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United Nations Tribunals and Complicity in Human Rights Violations: The Assassination of Zoran Djindjic

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Abstract. This article presents a hypothesis of untoward consequences through the reification of human rights.

A common take within public discourse on the recent assassination of the late Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic is that Serbia still has a long way to go. Even with Slobodan Milosevic in the dock of a United Nations tribunal at The Hague, there are still powerful paramilitary, intelligence, security, military, and business personages. These personages are fighting against baring the past, present, and future of human rights, civil liberties, and civil rights violations to public, political, and legal scrutiny. This take on the assassination especially places human rights as an unquestioned end that seems to justify just about any means.

That human rights must not be impervious to means-ends analysis can be considered by reviewing political analyses associated with Djindjic's assassination. For example, Simons (2003) implies that representatives of human rights were putting significant pressure on Djindjic and his allies to deliver ever more notorious human rights violators ever more quickly or frequently. BORBA Online and Blic Online commentaries suggest that this pressure might have induced misperception and miscalculation on the part of Djindjic in terms of how far and fast he could go in bringing the past to account, constructing a new present, and engendering hope for the future.

A logical progression from these postulations could lead us to the hypothesis that the push for human rights led to a violation of Djindjic's human rights. In essence, fervent supporters of human rights may have bled on their hands--viz., the blood of Djindjic.

A further logical progression could lead to us a common observation of 20th century human atrocities--that the quest for utopia too often can lead to a horrible dystopia. Political fantasies of equality, equity, nonviolence, liberty, peace, and purity too often beget nightmares. The political fantasy of human rights might possibly be seen in the unfortunate context of violating human rights to nurture them--a reality that would resonate with destroying a village to save it.

Also, there appears to be a certain tension and pressure to effect human rights at all costs that seems to be well explained by the psychodynamic construct of reaction formation. Here the press towards the goal of human rights for all humans would be unconsciously an expression of the converse--of expunging that which consciously is to be nurtured. It is in this latter sense that the best of the human quest is taken over and subverted by the worst. The death of Zoran Djindjic and the ceaseless insistence on legal accountability for human rights violations may constitute but one example of this. (See Commentaries on Djindjic. (March 13, 2003). Blic Online. <http://www.blic.co.yu/danas/broj/E-Index.htm>; Commentaries on Djindjic. (March 13, 2003). Borba Online. <http://www.borba.co.yu/society.html>; Rothstein, D.A. (1973). Reflections on a contagion of assassination. *Life-Threatening Behavior*, 3, 105-130; Simons, M. (March 13, 2003). Serb's killing is a setback to war crimes tribunal. *The New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com>; Weinstein, E.A., & Lysterly, O.G. (1969). Symbolic aspects of presidential

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assassination. *Psychiatry: journal for the Study of Interpersonal Processes*, 32, 1-11.) (Keywords: Assassination, Djindjic, Human Rights, Serbia.)