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6-MONTH REPORT

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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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INTRODUCTION

Dear friends,

September 2006 - February 2007 public report of the Centre for Nonviolent Action Sarajevo/Belgrade is coming to you with quite a delay.

These were the stormy times, packed with both our regular activities in the field of peace building and turmoil and internal processes that we were going through, more or less successfully.

After almost 6 years of working together, Milan Colić Humljan, our colleague left CNA team. His departure occurred at the moment when pressure and stress that we had been exposed to for quite some time reached its heights, therefore our capacities to deal with escalating conflicts and problems were significantly diminished.

We are still going through the process of «recovery» and consolidation and we are investing a lot of energy to get an insight into where and how we want to go from here, what kind of CNA we need and if we are our ready and capable to achieve the desired situation.

In February 2007, a new member joined our team: Podgorica-born Radomir Radević, an old friend and a colleague of ours brought some fresh energy, ideas, philosophical point of view along with his sense of humour, thus propagating some new waves of enthusiasm and motivation.

Along with all this, we have been working a lot and almost non-stop: we organized two basic and one advanced training in peace building; we promoted our documentaries throughout the region of former Yugoslavia and even further away - in Vienna, we continued working on dealing with the past by way of connecting and bringing together different approaches to this problem, we worked with the youth in Srebrenica and Bratunac (Bosnia and Herzegovina), we tackled numerous challenges while working on the book on peace building in the area of former Yugoslavia, we took part in the «Youth power» project, travelled and received guests, talked and discussed many things, searched for new ideas and challenges...

We'll see where all this is taking us. We keep holding on because we believe that the amount of work we've done is not that small. Moreover, that it means a lot.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

II Advanced Training in Peace building

Phase I: Jahorina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, August 4 -14, 2006

Phase II: Ulcinj, Montenegro, October 4-10, 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.

There are two main reasons for including this type of peace education into our regular activity schedule:

- The need which was recognized by various groups at our basic training events, to further deepen the knowledge and skills gained at the training, but also to master some new instruments for concrete work in the region and/or in local communities (that is especially the case with different aspects of work on dealing with the past, as well with activism in the widest sense)
- The need to work continuously with some participants, after the end of the basic training events, hence offering the chance to those with the highest motivation to take part, together with CNA team, in designing and implementation of the new educational programme, which should, in our view, continue to develop and respond to numerous new challenging situations, occurring in the region of former Yugoslavia.



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 patriarchy and militarism lie; what are the processes associated with terms like truth, justice, forgiveness, reconciliation etc.) The work was very intensive and the workshops were bursting with interesting, sometimes hot-tempered discussions. Participants also organized open evenings in order to continue discussions that had started earlier that day, at the workshops. The most conflicting

issues were also thematized (especially the issue of homophobia and the religion's stand on homosexuality).

The training team set up a very flexible concept and as open as possible, which added up to the atmosphere of creativity within the team and the feeling that we were creating something new that also meant a lot to us as peace activists and to our own professional and personal development.

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 ambiance of the sun-lit Ulcinj. Perspective of personal development and dealing with one's own fears, dilemmas and difficulties seemed just as important as understanding of the society that we live in was, although by the end of the training, again we missed some time to deal with these issues. Basic difficulty of the phase II of the programme was the absence of several people, which changed the work dynamics and deprived us of some space to work on processes that had occurred during the phase I.

Evaluations of the training team that were conducted after every phase of the programme, detected some of the basic learning points/mistakes/oversights that were made in the course of the implementation of the second advanced training:

- The theme of violence which was left to be covered on the phase II of the programme, was not treated deep enough, therefore the impression remained that for some people it was more of a metaphysical and esoteric issue, rather than an adequate alternative and powerful tool to be used for the purpose of social change. We underline this because the nonviolence is the main feature and starting point of our work, therefore, if for no other reason, it would be very important to cover it more thoroughly at the advanced training and to deal with cultural and other types of resistance that oppose the choice of nonviolence as a guiding idea.
- Even though we had wanted to ask people from other organizations in the region to conduct workshops on various themes for the phase II, it was impossible this year because we didn't get the financial support we had expected. Therefore we were forced to look for funding from alternative sources (and far more restricting, too) and that did not allow the option of inviting people from outside. However, this is one of the key learning points for future similar programmes, which are supposed to demonstrate firsthand the diversity of peace work's *approaches* and *focuses*, among other things.

At the end of the programme in the evaluation, participants expressed their wishes to organize some concrete activities in different parts of the region, as the next step, so that in this way the third phase of the programme brings to life a multitude of ideas and issues that we were exchanging during our 16 days of work. 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).

Basic Training in Peace Building

Travnik, BiH 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 training was attended by 19 participants, and one place remained empty due to a number of last-minute cancellations that prevented us from calling another person on the waiting list to join in.

Trainees came from different regions of former Yugoslavia: Macedonia, Kosovo, Serbia including Vojvodina, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The distinguishing feature of this group was certainly participants' age and professional diversity; therefore, we had former combatants, educational workers, activists of political parties and those with international and local activist background.

The training was designed according to the new concept which focuses on peace building and dealing with the past, which is something we have started to introduce recently.

In general, we are satisfied with the setup, the order and the way the themes complemented each other. What we see as a shortcoming was the lack of a more distinctive transition from personal to social level, which was particularly evident while we were working on the theme of understanding the conflict, since the discussions were far more focused on the analysis of personal, everyday conflicts than on reflections on society.

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".

To the detriment of this subject, some things remained slightly unarticulated. We think that it was necessary to pay extra attention to a more focused thematization of priorities in peace building and to designing and implementing an empowering concept of nonviolent action, having in mind that not all the trainees are activists and that little things we do on daily basis, that are within our reach, also may be a valuable contribution to peace building. Therefore, we reconsidered introducing "creative conflict transformation" again, where we would try to compose and methodologically freshen up the discussion on peace building by creating concrete personal actions and activities.

We think that the selection and sequel of themes enabled us to achieve participants' sensitization for many burning problems regarding violence in our societies. Moreover, we deconstructed many important processes and social mechanisms that help understanding violence committed against those who do not represent dominant majority, which is often not regarded as violence since it has become enrooted and represents normal behaviour.

What we lacked was a more concrete discussion about human rights that are not related only to ethnic discrimination but are concerning all the groups whose human rights are either violated or denied. That is primarily the case with sexual and gender minorities.

It was a pleasure to work with such a motivated and talkative group of trainees. Anyway, the training was certainly marked by long, thorough and ample plenary discussions that prevailed, because it seemed that such sequel of themes and discussions was most suitable for the group's needs.



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.

Seminar on Dealing with the Past - Ways and Approaches

Ilidža, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, November 17-21, 2006.

Members of CNA Sarajevo office organized the seminar on the theme of "Dealing with the Past - Ways and Approaches" for the peace activists from ex-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. This time we chose a somewhat different approach in organizing educational programmes. Seminar was designed as a set of workshops, presentations, speeches and discussions that were not prepared, moderated and conducted by people from CNA team, but the responsibility for that was left to our guests who were very experienced in working on various aspects of dealing with the past.

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

- Vladan Beara of the Centre for War Trauma, Novi Sad

The Importance of Work on War Trauma for Releasing Veterans' Constructive Potential for Peace Work

- Mirsad Tokača of The Research Documentation Centre, Sarajevo, BH

The Role of the Facts in Dealing with the Past

- Randy and Amela Puljek/Shank of Mennonite Central Committee, Sarajevo

The Trauma and Reconciliation / Collective Trauma (Narratives)

- Matias Hellman of 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 of QPSW and Miramida Centre and Bruno Čavić of Izmir, Zagreb, Croatia

Work with Veterans in Croatia, Dealing With the Past in Peace Education, Peace Building

- Adnan Hasanbegović and Sanja Deanković of CNA

Relationship Between Peace Building and Dealing with the Past, Work with Veterans, Dealing with the Past in Peace Education

Discussions that took place during the workshops were mostly focused on work with the veterans and challenges of their involvement in the processes of peace building, and learning



points, dilemmas and experiences of people who are involved in work with this population through various activities.

Since we started designing this programme, based on our own needs regarding the improvement of our knowledge in the field of dealing with the past, we were somewhat taken by surprise and truly glad to recognize motivation and readiness of both the participants' and the people we had invited as introductory speakers. That is why this model of exchange and learning from each other seems like something worth continuing and upgrading. Based on participant's evaluation and internal evaluation of the CNA team, we got an idea to keep on organizing similar gatherings in the future (with focuses on new things) on which experienced activists who work on dealing with the past would get a chance to present results of their work in front of their colleagues from the region, as well as to people who were only just starting to work in it. We find it important for multiple reasons, for both CNA as organization, and for the level of our involvement and knowledge of the general situation in the field of dealing with the past in this region, but also for other people in our region, who share the opinion that it is not enough to work on isolated activities, however good they are, but that it takes constant upgrading in the form of exchange and a chance for discussion about the directions that we want to go and results we expect on the way.

Regarding all this, here is what participants stated in the evaluation of the seminar:

- *For me it was very tiring but also very useful. For me, the work of Mirsad Tokača is particularly serious. I am glad that I've seen people here who are willing to work on dealing with the past and I hope that these concrete ideas won't remain just a dead letter.*
- *In the context I live in, I see myself as a blind man with my hands tied up, and when I get out of my context, I see a few hands. I am empowered because I have seen people who are working on something concrete and serious.*
- *I've reached some progress regarding understanding many things, and I will especially underline the progress related to narratives. I think that we haven't worked enough on the issues of religion, its influence and the influence of religious communities. This is a good support to all of us that people on all three sides see that there are people who ask questions and start up processes of dealing with the past. Therefore, when I'm asked why "we" are doing it if "they" are not, I can say that there are people who are doing something and where exactly they are.*
- *I feel empowered. I'm a little confused because what I'd like most is to jump over to Vukovar to work on something, but there are so many things that I wouldn't know where to start.*
- *Here I've realised and articulated the opinion that the time has come to apply a different approach in work on dealing with the past, since Serbia has moved from the phase of denial into the phase of justification and the situation ought to be changed even further. The question for me is how, because I still don't know how to work to change that. For the first time I was sitting together with the colonel of the Croatian Army, we talked and I wasn't feeling uncomfortable.*
- *This approach in work with the veterans has opened up some space for me not to work with them myself but to look at some other groups differently and to approach them from a different angle. I need more experiences.*

We thank all the participants, guests, Mennonite Central Committee, Sarajevo and QPSW for support we received while we were working together.

Promotions of «Traces»

Graz, Austrija 16.10.2006.

Beč, Austrija 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, member of our Belgrade staff, Sanja Deanković of CNA Sarajevo 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.

The Promotion and the Forum in Graz

On October the 10th, 2006, our film «Traces» was promoted in Wallzentrum, in Graz.

The screening was followed by the discussion, in which Milan Colić Humljan, Sanja Deanković and Nermin Karačić took part. It was moderated by Franz Soelkner, who was also the organizer of the event.

There were about 100 people at the audience, students, immigrants originally from our region and peace activists.

We spoke about the work of the Centre for Nonviolent Action, about the making of the film and the message it carried, while Nermin spoke about his view on why the film was important and why he appeared in it.

The atmosphere and the conversation with the audience were very pleasant, both during the forum and afterwards. Many people stayed to talk to us and offer their support.

Questions that people from the audience asked were inspiring, and almost all of them carried words of support to our work.

Here are some of the issues we discussed: *Why did the war break out? Who was behind it? Did foreign powers have any interest in it? Was it about the money? Was SFRY «an optimal democracy»? If that was the case, how come the war happened? When will it be possible for people to stop being afraid of each other? Why doesn't the «ordinary man» react? What should be done now and how to go on?*

The atmosphere of the forum was very nice also due to the appearance of Berndt Luef und Ewald Oberleitner Duet. They played their songs dedicated to Sarajevo that they had written during the war in Bosnia.

The Promotion and the Forum in Vienna

Another promotion with the discussion was held on the following day, October 17, 2006, t. in WienXtra-Cinematic, in Vienna.

Besides Milan, Sanja and Nermin, Manfred Pinterits took part at the discussion. She spoke about how important it was to include films like this in school curriculum in Austria. The moderator of the forum was Barbara Goetsch of Evangelische Akademie, Vienna.

There were about 130 people at the audience, many of whom were immigrants and we recognized some familiar faces we had seen the year before.

The discussion revolved on the film and also, inspired by the questions from the audience, on the political support to our work from outside, on the support of current administrations, art as a way of connecting people, post-traumatic stress syndrome and war trauma, Srebrenica, the Republic of Srpska etc.

After the promotion and the forum, many visitors together with our friends and collaborators who organized the event engaged in the discussion. We spoke about their plans to show the film in Austrian schools and have the discussions with children, afterwards.

The film has already been shown in one school in Vienna, provoking a very heated reaction of one pupil, born in Bosnia.

Due to that experience, there were some talks about the necessity of educating the teaching staff in dealing with eventual traumatic issues and "difficult issues" since there are many children born in our region, who had come to live in Austria during the war.

Both promotions and forums were organized excellently as well as all the accompanying events and the media coverage was provided for both forums.

We are extremely satisfied with these appearances because they opened up some new paths of cooperation with people who work in the field of peace building in Austria, and we are satisfied with contacts that followed, regarding the support for fundraising for our work, as well as getting in touch with people who are ready to help us show the film on some foreign TV channels.

It Is Up To Us Whether It Will Last For Ever or Not¹ **Promotion of the documentary entitled *It Cannot Last Forever***

Novi Pazar, Serbia 13.02.2007.

Bratunac, BH 27.02.2007.

Novi Sad, Serbia, Vojvodina 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).

Generally speaking, the promotions had different reception in these towns and that certainly had to do with their respective political/social contexts.

In Novi Pazar, the town in the Serbian province of Sandžak, with the majority of Bosniak population, the film was received quite well. The media were not only interested to make interviews with guests but also to broadcast the film on local/regional TV stations. Apart from the organizational support we received from Urbanin, we were also supported by Mevlud ef-Dudić, Dean of the Faculty of Islamic Studies, who appeared as one of the guests at the promotion (and in the film, too). The audience commented that the film had to be shown to a wider public, especially to people in some communities in Serbia, "the monoethnic Serbia" as one of the journalists put it (comments were either left in the guest box or expressed during the discussion).

¹ Statement taken from the guest box (at the end of the promotion the audience had a chance to write down their impressions and leave them in a guest box).

In **Bratunac**, a small town in Eastern Bosnia and the Republic of Srpska, nearby Srebrenica, very few people showed up at the promotion. One of the possible reasons for such a small attendance is the fact that Bratunac is still a rather closed, mostly ethnically homogenous community where people who think and speak differently still encounter various problems. Questions and comments that followed the screening of the film were mostly biased by justification of crimes (like for example „what happened in Srebrenica was terrible, but what happened to us ...“). This shows that when it comes to dealing with the past, only some small steps were taken, since we moved from the state of denial to the point of justification. It also proves that there is more work to be done and that Bratunac and other such communities still have to go a long way towards dialogue.

It was important to us to support young people from Bratunac who organized the promotion, particularly because of their evident initiative and motivation to show the film in Bratunac. Besides, they want to organize another screening of the film in their town, and that is something we are working on right now.

Promotion in Novi Sad (Vojvodina) was also held without massive attendance, but it seemed that it was due to lack of information. The analysis of the audience that attended the promotion in Novi Sad shows that the majority of them are former combatants. One of them was particularly aggressive, often denying the others chance to speak (especially if their opinion was different from his). Again, one could often hear that „we weren't the only ones who committed crimes“ and „why are we the only ones to be blamed?“, which was very similar to the promotion in Bratunac and illustrates where we stand with the process of dealing with the past.

We are glad that we have started closer cooperation with Centre for War Trauma. Working with them gives us a good feeling.

After the promotions, we were considering if and how important and meaningful they were because two of them were attended by only a small number of people and many things that were said there was actually justification of crimes. However, we concluded that they were meaningful for several reasons:

This way we survey where we stand with the process of dealing with the past. A certain progress has been made, but there is still a lot of work to be done. Contacts with local people are priceless, because they offer a better picture of the atmosphere in small communities. The contacts we established with the media on this occasion are valuable. As we have stated earlier in this text, media want to broadcast the film on TV (and it is well known that local/regional media have very high ratings).

We are more present in public which is one of CNA's goals since for a long time we have been working in a rather "confined space". People get to know our work, as well as dealing with the past and peace building, and these processes are being promoted in public.

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.

Preparations for filming the Documentary in Macedonia

Skopje, Makedonija, 23.01.2006.

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. In our previous works we somewhat neglected this part of the region, because we were more focused on the work in the triangle of Serbia - BH - Croatia. Together with our friends in Macedonia we have decided to try to implement the idea of making the documentary which would focus on relations between different ethnic groups in Macedonia, their personal experience of Macedonia, as either the "state of all Macedonians" or the "state of all its citizens" and their different views concerning the events that had happened in 2001 (was it a conflict? a war?).

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. It was very important for us to know what kind of reactions this idea would encounter because we estimated that it would be meaningless to start such a project if people who lived and worked in Macedonia did not back it up.

People liked the initial idea, so the purpose of the meeting was mostly to make the list of potential questions that would make the skeleton of the film, as well as to select potential groups who we would like to film.

We agreed to ask various people in local communities to give us their feedback, with the emphasis on representation of Albanians. That goes for both the process of organizing the filming and interpretation and for the people who would appear in front of the camera and express their opinion publicly.

We can only hope that we will manage to provide financial resources for this documentary therefore the huge energy and enthusiasm demonstrated during the meeting will not be in vain.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Training Events on Dealing with the Past for the Youth of Srebrenica and Bratunac

Sarajevo, SHL House

Phase II: September 22-25, October 13-16

Phase III: November 10-13, December 8-11

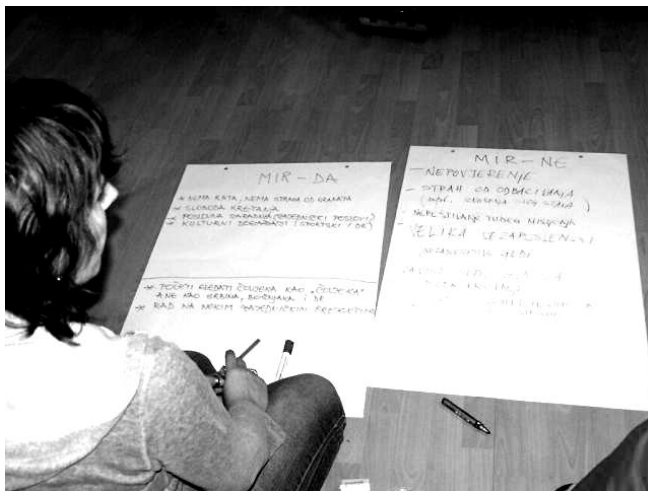
Our three month report on the period of March - May 2006 already brought the information about the idea to organize the series of training events for the youth of two municipalities in Eastern Bosnia. Two training events with two different groups of participants were held at that time.

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. During the work on these training events we received many learning points, ideas, realizations, dilemmas, etc. that still need to be classified and more thoroughly processed in the final evaluation of the whole programme. What we can say for now is that it was a very important experience for us and that all partners expressed their wishes regarding the continuation of the programme, but we still need to decide on its concept.

Here we present some of our main impressions, questions and ideas:

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.

In these circumstances, it is very important to attain cooperation with organizations that also recognize the priority of work on dealing with the past and especially with organizations and institutions in local communities.

As for the work with young people, the main question is how realistic it is to expect that young people will really have an opportunity to work on the issue of dealing with the past, if

we know that very few organizations in this area are interested to work on this issue. How big real social power is needed to start and implement certain initiatives in the process of dealing with the past, in communities like these? The answer to this question should not be mystified, presented as unattainable, neglected or easily dismissed. It takes a dedicated work, recognition and perceptiveness of the actual needs and the motivation of the youth living in these small communities that were severely affected by the war and devastated in different ways. It's because these young people are intensively *re-living* the past on a daily basis, feeling that in some perplexing way it influences their lives, while at the same time, it is very difficult for them to recognize what it has to do with their own responsibility, their choice, desires or needs. Perhaps the solution is to build their capacities and potentials for work on peace building in a wider sense, and if in the process, some of them turn out to be ready to

work on dealing with the past, all the better. That is certainly the main learning point for designing the sequel of this programme.

Regarding this, it is useful to look back at how realistic it is to expect to find enough people in a relatively small area, who are really motivated to make two groups of participants?

Finally, it was really a pleasure for us to work on this programme, and 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.

Regional Conference « We Pray the Lord by Building Peace »

Krk, Croatia, September 20 - 24, 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.

The conference was intended as a combination of lectures, plenary discussions, work in small groups and workshops, enabling participants an exchange of experiences, views, and discussions about the role of faith and believers in peace building.

Our overall impression is that the conference was quite successful, offering thorough discussions, presentations of introductory speakers and lot of questions about violence in the name of religion, committed recently or in the past, as well as different experiences of Muslims and Christians throughout history, different perceptions of society and faith in general, problems of proselytism, missionaryism, nationalism, fundamentalism and war doctrine in religion, etc.

It was also noticeable that most of the people who attended the conference shared a deep belief that the primary message of all religions was really the one of peace and humanity, and that fact additionally indicate to great responsibility believers bear when it comes to public promotion of principles of nonviolence, like justice, truth, peace, mercy, forgiveness, etc. The final phase of the conference brought discussions regarding some concrete ways to include believers into the activities related to peace building and obstacles and problems they encounter regarding it.

Since most of the participants, guests and organizers came from Christian (catholic, protestant and orthodox) and Islamic religious communities, the themes related to the relations between these two traditions were dominant. Therefore, views of some other groups were missing, like for example those of Jewish community. An important learning point for future gatherings is that it is preferable to have as many Muslims as possible. At times, themes were analysed without a clear focus on the region of former Yugoslavia and the influence and the role of religion on the Balkan wars in the 90-ties and its attitude towards

the reconciliation process. That indicates to the currency of the theme on the global level, in the context of modern wars that, unfortunately are continuing. All the people who took part at the event experienced it as empowering and important and stated that it would be a good thing to have more meetings like this and establish more distinctive cooperation and exchange between participants.

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

ARTICLES - PERSONAL VIEWS

My Arrival at CNA

Word from new CNA member

It is very difficult to either precisely determine or at least roughly define what it really means for me to come to CNA. Is it just about starting a new job or is there more to it than that? Does my arrival mean achieving an ancient wish to work and give my own contribution to the processes of peace building? Is my arrival partly an expression of my need to stand up to any kind of violence and discrimination? Of course that there's a little bit of all of that but is it also my personal "return" to CNA, return to nonviolence, return which is not a return really, because I have never completely broken up with ideas, goals and aims that CNA have been standing for years. The question is really whether it is possible to break up with nonviolence, once you truly step into it, when it fulfils you and permeates you completely, walks with you, deeply amalgamated with everyday problems that have become rather irrelevant now.

Coming into CNA might mean coming to myself, coming to what is nonviolent and human, coming to something I regard truly valuable to work on, to strive for and dedicate myself to. Coming into CNA I see as finding myself in nonviolence and striving to keep to that side of the coin that I had recognized immediately in my basic training and quite selfishly embraced then. The other side of it is reflected in finding the nonviolence inside me, finding a home for nonviolence inside me, so it shines through me, so that others see it and find it in me and inside of me - that is one of my true concerns and dilemmas that tortured me while I was thinking about coming here. Am I the one in which nonviolence can find its home, am I worthy of carrying the idea of nonviolence onto other people, while working on peace building and am I the right person for such a big burden of responsibility?

Loads of question marks in the beginning of this article by no means reflect my indecisiveness or lack of information, but is a result of a consistent, often mounting process of questioning and re-examining myself, which I find necessary for both one's own advancement as well as processes of peace building in general. In my view, re-examination of yourself and your actions go along with finding and taking over responsibility on both personal and social level, and both processes are necessary for dealing with the past and peace building. That is something that was born in CNA and I hope it will continue to deepen and develop with my arrival.

My arrival to CNA also means a chance and heaps of possibilities to act, to participate actively in creating a better place to live in, but also a chance to provide support and help to others; especially in those difficult moments of helplessness, that I know so well and that I have found myself in over the past years. Feeling of helplessness imposes discouraging thoughts that it is impossible to influence important social events, that we cannot move from a very dangerous state of lethargy, that we cannot break free from indifference to the fact that we either no

longer are or cease to be humans, that we cannot resist the feeling that there's a lack of solidarity which is absolutely necessary in our societies, that we cannot stand up to violence, clearly and publicly. For me it is much easier to defeat this feeling with the support and unconditional help of people from CNA. Not only that it splashed me when I arrived, but I had experienced it before, too, perceiving these people, among other things, as true friends. I once more, officially thank you, for your support!

What I want to work on, which at the same time coincides with my expectations from CNA can be summarized into my perception of nonviolence. Enrooting and further nourishing of the beauty of a "NO", beauty and value of a strong "NO" to violence and wars, NO which is not a simple negation that equals destruction, but NO that indicates to existence and expansion of the things that it is opposed to, tries to change it as well as prevail it. While radiating with dignity and defiance, I want this NO to point out not just to refusal and negation of the existing things, but also to acceptance of a different, new road and a new Life.

Radomir Radević

Who's to Blame?

On February 26, 2007 The International Court of Justice ruled in the lawsuit for genocide filed by Bosnia and Herzegovina versus Serbia.

According to the judgment, the genocide had not been committed on the whole territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina (even though serious crimes were committed), but «only» the Srebrenica crime was proclaimed as such. Serbian state is not guilty of genocide, but of not having done everything within its power to prevent the crime. Serbian state was obliged to cooperate fully with The Hague War Crimes Tribunal and to take an official stand regarding the Srebrenica genocide.

While thinking about the ruling I always feel some reservation, because I haven't had a chance to read it, and even if did I doubt that I'd understand all of it. That is why I wrote this article, and I ask those who read it to do it with the same kind of reservation.

There were many comments in public, from different sources regarding the judgement. My first reaction to the judgement was very complex and only slightly rational. While I was listening to the people who looked up to the International Court of Justice as if they had expected it to deliver long-awaited justice, and felt disappointed with the outcome, I couldn't help feeling the same way. On the other hand, what kind of a judgement would be considered just by all the people who live in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, too (or at least by the great majority of them)?

It seems that in this case it became quite apparent that law and justice are not the same thing. Expectation that the verdict itself (even though it was delivered by the highest legal instance) would bring satisfaction for the injustice, often did not get fulfilled. It takes a lot more than that.

The other thing about the judgement is that what was happening in Srebrenica in the summer of 1995 was called genocide (even though it was not the first time an international court did so). According to this verdict, Serbia did not commit it, but someone did. According to the judgement, the soldiers of the Army of the Republic of Srpska committed it.

If I go back to the time before the judgement was brought, I'll say that the leaders of the "Bosniak" parties were reassuring their constituency that the judgement would show the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina had been ONLY "an aggression". At that time it was rather unwelcome or even inappropriate to ask a fairly realistic question: What if The Hague Court does not rule in favour of BH?" It's partly due to such an attitude that I can understand the

people who feel disappointed with the judgement. For me the painful thing is the feeling of injustice because of what was experienced, which remains, and that is a result of such politics. On the other hand, I also feel angry, because I consider such politics of Bosniaks a manipulation with the suffering of the people. However, all the problems that were once hidden behind the approach according to which the verdict would show who was guilty, arise now, thus putting an end to initiative to engage in a dialogue with "the other" side.

From the beginning the charges were opposed by one part of BH - the Republic of Srpska, and Serbian politicians in BH never accepted the charges as legitimate. Due to this division within BH, the charges and the lawsuit were not financed from the state budget, even though legally Bosnia and Herzegovina stood behind it. Before the actual ruling, Milorad Dodik, Prime Minister of the Republic of Srpska said that he would not accept any judgement at all (presumably meaning the entire RS). I hope that it was just for a moment that he had neglected the fact that every verdict of the International Court is obligatory for all parties. Eventually he somewhat changed his opinion in the meantime, which I guess had to do with the judgement. However, some RS officials went as far as accepting it indirectly.

It is worth mentioning that the representatives of the Croat people - the third constitutive people in BH were entirely indifferent. It is to be expected that they will be more agile once the legal process brought by the Republic of Croatia begins.

Few things have happened in the political ambiance of BH, since the judgement was brought: Firstly, the burden of war crimes committed in BH and the ways of dealing with the causes and consequences of the painful, recent past has fallen almost exclusively on BH. One might say that we're about to "sweep our own yard", and it's about time we do so, 12 years after the end of the war.

The story about the character of the war seems to be getting slowly out of focus, while the constitutional organization of the country and the status of the RS including the status of Srebrenica in the RS, are becoming the main topics.

High officials of the RS, and especially those members of the ruling Alliance of Independent Social Democrats, are threatening less and less with referendum and secession of the RS - that is the job of certain quasi- nongovernmental organizations. It's probably because after the secession it would become a legal subject, which might be taken to the International Court facing the charges of genocide, that had been confirmed by the court's verdict. There's almost no space to deny the genocide that took place in Srebrenica in 1995, while representatives of the RS emerged with a clear statement that all individuals responsible for the crime committed in Srebrenica must be punished (I must say that this does sound slightly ironic, twelve years later).

As a peace activist and a person involved in the process of dealing with the past through my work, I believe/want to believe that such a verdict can also contribute to healing of our society. By this I mean primarily regarding our attitude towards crime, which will not depend upon the victim's name i. e. their ethnic background.

I also believe that readiness to call upon all those responsible for the crimes and individualisation of guilt will not remain an empty phrase, politically correct at this moment (and not only now), but that it will be transformed into the willingness to actually do it and punish those responsible, even when they belong to "our" nation.

Who are the "individuals" responsible for Srebrenica genocide, who should be made accountable? Who are all those who can be filed under "individuals"? Are those all the people who served in the units of the Army of the Republic of Srpska, who were present at the area or those who "planned, prepared and implemented all of it"? I would like us to "search" for those around us who are guilty and responsible for what happened in Srebrenica (but also for the other crimes as well), to name them, to declare ourselves clearly regarding them and their deeds and if we are free of sin to be the first who'll cast the stone.

Nedžad Horozović, April 2007

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