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ANNUAL REPORT

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ABOUT CENTRE FOR NONVIOLENT ACTION

CNA's mission has been to work on the building of lasting peace in the region of the former Yugoslavia through the promotion of the cultures of nonviolence and dialogue, and through the trust building among individuals and groups, as well as constructive dealing with the past as one of the key elements of the peacebuilding.

We have been striving to achieve a society of lasting peace where the development of critical thought, taking responsibility for society and community, the encouragement to reassess one's own attitudes and the acceptance of the diversity are cherished. To achieve these social values, we apply different kinds of activism, while focusing on peace education, publishing and video production.

What do we want and what are we striving for?

With our work we want to incentivise and encourage the promotion of peace as a basic social value and ridding of the war and violence as ways to solving conflicts. Dealing with the past in the region of former Yugoslavia has been the focus of our interests and we advocate for the definition of this process as a multilayered and complex process that includes also: the work to deconstruct the "enemy images", to build trust among people in the region of the former Yugoslavia and to establish a culture of remembrance; advocacy for promotion and development of public policies aimed at dealing with the past; the reexamination and deconstruction of nationalism, militarism and patriarchy as the ideological pillars of violence in every society. With the programmes of peace education and activities in the field of documentary production and publishing we strive to create new and strengthen the current resources for peace work in the region of the former Yugoslavia. Our desire is to create and to support the capacities focused on *value-based* approach to peace building, led by commitment to human rights protection and freedoms of all individuals and the values of dialogue, co-operation, social justice and solidarity among the individuals and groups.

In which way do we want to accomplish this?

By respecting the basic principle "live what you preach" as well as by creating a firm value-based foundation in our work, but also in the way the organization itself is functioning. In openness for dialogue with all those who want it and in readiness for co-operation with those with whom we share visions and values of nonviolence, culture of dialogue, constructive criticism and struggle against injustice. In the focus on regional cooperation as an important element of the lasting and sustainable peace in the region of former Yugoslavia.

In readiness to change, develop, learn and adjust ourselves to the demands of the real needs of our societies, not the demands of donors and "real-politik."

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Dear friends,

We are presenting you with yet another CNA annual report - on our tenth anniversary. Even though we are not prone to special celebrations, jubilees, ceremonies and everything else that goes with anniversaries, we felt extremely pleased to celebrate our first ten years with a party with a little help from our friends.

As one way of celebrating, more in the spirit of CNA if you will, was the publishing of the book *“20 Pieces Encouragement for Awakening and Change: Peacebuilding in the region of the former Yugoslavia”* where are collected stories, successes and failures of peace activists who have been involved in peace building in this region for the past ten and more years.

And while we have been living out that tenth-year of ours, we have been doing a lot of planning, reexamination and overall contemplating the image building of CNA, if not in the following ten, then at least within the next couple of years.

We have been changing along with the society in which we live and work. The direction of social changes does not make us happy or please necessarily, but is nevertheless a key factor in planning and creation of our future activities.

And “new winds” in CNA are blowing in the direction of our still more intensive coming to terms with the past and more presence in public through various activities (documentary films, books, textbooks) on peace promotion. Peace, as a way of life, as a foundation of system of values and a quality which means much more than mere words that are exchanged between tireless national leaders when they are trying to give some sort of music to their disgraceful policies so that it would become acceptable to a hardened hearing of “the international community” or local “mass” of people leaving in apathy whose fears and traumas are easily exploited.

We have learned gradually over the ten years to watch over ourselves more, to take rest and not go over our limits, and to find time for learning and our personal development. When you add to this 30-odd basic trainings, five training for trainers programmes and two advanced trainings, five years of work with war veterans, four documentaries, a textbook published on four languages, two books on reconciliation and peace building... well then, one finds a reason to feel a sense of accomplishment after all ☺.

CNA programmes

Advanced training in peacebuilding (II)

1. phase: Jahorina/BH, 04-14.08.2006.
2. phase: Ulcinj/Montenegro, 04-10.10.2006.

After our last year's experience with the organization of the first advanced training in peace building, and the feedback we received from the group of participants about the aptness and usefulness of such programme, we decided to organize the training with similar concept and goals, again this year.

The group that was selected for this year's advanced training gathered 19 participants from different parts of the region of former Yugoslavia, individuals with different ethnic and religious identities and coming from very different professional and activist context. The distinctive differences amongst the people in the group were the very thing that made this training very ample and challenging, because there is neither a defined theme nor the hypothetical situation, however well set-up that can be such a driving force of the process as it is the case with differences that exist amongst them, that in many cases mean different value standpoints.

Therefore the very selection of the people and their placement in the context of the *advanced* training in peace building, during the ten days of the phase one, offered a chance to deal with one of the crucial questions related to peace work - *are we and in what way, ready to talk with people whose value system is different from our own?* The entire first phase of the training was dedicated to shedding some light on some social phenomena and problems that need to be understood in order to work

efficiently on peace building in our region (what do people in our societies are afraid of; how these fears help to construct picture of the enemy; where do the roots of the patriarchate and militarism lie; what are the processes associated with terms like truth, justice, forgiveness, reconciliation etc.).

Since the phase one had been (too) intensive with a very dense schedule containing many themes, our idea was to set a more relaxed concept for the phase two, the one that would give people in the group a chance to reflect on their past and future peace engagement, to deal with some personal processes and try to create/sharpen/improve their own personal strategies of peace work, in an inspirational ambience of the sun-lit Ulcinj.

After all, we can freely say that it's been a long time since we've had a chance to work with such a motivated and inspiring group of people, who gave us so much energy, support and warmth.

The members of the training team were: Ivana, Helena, Milan and Tamara, from both CNA offices. Financial support was provided by German Ministry of International Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

(More detailed article published in our previous report.)

Peace
education
prog-
rammes



Basic training in peacebuilding (XXVI)

Travnik/BH, 08-18.12.2006.

This year's third Training in Peace Building, and the 26th one organized by CNA was held in the Lipa Hotel in Travnik, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The distinguishing feature of this group was certainly participants' age and professional diversity; therefore, we had war veterans, educational workers, activists of political parties and those with international and local activist background.

The training was marked by the work on dealing with the past, which was covered in much detail, with three working blocks that were dedicated to it. It contained very thorough analysis and discussions that had strong impact on participants. We think that it created space for encouraging many persons to re-examine their former views regarding the past wars and current situation in our societies as well as feel empathy for the "others".

The lack of trainees' insight into the regional context was symptomatic, as it often happens in the training events. This certainly requires more thought regarding ways to make people acquainted with the context and promote regional work and its importance. One of the important things that we want to point out is the presence of a Croatian veteran whose participation in the work process, openness and willingness for re-examination helped other participants to humanize the perception of this segment of population and to reduce prejudices towards them. This was another incentive for us, for further inclusion of veterans in our programmes and for offering support to people with this identity who want to work on peace building.

(More detailed article published in our Six-month Report, Sept. '06 - Feb. '07.)



Basic training in peacebuilding (XXVII)

Tivat/Montenegro, 09 - 19. 03. 2007.

27th CNA *Basic Training* took place in Tivat, a coastal Montenegrin town, this March. We have received 121 applications and it was difficult to select just 20 participants. This group of participants had a little bit more media people, which was not originally intended, but CNA certainly perceives media people as those with a significant multiplication capacity within their line of work, as well as a capacity to initiate a process of dealing with the past on a broader social level.

As one person had to leave the training on day 1 due to family problems instead of 20 there was a total of 19 participants present - eleven women and eight men. Also, we have faced a number of cancellations immediately before the training which has considerably

narrowed our choice of selection of adequate replacements from the backburner list. In this way four Albanians gave up in the last moment so there was no Albanians at the training.

Training team was led by: Radomir Radevic, Tamara Smidling, Sanja Deankovic and Milan Colic Humljan from Babusnica/Belgrade.

The basis for this training turned out to be that of dealing with the past which in our opinion has left the strongest effect on the group. The group has positively responded to this topic which bears all the hallmarks of an advanced training and with their emotional opening it paved the way for the training to reach its height in those moments. Especially open and difficult

emotional exchange, particularly regarding the subjects of violence and coming to terms with the past, where personal stories of the participants and their experience, of the war primarily, has turned out to be something of a great significance for the group as a whole, both in terms of getting to better know each other and in developing trust within the group, and in terms of the readiness to continue probing the “tough and touchy” subjects. All this has resulted in an awareness that dealing with the past is an indispensable element of peace development and of the necessity to discuss it, not only at the training but also back home. This concept of training with the focus on dealing with the past has shown to be a good way to go since it seems relevant to the current socio-political state of affairs and that this is the right time for those issues to be discussed. The group was somewhat older in age than usually, 30-odd years on average, but it was very inspiring and demanding thus challenging the training leaders to deliver more than usually to which the latter responded enthusiastically. During certain periods of training, it was not unusual to go past the schedule, as in the workshop titled “The war and I”, where despite fatigue setting in, the group persevered until every participant had told their story. This was a pretty diverse group from a professional background with its idiosyncrasies, diverse perceptions and attitudes, which contributed to finding common ground among the differences and insights on a number of different subjects, which definitely represented a significant contribution to the perception of certain issues but also of the ways for their solution from many different angles.

The participants were impressed by the working methodology which was a breath of fresh air for many of them, leaving more room for personal expression and a confrontation with a group as well as for the inside processes, contemplation and reexamination of tough questions, which according to the words of the participants was the most valuable experience from the training.

One of the deficiencies of the training was the already mentioned absence of the Albanians which has effected the training a lot. For example, one issue, that of Kosovo, and the relationship between the Serbs and the Albanians, could have been dramatized only through the view of one minority group, that is Bosniaks from Kosovo of whom two participated in the training. However, the absence of these people meant the absence of confrontation among those groups, but also the lack of opportunity for people from those communities to meet and strike a conversation and at least in that way move into the process of overcoming the contemporary obstacles at the Kosovo, which has already been

singled out as one of the goals of CNA's activities. Along with them, two more persons from Montenegro applied and then gave up, which becomes a more frequent occurrence, especially after the proclamation of Montenegrin independence. All of this leads us to think more about the ways of applications as well as the ways to motivate people from these areas, not only how to apply but also how to participate in the training.

The trainer team worked a lot which can be seen in the fact that the afternoon and evening evaluations and the planning of the following workshops had gone on for hours. By the end of the training everyone experienced a significant drop of energy and concentrations. All this has led us to conclude that it should have been looked closer into the ways to preserve energy within a team and how to distribute it more evenly. One of the suggestions was that with some of the workshops, especially those by the end of the training, the team would do better if a part of it (one or two people) has taken responsibility around their preparations, starting and led, and left a chance to others to gather or keep energy necessary for the continuation of the training. There was room for improvisation, and as for the methods and for the content, which was mainly used constructively. But there were some shooting in the dark, such as within a peace building workshop where the part of it was based on the work with the reporters, and which was too ambitiously set up so it resulted in not a story about peace building but in a story about journalists and media in peace building as well as about investigative journalism, which certainly has some advantages, but in our opinion, it shouldn't have taken up so much space (half of one block).

A significant drop of energy and concentration that has resulted in the participants is mostly due to their full commitment within the blocks of dealing with the past, as well as a pressure of the last day and going home, which led to last workshops being done in a laidback fashion, thus leaving the concept of training slightly unfulfilled. However, the set up of the rest of the workshops, which within itself had a connection with peace building and non-violent action have left an impression at the group, especially some individuals that they are coming out much stronger and motivated for a work inside their communities which in some way makes up for the missed and necessary, stronger empowering of participants within the last round of workshops. To the end of promotion of peace work in general and also that of trainings and other peace building actions being more visible to public, a comprehensive press release covering both the training and CNA was sent to all media outlets in Montenegro, where the training took place. This has resulted in conversations with several

journalists and in news coverage by certain media outlets, which represents important and encouraging piece of news. More details on the training itself, the

topics covered and training evaluation can be found in the publication “Jeste, jeste” (in B/H/S language), which is available on request.

Seminar: Dealing with the past – ways and approaches

Ilidža/BH, 17-21.11.2006.

Members of CNA Sarajevo office organized the seminar on the topic “Dealing with the Past. Ways and Approaches” for the peace activists from the former Yugoslavia, who either have some previous experience of work in this field or intend to deal with it. It took place in Ilidža, from November 17-21, 2006. The basic idea was to offer a chance to participants to exchange experiences and discuss the issue both with each other and with people who have been working in various segments of the process of dealing with the past for the past few years.

The following people took part on the seminar presenting their work:

- Vladan Beara from the Centre for War Trauma, Novi Sad
The Significance of Work on War Trauma for Releasing Veterans' Constructive Potential for Peace Work
- Mirsad Tokača from The Research Documentation Centre, Sarajevo
The Role of Factography in Dealing with the Past



- Randy i Amela Puljek/Shank from the Mennonite Central Committee, Sarajevo
Trauma and Reconciliation / Collective Trauma (Narratives)
- Matias Hellman from the ICTY Sarajevo Office
Criminal Justice in the Context of Dealing with the Past - Experience of the Outreach Programme of the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia
- Goran Božičević from QPSW/ Miramida Centre and Bruno Čavić from Izmir, Zagreba
Work with Veterans in Croatia; Dealing With the Past in Peace Education; Peacebuilding
- Adnan Hasanbegović and Sanja Deanković from CNA
Relationship Between Peacebuilding and Dealing with the Past, Work with Veterans, Dealing with the Past in Peace Education

(More detailed article published in our Six-month Report, Sept. '06 - Feb. '07.)

Training for veterans

Jahorina/BH, 01. 06. - 05.06. 2007.

Bjelašnica/BH, 30.06. - 04.07. 2007.

The fifth CNA's training for former combatants of 1991-1999 wars was held in two parts, in June and July 2007. The part one gathered seventeen veterans and the part two was attended by thirteen of them: activists of veterans' associations of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Srpska), Serbia and Croatia. The actual implementation of the training was preceded by a more

intensive series of activities (in comparison to the previous years) which included organization of meetings and visits to different veterans' associations. Due to our experience from the earlier training events we decided to take these measures that included a series of preparatory meetings, aiming to achieve concrete agreements regarding mutual cooperation, as well as more efficient approach to the veterans and their massive

participation on the training events. The activity in question and the fact that there are more and more people working with the veterans, in addition to the support that some influential people in veterans' associations gave us for both our past actions as well as this one resulted in seventeen veterans who attended the training, which was the first time. After the phase one, they were all willing and very highly motivated to take part on the phase two, but it didn't happen because of some objective reasons (it was primarily due to health-related problems that there was thirteen people present). Part of the problems we had encountered earlier, and by this we mean the distrust that veterans' associations have towards both peace organizations and peace work in general, were mostly overcome in direct talks with people when they were able to get to know our intentions. This was the case on both phases of the training during which all participants put their absolute trust into the training team. They trusted us with the way the process was going, importance of the themes that were chosen to be discussed, and there was an absolute trust regarding the purpose and the importance of mutual work of veterans on one side and peace activists on the other. All this, together with some very motivated individuals, resulted in the least of difficulties that had occurred very often in the past, due to trainees' mistrust and attempts to discredit training team. Accordingly, the atmosphere within the group and during the entire working process was truly empowering and ideal for work. One should also mention that people who had talked to combatants in the period of preparations were also former combatants and at the same time members of the training team, which made the work on trust building and motivating people to participate on the training lot easier. We think that in this way the gap that still undoubtedly exists between veterans and peace activists was lessened, at least with this group, which was something we had wanted to work on.

The people who also work with veterans commented that our training was "too hard", since, according to them, the very fact that combatants from different

sides are gathered in one place and can talk is enough and means a great success. This deserves further reflection, but on the other hand this training confirmed our opinion that the people who came to the training are primarily guided by their internal need to talk and to listen to "the others, those from the other side". Those "hard" conversations and "hard" themes are what gives them satisfaction and rejuvenation as well as give them motivation for both new meetings and work on dealing with the past.

One trainee stated that he had come to the phase two of the training as if he "was going out" which was the best indicator of the atmosphere and the friendly relationships that were established between participants. These relationships continued during the period in between two training events and still last, which was unimaginable for most of them before the phase one, with all the insecurities and fear they had had. This certainly doesn't mean that the people took of their attitudes and opinions lightly, beating around the bush or correcting them, at least while the training was taking place. On the contrary, different opinions and freedom of expression of their own views were accompanied by the attention towards other people's feelings all of which greatly contributed to the exchange of information about the "other side" that had not been exchanged until then. All of that resulted in reduction of strong prejudices and image of the enemy and re-examination of most trainees' personal views.

Unwillingness to concede to any kind of compromise, inability to reach agreement particularly regarding certain painful issues (hero or war criminal?; legitimate military action or ethnic cleansing?; human life as a priceless value?; personal responsibility etc.) as well as many other issues that are often characteristics of a group of former combatants who had fought on different sides, were overcome to a great extent. Underlining the values that we have in common or should have in common, which were written down at the end of the training, as the values we share and are willing to stand for (peace, freedom, respect of human life, true aspiration toward truth, etc.) clearly indicates the

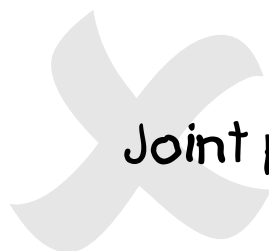


common ground we share as well as how we should and can work on peace building.

We are particularly glad that all the goals that we outlined before the training were accomplished to a great extent while some were even exceeded. The phase two of the training was in most part different to all the previous ones, because there was something that resembled to the preparation of the action plan, which in this case included designing concrete joint activities. An enormous readiness of all the trainees to take part in all the further actions as well as to take part in organization of these concrete activities was quite refreshing. Mutual visits of veterans' associations, joint visits to scaffolds by representatives of veterans' associations from different sides, publishing of the book with veterans' stories as well as organizing public forum in Zagreb, were just some of the ideas trainees came up with and were willing to implement. The desire to take part and willingness to take over

responsibility for the organization of these activities was demonstrated by all the participants on the training. The enormous and true willingness is enough to motivate, encourage and assure that further work with veterans is necessary. There are plans for mutual visits of veterans' associations, part of which should be joint visits to the scaffolds, further elaboration of the ideas regarding publishing of the book as well as confirmation of the likelihood to organize the forum in Zagreb. Smaller teams that were formed on the training should make detailed planes of these actions, so the first concrete steps are expected to take place in October 2007.

An enormous willingness to continue working together as well as potential for further work on dealing with the past that this group possessed, had a very empowering effect on us, therefore we are highly motivated and looking forward to both new training events and implementation of joint activities.



Joint programmes

Peace education for youth of Srebrenica and Bratunac

Training events on dealing with the past

Sarajevo, SHL House
phase 2: 22-25.09 and 13-16.10. 2006.
phase 3: 10-13.11. and 08-11.12. 2006.

Our three month report on the period of March - May 2006 already brought the information about the idea to organize the series of training events for the youth of two municipalities in Eastern Bosnia. Two training events with two different groups of participants were held at that time.

In the meantime, after 6 months long break, the remaining two phases of the programme were organized.

The entire activity was initiated by Nansen Dialogue Center, Sarajevo (who were the organizers) with trainers' support provided by CNA (in charge of designing and conducting the workshops). "Odisej", Bratunac-based youth organization offered various and irreplaceable support in the local community while QPSW

helped by providing financial and logistic support.

Even though we're basically focused on regional work, it has become more clear how important it is to have an insight into the situation in various local communities, especially in those considered as "most critical" in terms of work on peace building and dealing with the past. The region that we covered with these training events certainly falls under that category, not just in the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but the wider region, too.

Speaking from the trainer's point of view, it was a real challenge to bring this difficult subject closer to young people, get them to become interested in workshop methods and take part in creating a valuable space for the people of different ethnic identities to hang

out and work together, which is something that they cannot do in a relaxed manner at home, in their own communities. We have to say that the cosy atmosphere of the Schueler Helfen Leben's House brings additional

feeling of relaxation and helps build the group, thus making it easier to enjoy work, which makes it a good choice for training events like these.

Five-day training in peacebuilding

Sarajevo, 01. - 05.05.2007.

I realized how work with young people can be inspiring and motivating, on one hand and exhausting and extremely stressful on the other, when I joined the work with youth of Bratunac and Srebrenica. Five day training came as a final part of the follow up of our co-operation with the Nansen Dialogue Centre, the organizer of "small" training events with CNA team in charge of preparation and implementation. The activity took place in SHL House in Sarajevo, from May 1-5, 2007. Trainees were people from both groups who had participated on the previous three-day training events.

Our intention to complete the work with young people with whom we had worked on dealing with the past (DWP) with the training in peace building, came primarily as a result of our insight that peace building is not nor can it be only DWP. If we work on DWP, especially with youth and leave out the themes like prejudices, identity, conflict, gender, nonviolent action, etc. we shall cover peace building only partially. One of the learning points that we gained from the entire process was that the themes aforementioned could have been more easily fit into one another if DWP was worked on at the final phases of the whole process, and not in the beginning, as it was the case here. What was special about the work in this case was the fact that young people we worked with were very much closed inside their mono-ethnic communities, most of them having been either refugees or returnees, having suffered loss of loved ones or even injuries in early childhood, etc. We should add that they were quite badly informed about the context of war events and poorly educated in general, carrying a strong collectivistic spirit, which made it quite difficult to break the ice and work on the themes above mentioned. On the other hand, the pressure they are exposed to in their communities on daily basis, in the form of condemnation of their socializing with those from the other side, the burden of being called traitors are more than clear warnings to approach work with young people with a maximum of caution. In order to establish communication with trainees we needed to penetrate a strong shield made of

things that shape their lives: lack of any kind of prospects in their communities, jobs, ambitions to continue with education, life which seems perpetually burdened with genocide and victims as the first things that come to mind when hearing about their communities, strong sense of victim that is hard to overcome, throwing over responsibility to the other side, sinking even deeper into the shell of nationalism. Of course there are, on the other hand, inquisitiveness and energy of youth, lust for life and wish to make whatever progress possible, all of which was quite refreshing in some difficult moments. Pointing out to the fact that there is no peace building without gender equality, reduction of prejudices (especially those ethnic ones), attempts to step out of the rigid ethnic identities and personally re-examine patriarchal code that is dominant in their societies, schools and families was partially fruitful. We say partly because it was the first time for most of them to discuss these themes in a different manner and the first time they were exposed to an open confrontation. However, it was fruitful, because some of the habitual prejudices were quite shaken and re-examined (which was especially the case with those against gay people), and trainees were offered a chance to talk about it openly, perhaps for the first time. That is exactly the kind of space young people from different sides need so they can have an honest conversation and discuss their needs. That space needs to be built. Sensitization for different forms of violence and raising awareness about the necessity of personal work were also partially accomplished. Several individual demonstrated an exceptional willingness for both confrontation and further work which encouraged us and reassured us in our belief that young people should be given an opportunity to talk, be asked and listened to, instead being left aside and made an easy target for nationalism and monotony of routine processes of discrimination and violence. To remain indifferent towards the position of these young people is also violence, both against themselves and ideals of change that we all look for and advocate.

Training in peacebuilding and dealing with the past

Sarajevo, SHL House, 23 - 28. 06.2007.

This training represents continuance of our cooperation with the Nansen Dialogue Centre, Sarajevo and a start of a new cycle of training events and workshops with youth of Bratunac and Srebrenica (Bosnia and Herzegovina), future of which remains doubtful due to an uncertain funding. We bring the information about the previous cycle in this and some earlier CNA reports.

The activity was designed and implemented by CNA's Sanja and Tamara.

The training was characterized by some specifics regarding the trainees' group.

First of all, I'd like to look back at the fact that this was the youngest group we had worked with so far, mostly made of high school students and few college freshmen. There was much more men than women in the group, and the women were far quieter and mostly fitted into the dynamics of the dialogue, imposed by boys who fairly outnumbered them. It was also the reflection of people's perceptions and experiences regarding those who have the decisive role in the society and are supposed to take initiative.

Motivation of people who are so young as well as their particular identities (Bosniaks-returnees from Bratunac and other neighbouring hamlets and Serbs from Srebrenica, while there were neither Serbs from Bratunac nor Bosniaks from Srebrenica in the group) are just some palpable indicators how the context of life in these communities burdens young people. They feel that something's wrong but are unable to talk about it or work on it. People in these communities live in almost completely separate and parallel worlds, exposed to two different ideologies and meet sporadically, like when they go to the same school. All this makes those who are a majority in their communities and "on their own land" (like Serbs in Bratunac, for example) often unaware of how minority feel, how they live and what they have to deal with. On the other hand, being a Serb in Srebrenica means carrying a collective stigma of the "bad and guilty ones" in other people's perception, and that is a heavy burden to carry, especially for young people who do not have a clear picture what to change and how and what is the right way to do it.

Few months before the phase one was about to start, all the trainees were interviewed by the organizers from NDC Sarajevo regarding their motivation to participate in this programme, and one of the precon-

ditions was that they had not attended similar peace education programmes. However, in a few months between the interview and the training, many attended several workshops that thematized various segments close to peace building and dealing with the past, therefore we needed to change and adjust the prepared concept. It is certainly an indicator that many organizations work with youth in this micro region, but there is neither that many opportunities to exchange extremely personal experiences from the past which is still very much alive, nor are there chances to discuss matters that really hurt, to ask others and get a personal answers, which fall out of the common denominator of perpetrators and victims.

The phase one of the training was a chance for sensitization and examination of different forms of violence in the society, which are so enrooted and "normal" and no longer identified as violence in the first place. It was designed as an introduction into the importance of reflection on processes of dealing with the past in our communities and on the things that we were offered as non re-examinable truths about the war and "the other ones". Later phases of the programme are planned to cover only dealing with the past.

It is really too much to expect that things will change more significantly after just one training where the question of role of personal responsibility of these young people for keeping the status quo in solidified and divided communities like Srebrenica and Bratunac was raised, but this definitely is a step forward, to making some space to discuss painful and frightening issues, not only within the circle of people who share same ethnic identity.

I believe that the experience of personal stories trainees told each other, with all of them having been both refugees and returnees (regardless of their ethnic pertinence) will encourage mutual empathy that crosses over the lines of identification only with the suffering of "our own" as well as that horrible things were done in the name of those things that we are proud of and swear upon. I believe also that this is a one possible way to initiate changes in our communities, because this kind of exchange doesn't take place very often nor is there much initiative for it in public space, not only amongst the youth of Bratunac and Srebrenica, but in the wider region, too.

Miscellaneous

Peace or justice: advanced reflection on work on dealing with the past

The sixth regional training for persons under the age of 30
Quaker Peace & Social Witness in cooperation with TERCA, Sarajevo & Miramida Centre, Grožnjan
Hajdukovo near Subotica/Serbia, 15 - 20. 07. 2007.

Working at CNA means willingness to accept being regularly overwhelmed with duties, various activities and massive paperwork, lack of which would make it impossible for the organization to function. This kind of “state of emergency” has been going on for years. Hence, when we receive an invitation to work as guest trainers with colleagues from other organizations, we try to find some time for that too. However, first we usually give it some good thought.

When I got the invitation to work with former and present members of QPSW crew, I didn't really think all that much. Despite my very stuffed schedule, I accepted it with pleasure and there were several reasons for it. I want to look for opportunities to exchange approaches, methods, experiences and dilemmas outside of conferences and meetings - at training events where some live interaction with people takes place, where I can hear people talking and interacting directly, instead of having some written, superficial method descriptions. I want willingness for cooperation which is not a mere proclamation. I miss working with people who I have known for a long time and whose work I highly appreciate. And, most important of all, I was very curious to see firsthand, how one of the very few training programmes in our region that demonstrate continuous dedication to Dealing With the Past (DWP) looks like and where it's going. These are some of my impressions from the training, presented in not overly systematic way, with focuses on different things: work process, content, methods or a wider context of work on DWP:

I'd say that *working with the group of almost 30 people* is not the kind of challenge I crave for. Work and the plenary discussions were almost impossible and/or exhausting for most people in the circle. On the other hand, number of participants and the diversity of the group, trainers and guests enabled longer time to be spent on work in small groups, having predetermined terms every afternoon and an open concept which was set according to the affinities of people in small groups. That is certainly the kind of concept worth trying out, modifying and developing and it gives some breathing space to activities like this and makes it more relaxed and not over-crowded.

The working days started with *a brief input by Brian Philips*, an activist and Oxford University professor, who has been actively and wholeheartedly supporting peace initiatives in the region of former Yugoslavia and whose work proves that it is possible to maintain close connection between academism and peace practices. In addition, it can be quite inspiring. His short introductions about the foundation of the dilemma between peace and/or justice, about the “dessert” that people who work on peace building must be prepared for but also about moral implications of the choice to invite others into this dessert, were very encouraging for me. It is perhaps too advanced a level for a group of people who still need to form their perceptions of their own role and eventual input to the process of DWP.

Where do we start working with young people on DWP, what should the work be focused on and how deep into the themes should we go? These are the questions that make the skeleton of my big dilemma and put me in front of one of those (perpetual) open questions. Why work with youth or why **only** with them? After this training I still haven't got an answer to these questions, and it's not quite clear to me why is it that the world remains only on people under 30 (and together with it all the world's problems remain too, including the problem of non-dealing with the past), don't the older people have something to say or do concerning that subject. Well...

However, judging by this experience, “youth” of today seem to think about dealing with the past mainly in terms of transitional justice, which is predominantly defined by strictly legal terminology. That's why a good deal of plenary discussions sounded like some law students' debate (penal policies, guilt, levels of responsibility, court's jurisdiction, legislature, proving genocide, etc.). It was a bit more difficult to get personal dimension of the discussion on DWP (what do we want and where do we see ourselves in it? what are our personal difficulties and dilemmas regarding it?) and an open debate with more mutual confrontation.

Young people are surely least responsible for formation of certain petrified narratives about **dealing**

with the past. Social climate in which one of the real and unavoidable priorities is punishment of war criminals had the prevailing impact on creating such narratives. Since top political decision-makers deny the need to do that, insisting of those few people to arrest criminals and abandon the politics of denial and oblivion has become a new dogma of DWP. There's nothing wrong with it, as long as it does not mean that Dealing with the Past ends there. Ratko Mladić and the genocide committed in Srebrenica are the parts of the same puzzle, while the problem is much larger and deeper than that. The largeness of it is what offers a chance to these young people to take part in these processes and find their own place inside of them.

Finally, the training reached its heights with the appearance of Drago Hedl, journalist with the Split-based weekly "Feral Tribune", and a guest at the workshop named "Work in my community". In a three-hour long discussion with trainees, he shared his experiences of exposing two cases of war crimes that had been committed in Osijek, Croatia in the beginning of

nineties (also known as "Garage" and "Scotch Tape" cases). His lack of self-promotion, an exceptional civil and journalistic courage and outstanding honesty and respect for conversational partners deserve true admiration.

Facts about the training:

Team: Zorica Trifunović, Goran Bubalo, Goran Božičević, Tamara Šmidling, Brian Philips feat. Alan Pleydell

Group: 24 young people from Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia and Macedonia + guests, interpreter...

Themes: peace and/or justice; work in one's own community, personal motivation...

Place: "Vinski dvori" in Hajdukovo, nearby Palić, close to Subotica. It was comfortable and air-conditioned, little to isolated, with complaisant hosts and hostesses and generous vegetarian meals (I didn't try those non-vegetarian ones ☺); too hot for work in July but probably very pleasant in October...

Tamara Šmidling

Workshop "Dealing with the past" as a part of the Trust Building School

Organisers: Youth Initiative for Human Rights, Sarajevo
with the support of local partners from Democratic Centre "New Hope" Foča/BH

The second in the series of five six-day activities named Regional School for Trust Building Amongst Youth of Bosnia and Herzegovina (as a part of the Bosnia Trust Project) was held in SHL House Sarajevo, from June 1 - 5, 2007. This activity gathered participants from the region of Rogatica/Foča, BH.

I accepted to be a part of the training team that implemented one part of a five-day activity primarily to build my own capacities as a trainer for work on dealing with the past, by participating in an event other than those organized by CNA, and in order to take up this unique opportunity to work with young people from Eastern Bosnia, since we haven't had much chance to get in touch with people from this region nor did many of them applied to our training programmes. My colleague Milan Colić Humljan and I designed and facilitated the first two days of the school, which put us in a somewhat tough situation, since it was only a day before the training was supposed to start that we were told to prepare the part where trainees get to know each other and to work on trust building. It was the moment when we were just about to start working on rather sensitive and difficult themes, related to our personal standings and attitudes towards the past wars and all the things that came out (and are still coming

out) as a result of it. The experience we have gathered so far proved that it was extremely difficult to start these kinds of issues within groups that had been formed already and amongst people who had known each other very well, therefore it required an additional caution when designing the concept of the workshops.

There were many difficulties and extenuating circumstances: first, there were thirty people sitting in the circle together with the two of us as facilitators, while several organizers and the representative of the British Embassy occasionally came by and sometimes even joined the circle. I got the impression that trainees' motivation to take part in this education programme quite differed. I cannot imagine that many of them expected to sit in the circle, discussing their views on problems of their local communities and re-examining their roles and responsibilities for the current situation.

Nonetheless, I think that some space for discussion did open up, after all and we made some progress with some issues. The discussion about the war started with claims that the war was staged by the foreign mercenaries, while we were the poor victims of the international conspiracy whereas the discussion about war crimes in our communities ended up in mentioning „those

things“. It's no wonder these mechanisms exist, especially when young people who live in mostly mono-ethnic communities, created after the war, come face to face to „the other ones“. The debate gets to be reduced to the condemnation of war crimes without getting any further into the heart of the problem or any kind of re-examination of the position of one's own side and of the society that continues to either directly or indirectly gives credibility to the current situation.

For me the value of two-day workshop is certainly not in naming „these things“, or clearly acknowledging that the ethnic cleansing took place in their communities and that many were killed only because they had the wrong names and practiced their religion differently. For some of these young people, it was the first time they heard about the fears of “others” regarding

some things that result from their identities and experienced how the standard role of the victim that people all over Bosnia carry along was shaken up a little.

I do not know what was happening exactly for the rest of the training and I do not know whether these young people will work together on projects in the area of dealing with the past and protection of human rights (which is one of the objectives of the Schools of Bosnia Trust Project), but I certainly think that they need some space for exchange. At the end, one of the trainees commented it in this way: “I've been in NGO scene and travelled all over Bosnia for five years already, meeting people from all ethnicities, but we always run away from these issues and never opened them. I feel somehow relieved now and much closer to these people.“

Sanja Deanković

Cooperation – what does it mean exactly?

Youth Seminar “Let's start our future today”
Palić/Serbia, June 2007

At the end of June, Swiss Helsinki Committee for Democracy, Rule of Law and Human Rights organized a Youth Seminar which was held in Palić, Vojvodina. The organizational activities started last fall when the author of this article met the organizers of the seminar. We discussed not just some dilemmas regarding organization, but also the content of the seminar. It was a really good feeling to have someone coming from outside who was checking with local people active in peace building (in whatever context - legal, social etc.) what their needs regarding work were. Within the next few months we agreed on a youth seminar and a module/workshop on the theme of conflict that were going to be prepared and facilitated by a member of CNA team.

However, at one point at the actual workshop, view of the organizers and the author parted regarding the way in which the theme of conflict should be approached. One can approach conflicts from different perspectives, and many of them are both appropriate and important, while the perspective and the work method depend greatly on (knowing) the social context, group etc. Harmonizing different views, without nor letting participants suffer neither allowing it to turn into a compromise (though there wasn't much time to talk things out), organizer's entry into the workshop, presence of the Committee's representative and their instructions on how the work should be done provoked extreme strain during the work process. No doubt that some very interesting discussions took place, amongst other reasons because they reflected

experiences out of the context completely different then the Swiss, but for me the key word here was cooperation and what it really meant, and then the whole bunch of questions that followed after that.

If we want to work on peace building, we need to cooperate with many people (individuals, organizations, institutions, etc). How much we really understand each other when we enter cooperation? How much does it take to know each other (well)? How much are some things taken for granted so we don't get into the every detail? What's the minimum of values that we share in our cooperation? Where do we draw the line? What does cooperation really mean? Does it mean, like in this case: we ‘hire you’ to facilitate a workshop so you are suppose to do as we say? How prepared are we for the compromise that in many cases seems to be inevitable? These are the dilemmas that would take a whole chapter, not just an article. Let this be just an impulse for reflection. There's one more impression I want to share mainly regarding the content of the workshop. Most participants came from Vojvodina, and it was really nice to work with them. I still cannot shake off a certain bitter feeling in my mouth that came after hearing some prejudices and a certain kind of intolerance, or better yet, lack of understanding for different ‘sides’, their fears and needs, which still occur, and sometimes escalate amongst people in Vojvodina.

However we look at it, once again it's about (lack of) cooperation.

Helena Rill

Documentaries

Promotions of “Traces” in Graz and Vienna

Graz, Austria 16.10.2006.

Vienna, Austria 17.10.2006.

After our last year's successful cooperation on organizing and implementing the forum with former combatants from the region of former Yugoslavia, our friend Wolfgang Weilharter and his colleagues and co-workers at Evangelische Akademie, Vienna and Franz Soelkner of Steirische Friendsplattform, Graz, invited us to be their guests and promote “Traces”, documentary produced by CNA. The film was presented by Milan Colić Humljan and Sanja Deanković from CNA and Nermin Karačić, one of the protagonists of the film.

We consider this presentation and cooperation important for several reasons. Firstly, it was the promotion of our entire work, with the emphasis on dealing with the past and activities with the veterans in

peace building. Just as important are the establishment of long term cooperation with organizations that support our work and the exchange of experiences in work on dealing with the past in different social context (in this case, it was the context of Austria).

It was also the chance to show the film to the audience outside the region of former Yugoslavia and to reach immigrants, who had been also affected by the war, since they had been forced to leave their countries and become immigrants. Therefore, our impression is that it is also important to discuss that with people who live outside this territory.

The important thing was also meeting people and establishing new contacts, in order to broadcast the films on foreign TV stations and to provide financial support for our work.



Preparations for filming a documentary in Macedonia

23.01.2007.

In the past four years, production of documentaries has become one of CNA's main fields of activity. Since the basic aim of the films we make is promotion of peace and work on peace building in the region of former Yugoslavia, once we completed three documentaries and publicly promoted it, the logical thing to do was to ask ourselves “What's next and what priorities and hot spots have remained uncovered”?

Having in mind that at this moment it is extremely difficult to make the film about relationships between Serbs and Albanians, which would not fall into the trap of politization and day-to-day politics, we focused our

attention towards the far south of our region - to Macedonia.

We organized a one-day preparation meeting, which was attended by twelve persons, most of whom were our partners, based in different parts of Macedonia (Skopje, Kumanovo, Tetovo and Prilep). The basic idea behind the meeting was to gather and ask local people for their opinion about the idea, to hear their suggestions, exchange dilemmas, and explore the reality of such an undertaking, that is, to what extent people would be ready to join and support making the documentary like this.

Promotions of the documentary “It Cannot Last Forever”

Novi Pazar/Serbia, 13.02.2007.

Bratunac/BH, 27.02.2007.

Novi Sad/Serbia, 28.02.2007.

In February 2007, we organized a series of three promotions of our film *It Cannot Last Forever*. The film thematizes the relationship between Serbs and Bosniaks showing 21 persons who give answers to some painful questions and asks their own questions. The film was promoted in Belgrade and Sarajevo last year.

All three's promotions, that were held this year, were organized in cooperation with our partners that we had met through our work up to date: training events (members of Odisej Youth Organization organized the event in Bratunac, BH); some other activities (with Urbanin, Novi Pazar based organization we organized “Four Views” forums in Novi Pazar); via contacts established through peace work with veterans (Centre for War Trauma, Novi Sad).



Therefore, in the end of this short review of the promotions of “*It Cannot Last Forever*”, we should say that except for our local partners, the promotions would be incomplete if it wasn't for the participation of Nenad Vukosavljević, the author of the film, Vladan Beara and the protagonists of the film:

Dražen Popov, Mevlud ef. Dudić and Amer Delić (he had a tough task in Novi Sad, where he bravely confronted some nationalists in the audience). We thank them for their willingness and courage to speak publicly about many difficult issues. Still, as the title goes - it's up to us whether it will last forever or not.

(More detailed article published in our Six-month Report, Sept. '06 - Feb. '07.)

Promotions of the documentary “All Wish to Cast a Stone”

February - March 2007

In February and March of 2007, we organized four film promotions that were part of the ‘simulated dialogue’ trilogy - *All Wish to Cast a Stone* (about the dialogue between Serbs and Croats). However demanding these promotions were in organizational sense and often accompanied by difficulties, they proved to be useful, necessary and important.

We can say that we are satisfied with the promotions of this film that were held in four cities in the region: Zagreb (Croatia), Subotica (Serbia, Vojvodina), Kragujevac (Serbia) and Banja Luka (BiH, Republic of Srpska). The promotion in Zagreb was at the same time the film's premiere (with the discussion afterwards). We received the support for the film and our work, there was a lot of commending remarks regarding it, and we were encouraged to continue with our work and belief that there's plenty of need and purpose in doing something like this.

Promotion in Zagreb (Croatia) was held in the Centre for Human Rights. The film screening was followed by an inspiring dialogue, which occasionally reminded us of a

Peace
promotion
activities

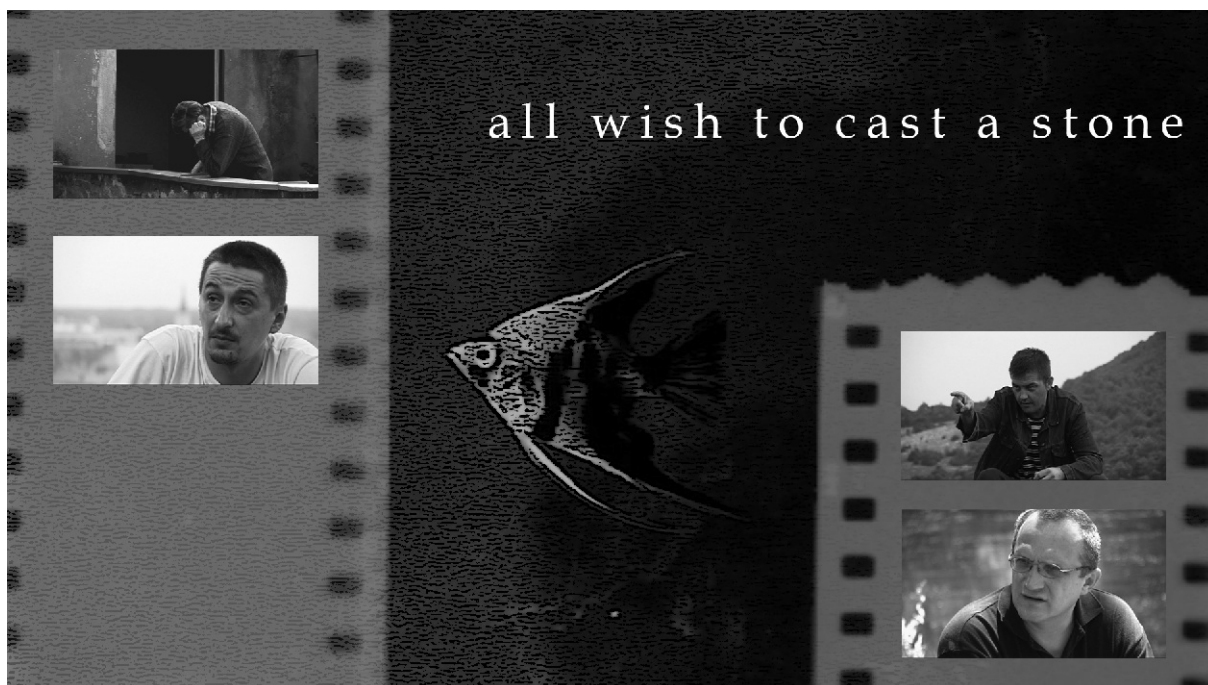
big workshop where the majority of audience took an active part in the discussion commenting not just the film, but the social and political situation as well, considering different ways of work on prejudices, peace building, dialogue, dealing with the past, etc. One of the guests at the event was Marčelo, Serbian hip-hop musician and the protagonists of the film, well-known for its anti-war stand, whose music and commitment are also known in the region of former Yugoslavia. By presenting his own views of the situation, he somehow broadened the scope of the discussion and encouraged others to share their opinions. After the event the discussion continued, and some suggestions were made to show the film in some other, more accessible place, and on regional TV stations, as well. We received letters of support also by email.

Promotions in Subotica (a town is situated in Vojvodina, in the north of Serbia, with a large Croat minority) and Kragujevac (located in central Serbia, with many civilians mobilised and sent to the frontline in Croatia, during the war) were held in cultural institutions that are supported by the town i. e. municipality, which is a good sign to have support of public institutions for the screening of such films. Most comments expressed views that it was necessary for the wider public to see the film and that it was important to show something like that and to work on those issues.

Guests who spoke on both promotions were Veselinka Kastratović from Osijek, Croatia and Dragan Mavrak from Mostar/BH, protagonists of the film who were very well received by the audience, especially in Kragujevac. The audience applauded to them on several occasions while they were talking about their experiences and were answering the questions.

Banja Luka (town in the Republic of Srpska) was the place where the fourth promotion was held and it took place at the Faculty of Communicology. It was more of an introduction to the TV show about the film that was broadcast on Alternative Television Banja Luka. This way we reached a wider audience, and the discussion that followed after the film also revolved around the processes of peace building and dealing with the past.

Even though five promotions were planned to take place, unfortunately the one that was supposed to be held in Knin (the town in Croatia from which large number of Serb families fled after the operation Storm) was cancelled due to some still unclear circumstances. We received the information that the organizer of the event was scared off and therefore cancelled the promotion only one day before it was supposed to happen. We still haven't got the exact information about what was going on, but generally speaking this promotion was the one accompanied by the most confusion which was one of the difficulties we encountered.



Publications

“20 Pieces of Encouragement for Awakening and Change – Peacebuilding in the Region of Former Yugoslavia”

“20 Pieces of Encouragement for Awakening and Change - Peacebuilding in the Region of Former Yugoslavia” was published by the end of June 2007, after almost a year and a half of an intensive work.

General information about the book:

The book was published in local languages Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian: “20 poticaja za buđenje i promenu - o izgradnji mira na prostoru bivše Jugoslavije” (303 p.) and English (352 p.).

It's a collection of works of activists and theorists from different parts of the region of former Yugoslavia. The book consists of 20 pieces in total (articles and interviews) with the introduction by the editors and the preface in English by Martina Fischer, PhD.

Contributions were assembled into nine chapters: nonviolence, activisms, peace education, dealing with the past, work with combatants, towards reconciliation, civil society - reflections, questions, dilemmas, gender and peace work, demilitarisation. The book also brings short biographies of the authors.

The book was edited by Helena Rill and Tamara Šmidling, with the support of Ana Bitoljanu (Skoplje, Macedonia).

About the Work:

The work process took several months longer than planned. Even though we had had some experiences with the previous book we had published and were familiar with the experiences of other people in the publishing business, nevertheless we were unpleasantly surprised by the deadline rescheduling and tardiness of the entire process. The reason for the delay lies in the fact that very many people took part in the different phases of making of the book (at certain points there were as many as 30 people), scattered all over the region of former Yugoslavia, and elsewhere. It

took a lot of energy, communication skills and willingness to agree coordination of the whole process. And finally, to get the result that would justify the effort, energy and money that had been invested into it.

Even though the process of work on the book was more thoroughly described in the chapter “Difficulties”, the entire work can not, however, be reduced only to problems and difficulties.

We think that an exceptionally valuable contribution was made to systematization of reflections and experiences gathered in peace work in former Yugoslavia. We are sure that the book will find its place in the field of “peace publishing” which needs to develop and define focuses of its future interest. The current situation in our region means that very few publications with the focus on peacebuilding are being published, and the insignificant number of those that are globally relevant are translated. That's why it is important to encourage and empower local initiatives within the region, aiming to transfuse abundant experiences of practical work into a literary form, thus saving the precious material about the historiography and ethnography of peace work created in the region of former

Yugoslavia.

Besides articles, the book also brings interviews with activists whose contribution we valued as necessary, who were too busy to write themselves. What seemed as a compromise at that moment in relation to the original idea, turned out to be a very good choice that added up to the book's dynamics and freshened up the content of the collection with some firsthand experiences.

The selection of people we chose for the articles and interviews shows balance that we wanted to achieve between giving space to those most experienced and most prominent activist voices and giving a

20 PIECES OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR AWAKENING AND CHANGE

Peacebuilding in the Region of the Former Yugoslavia

Edited by
Helena Rill
Tamara Šmidling
Ana Bitoljanu

Centre for Nonviolent Action
Belgrade – Sarajevo

chance to young people who surely have a lot to say and offer...

When the book was published, we received some very positive feedback that indicates there's a lot of interest for it in the region as well as elsewhere. People who work in peacebuilding find the book valuable because it offers in one place different experiences and approaches to peacebuilding, while those who are not focused on peace work say that the book is valuable because of some new, inspirational perspectives it brings.

Difficulties, Challenges:

All the phases had their difficulties and required some new solutions as a response to those unexpected situations.

Most of the difficulties we encountered occurred while the articles were being written. While we were working on the book we got in touch with many people from our region and we invested a lot of energy to get a substantial collection of articles, that does not aspire to be an overall view of all the things that have been done or are being done, but still can offer an insight into some of the basic trends of peace work. On several occasions we were left empty-handed, because even after so many deadline postponements, whole bunch of exchanged emails and numerous phone calls and even meetings on which occasions we expressed our willingness to be as flexible as possible, some of the articles just didn't come. As a result there are few blank spots in the concept of the book, with the noticeable absence of some important aspects of peace work, such is work in local community, culture as one of the areas of affirmation of peace work, etc. and the lack of some regions (Kosovo and Montenegro). It also indicated to several "symptoms" that peace activists suffer from. The most important and alarming ones are feelings of fatigue and satiation and the accumulated stress that are noticeable and all together result in a situation in which it is difficult if not impossible to transfer the experiences once gathered into a written form.

On the other hand, the most serious and certainly the most stressful difficulty was the one related to the proofreading of the version of the book in local languages. After all the copies were printed we were pointed out to some mistakes and inconsistencies in proofreading regarding two standard versions of local (Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian) languages: ijekavica and ekavica.

Some texts had the combination of those two standards, which was intolerable; especially if we have in mind the political sensitivity of the question of language and identity in the Balkans (ekavica is used in Serbia, while Bosnian and Croatian standard means that ijekavica is used). That's why we decided to publish a number of copies again, and to distribute the books that had already been printed with an additional note and apology for the omission.

On another level, the very idea of making a book of this kind was a huge challenge since it is much different from everything that we have done so far when it comes to publishing. Doing this kind of editorial work was a new experience for us, which is very important and useful for our future work as well as for the way in which we perceive the things we know and want to work on. We know now that we can get into this field of "peace publishing" which has been slightly neglected and undeveloped in the overall picture of work in peacebuilding in the region of former Yugoslavia.

Promotion in Berlin:

On July 5 2007 the promotion took place in Berghof Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management, in Berlin. The short promotion was held in a very pleasant atmosphere and was followed by an hour long discussion which was mainly related to the current situation in our region (especially in BH and Kosovo), and in the end there was a cocktail party to mark the Centre for Nonviolent Action's tenth anniversary.

The guests were people of different backgrounds: including both diplomats on high positions and activists with professional and personal ties with the region of former Yugoslavia (especially BH). Judging by the atmosphere at the book promotion, the book that we published really is a good encouragement to discuss thoroughly problems of peace work, both in general and those of our region.

The initial reactions we received at home are very positive and we sincerely hope that the book will help in reflection and promotion of peace practice in our region.

We have already started with the distribution by sending some copies to organizations and institutions in our region. The publication will be available in CNA Sarajevo and Belgrade offices and in Berghof Research Center in Berlin.

Regional conference “We Pray the Lord by Building Peace”

Krk/Croatia, 20-24.09.2006.

From September 20 - 26, 2006, RAND (Regional Address for Nonviolent Action), Zagreb, MCC Mennonite Central Committee and Church & Peace, Laufdorf/ Germany, organized the first Inter-religious Regional Peace conference, entitled “*We Pray the Lord by Building Peace*” at the island of Krk, Croatia. The conference was prepared by an inter-religious group made of eleven individuals, members of the following organizations: Ravangrad (Sombor, Serbia), TABITA (Novi Sad, Serbia), CNA (Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina), Centre for Peace Building (Sanski most, Bosnia and Herzegovina) and KIFA (Skopje, Macedonia).

The conference gathered about 50 people from the region of former Yugoslavia, with several guests from EU and USA, for whom faith is an important part of life and who either actively participate in peace building and reconciliation or wish to get involved in it, based on the principles of nonviolence and drawing strength from their religion. The main idea of the meeting was to open and exchange dilemmas and questions regarding the dangers of violence in religion, potentials for nonviolence and ways to work on peace activism within religious communities.

More details and information about this event is available from RAND (e-mail: rand@rand.hr).

“Youth power” project

The first exchange meeting

Koenighshorst/ Germany, February 19 - 23, 2007

“*Youth power*” is a three-year project, which is financially supported by European Union. The main goal of the project is to enable multiple and multi-layered process of learning, practice and exchange for peace activists and youth in different conflict and post-conflict regions. The carrier of the project is Kurve, Wustrow-based peace organization from Germany with partner organizations: Wi'am Centre (Palestine), CBC Loja (Macedonia) and CNA Belgrade/Sarajevo.

Even though work with youngsters is not CNA's focus of activity, we joined the project, primarily because of the chance to exchange experiences with activists from other regions, as well as because we wanted to support the idea and contribute to it as we could. The projects includes exploratory trips to Sarajevo, Palestine, Tetovo and Wustrow, during which there will be plenty of chance to get to know how different organizations approach peace work and work with young people.

The first meeting was organized with the intention to encourage exchange, and plan and clearly define outlines of future activities of this rather demanding project. It was the expectations of mutual talks and getting to know deeper the contexts in which we work and the approaches we use, on one hand and the need to agree and plan many things on the other that resulted in a very tiring work. At times it was frustrating, too because there was neither a clear idea nor a concept of what is required and what can be achieved within the given timelines. One could say that those were the usual problems when a group of people who hardly know each other (or not at all) ought to agree on something. Especially if the agreements are obligatory and stretch out to a longer period, no wonder that there is a dissonance of views and needs. That's why such meetings need a more strict guidelines (at least in the beginning) as well as people who will moderate the process throughout the entire event.

Other
activities

Nevertheless, an extreme dedication that people from Kurve Wustrow demonstrated, gave us hope that the process would improve and that the next meeting

in Belgrade would really be focused on **exchange**, therefore all of us would contribute that the time we spent at the meeting was well spent.

Study visits to Palestine, Germany, Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina

April - May 2007.

After the first exchange meeting that had taken place in Königshorst, Germany, in February, the *Youth Power* project continued in the spring and summer with the study visits to the participating organizations' home countries and with another exchange meeting in Belgrade.

The visits that had been intended as an opportunity for people to get to know other social, political and activist contexts were implemented in April and May. Judging by the participants' impressions, these visits had an invaluable role in perceiving the complexity of different situations in which people included in the Youth Power project act on daily basis and the various ways they deal with them. The concept of visits was designed by the hosts, depending on focus of work of each organization. Hence, the guests who came to Bosnia and Herzegovina were mostly informed about the work on dealing with the past in this country. Besides Sarajevo, they had a chance to visit Bratunac, Srebrenica and Mostar, and get to know the characteristics of these local contexts that are very symptomatic for the current situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, although in a variety of ways (places where genocide had taken place, as well as those where it's being denied, divided

cities, mistrust between communities etc.). People who visited Germany attended the training in Wustrow and had a chance to take a closer look at the collective centres for refugees in Berlin and the way people live there, and the response of some parts of the activist community to different living conditions in highly developed capitalism (strategy of resistance to consumerist society and consumerism, discovering ecologically-aware strategies of living in communes, either outside of big cities or in them, etc.). The visit to Macedonia included getting to know the context of work in Tetovo, uncharacteristic community that had a very important role in the context of war in Macedonia. Additional activities included visits to the Macedonian capital Skopje and the ancient town of Ohrid. Another article about the study visit to Palestine is included in this report.

Apart from getting a better insight into the situation in aforementioned countries, visitors put a special emphasis on deeper and more relaxed communication and the fact that they had had a chance to get to know each other better which would be very important for successful implementation of the following phases of this three-year programme.

The exchange meeting in Belgrade

06-11. 07. 2007.

The meeting was organized with three basic goals: continuation of the exchange on approaches and strategies that four organizations that are taking part in the project use in their work; planning some concrete steps for the phase two of the project (organization of the

training for youth of the Balkans, Germany and Palestine) and planning some concrete steps to create a manual for work with young people in Albanian, Macedonian, German, Arabic and Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian language.



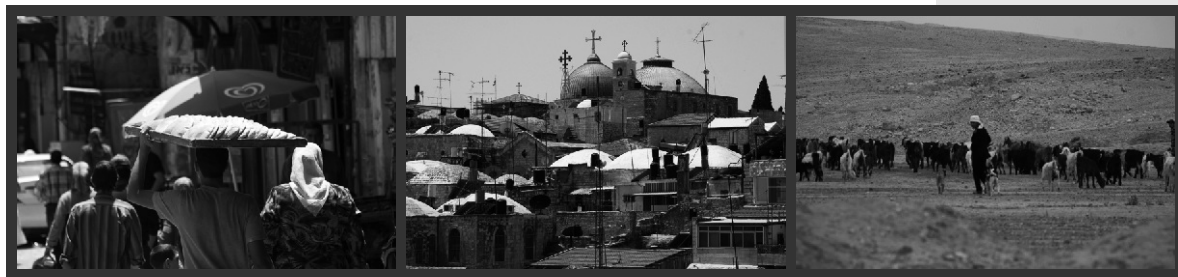
The work atmosphere was much more relaxed then at the first meeting in Königshorst, which was certainly to a great extent the result of the study visits. The level of exchange was far deeper and many concrete things that are still to be implemented in 2008 were agreed. This meeting was the last phase of the activity in which we were involved as an organization. In the following phases, our contribution will be limited to

participation in designing of the manual for work with youth, where our colleague Tamara Šmidling is going to be a member of the editorial team. Having in mind the fact that the production of the manual will be coordinated from four different parts of the world and should be released in five different languages, it is for sure that there will be plenty of challenges and excitement ☺.

Exhibition of power abuse and collective punishments - A visit to occupied Palestine

How shall we get from Tel Aviv airport to Bethlehem, will there really be a cab to bring us through the checkpoint at Bethlehem, what shall we be asked at arrival, how will our one week visit look like, chaotic or organised... These were the questions Nedžad and me

ated part of town, not to mention entering Israel itself. The permits are not given in practice. Travel in-between cities under Palestinian authority in the West bank, is possible for Palestinians, taking into account that they might be subject to regular (constant) and



have had on our minds as we headed for a journey to Palestine. Artan from Tetovo (Macedonia) and Anja from Wustrow have arrived already in Bethlehem, when we started. Four of us were going for a study visit to Palestine, aiming to learn something about the situation there and the work of our host organisation, which like us works with youth in conflict. Practitioners exchange was meant to happen within the frame of the field visit. Our hosts, the Wi'am Palestinian Conflict Resolution Center from Bethlehem, have sent us some information in advance, but we did not know what to expect. Can you imagine being a host to visitors from abroad and you are not able to pick them up from the airport. Can you imagine that you can not take the 20 min drive to Jerusalem, the heart of the Holy land, of your own country? I could not. And after seeing much of it, listening to stories and experiencing bits of reality, it is all too hard to comprehend that nowadays such situation exists, such segregation, discrimination and violence. Injustice!

Palestinians without special Israeli permit can not enter even east Jerusalem, predominantly Arab popul-

“flying” checkpoints, and certainly that they take roads which are allowed for Palestinian use by Israeli army. Some roads are allowed only for cars and passengers with Israeli registration and for foreigners.

During our short visit to Hebron at the second day of our stay we were accompanied by a friend from Wi'am, who is a Palestinian. We desired to visit the main mosque in the old town which is blocked by the army checkpoint and were told that foreigners must use a separate entry which is not allowed for Palestinians, and Moslems may enter the mosque for prayer from the main entry, once they pass the security check, including metal detectors and bag search. While sitting at the street in the shade, waiting for the prayer to end, we were offered by the Palestinian shop owner, cups of tea. Not an unusual thing obviously, although often connected to beginning of trade - but not this time, no attempt was made to lure us in the shop. I felt overcome with anger looking at this injustice happening in front of my eyes, and said that I would not enter the mosque if our Palestinian friend can not enter with us. None of us did at the end, as we faced an

arrest of a 15-16 year old Palestinian boy who was arrested at checkpoint for bearing a knife which is enough for presumption of a planned attack on soldiers. His companion was also arrested, who had no arms with him, also 15-16 year old. They are likely to end up in prison for several years we were told. That event of course meant a total closure of the checkpoint and a local alarm. Our friend guided us out quickly.

Gorgeous houses of Hebron, speaking of incredible wealth of the past, rot ahead, turned into ruins, above them a Jewish settlement directly in the town. Walking the main old-town road with dozens of shops and vivid life, one could notice a sudden halt in the road. From above, the settlers obviously threw rubbish and stones, which were halted by a protective steel net above our heads. Why?

Kids passing by who'd spot us, a group of foreigners, were often shouting at us "Hello", "Welcome" or "Hello, what is your country?". Three kids in front of the checkpoint at the small square were having fun by catching passer-by enclosed with a rubber tube few meters long. I took some pictures and the soldier shouted from the watchtower that we're not allowed to take photos of the settlement behind him, but only of the Arab part. I did not want to take settlement photos anyway.

Something I expected, but still felt impressed with it, was the great hospitality of people we met. Of course the Wi'am people but also the others. Zoughbi Zoughbi Wi'am director, whom I have met in 1996 as he was my trainer at the International training in KURVE Wustrow, remained in my memory as a warm person, ready to sit with us trainees until late at night and chat, play table tennis and joke anytime about hard things. It felt very close to what I feel as home, my country, it was then my 7th year of exile, one has to laugh to stay sane.

The meetings in Wi'am were called in Zoughbi's office, a line of chairs surrounding a small table and paper-towers on the desk, of whose secrets only Zoughbi seems to be in knowledge of. I liked the energy I have felt within the Wi'am team, although it is clearly

Zoughbi who's a director, this hierarchy is not felt within human relations. We enjoyed coffees, teas, sweets and snacks, replacing each other at the small table and spoke of Wi'am's work, everybody spoke of their part and we visitors asked questions. Impolite visitors from the Balkans have constantly changed their spots at the balcony door, in order to smoke and disturb others less.

Beside Bethlehem and Hebron, we visited also East Jerusalem, Jericho and Ramallah, two of the last in the final 2 days of visit at our friend Ulli who works in Ramallah.

Travelling from Jerusalem to 15 km distanced Ramallah, we saw the final stages of wall-building, how could I not mention this several hundred kilometres long monster, which Israel builds for "security reasons". Same reasons are used for special roads leading to fort-like Jewish settlements allowed only for them and the military, which cut through the olive fields of peasants leaving them without their property and assets for survival. I have thought that the former Berlin Wall was terrible, remember my stare at it some 20 years ago, thinking that it will never go down. Seeing the "protective wall" built by Israel which encloses large parts of land beyond Israeli borders, the Berlin wall seems like a toy. The wall height differs from place to place, but in Bethlehem is around 10-15m high, with watch towers at regular distances. In Jerusalem outskirts the wall cuts directly through Palestinian neighbourhood, through the streets if it could not be squeezed between houses. We watched a bulldozer dig for the final bit of wall closing the street, with people watching it helplessly. A shop owner sat eating ice-cream and watched. When they finish, his shop will look at the wall 10m high, he will not be able to see neighbours across the road, the kids from the other side will have to find another place to get ice-cream and grow up watching the grey concrete of the wall. It was hard to process so much misery and so much beauty in such a short time, I felt as if I was swept by a wave unable to resist or act anyhow. The landscape in and around Jericho is about the most exciting place I



have ever laid my eyes upon. That is how it felt to me.

I've seen none of Israel, I have spoken to no Israelis there, except for few security interviews at the airport. Zoughbi, who was under emergency law detained for 15 times by Israeli forces in the past, never charged or sentenced for anything, a man committed to nonviolent freedom struggle, has told us something, which I will not forget. "Sometimes the jailer has it harder than the prisoners."

What I have seen, heard, tasted and felt has made me think, has made me sick, has made me question my perception of my own reality here, back in the Balka-

ns. And I feel a link much stronger than before with what goes on in Palestine. I still need to reflect what I have actually learned and what that means for my work and my life. It took me 4 days to be able to get back to work, first of all, but I have not wasted my time. Wi'am's nonviolence T-shirt which we were given as presents, explains what nonviolence means for them, and has one quote at the back of it:

You must be the change you wish to see in the world. - Gandhi

Today is the Celebration day of victory over fascism in the II WW. I wonder which faces fascism has today.

Nenad Vukosavljević



International peace conference

Nuremberg/Germany, June 25 - 27, 2007

Thanks to the invitation of our friends from the *Working Group on Development and Peace* (FriEnt), founded by the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany (BMZ), I had an opportunity to take part at the International Peace Conference "Building the Future on Peace and Justice". The conference was attended by a large number of participants from all over the world, activists of local and international NGO's, state and scientific institutions, embassies, etc.

The conference was officially opened at the Courtroom 600, well known for the trial of the Nazi leaders, after the World War II. One of the people who spoke at the opening of the conference was Frank-Walter Steinmeier, German Minister of Foreign affairs.

An unusual detail from the opening was the moment when I was asked, together with some other participants, mostly those from the countries struck by war (from the Balkans and Africa), to sit in the part of the courtroom where Nazis were seated during the trial. For the guests from EU and USA it was a problem to take those symbolic seats.

Besides the plenary sessions (the introductory and the final one), there were 10 workshops that took place during two days, with various themes and guests, introductory speakers. I attended two of them that were held under the working titles:

- "Looking Back and Moving Forward - The Nexus between Justice and Development" and
- "Alternative Approaches to Dealing with the Past".

Some of the conclusions of the first workshop were that mechanisms of the transitional justice may contribute to political, socio-economical justice and development. Still, they were not a „magic key“ to building of a lasting peace but merely a part of the wide range of different measures that had to be efficiently compiled together.

In my opinion, the discussion lacked some space to look back at the current global situation in the context of wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, especially because representatives of the countries, whose soldiers are at the moment fighting in these countries, were taking part at the workshop. The second workshop presented

cases of dealing with the past in Burundi, Mozambique and Spain which was a chance for us to hear about different and interesting ways these societies deal with the difficult past, with the focus on retributive and transitional legal mechanisms and traditional ways of overcoming traumas and conflicts from the past.

It was interesting that the situation in Burundi was presented by a Belgian national, even though participants from Burundi were attending the meeting. The presentation was focused on the period after the 1962 when the war had broken out, without any reference to the long colonial period, that in my opinion strongly influenced the overall situation in that country.

I consider that the conference was very important

because it offered the chance for bringing together different people who work on important issues all over the world as well as people who can exert their influence on important decisions on global level. This was also a chance to meet potential collaborators and partners, who work on issues similar to those we do. At the same time, I cannot shake off a bitter feeling that there is no willingness to re-examine the role of the NATO alliance, but instead, I see an attempt to include ourselves, peace activist as a part of the same context in which we will have come to “build peace” after the war operations are over. It seems that there is no space for a pacifistic approach at this moment.

More information about the conference is available on the web site: www.peace-justice-conference.info.

Adnan Hasanbegović

“Layer of genocide, then layer of showbiz” – context of peace work in BH

For years already, every September, I write an article on the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina and doing peace work in it. I try to synthesize the processes and the events that have taken place in this region in the past year, look at things from different perspective and present the way they are mutually connected and the impact they have on peace work. So ... after all this, I always have the feeling that the story is the same as the year before and so are the key categories, while only the words we use to describe them are changing.

Hence, there's nothing particularly new this year, either. We haven't reformed the police, thanks for the enquiry; we haven't agreed on the constitutional changes; God forbid that we arrested most wanted war criminals (some of them were arrested, while others escaped from jail - that's life, what can you do); we haven't come much closer to the European Union; we haven't exempt or at least reduced value added tax on food, but in return we do not know how value added tax is distributed, while the poverty, both material and spiritual, is becoming ever so tangible ... Need more?

When it comes to political changes - we (still) win zero points. I know that for many in the Republic of Srpska, this sound like a blasphemy, because of last year's elections total triumph of Milorad Dodik's Alliance of Independent Social Democrats over Serbian Democratic Party, long-standing rulers of the “smaller Bosnian entity”. However, I must say that I remain personally unmoved by the optimism of “social democratic” enthusiasm, while the nationalistic odour makes me gasp for fresh air to the point where my frustrations become incandescent. On the other hand, Haris Silajdžić, Mustafa ef. Cerić and other diligent national workers pertaining to “hundred percent Bosnian” camp of so called Bosniak corps (grotesque name they owe to the BH media) made sure that the situation remains even more colourful. Readers who are sensitized for Bosnian problems must ask themselves what ever happened to Croats, the third constitutional people and why they are left out from all this. Cynical answer to this question might be the following: no worries, as the saying goes: “they, too, have the horse for the race”, and it comes in form of politicians, entertainers, Catholic Church dignitaries. More serious response would read something like: Croats are here, too, but since the public discourse is so focused on conflicts between Serbs and Bosniaks, it seems that all the crucial matters in this (semi) state are happening or being resolved exclusively amongst these two. There's no need to explain how damaging that is for Bosnia and Herzegovina and its alleged multi-ethnicity.

No one bothers to ask for the “others”. These people with “wrong” names who are lost in a famous identity politics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (which is wholeheartedly supported by the international community that had made it part of the Constitution and a fundamental principle this country is based on), seem to be unimportant. Now, twelve years after the war, when the child (BH) has grown a little, it seems to be too crazy to be loved with a true, motherly love.

So much for the politicians, elections, failed reforms, since ...

More I think about BH, more shallow the analysis of day-to-day political trends and processes seems as a means to get to the bottom of things. One can of course reflect on the complexity of BH's reality from hundred, sometimes even mutually opposing perspectives. If only there was more willingness in this society for a serious analysis of the situation and discussion of its findings in public. I use this opportunity to present my opinion as (almost) a citizen of this country who thinks that what lacks here is a view from a different perspective, far away from the parliament and state, entity or cantonal institutions, perspective of a daily life in BH, of what people say and think, what they read, watch, things they are afraid of, confused with or laugh at ... That perspecti-

The
political
and social
context
within
which
CNA
works

ve shows the extent and harmfulness of ethno-politics that penetrated all aspects of everyday life while there's a lack of any kind of meaningful alternative to it which would be supported and affirmed by a considerable number of citizens.

Citizens of BH who had first accepted to be primarily (and in many cases only) Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks, and then believed that they can live freely and proudly only when surrounded with big enough number of their fellow compatriots, now have a choice to either back-up stridently the politics of their own herd or look for shelter elsewhere. The shelter prove to be closer to ethno-politics more than anyone is willing to admit and one of the most reoccurring "heavens" of this kind is pumping up BH patriotism. Even though it is based upon an acceptable hypothesis on love of one's own homeland, it seems unable to tackle deeply enrooted problems and painful divisions of this society and thus easily ends up in shouting public claims about BH's multi-ethnicity, especially when it comes to its big cities like Sarajevo and Tuzla or populist mumbo-jumbo like "the pyramid cult" and other such nonsense.

It is a clear indicator that whoever wants to offer a serious alternative to ethno politics must first answer the following question: what are we going to do with the past since it is obvious that we cannot sweep it under the carpet, ignore it or reduce it to drawing the sharp line between the moral and the immoral ones and right and the guilty ones. Some people are good at collective amnesia (especially those in the Republic of Srpska when it comes to killing civilians, detention camps, rape, mass deportation), but the fact that BH today is primarily *victimised* society doesn't allow the past to be ignored.

Difficult truth is that all three constitutional peoples of BH are in the state of severe victimization. In the case of Bosniaks that's where they are trying to draw the entire human and moral integrity from, which in their opinion they are entitled to in a much bigger extent than all the others. Serbs use it as a refuge from

unpleasant and hard questions like the following: "Where were you and what did you do?" while for Croats it is a means for accomplishing their political project of the third entity. All the combinations of goals that are being achieved through victimization are of course possible.

To acknowledge and name the suffering of all the victims and offer them some sort of satisfaction is not the same as to support and continuously empower the position of victimisation of entire peoples in which individuals remain completely faceless and anonymous mass of mere victims. The fact that Srebrenica genocide, which has been proved, is becoming ever more ideologized for the purposes of everyday politics and the victims are being subject of manipulation, demonstrates how much the process of dealing with the past is moving towards deliberate victimization. Unnamed Sarajevan comments the situation with the following words: "It seems to me that it is not in the interest of many to find out the truth about what happened and who it happened to, because it is easier for things to remain like this - first some genocide and then little bit of showbiz so we'll see who's going to live to tell". All of this for unified, multi-ethnic BH".

I find it hard to watch calmly where we are heading to because I live here and I care about the future of this society. It's hard not to feel sick with hyperinflation of denial and justification of crimes of "your own" (hypothetically speaking) and cheap and hypocritical manipulation with the role of the victim and real human suffering of the "other ones" with whom you live and communicate on daily basis. Even though I'm one of those who do not perceive aforementioned categories as their own and reflection of their own personal attitudes and values, like thousands of others I'm left to search for a way to neither ignore these categories, nor let them shape me and my everyday experience of coexistence. Coexistence that I firmly believe is possible.

Tamara Šmidling

Croatia in the context of dealing with the past

First of all, I must underline that this is a very personal essay on the context of Croatia from the point of view of a peace activists who lives and works in Sarajevo.

While I was writing this article my intention was to put an emphasis on several things I found important for the processes of dealing with the past (as if anything could be separated from them, in the first place) as

well as on my own, personal perception of the social climate in the community I come from.

I have a feeling that the geographical distance means that I perceive certain processes in a different way than if I were living in Croatia; therefore my view is cleansed from the folklore of daily politics.

It seems important to me to look back at the renowned discussion about war crimes which has beco-

me far more present in Croatian public than before.

Though, it's done in a way which makes it particularly interesting... The apprehension of Branimir Glavaš provoked some interesting reactions. Glavaš is suspected of ordering executions of civilians and being responsible for repression, missing persons and theft but was nonetheless given a huge media space to present himself as one of the pillars of the untouchable Homeland war and to send a message that: "Even if something ever happened it was for all of us Croat men (Croat women are mostly unmentioned in this context) and for the homeland that we now have". After watching the results of TV referendums, listening to the comments in political panel shows and viewers comments via phone, it seems that the reactions of Croatian public however colourful do have some things in common. Regardless of air time this problem was given, it is hard not to notice that it all comes down to damage control made by "few killings too many", because "it was the war after all and whatever we say and however we criticize now, from this distance, if it wasn't for the 'fearless ones' Chetniks would have made it all the way to Zagreb, Rijeka, Split." Therefore, as Viktor Ivančić, of Rijeka-based weekly "Feral Tribune" says: "War crime was called 'Scotch tape case' as if it was about stealing some office supplies instead of murders."

Some other trials to Croatian generals have either started or continue: in The Hague Tribunal (Ante Gotovina, Ivan Čermak and Mladen Markač for their conduct in the operation "Storm") or in Croatian courts (Vladimir Zagorac, Hrvoje Petrač.).

Without getting any further into the legal matters, I must comment on transcripts of audio tapes made just before the operation 'Storm' was about to begin, since the entire concept of general Gotovina's defence is based on an attempt to declare them invalid. The attempts are being made to dispute the authenticity of Tudman's statement that: "We should open the door

for Serbs to leave, and then pretend to guarantee their rights." Doesn't this statement reflect the current situation of Croatian public regarding the war and the exile of Serbs?!

Isn't that what Croatian public is doing?

In his column, published on the anniversary of the operation 'Storm', journalist of Split-base daily 'Slobodna Dalmacija' wrote: "Today is the day of Homeland Gratitude. Gratitude to tanks and tractors." Therefore, I really wonder what does a condemnation of war crimes and Tudman's filthy ideology really, honestly mean (is it only his ideology or did we live in it, too - that's the question we must not forget to ask)?!

I somehow get the impression that our society is moving towards condemnation of "our" war crimes and exile and killings of Serb civilians, but only to underline morally superior position of ourselves, Croats. Even though we had been attacked, we managed to defend the land of our grandfathers and our fireside, while still willing to condemn those black sheep in our flock that slaughtered and killed in our name. Nonetheless, while thinking about the aforementioned gratitude to tractors, I ask if we are ready to wholeheartedly call those Serbs who 'left' to come back to their ancient firesides. Moreover, are we ready to invest some effort into building a state where everyone will have equal conditions and opportunities, regardless of their ethnic identity, name, sexual orientation and many other differences that make them more or less different from the picture of 'true Croat', as they are supposed to be?

There aren't that many encouragements for that from the political elite, and all the statements regarding the past are wrapped into relativisation and demagoguery, whether they come from the extreme right-wingers or those who think of themselves as lefties, even though the line between different political options regarding the attitude towards the past has long been blurred in Croatia.

Sanja Deanković

Montenegro

It's been a little over a year since Montenegro started to live the biggest dream of all - the one of independence. The country became independent, or to read it differently, became free. The year of liberation and rejoicing in freedom should have meant the year of serenity, peace and prosperity, the year devoid of turmoil and violence. We can either cheerfully wish a happy first birthday to the independent Montenegro or sadly commemorate its first anniversary.

However, in both cases we encounter a problem, because we need to say a few words about the few good deeds of a fine celebrator or even better deceased.

- equality -

Montenegro - the country of all its citizens, all peoples who live within its borders, the land of all well-meaning men. According to its laws, all people are equal, "only men, Montenegrin and big businessmen

are a bit more equal than others". In order to confirm that citizens of Montenegro are as equal as Podgorica Aluminium Plant and its owners when it comes to the price of electricity they pay, a local NGO MANS had implemented a project that ended with an attack against the MANS director. Ms Beba Džaković, the chairman of the Montenegro's parliamentary Gender Committee paradoxically belittles not only her own, but the gender of those for whose equality she should fight for, at least according to the position she holds. The failure of an attempt to oust her completely reinforces more equal position of men. Additionally, many employees of the Interior Ministry were made redundant solely on the basis of their non-Montenegrin ethnic pertinence, which was an obvious example that Montenegrins are more equal than others in equally multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and above all, democratic Montenegro.

- human rights -

In a free country, one is, of course, free to look for a place to sit down, but whether one is free to get up and say something freely is demonstrated in the case of Aleksandar Zeković, a researcher of human rights violations, who was recently threatened. After he had spoken about the deportation of Muslims from the town of Herceg Novi, he received several phone threats that were supposed to stop him from talking further about this case. The threats to the person who stands for respect and protection of human rights are indirect threats to every other person who tries to fight for it, and respectively to the state of law, aren't they? Official reactions surely followed, just as they did in many similar cases, and that was the case with expressions of solidarity and support to Aleksandar Zeković, but I'm not too surprised by the lack of determined, intense and concrete action (not reaction!) from the police, district attorney's office and court. To be honest, I do not really know what a determined action of the Montenegro police and DA means. One of the few cases I could compare it with was the case of deportation of Muslims from Herceg Novi, the very same one that provoked threats after it was condemned and requests were made to prosecute the perpetrators.

- welfare -

We should wish a happy birthday to Montenegro, may it have many more and live a long life. I congratulate to all of us, your citizens, on the costs of living that are now six times higher than before while the salaries are lower. Anyway, what's a mere financial and economic independence in comparison to our state independence? What do we need high salaries and good pensions for, what's travelling and good standard of

living, foreign education, vacations and holidays for? Why do we need anything else now when we have our own, and finally only ours independence? We neither depend on results of our own work nor on our knowledge. It's because the former is in vain and the later doesn't count for value any more. Everyone needs something, is bothered with something, everyone misses something and is harmed by something. Everyone who depends on their needs and desires becomes a debtor, and those in debt have to pay.

- justice -

Montenegro is choking with glory, celebration and congratulations while an ever growing number of those who murdered its independent and innocent citizens walk around freely, independent of justice and law. Unsolved murders - the sad leitmotif of the last and many previous years, cannot be replaced with some other, more cheerful, cordial or at least less sad motif. Neither perpetrators nor those who gave orders are nowhere in sight and the same goes for the processing and conviction of these crimes. There's neither a satisfaction nor a hint of justice. There's nothing to indicate that there were even murderers hence victims. Only the graves have become more common, along with the threats to sense of security and peace, to every word and thought that is different, to every free mind. Unsolved murders of Duško Jovanović, editor in chief of the "Dan" daily, Slavoljub Šćekić, high police official and Branko Vojičić, director of Montenegro state TV, as well as recent brutal beating of Željko Ivanović, director of the independent daily "Vijesti", stand as a sad evidence that there is neither media freedom nor any other kind of freedom in Montenegro.

- prosperity -

Former Montenegrin Prime Minister Milo Đukanović and some other former leaders of this country who are today Democratic Party of Socialists' MPs and "very industrious businessmen" are the living proof that one can make money in Montenegro and have the European standard of living we all dream of. Montenegro seems to be an economic paradise because MPs can make multi-million loans to establish private universities and buy one and a half million euro worth of bank stocks, even though they make only a 800 € a month, have a reputation of good businessmen and are well connected but without any savings, at least according to the Trade Court and the Public Records of Property Ownership. Since such a thing is possible for someone who makes 800 € a month, it is no wonder that Russian citizens worth several hundred times more than the gentlemen in question, invest in real estate in Montenegro,

cheering up many Montenegrins who shamelessly give up the land of their grandfathers.

- independence -

Montenegro has the intention of making its own language completely independent of all the rules, spelling, grammar, dictionaries and standards, as well as independent from what its citizens think, even though many claim just the opposite. In the process of accepting the Constitution of the Republic of Montenegro a conflict has arisen with regard to the language we speak, or more precisely, we should speak. We should speak differently, of course, because we are now different and we should demonstrate it, and what better way to do it than to speak different language or find the new name for the same one, since all independence and identity lie in the name, anyway. In any case, by depriving ourselves of any sense of responsibility towards feelings and wishes of our citizens, rules and norms, we deprive ourselves of duty and freedom, too.

- freedom -

In an intention to additionally confirm their long-awaited independence citizens of Montenegro made sure that there's no shortage of necessary pomp by establishing "Montenegrin Orthodox Church". They did so by storming the Cetinje Monastery, among other things, presumably to make it independent, too. Attempts of plunder like this are what every believer and every man consider usurpation of temple of God and turning it into a personal property or the property of a small group of people. It's a threat not only to independence but to common sense, and worst of all, to peace in this country. On the other hand, pro-Serbian opposition, lead by the Serbian Orthodox Church, readily stood up to defend their sacrileges just as it had been doing for the past fifteen years all over the former Yugoslavia. We should of course commend professionalism of the police department. Even though they acted without a transparent standpoint of the authorities regarding the issue, they managed to protect it (Monastery) from plain robbery so the authorities retained their reputation of independent and democratic, which they had earned during the past year. The announcements of further violent storming of churches and monasteries, on one hand, and their defence, on the other, prove that the practice of storming into edifices has not been abandoned. Perhaps we are so free here in Montenegro that we do not depend on God any longer. Therefore, as independent as we are from both

mind and God, we found our independence on robbery and violence - which are the pillars of freedom in Montenegro.

- oasis of peace -

It is the most used description of Montenegro, the country whose soldiers once shelled Dubrovnik and robbed Konavle (Dubrovnik's' hinterland), where Croatian prisoners were tortured in Morinj detainees' camp, where Muslims were exiled from the town of Herceg Novi straight into the hands and knives of Radovan Karadžić, with its Army that killed refugees from Kosovo in Kaluđerski Laz, etc. Finally, it's the country that still hasn't started to ask questions regarding dealing with all these issues (or at least its officials haven't done so). The tendency to look towards the future, towards the European integrations, to forget and erase the past is still an ongoing trend in Montenegro with only a few exceptions to this rule, amongst those who are trying to start working on some of these issues (law suits against the Republic of Montenegro brought before the court by the families of the Muslim victims, recent indictment against several then officials of the Ministry of Interior Affairs as well as a request to prosecute soldiers responsible for the massacre in Kaluđerski Laz). The processes of dealing with the past seem to avoid Montenegro and God forbid we need them since Montenegro is actually an example of multiculturalism and coexistence that were built and preserved in tough times, therefore Montenegro remained one and only oasis of peace amid the war. The main obstacles to these processes are both the trend of silence and oblivion and the group of people that has remained on power during all this time (there's no mentioning the process of lustration in these circumstances, either). It's the same group that is also directly responsible for all the aforementioned events, therefore by keeping quiet they protect themselves and their positions. Without an honest and unequivocal taking responsibility for all those events, without willingness to accept them and to deal with the consequences of that responsibility, without accepting the process of dealing with the past on a mass-scale (which would include: completely marginalized and forgotten veterans, ordinary people, victims' associations as well as authorities), without a more intense work on the dialogue between different nations in Montenegro, without civil courage and willingness to accept changes, there is not nor will there ever be peace in Montenegro.

Radomir Radević i Kristina Bojanović

It's all natural... - The context of CNA's work in Serbia

It is difficult to look back at the last year without becoming extremely pessimistic, let alone maintain some optimism. I believe that not everything is black as it seems, but sometimes it is difficult to get a perspective of things (if possible at all), especially if you live in the region like ours. Even though there's an impression that there was something going on all the time, during the past year, there are few events and processes that were more important than others. This article is dedicated to some key events, or those that can describe the context of CNA's work and everything that surrounds it.

Kosovo, or more precisely, the status of Kosovo is the theme that was the most talked about, written about and the one that was the most time consuming, therefore a lot of processes/events were related to it, like the new Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, to name just one.

The fall of 2006 finally brought the draft of the Constitution which was then not only hastily accepted but also adopted on the referendum. At that time, the negotiations on the Kosovo status were approaching, therefore the leaders of this country thought that it was necessary to adopt the constitution which would contain the following phrase: "Republic of Serbia has the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina and the Autonomous province of Kosovo and Metohija". I can't remember any other campaign that was as big and persuasive: one should go to the polls and vote 'YES' (as the only correct answer). There was even a two-days time period to vote, while some mentioned more ballots than voters. However, according to the person in a State Electoral Committee, country's official electoral body, it was all natural... Many strange things were proclaimed natural in Serbia. So, there's no need for further explanation, is there?

Two days after the referendum and without any prior public debate, the Constitution was accepted and became both object of pride for some (mostly the authorities) and something to be ashamed of. However, officially it reads: "Republic of Serbia is the state of the Serbian people and all the citizens who live in it" which crucially determines the direction of the Serbian politics and in a certain way justifies discrimination regardless of the fact that it proclaims to be against it. Nonetheless, it's merely a proclamation: there is a rather long list of constitutional articles that define things in one way while the practices are something entirely different.

The impression that proclamations dominate over

values was confirmed by the former judge of the Constitutional Court of Serbia, according to whom pasting the posters with the image of Ratko Mladić was the same as pasting the posters of slain prime minister Zoran Đinđić and the law had to apply to all equally(!?) To be honest, for some the law is more applicable, while for others it is not really the case. By the way, pasting posters was particularly interesting at the time when the former AVNOJ Boulevard (AVNOJ stands for the Anti-Fascists Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia) was renamed Zoran Đinđić Blvd., and the street corners were pasted with makeshift street signs with the name of R. Mladić. Let's not get into the question why the name of that street was changed in the first place (must everything that is related to the past be erased, especially since it has to do with anti-fascism).

The verdict in the case against the assassins of Zoran Đinđić was brought and the presiding judge was being threatened. Political background of the murder has not been disclosed yet, at least not publicly. Milorad Luković Legija, one of the main indicted and convicted of the murder, has wrote a book which was published by Prosveta publishing house. It was nicely displayed at the window of their bookstore... All of which testifies that the state of law and the reality contradict each other.

The Constitution declares that churches and religious communities are separate from the state. Although, I do not know how come it is possible to charge for the postal stamp of the St. Sava church (the Orthodox church which is being built in Belgrade)? One cannot mail anything without paying for the stamp. However ordinary this might be it tells a lot about the reality we live in. The Hilandar monastery, one of our cultural treasures, received about a million euro from Serbia! It is far more important than any human treasure ... Some churches and religious communities come before the others, judging by the attacks on Adventist Churches in Vojvodina. There are also broken windows of Vesna Pešić, Liberal Democrat Union's MP and Mirko Đorđević, publicist and prominent sociologist of religion, and the swastika graffiti on the walls of the Synagogue in Novi Sad. Clerical fascist organizations continue to sprout and I cannot see any big changes in that department.

Once again I must refer to the Constitution and the articles regarding the inviolability of human life and freedom of media. It is interesting how at the same time life seems cheap and freedom is relative. Not long ago, there was an attack on Dejan Anastasijević,

journalist of the Belgrade weekly "Vreme" and none of the results of the investigation have been revealed so far. A local politician commented that he was surprised by the fact that the journalist had not moved from his ground floor apartment somewhere else, on some higher floor?! I get the impression that the top state officials continue to pamper and silently protect war criminals, as if there was a plan not to find Ratko Mladić, while people who write about the society where such things take place are labelled as traitors (the traitors are of course all of those who criticize, talk about problems etc.). In favour of the pampering is the fact that two streets in Novi Sad were almost named after the 'liberators' of Vukovar. The fact that the suggestion was not accepted proves that there is still some light at the end of the tunnel.

One of the key moments of the past year is forming the government, i. e. the elections that were followed by almost a three-month long negotiations between political parties. At one moment, when the deadline to form the government was about to be reached, once again it was demonstrated that things could always get worse than we had thought. Tomislav Nikolić of the Serbia's hard-line Radical Party had been elected as the Speaker of the Parliament and soon after having been appointed he started to talk about declaring the state of emergency, etc. That was really the alarm ringing bell, and one could feel that in every aspect of public (and private) life of every citizens. Many people had the worst possible scenario in mind and it had its consequences on the economy since the stock market index dropped instantly. In any case, the government was formed at the last minute by the trinity made of Democratic Party of Serbia, Democratic Party and G17Plus. The Ministry of Human and Minority Rights was left out of the new government but since everything is just about ideal in this country, what do we need it in the first place?

The new government declared that they will end the cooperation with the Hague Tribunal, which is especially important for our work in the field of dealing with the past. However, I cannot remember whether they said they were going to deliver war crimes indictments, too. To tell the truth, some of them were apprehended, but those most important are still at large. It was even said that the war criminals are hiding mostly in the "bordering area between Serbia and the Republic of Srpska..." Former sitting of the Serbian Parliament discussed heatedly the declaration on Srebrenica, but the MP's were in favour of condemning all crimes, from the Biblical days of Cain, all the way to Moby Dick and Godzilla, and the NATO alliance, as it was commented by Ljubomir Živkov of the Belgrade-based weekly

"Vreme"... One of the more important issues when it comes to (not) dealing with the past is the verdict in the lawsuit of Bosnia and Herzegovina against Serbia. According to the verdict, Serbia did not commit genocide but did not prevent it either. Either way, the court's decision was received with the relief, while elsewhere in this region it was received with great disappointment. Of course Serbia still has to go through the process on the lawsuit of Croatia. However, the verdict is not a part of Serbia's dealing with the past (in a constructive manner), especially if we bear in mind that one of the arguments of the defence was that Serbia had not been member of the United Nations at the time? Do we need to say any more?

One of the issues we should underline, particularly in the context of peace building is the apology of the Serbian President Boris Tadić, for everything that his fellow countrymen did to Croatian citizens. The apology made much of a splash in the entire region, and the reactions were mainly positive. It is one of the elements of reconciliation and means that an important step has been made. Some criticize it (and by some, I don't mean members of the Serbian Radical Party or former Milošević's Socialist Party of Serbia) because it imputed the responsibility for war crimes more to the people than to the state, which is something worth discussing.

What else marked this year?

Serbia has joined the Partnership for Peace, "Petrohemija", Pančevo-based chemical plant, continues to send poisonous gas into the atmosphere (the important thing is that they make some profit, who cares about the people getting sick?), Telecom Serbia bought the Telecom of the Republic of Srpska so the Prime Minister commented that "citizens of the Republic of Srpska and Serbia will be able to understand and hear each other better". How symbolic...

You can find an article about Kosovo in this report, but since I'm writing from the perspective of Serbia, I cannot shake off the impression that the insanity has gotten out of control especially because our professed politicians keep saying that "we shall defend Kosovo with all the means necessary, and we shall not let 'our tissue' be thorn apart, etc".

So, at the end, let's underline some things. Human rights are based in the Constitution therefore they are still sort of iffy, court trials are often accompanied with threats and uncertainties ... Defending Kosovo is still the most important thing, and nothing else matters. According to the Biro, the best thing to do is abandon critical thinking and put our future into the hands of the Prime Minister Vojislav Koštunica and accept obediently everything the government does.

It's still a long way ahead of us...

Helena Rill

Kosovo - a never ending story

It is difficult to write about the situation in Kosovo, from the point of view of someone who lives in Belgrade, perhaps due to an unexpected reason - the saturation with the subject. One can get the impression that Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Koštunica, and the entourage of his advisers, associates and freeloaders do not intend to do much else but monotonously repeat the same views about the in-alienability of Kosovo from Serbia. Media, especially state-owned TV channel do not go skimp on airtime and keep informing us on daily basis that Mr Prime Minister has neither stopped nor is he ever going to. It remains unclear whether they think that the audience, i. e. the citizens of Serbia suspect that he eventually will stoop or they are just trying to convince themselves of it.

The announcement and later delay of the call of UN vote on resolution on Kosovo's independence, due to the opposition from Russia, caused a triumphant hysteria and delight in Serbia.

In the meantime, when you read between the lines of home and international news, you can foretell that the situation is aggravating and worsening and that there's even bigger threat of violence escalating. Neither side restrain from discrete yet clear announcements that they will be willing to achieve their goals with war if other ways prove impossible. According to some Serbian Government's advisers, the Army is obliged by the Constitution to secure territorial integrity of the country etc. which probably means that they are calling a bluff and responding to a more open threats with violence coming from Albanian side, in case their demands aren't conformed to. Nonetheless, the readiness to reach for violence and mentioning of war as a "possible solution" happens so frequently hence it provokes fewer reactions. The latest peace of wisdom we've heard comes from one of Prime Minister's advisers,

according to whom Serbia should stop the process of accession to the EU, in case EU fail to protect "territorial integrity of Serbia". I doubt that these statements cause EU to panic, because they somehow manage to go by without us, although they would surely have a blast with us, especially if all our neighbours would also join them. Joking aside, the number of ethnically inspired attacks in Kosovo is increasing. There are some indications that Kosovo Liberation Army is mobilising their troops and an explosion of violence once again becomes a realistic scenario. It seems that officials on the Serbian side do not detest that, because it will provide them with additional argumentation that Serbs are the victims and that Albanian side makes unjustifiable claims. I doubt that any of them seriously consider what's more important: human lives or territory. They stick to the part of the Constitution and laws that refer to the interests of the state which is in their view *raison d'être* of all of us, citizens, and not the other way around. According to them, the state is not the form by which citizens regulate their relations, protect their interests and establish rules of living. Instead, the state is a value by itself, for which citizens should make sacrifice.

Dealing with the crucial problem: mistrust and hate that exist between Serbs and Albanians, both in Kosovo and Serbia, doesn't seem to be of anyone's interest, and that is especially the case with those on the highest positions. There is no solution to the status that can resolve this crucial problem, while the lack of willingness to work on it means that it is delayed until after the solution is found. That will possibly only worsen the problem. Whatever solution of the status is found, it certainly doesn't mean that these two communities will live on two far away planets, but will continue to exist next to each other.

Nenad Vukosavljević

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CNA will very much welcome feedback, suggestions,
questions and criticism concerning this report and
our general work.
Your thinking along helps us!
Thank you.

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i našim radom uopšte.
Vaša razmišljanja su nam od pomoći!
Hvala vam.

**Zahvaljujemo se
svima koji su podržali naš rad,
finansijski ili svojim
angažovanjem, kao i svima onima
koji su bili sa nama u svojim
mislima.**