

ANIMAL KILLER

Transmission of War Trauma from
One Generation to the Next

VAMIK D. VOLKAN

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Vamık Volkan is an Emeritus Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia; the Senior Erik Erikson Scholar at the Erikson Institute for Education and Research of the Austen Riggs Center, Stockbridge, Massachusetts; and an Emeritus Training and Supervising Analyst at the Washington Psychoanalytic Institute, Washington, DC. He served as the Medical Director of the University of Virginia's Blue Ridge Hospital and as director of the University of Virginia's Center for the Study of Mind and Human Interaction (CSMHI). He holds Honorary Doctorate degrees from the University of Kuopio Finland and from Ankara University, Turkey. He is a former President of the Turkish-American Neuropsychiatric Society, the International Society of Political Psychology (ISPP), the Virginia Psychoanalytic Society, and the American College of Psychoanalysts. He is the author, co-author, editor, or co-editor of dozens of books, and the author of hundreds of book chapters and academic papers. He has served on the editorial boards of sixteen professional journals including the *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*.

Over past decades, Professor Volkan has been the Inaugural Yitzhak Rabin Fellow, The Yitzhak Rabin Center for Israeli Studies, Tel Aviv, Israel; a Visiting Professor of Law, Harvard University, Cambridge,

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Professor Volkan served as a member of the Carter Center's International Negotiation Network, headed by former president Jimmy Carter. He chaired the Select Advisory Commission to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Critical Incident Response Group, was a Temporary Consultant to the World Health Organization (WHO) in Albania and Macedonia, and a Fulbright Scholar in Austria. He has received numerous awards from national and international organisations, including the Elise M. Hayman Award given by the American Orthopsychiatric Association for his contributions to the psychology of racism and genocide, and the Sigmund Freud Award given by the city of Vienna in collaboration with the World Council for Psychotherapy.

Currently Dr. Volkan (with Lord John Alderdice (United Kingdom) and Dr. Robi Friedman (Israel)) chairs the International Dialogue Initiative (IDI) meetings. He established the IDI in 2007, with the Austen Riggs Center in Stockbridge, Massachusetts as its administrative home. The IDI members are unofficial representatives from Lebanon, Iran, Israel, Germany, Russia, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, and West Bank. They meet twice a year to examine world affairs primarily from a psychopolitical point of view.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

Ten hours after the raid on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, 200 Japanese bombers arrived in the Philippines over Manila and found the American warplanes still on the runways—like sitting ducks. The Japanese pilots destroyed everything they saw. This was a portent of more horrible things to come, including events in the Philippines' Bataan Peninsula.

Soon after the attack on the American military airport the Imperial Japanese Army began invading the Philippines. General Douglas MacArthur, then commander of US Army Forces Far East stationed in Manila, was compelled to withdraw his troops; an estimated 60,000 Filipinos and 15,000 Americans withdrew to the Bataan Peninsula, where they waited for relief. The situation there became so bad that the soldiers began chanting the limerick written by Frank West Hewlett, who was a war correspondent during World War II.

We're the Battling Bastards of Bataan,
No Mama, No Papa, No Uncle Sam,
No aunts, no uncles, no cousins, no nieces,
No pills, no planes, no artillery pieces,
And nobody gives a damn!

General MacArthur, his family and staff managed to escape from the Peninsula in March 1942, leaving the American soldiers feeling abandoned. After a 90-day siege, on 9 April 1942, the Americans and Filipinos surrendered to the Japanese. The prisoners of war, an estimated 75,000 of them, were forced to walk fifty-five miles in the broiling sun while Japanese beat them with rifle butts and whips, killing some of them. The captives were given no food during the first three days of walking and were forced to drink water from filthy wallows used by water buffaloes. It is estimated that between 100 and 650 American and between 2,500 and 10,000 Filipino prisoners of war died during this horrifying march, which would be recorded in history as the Bataan Death March. The death marchers arrived at San Fernando where they were piled into boxcars and then taken by rail to Capas. From there they were forced to walk another eight miles to Camp O'Donnell, which was originally a Philippine Army post that had become a facility of the United States Air Force.

Many first-hand stories have been written about the horrors the prisoners of war experienced at Camp O'Donnell (Hartendorp, 1967; Dyess, 2002; Knox, 2002; Boyt & Burch, 2004. See also: *Report on American Prisoners of War Interned by the Japanese in the Philippines, Prepared by the Office of the Provost Marshal General 19 November 1945*). An estimated 40,000 Philippine and American prisoners would die at this camp due to its horribly unsanitary conditions, malnutrition, dysentery, and mosquito-transmitted dengue fever and cerebral malaria. Many prisoners walked around with open, untreated wounds. During this time, it is said that the Japanese Army provided food and medical care for its own people. Besides being obliged to bow to Japanese officers, boil the dirty water before drinking it and constantly shoo away flies, the prisoners endured terrible treatment. Some of them were beheaded next to open graves and others had to rebury corpses that heavy rains and floods had brought to the surface. General MacArthur returned to the Philippines in late 1944 as he had promised, and eventually the US Army and the Philippine Commonwealth Army liberated Camp O'Donnell on 30 January 1945.

One of the Americans who survived the Bataan Death March and endured Camp O'Donnell was a large, handsome young man. He was at the camp for about a year and, just before conditions there began to improve slightly, he was sent to another prisoner-of-war camp in the Philippines. At the new location he continued to experience horrors

similar to those he had endured at Camp O'Donnell. By the time he was saved, he had lost over sixty-five pounds. Let us call him Gregory.

Gregory came from a well-to-do family. Before he had been sent overseas—soon after he began studying engineering—he had known a girl from a poor background named Libby, who had gone to his high school. After Gregory returned to his hometown in Virginia, weak and bewildered, he again met this young woman who had not gone to college and was working at a local drugstore. While Gregory was away Libby had married a man after getting pregnant. Her husband left her when their son was only six weeks old and later they were divorced. We will call her little boy Peter.

When Gregory appeared in little Peter's life the boy was three years old, living with his mother and maternal grandmother in a small apartment. His biological father was still in the same town but had no connection with his ex-wife or his child and, for reasons unknown to me, did not pay child support. Peter's maternal grandfather was long dead. His grandmother was involved with a rather fundamentalist Baptist church which provided the sole social life for her and her daughter. In spite of their smiles at the church and expressions of love for humankind, both women were frustrated, angry, and most likely depressed. They felt overburdened by little Peter, and in their resentment they overfed him, intruding on the boy's autonomy by spoon-feeding him, even after he had learnt how to use eating utensils. He became an overweight child. Peter did not have his own bed and slept with his grandmother.

Gregory, who was having a hard time adjusting to post-prisoner-of-war life, took refuge in this apartment to escape the routine outside world of his former friends, family members, and their circle of friends. Since he did not work, he spent most of his time in this apartment as if in a prison. He became Libby's lover. Peter's grandmother moved to an apartment next door and remained the boy's primary caregiver while Libby continued to work at the drugstore. In the evening Peter would stay at the grandmother's apartment and continue to sleep with her. When Peter began school, the two intrusive women did his homework for him, forced him to listen to Bible stories, and to be an obedient, "good" boy.

Sensing that Peter had been raised as if he were imprisoned by two frustrated and angry women, Gregory unconsciously saw a "fit" between the little boy's developing self-representation and his own helpless self-image that he had developed in the Philippines. He