Preventing violence and generating humane values: Healing and reconciliation in Rwanda

Ervin Staub*

The general question underlying this article is how can individuals and groups of people be induced to act according to humanitarian laws, or to comply with something even more profound – the humane values on which those laws are based? A primary focus of the article is on how renewed violence after genocide can be prevented. Secondly, it will seek to explain the origins of violence between groups, an understanding of which is important for the prevention of new violence. The main example for both these topics will be Rwanda. Reference will be made to the root causes of genocide, and specifically of the 1994 genocide there. Reconciliation and other processes designed to restore humane values and practices and create a peaceful society in Rwanda will also be discussed. A third issue addressed is how children can be brought up to adopt humane values and treat people with caring consideration and respect, including people who do not belong to their group, thereby making violence between groups less likely.

In discussing reconciliation and the prevention of new violence in Rwanda, I shall draw on our past and present work there, which started in early 1999 with the purpose of healing, reconciliation and the prevention of new violence.** In Rwanda we began by training the staff of local organizations that worked with groups in the community, helping them to integrate an approach we have developed into their usual approach towards those groups.

We evaluated the effectiveness of this working method by means of an experimental field study, in which some of the people we had trained worked with groups in the community using the approach they had developed in their work with us, while others not trained by us worked with comparable groups using their own approach; other community members were part of untreated control groups. The community members who worked with the facilitators we had trained showed reduced trauma symptoms, both over time (from before the beginning of their group meetings to two months afterwards) and in comparison with the other groups in the study. They also showed a more positive attitude towards members of the other "ethnic" group (there is a lack of clarity about Hutus and Tutsis as an ethnic, social/economic or other type of group), likewise over time and in comparison with the other groups in the study, which may be interpreted as an indication of at least the beginning of reconciliation.[1]

The elements of our approach were both psycho-educational and experiential. We gave brief lectures on several topics: the impact of trauma on people, especially of great victimization such as the genocide; avenues to healing; understanding the origins of genocide and their implications for prevention; and basic human needs and their role in genocide, trauma and healing. These lectures were followed by extensive discussion in which participants gave accounts of their own experiences. We also had participants talk to each other in small groups about their painful experiences during the genocide, with prior training in empathically responding to each other. All the elements of this approach were based on previous work of our own and/or others.[2]

Following this initial project we used elements of our approach, as appropriate to each group and the specific objective, in working with various groups. We have worked in seminars and workshops with journalists and with national and community leaders, have trained trainers in our approach and have helped to develop a radio project starting in the summer of 2003 and designed to spread the information inherent in our approach among the population.[3]

1 E. Staub *et al, Healing, Forgiving and Reconciliation: An Intervention and its Experimental Evaluation in Rwanda,* forthcoming (on file with the author); E. Staub, L. Pearlman and V. Miller, "Healing the roots of genocide in Rwanda", *Peace Review,* Vol. 15, No. 3, 2003, pp. 287-294.

2 E. Staub and L. Pearlman, "Healing, reconciliation and forgiving after genocide and other collective violence", in S. J. Helmick & R. L. Petersen (eds), *Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Religion, Public Policy and Conflict Transformation,* Templeton Foundation Press, Radnor, PA, 2001; Staub, Pearlman, and Miller, "Healing the roots", *op. cit.* (note 1).

3 Staub, Pearlman, and Miller, "Healing the roots", *op. cit.* (note 1).

The roots of violence and the development of caring

Devaluation of "the other" versus inclusive caring

Human beings readily draw lines between "us" and "them," and easily devalue those they identify as "them".[4] In many societies a devaluation of whole groups of people develops.[5] Devaluation may serve to justify discrimination, while discrimination in turn maintains devaluation. When life is difficult in a society, a devalued group is often singled out as a scapegoat, blamed for problems that have arisen or identified as an enemy of some ideology that promises a better future. When discrimination against them intensifies and violence begins, the cultural devaluation attitudes absorbed by other members of society make it less likely that they will speak out against policies and practices that harm the devalued group.[6]

Extreme devaluation means that the devalued other is excluded from the realm of humanity. When this happens, moral values and principles (and therefore, presumably, humanitarian laws) cease in the minds and experience of the devaluers to apply to those devalued others.[7] It is therefore essential in every society to stress the value as human beings of those who are defined as "them" and devalued, using words, images, local laws and so on to change such attitudes, if people are to speak out against persecution and engage in political action when such policies and practices arise.[8]

While words and images help in learning acceptance, the main avenue is experience. In research on rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe it has been found that many of them grew up in families that engaged with the "other," including Jews; parents thus taught acceptance by example.[9] Intensive contact with "the

4 M.B. Brewer, "Ingroup bias in the minimal intergroup situation: A cognitive-motivational analysis", *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 86, 1978, pp. 307-324; H. Tajfel, "Social categorization, social identity and social comparison", in H. Tajfel (ed.), *Differentiation between Social Groups*, Academic Press, London, 1978, pp. 61-67; H. Tajfel, "Social psychology of intergroup relations", *Annual Review of Psychology*, Vol. 33, 1982, pp. 1-39; H. Tajfel *et al.*, "Societal categorization and intergroup behavior", *European Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 1, 1971, pp. 149-177.

5 E. Staub, *The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and Other Group Violence*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1989 (hereinafter "*The Roots of Evil* "); E. Staub, "The cultural-societal roots of violence: The examples of genocidal violence and of contemporary youth violence in the United States", *American Psychologist*, Vol. 51, 1996, pp. 17-132.

6 Staub., *The Roots of Evil, op. cit.* (note 5).

7 E. Staub, "Moral exclusion, personal goal theory and extreme destructiveness", in S. Opotow (ed.), "Moral exclusion and injustice", *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 46, 1990, pp. 47-65.

8 Staub, Pearlman, and Miller, "Healing the roots", *op. cit.* (note 1).

9 S. Oliner and P. Oliner, *The Altruistic Personality: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe*, Free Press, New York, 1988.

other" — working together cooperatively in schools, for example — helps to develop inclusive caring.[10]

In most countries where genocide has been perpetrated, there has been a division between members of the perpetrator and victim groups and devaluation of the latter by the former, or at times mutual devaluation. In Europe, and in Germany in particular, there had been a long history of anti-Semitism, devaluation combined with discrimination, persecution and violence — even though there were also periods of relative safety for Jews.[11] In Turkey, the Armenians were devalued and became objects of discrimination and violence as a conquered people with a religion different from that of the ruling Turks.[12]

The case of Rwanda

In Rwanda there has been a long history of division between Hutus and Tutsis. The minority Tutsis were wealthier and ruled the country. This division was greatly accentuated by the colonial powers. Belgium, which was the colonial ruler of Rwanda over the first half of the twentieth century, empowered the Tutsis to rule on its behalf. The Belgians gave them a higher status, propagated an ideology elevating them over the Hutus, and allowed the Hutus to sink into increased poverty and servitude.[13]

In 1959, about 50,000 Tutsis were killed in a Hutu revolt. After 1962, when the country gained independence under Hutu rule, severe discrimination against the Tutsis was accompanied by massacres in the early sixties and seventies, as well as by less extreme violence. Prior to the genocide in 1994, in which some 700,000 Tutsis and 50,000 "moderate" Hutus were killed, there was intense propaganda against Tutsis. This propaganda combined a profound devaluation of the Tutsis, depicting them as a grave threat to Hutus — to their property, identity and lives, with an ideology of "Hutu power." This ideology essentially proclaimed that a world without Tutsis is a better world for Hutus.

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10 Elliott Aronson *et al.*, *The Jigsaw Classroom*, Beverly Hills, Sage Publications, Inc., CA, 1978; E. Staub, *The Psychology of Good and Evil: Why Children, Adults and Groups Help and Harm Others*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2003.

11 P. Girard, "Historical foundations of anti-Semitism", in J. Dimsdale, (ed.), *Survivors, Victims and Perpetrators: Essays on the Nazi Holocaust*, Hemisphere Publishing Company, New York, 1980; Staub, *The Roots of Evil, op. cit.* (note 5), p. 3.

12 Staub, *ibid.*

13 A. Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda*, Human Rights Watch, New York, 1999; M. Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2002.

In 1990 the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), a rebel group consisting mainly of Tutsis, primarily descendants of refugees who had fled from violence against Tutsis, entered Rwanda and started a civil war. A cease-fire and a peace agreement were reached, but when the genocide began the fighting flared anew. The international community remained passive.[14] The genocide was finally halted by the RPF.

This party has governed the country since the end of the war, its rule affirmed by problematic elections in August and September 2003. Yet the very idea of elections, held nine years after an appalling genocide and leaving the country governed by a group that constitutes only about 14 per cent of the popu- lation and was the victim of that genocide, seems problematic. Although giving rise to concern about the development of democratic processes the government continued, perhaps not surprisingly, to restrict the activities of opposition parties, despite the fact that after ending the genocide and taking power, the RPF proclaimed from the start that its aim was to create "unity and reconciliation».

In working with national leaders in Rwanda — government ministers, heads of national commissions, advisors to the President, leaders of political parties who are members of parliament — we discussed with them how geno- cide originates and the policies and practices they might follow to avert make new violence. One aspect of such policies is humanizing "the other", in this case giving Hutus a more human image in the eyes of Tutsis.[15]

Among the various ways discussed, a direct and immediate means of doing so that we repeatedly suggested to groups was that Hutus who had saved the lives of Tutsis during the genocide, and in some cases were killed as a result, be acknowledged and included in the yearly commemoration of those tragic events. A book published about such rescuers by Africa Rights[16] has played an important part in drawing attention to such people. They were included in the commemoration for the first time in April 2003.

The origins of inclusive caring: becoming a caring person

In our continuing work in Rwanda we plan to work with children, through the schools and in informal settings, to promote inclusive caring, i.e. caring about people beyond one's immediate group. People are not likely to

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14 S. Powers, *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*, Basic Books, New York, 2002; Staub, *The Psychology of Good and Evil, op. cit.* (note 10), p. 4.

15 Staub, Pearlman, and Miller, "Healing the roots", *op. cit.* (note 1). See also the website: <http:www.heal-reconcile-rwanda.org>.

16 *Africa Rights, Attribute to Courage*, London and Kigali, 2002.

care about "the other" if they do not care about people close to them. Children are likely to first learn to care about people close to them, parents, teachers and peers, and by extension also learn to care about people further removed from them.[17] To care about people we need to feel cared about. Children who experience love, affection and positive guidance will feel good about themselves, see the world as benevolent and will value other people. However, children who experience neglect, rejection, hostility and bad treatment cannot simply be instructed to care about people. Their experiences will create fear and mistrust of people.

A society that helps fulfil fundamental human needs creates the underpinnings of respect for human rights. There are of course universal physical needs. But there are also universal psychological needs.[18] Especially important among these are security, a positive identity, a feeling of effectiveness and control over important events, positive connection to other people, reasonable autonomy, and an understanding of the world and of one's own place in it.[19]

When these fundamental needs are frustrated in the normal course of events, they do not go away. Instead, people will often find destructive ways to satisfy them. Power over others, joining ideological movements that offer visions of a better life but also identify some groups as enemies who stand in the way of the ideology's fulfilment, connections to other people who are part of the ideological community, a feeling of effectiveness and control and a new comprehension of reality that the movement offers, all these help to satisfy basic needs. However, people caught up in such ideological movements will become increasingly unconcerned about the welfare of other people.[20] Poverty, great inequality, deteriorating

17 E. Staub, "Preventing terrorism: Raising 'inclusively' caring children in the complex world of the 21st Century", in C. Stout (ed.), *The Psychology of Terrorism*, Praeger Publishers, New York, 2002.

18 H. Kelman, "Applying a human needs perspective to the practice of conflict resolution: The Israeli-Palestinian case", in J. Burton (ed.) *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1990; A. Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being*, 2nd ed., Van Nostrand, New York, 1968; L. McCann and L. Pearlman, *Psychological Trauma and the Adult Survivor: Theory, Therapy, and Transformation*, Brunner/Mazel, New York, 1990.

19 Staub, *The Roots of Evil, op. cit.* (note 5), p. 3; Staub, "The cultural-societal roots of violence", *op. cit.* (note 5), 1996, p. 3; E. Staub, "From healing past wounds to the development of inclusive caring: Contents and processes of peace education", in G. Saloman and B. Nevo (eds), *Peace Education: The Concepts, Principles, and Practices around the World*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahvah, NJ, 2002.

20 R. Ezekiel, *The Racist Mind*, Penguin Books, New York, 1995; R. Ezekiel, "The ethnographer looks at Neo-Nazi and Klan groups: The racist mind revisited", *American Behavioral Scientist*, Vol. 46, No. 1, 2002, pp. 51-57; E. Staub, "The roots of goodness: The fulfillment of basic human needs and the development of caring, helping and nonaggression, inclusive caring, moral courage, active bystandership, and altruism born of suffering", in C. Edwards and G. Carlo (eds), *Moral Motivation. Nebraska Symposium on Motivation*, Nebraska University Press, Lincoln, forthcoming, (on file with author).

economic conditions, political disorganization and social chaos are among the conditions that make the fulfilment of basic needs more difficult. They frustrate the needs of adults, which makes it less likely that they will be loving people and effective socializers of children, whose needs are then frustrated in turn. Help for people under these conditions to create a community, to provide support to each other, is of crucial importance in enabling them to satisfy their needs constructively, rather than by turning against each other.[21]

Social conditions in Rwanda before the genocide were becoming more and more critical. There were severe economic problems as tin and coffee, Rwanda's primary exports, declined in value on international markets. There were political problems as dissatisfaction with the government and new parties emerged in a country unaccustomed to a free political process. There was the civil war, and a peace agreement that would have led to the inclusion of Tutsis in the government, a development strongly opposed by radical Hutus who saw Tutsis as enemies and feared and devalued them.[22]

The prevailing economic, political and social conditions greatly frustrated basic needs. The history of devaluation of Tutsis, combined with these difficult living conditions, made people receptive to leaders who advocated the ideology of Hutu power and mobilized people against the Tutsis. They gave people a feeling of identity, of affinity with other Hutus, and a philosophy of life. Political parties started youth branches consisting of unemployed youngsters who, in these organized groups which also fed them, gained security as well as a sense of identity and belonging.[23] The young Hutu males in these groups later became the *Interahamwe*, the youthful militias who did much of the killing during the genocide.[24] While basic psychological needs were fulfilled to some degree, their fulfilment was destructive, both to other people and to Hutus themselves.[25]

Besides meeting children's basic needs in the course of growing up, so that they will be more resistant to such influences, an important issue is how people can not only select but also influence leaders so that they lead more

21 Staub, "From healing past wounds", *op. cit.* (note 19), p. 7.

22 Des Forges, *op. cit.* (note 13), p. 5.

23 Staub, Pearlman, and Miller, "Healing the roots", *op. cit.* (note 1); E. Staub, *Reconciliation after Genocide, Mass Killing or Intractable Conflict: Healing and Understanding*, forthcoming (on file with author).

24 Des Forges, *op. cit.* (note 13), p. 5.

25 E. Staub, "The roots of evil: Personality, social conditions, culture and basic human needs", *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, Vol. 3, 1999, pp. 179-192; Staub, *Reconciliation after Genocide, op. cit.* (note 23), p. 8.

constructively in difficult times, for example by adopting or creating ideolo-
gies that are "inclusive", that encourage groups to work together to improve
difficult living conditions. Part of our work with national leaders in Rwanda
has been to address such issues.[26]

Healing from past wounds: perpetrators, victims and bystanders

Discrimination, persecution and violence usually evolve. At times
there is a lull in this evolution, which under certain societal conditions may
resume. For example, both in Turkey and in Rwanda intense violence was
followed by a period of relative quiet, followed by even more intense viol-
ence. The reason for this evolution is that as action without forces to coun-
teract it is taken within a society against members of a group, psychological
changes in the population and social changes in norms and institutions
ensue, which lead to greater harm being done. The group that is harmed is
devalued more and more and excluded from the moral domain, from the
realm of humanity to which moral values and norms apply. As a result, vio-
lence against that group becomes easier and more probable. This evolution
can end in genocide.[27]

People who have been victims of intense persecution or violence, espe-
cially if they are survivors of mass killings or genocide, are usually deeply
wounded. At less intense levels of persecution they may simply feel helpless
and abandoned by neighbours and friends. After mass killings or genocide
they will feel profoundly vulnerable and insecure; they will mistrust people
and see the world as dangerous. They feel any threat more acutely, and may
become perpetrators as they forcefully respond to what they perceive as a
new threat, believing that they must defend themselves against it. Healing
can help them to live better lives, and can make violence by them less
likely.[28]

Perpetrators are also wounded. Often their violence is due to past vic-
timization or to a culture that has focused on a past "chosen" trauma.[29] But
engaging in great violence against others inflicts its own wounds. Even after

26 Staub, Pearlman, and Miller, "Healing the roots", op. cit. (note 1).

27 Staub, The Roots of Evil, op. cit. (note 5), p. 3; Staub, "Personality, social conditions", op. cit. (note 25).

28 E. Staub, "Breaking the cycle of genocidal violence: Healing and reconciliation", in J. Harvey (ed.),
Perspectives on Loss, Taylor and Francis, Washington, DC, 1998; Staub and Pearlman, "Healing, reconcilia-
tion and forgiving", op. cit. (note 2), p. 2; Staub, Pearlman, and Miller, "Healing the roots", op. cit. (note 1).

29 V. Volkan, Blood Lines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 1997.

they are defeated and stopped, perpetrators tend to shield themselves from feelings of empathy and guilt, often by continuing to devalue their victims and clinging to their belief in the destructive ideology that has guided them. Their healing process may open them both to their own pain and to the pain of others, and increase the possibility of reconciliation.[30]

Passive bystander members of a perpetrator group also change in the course of violent action by their group. To reduce their own empathic distress, they distance themselves from those who suffer. Harmful acts are often justified by greater devaluation of the victims, by their dehumanization, by their exclusion from the moral domain, not only by perpetrators but also by passive bystanders. Taking some kind of positive action can help people to remain compassionate witnesses. The longer bystanders remain passive, the less likely it becomes that they will act.[31] In the case of genocide, there seems to be an exception to this: when large-scale murder begins, some previously passive people become rescuers as though they have realized that events have assumed a different, truly horrible dimension. Unfortunately, however, as the violence evolves many passive bystanders join the perpetrators.[32]

Healing requires that people face up to their painful experiences, under supportive conditions.[33] The presence of other people who are empathic and caring can help, as can that of people who have suffered in a similar manner. In Rwanda, we had people in mixed groups of survivors and members of the perpetrator group (who presumably were not perpetrators themselves) confront their experiences during the genocide. The empathic presence of others can help with another important aspect of healing — regaining trust in people, reconnecting with people.[34] The presence of both groups may have contributed to the more positive attitude of Hutus and Tutsis towards each other. Empathy by members of the perpetrator group may have furthered both the healing of survivors of violence and their openness to reconciliation.

Helping children to heal is highly important. We now know that even very young children carry their painful experiences with them and can later

30 Staub and Pearlman, "Healing, reconciliation and forgiving", op. cit. (note 2), p. 2; Staub, Pearlman, and Miller, "Healing the roots", op. cit. (note 1).

31 Staub, The Roots of Evil, op. cit. (note 5), p. 3.

32 Staub et al, Healing, Forgiving and Reconciliation, op. cit. (note 1), p. 2.

33 J. Herman, Trauma and Recovery, Basic Books, New York, 1992; McCann and Pearlman, op. cit. (note 18), p. 7; L. Pearlman and K. Saakvitne, Trauma and the Therapist, Norton, New York, 1995.

34 Staub and Pearlman, "Healing, reconciliation and forgiving", op. cit. (note 2), p. 2; Staub, Pearlman, and Miller, "Healing the roots", op. cit. (note 1).

be significantly affected by them. Reading about events can help children, at some level, to come to terms with their own experiences.[35] Here, too, supportive conditions are vital. This may be followed by children actually talking about their experiences, while receiving empathetic, loving support. However, talking about such painful events must not be forced. It must take place under the control of the person concerned, at his or her own pace. The people who guide children or adults in such a process do not have to be professionals, but do require some training.

Ceremonies and commemorations can also help with healing and reconnecting with other people. However, they have to be carefully devised, so that rather than reopening wounds and accentuating feelings of insecurity, they point to a more hopeful future.

Altruism born of suffering: the importance of human relations

Many people who have been victimized become violent.[36] Past research has focused on people who have been treated with love and received positive guidance becoming altruists and active bystanders to others' suffering.[37] But if that was all there is to caring, we would have serious problems, for who would then help in environments where most people have been victimized and traumatized? In my recent work I have begun to think and write about the people — and there are many of them — who have been victimized and have suffered greatly, and who later become caring and helpful persons. Such people devote themselves to helping others and are often strongly motivated to prevent other people from suffering what they have endured.[38]

What are the sources of such "altruism born of suffering"? I believe that healing from past trauma is one primary source. Another, connected to it, is

35 Staub, "From healing past wounds", op. cit. (note 19), p. 7; Staub, The Psychology of Good and Evil, op. cit. (note 10), p. 4.

36 J. Gilligan, Violence: Our Deadly Epidemic and its Causes, Putnam and Sons, New York, 1996; C. Widom, "Does violence beget violence? A critical examination of the literature", Psychological Bulletin, Vol. 106, No. 1, 1989, pp. 3-28; C. Widom, "The cycle of violence", Science, Vol. 224, 1989, pp. 160-166.

37 N. Eisenberg, The Caring Child, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1992; N. Eisenberg and R. Fabes, "Prosocial development", in W. Damon (ed.), Handbook of Child Psychology, 5th ed. N. Eisenberg (ed.), Social, Emotional, and Personality Development, Vol. 3, John Wiley and Sons, 1998; E. Staub, Positive Social Behavior and Morality: Socialization and Development, Vol. 2, Academic Press, New York, 1979.

38 G. O'Connell Higgins, Resilient Adults Overcoming a Cruel Past, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 1994; Staub, The Psychology of Good and Evil, op. cit. (note 10), p. 4; Staub, "The roots of goodness", op. cit. (note 20), p. 7.

the experience of loving human relationships. Such altruists often report, as do resilient children and adults who have had painful/traumatic experiences but function well nonetheless,[39] that some people have shown concern, caring and affection for them and given them help. As a result, they have come to see the possibilities of loving relationships among people and better lives for themselves and for others. As they then open themselves to the suffering of others, their own past experiences intensify their sympathy, caring and concern.[40]

With rare exceptions, children in Rwanda have been deeply affected by the genocide and its aftermath. Because of the violence they witnessed, the suffering inflicted upon their families and the resultant losses, and because of the trauma and psychological wounds of their care-givers, all children in Rwanda are liable to be extremely vulnerable. It is essential to provide them with experiences and conditions that can promote healing and create loving relationships with adults and other children, so as to make individual and group violence by them unlikely, to enable them to live better lives and to pave the way for a peaceful future — in part by generating altruism born of suffering.

Moral courage

In many circumstances caring values and moral courage are required to be a compassionate, active bystander, whether to speak out in the political domain against the persecution of others or to take action in specific instances. Moral courage is the willingness and ability to speak and act according to one's moral and caring values in the face of likely opposition, disapproval, ostracism or even physical danger. Knowing and believing in humane values can motivate moral courage. But in addition to such motives, having an independent outlook (for example, to see persecution for what it is), the ability to stand on one's own and confidence in one's own opinion are all-important for morally courageous actions.[41]

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39 R. Tedeschi, C. Park, and L. Calhoun, (eds), *Post-traumatic Growth: Positive Changes in the Aftermath of Crisis*, Vol I of B. Weiner (ed.), *Personality and Clinical Psychology Series*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, New Jersey, 1998.

40 Staub, "The roots of goodness", *op. cit.* (note 20), p. 7.

41 E. Staub, "Blind versus constructive patriotism: Moving from embeddedness in the group to critical loyalty and action", in E. Staub & D. Bar-Tal (eds), *Patriotism in the Lives of Individuals and Groups*, Nelson-Hall, Chicago, 1997; Staub, "Personality, social conditions", *op. cit.* (note 25), p. 9; Staub, "The roots of goodness", *op. cit.* (note 20), p. 7.

Giving children a say at home and in school, for instance through participation in making rules at home or in the classroom, can be one way of developing moral courage. This is particularly hard to accomplish, and thus particularly important, in cultures that socialize children by instilling into them a very strong respect for authority. Such is the case in Rwanda, and this very strong respect for authority is one of the cultural elements that made genocide more likely.[42] Speaking out and thereby standing out is especially difficult in such cultures.[43] Adults require training that brings about some degree of transformation in them, if they are to give children opportunities to express their own views and thereby develop the confidence required for morally courageous action. The example of moral courage by adults is also highly important.

Understanding the roots of violence: an avenue to healing, reconciliation and active bystandership

In our work in Rwanda, my associates and I have found that it is highly effective to talk to people about the influences that lead to genocide, give them examples from other places where genocides have been perpetrated and have them apply the understanding of genocide that we present to events in Rwanda. The influences that commonly lead to genocide include difficult living conditions and group conflict within a society; singling out some group as a scapegoat for problems; the creation of ideologies that offer a vision of more hopeful societal arrangements for one group but identify another group as an enemy which stands in the way of the ideology's fulfilment; growing devaluation, persecution and violence; and cultural elements such as a past history of devaluation, past victimization and injury by a group, overly strong respect for authority and others, and the passivity of bystanders both inside and outside the group.[44]

Gaining an understanding of the roots of violence seems to contribute to both healing and reconciliation. It seems to make survivors feel more human as they come to see the great violence perpetrated against them not as an incomprehensible evil, but as the outcome of understandable human processes. In seminars and workshops participants say things like: "If this has happened elsewhere, and if we can understand the influences (human

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42 Staub, *The Roots of Evil, op. cit.* (note 5), p. 3; Staub, "Personality, social conditions", *op. cit.* (note 25), p. 9.

43 Staub, The Roots of Evil, *op. cit.* (note 5), p. 3.

44 Staub, *ibid.*, p. 3; Staub, "Breaking the cycle", *op. cit.* (note 28), p. 10; Staub, *The psychology of good and evil, op. cit.* (note 10), p. 4.

experiences) that lead to it, then it is not God who has chosen to punish us. And if we know how this happens, we can take action to prevent it." An understanding of the influences that led to the genocide in Rwanda also makes survivors and members of the perpetrator group more willing to accept each other. Survivors can see the acts of perpetrators, horrific as they are, as more human in origin, as can members of the perpetrator group see the actions of their own group. An understanding of the origins of violence and their implications for prevention also seems to enable leaders to consider and evaluate policies and practices in the light of their role in contributing to or preventing renewed violence,[45] although the extent to which they actually use their understanding in devising and deciding on policies is unclear.

Such understanding can be important for everyone. To create active bystandership, it is important for people to comprehend the forces that create passivity, such as pluralistic ignorance (not knowing what other people think and feel) and the dispersal of responsibility (the feeling that with so many others who can intervene, one is not responsible oneself).[46] An important inhibitor of action may be that people usually do not foresee the evolution of violence. They tend to consider a new step in the persecution of the victimized group only by itself, not as part of an evolution. They do not take into account how things have already changed and are likely to change further. Seeing a particular human rights violation as one step in a course of development, as one further step along "a continuum of destruction", may make early action by them, which is both easier (less dangerous) and more effective (since perpetrators are less committed to their course), more likely.

The role of leaders and external bystanders

Often people in other countries, "external bystanders", are especially important for preventing the evolution of persecution and violence, i.e. of human rights violations. Unfortunately, nations have historically remained passive or have been tacit accomplices.[47] Improvements in the human rights environment have also suffered a reversal, as persecution by governments of supposed terrorists, without proper legal safeguards, has become more acceptable after the terrorist attacks on the United States.

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45 Staub and Pearlman, "Healing, reconciliation and forgiving", *op. cit.* (note 2), p. 2; Staub, Pearlman, and Miller, "Healing the roots", *op. cit.* (note 1).

46 B. Latane and J. Darley, *The Unresponsive Bystander: Why Doesn't He Help?* Appleton-Crofts, New York, 1970.

47 Powers, *op. cit.* (note 5).

How might people deal with leaders who promote destructive ideologies and allow or lead their people to persecution and violence? There can be a wide variety of reasons for such leaders' actions. But despite varied motives, thoughtful and concerted action by bystanders can have demonstrable effects. For example, when persecution of the Baha'i increased after the overthrow of the Shah in Iran and about 200 of them were executed, representations by the international Baha'i community to their governments and the United Nations, and protests by these to Iran, led to a halt in the executions.[48] Protest alone can be important. However, reactions by "bystanders" who are also guided by an understanding of the motives of such leaders, and can thus approach them in a way that is sensitive to their motives and their culture, can sometimes be extremely useful, especially when those motives stem from the group's past victimization, or perhaps more directly from the leaders' own or their family's suffering in the course of that victimization.[49]

To exert an effective influence on perpetrator groups and their leaders, who are often high-level leaders in a country, the informed, thoughtful engagement by governments and high-level leaders of other countries may be required. This is often not forthcoming. In the case of Rwanda, the passivity of the international community, ranging from the United Nations to the United States of America and other countries, or indeed their active resistance to taking action, was truly horrifying.[50] This passivity, in face of the clear evidence of ongoing mass murder, might well be considered as evil.[51]

An important form of bystandership for citizens of countries is to exert influence on their leaders and governments to be compassionate, active bystanders. For this to come about, countries need to develop institutions that will activate positive responses by governments and leaders.[52] Concern

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48 K. Bigelow, "A campaign to deter genocide: The Baha'i experience", in H. Fein (ed.), *Genocide Watch*, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1993.

49 Staub, "Personality, social conditions", *op. cit.* (note 25), p. 9.

50 P. Gourevich, *We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families*, Farrar Straus and Giroux, New York, 1998; Powers, *op. cit.* (note 5), p. 16; Staub, "Personality, social conditions", *op. cit.* (note 25), p. 9.

51 Staub, "Personality, social conditions", *op. cit.* (note 25), p. 9. In the aftermath of the genocide, during the presidential debates leading up to the 2000 elections, candidate George W. Bush said that he would not have sent troops to Rwanda, although in the aftermath of the genocide it seemed that a small contingent of troops could have prevented the genocide. Candidate Al Gore followed Bush's lead and agreed.

52 *Ibid.*

about humane values and humanitarian law should include informing people and helping them to become active at home in influencing their govern- ments to apply humane values in relation to other countries, and thus to be active bystanders whenever harm is done to people anywhere in the world.

Résumé

Prévenir la violence et générer des valeurs d'humanité: guérison et réconciliation au Rwanda

Ervin Staub

Cet article examine les racines de la violence entre les groupes et les moyens de prévenir une nouvelle flambée de violence, en prenant le Rwanda pour principal exemple. Il analyse aussi la manière d'élever les enfants afin qu'ils adoptent des valeurs d'humanité et agissent conformément aux principes humanitaires, ce qui réduira les risques de violence entre les groupes. La dépréciation de l'autre, une tradition de dépréciation dans la culture, les conséquences psychologiques du harcèlement passé, et une évolution au cours de laquelle les individus et les groupes changent du fait de leurs propres actions violentes et préjudiciables sont du nombre des facteurs qui ont favorisé le génocide. Seules la guérison des rescapés, profondément marqués par leur situation de victimes, et celle des auteurs et des membres de leur groupe, dont la violence ou la passivité est la cause de grandes blessures psychologiques, peuvent prévenir une nouvelle flambée de violence. Ces guérisons permettent d'entrevoir une réconciliation. Diverses interventions au Rwanda sont évoquées. Centrées sur la population en général, les dirigeants nationaux, les journalistes et d'autres, elles visent à promouvoir la guérison et la réconciliation. Une évaluation expérimentale de l'une d'entre elles a mis en évidence des résultats positifs. L'accent est mis sur la nécessité de comprendre les origines de la violence, en particulier les causes profondes du génocide au Rwanda, pour favoriser la guérison, la réconciliation ainsi que la prise de mesures de prévention par les dirigeants. Le fait de susciter chez les enfants un sentiment de compassion «inclusive» qui s'étende aux personnes n'appartenant pas au groupe, et le rôle de la satisfaction des besoins psychologiques essentiels sont examinés. L'affermissement du courage moral qui rend plus probable une observation active et celui de l'altruisme né de la souffrance sont aussi examinés.