

**CENTAR ZA NENASILNU AKCIJU**  
CENTRE FOR NONVIOLENT ACTION



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# 3-MONTH REPORT

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*Centar za nenasilnu akciju (Centre for Nonviolent Action) is a non-governmental and non-profit organisation whose basic goals are peace building, the development of civil society, cross-border cooperation and promotion of nonviolence.*

*Our main activity is to organise and implement trainings (seminars) in nonviolent conflict transformation and to support groups and individuals who wish to do this kind of work. Through training in nonviolent conflict transformation we are aiming to develop political awareness of the training participants, and to pass on skills in nonviolent dealing with conflict. At our trainings CNA gathers people from all parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Yugoslavia and Macedonia, hence giving special focus on networking, and communication between people from different areas, whose communication has been interrupted through war and supporting the process of prejudice reduction and trust building. CNA started with its work in 1997 with Sarajevo office. Office in Belgrade started in 2001. CNA is an external branch of KURVE Wustrow.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Dear friends,

We've entered another calendar year. We've said goodbye to the last year, feeling quite tired, but ready to start 2002 with new ideas and renewed energy. CNA Belgrade office is already running smoothly, although there are still difficulties concerning legal and administrative regulation having in mind that the Law on foreign organisations hasn't moved any further from a proposal.

At the end of last year, we had an important and necessary team meeting in Sarajevo, on what we had accomplished so far and about our future plans. It was an excellent opportunity to gather and hear each other out, but also to say goodbye to our colleague Iva Zenzerovic. Iva has been in CNA for about a year, as planned, and is now back to Centre for Peace Studies in Zagreb, Croatia. Although we're sorry because she's not giving her active and valuable contribution to our team, which is very important to us, her return to CPS Zagreb makes another strong bond with the organisation we appreciate highly and with whom we share common values we both support. Also during this period, we had a visit from dr Martina Fischer who conducted evaluation interviews with us.

December was very active. The exploratory trip in Yugoslavia was completed. This gave us a better insight into the NGO scene, but also into the political situation in different parts of the country, which has been turbulent and perceived differently.

Two CNA volunteers (one from Belgrade and one from Sarajevo office) went to Štrpce, Kosovo. An invitation came from OSCE to do a three-day training for people in this Serb enclave in Kosovo. Our team members had a chance to find out about the difficulties people of Štrpce deal with on daily basis, but also to meet a participant from one of our previous training events. Another Basic Training in Conflict Transformation was held in Kiseljak, Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was implemented with the cooperation and support of the GTZ office from Sarajevo, and was conducted by CNA team members from both of our offices.

During the first two months of this year, there were many official visits, meetings, internal CNA training, and unpleasant news about the delay of our Basic Training from March to May, because there wasn't enough financial support for it.

At the beginning of February, an internal CNA training took place in Sarajevo, which was very useful because it offered mutual exchange of skills, information and experience. Also in February, one female member from our Belgrade team and one male member from our Sarajevo team went to visit peace organisations in England and Northern Ireland, through an invitation from the Committee for Conflict Transformation Support in London. More information about our internal training, and the visit to England and Northern Ireland will be available in the Three-Month Report from our Sarajevo Office.

CNA was invited to participate at the Annual Conference of the Centre for Peace Building from Bern, Switzerland. We also attended a Regional meeting in Grožnjan, Croatia.

Political turmoil is the main characteristic of the past 3 months – with different events showing political and civic (in)tolerance. A lot has been said and heard about the trial of Slobodan Milošević. A lot has also been said and heard about the talks on the future of the Yugoslav Federation and the meetings of Serbian and Montenegrin representatives. The situation in the south of Serbia and in Kosovo is further cause for discussion, as well as the future status of Vojvodina, the increasing disagreements of the two leading parties of DOS (Coalition: Democratic Opposition of Serbia): Democratic Party and Democratic Party of Serbia, individual responsibility for what has happened over the past 10 years, and the inability of some people to accept that. Those people who are trying to work on developing

tolerance between ethnic groups or steps toward dealing with the past, cannot feel safe, since they still receive open or anonymous threats.

## MAIN ACTIVITIES

### Exploratory Trip in Yugoslavia

*Report by Ivana Franovic*

#### **Introduction**

Ivana Franovic, Milan Colic and Nedžad Horozovic from the Centre for Nonviolent Action made an exploratory trip to Yugoslavia in October and December of 2001.

This research had the following goals:

- Getting to know NGOs and their local conditions
- Analysis of the political situation in the country and problems of society
- Assessment of needs of the groups working on peace building, conflict resolution, inter-ethnic relations and cross border cooperation
- Assessment of needs for education in nonviolent conflict transformation.

During the research, we visited 46 organisations from all over Serbia and Montenegro, from: Niš, Medveda, Leskovac, Vlasotince, Vranje, Bujanovac, Preševo, Cacak, Užice, Novi Pazar, Kraljevo, Kragujevac, Dimitrovgrad, Piroć, Knjaževac, Zajecar, Negotin, Bor, Beograd, Novi Sad, Sombor, Becej, Kolašin, Podgorica, Nikšić, Cetinje, Kotor, Herceg Novi, Tivat, Ulcinj, Bijelo Polje.

Having in mind the size of Yugoslavia, and the number of organizations active in it, our priority was to spend as much time as possible in the province, in small towns and cities, to explore the situation and contact organizations that are active there, rather than in Belgrade. Research did not include Kosovo, for security reasons.

#### **Political situation**

The political situation in FR Yugoslavia is rather complex. The complexity begins with perception of the term "Yugoslavia", which can be quite different. Some people consider Yugoslavia as: Montenegro and Serbia (together with the regions Vojvodina and Kosovo). For others Yugoslavia means: Montenegro, Serbia proper and Vojvodina. For some people Yugoslavia means only Serbia (questions remains whether "Serbia" is just Serbia proper, or includes the region of Vojvodina). All this means that the use of the term "Yugoslavia", for some people from this region, may sound like a political statement by itself, regardless of the fact that it is the official name of the country. The situation is similar with the term "Serbia".

Today, part of the population of the Republic of Montenegro wants an independent state. Part of the population of Vojvodina wants more autonomy for Vojvodina, and the majority of the population of Kosovo wants this region to become an independent state.

Parliamentary elections held in Montenegro in April of 2001 were mostly perceived as a referendum for the independence of Montenegro. The two biggest political coalitions confirm that with their names: "Collition Together for Yugoslavia" and "The Victory of Montenegro – Democratic Coallition of Milo Đukanovic". This unofficial referendum, however, did not untangle the complicated situation in Montenegro, because no one won more than 50% of the vote (official results were: 40,9% to 42% in favour of Milo Đukanovic's coalition). The rest of

the votes went to the pro-independence Liberal Alliance (7,9%) and to some small parties like those of Albanian and Bosniak ethnic minorities.

During 2000, while Slobodan Milošević was still in power in Serbia, Montenegrin daily papers were full of feuilletons about "centuries of torture of Montenegro under Serbia". This atmosphere was very reminiscent of what was happening in Bosnia and Herzegovina or Croatia just before the war. Heavy police forces were present on the roads of Montenegro, with police wearing combat uniforms and khalashnikovs. There was fear of possible war between Serbia and Montenegro. The fear is gone now, especially after the so called "changes" in Serbia (the fall of the former regime).

What remains is the question of independence as an urgent problem in Montenegro. The first reactions in Serbia were: "Let them go if they want", "To hell with them", "No one asks us whether we want to live with them, only they are asked whether they want to live with us". During 2000, however, people became slightly tired and disinterested in the subject. For a long time, both authorities and most of the media acted as if a consensus had been reached on the issue of independence in Montenegro. All the attention was drawn to Serbia, like it was only up to Serbia whether Montenegro would become an independent state or not. Not enough opportunity was given to the citizens of Montenegro for dialogue and public debate. The situation is however very complicated, and people are extremely divided. In some cases it affects families: family members don't speak to each other because of their different political position. In some towns, those who support one or the other side go to separate pubs and do not mix. Riding in a car with Belgrade registration plates and asking people for directions gives you an idea about whose side most of the people are that you talk to. Political parties or the media in Montenegro do not make it any easier, and instead increase polarization. The media has clearly made its choice. It seems there is no independent media to offer constructive criticism of both political options, and to give an effective approach to the problem.

According to the latest research from the Center for Democracy and Human Rights from Podgorica and Damar Agency (January 2002) the referendum results for independence of Montenegro would be: 46,7% to 41,9% in favour of independence. When asked about the best way for Serbia and Montenegro to establish their mutual relations, people gave the following answers: an independent and internationally recognized state (37,2%); a federation based on the new constitution (32,7%); a union of independent states (11,2%).

This conflict will certainly not be overcome without constructive dialogue and the public debate of supporters of different political options in Montenegro.

As well as Montenegrins and Serbs, there are members of other ethnicities in Montenegro: Albanians (mostly in the southern part), Croatians (in central and northern part of the Adriatic coast), Bosniaks (in the east - the Montenegrin part of Sandžak), Roma and others. There are evident inter-ethnic tensions, but the matter of independence has pushed all the other problems in the background. These problems are either not discussed or denied. The precise ethnic structure of Montenegro is unknown, because the last census was done in 1991. The next census is expected in April of 2002.

According to the figures obtained in this research, Albanians make 7.6% of the total population, while there are 83% Albanians in the town of Ulcinj, at the very south of the Adriatic coast. Quite a large number of Albanians got their qualifications in Albania and Kosovo, because that way they had a chance to study in their native language. However, the authorities do not acknowledge degrees from Kosovo and Albania and that is one of the most common problems Albanians encounter in everyday life. It is interesting to notice that during the holiday season, the largest number of tourists visiting Ulcinj come from Kosovo (Albanians), while visitors from other parts of Yugoslavia are very rare. Undoubtedly, there are strong prejudices towards parts of the country inhabited mostly with Albanians.

Sandžak is a region in Yugoslavia, with a mostly Muslim (Bosniak) population, divided into two parts by the border between Montenegro and Serbia. Bosniaks in Montenegro do not have one political party to represent their interests. Their political leaders are members of the ruling

coalition and support the independence of Montenegro. In Serbia, there are Bosniak political parties, and most of them are against the independence of Montenegro, because that would break the region of Sandžak into two, and break many family, friend and business ties of these people.

According to the 1991 census, almost one third of the population of Serbia including Vojvodina and Kosovo, are not Serb nationality. Ethnic structure has certainly changed a lot due to intensive migrations of population over the last decade. However, Albanians, Bosniaks/Muslims, Croats, Hungarians, Bulgarians, Slovaks, Rusins, Roma, Vlachs, Macedonians, Slovins, Germans, Gorans and others still make significant percent of population.

Vojvodina is the most multi-cultural part of Serbia, where the biggest minority is Hungarian. Nationalists still "remember" and blame Hungarians for being Nazi's allies in The Second World War. The support of a large part of the population and political leaders of Vojvodina for more autonomy of this region is perceived as a call for separation and unification with Hungary. These kind of populist comments coming from certain politicians are not harmless, because they fall onto the fertile ground of still existing smoldering nationalism.

Bulgarians are the largest minority in the south-east of Serbia (in Pirot county, they make up about 30% of the population). While the Hungarian minority have primary and secondary schools in their native language in Vojvodina, there are not any schools in Bulgarian language. Aspirations of some Bulgarian political parties to have primary and secondary schools in Bulgarian language are perceived as attempts towards unification with Bulgaria (just as with Hungarians). Nationalistic prejudices are very strong in that part of the country. Even the term »Bulgarian« sounds defamatory.

Over the last few years more young people of Bulgarian and Hungarian nationality choose to study in Bulgaria and Hungary, because they have a chance to learn in their native language, but also with the hope that they will be able to find a job and a better life in those countries.

Albanians are the largest minority in the southern part of Serbia. The situation is calm there after armed clashes between members of OVPBM (Liberating Army of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveda) on one side and the Yugoslav Army and police on the other side. There are, however occasional incidents. Intensive police and army presence is quite evident. For instance in the centre of Medveda, on the town square, there is a big army barracks. After the armed conflict, the majority of the Albanian population moved from Medveda, mostly to Kosovo. According to Serbs it was "voluntary", while Albanians said "they were forced to leave". Fear itself is a good enough reason to leave. Authorities in Serbia made some steps to calm down the situation, but most of it was rather clumsy. The establishment of a multi-ethnic police force sounds like a constructive step, but those Albanians who decide to join the force face the following problem: most of them got their training in Kosovo or in Albania, and their degrees are not accepted in Serbia. There are very few Albanians in the local administration of the town of Bujanovac. A local Serb commented: "The biggest problem is the fact that Serbs are now supposed to share something they consider to be their own, and they are not used to sharing it, but to be the bosses." But also: "There isn't any conflict between the Serbs and the Albanians here, it's the conflict between the Albanians and the state."

Bujanovac is divided: different radio stations for Albanians and Serbs, separate pubs, separate schools, different languages.

Media in Serbia often use the term "Šiptar", which is pejorative name for an Albanian.

Ethnic groups have difficulty in preserving their cultural traditions in the educational process. Even if there are textbooks in their native language, they are simply translated from Serbian language and they bring a one-sided perception of history. Furthermore, there is either very little or no information whatsoever about the culture of those ethnic groups. It's absurd that history textbooks for pupils in primary school, translated into Albanian language, have a photograph of an orthodox church, on the cover. There are no books with the photo of a mosque on the cover page.

Additionally, there are a minor number of literary works written in the languages of the minorities of Yugoslavia, translated into Serbian language.

Education certainly does not offer a multicultural picture of the society we live in.

In April 2001, SMMRI (Strategic Marketing & Media Research Institute) completed research titled "Perception of truth in Serba". The results were amazing: 39.9% of the population of Serbia think they should never again trust to those nations they once made war with. About 21% of those aged 18 to 29, and 34.6 % of people over 60 say they are totally unprepared for reconciliation with nations with which we were at war. The Army is considered to be the most important factor of the country's security and an institution of utmost trust. The most important factor for the disintegration of Yugoslavia is Croatian nationalism (77.7%) and the interests of USA (73.5%). Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina were more tolerant than the other nations there, which is why they suffered (41.9%). This is how some relevant factors from the Serb side are estimated: Ratko Mladic and the Army of Republika Srpska - excellent (46.3%); Radovan Karadžić and the Serbian leadership from Pale - excellent (34.9%). According to 52.5% of the respondents, Serbs committed 0 war crimes in the past ten years.

The federal Ministry of Ethnic and National Communities started a campaign with the slogan "Tolerance!" After so many years of hate speech in the media. This is certainly refreshing and a step that deserves welcome and support.

The economy of Serbia and Montenegro is in very bad state. As an example, according to the figures of the Federal Statistics Institute, the average salary in Yugoslavia in November of 2001, was 6.944 dinar (about 115 EUR). At the same time the basket of goods for the family of four was 1.2067,58 dinar (about 201 EUR). Many people are losing their jobs because big factories are closing down since they are no longer profitable and budget funds are spent on them. This can cause social turmoil of great proportion, but people have got used to various difficulties such as international sanctions, war, bombing, and inflation; and don't seem to react in a way one might expect.

At this moment several hundred thousand refugees and displaced persons from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo live in Yugoslavia. Figures about them vary a lot (according to the Red Cross, there are about 350.000 refugees and 185.000 displaced persons in Serbia). Most of them live in collective centres and very often their living conditions are inhuman. They are mostly situated in central Serbia and Vojvodina, and they often make 14-37% of the total population of the municipality they live in, including the poorest municipalities in Serbia like Kraljevo, Kragujevac, and some towns in the south of Serbia. These people usually are not accepted by the local population. They are often accused of being the cause of the difficult economic situation they find themselves in. Therefore, it's not uncommon for refugees to live their lives as in a ghetto.

In our contacts with NGO representatives, most of them expressed their disappointment with "changes" in Serbia. People complain it is taking too long for results, that they are almost invisible, that there is hardly any change in the system, that the new authorities do not know or are unable to perform true changes. However almost all the people we've talked to emphasized that there was a sense of freedom, no more fear of the police, arrests, no more of underground work. No matter how much disappointment, there is a general understanding of the problems the new government has, and therefore there's patience and hope that some essential changes will come in time. There's slightly less understanding for local authorities in some towns, where the very same people (who were once part of the previous regime) stay in power, but now belong to the different political party, or those new people who adopt old manners (corruption, nepotism, arrogance, etc).

This is what activists identified as problems within society, and in their local environment:

- Economic problems, strikes, low salaries, fear of losing job
- Quarrels within the ruling coalition
- Corruption ("When you want something done you have to take at least 200g of coffee to the clerk at the township, not the mention doctors")
- Apathy, melancholy, having no power or energy, especially apathy amongst young people
- Young people do not have a space to express themselves
- Unemployment
- Silent migrations of young people from villages and small towns
- Criminal
- Racism
- Nationalism
- Xenophobia
- Not accepting differences
- Disrespect of civil rights of minorities
- Hate speech in media
- Violence in families
- A minor number of women and young people in local government structures
- Population which is not informed - fertile soil for manipulations
- A minor number of independent media with well educated journalists who check information before broadcasting them

### ***Non Government Organizations and Authorities***

Non government organizations blame the "new" authorities in Serbia for the absence of law on nongovernment organizations, so they continue to function according to the old legal regulations. This means that when it comes to finances and taxes, NGO's are treated like profit organizations. NGO's are forced to engage in "creative bookkeeping" in order to survive. NGO's had an important role in overthrowing the old regime and gave direct support to the present government, which is why their disappointment is even bigger. One of the activists says: "We protested for them. We did everything as volunteers, never asked for any help. We haven't done that for their sake, but for our own. I don't need a medal or a tap on my shoulder. All I want is to know what my rights are, and not someone to do favours for me. At the moment it's in our favour, so there are no financial police here. The question remains whether they will be in favour of us when we start to criticize them."

NGO law in Montenegro is not much different when it comes to the financial aspect of their dealings (for example, if the organization has any money left on their account at the end of the year it's considered as profit and they must pay tax for it).

Both the government and local authorities in Montenegro provide some money in their budgets to support activities of NGOs. However, information on the amounts of money planned in the budget or organisations which were granted the money is unavailable. It seems that this kind of information is not for public consumption.

Many of those political parties in power, in both Serbia and Montenegro, have their own nongovernment organizations.

In some municipalities (like Niš and Pirot), there is an "empty seat" in the town hall for the representatives of NGOs, who cannot vote, but have a chance to take part in discussion.

Representatives of local authorities rarely or never respond to invitations for seminars organised by NGOs. Several people we talked to say that they were under the impression that local government had considered them as some sort of competition. It's because they were working on programmes local authorities should have been doing but never did. Also, it was difficult to get any information from the authorities. One of the people we spoke to said: I think local authorities see us as competition, because we had a chance to get more education than they had. We know more about some of the things they are supposed to know about. It is absurd that when we want to share what we know with them, they simply don't show up at the seminar."



There are very few organisations that achieved any kind of cooperation with local structures. There are also very few of those who got any kind of support from them, even though they work on programmes of common benefit. This is not the case when NGOs distribute humanitarian aid, because then they usually have the support of local government.

Cases of cooperation between NGOs and the republic or federal government are also rare. A woman we talked to said: "It is easier to get in touch with some foreign ambassador than with an official from the ministry."

### ***The Difficulties NGOs Encounter***

Most of the NGOs we visited experience one major difficulty - people are leaving them. There are several reasons for it:

- Educated activists go to work for bigger international organisations (they are mostly administrators and rarely in a position to make decisions, but they get better paid and their salaries are regular)
- Educated activists have become representatives of local and other authorities
- After the regime was overthrown the motivation of activists dropped.

Most of the people working in NGOs haven't got any social or health insurance.

The lack of adequate law on NGOs forces them to ask for funding from foreign donors, since local companies have no interest in financing NGOs because it's not tax deductible.

Most of the NGOs in Serbia and Montenegro are "project oriented", meaning they don't have a clearly defined mission and strategy, but prepare their project proposals based on open competition donors announce. Thereby, donors directly define strategy of work and development and priorities of civil society. Thus, authentic initiative of the local people is lost, and they are the ones who know local conditions better than donors. Programmes become oriented towards the donor, and not to the target group. This is one of the reasons why many NGOs were created to obtain jobs to some people. A man we talked to said: "Working on the programme, which is not a priority, makes you feel apathetic, but unless you accept what is offered there are not any funds. Donors finance humanitarian aid, which is why we do it, we need something to survive."

An additional difficulty lies in the fact that NGOs hardly manage to find donors eager to grant resources for structural financing (for office expenses like: rent, phone bills, power and heating bills, salaries), while the activities are easier to get funds for. In order for organisations to realize quality programmes, they need certain experience and well-co-ordinated structure to perform that in a professional manner. However, this structure is often missing, because there are not enough finances to support it.

Several organisations, especially Roma, said that it is very difficult for them to write project proposals in English. The majority of the population can't speak English and this goes for many of the activists, too. Some of the organisations have stated this as an example of discrimination: "If we can't speak English, we're automatically deprived of many competitions and funds."

Very few NGOs said they had a problem with local extreme groups.

Women's groups working on: prevention of violence against women and raising community's awareness of its presence in families (against women and children) and awareness of the unequal position of women in the community, very often are not accepted by local communities, especially in small towns.

For NGOs from small communities it is difficult to get access to information (about education, open competitions for funding, similar groups from other towns, literature about their field of work). Organisations from Belgrade rarely have these kind of difficulties, because Belgrade is at the same time an information centre.

## ***Peace Building, Regional Cooperation, Multi-ethnic Dialogue***

### ***Present Initiatives***

CNA regards contacts and acquaintances with groups working on peace building, inter ethnic dialogue and those groups whose priority is regional (cross border) cooperation especially important. It is amongst them, that we see our potential colleagues and allies in many activities to promote shared values.

There are over 3.000 registered NGOs in Serbia and Montenegro.

According to the latest figures from the Centre for Development of the Non-profit Sector, who has a data base of NGOs from Serbia and Montenegro, there are only 51 organisations that declare themselves as peace organisations and propagate a culture of peace and nonviolence. A large majority of them are either not active at all or their activities often have nothing whatsoever to do with peace building.

Most of the NGOs we visited, whose mission is to propagate a culture of peace, have dedicated most of their capacities to distribution of humanitarian aid. Although that work is certainly very useful and necessary for hundreds of thousands of people in Yugoslavia, it isn't a peace work in the true sense.

Nevertheless, some organisations don't perceive their own work as peace work, but in fact they are making steps towards sustainable peace.

Very few organisations work on conflict transformation and offer education in nonviolent conflict transformation (like Most, Hrast, Hajde da...). Most of the organisations we met never had a chance to get any similar type of education, and they found it necessary for their work.

Some of the organisations even want to include peace building and nonviolent conflict transformation in their long-term strategy, so they expressed an explicit need for education of their members. We haven't got any information on whether any organisation does training for trainers in this area of work, or not.

With respect to the parts of the country with an ethnically mixed population (south and south-east of Serbia, Vojvodina), there are few ethnically mixed organisations working on inter-ethnic dialogue. Organisations of ethnic minorities are mostly focused on preserving their culture and tradition, and perhaps on protection of human rights of the ethnic group they belong to.

A small number of organisations are involved in the direct monitoring of human rights and presenting cases of human rights abuse to the public. The work of those organisations is invaluable to the social groups whose rights are being broken. This way they get direct support, but it is also very important to sensitise society towards the discrimination that is strongly present. We should certainly point out the Fond za humanitarno pravo (Humanitarian Law Centre) and Jukom (Yugoslav Committee of Lawyers for Human Rights), but also local organisations such as Odbor za ljudska prava (Council for Human Rights) Bujanovac, Odbor za ljudska prava (Council for Human Rights) Negotin and others.

It is important to mention organisations whose programme is dealing with the past, like Odbor za gradansku inicijativu (Council for Civic initiatives) Niš, Gradanski parlament Srbije (Civic Parliament of Serbia) from Cacak, Medija centar Beograd, and others.

Regional (cross border) co-operation is also badly covered. Most of the rare organisations involved in cooperation with organisations from neighbouring countries or programmes regarding these countries were focused on Romania, Bulgaria and/or Hungary. Only several of them focused their work on one or several countries of former Yugoslavia, and set this as one of their priorities. A couple of organisations expressed their wish for cooperation with organisations from ex-Yugoslav countries and a need to establish contacts.

## ***Needs and Lessons learned***

*Most of this research was done while CNA was preparing one of our basic training events in nonviolent conflict transformation. We received about 160 applications for this training, 100 of which came from Serbia. We were a little bit concerned about such a large interest, since we were able to accept only 20 applications per training.*

With respect to the number of various problems in society, there is certainly a big need for *education in nonviolent conflict resolution*. There is also an interest for it. Present capacities in Yugoslavia are insufficient to meet all demands, and therefore *education of multipliers* deserves special attention.

Some of the NGOs we'd met expressed an explicit need for *cross border work*, especially within former Yugoslavia. We find this approach necessary for dissolving prejudice and mistrust that exists, for establishing communication and opening up dialogue. An important dimension of cross-border meetings and cooperation is sensitising to violence within society, which is a result of a whole range of different experiences and perceptions. This means there is a need for more than just "recreative" gatherings of people from different nationalities, "from different sides", but also for a meticulous and constructive approach to opening up those issues where conflict exist.

We estimate that it is very important to work on *education about different cultures* with and by whom we live. Publishers need encouragement to translate into Serbian language and publish the works of those authors who belong to either minorities or neighbouring nations.

NGO activities don't get enough media coverage. On one hand, the media are badly informed or not interested in NGO activities. On the other hand, NGOs don't give information and are not presenting their work well to the public. That's why it is important to *educate people from the media and NGOs* about each other, in order to broaden and empower the circle of individuals and organisations that understand and support peace building and establishing of civil society.

We also think it is a good idea to *support cooperation between NGOs*. One can often notice an atmosphere of rivalry between NGOs, which prevents fruitful cooperation and exchange of information and experiences, and above all mutual support. The solution of this problem is not in forming massive NGO-networks with many members, because they are doomed since they really are only formal. We estimate it is necessary to work on education on civil society based on cooperation, information exchange and mutual support. A great number of the organisations we met expressed their need for education in teamwork, which is a basis for cooperation.

Besides cooperation between NGOs, there is a need to support cooperation between representatives of the media, authorities, NGOs and other representatives of civil society. A successful strategy towards this would be to get to know each other and work on building mutual relations between them.

It is important to exert influence on the Ministry of Education and other authorities to carry out *reforms of the educational system* quickly and more thoroughly, and also to pay special attention to the changes of school programmes. Up to now, school curricula are not sensitive on issues like minorities, gender, human and children rights, or violence within society. We would be very glad to see the transformation of those ideals, now presented in school books as "to give one's life for the fatherland" into values of a society which is finally determined to promote the culture of peace and non-violence.

To those organisations and individuals coming from outside this region, we recommend *listening to local needs and circumstances*, if they want to offer support to local initiatives building civil society and sustainable peace. This way they can avoid an outcome in which

programmes are oriented towards foreign organisations, instead of towards the target group and needs of local population.

No one can build a sustainable peace for the people of this region and make them deal with the past. This is a job they need to do themselves, with the support of all people of good will.

We must underline that this society does not need to concentrate only on extinguishing fires that are already burning, but to set priority to *prevent them from breaking out in the first place*.

### ***The Role of CNA in Peace Building***

The Centre for Nonviolent action certainly recognises its role in support of *peace education* where our capacities and competence are the most impressive. As until now, we will organize training events in nonviolent conflict resolution and try to respond to the present needs and requests we've already received. Participants of our training events are people who work in NGOs, media, political parties and education, from the countries of former Yugoslavia. According to the needs assessment we find all four levels of training to be important:

- work on techniques and skills of nonviolent conflict transformation (nonviolent communication; teamwork and decision making; understanding, analysis and transformation of conflict; etc.)
- Sensitising of violence within society and dissolving of national and other kinds of prejudice (establishing communication and giving people a chance to hear the other side)
- Empowering people to work actively in both their local community and society and to react in an adequate way on violence and violation of their own rights and rights of their fellow citizens
- Connecting and networking of people from both: different countries of former Yugoslavia, and different areas of public activity (NGO, media, political parties, education); and supporting their mutual cooperation.

With the opening of an office in Belgrade and broadening our capacities we've intensified our work with a chance to respond to more requests for training events. However, since we are not able to meet the demands of all those who are interested, we see our role in *education of multipliers*, and organisation and development of *The Training for Trainers Programme*, which includes special attention to the selection of participants.

An important aspect of our work is *support* to peace groups and individuals who wish to work on peace building, nonviolent conflict transformation and sensitising of society to violence around us. The Belgrade office enables a stronger presence in this part of the region of ex Yugoslavia from which the majority of requests for training events come from, and therefore it is easier to respond to them and offer support.

We find stronger *public presence* to be important for our work; in order to include more people in discussion on those issues we work on our training events.

We think that the Belgrade office should have a special role in *dealing with the past and dissolving prejudice* against other nations/ethnic groups, pointing out discrimination and other forms of violence within society. This kind of work would be accepted more easily in public if local people do it.

Cooperation with other groups from this area with whom we share the same values: Gradanski parlament Srbije (Civic Parliament of Serbia) - Cacak, Odbor za gradansku inicijativu (Civic Initiative Council) - Niš, Most - Beograd, Centar za gradanske inicijative (Centre for Civic Initiatives) - Kolašin, Fond za humanitarno pravo (Fond for Humanitarian Law) - Beograd, Žene u crnom (Women in Black) - Beograd, Jukom (Committee of lawyers) - Beograd, etc. is very important and needed.

CNA is not a national organization. We have offices in Belgrade and Sarajevo with staff made up of people from different countries of former Yugoslavia. This fact seemed to be important

to the people we talked to on this trip, since it's really very rare. Moreover, it is a concrete example of regional cooperation, communication and mutual peace building and a direct way to promote all of it.

This research has been invaluable for CNA, since we had a chance to personally meet many NGOs and their activists, and get a better picture of situation in local communities.

We thank all those individuals we met during this research for their hospitality, time and useful discussions.

### **Three-day training in Štrpce, Kosovo**

*Štrpce, December, 2001*

Two members of the CNA team (Ivana Franovic from the Belgrade office and Nedžad Horozovic from the Sarajevo office) conducted a short three-day training "Introduction to Nonviolent Conflict Transformation" in Štrpce, Kosovo, from December 13 to 15, 2001, as a response to an invitation from the OSCE Democratisation Office. Participants came mostly from Štrpce, but also from Gnjilane and Kamenica (Kosovo). Apart for one Roma person, all the other participants were Serbs, aged 23-36. Most of them are active in newly founded NGOs. There were also individuals who weren't members of any organization but perceived themselves as active members of the community they live in.

Štrpce is one of the Serbian enclaves in the southeast of Kosovo, close to The Šara Mountain, at the border with Macedonia. The municipality of Štrpce consists of 16 villages, 7 of which are populated with Serbs and 4 are Albanian. Five of these villages had been mixed, but the Albanian population returned only to two of them. There is an apparent border between the two communities, Albanian and Serb, marked by KFOR checkpoints. Few Roma families live in the Serbian part of the municipality. A huge part of the population of this enclave is made up of internally displaced persons from other towns in Kosovo (Prizren, Uroševac, Priština).

Their freedom of movement is quite limited, because the only way they can leave the enclave is with a KFOR escort. A few times a week organised convoys (buses escorted by armed forces of KFOR) travel to Serbia proper, Kosovska Mitrovica and Macedonia. However, it is obvious how people there live in isolation. Along with limited freedom of movement, there are many other social and economic problems (a high unemployment rate and almost no economic activity whatsoever). The big problem is also a lack of power supply. Power reductions go on all the time, and sometimes during the day, there's power for only an hour or two. More information on this enclave and Štrpce Municipality is available in OSCE comprehensive report "Municipal profile: Štrpce/Shtërpçë" ("Profil opštine Štrpce/Shtërpçë"), September 2001 (copy of the report is also available from CNA, on request).

Shortly after our basic training in Ulcinj, where one person from Štrpce had taken part, we received an invitation for a brief training in Štrpce. This person had given us some more information about the situation in this enclave. We were definitely glad to get the invitation, and we set it as one of our priorities to go there. As a result of that, some other previously planned activities were delayed. It was surprising to hear from OSCE staff, that we were the first organisation to respond positively to an invitation, although they have been trying, for a couple of months already, to find someone to conduct a training in non-violent conflict transformation.

This training was certainly a very valuable, important and a nice experience. We tried to cover as many elements important to the understanding of conflict and sensitising for violence, as possible, in just three days. There was strong support from the group.

Participants were very motivated to work and ready to extend working hours for more than it had been planned. During workshops we tried to cover the following themes: non-violent communication, teamwork, violence, perception, understanding of conflict, power. Although, we did not insist on focusing on the existing and permanent conflict in Kosovo, when an example was needed, participants referred to it quite often. This shows their strong need and willingness to work on the transformation of this conflict.

We were a bit suspicious about the purpose of working with an almost ethnically homogenous group. This experience, however, showed us how worthy it is to start working on reconsidering one's responsibility for the past and violence in a nationally/ ethnically homogenous group. It proved that people were feeling safe enough to criticise "their own side" without automatically turning to defend themselves. We were also surprised with the atmosphere in the group, because not much time was spent on setting the details on how to work and behave with each other. Participants were following the process and taking care of it, and also paying attention to who was talking, and taking good care of each other. There were not even usual "misconduct" like heckling, making noise while other people were speaking, teasing, although for most of the people in the group, it was their first participation in an interactive workshop.

It is clear that three-day work cannot make big effects. However the participants expressed how much it meant to them to perceive the Kosovo conflict from a new, different angle and that they want to continue working on it. We were pleased to hear people saying they realised they can contribute to conflict transformation in some way, too. Many of them told us they were feeling a little forgotten, and they thanked us for coming to Štrpce. However, we're thankful to the local staff of the OSCE office in Štrpce, who invited us and organised our trip (for security reasons, travelling to Štrpce is possible with the escort of KFOR forces, either in vehicles of OSCE or other international organisations).

On the last day of our work, although many participants celebrated Slava, a Serbian family feast, we were under the impression that none of them wanted the training to end. In the evening, they threw a party for us in the local pub. They wouldn't let us leave the party until it was very late and we finally had to go get some rest before returning home, so they kept saying goodbye over and over. We were deeply touched with the whole situation.

This certainly shows us how many people there are ready to deal with the past, but they need very much support, acceptance and understanding.

We thank to all the participants for all we have learned from them, because this training has also empowered us and motivated us for further work, because we had a chance to realize once again that peace work makes sense, and how necessary and important it is. The work we do sometimes seems like fighting windmills, but definitely, the biggest satisfaction one can get is support from people with whom we work and the feeling of usefulness.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

### Regional meeting in Groznjan

*Evaluation and Work Plan of the Project "Contribution to Communication within Divided Communities - Regional Peace Response for Southern Serbia and Macedonia"*

*Groznjan, 19<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> February 2002*

Two CNA team members, Helena Rill and Nenad Vukosavljevic, attended the regional meeting in Groznjan, Croatia, from February 19<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> 2002.

The goals of the meeting were: evaluation of the following MIRamiDA training events in South Serbia (near Medveda and Bujanovac), in Macedonia (in Ohrid and Skopje), MIRamiDA Plus in Groznjan; exchange of experience; getting an insight into new skills and knowledge; perceiving the needs of this region and what can be done concerning all that .... It was prepared for MIRamiDA teams in Sijarinska Banja and Bujanovacka Banja (Serbia), Ohrid and Skopje, MIRamiDA Plus team from Groznjan, for organisers of these MIRamiDA training events, collaborators on this project, and other colleagues interested in regional cooperation. CNA found it important to offer support to both this project and our friends from the Regional Centre in Groznjan, as well as using this chance for an exchange of opinions concerning the approach to peace work.

For the first two days of the program the plan was to focus on project evaluation for teams and organisers. For those who weren't directly involved in the project, discussions were planned on certain topics, within small groups. Afterwards, the plan included exchange of experience - analysis of the situation in the region and what can be done in the future. Due to many delays and people coming late (it took 3 days for everyone to gather) the time schedule was disrupted, and therefore there was less time available for questions concerning the evaluation of the project, and the experiences of other organisations.

After the evaluation of the project, learning points were discussed, like the following: "constantly having in mind that we empower people for activism (what for? Where is transformational peace building?)", "perceiving participants' needs - to integrate focus of the action with problems they have in their lives."... There were also talks on how and who of those participants can contribute to the "change" of the situation in the region of Macedonia and Southern Serbia.

This meeting encouraged CNA members to exchange ideas on different subjects like: empowering/re-questioning (empowering by all costs like "tap on the back" and/or constructive criticism as a form of support), what are other peoples experiences, whom to invite as a participant of the Basic Training events? This meeting initiated discussion about differences and similarities between approaches these two peace-building organisations (CNA and CPS) have. Although, not the original topic of the meeting, the following issues were opened: the approach to work on peace building, how much it is subject to empowering and/or re-questioning, working with motivated /unmotivated people, goals, trainers, etc. However, members of CNA and CPS still continue to discuss and exchange experiences and ideas through e-mail.

The expectations of this meeting by CNA members, were based on the need for more exchange of experience, and discussions about approach and strategies of peace building. While other participants took it as an important chance to meet people and hear their concrete experiences concerning specific activities, which were two different levels of the expectations.

## **Annual Conference of the Centre for Peacebuilding**

*Bern, February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2002*

The Centre for Peace building (KOFF), a project of the Swiss Peace Foundation, organised its first Annual conference on February 28<sup>th</sup> in Bern, Switzerland. The theme of the conference was "Building peace after war". The conference gathered members and partners of KOFF: Swiss development and peace NGOs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Development, Universities, etc. The main idea of the conference was to focus on the process of peace building after peace accords have been signed.

CNA was invited to give its contribution to the conference by sending a resource person. The morning panel of the conference had four keynote speakers: Jon Cortina, Jesuit University El Salvador; Ivana Franovic, CNA Belgrade/Sarajevo; Yvonne Buschor, Fastenopfer, Switzerland; Peter Maurer, Political Department IV, Switzerland. The discussion was mainly addressing problems and obstacles in the peace building processes in post-war societies, and the role of external actors.

In the afternoon there were six workshops organised, on different themes:

1. Humanitarian aid / do no harm;
2. Justice / truth commissions;
3. Children / youth and peacebuilding;
4. Rebuilding / strengthening nonviolent means / capacities of conflict resolution in the society;
5. Political role of Switzerland in peacebuilding; 6. Economy and peacebuilding. The CNA volunteer participated in the fourth workshop and had a short input on CNA work.

During the conference many important questions and issues were raised and discussed, i.e. the role of external actors in a post-war society, ways of strengthening local capacities in peace building processes and supporting local groups, the role of military "peace" forces, etc. Of course, one-day conference makes the depth of discussions quite limited, but the actual gathering of different actors (NGOs, academics, and government) that may contribute to the peace building process, and joint discussions among them is of great value.

Besides the conference, time spent in Bern was also an opportunity to meet people committed to peace work and to have interesting and useful discussions with Natascha Zupan from KOFF, Roland Salvisberg from the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ueli Wildberger from the Forum for Peace Education (Forum fuer Friedenserziehung) and many others. It was also interesting to see and discuss how the multiethnic and multilingual society in Switzerland functions.

## **WORK PLAN**

At the end of last December, CNA members had a joint meeting, in which the 2002 work plan was agreed, as well as team assignments and responsibilities for specific activities.

The following activities were planned for the beginning of the year:

- Visit to peace organisations in England and Northern Ireland, through an invitation from The Committee for Conflict Transformation Support from London, in February (see Sarajevo report);
- Participation at the conference "Building Peace After War", by invitation from The Centre for Peacebuilding (KOFF), in Bern, Switzerland at the end of February;



- Participation at the regional meeting and evaluation of the project "Contribution to Communication within Divided Communities – Regional Peace Response for Southern Serbia and Macedonia " in MIRamIDA Regional Centre, in Grožnjan, Croatia.

*CNA Belgrade office has planned the following activities:*

- Basic Training in Nonviolent Conflict Transformation, from April 12<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>, 2002.
- Completing the project called "Dealing With the Past" in which panel discussions will be held in four different cities in Serbia, aiming at enabling citizens to deal with their own responsibility for the past events in Serbia. The beginning of this project is planned for May.
- Translating and publishing The Manual for Trainings in Nonviolent Conflict Transformation for Work with Adults "NENASILJE?" in Albanian, in May.
- In 2002, The Training for Trainers Programme will contain 6 out of 8 phases altogether:
  - o phase I: The first ten-day training from July 5<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup>
  - o phase II: Follow-up meetings in August
  - o phase III: The second ten-day training from August 24<sup>th</sup> to September 2<sup>nd</sup>
  - o phase IV: Five-day training from October 25<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>
  - o phase V: Follow-up meetings in November
  - o phase VI: Five-day training from December 13<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> 2002.

*Work Plan of CNA Sarajevo office is the following:*

- Basic training in Nonviolent Conflict Transformation 1, from April 19<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup>;
- Basic training in Nonviolent Conflict Transformation 2, in May. It was planned for March, but had to be delayed due to insufficient funding;
- Basic training in Nonviolent Conflict Transformation 3, planned for July 26<sup>th</sup> to August 5<sup>th</sup>
- Networking meeting, from November 23<sup>rd</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>.

## APPENDIX

### About Tolerance and 'Hate' Speech

*by Helena Rill*

*"Let the neighbour's cow be safe and sound" <sup>1</sup>*

The changes that have happened after the October 5<sup>th</sup> of 2000 when the new government was established, after Slobodan Milošević and the old regime had been overthrown, haven't had much effect on hate speech. It remains present in everyday life, and often is a part of public communication.

Chauvinistic graffiti, attacks on religious and ethnic communities, insults based on national, religious, and sexual orientation, doesn't make the hate speech any weaker, but quite the opposite, even stronger and more harsh, as a result of rage, feelings of danger and impotence, as a reaction to the appeal made to the citizens of Serbia/Yugoslavia to deal with their own responsibility for the crimes committed in their own name.

As an example of this practice, in just one week, following panel discussions were either cancelled or delayed, because threats and anonymous tips were made:

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<sup>1</sup> As opposed to an old saying "Let the neighbour's cow drop dead"

- a) The threat was made that the Technical Faculty building in Cacak, Serbia, would be "stoned" if the panel discussion *"Truth and Responsibility"* was held there.
- b) A bomb scare took place at the building of Dom omladine (Youth Home) in Belgrade, where the discussion of the Postpesimists *"Threatening Phenomenons- Tolerance"* was supposed to be held.

The first time I heard of *"Threatening Phenomenons - Tolerance"*, I wondered why anyone would consider tolerance to be something threatening. This is especially because I come from Vojvodina where this word is often used, particularly in political speeches, for strengthening one's political positions etc. I'm under the impression, especially when I'm feeling apathetic, that this word is such a cliché, therefore it cannot be perceived as threatening and that its real meaning is forgotten. However, I was wrong. Tolerance becomes dangerous for some people, and has been proved with this anonymous tip about the bomb. In my opinion, it means that resistance is being set up against hate speech, and those who use this kind of speech are frightened and feel in danger.

Why is tolerance becoming dangerous? I presume that is because finally it is becoming important in its own right. It goes back to its basics, it makes us reconsider and deal with our own responsibility and ourselves. Unfortunately, I often hear that "tolerance means leniency towards opinions, convictions and behaviour we disagree with"; that it is some kind of sufferance so we can all live in happiness and harmony. Furthermore, I hear it most often in the context of national and religious tolerance, but what about tolerance when it comes to ones with different opinions, different origin or sexual orientation?

What is the essence of tolerance, for me? I perceive it as something much more demanding than sufferance, which is, in my opinion, very dangerous, because it reminds me of sweeping the whole thing under the carpet, which is the cause of many problems in this region, and in general, too. To be more exact, tolerance is not sufferance. Tolerance is an active attitude towards differences, respect for them and it requires an individual engagement: reconsideration, cognition of one's own responsibilities, needs, values, ideas, getting to know the others and learning about them and their differences. It is easy "to be tolerant" when we think the same and share the same values, but what happens when this is not the case?

However strange it may sound, I'm under the impression that's where the circle of cause and effect begins. As a response to hate speech, there's a "Tolerance" campaign by the Federal Ministry for National and Ethnic Communities. A reaction to this campaign is more hate, which starts another circle. However, this time it seems to me that the circle is getting smaller because for the first time in 12 years, the government has made a strong statement: we don't want hate, we want tolerance.

The Federal Ministry for National and Ethnic Communities launched the campaign called "Tolerance" on the panel discussion *"Threatening Phenomenons - Tolerance"*. It gives hope that things change in Yugoslavia, because the official stand is against hate, and in favour of a culture of differences. This long-term campaign has started with TV ads in the form of cartoons, easily acceptable, and with the message that one picks up very quickly. The leading character in one of these ads is a little cow, and the message of the ad is to "let the neighbour's cow be safe and sound" as opposed to the very popular saying that goes "let the neighbour's cow drop dead". The other message is: "Tolerance. It costs nothing, but it's worth a lot ". These messages are placed on billboards in Belgrade. According to Jelena Markovic, a federal assistant minister for national and ethnic communities, the plan is to develop this campaign over the next 2 years, and to make it a part of some school programmes.

What are the effects of this campaign? Here's a story to illustrate it: A man asks a saleswoman for a certain kind of tea, at the market. Since she doesn't have it, she sends him over to another counter. The man is surprised and he asks her if she is sending him off to the competition. The woman replies: " It costs nothing, but it's worth a lot ".

This panel discussion "Threatening Phenomenons - Tolerance" has showed me how strong the hate still is, how much strength it requires to fight against it, how important this step is toward tolerance that the state has taken, and that there are young people in the ministry/Ministry who believe in the things they do and fight for it.

Let's be honest. Nothing's will happen quickly. It takes years, even decades for the final results to come. But, the problem should be addressed with an active approach.

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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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