



When History Is a Nightmare : Lives and Memories of Ethnic Cleansing in Bosnia-Herzegovina

Stevan Weine

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Stevan M. Weine is a psychiatrist who has spent the past decade working with Bosnian survivors of ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia. As he listened to their testimonies, Weine concluded that these narratives were capable of bearing a complex truth about the horrific events in Yugoslavia that often were lost in more analytic works on the subject. *When History is a Nightmare* also explores how these traumatic events affected not just individuals, but an entire society and its culture.

Weine investigates the survivors' attempts to reconcile the contrasting, collective memories of having lived in a smoothly functioning, multiethnic society with the later memories of the ethnic atrocities. He discusses the little-known group concept of *merhamet*. Denoting compassion, forgiveness, and charity, *merhamet* was a critical cultural value for the Bosnian Muslims.

Weine also explores how ethnic cleansing was justified from the vantage point of psychiatrists who played prominent roles in instigating the horrors. He also provides personal portraits of leaders such as Jovan Raskovic and Radovan Karadzic. He concludes by describing the recovery efforts of survivors—how they work to confront the destructive nature of their memories while trying to bring about healing, both individually and collectively.

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