suggested that the commissions should be formed, which will acknowledge the truth about misdeeds from the past as the basis for overcoming the negative legacy. Numerous commissions were formed, mostly in Latin American (Chile, Argentina, Guatemala...) and African (Uganda, Chad, Burundi...) countries

(Hayner, 2001), and the most famous and the most effective commission of this kind, is, with no doubt, South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission which by giving certain amnesties for telling complete truth, enabled the transition from the period of racist segregation and apartheid to the period of relatively stable democracy. Some authors (e.g. Kriesberg, 1998), highlight the need for apologizing from perpetrators and forgiving from the victims' side.

Even though the chances for achieving the retributive justice are very low, especially after the conflicts in which there are no clear winners and the defeated, from the specter of demanded means of fighting against the legacy of the past, summons to court for classical trials appear quite often, at least principle organisers of massive crimes are often summoned. The instruments of this kind of justice start from the International Criminal Court, and ad-hoc International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and former Yugoslavia, the official national courts, to the traditional people's tribunal like gacaca in Rwanda. In these cases it is also expected that the victims will be given certain compensations for their suffering and losses.

Very often various ways of overcoming the past are combined, in order to gain the most appropriate combination which in certain country or region can bring the greatest justice together with keeping the fragile post-conflict stability.

Obstacles and Resistances in Overcoming the Past

However, the very fact, that it has been very extensively written and discussed about the ways of overcoming these dark phases of the recent history, proves that this task was not easy at all. There are various resistances to these attempts and those resistances are both psychological and the ones connected to the keeping of positions and privileges.

Sten Cohen (Cohen, 2003), in his book *States of Denial* has given very comprehensive answers to problems of avoidance and evasion of uncomfortable past. The author argues that the capacity to deny one's own awareness of past atrocities is the normal state of affairs for people. However, as Cohen writes, denial involves a fundamental paradox – that in order to deny something it is necessary at some level to recognise its existence and its moral implications. It is, he says, a state of simultaneous "knowing and not-knowing". What is even worse is the fact that such processes are not only characteristics of perpetrators only, but also of that silent minority, bystanders, who usually, even during the worst atrocities, remain passive and do not feel any responsibility afterwards. Similarly, according to Mitscherlich (1975.), an entire people in Germany have been made "unable to mourn" after the Second World War.

But there are obstacles which are far more direct than different psychological mechanisms of defense, especially of denial.

Characteristics of almost all contemporary conflict resolutions are that former oppressors have not been totally defeated, but their victims arrange a type of compromise with them. Striving for full truth and full justice is an amazing human goal and each person who is deeply devoted to such goals deserves admiration! Unfortunately, all people do not share such devotion, especially those who are not ready to lose their privileges and accept their responsibility. The principles of justice and truth are not supreme principles for both sides, but only for one, usually weaker, side. The main goal of the other side is to save, as much as possible, the power and privileges and to pay the smallest price for what was done. Just as Bertrand Russell (1938.) warned "The fundamental concept in social science is power, in the same sense in which energy is the fundamental concept in physics" In such circumstances, as president of Chile Aylwin stated in his inaugural speech, we should "strive for all truth and justice in so far as it was possible".

Therefore, primarily priority steps should be made. First and foremost, it is important to stop atrocities and brutalities, then to stop any further degradation of victims. As the next step, it is important to provide irreversibility of new, non-warlike conditions. The next step is a request for truth and justice. We should not deceive ourselves, that this is an ideal world. Former oppressors often retain social power in postconflict period and they want to defend their interests, at least to avoid any type of responsibility. They will make just as many cessions as they are forced to give. In such circumstances, it is necessary to try to promote victims' side, and to expose them at least as moral victors and condemn in public discourse, if it is not possible to condemn offenders, then at least their politics and policy and their value system.

After peace accord, which usually means ceasefire rather than real peace, some painful compromises are necessary. Some deep moral questions have arised, and such questions often transcend normal human mind. A society and its members should choose between two bad, if not terrifying options. Sometimes it faces the most extreme forms of human existence. Let's imagine Hitler offering peace after his troops had killed one fifth of all his victims (a couple of million human beings), but he had asked for total amnesty and possibility to stay in power in peaceful circumstances. It would be extremely difficult to accept and maybe even more horrible to refuse such an agreement. What are we to do in such a situation? One does not dare to propose an answer. But there is such a type of situation after many contemporary conflicts. When *Good* defeats and crushes *Evil* everything is very well. But, unfortunately, the situation is, often, not so easy and clear and therefore many problems arise.

It is not rarely that oppressors 'sacrifice' one man who could even be their leader, in order to preserve all the others as well as their value system. It is not rare that former oppressors, even perpetuators still have power of each kind, and good positions which allow them to hinder investigation, to evade responsibility for

misdeeds and even to keep their status and positions. From these positions they can rule over their victims again. If victims are from their own (national or other referent) groups they politicized and misused victims' organizations to justify their own goals and their own conflictive policy. Even more, these oppresors have usually considered that only by reduction of their 'almighty' power scope, they did enough for compromise and for that 'favour' they expect, at least, total amnesty. There is nothing surprised that the militaries (for instance in Latin America) have put elected governments on notice that democracy exists at the military's pleasure. Despite that report of the truth commission in, for instance El Salvador, named the most responsible persons for misdeeds during the civil war, the top officers named, including then defense minister, served out in the armed forces until retirement and retired with full honors and pensions.

Importance of Psychological Factors

While dealing with postconflict problems, it is important not to abandon psychological factors and to consider them not as sufficient but as crucial in explanation of given phenomena. Analysts propose many ways how to reach the desired goal of reconciliation: through truth, apology, cooperation, empathy, etc. Nevertheless, it is not so rare in international politics and international history that very strong positive structural, political, economical, secure and other factors did not help to resolve conflicts. Wilmer (1998.) noted that "Structural factors may contribute to precipitating a conflict or to constructing a framework for stable peace; structural factors alone neither cause nor resolve protracted and violent conflict." Let's mention only Oslo agreement from '93 which unfortunately did not bring peace to the Middle East. Similar problems can be faced in interpersonal relations as well. What is necessary is usually good will. As an old proverb says "Where there's a will there's a way!" Let's take as an example the thorough and comprehensive report of Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Guatemala (Tomuschat, 2001). The same stimulus which one group of people accept and applaud, others totally reject! That is why we proposed a mediating variable - readiness for reconciliation (Petrović, 2005).

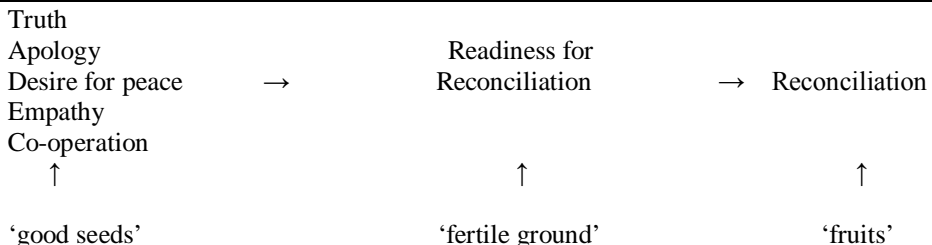| Truth Apology Desire for peace $\rightarrow$ Empathy Co-operation	Readiness for Reconciliation	$\rightarrow$ Reconciliation
$\uparrow$	$\uparrow$	$\uparrow$
'good seeds'	'fertile ground'	'fruits'

Figure 1: Readiness for reconciliation as a mediating variable

Or, these elements on the left side, on Figure 1, cannot cause reconciliation directly. They are refracted through that personality characteristic like light through a prism and very often, the same situation produces different consequences in different persons. Therefore, we can agree with those authors' points of view, who consider psychological changes as vital in establishing lasting peaceful relations (Bar-Tal and Bennink, 2002.)

Disparity between Ideal Proposes and Real Possibilities

There are numerous brilliant analyses in literature about what should be done in order to make the process of strengthening peace and reconciliation progress as fast as possible: the truth should be announced, perpetrators should confess their misdeeds, express their true regret, and ask for the victims' forgiveness. It is desirable, as much as possible, to provide reparations, by which the victims would get certain, if not complete compensation, at least for these losses which can be restored (property and the like). Those and other actions should provide the highest possible fruition of justice. Justice, in postconflict societies, according to Lederach involves "the pursuit of restoration, of rectifying wrongs, of creating right relationships based on equity and fairness. Pursuing justice involves advocacy for those harmed, for open acknowledgement of the wrongs committed, and for making things right. Mercy, on the other hand, involves compassion, forgiveness, and a new start. Mercy is oriented toward supporting persons who have committed injustices, encouraging them to change and move on." (Lederach, 1997). The challenge, according to Lederach is "to pursue justice in ways that respect people, and [at the same time] to achieve restoration of relationships based on recognizing and amending injustices" (Lederach, 1995). New generations should be raised in the spirit of reconciliation or at least in the mutual peaceful coexistence, especially minding these noble goals in their education and their subjects' curricula. What should be primarily taken care of is to achieve the goals of this education. This must not be obstructed by moving the focus of attention from the essential objectives to some superficial and formal ones. Conflictive viewpoints and beliefs should be leaved behind through many channels of communication: from the actions and speeches of politicians and positive news, to the various forms of popular culture and art: through film messages, popular songs lyrics, theatre dramatisations, etc, in order to change them as soon as possible and as thoroughly as possible.

Almost all would agree, that previously mentioned activities are very desirable for strengthening of peace. However, the greatest problem is that these activities are practically unreachable, because of various resistances which have already been analyzed.

The basic question that is posed now, is how to overcome existing obstacles, and despite them to do as much as possible in strengthening and stabilizing peaceful

relationships. We will focus in this paper, before all, on education. When there is no tendency for compromise in the broader social surroundings, and when positive messages and the acts of good will from leaders do not exist, but conflict rhetoric prevails with the accusations of the other side, education cannot be effective. Besides that, peace objectives often contain a direct challenge to the present state of society, since it always promotes a kind of transformation and change (Bar-Tal, 2002).

Negative conflictive climate incites distrust and doubt, which is reflected in media, education and mutual interactions in every-day life. And such messages reinforce initial distrust and negative feelings towards the other side. According to Pavlovian laws (1927) of conditioning in traumatic occurrences like strong traumatic experiences during intractable conflict, the phenomenon of negative emotional conditioning appears, which is characterised by forming quickly, spreading and generalising easily, and ceasing with difficulties. This means that only one traumatic occurrence is enough to form negative emotional conditioning, where fear, hatred, anger and desire for revenge dominate. Even greater problem is spreading of these reactions not only to the direct perpetrators but also to all persons of their ethnic or other referent group. Additional problem is that thus conditioned reactions disappear hard. It is necessary to slowly, step by step, reach trust and reduce these negative reactions. Unfortunately, even when great energy is invested and important progress is achieved, the smallest 'incident' could bring everything to the beginning. All of this can form vicious circle which is very difficult to escape. This is why instability periods after intractable conflicts last very long, and it is not rare that these conflicts renew.

Is there, then, any possibility to make a step forward? One might wonder is there in post conflict societies some capital, some resource, which it is possible to rely upon in society transformation? The eighteenth century German philosopher Herder could lead us where to find this answer by saying: "Nothing great and good would happen on this earth without inspiration... Those regarded as visionaries have provided the greatest of all services to mankind. Despite being ridiculed, persecuted and despised they forced their way forward. If they did not achieve their goal, then they tried again and again."[2]

Characteristics of Actors

Therefore, visionaries with inspiration should be sought, who are ready to incite their surroundings and their society to move forward in spite of obstacles. It is best when it happens that these visionaries are at the same time national leaders. In these fortunate circumstances positive development is reachable, no matter how

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[2] Citation from *Dadalos* web site: http://www.dadalos.org/int/Vorbilder/Vorbilder/vorbilder.htm (Last access 28.10.2012.)

serious a conflict has been. The most prominent example is relatively recent, magnificent deed of Nelson Mandela. Apart from him, Egyptian president Anwar Al-Sadat and his historical departure for Jerusalem deserve admiration; just like postwar leaders of France and Germany who buried old animosities of their nations and built foundations of united Europe. Unfortunately there are no such extraordinary personalities everywhere, who want to use their positions to do magnificent deeds for the future of their societies. In such circumstances, the future leaders must be sought somewhere else. The more salient are their places in society the greater is chance for broader and more direct influence. Pop stars' and movie stars' messages would more easily find their ways to numerous fans than those of ordinary people. However, Dylans and Geldofs are not always dispensable.

Who, then, of the so-called ordinary people is most interested in changes in the long run? It seems that it is the young generation because of the following reason. Even in situation they have the same degree of experienced losses, the young have less destroyed sense of life, because they have greater opportunities to start new life with new sense, no matter how great are their previous losses. So their hope for the future is more expressive and it can be developed more early and faster. Older generations more often feel that 'their world has fallen apart' with everything they lived for, and what they invested in for decades. This does not mean that there should not be equal care for people of all ages with war traumas. It only means that it is easier to find stronger bearers of positive transformations in the young, and everyone could benefit from these changes.

Lederach (1997) points to the importance of peace building on the level of the middle range, even grass root leaders who can have influence on smaller number of people. These leaders must be aware that changing people and communities is a long process that evokes a strong resistance from the opportunistic majority. This is why the necessary condition is for the leaders to have endurance, to be persistent and consistent, they should always commit clearly and principally, and with such behavior, they should in time gain reputation and influence in their communities. They should be 'critical yeast' (Lederach, 2005) in their communities. It is necessary to resolve successfully what Heidi and Guy Burgess named the 'scale-up problem' which refers to the manner of moving from a small group of people who are transformed by a process to larger and larger groups of people, equally transformed, until the whole society can see the future in a new and hopefully brighter way (Dugan, 2003).

In each society, there are persons who have the will to take over this sort of responsibility. Even though these dedicated people exist and they have desire to do as much as they can, it seems that these people ought to get additional professional education (since they have different educational background, not necessary in social sciences) and certain sort of support, with which they will become empowered, more ready to face and try to solve problems, and which could help them to

increase their abilities for more efficient work. Without refusing anybody a priori, it seems that the most appropriate candidates should be young experts (who ending their university education) who will soon have influence on their future students, clients, patients, readers, constituents. First of all, it is necessary to find these who have inclinations to being leaders in strengthening peace, to contact and gather them. Then by going through a specific programme of education, which would rather pointing the way than giving final answers, their primary inclination should be further strengthened.

But, before moving to education goals, we should dwell upon the features necessary to future leaders and whose future development should be supported and encouraged. In order to be accepted by their surroundings and to have influence on it, they must be of great moral integrity because they will be faced with numerous attempts of degradation. They should not be conceited, but they should build and prove their good intentions and indestructible integrity. As Martin Luther King (1963) advised "Get the weapon of nonviolence, the breastplate of righteousness, the armor of truth, and just keep marching." Apart from honesty, the future leaders should possess the need to be eager to exchange views and discuss issues with others. Then, they should be sensitive and empathical, which will be reflected in need to understand their community and to be aware of easily offended or upset issues and relating to it. Empathy is above all related to capability to put themselves in the place of others. The leaders should certainly take responsibility for their actions and be ready to explain them.

A very important characteristic of the future leaders is possessing visionary skills which refer to the ability of a person to see the community both how it is and how it should be. Reycher and Stellamans (2005) especially emphasize as a feature of peace building leadership the importance of envisioning mutually attractive peaceful future for all who want to cooperate. Such leaders, according to these authors, should identify and get a full understanding of the challenges which they are confronted with and which could include the brutal facts. They should focus both on the weaknesses and problems and at the actual and potential strengths. The past should not be forgotten, but at the same time it is necessary to establish hope and the expectation of a better future. In that sense it is illustrative quote of Nelson Mandela (1995): "I would not mince words about the horrors of apartheid, but I said, over and over, that we should forget the past and concentrate on building a better future for all."

Even the people with extraordinary human characteristics and values are usually not prone to believing that they are the ones to bring some great contribution ('salt' and 'light') to the world. Many well-intentioned can be afraid of such a challenge. But, this future contribution would depend, above all, on the long-term work and dedication to the goals of the welfare for people who surround them. At the end of that path of commitment, compassion and courage, not all of them will

become Gandhi but the accumulated activities of many anonymous dedicated people will provide, despite all hardships, that good will dominate all human communities and societies.

This path could not prove to be wrong because it is similar to ideas from religious teachings that inspire people for centuries and bring them new strength all over again, and enthusiasm despite hardships. This is why this undertaking could be viewed as a task for religious dignitaries and they have done such work in some cases and gave prominent contributions like Desmond Tutu and Martin Luther King Jr. But one should not forget that in existing turbulent regions like the Balkans, Caucasus, Northern Ireland, paradoxically, religion shows a consistent negative connection with readiness for reconciliation there (Petrović, 2005). We see no other explanation than that people do not declare themselves religious because of the dogmas of their religion, but rather because of the underlined religious difference between the groups. One must be very careful and resist the temptation to criticize the very religion (which could hurt numerous true believers) but only its manipulative use which is usually contrary its basic principles. Religious borders are the only visible borders among those nations and groups and these are the ways they can maintain the borders of their national identity, as has been explained in the theories on social identity and social categorization by Tajfel (1978.) and Turner et al. (1987.).   It is totally contrary to what, let's take, the verse from the New Testament conveys "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3, 28).

Processes of Strengthening Peace

In each post conflict society, as in all the others, there are an endless number of mutual interactions among the society members. At least, a small percentage of these interactions must be positive by the statistics rule, and some others might be negative. Anyhow, it often happens that in a post conflict era, by inertia of the previous conflict period, only news for media concern negative relations, and such news, by the rule are the ones where members of 'their' group did something bad to members of 'our' group. Opposite information, and positive relations in general, are not so 'interesting'. With such selection of information, conflict system of beliefs and emotions is preserved and such state does not bring improving of relations among former adversaries. Readiness for reconciliation, including confidence in the other side, readiness for cooperation, for giving and receiving forgiveness, and seeing the opponent as a human being, is connected to selected information that we wish or do not wish to accept and in the manner in which one will interpret objective events (Petrović, 2005). This readiness of people is projected on objective outward occurrences which people interpret as they prefer. Newly interpreted events then influence the course of events and this readiness. As physical violence and its media dissemination caused starting negative spiral of hatred and crime at one moment of

social crisis and changes of social values. Analogically, but in opposite direction, the readiness for reconciliation or good will, should be a prerequisite for starting one positive feedback and provide energy for spreading positive ideas and actions. Leaders' and other public opinion creators' messages are certainly important for this reason. The future leaders' task is to incite promotion of that which is positive and by doing this, help positive examples to become desired models of behavior, which will contribute strengthening of peace. Positive occurrences are much more frequent, even in the hardest conflicts – there are always courageous people ready to help unfairly persecuted ones, endangering even their own lives. Desmond Tutu (2005) highlights that "for every act of evil there are a dozen acts of goodness in our world that go unnoticed… It is only because we believe that people *should* be good that we despair when they are not." If people would be more aware of the existing positive energy and if it was put in the foreground, a positive feedback could be created and it might have a healing impact on society. This would certainly positively influence the necessary change of a society in transition, from the situation of dominating conflict into normal democratic society. In the following paragraphs it will be pointed out where the future leaders' role in society change and change of its members could be, and then, how these leaders may modify media power.

In the middle of 20th century, psychologist Kurt Lewin (Lewin, 1947) identified three stages of change processes in individuals and societies: unfreezing, transition, refreezing, that are still the basis of many approaches today. Unfreezing is the first step towards change which usually refers to developing openness to new ideas and new solutions. In order to achieve it, we can use various methods which include: exposing or creating a crisis (known as burning platform), inspiring people to achieve remarkable things (challenge), expose them to undisputable data which is difficult to ignore (evidence), or simply teaching them to change (education). Many people especially the young in post-conflict regions are already clearly aware of the problems which they face in everyday situations. So we can presume that their beliefs are already unfrozen, they are rather anomic than devoted to conflictive system of values (Mihailović, 2004). Therefore, there should be no problems for this phase to be realized. The next step involves movement, i.e. some action that changes or moves the social system to a new level. This transition requires time. Leadership is often important in that process when whole communities change. It could be useful to apply coaching, counseling and other psychological support techniques. This is why it seems that the role of our, previously mentioned future leaders would be very important in this phase. They should inspire people in their communities to challenge, to achieve remarkable things by point them importance of change and how embracing change is a far more effective life strategy than staying where they are or resisting. It usually might be useful to break the work into distinct packages and discuss about each separately for this change to be accepted more easily and more naturally. The final phase - refreezing must be taken to ensure that new beliefs

and behaviours became relatively permanent among the members of the community. Final success of this phase also depends on strengthening of social institutions.

Similar model of managing changes was suggested by Beckhard and Harris (2003), which can be represented as follows: current state → transition state → desired future state. It is interesting that authors suggest beginning with the end, i.e. with envisioning desired future state. This enables beginning the process of unfreezing and establishing future goals. What is especially important for this work, and in accordance with what will be mentioned further in this text, it has been found that starting with what people desire in the future generates energy, enthusiasm, motivation, and commitment to the plan and its implementation (Lindaman and Lippitt, 1979). Even here, it seems that there is room for contribution of the future leaders. The next step after completing this future vision, it is necessary to go back and asses the current state (e.g. capabilities) of the group in question. The next task is to create a transition state, which should balance its own need for stability and for change.

The influence of media is obviously very important. However, the Lazarsfeld et al. (1944) research pointed out to some constrains of the media role long ago. Their research suggests that the flow of mass communication is less direct than previously supposed. People tend to be much more affected in their decision making process by face to face encounters with influential peers than by the mass media (Lazarsfeld, Menzel, 1963). It opens the interest for opinion leaders and their role. Their role is especially important when media sources are not trustworthy. In these situations the opinion leaders act as mediators between the public and the media, personalising and making authoritative the information the media provides. Thus "...the person-to-person influence reaches the ones who are more susceptible to change and serves as a bridge over which formal media of communications extend their influence." (Lazarsfeld et al, 1944). It would be very useful to train the future leaders for this role. The media communication in the contemporary world has a great amount and variety of data, information, and news, the audience is overwhelmed with. Therefore the role of the people who will make the selection and point out the importance and trustworthiness of the certain information increases. The future leaders in these circumstances can play a very important role in such a way that they will point out to their community to pay more attention to more positive messages which currently is not the case. Apart from this, it is important to mention that the media role in stimulating particular activities should be followed by the complementary organised social milieu in order to get desired results. It is necessary to provide the programs, joint projects and possibilities to apply them, and then to mobilize and move people by media campaigns. For example if it is needed to stimulate children to go in for sports, the media campaign should be followed by opening the greater number of sport clubs, building play grounds and employing greater number of coaches etc. And in the field of strengthening peace, the positive

media message should be followed by the appropriate behaviour of the leaders, bringing the appropriate laws, building the democratic institutions etc.

Proposed Programme for Future Leaders

One of the possible ways to act on overcoming obstacles in strengthening peace (on a subjective level) is by nurturing the future leaders through additional professional training, during which they will gain necessary knowledge and skills that will be used in work on surmounting obstacles in their communities. Goals and desired outcomes of such training, and processes of adopting not only knowledge and skills, but stimulating and increasing dedication for work on such tasks, will be illustrated on the example of a course syllabus, prepared for these purposes (Petrović, 2006). In order for the course attendees to become the successful and respected future leaders it is necessary to have, as it has already been emphasized, theoretical knowledge of that which is in the core of phenomena and knowledge of the problem this work is engaged in. The skills to arouse those positive qualities in others, together with the dedication to this work are also the important features of the future leaders. The knowledge itself could stay infecund, just like the motivation itself, without any previous knowledge, could not give any fruitful results. It usually happens that organizations in this field organize workshops with motivated people, where modern techniques are applied without much knowledge about the essence of facts which are discussed. But, it seems that the result in such circumstances could not be as good as it is desired. Hence, all the cited elements must be included. In conveying the knowledge, apart from the classical methods, it is very important to apply both experimental learning and experimental understanding (Staub, 2003; Marsik & Sauquet, 2003).

This is why the mentioned course consists of comprehensive content which covers following fields and blocks: stating the problem of strengthening of peace in the broader context which includes exploration of the philosophical ancestors of contemporary form of reconciliation; introduction of basic of main western and eastern religious traditions regarding forgiveness and reconciliation; explanation of influence of situational and dispositional factors and their interaction in all kinds of human behaviour, and especially their contribution to genesis of a conflict. Then, introduction of the concept of reconciliation, and its forms, aspects and elements, from the point of view of different authors. The next problems which the attendees should be informed about are various types of actors included in these processes and their problems. There, the attendees will be introduced to various types of victims which should help in search for adequate victims' programmes; to psychological and situational factors and their interaction which lead individuals and groups to perpetrate mass atrocities; to factors which lead some persons to stay passive and others to help to people in need regardless potential negative consequences; and ways in which all of them tend to preserve personal integrity and return to normal

functioning. The next block should overview main methods which can be useful during the reconciliation process. The attendees, depending on their interests, should be informed with the possibilities of objective scientific research of the reconciliation problem, and above all, the most direct preparation for their work would be review of up to date contributions in the domain of the future perspectives: which should certainly include overview of importance, principles and constitutional elements of peace education and to stimulate them to think about culture of peace - a comprehensive system of values, which can motivate people in post conflict societies to see peace as a premium value.

The previous review is related to the knowledge above all, which has been, as we said, necessary but not enough in education of future leaders, or to say a little bit more poetically, but we believe also more precisely – in shaping future visionaries.

We have already mentioned experiential understanding which Staub defines as "a joining and integration of facts and ideas with life experiences, thus creating a deep, 'organismic' understanding that reaches beyond thought to feelings" (Staub, 2003).

Therefore, what is necessary in order to create a deep, organismic understanding is connection with life experiences. Some of course attendees certainly had a traumatic war experience. Some others may not. From the group of the future leaders, those that have never had any direct war experiences should not be excluded. So, it is not possible to use everything they learn about and everything that will await them in the communities work as a starting base for what they will be able to recognize in their own experience. On the other hand, people should not be manipulated in such a way so as to intentionally be put in traumatic situations, nor it can be expected that there would be enough of those who had numerous and various unpleasant experiences. Experiential learning which encounters knowledge brings profound understanding and tendency for a positive change will be understood somewhat differently in this text. Apart from adopting knowledge, the attendees would have discussion sessions during which, with the help of the moderator, they would have the opportunity to discuss with others, facts which they learned. In such interaction applied to the appropriate real world problem (such as discussions about gacaca tribunals, about the victims' status in the South Africa, searching for similarities and differences in the conflicts in the Balkans and in Cashmere, etc.) they should explain their views, understand their shortages in their own and the others' standpoints, further they should defend their own positions and in such a way, comprehend the problem more profoundly. But, it seems that the most important part of the problem should still be explained. The syllabus (Petrović, 2006) includes watching and the discussion of some inspiring films with themes about conflicts and overcoming their consequences.

Reading and listening of inspiring and stimulating speeches connected with the appropriate topic should also be included. Among them the Nobel Peace Prize

laureates lectures, other speeches of Martin Luther King Jr, Desmond Tutu, Mahatma Gandhi and many others. They also will be followed by interactive discussion among attendees. Such material can complement the text, lectures, and enrich discussions by providing a concrete way to present important information. It is said that one photo (and video even more) speaks more than 1000 words. Those 'moving pictures' are more vivid, full of details, ask person to be involved in with his/her whole being.

It may be a good idea to start with films about victims during their suffering (like film *Hotel Rwanda*) and start discussion about presented situation, about victims, perpetrators, bystanders, etc. After that some films which present ways of overcome postconflict obstacles should be watched, like those about difficult moral question of truth telling sessions (like in film *Country of my Skull*) or problems with war crime trials, like in film *Nuremberg*.

Carefully selected, strong, artistic films, with the discussion that will follow, can be exceptionally stimulating for some of the most complex issues of human existence and relations among people and groups. It would be especially favorable to compare scenes and actors with occurrences and people from communities which the viewers and participants of discussion sessions are part of. Attention should be paid to similarities and general problems (like justification of perpetrators), that can bring to the conclusion about generalized principles and understanding that Evil is universal and that it might appear in certain degree and form in any place, just like Good can, too. Appearing and expressing of profound emotions in participants should not be avoided, but rather contrary it should be completely permitted. All of this should bring to the strengthening of desire in them to act towards justice and truth and the highest principles.

Proposed films can serve to one of the main goals of this course: to inspire enthusiasm in participants for the indefatigable work toward peace and to make them real leaders in the reconciliation process who further transmit their affection to other people with whom they will work and to whom they will influence.

In the beginning it will be appropriate that such course should be attended by those people whose motivation ensures that they will resist all the temptations, criticisms and pressures from their surroundings, which could not be possible to avoid. These will be moral persons, for an example to others, with high personal integrity and who will withstand the attacks from all sides. The attacks must be expected, because when one is for the justice principle, then one challenges beliefs on each side since all of them believe they are ideal. The members of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa heroically endured all the criticisms and did a wonderful job (Krog, 1999; Verwoerd, 2003). However, as the situation gradually improves, more people will be able to join these activities, while the change in society is not provided and coming out of the vicious circle of hatred and distrust. This should, finally, become some kind of a school subject that will assure

maintenance of civil society and its values in the future, and watch over the existing dangers from undemocratic practice, as is the case in Germany today. Taking into consideration the importance of keeping these positive values of the civil society, that were not reached easily, The Council of Europe started Democratic Education Project whose one of the central objectives is to make citizens aware of various threats for democracy such as extremist movements, violence, racism, xenophobia, and social exclusion.

Positive Future Orientation

The main effect which those young leaders should bring and disseminate is positive vision of future. It has already passed lot of time from the end of many wars and it is high time to take a long-term perspective into consideration. The most important element in that sense is hope! As M. L. King (1963) said in his famous speech "If you lose hope, somehow you lose the vitality that keeps life moving, you lose that courage to be, that quality that helps you go on in spite of it all. And so today I still have a dream." Coleman & Deutch (2000.) similarly pointed to imagining a desirable future as a way to overcome conflictive situation. They cite various terms – 'envisioning the desired future state', 'social imaging', 'future search' – to characterize the process by which individuals, groups, or organizations are encouraged to free themselves from the constraints of current reality to develop an image of a better future. In practice, this procedure has been useful in helping people develop awareness of new possibilities and new directions. Our empirical research on reconciliation in the Balkans (Petrović, 2005.) confirms previous views. The readiness for reconciliation has an expected and very negative relation with attachments with different in-groups (above all – nation) and distance from almost all out-group; then with emotions (often extremely negative) like anger or rage towards other nations. On the other hand, positive emotions like hope, optimism and faith in a better future are elements that show we are on the right path towards reconciliation among nations. On figure 2, it is clearly shown that scores of hope are higher in groups which are more ready for reconciliation among members of all three examined national groups.
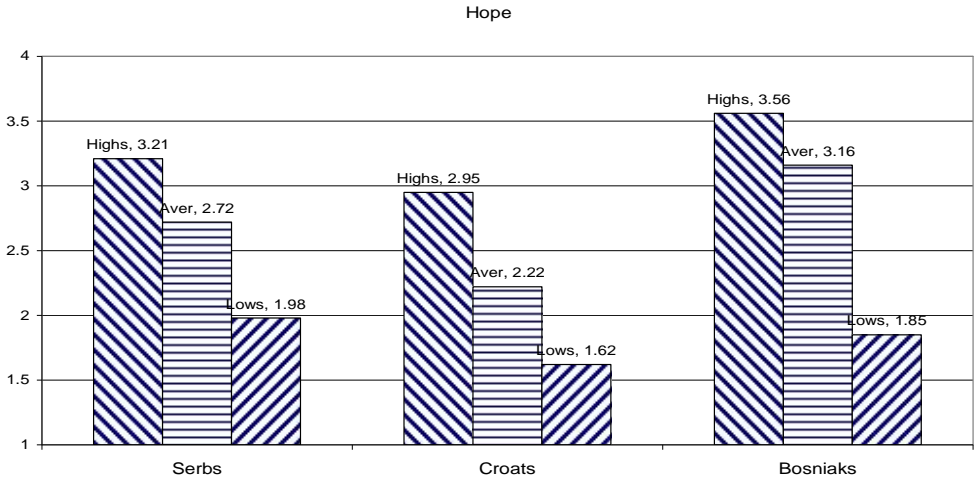
Figure 2. Degree of hope in different subsamples

     The readiness to reconciliation has a further negative relation with different aspects of anomie, hopelessness and negative expectations from the future, and a lack of trust in social norms and democratic institutions. On figure 3 we can see that subjects who had higher scores on readiness for reconciliation expected less problems in future relations with members of other examined national groups.
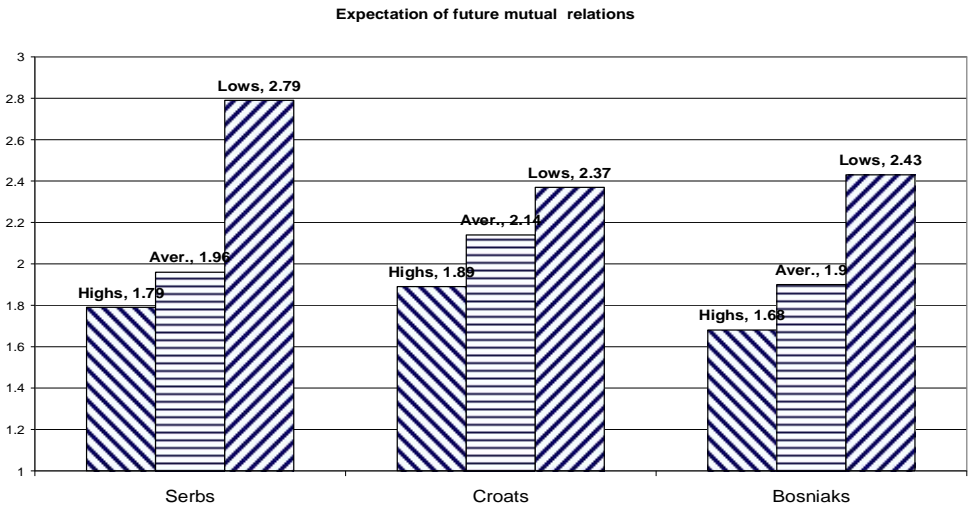

Figure 3. Future expectation (higher score means expectation of more problems, range 1-5)

When we take into consideration all correlations at once and try to explain and make sense of them, we can find some deeper, even philosophical bases. All correlations are either directly or indirectly connected with hope, with optimism, with the attribution of sense to life, and with the belief in the possibility of realising all human and social potentials. On the other hand, negative correlations can be explained in terms such as fear, helplessness, powerlessness and anomie (Petrović, 2005).

Other very important authors including Viktor Frankl, Erik Erikson, Erich Fromm and Daniel Bar-Tal emphasised importance of hope. Hope is one of three main virtues in the New Testament. Frankl, who was detainee of Nazi death camps himself, explain (Frankl, 1977) that disappearance of hope in the camp certainly meant lost of life. For Erikson (1950.) hope is the expectation that good things will happen in the future. Hope is both the earliest and the most indispensable virtue inherent in the state of being alive. It enables the person to move forward into the world and take up new challenges. In his book *Revolution of hope*, Fromm (1968) emphasized that hope required conviction about the not yet proven, courage to resist temptation to compromise the vision, and transformation of present reality in the direction of greater aliveness. But Bar-Tal (2001) warns that hope, especially in war-torn societies, often impeded by interference of fear. The reason for that is in fact that fear is an automatic emotion which can causes freezing, conservatism and sometimes it leads to pre-emptive aggression while hope needs cognitive activity and the search for new creative ideas. Therefore, it is obvious need for a seed-plat of such activities and ideas, and our leaders are adequate answer for that need.

It could be useful to see concerned phenomena of peace strengthening in the light of positive psychology, which has the objective to catalyze a change in psychology from a preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building the best qualities in life. (Seligman, 2002.) Seligman explains that positive psychology at the group level is about civic virtues and the institutions that move individuals toward better citizenship: responsibility, nurturance, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance, and work ethic. It is originated from task to overcome disease model, and discovered that there are human strengths which are a kind of guard against illness and other negative states. They include: courage, future-mindedness, optimism, interpersonal skill, faith, hope, honesty, perseverance, the capacity for flow and insight.

Fortunately, importance of future is naturally very high among young people. Our empirical results (Kuzmanović & Petrović, 2005) confirm the previous assumption. Subjects of this research, of connotative meaning of relevant political and social terms, were 18 year old students from Serbia. Among other, we got semantic profiles of words which denote time determinants: past, present and future. Our subjects started to attend primary school in 1994, one year before the Dayton agreement and the end of the war. So the past, in their case need not to be connected

with war exclusively, maybe not at all. They had to circle an appropriate answer on semantic differential scale from -3 to 3, which we transformed to 1 to 7, i.e. 4 is neutral point (neither worthy nor worthless, neither stable nor unstable…) Results, shown on figure 4, clearly indicate that broken-line "future" is significantly (from 1-2 points) above "past" and "present" lines. So, it is important to take advantage on this, normal youth tendency to expect much from the future. It is also very important to provide them new, better alternatives. To ensure escape of violence, that is, as Bruno Bettleheim once commented, the response of a person who can imagine no other alternative.
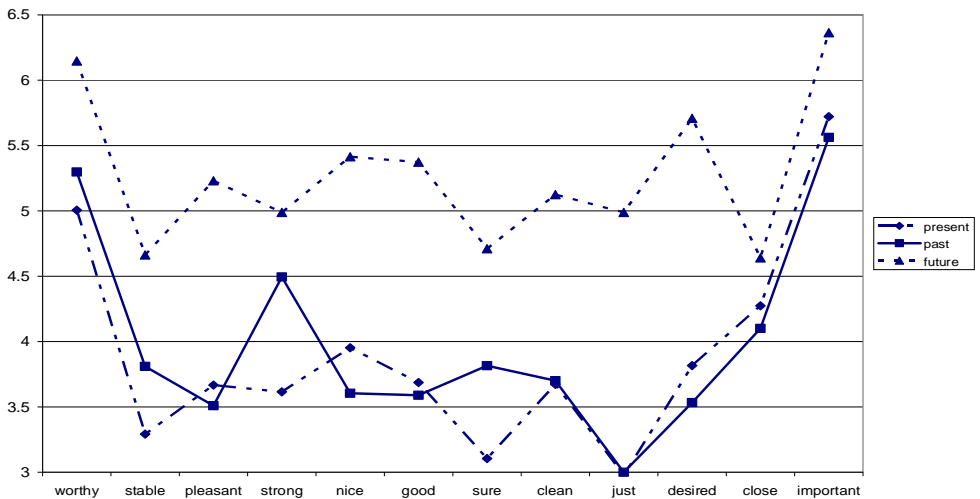

Figure 4. Connotative meaning of past, present and future

Impact of Globalization and Importance of Principle of Justice in Overcoming Negative Past Legacy

Not so long ago, parents and other family members were exclusively agents of socialization for their children. Those, who attended school accepted additional influences from their teachers. But there were, generally, no many variations in times of weak interconnectedness and only one source of social norms and rules. Therefore, new generations became very similar to generations of their parents and grandparents. However, appearance of mass media and changes in life style which did not allowed so much time for child-parents relations, brought possibilities for different socialization outcomes. Cases in which children acquired characteristics opposite of their parents intentions became very often.

On societal level, in postconflict societies, government controlled media repeated constantly messages saturated with conflictive world view and therefore

preserved tension in relationships between former adversaries and impeded reconciliation. Kaldor (2003) pointed out that states manipulate the fear of external threat to ensure political debate takes place within the narrow confines of the status quo. Nowadays, with spreading process of globalisation, it is possible to marginalise such negative influence. As Giddens noticed: "the ideological and cultural control… could not survive in an era of global media." And "as the changes gather weight, they are creating something that has never existed before, a global cosmopolitan society." (Giddens, 1999) But global civil society has constituted 'from bellow' also, by foregrounding new forms of autonomous political action outside any governance mechanism of formalised rights and international law (Chandler, 2004). And we proposed one such new form with its actor – young devoted leaders who would help transition from war-torn to democratic society. But in a postconflict society they can be considered as a "small island in a sea of apathy" (Kaldor, 2003). Grenier discuss different terms which could be used to label those leaders, such as 'civil society leader', 'social activist', 'radical', and 'social entrepreneur'. But, as in her text, the most appropriate term in case of our leaders is 'pioneer' which she defined as "one who goes before to prepare or open up the way for others to follow; one who begins, or takes part in beginning, some enterprise, course of action." They "are leading the way for others to follow at the same time as serving society in general, by testing different routes and determining the best ones." (Grenier, 2004).

However, new arised global society, beside new opportunities, takes over new responsibilities, at the same time. Therefore, strict caution is necessary because decisions and actions in one region, understood as principles, could be of great influence at the other part of the world. That is why principle of justice must become superior one. Justice and morality principles must be valued on every level and in every occasion, and not to adduce them only when it is suitable (when one is on the weaker side) while, when one belongs to the stronger side one uses 'the right of the stronger one'.

It could be important for our discussion to mention Russell's and Rawls' ways to assure justice as a dominant principle. Bertrand Russell pointed out the need to change the names of different countries in the events described in newspapers. In this way we would verify if our reaction to the event is a consequence of moral assessments of an action or from the prejudices about certain country. In order to confirm whether we act according to the moral principles an event occuring between Serbia and Croatia should be moved and post imagined substitutes in the USA and Iran, India and Pakistan, etc. Russell named this principle 'the rotation of nouns'. (Russell, 1950). This mental substitution ensure that moral claims are based only on concrete events and not on our preferences and prejudices about different nations and other groups.

John Rawls (1971) introduced another term – 'veil of ignorance' as a prerequisite for just social relations. The veil of ignorance in Rawls's theory of

justice requires that a person temporarily neglects his or her physical, psychological and moral attributes. Provided that it happened we start deciding about our future social arrangements without knowing which position in the social context we hold. Because of this we are not able to guide our decisions by selfish interests, but only by what we have – a capacity for justice. So, a person will consider all possibilities without being biased.

When people watch a film or read a novel in which good and evil conflict, there practically is not anyone (except for some psychopath) who is not taking side of the good, and who does not support victory of justice, which proves that this is one of the strongest prime-movers. One more proof of the justice motive existence is the fact that people endure the greatest hardships more easily if they find themselves in the same position, for example if people face some natural disaster like an earthquake, tsunami or a hurricane.

Consequently, the most important task is to assure that people judge principally in all situations, i.e. that principle of justice overpower automatic principle of judge according to social belongingness.

To illustrate that point we will make a digression to history, which can also be the source of many various models. Instead of inciting conflict, emphasizing victimization, it is possible to find positive examples. Many authors condemn manipulative use of Serbian historical tradition and mythology (justifiably) as the main source of problems in former Yugoslavia. However, in the same Serbian tradition, more precisely in national epic poetry, ethical imperative, older than Kant's could be found, which could have caused completely opposite consequences if it was promoted and emphasized as the authentic people's thought. In one epic poem, national hero Marko was invited to arbitrate to whom the throne belongs, after the death of the greatest Serbian middle-age ruler - the Tsar Dušan. Apart from Tsar's son, who should inherit the throne by descent, the claimers to the throne are the father and uncles of the invoked arbitrator (Marko). Before the very arbitration, his mother, princess Jevrosima, implores her son not to be unjustly prone to his father and uncles, but to arbitrate by God's will (i.e. by principle of justice). With this, she warns him that transgressing is worse than dying.

Consequently, one need not always comply with wishes of in-group, if they are not in accordance with justice (which is basis of concept of constructive patriotism, a form different from blind patriotism or nationalism). This could be good base for education and socialization generally. It is especially important because the rule originated from in-group, and at the same time allows criticism of the in-group itself (when it is not right) with no fear that the critic would be pronounced as a traitor. It could be useful to take advantage in youth education of this legend and similar examples which kept in the tradition in a long period, even for centuries.

Kohlberg emphasizes that morally mature person guided by one principle of justice, and not by a range of them, which can be contradictory. He or she deduces from the justice principle all the rules and norms and applies them to the concrete situations. Therefore our future leaders should be educated about the principles which are supposed to be their guidance and by which they would judge each concrete situation. (Kohlberg, 1970). They should not be taught to dispraise bad Serbs, Germans, American, Moslems, etc, but to condemn misdeed of perpetrators from these and other groups and resist to all injustices.

Kohlberg explains that M. L. King was a moral leader, not because his advocacy for welfare of the Afro-Americans, "but because he was a drum major for justice. His words and deeds were primarily designed to induce America to respond to racial problems in terms of a sense of justice, and any particular action he took had value for this reason and not just because of the concrete political end it might achieve." (Kohlberg, 1970, p. 68)

Prospects for Changes

It is necessary to underline once again, that we like to highlight importance of psychological, mainly motivational factors in this article, and that we consider those factors indispensable but not unique in the quest for changes after conflicts. Social and peace psychologists should be aware that "to extent that conflict resolution eclipses power differences, peace psychology will unwittingly contribute to the status quo, colluding with social injustice." (Du Nann Winter et al., 2001. p. 366). Therefore, peace psychologist, as well as our future activists, should keep in mind that their work potentially entails a promotion of social and institutional change as a path to social justice and consequently long lasting peace (Comas-Díaz et al., 1998). Some authors (Dawes, 2001) proposed Liberation psychology that would use psychological knowledge and practice to bring about change in structure of oppressed societies, and that help psychological liberation of individuals from the negative conceptions of self and her community.

Instead of conclusion of this text, we can arise a question about prospects for positive transformation of postconflict societies. Is it possible at all to change dramatically whole societies in relatively short period of time? Has it been any such example in the history? The answer is positive and probably the best example of such change is post war Federal Republic of Germany. After it seemed that German character (and therefore any other national character) could not be changed, following radical changes proved possibility for relatively fast and broad transformations even at the level of large social groups as nations.

In her discussion on changes on authoritarianism in post-war Germany, Lederer (1993) writes that just after the war Schaffner, and two decades after Dahrendorf, agreed on very close relationship between Nazism and traditional

values of German society. Therefore they were suspect of possibility of fundamental change. However, just one more decade after, as Lederer reported, several independent studies and meta-studies on large number of previous research (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement on civic education, 1975; Merelman and Foster on writings on political culture in FR Germany, 1980; classical Almond and Verba's *The Civic Culture*, revisited edition from 1980) showed totally different picture. The data on German adolescent started to show fundamental changes in direction of acceptance of civic and democratic society values. And even more, Lederer quoted finding that by the late 1970s, by all measures, Germany became a model of democratic political stability and on some measures even more distinctly than Britain or the United States!

Other western societies have also changed. Well-known social revolution in whole western world has happened in 1968. Central Europe, in terms of value preferences and social norms, is absolutely different today than only 20 years ago. We are witnesses of great economics changes in China today. The globalisation faster all changes in all domains of life. So, changes are inevitable. But we still have great responsibility, to ensure that these changes go in positive direction.

The approach we offered is undoubtedly directed to the future. However, this does not mean that we support forgetting the past on the principle 'let bygones be bygones'. In postconflict situations people are captivated in a stalemate position. They can neither face problems of the past, because of numerous resistances, nor can they move forward towards the future. Nevertheless, the created vision of the bright future will be the strongest engine that will move people forward, which will not let them back down from problems, and will allow them positive thoughts during the inevitable obstacles on the road towards reconciliation. That is human nature. When people have a clear idea of some future goal, when they have hope, such persons will give all their efforts—they will work hard, they will be responsible, they will take care of others. When the future is gloomy and persons are helpless and in despair, when they don't see any possibility for improvement, they will take care neither of themselves nor of those around them.

The degree of expressed hope, optimism and faith that it will be better, and perception of the future in a positive perspective decreases hopelessness, feeling of personal helplessness and closing into in-groups as their antipode. Beside that, the hope and optimism are in the most direct connection with readiness for reconciliation which is proved by empirical results (Petrović, 2005). This means that by increasing the power that leads us towards the future (hope, positive vision), the degree of readiness for reconciliation increases, and consequently desire and tendency that the entire negative legacy from the past should be solved as soon as possible. Therefore, people will accept without defence mechanisms and more easily making hard decisions like confessions, understanding, and regret for acting or not acting (when it was necessary) and performing difficult acts like forgiving; when

they know that meaningful and fulfilled life awaits them afterwards. In this manner, paradoxically, the future will help solving and overcoming problems of the past!

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