

Dear Readers,

This issue of the CCTS Newsletter is devoted to our second seminar on post-war peacebuilding. It contains the paper on which the seminar was based and, starting on page 15, an account of the seminar itself.

We hope that you find the newsletter useful, and that it might interest you in taking part in our next seminar, *The Interplay of Domestic, Regional and International Forces in Post-War Peacebuilding*. We will let you know the details of when and where this will take place.

Demilitarising minds, demilitarising societies

a discussion paper by Howard Clark

There is a ceasefire agreement pledging the warring sides to demilitarisation. International agencies come in, organising re-integration – dishing out jobs, training and trauma counselling. They throw in some local capacity building for local NGOs and set up a process for investigating the crimes of the war. And hey presto!

There you don't have it. There are no easy recipes for demilitarisation.

Militarisation at its worst constructs self-perpetuating war machines that accentuate hostility towards the Enemy in order to legitimise their own existence and power. It creates an authoritarian environment of intolerance that celebrates values such as patriotism and toughness. To concentrate on the problems of militarisation is not to rule out that there may also be some positive features of the military ethos. Militarisation, however, refers to the *preponderance* of the military – of military institutions, of military modes of organisation, of military forms of behaviour within the society, of military ways of looking at the world. Such militarisation has to be understood not only as a process – the result of interactions between rival forces – but also as a way of asserting certain interests, as a means to construct a power base.

Three general points on demilitarisation

- 1) The structures of militarisation – social and personal – have their own momentum, and are reinforced by other elements of the continuing conflict. Military institutions have an interest in their own survival as well as pursuing the interests of the economic and social groups with which they are aligned. The people caught up in those institutions – from the elite level down to the base – also have interests that they see as most likely to be served through the military.
- 2) There are different levels of demilitarisation. What I shall refer to as the 'surface level' is disbanding forces, surrendering arms, implementing ceasefire agreements. The term 'surface' is in no sense pejorative here: this is usually the level that puts an immediate end to the fighting. A UN report refers to recent peace operations as working "*to divert the unfinished conflict, and the personal, political or other agendas that drove it, from the military to the political arena, and to*

make that diversion permanent”,¹ a useful description of surface level demilitarisation. What I am calling ‘deep demilitarisation’, on the other hand, seeks to address the roots of militarisation and to undo the legacy of war and militarisation as part of an effort to reconstruct society on a different basis.

- 3) There cannot be deep demilitarisation unless civilians take issue with militarisation, question militarised perceptions and build up a counter-force to militarised institutions. Deep demilitarisation requires social struggle.

This paper begins by looking at aspects of militarisation, noting ways it threatens peace in a post-civil war situation but placing all militarisation – from the superpower down to the local warlord or paramilitary thug – on a continuum. The second section looks at ‘surface level’ demilitarisation, discussing some of the dilemmas faced by UNMIK in Kosovo. The third section refers to various lines of action, primarily by civil society actors, for deep demilitarisation.

Aspects of militarisation

The legacy of war

“What does it mean to think in wartime images? It means seeing everything as existing in a state of extreme tension, as breathing cruelty and dread. For wartime reality is a world of extreme, Manichean reduction, which erases all intermediate hues, gentle, warm, and limits everything to a sharp, aggressive counterpoint, to black and white, to the primordial struggle of two forces – good and evil. Nothing else on the battlefield! Only the good, in other words us, and the bad, meaning everything that stands in our way, which appears to us, and which we lump into the sinister category of evil.” Ryszard Kapuscinski, 1945.

War, whether it seems necessary or not, leaves a social legacy. The more protracted the war, the more entrenched become the processes of militarisation and the more widespread its personal ramifications. An agreement to stop the fighting does not put an end to this, and various forms of militarisation will continue to pose problems for a peace process, at times threatening to re-ignite the war itself, repeatedly impeding the development of nonviolent and civil alternatives.

A military continuum

There are practical and principled reasons for treating military groups on a continuum:

- i) Powerful states at times supply military training and weapons to armed bands active in civil wars, while former-soldiers enlist to fight as mercenaries elsewhere.
- ii) Powerful states and armed bands sometimes operate on the same terrain or against the same enemy. International forces engaged in ‘peace operations’ exist side by side with whatever local forces there are – and also need to be monitored. As for operations against the same enemy ... I would not go so far as to blame NATO for indiscriminate actions by Kosovo Albanians against Kosovo Serbs after the war, but I would suggest that NATO’s bombing campaign equally conveyed the message that “all citizens of Serbia are guilty” – even Vojvodinans living far away from Kosovo and likewise having lost their provincial autonomy.
- iii) Whatever their pretensions, the permanent members of the UN Security Council – nuclear-armed states all – cannot assume that their societies are more mature or their values more coherent than states with fewer material resources. The problems of violence within their societies are far from solved and the insidious influence of militarisation is not far below the surface. Britain, itself, faces problems of overtly political violence (N. Ireland), social violence (‘inner-city’ violence), and of a gun culture (Dunblane). British soldiers too suffer from post-traumatic stress and, on their return to civilian life, get involved in crime.

¹ *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, 17 August 2000, para 20.
http://www.un.org/peace/reports/peace_operations/

- iv) The same standards should apply to all military strategies. 'Terrorism' is not the exclusive domain of 'pariah states' or armed bands, but extends to strategies employed by members of the UN Security Council: deploying weapons of mass destruction; using smaller but still indiscriminate weapons such as cluster bombs; targeting civilian more than military structures; counter-insurgency operations. The armed forces of the members of the Security Council resist being called to account like any other military force (a notable exception has been the recent US army study criticising the conduct – on and off duty – of its soldiers in Kosovo).

Some propositions about militarisation

Militarisation accords the military or its allies power over a population. While it gains strength in conflict with external forces, internally it often represents a particular set of interests and is linked with other forms of authoritarian and elitist behaviour. From the power to conscript members of the population or to take over property to its influence on political decision-making, militarisation makes the military a central component of how power is structured in society.

Militarisation offers privilege and opportunity through promotion within or connected to the military. A military power base often links with networks for social advancement – networks stemming from kinship, tribal, ethnic or political relations or sometimes involved in organised crime.

Militarisation confers social status for military prowess. If the world is divided into 'patriots' and 'traitors', there is no status higher than 'war hero'. The tendency to fight elections looking back to the past is accentuated after war when a party's identification with the war effort often weighs more heavily than any policies for the future.

Militarisation permits an army or armies to usurp social responsibilities, restricting civil participation and insisting on obedience to its chain of command. Civil wars do not pit only armies against each other but the social systems administered by those armies. While destroying many aspects of 'normal' civil administration, an army or a warlord may assume responsibilities for their 'own' people, taking over institutions and granting or withholding access to resources according to a person's or family's loyalty or compliance. This pertains in fields as basic as food distribution, welfare and healthcare.

Militarisation inclines people to resort to violence more readily instead of discussion. Military training brutalises a person's sensibility making him/her able to kill to order, obediently, without question. Once people have crossed the threshold to carry out acts of violence in one situation, it becomes easier to turn to violence elsewhere. Political violence is common after civil war, with victors falling out with each other and political intimidation of critics. However, the propensity for violence is accentuated more generally, often leading to an increase in armed crime and usually leading to an increase in both the incidence and the severity of domestic violence.

Militarisation channels social or personal frustration into violence. Specifically, the resentment of those defeated in one war can be channelled into a permanent hostility, demanding military retaliation. More widely, in view of the spread of 'purposeless' armed violence, some commentators see a continuum from inner-city violence to Rwanda. My view is that *mass* violence is rarely initiated spontaneously. If it is not a reaction to provocation, it is prepared by hate-speech or by imagery that divorces violence from its consequences. It *is* structured – people lose their self in a group identity beyond personal control.

Militarisation produces 'freelance' armed bands, be they units operating in tandem with the regime – death squads as in Guatemala and Sri Lanka or paramilitaries such as Arkan and Šešelj in former-Yugoslavia – or bands made up of former fighters, mercenaries, or those who engage in covert operations beyond the edge of the law.

Militarisation concedes power and influence to arms traders. Between states, the arms trade is a shadowy world, often associated with bribery, corruption and espionage. Non-state armies acquire weapons as they can – usually criminally.

Militarisation spreads the possession of small arms beyond social control – not only increasing risks of crazed mass killings, but the general likelihood of incidents escalating into armed violence.

Militarisation subordinates civil rights to military needs. The decision to use force makes paramount the success of a military operation. A state opposing armed groups – as in Northern Ireland and the Basque country – may complain that terrorism cannot be defeated with ‘one hand tied behind its back’. This may lead to the formal suspension of certain civil rights and for security operations that contradict the declared codes. In a post-civil war situation, where a garrison state prevails, ‘military necessity’ still seeks to dictate the terms.

Militarisation strengthens authoritarianism and reduces transparency. The military – conventional or guerrilla – prefers to proceed in secrecy, devising a plan and then executing it decisively. Those who publicly dissent or who try to reveal facets of operations that are not publicly acknowledged are liable to be smeared or worse.

Militarisation protects soldiers from prosecution for criminal actions. Victors in war may want to prosecute those they defeated yet themselves remain above the law. The loyalty bred among the military inclines them to close ranks, insulating themselves from outside criticism. Where they have served as a power base for political interests – as with the Latin American dictatorships of the 1980s – the military continue to resist investigation. The militaries of members of the UN Security Council also refuse to accept accountability. For Britain, one recalls the difficulty of investigating summary executions of Argentines who surrendered in the Falklands War and various incidents in Northern Ireland. NATO governments are indignant at the suggestion that there is a case to answer over the 1999 bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Militarisation hardens divisions between social or ethnic groups, inculcates a culture based on suspicion of the Other and heightens intolerance. Military morale depends on group identity, usually defined against an external enemy. Most armies are fed stereotypical images of their potential enemy as in some way sub-human, monstrous or criminal. To put the population on a war footing or to support a high level of military preparation often requires a sustained propaganda campaign demonising the Other.

Militarisation distorts social priorities by appropriating resources for military rather than social needs. This has been well documented at the state level by Ruth Leger Sivard’s statistical compendium *World Military and Social Expenditures*. It also happens at the non-state level in territories controlled by guerrillas.

Militarisation excludes or obstructs efforts to try non-military methods.

Demilitarisation at the surface level

Surface level and deep demilitarisation

Shifting a conflict from the military to the political arena, from the lethal to the non-lethal, is an important achievement. In the short term, this rarely requires fundamental attitude changes. Rather, the peace deal is likely to reflect a balance of power and may occur either through the victory of one side or through a compromise based on exhaustion. This end of the fighting, however, does allow expansion of other peace-building activities.

Earlier, I introduced a distinction between ‘surface demilitarisation’ and ‘deep demilitarisation’. In hardware terms, ‘surface’ might take the form of arms control, with agreements to monitor and reduce force levels and the quantity of arms held. Deep demilitarisation would then press for disarmament. In terms of human relations, ‘surface’ might mean keeping the parties apart in the short run, while the deeper level would involve reconnecting them – or perhaps connecting them for the first time.

At times, we could interpret surface demilitarisation as primarily being designed to restore the monopoly of violence to constitutionally legitimated bodies (ie either the state or an international force). This legitimisation usually requires reforms of security forces such as: a) dismantling secret (or not-so-secret) centres of power from which crimes have been organised; b) re-training and introducing higher – some would say ‘more professional’ – standards, such as impartiality; c) making the forces

representative of the whole society (which in turn might entail integrating hostile combatants into the same units).

‘Deep demilitarisation’ seeks to go further than a re-monopolisation of violence: to address causes of violence and offer alternative, non-military approaches. If ‘surface demilitarisation’ lends itself to being a form of action ‘from above’, social engineering if you like, ‘deep demilitarisation’ is impossible without action initiated within the communities in conflict. Ordinary citizens need the civic courage to stand against militarising trends and interests, at least taking the risk of being ostracised as a traitor, sometimes of being eliminated as a danger to the interests of local warlords.

The surface/deep distinction is not at all absolute, and the levels are not discrete. At times ‘surface’ and ‘deep’ demilitarisation will be interdependent, perhaps complementary parts of a process, perhaps even phases. ‘Surface-level’, however, is inexorably entrapped in the world of realpolitik, while the deeper level is often looking to change that agenda, searching for forms of civil action and nonviolent alternatives.

One topic for discussion should be the interaction between these two levels. The strength of public support might often be a critical factor in determining how far a ‘surface-level’ reform can go. At the same time, ‘surface’ reforms can establish a permanent system of accountability to the public. For instance, on the question of police reform, public demands will play an essential role in the attritional struggle at the political and institutional level, while those in charge of reforming the police should be setting up organs such as citizens’ review boards.

In post-war situations, there will be a number of issues where those in charge have a choice between an authoritarian (military) ‘solution’ and a solution that goes deeper and depends on civil society. The issue of hate-speech after ethnic war, for example, can be ‘resolved’ through censorship or through institutionalising the right to reply and convening journalists from all quarters to agree a common code.

A further issue where the perspectives of surface and deep demilitarisation may diverge is the extent to which the international soldiers in peace operations engage in community improvement work. From the surface perspective, this is admirable, gains the trust of the local community and often meets an immediate practical need – a new road or bridge or patch of concrete. From the perspective of demilitarisation, it may be seen as inappropriate, as encouraging dependence on the military in general, or as a missed opportunity for a civil development.

Converting soldiers into peaceworkers

An important goal of surface demilitarisation is reducing the size of the armed forces. In this there is a potential to appeal to the higher motivation of combatants to use their skills for peaceful purposes.

Some ‘military’ values may be considered vital in peace-building, as has been argued by pacifists in the tradition of William James’s “A Moral Equivalent of War” (1910) or Gandhi’s call for *Shanti Sena* – ‘peace soldiers’. More recently, Alejandro Bendaña, who has been involved in re-training former fighters, echoes their view. While he notes that often “*the proclivity towards violence and contempt for life*” may carry over into civilian life, he also sees “*a number of traits associated with war which are also indispensable in peace-making – dedication, sacrifice, solidarity, discipline, teamwork, administration and organisation.*”²

There are a number of criticisms to be made, however – both about specific traits but also about these as a set of qualities. The ‘martial virtues’ come as a package; they are linear, going straight for goal without being diverted by human empathy. Discipline is based on routine, obedience and hierarchy; teamwork and solidarity are based either on having a common enemy or on buddy-buddy behaviour that often takes the form of sexual harassment. The group behaviour encouraged in most armies is far

² Alejandro Bendaña, Centro de Estudios Internacionales, Managua, quoted in “Armies for Peace in Nicaragua”, *People Building Peace* (European Centre for Conflict Prevention in cooperation with IFor and the Coexistence Initiative of the State of the World Forum, 1999), p. 371.

from conducive to building peace. In short, the re-training of soldiers needs a transformational content. Bendaña himself stresses the role of reflection in training: *“Human training (accompaniment, as opposed to counselling, based on empathy, including personal and collective psychological rehabilitation) is the groundwork for technical training”*.

Perhaps the clearest example of former soldiers using their skills for demilitarisation is among those NGOs working to clear mines and unexploded ordnance. They firmly contextualise their work within a non-military culture. Paul Davies of the Mines Advisory Group writes:

“NGOs have evolved from mere technical service providers to more rounded humanitarian agencies interested in mines and UXO as a development issue in the broadest sense. They have developed multi-media community education programmes ... operating first in relief mode (rapid, emergency dissemination of information) but gradually evolving into a development mode that seeks to engage and involve the target communities in constructing and sustaining their own education programs. NGOs have also acted as facilitators in the villages rather than as disseminators of predetermined messages. They have developed data-gathering teams and village agents and integrated these elements of their operation into their clearance responses, thus giving a community-responsive and community-based reality to their operations.”³

This example also illustrates a link between essential action for surface demilitarisation and a longer term perspective of peace-building: the actual mine clearing and urgent necessity to inform the community about the need were carried out in a way that contributed to the long-term development of the community.

In view of the conspicuous presence of former-soldiers in charge of the logistics in humanitarian agencies, one could suggest too that there might be some value in re-training them with the same long-term perspective. Logistics can be more than a question of how to get material from A to B; it can offer a chance to begin to build durable distribution networks and even of fostering cross-community cooperation.

UNMIK and the demilitarisation of Kosovo⁴

To illustrate some problems of ‘surface demilitarisation’, let us examine various dilemmas faced by the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in demilitarising the Kosova Liberation Army (UÇK):

i) The individual level

Reintegration can be very complicated where there are rival militia with shifting alliances or where there has been press-ganging of children or displaced people who, after years of indoctrination, come to know no other home than the army. Major difficulties in the post-war situations in Africa discussed by Nicole Ball have arisen from the need to organise cantonments prior to demobilisation.⁵ Kosovo, in comparison, has been relatively simple at the level of reintegrating individuals. If unemployment was widespread among UÇK combatants, most had a clear attachment to their home area; although usually their homes were not habitable, in most places the security situation permitted them to return and rebuild. Moreover, the war had been short – not more than 15 months for all but a few UÇK fighters.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) registered 25,373 people claiming to be former UÇK combatants, in so doing compiling a socio-economic and demographic profile. The IOM has done well in supporting those who want to return to civilian life. It assesses their training needs and then its reintegration fund provides vocational training or seed money for new projects. It has also

³ Paul Davies, “Mines and Unexploded Ordnance in Cambodia and Laos: Understanding the Costs”, in Krishna Kumar (ed), *Rebuilding Societies after Civil War: Critical Roles for International Assistance* (Lynne Rienner, 1997), pp. 249-250.

⁴ I discuss UNMIK more extensively in a forthcoming paper for the Centre for the Study of Forgiveness and Reconciliation, University of Coventry.

⁵ Nicole Ball, “Demobilizing and Reintegrating Soldiers: Lessons from Africa”, in Kumar (ed), *Rebuilding Societies*, pp. 85-106.

compiled lists of employment opportunities. While the IOM has no specific programmes for women former-combatants – a category generally under-represented in post-war registration and with particular difficulties in reintegration into traditional societies – it does have an employment opportunities programme specifically for women.

Ball refers to the need to strike a balance between reassuring “*the demobilized that they have not been abandoned and avoiding reinforcing their sense of themselves as a special group*”. The case for directing aid to former combatants rather than to the community where they live is that, because of their military training, unassimilated soldiers pose a threat to law and order. The IOM in Kosovo justifies its programme by pointing out that the former combatants registered claim to be supporting over 200,000 dependents – or at least 10 per cent of the total Albanian population.⁶ Therefore former-combatants come under the heading of Quick Impact Programmes which, in this case, take place in the context of an overall drive towards economic development.

ii) The collective level

The UÇK wanted to stay in existence as Kosovo’s army: this was part of its vision of independence and most members saw a strong continuing need to maintain a defence capacity against Serbia. Moreover, the UÇK was determined to use Serbian withdrawal to establish its own leadership in Kosovo: immediately after the war, it tried to establish the de facto government of the territory, installing a ‘provisional government’ in Prishtina and appointing local mayors.

UNMIK could not accept UÇK’s leadership. The UÇK did not represent the democratic will of the population, meanwhile people wearing UÇK uniforms were prominent in the many acts of revenge and intimidation taking place. Public statements by UÇK leaders condemning such actions did little to restrain them. So UNMIK entered into negotiations with the UÇK on demilitarisation. UÇK conceded that it would surrender 10,000 weapons – rather few for a force of more than 25,000 – and dissolve its own structures. In return, former UÇK combatants would receive preferential recruitment to two bodies being formed under UNMIK supervision – the Kosovo Police Service and the Kosovo Protection Corps (TKM), a civilian service with 3,000 full-time personnel, 2,000 reservists, largely unarmed (it has just 200 small arms to be used in security duties). UNMIK refused to allocate a block of places in the police service to former UÇK fighters, but made two substantial concessions: that military experience would be considered an advantage, and that the UÇK would have a veto over applications from those who had previously served with the police in Kosovo (Albanians from the 1980s or Serbs). Meanwhile UNMIK agreed that the Protection Corps would be led by former UÇK officers, headed by a former UÇK commander.

How then are we to analyse this as a move towards demilitarisation?

UNMIK would argue that they had a choice of confronting the UÇK with the risk of converting them into enemies, or of enlisting their cooperation and so bringing them more under control. It is still too early to judge the success of their strategy.

A sympathetic reading might say that ‘robust’ action to forcibly dissolve the UÇK would have resulted in Kosovo Albanians closing ranks against the outsiders. Through involving UÇK in the police service and the Protection Corps, UNMIK could also argue that it was a) creating jobs for people who, trained in the arms use, might otherwise be tempted into crime; b) exposing former-combatants to international training; c) putting former-combatants under international supervision; and ultimately d) creating an institution where the different ethnic groups would work together.

The more hostile reading regards the protection corps as – in Tim Judah’s words – “*the UÇK in mothballs*”. UNMIK is seen as having set up a body with a military structure, many of whose members are engaged in activities that UNMIK is pledged to stop – military preparations (holding arms caches, training), organised crime, and intimidation of ethnic minority groups. Moreover, although corps members have to forswear membership of political parties, the TKM is clearly aligned

⁶ IOM, *Socio-economic and Demographic Profiles of Former KLA Combatants registered by IOM*, Vol 1, January 2000, p. 25. Within the limits of the situation, IOM has also looked for opportunities to establish economic cooperation between Albanians and other ethnic groups.

with those parties rejected emphatically at the recent municipal elections. Further, political intimidation of Kosovo Albanians has not ceased with those elections, is linked by most people to elements of the former UÇK and therefore casts suspicion on the TMK.

If former-UÇK has less influence in the police, many police have little to desire to investigate the misdeeds of UÇK-related people and are amenable to 'losing' evidence. Both police and judiciary are seen as lacking independence and impartiality. The UNHCR continues to denounce 'the climate of impunity' that exists in Kosovo.

Drawing on this and a study of the attempt to separate the police from the military in El Salvador,⁷ perhaps the following basic lessons should be emphasised:

- Analyse the interests that exist in maintaining military structures – be these a genuine security concern, political or financial advantage, or criminal connections. Military structures do not just dissolve – they resist being dissolved; when necessary, they transmute into other forms.
- Establish mechanisms of accountability for the post-war security structures – be they an army still in existence, police or protection corps. Local civilian involvement in this monitoring is essential, although risky for the civilians.
- Include a substantial civil rights component in post-war training or retraining.

Deep demilitarisation

All real peace-building activity contributes to de-militarisation. Hence it could be argued that the way to de-militarisation is to construct a peaceful environment. This 'indirect approach' to militarisation is especially relevant in dealing with armed groups that are not state sponsored. At the same time, militarisation in general can derail peace processes and armed groups often have an interest in doing this. Therefore in this section, I concentrate on addressing demilitarisation directly as distinct from general peace-building.⁸

Organising against militarisation

There seem to be three basic lines of approach:

1. **Name the militarisation.** That is shorthand for awareness of how militarisation is embedded in a society, and a determination to limit the prerogatives claimed by military groups, to render them accountable to those – if any – they claim to represent, and to question the attitudes engendered by militarism.
2. **Propose alternatives** – at the level of perception (de-activating enemy images) and at the level of social organisation – and so expand the non-militarised options. The range of alternatives has to address not just personal and cultural issues but also economic and security issues. Even if an alternative is not acted on – as with many of the ideas brainstormed in workshops – it may serve to open a public space, encouraging different ways of thinking to develop.
3. **Organise collectively.** While militarisation is a self-perpetuating process, it also serves interests. Alternative civil processes serving wider social interests require social struggle, on the one hand putting pressure on the institutions, on the other spreading a different approach through their own activities. Often the initiative has to be taken by people forming small groups. Members of such a group can provide a safe space for each other in a society where most people feel under siege, and through this people may find types of action that suit them and encourage each other to experiment to see what power they have to change situations close at hand.

⁷ William Stanley and Charles T. Call, "Building a New Civilian Police Force in El Salvador", in Kumar (ed), *Rebuilding Societies*, pp. 107-134.

⁸ Perhaps I need too to make explicit what I think is probably a shared assumption: that neither peace-building or demilitarisation should be confined to post-war phases, but can precede the war and - especially in the case of protracted wars - take place during the war.

To detail the kind of activities relevant to each of these steps would require writing a manual of anti-militarist action – perhaps worthwhile, but not my purpose here. Two themes that seem essential to mention, however, are those of a) civil disobedience and b) allegiance to values that transcend either a state or an ethnic framework.

a) Disobedience is not just a right but at times a duty – when faced with immoral orders. It also expresses a personal commitment that can grow into forms of collective non-cooperation that ultimately can undermine war machines.

b) To go against the tide of a dominant war-making culture requires personal strength, and to be sustained collectively it requires an alternative identity that underpins non-militarist values. This identity may be localised, sub-cultural, religious or professional (eg physicians); it may be a transnational identity or allegiance (eg feminism or human rights advocacy). It could be something as simple as the bonds of a cross-boundary friendship that withstands the social pressures towards antagonism and mistrust.⁹ Militarisation pushes people to define their identities according to what is at stake in war. A vital task of demilitarisation is to strengthen non-militarised identities that may offer common values.

These lines of activity oppose an atmosphere of militarisation and in particular will challenge state militarism. Non-state armed violence, however, is more difficult to reach. My awareness of this problem is heightened by the news while I have been writing: in Spain, an armed band – presumably ETA – has assassinated one of the leading voices for dialogue in the Basque Country, while in Kosovo the right-hand person of Ibrahim Rugova has been assassinated.

One useful structure for reaching non-state armed groups might be the ‘cross-sectoral peace committee’. This was central in initiating the Peace Zones in the Philippines (see below). The committee is formed of citizens groups whose involvement in different sectors of work gives them an extensive network. The committees are not identified with a particular political agenda beyond ‘peace’ in a loose sense, and ideally include some who have the ear of one or other of the warring parties.

A psycho-social approach

Maynard¹⁰, in an essay primarily looking at what foreign agencies can contribute, has proposed five phases of post-war psychosocial recovery:

A. *Establish safety and protection.*

B. *Communalization and bereavement.* “This process of sharing traumatic experiences with others and allowing a period of mourning over the losses is essential to healing. These can be done only in an atmosphere of safety.”

C. *Rebuild trust and the capacity to trust.* “Renewing interpersonal relationships begins with restoring honor to the adversary, which has been destroyed by dehumanizing the enemy during the fighting.”

D. *Personal moral recovery and the re-establishment of social morality.*

E. *Re-integrate all societal elements into the community and restore democratic discourse.*

This schema is useful, but also has to be treated with caution:

Is someone’s recovery more likely to be advanced in the safety of exile or by running the risk of return to re-build their own home? Is trust necessary to re-establish a social morality? Can there be trust without confidence that certain basic rights will be recognised? If people do not have a relationship their antagonists, will they learn to recognise their rights?

⁹ Nigel Young, “War Resistance, State and Society”, Martin Shaw (ed), *War, State and Society* (Macmillan 1984), pp. 95-116, has written eloquently on this theme, while the transnational network of Women in Black provides an outstanding example of anti-militarist feminism as a transcendent identity.

¹⁰ Kimberly A. Maynard, “Rebuilding Community: Psychosocial Healing, Reintegration, and Reconciliation at the Grassroots Level”, in Kumar (ed), *Rebuilding Societies*, p. 210.

It is striking – although not remarked on by Maynard – that no action is demanded of the antagonist community – for instance, no apology nor handing over war criminals. Rather, each person remains responsible for their own actions, including regaining their capacity for empathy. It depresses me to hear Kosovo Albanians argue that for coexistence with Serbs to be possible (that is, for the current violence against Serbs to stop), Serbs must acknowledge what they have done in the past. The violence against Serbs this past year is unacceptable. If Nekibe Kelmendi, whose husband and two sons were taken from their home and killed on the day NATO joined the war, can say that she will not call any Serb a war criminal until he or she has been tried, then I would urge every Kosovo Albanian to adopt the same standard.¹¹

The international growth of trauma counselling in the 1990s has brought with it a rather bad press, especially among those living in the societies where it is practised. The prime problems have been that it has been insufficiently attuned to the cultures in which counsellors are operating and in particular that some approaches encourage the individualisation of an experience that was widespread and social. It has also attracted practitioners or even trainers who would be better staying at home. For instance, it perturbs me to read a British trainer in trauma counselling from Child Advocacy International quoted as describing her purpose as ‘to encourage forgiveness’ and lauding the British capacity to ‘forget’ and co-operate with past enemies.¹² The point of trauma counselling should be to help somebody digest their experience, so freeing themselves from some of its often unconscious effects and hence making them better able to determine their own future. It is a goal that the person tortured does not him/herself become a torturer, but going beyond that it is for the person who has been traumatised – not for a British professional who sees her own society through rose-coloured spectacles – to decide whether to forgive, whether to press for the prosecution of those who caused the traumatising, or whether to concentrate on rebuilding a new life.

The loose use of a term like ‘collective trauma’ worries me. It seems to remove moral responsibility from each person under the collective. Can those Tutsi who, on their return to Rwanda, massacred Hutu or those Albanians who, on their return to Kosovo, torched Serbian homes plead ‘temporary insanity’ on account of collective trauma?

Again this is not to deny the value of, say, Unicef’s efforts to support local teachers in developing classroom activities that can help the psycho-social recovery of children exposed to war. Nor of the work, usually based in forming self-help groups, with torture and rape survivors. Post-war, some kind of social space has to be opened for people to talk about psychologically damaging experiences. However, I am less convinced of what a generalised ‘therapeutic’ approach offers for demilitarisation than in methodologies rooted in the mutual support of a group of people who share the same reality, face many of the same choices, but also have a common commitment to change. As examples, I have in mind groups such as Vietnam Veterans Against the War or those facing political repression in El Salvador and Guatemala, often people whose loved ones had been ‘disappeared’, as documented by Beristain and Riera.¹³

Vietnam Veterans Against the War was one of the first groups in the peace field to consciously address the issue of trauma. Many US GIs sent to Vietnam reacted against the war; many also were traumatised and began to abuse drugs and alcohol. More US Vietnam vets have died through drugs overdoses or suicide than the nearly 60,000 who were killed in combat. VVAW based itself on mutual support groups, people who understood each other but also made a commitment to take action to stop the war, a commitment that has broadened to opposing other wars, opposing militarism, and even organising journeys of reconciliation – not only to Indochina but to what was the Soviet Union, for instance meeting Soviet veterans of the war in Afghanistan.

¹¹ I should also add that I believe that it would be a great aid to peace in Kosovo if Serbs would accept their responsibilities instead of playing the victim, merely complaining that they were manipulated.

¹² IWPR’s Balkan Crisis Report, No 142, 23 May 2000. Child Advocacy International did not reply to my subsequent email asking if they had any comment on this report.

¹³ Carlos Martín Beristain and Francesc Riera, *Afirmación y Resistencia: la comunidad como apoyo* (Virus, 1992). Although translated, this valuable book has yet to be published in English.

Collective memory

The collective memory of war is itself militarised. In the case of ethnic war, the memory deals in stereotypes – of rape, torture and ethnic cleansing by Them, and of heroic resistance and nobility in protecting women and children by Us. To break with these stereotypes takes courage. There is a quip from Belfast that “*to fire questions in your own community takes far more courage than to fire a bullet in somebody else’s*”.

It is important to challenge a stereotyped, militarised memory by offering other examples. One means to do this is to honour the war resisters of the other side – the conscientious objectors, the draft resisters and deserters who refused to join in the war. This rarely happens. Their refusal puts human solidarity above the claims of each ethnic camp, an act that can bring into question the ethnic discipline in both camps and also can raise the issue of how their counterparts – the war resisters on the other side – have been treated.¹⁴

Similar remarks can apply to human rights activists who may earn the opprobrium of both military parties by their monitoring of human rights violations on all sides. Their witness to values that transcend communal divisions and apply to all offers a profound alternative to the militarised worldview.

Also excluded from the collective memory tend to be the acts of common humanity that cross the lines of ethnic conflict – those who protect or shelter those of the other ethnic group, or even those who try to offer protection at the cost of their own lives and fail. Every war has its small-scale Schindlers.

One of the goals of truth-telling after war should be to acknowledge the complexity of what people have just lived through. It is important that people can talk about what they suffered, and if those responsible can be called to account, so much the better. But people also need to speak of the difficulty of the choices they made, the limits they faced, and what helped them survive. The local media can help enormously in this by not simplifying the memory of war into stereotypes, but exploring it in its diversity.

Displaced people

Those who want war can find a pool of potential recruits among displaced people. They have a grievance, have lost their livelihoods and usually are unwanted in their temporary ‘host community’ and are therefore vulnerable. At times the displaced themselves become an organised lobby demanding redress through military action.

Self-help economic development programmes can help displaced people regain or maintain their self-esteem and in some cases offer an alternative to joining an armed group. The general point, however, is not to sugar the pill of displacement, but to recognise that displaced people are more than victims: they are people who can organise themselves and who have the right to return. From the point of view of demilitarisation, the key is to develop non-military means for claiming that right by working within the situation from which they were expelled to enhance the conditions for return and by supporting the refugees’ own efforts to devise nonviolent courses of action.

Usually the most important factor in people’s decisions to return is their perception of security. There are no guarantees. A heavy international military presence might even convey an illusion of security. The need is to be able to make an informed decision. Therefore return has to be prepared, taking a long-term view. Where people have been expelled on ethnic grounds, the ethnic resentment among the displaced is likely to harden, unchecked by any contact beyond the communities of the displaced. Preparations for return should include meetings with people remaining in the situation. Local human rights groups, where they exist, can make a good entry point: for instance, Otvorene Oči (the Balkan Peace Team in Croatia) helped arrange for human rights groups from the Knin area to go to Banja

¹⁴ A non-ethnic example of victors with no interest in the other side’s war resisters is NATO. Despite airdropping leaflets on Serbia inciting desertion and draft resistance, NATO states have subsequently done little to support Serbian war resisters imprisoned, facing charges or seeking asylum.

Luka to meet displaced Serbs. A second step can be return visits in the company of international agencies. The point is to take limited risks in as controlled a way as possible.

A third step is negotiation between the returnees and those who claim authority over the land where they want to return, be they a state, a guerrilla force or an international administration, or all three. The point is to make the return non-threatening, to press the authorities into at least some recognition of legal or moral obligations towards the displaced and perhaps to establish some joint commissions to monitor progress and deal with problems that emerge. The fourth step can then be to enlist international support – economic aid to assist resettlement and development and activity as non-armed observers of the return process and non-armed escorts for the return.

Referring to the experience of Bosnia and Croatia, Stubbs concludes that “*large-scale, high-profile, NGO work on repatriation ... is as likely to have negative as positive consequences. Work with traditional trust-builders – church leaders, citizens’ associations, sports clubs, and so on – may actually be more valuable*”.¹⁵ In the situations he studied – of ethnic conflict where there has been intensive international engagement, including a military presence – gradualism and small-scale initiatives may be indicated. However, in situations with a much lower international presence and where refugees may be contemplating returning in arms, it is worth considering non-military strategies for large-scale return.

A well-documented example of nonviolent accompaniment of a large-scale return took place in January 1993. A caravan of 78 buses, each with international volunteers, carried 2,480 refugees back from Mexico into Guatemala. Most had fled 10 years earlier in the face of the scorched-earth methods used by the government to combat the guerrilla rebellion. In Mexico, the refugees established their own democratic organisations and established their right first to visit Guatemala without losing refugee status and ultimately to negotiate their return. The two major issues for negotiation were demilitarisation and access to land, the essential condition for the refugees’ economic reintegration. The refugees insisted not only that they should be exempt from military recruitment and the so-called ‘civil patrol’ system, but that the military should be excluded from their communities and that they should have the right to choose their own international non-armed escorts to accompany the return.¹⁶

Peace Brigades International, one of the smaller organisations involved in the return to Guatemala, has more recently been working with displaced in Colombia, offering accompaniment in attempts to return to territory that is still contested. An essential concept here is the idea of local peace zones – villages that have declared their determination to live without weapons and, on that basis, have enlisted international aid for economic development.

The main experiences with peace zones have been in the Philippines since 1988 and in Colombia. In the Philippines a peace zone has been defined as “an area-based community initiated, nonviolent approach to armed conflict. In essence, it includes a people-initiated ceasefire where armed combatants are called upon to withdraw forces and operations from the peace zone. A community becomes a peace zone through a unilateral declaration. In some cases, the declaration is accompanied by a set of guidelines, community structures or mechanisms for specific peace-building tasks such as: (1) consultation with the community and decision-making on the people’s peace agenda; (2) liaison/negotiation/dialogue with armed combatants; (3) monitoring of combatants’ activities to ensure adherence to Peace Zone guidelines; and (4) information dissemination.”¹⁷

Through such local initiatives, people can try to establish a demilitarised space even when there is deadlock in national negotiations. Such zones are not an easy option. Those initiating peace zones take enormous personal risks. Indeed, in Colombia, one can say that any activist who works for

¹⁵ Paul Stubbs, *Displaced Promises: Forced migration, refugee and return in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina* (Life and Peace Institute, 1999), p. 57.

¹⁶ This paragraph is based on Liam Mahony and Luis Enrique Eguren, *Unarmed Bodyguards: International Accompaniment for the Protection of Human Rights* (Kumarian Press, 1997), Ch 10. Mahony’s fuller account is Liam Mahony, *Risking Return: NGOs in the Guatemalan refugee repatriation* (Life and Peace Institute, 1999).

¹⁷ Zosimo Lee and Ma. Cecilia Gastardo-Conaco, *Peace Zones in the Philippines* (University of the Philippines, 1994).

popular empowerment is in danger. Moreover, the zones remain vulnerable, with or without a ceasefire agreement and with or without the presence of observers from international NGOs. However, the communities which declare peace zones or the displaced people who are attracted to them are already vulnerable. The space they are creating is not 'safe' – nor for that matter are the 'safe havens' under perpetual military protection. Rather it is a space to engage in social struggle, to try and build a better life. For this reason such zones have to be based on the commitment of those living in the area, not on incentives that can be offered by outside agencies or an international administration.

Cross-community initiatives

I have already referred in passing to cross-community initiatives – in the context of psychosocial recovery, of collective memory and of working with displaced people. The earlier paper in this series by Diana Francis also raised a number of issues in this connection. In addition, I want to raise the issues of different levels of contact and of timing, which is a more general problem.

A phrase recently used by the Balkan Peace Team about its cross-community work is 'self-paced interaction'. This seems a good concept for the grass-roots level, where BPT works. At the top level – where leaders purport to speak for whole communities – the contact cannot be self-paced: outsiders may need to cajole, pressure or bribe leaders to the negotiating table. At the grass-roots level, however, outsiders can only invite, suggest, offer opportunities, create a safe space for. What is important to recognise, however, is that 'self-paced' has to accommodate both the tortoises and the hares within a community.

A recent success story in Kosovo concerns the city park in Gjilan where a foreign volunteer from Balkan Sunflowers prevailed on some former UÇK fighters (now in the Kosovo Protection Corps) to work with a group of Serbs to revive the park. This volunteer was told by every international worker he spoke to that it was 'too soon' for such an initiative. However, he was headstrong enough to push ahead, and he turned out to be right. If this had been a initiative from on high, I'm sure that all the reasons why it was 'too soon' would have come into play and the project would have been sabotaged.

At the same time, the grassroots outsider with a vision of peace also has to recognise that this is not her/his situation, that it is for locals to determine what is appropriate and when. The outsider's role is then one of prodding and trying to create spaces where people can take risks at their own pace.

Workshops facilitated by outsiders offer such a space to test ideas. This is true of workshops with members of just one of the conflicting communities as well as with cross-community workshops – a chance to say what is 'unsayable'. Some workshops produce visionary ideas for non-military forms of action. I think it is important to stress the need for follow-up of workshops, for some continued support to participants in converting the ideas generated into action.

At a workshop organised by the United States Institute for Peace with municipal level leaders from the Serbian and Albanian communities in Kosovo, one suggestion for action to change the ethnic atmosphere was 'protected walks' by multi-ethnic groups of prominent citizens down the main streets of cities. It was unclear from the report what form of protection was being referred to, and I do not know of any body working to translate this idea into action.

For me, this idea suggests a form of nonviolent action that could have dramatic and demilitarising results. In many parts of southern Europe there is a tradition of an evening promenade – in Kosovo called the *korzo* – down the main street. A multi-ethnic *korzo* with respected figures such as former political prisoners could be a powerful repudiation of the atmosphere of intimidation. I have little doubt that the transformative impact of such an action would be far greater if it was carried out as a nonviolent action abjuring military protection but instead relying mainly on the public esteem of certain walkers and the desire of most people to end the violence. Although, as we have seen in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country, peace marches cannot by themselves disband armed groups, they can and often do fortify the civil courage needed to overcome intimidation.

Some possible questions for discussion

Most military forces in international peace operations lack common guidelines about their own conduct. What points need to be suggested to them? How can they avoid contributing to the militarisation of the situation?

Surface and deep demilitarisation interact. Ideally short-term necessity/crisis management can be organised in a way that is a step towards long-term resolution. What is necessary in pursuit of surface-level demilitarisation to strengthen the possibilities for a deeper demilitarisation?

What re-training needs do soldiers have to help them adapt to post-military life? And, more specifically, to non-military humanitarian operations?

Identities can sustain non-militarist values. What can outsiders do to support these processes?

What is the relationship between psychosocial recovery and restoring social morality? (Maynard's five points)

Displacement is a pressure for war. How can this be de-fused and channelled?

What are the non-military strategies most likely to have purchase on a non-state armed band?

What are appropriate roles for nonviolent (physical) accompaniment?

Demilitarising Minds and Societies

*Report of a seminar held on 7 December 2000
at John Adams Hall, 21 Endsleigh Street,
London*

This seminar, the second in a series on *Supporting Post-Conflict Peacebuilding Processes* organised by the Committee for Conflict Transformation Support (CCTS), was attended by 31 people (whose names and addresses are listed at the end of this account). Its purpose was to examine the different forms of demilitarisation that are needed if a society is to achieve any measure of security and stability. This involves changing not only institutions (eg the police, local and national government) but also the values, attitudes and mindsets of 'ordinary' people. The seminar discussed the obstacles to these changes and looked for ways in which they could be overcome.

Howard Clark, former coordinator of *War Resisters International*, whose book *Civil Resistance in Kosovo* has recently been published by Pluto Press, opened the seminar with a discussion of his paper, *Demilitarising Minds, Demilitarising Societies*, which is printed above. He urged participants to avoid considering some militarisation as 'good' and some as 'bad' – as Western governments tend to do when they send their armies in to 'solve' other countries' problems – but to consider on a continuum the possession and use of weapons in all societies.

He distinguished between 'surface' demilitarisation: the immediate actions that put an end to fighting, such as disbanding or isolating forces and implementing ceasefire agreements (often under high-level international pressure), and 'deep' demilitarisation: the more fundamental cultural and structural transformation that is necessary in order to build a peaceful society. 'Deep' demilitarisation, which includes such action as disarmament and the (re)building of trust between opposing factions, requires grassroots action; it cannot be enforced. A politically-imposed and militarily-policed peace is generally illusory, and can perpetuate a dependence on military action, as well as on the hierarchic, goal-based military mindset.

Much of the subsequent discussion was focused on these two levels of demilitarisation and on the interaction between them, so the description of plenary and group discussions at the seminar have been combined in what follows.

Surface demilitarisation

Military peacekeepers are often sent in to establish a ceasefire, or to separate opposing parties in a civil war. Even while such intervention is considered necessary, however, it is important to be planning the (re)connection of opponents, and the (re)establishment of civil controls: the rule of law is best enforced as close to home as possible.

In circumstances where international forces maintain a longer-term presence, for example after genocide or protracted civil war, they are often given other, less ostensibly military roles within the community, such as bridge repairs and road building. It was generally agreed that while this work is useful it is better for this job, too, to be performed by local civilians. The objective must be for all reconstruction, whether physical or social, to be conceived and managed locally (though outsiders may be drafted in to assist). A sense of local ownership and involvement in the peace process is crucial. For this reason external (particularly Western) peace workers need to find ways to help local people without 'getting in the way' of local initiatives or inhibiting progress by mis-timing their interventions.

There are two separate tasks involved here. The first is to demilitarise the peace-keeping, in order to increase local ownership of the peace. Clearly, the work of the peace-keeping mission should be restricted to as small an area as possible; but it may not be enough to transfer some of its other roles to civilians (eg the police) because this may simply perpetuate the military attitudes in civilian society. The second and more fundamental task is to demilitarise society itself by changing its attitude towards the violence and its causes. This latter task is the business of deep demilitarisation.

Progress is occasionally made by an apparently spontaneous upsurge of ordinary citizens, as happened in Serbia to overthrow President Milosovic. Such actions need to be harnessed and channelled so that the energy for change is not sidelined or dissipated.

There is a danger that 'surface' actions might be obstructive. For example, the money spent on arms to enforce a peace is not available for development and reconstruction; and external intervention can have a negative impact when it ignores the underlying problems that have precipitated the violence, or tries to impose a 'solution' that is counter-cultural, or to force coexistence before it is possible.

International intervention seems inevitably to take a military form. Several participants were keen to find alternative types of intervention, at an earlier stage, before the conflict escalates: suggestions included larger, more determined groups of OSCE observers and the involvement of people trained in conflict resolution to help the local community to avoid military conflict. Sadly, however, it is generally harder to interest international politicians in the longer-term, less goal-oriented solutions that lead to deep demilitarisation. There is more interest in action that leads to political 'quick wins' or which bolsters the justification for military investment at home. International political alliances can also be a barrier to peace (for example, Russia's support for Serbia; Germany's support for Croatia) – providing not only the weapons that allow the fighting to continue but also the political muscle to resist compromise.

While most participants found the distinction between surface and deep demilitarisation useful, there is clearly substantial overlap. It would be a mistake, too, to regard 'surface' demilitarisation as easy. After violence, a larger number of changes may be necessary before one can feel secure. It is necessary to create 'safe spaces' in which people can operate with confidence.

Deep demilitarisation

Howard suggested two types of action necessary to achieve deep demilitarisation:

- *Horizontal action* among a range of grassroots workers (for example, police, social workers, teachers and medical staff) who have influence in their own communities to build peace;
- *Vertical action* by grassroots workers banding together to put pressure for change on their local and national leaders.

Militant armed groups, such as the IRA or ETA, pose particular problems. They may have

limited popular support and accountability, but if they see nothing to be gained by dialogue it can be hard for civil society to deal with them.

It is hard to find role models for deep demilitarisation because all societies are to an extent militarised. The Western powers that tend to lead the peacekeeping forces are in some ways the worst offenders. These are the states with nuclear weapons, professional armies and an adversarial approach to politics that is quite likely to carry a 'winner-takes-all' attitude into civil life (though some countries may envy their ability to maintain civilian control of their military forces). We therefore need to look at smaller-scale, local initiatives that have helped communities to move towards peaceful coexistence and away from polarised, militaristic attitudes. It is often necessary to 'create facts': to grasp an opportunity as it arises and then to use it as an example for others to build on.

It may demand a degree of 'controlled risk-taking' to create an alternative to military force. Howard's paper gives a number of examples: the peace zones in the Philippines and Columbia; a peace-march that cuts across ethnic divides; the accompanied return of displaced people, or the public involvement and support of well-known non-political individuals. 'Deep' demilitarisation is not easy to achieve. Peace-builders must be opportunistic, seizing the chance to make progress whenever and wherever it arises.

This section contains further examples of what is possible, suggested by seminar participants.

In Spain, individuals who were prepared to be imprisoned rather than be conscripted into the military each enlisted the support of a circle of previously apolitical neighbours; the end of conscription was due, in part, to the combined force of these support circles.

In the Caucasus, regional and local NGOs supported the creation of neutral 'free trade zones' where people from opposite sides in a dispute can meet to buy and sell goods. This can sometimes be more productive than workshops because, in addition to fostering communication, it satisfies some basic needs on both sides. It was noted that private enterprise tends to find a way of thriving even during conflict. For example, the Mafia continues to operate for gain in the most dangerous conflicts. Business contact has continued throughout the war in the Balkans, and there is

now a proposal to reopen a marketplace in Kosovo/a that can be used by all parties. In Somalia, too, businesses have continued to operate in the absence of any central government, and have even created some of the pressure for its reinstatement. Business may be able to provide a forum or channel for dialogue. (Participants were less sure how peacebuilding groups could emulate the Mafia.)

It can be helpful to use traditional ways of dealing with conflict within the community. In Rwanda, for example, people involved in the genocide are tried in the communities where they committed their crimes, and are given reduced sentences if they are willing to describe exactly what occurred. The open acceptance of guilt not only helps to establish the real nature of the genocide, but also makes it easier for local people to put it behind them.

Ex-combatants are frequently traumatised by their part in the violence and can find it hard to reintegrate into civilian society. Shaming, reparation and forgiveness can be constructive alternatives to punishment. This type of community-owned justice may be easier to achieve in traditional societies than in the socially fragmented West.

The illusion that security can be absolute can lead to a deep reliance on ever-increasing levels of militarisation. Real security is based on legitimacy and consent within the community; fearfulness gets in the way. For example, the shops from which Nairobi citizens buy gold are heavily fortified but are nevertheless regularly attacked by gangsters and terrorists; but a group of Somali women who started selling gold from market stalls in the street, without armed protection, were not molested at all.

In extensively military societies the problems are particularly acute. In Kenya, for example, such a large proportion of government funding and training is directed towards military objectives that there is little civil incentive to demilitarise. When arms trading is a more valuable local business than growing tea or coffee, and it is as easy to buy a Kalashnikov as milk or bread, violence becomes the norm. Even in these societies, however, it can be easier to have dialogue with the soldier, who has engaged with death, than with the politician who may have a vested interest in the violence. And it is still true that individual actions can have an impact: for example, when a single surviving member of a family rejects revenge

and argues for reconciliation. (It is important that peacebuilding groups resist the temptation of separating such individuals from their local society by publicising their example on too wide a scale.)

Peace workers not to feel discouraged if they were only able to work at the margins of a conflict; this is where movement most often takes place.

One participant suggested that because women and young people have had a less direct involvement in the fighting, and are therefore less brutalised by it, they might be better able to act to achieve peace. Others, while acknowledging that these groups are often active in post-conflict peace building, pointed out that the emotional motor for war is female as well as male; and that many young people are swayed by the rhetoric of conflict.

Peace making can be seen as less 'exciting' than conflict, especially in deeply militarised societies. In an effort to counter this, the peace movement in Somalia has instituted annual 'peace festivals' at which peacemakers are honoured – not grandly, simply by the public award of a certificate.

At the same time, the hard work of conflict resolution – confronting the issues on which the violence is based – must not be overlooked.

Connecting surface and deep demilitarisation

A peace based on grass roots action is far more likely to succeed than one imposed from outside. (Compare, for example, the peace achieved within Guatemala with that brokered at Dayton.)

The real need is to identify a peace constituency at all levels in the community (leaders, middle-level brokers and grass roots) and to connect them together. Participants found it hard to identify a good method of achieving this objective, other than by the lobbying of one level by another.

The grass roots level often presents the greatest difficulties, especially after a long war, when violence can persist long after the primary cause has been forgotten. The entrenched positions, where "it is easier to fire a bullet at your opponents than a question at your own

side”, are hard to dispel. In addition, conflict leaves people feeling disempowered, and it can be difficult to find methods of giving them a voice again. The partisan attitudes of the diplomats and politicians who are sponsoring the military intervention can also be problematic.

Ironically, it can be relatively easy to work constructively with the military. In a recent visit to the Pentagon, one participant found that US military chiefs were very aware of the problems associated with the long-term reliance on military peace-keeping missions, but frustrated by the lack of imagination shown by civilian institutions in finding viable alternatives. This is a challenge that peacebuilders cannot afford to ignore.

Bridge-builders at the middle-level can often act most easily. In the Caucasus, for example, local NGOs have been able to co-operate even when there is little or no high-level political communication, and when grass-roots action is often stifled by local politics. In these circumstances, however, the NGOs are often regarded as anti- rather than non-governmental, and workers can feel isolated; groups such as CCTS provide welcome insight and support.

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Quaker Peace and Service, London

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