

4. REVERBERATIONS OF HISTORY

4.1 SHAME, GUILT & SCAPEGOATS

The failure to face history as openly and truthfully as possible can have serious consequences, not only for the generation that experienced it, but also for the generations that follow. While it is understandable that a generation that has lived through war and genocide has a natural desire not to think about that experience, there can be after-shocks for their children and grandchildren.

The work I did in Bosnia, also documented in *The Pendulum*, is a more recent example of where populist politicians continue to draw upon unprocessed or poorly processed memory in the society in order to continue to stoke ethnic tensions to their own advantage. Unavoidable feelings of guilt and shame left by war can easily turn into indignation for having to bear these feelings, and even hatred, if not addressed. Extremist political movements can easily transform these ill feelings into hatred of certain groups, which become scapegoats. Hitler used this dynamic to his advantage, stoking the indignation Germans felt after WWI and directing it at Jews.

- 4.1.1 What is the difference between shame and guilt?
- 4.1.2 In what ways do shame and guilt motivate behavior through the generations in *The Pendulum*?
- 4.1.3 How can we understand previous generations' failure to face history honestly so many decades later? What are the consequences?
- 4.1.4 Can you provide any other example of where the failure to face history openly and truthfully has led to serious consequences, including the invention of scapegoats?