



The Contribution of Women to Peace and Reconciliation

Report on a two-year cooperation project with peace activists from Somalia, Rwanda, Ex-Yugoslavia, Israel and Palestine. Team of Experts: Gadha Al-Jabda, Birgit Daiber, Shukria Dini, Lama Hourani, Marlis Gensler, Molly Malekar, Yolande Mukagasana, Bosiljka Schedlich, Simone Susskind

Ed. Birgit Daiber | Rosa-Luxemburg-Foundation Brussels

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PROJECT REPORT

THE CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN TO PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

INTRODUCTION

BIRGIT DAIBER

History of the Creation of the Project

In December 2008, during the opening ceremony for the foundation of the strategic office of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation in Brussels, several of the invitees gathered informally and talked about their experiences as peace and human rights activists: Bosiljka Schedlich of the Southeast European Cultural Centre in Berlin, who had worked against the war in Yugoslavia in the diaspora, and had initiated many psychological and social initiatives with traumatized war refugees; Molly Malekar of Bat-Shalom in Jerusalem, who had, since the founding of Jerusalem Link in 1994, maintained cooperation with Palestinian peace activists despite all the blockades and battles; Asha Haji Elmi from Somalia, who has recently received the Alternative Nobel Prize for her initiative Save the Somali Women and Children, and Birgit Daiber, head of the Brussels Office, who had participated in the peace initiatives against the first Iraq War (the Sheherazade Network), against the war in Yugoslavia and for peace in the Middle East. A very lively discussion emerged around the various initiatives and experiences, and soon the question arose: couldn't we try to create a more continual working context? That in turn gave rise to the idea for the project "The Contribution of Women in Peace and Conflict Transformation". The Brussels Office of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation drafted an initial project outline, and other partners were also recruited: Yolande Mukagasana, author of the first documentations of the genocide in Rwanda (Mukagasana, 1997), Lama Hourani and later Ghada Al-Jadba from Palestine, and Simone Susskind, founder of many essential Euro-Mediterranean peace initiatives, especially Jerusalem Link and the International Women's Committee (IWC).

Thus, four areas of experience were included: Rwanda, Somalia, the Middle East and ex-Yugoslavia: four very different conflict and war contexts, not mutually comparable, different in their respective histories and their socio-cultural and economic contexts, their international frameworks and their intervention strategies, and also different in terms of their specific current situations of war, conflict and post-war development. However, there is one direct, common and provocative issue: how can it be that the enormous amount of work and experience in peace practice accumulated by women and by many selfless men, who are all struggling in their own contexts for compromise and peace, has entered to such a small degree into the general strategies of conflict prevention and of positive measures for peace building? And what about support for the civil resistance in war and violent conflict? Is the work of civilian women to secure the survival of their children and their families even noticed? Sometimes, as in the cases of Asha Haji Elmi, Bosiljka Schedlich or Ruchama Marton, women receive awards and then enjoy a brief moment of public attention, but they then immediately disappear back into their practical projects, their grassroots work, and when the “big” issues of conflict prevention and conflict transformation arise, women’s experience and women’s perspectives on conflict are hardly ever embedded in the strategies. Nonetheless there certainly have been successes:

Two major issues involving women have been incorporated into the official discourse on war and peace since the adoption of Resolution 1325 by the UN in 2000, and the passage in 2008 of UN Resolution 1820 on the criminal prosecution of sexualized wartime violence. These are the issues of the rape of women as a measure of war, and the participation of women in the construction of peace processes in the context of Women’s Leadership. Woman experts are incorporated into the international court teams for conflict management, and in specific projects (cf. e.g. Kennedy School of Governance, ISIS Europe), and further training strategies for women from conflict regions are being tested, so that their participation can be secured in the construction of civil structures. “A long, tedious international struggle of women has achieved successes in recent years. At the international level, both in the international

tribunes and now at the International Court of Justice in The Hague, perpetrators are being prosecuted judicially for raping women. ... However, the situation of witnesses in international criminal courts is ... difficult from a humanitarian point of view; protection and support are woefully inadequate." (*medica mondiale* 2008, p. 11). In an overall accounting, the expert women from many countries at the conference organized in 2008 by Medica Mondiale concluded that in spite of the fact that these criminal acts are internationally, and often even nationally recognized, "women often experience justice systems as inadequate or inaccessible – or even as incapable or unwilling to provide justice to female survivors of rape and other forms of sexualized violence. The inaccessibility of the established justice system is an ongoing problem. These systems are often far removed from the places of residence of women, speak languages foreign to those women, treat women in a hostile manner, and provide no security measures, so that women remain in an unsafe and vulnerable position. Often, participation in legal proceedings is a discouraging experience, and turns the survivors into victims once again." (*ibid.*, p. 33).

This shows that in spite of international recognition of sexual violence as criminal activity, judicial procedures for dealing with such violence is, to put it cautiously, often not in a position to do very much to restore the dignity of the women and girls concerned. The fact that it seems so difficult to do justice to the existential human interests of women, even in cases of crimes, may be an indication of how much more difficult it is to understand societal reality in violent conflicts and wars as power relationships, in which gender reality is just as much a constituent part as are economic, ethnic/nationalistic or religious factors. The primary task is therefore to really root the experience and solution strategies of women as central in conflict transformation strategies.

Peace Movements and Feminist Positions

Currently, there are thirty-one violent conflicts and wars raging worldwide. The international peace movements, by contrast, depend on resistance to war in the conflict regions themselves, but also in the western centres which are involved directly and indirectly in regional conflicts

and wars, both via the weapons industry and via concrete power interests. But in these multifarious movements and networks, the women's networks have a specific orientation: "It's the perception that militarism, militarization and war are – only in part, but very significantly – driven and perpetuated by gender relations. Economic factors, like oil or diamonds, drive war, yes. Ethno-national factors like the desire to kill all the Muslims in India, or all Christians and animists in Sudan, yes, they too drive war. But gender factors do too. I emphasize also: This is not to substitute a gender analysis of war for the mainstream analysis, but to propose it as an intrinsic, interwoven, inescapable part of the story. ...As far as militarization and war are concerned I think it's safe to say that (1) economic power, (2) ethnic or national power embodied in community, religious and state structures, and (3) gender power, are the most significant and influential dimensions of power." (Cockburn 2008, pp. 1, 9). And further, Cynthia Cockburn: "We need to see warfare as social. War may be deadly, but it's rational. It involves a degree of shared understanding between the warring factions. Only if we understand it this way, can we tease out, among the other relations, those of gender."

War as a social fact, she says, is not only embedded in social structures, but could also be considered a systemic fact; moreover, it is possible to see war as a certain phase in a sequence of conditions which operate as a continuum. This could mean for example, that the participants in civil wars no longer see their goal as being the battle against the enemy, but rather that they have an interest in the continuation of the war and the long-term institutionalization of violence as such. Cockburn reflects on violent conflict and war in the context of patriarchal societal structures, and concludes: "The case rests more firmly on the patriarchal gender relation itself, which is a relation as much between masculinity and femininity as between men and women, a relation of dichotomy and complementarity, hetero-normative, of domination and subordination, characterized by coercion and violence. It's the gender order itself that meshes with the war system in interesting and significant ways." (Cockburn 2008, pp. 1-5).

Often however, the patriarchal social structures which oppress women also permit them to maintain more subtle social relationships, even in conflict situations. "I know women who exercise leadership not only in

NGOs, but also through their own autonomous action at the community level. Precisely because of the gendered way in which they are raised, women have highly developed skills for communication and relationship, and are well practiced as bridge builders within the family and community." (Francis, *Open Democracy*, February 2010). Here, women often use subversive tactics to protect their families.

Diana Francis takes up these demands and formulates them as a general demand to processes of conflict transformation: "The practitioners and theoreticians of conflict transformation, if they are to be true to their calling, must develop analysis and strategy for transforming the global structures and practices of violence, in a process of global demilitarization that includes minds as well as societies, promoting a very different approach to what is now called 'foreign policy', and a new understanding of power. This is what 'working to scale' requires. It is the only realistic response to the current global nature of the problem." (Francis, OD, Nov. 2009).

The web discussions on OpenDemocracy address in a concentrated manner the multiplicity of the very different peace movements worldwide. Instead of complaining about their splintered nature, the participants believe that very flexibly and informally organized networks are most meaningful, providing "quiet processes and small circles, in which vital and transforming events take place" (Francis, Sept. 2010). Here, she also addresses the necessity for stronger ties between resistance movements in the development of strategies for solutions: "War resisters and peace policy advocates must keep finding opportunities to talk to each other and experiment with working together, so that our connections can make us more powerful". (Francis, OD, Sept. 2010)

At the concluding symposium of the Committee for Conflict Transformation Support (CCTS) in 2009 (CCTS Review 41, London, Dec. 2009), Diana Francis presented the results of the work of the CCTS on conflict transformation. She referred to the fact that difference and changes in societal conditions of life are part of the human condition, and that conflicts are therefore often inevitable – especially with regard to fighting injustice and repression. The goal of conflict transformation is therefore not stability and pacification, but rather the well-being and development

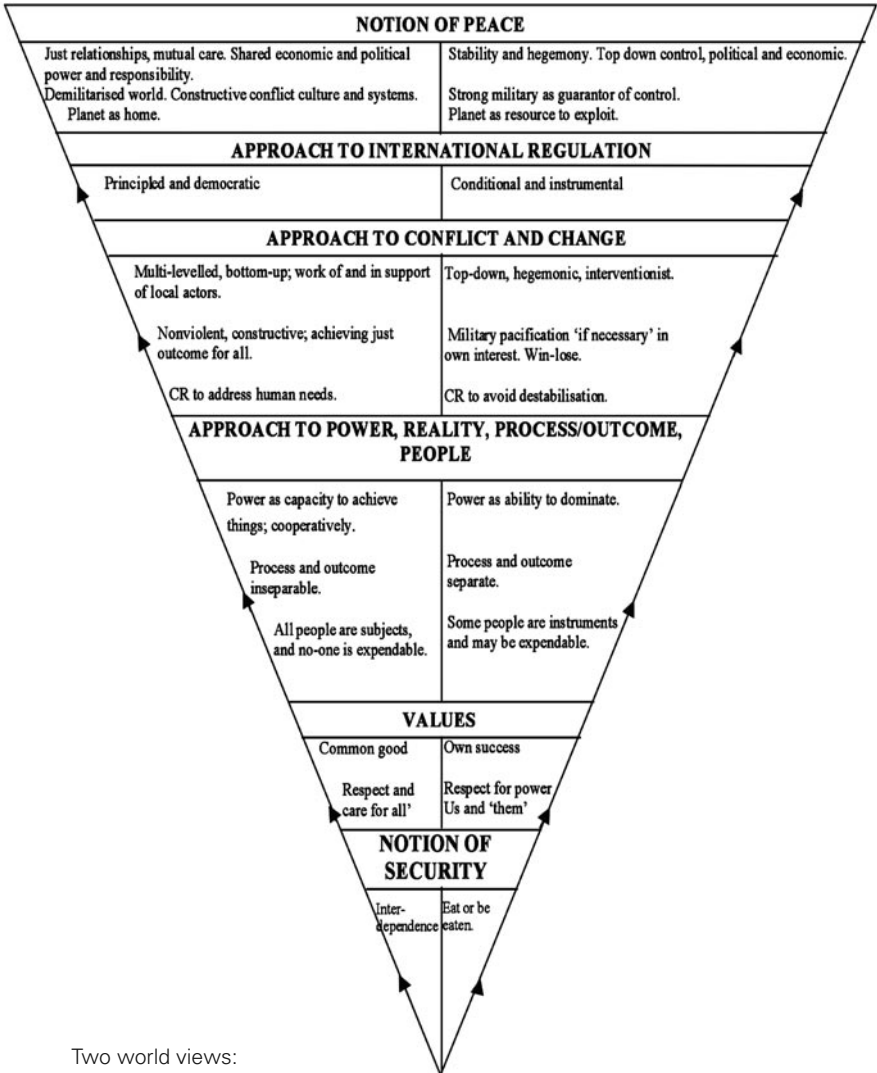
of societies: "Conflict is potentially constructive, and sometimes necessary to changing things that are unjust. Constructive conflict seeks solutions that address the rights and needs of all who are involved, paving the way for cooperation. Violence contradicts the values of respect and coexistence, so non-violent methods must be used." (CCTS 2009, p. 9).

She argues that non-violent action is not exclusive, but rather inclusive, and gains its power from the participation of the people, both of the weak and of the strong, that it begins with the process of consciousness-raising about the reasons for the existing situation and about the possible collective actions which could change that situation: "No large-scale, well resourced and internationally supported non-violent action force stands ready to take on such roles to protect and support local people" (ibid., p.11), she points out, but then asks whether it really makes more sense to have armies oppress the entire world? Basically, what is needed is a different understanding of human security and well-being: "We can never be more than relatively and temporarily secure, even those of us who live in the rich world. Learning to live with our insecurity, creatively and caringly, will make far more of us infinitely safer than trying to control the uncontrollable." (ibid., p.11). The major task for peace activists and researchers is, she says, to deconstruct war as a structure. In a chart, Francis counterposes two very different world-views of "peace building" and "pacification".

TWO WORLD-VIEWS:

Peacebuilding

Pacification



Two world views:
Peacebuilding and Pacification
Source: Committee for Conflict
Transformation Support (CCTS),
Review 41, December 2009

Basic Societal Conditions for War and Peace

While Cynthia Cockburn and Diana Francis address the practice of the peace movements and conflict transformation in the context of a feminist analysis of society, philosopher Judith Butler has examined societal power structures and the basic conditions for war and peace. She assumes that we think and act within certain frames, which are the result of power-oriented strategies. It is within the context of these frameworks that we perceive the lives of others as being destroyed or damaged – or not. Since any limit also includes breaks, the opportunity exists to shift these frames and to raise the question of how our limits of perception can be shifted, for “to say that a life is injurable, for instance, or that it can be lost, destroyed, or systematically neglected to the point of death, is to underscore not only the finitude of a life (that death is certain), but also its precariousness (that life requires various social and economic conditions to be met in order to be sustained as a life). Precariousness implies living socially, that is, the fact that one’s life is always in some sense in the hands of the other.” (Butler 2009, *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?*, pp. 13-14). “Simply put, life requires support and enabling conditions in order to be liveable life.” (ibid., p. 21). Butler distinguishes precariousness and precarity, and points out: “Lives are by definition precarious: they can be expunged at will or by accident; their persistence is in no sense guaranteed. In some sense, this is a feature of all life, and there is no thinking of life that is not precarious – except, of course, in fantasy, and in military fantasies in particular. ...

Precarity designates that politically induced condition in which certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support and become differentially exposed to injury, violence, and death.” (ibid., p. 25). For Butler, recognizing precariousness as a basic fact of human life is a prerequisite for developing empathy for the suffering of others. “For populations to become grievable does not require that we come to know the singularity of every person who is at risk or who has, indeed, already been risked. Rather, it means that policy needs to understand precariousness as a shared condition, and precarity is the politically induced condition that would deny equal exposure through the radically unequal distribution of wealth and the differential ways of ex-

posing certain populations, racially and nationally conceptualized, to greater violence. The recognition of shared precariousness introduces strong normative commitments of the quality and invites a more robust and universalizing of rights that seeks to address basic human needs for food, shelter, and other conditions for persisting and flourishing." (ibid., pp. 28-9). This right, she says, is universal. In the wars currently being fought however, human lives are separated into those "whose lives are considered valuable, whose lives are mourned, and [those] whose lives are considered non-grievable ... that cannot be mourned because [they] never lived, ... never counted as a life at all." (ibid., p. 38). The reason why we have no right to destroy the other is due to our subjective nature, which binds us as a subject to each other subject, as well as the realization "that we each have the power to destroy and to be destroyed, and that we are bound to one another in this power and this precariousness." (ibid., p. 43).

Butler argues for radical rethinking of nonviolence. Nonetheless: "Violence and non-violence are not only strategies or tactics, but form the subject and become its constitutive possibilities." (ibid., p. 165). And: "Non-violence ... denotes the mired and conflicted position of a subject who is injured, rageful, disposed to violent retribution and nevertheless struggles against that action." (ibid., p. 171). For Butler, "non-violence is not a peaceful state, but a social and political struggle to make a rage articulate and effective – the carefully crafted 'fuck you'." (ibid., p. 182).

Butler reflects societal power structures with reference to the war-making capability of our societies, just as feminist peace researchers and activists insist that the social gender constructs of patriarchy are an essential factor for training society for war-making capability. In order to develop the peace capability of a society, it is necessary – and this is where it transcends the classical woman-centred approaches – that the threat to human life as a fundamental fact be recognized, a threat which cannot be countered by armaments, by walling oneself in, or by heroism, since only its recognition as a basic fact of human existence makes it possible to comprehend "the radically egalitarian character of grievability" (ibid., p. 183) – and thus to permit the opportunity of a change of society towards peace capability and reconciliation.

Butler's philosophical approach forms a matrix on the basis of which concrete analyses and options for action can be organized in new frameworks, and an extended democratic practice for the development of peace capability can be motivated.

THE WORKING APPROACH OF THE PROJECT

The selection for the first phase of the project, planned for three years, was limited to the four cases mentioned above, in order to enable a relatively intensive in-depth process. The working languages were English and French, and to some extent German (none of the working languages is the mother tongue of any of the experts). The team of experts consists of:

Shukria Dini (Toronto/Somalia) assumed responsibility for the presentation of Somalia

Yolande Mukagasana (Bastonge/Kigali) the same for Rwanda

Bosiljka Schedlich (Berlin/Croatia) worked on ex-Yugoslavia

Molly Malekar (Jerusalem) reported on peace work in Israel

Lama Hourani (Ramallah) worked on the history of resistance in Palestine

Ghada Al-Jabda (Gaza) reported about initiatives in Gaza

Simone Susskind reported on the history of cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian peace activists and on the International Women's Committee.

The first work step was to build the cooperation between the experts. Based on the fundamental question of the susceptibility and significance of the peace work achieved by women in areas of conflict and war, a working context was initiated.

In order to facilitate cooperation between the experts, they provided information about their personal experiences and their access to peace work in biographical individual interviews.

These interviews were then circulated among the experts, and they were able to get an impression of their cooperation partners, prior to getting to know them personally.

In the second work step, key questions for country reports were formulated. The experts were requested to take a position on the history of the development of the conflicts, the course of the conflicts, civil resistance, particularly that of women, and on experiences of violence and strategies for solution and for addressing the violence of the war. The key questions were formulated simply as incentives for the flow of the account, and not as questions to be answered strictly. Due to the difference of the concrete conflict/wartime experiences, each expert concentrated on a different aspect.

In the third work step, the experts drafted country reports, which were then translated into the other working languages and circulated. Then each expert was allowed to choose which key question she wanted to address in her report.

In the fourth work step, the working seminars in Brussels were organized. The reports were discussed in two seminars of several days each in 2010 and 2011, and the recommendations for sensitizing policy were drafted.

In addition, two pilot seminars on the Middle East conflict were designed in Brussels, the results of which were also incorporated into the recommendations of the project. An initial pilot seminar on the history of cooperation between peace activists from Israel and Palestine since 1988 was organized in the spring of 2010 in cooperation with the EU Commission (DG Research). Activists, peace researchers, experts in the EU Commission, and politicians from the European Parliament participated in the discussion around the failure of the attempts to bring peace to the Middle East, and the consequences of that fact for civil society peace initiatives in Israel and Palestine. In the spring of 2011, in cooperation with the UNWRA office in Brussels, the visit of a group of activists to Gaza was organized, in which the work of the women's initiatives of the UNWRA in Gaza and their significance for civil society could be discussed.

In the fifth work step, the knowledge obtained in the project was considered and compiled, and presented to the closing conference of the first phase of the project in November 2011 in Brussels.

ANALYSIS OF THE COUNTRY REPORTS

In the analysis of the country reports, we refer to the categorization established in feminist peace research, taking particular account of:

economic
ethno-nationalist, and
religious

contexts of development, and the process and resolution of conflicts.

However, for the examples we selected, we also had to incorporate additional categories into the analysis, in particular:

post-colonial
post-socialist, and
imperial geostrategic interest driven

conflicts and war developments: Especially in Africa, post-colonial structures are still dominant, both as regards internal conflicts, and through the presence of former colonial powers which have repeatedly seen themselves called upon to intervene in conflicts, including militarily. This is particularly true of France.

The extent to which the end of the Cold War and the disappearance of the Soviet Union as a geostrategic superpower has accelerated the outbreak of regional and intra-societal violence, conflicts and wars, or promoted geo-strategically based wars by the United States and its allies worldwide, is not to be addressed here. Particularly however with regard to the Middle East conflict, these changes have to be taken into account. Here, an unholy alliance between the power interests of the West and the conservative regimes of the region has become obvious, an alliance which undermines any possible peace process in favour of an iron military security doctrine.

What is clear in the case of Yugoslavia however is that the end of the Yalta system promoted the development of war. To that extent therefore, it would appear appropriate to incorporate the changes and conflicts in post-socialist societies into the analysis. Bosiljka Schedlich has said in this regard: "In former Yugoslavia..., as in all post-socialist countries, a vacuum in terms of key values occurred after the political change,

so that in times of crisis, people gathered around such firm identities and values as a nation and the family. Only once the crisis ends can new creations and values be installed.” (Report, p. 69, Schedlich).

But we have also had to examine more closely from the point of view of geostrategic power relationships, and to call into question the theory often voiced in feminist positions that the more patriarchal a society is, the more it tends toward violence. We can certainly be stated that western societies have endeavoured to move toward societal equality of women, and no one would certainly claim that the USA is an extremely patriarchal society. At the same time however, the US – and its allies – pursue geostrategic imperial interests, and wage wars wherever they consider it advantageous to do so. We must also state that the internal condition of a society – whether more or less patriarchal – only to a limited degree reflects the power interests being realized through war and violence. Formulated drastically, it could be said that imperial interests overlay domestic civil society and gender oriented democratic participation processes, and shape them to conformity with power interests. This occurred in particular in the beginning of the Afghanistan War, which was partially legitimated by the argument that the goal was the liberation of Afghan women from the extreme rule of the Taliban.

In the following, we have compiled the official statements from the country reports in the three key dimensions of the project, which are:

the development of conflicts/wars

civilian resistance work

the work of peace-building

The Case of Yugoslavia

I am convinced that this war need not have been; that wars need not be at all. There were alternatives, as there are in every conflict, even though much of history remains alive in the present. People are different, always. – But is that a reason to wage wars?

(Bosiljka Schedlich, Report, p. 69).

In her report, Bosiljka Schedlich provides deep insight into the fissured history of the Balkans. The following compilation contains some of the key elements of the report.

The history of Yugoslavia has been marked by imperial conflicts, starting with that between the Eastern and Western Roman empires, and later between the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires. It has also been torn apart by ethnic and religious conflicts. In the fourteenth century, the Ottomans introduced Islam into their area of rule, while the areas subordinate to the Habsburgs were Catholic, and the Serbian areas remained attached to the Byzantine tradition of Orthodox Christianity. In the nineteenth century, nationalism emerged in Croatia and Serbia, giving rise to powerful movements for independence. After the fall of the Habsburg Empire in the First World War, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was created in 1918. The Croats and Serbs waged a continuing battle over their historic justifications and their national identities, while other elements of the population were ignored.

“In the discussion about territorial claims, the right of national self-determination was frequently projected into the past. In the minds of the nationalists, the nations had already existed in their respective medieval kingdoms. They derived their territorial claims from pre-Ottoman times, and demanded the restoration of their historic rights.” (Report, p. 74).

After Yugoslavia was invaded by Germany in 1941, during the Second World War, Croatian nationalists proclaimed an independent state and, at Hitler’s instructions, murdered the Jewish and Roma population. Thereafter, according to the plan, a third of the Serbian population of Croatia, especially the men, were to be murdered, a third were to be deported, and the remaining third, primarily women and children, were to be converted to Catholicism. But the royalist Serbs, too, committed massacres against the Croatian and Muslim populations. The Croatian-Serbian war which took place during this period was carried out with great brutality on both sides.

In accordance with a resolution by the Comintern, which wanted to tie up the German army in the Balkans, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in 1941 organized the anti-German resistance. “The Communists propagated equal rights for all peoples and also federalism; they were disciplined, and introduced strict ethical and moral rules, and unlike their opponents, respected the property of the people. This won them the

confidence of the people, who frequently sought refuge with the partisans, as they fled from the attacks by the nationalistic units." (Report, p. 79).

The Partisan movement under the leadership of Josip Broz Tito liberated Yugoslavia, which in 1945 became a communist, federal state. Bosiljka Schedlich notes, summarizing the country's history prior to 1989: "Yugoslavia was a conglomeration of several nations, languages, cultures and religions. It has been heir to four different cultural/civilizational realms: the Byzantine, the Mediterranean, the Central European and the Islamic. ... During the Second World War, the country also experienced a brutal civil war alongside the struggle for liberation. During the forty-six years thereafter, Yugoslavia was Stalinist for seven years and then grew from a centralist state to the most open socialist state that ever existed. Thus, Yugoslavia experienced capitalism and communism, fascism, occupation and civil war." (Report, p. 105).

The Yugoslav and European public did not realize how the situation began to change in 1981, after Tito's death. Bosiljka Schedlich gives a precise account of the events in her report: "... Students in Prishtina demonstrated for better food at the university canteen. Workers all over Kosovo joined them, and demanded higher wages. The police shot into the demonstration and killed thirteen people. The persecution, arrests and torture of Albanians became an everyday occurrence, they were dismissed from all important positions, and their children expelled from the schools, since they were no longer allowed to speak Albanian. The deaths in Kosovo aroused no indignation in the country. In the national pecking order in Yugoslavia ... Albanians were just one rung above the Roma." (Report, p. 89).

A memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Science and Art in 1986 accused the Titoist regime of being "anti-Serbian and of having prevented a Serbian state within the federation, of having suppressed Serbia politically and economically, and of having thrust Serbia into a subordinate role. Claiming that Serbs in Kosovo and Croatia were threatened and forced to emigrate or assimilate, they urgently demanded intervention to protect their cultural and national integrity. ... Now, they said, Titoist Yu-

Yugoslavia was a prison only for the Serbian people. The supporters of the Greater Serbian idea put heavy pressure on the Serbian and Yugoslav leaderships to get tough with the Albanians in Kosovo. Kosovo was pronounced the issue determining the survival and destiny of the Serbian people. ... "In March 1989 ..., the Serbian constitution was changed and placed above the Yugoslav constitution. With this act, Serbia in effect seceded and withdrew from the Yugoslav state. Unfortunately, the act and its implications were taken seriously neither in Yugoslavia nor abroad." (Report, p. 91).

When the Albanians in Kosovo protested against these changes in the autonomy of their province by Serbia, they were fired upon, and twenty-two people were killed. In June 1989, two million people gathered on the Kosovo Polje ("field of the blackbirds") to commemorate the 600th anniversary of the lost battle of Kosovo. "In his speech, Milosevic announced that Serbs were once again fighting a battle – without weapons, although that was not precluded. This remark too was not taken seriously, it provoked no reactions." (Report, p. 91).

In 1990, the process of the disintegration of Yugoslavia was radicalized. "Virtually all Serbs considered the elections in Slovenia as the Slovenian secession from Yugoslavia and those in Croatia as the triumph of the Ustaša [the wartime Croatian fascist party]. The results were used as a message and a call to the masses to continue the national struggle, even with weapons." (Report, p. 94)

However, the war and its justification in nationalisms unfolded in the context of an existential economic crisis.

"The 2700% inflation before the outbreak of the war in 1991 – like that in Europe during the 1920s – threatened people's very livelihoods, especially in the larger towns. There were reports of people who killed themselves because they were hungry and couldn't pay their electricity bills. In this situation, the interest in the preservation of the state was lost. The media had a major part in this, interpreting and disseminating the daily news in national terms. Anti-nationalism was discredited as the inheritance of the socialist regime, and Tito demonized as a 'totalitarian Bolshevik' by the Croatian and Serbian national leaders alike. A new me-

morial culture was to be forged, nationalism rehabilitated and antifascism called into question. In Serbia, the etniks were celebrated as antifascists, and in Croatia, the Ustaša were revered as heroes and defenders of their people. This process was underpinned by the disclosure of the covered-up crimes of the communist government at the end of the Second World War. To spread hatred and panic, Serb nationalists used the memory of the Jasenovac extermination camp, in which the Croatian Ustaša had killed thousands of Jews, Roma, Serbs and antifascists. The Croatian nationalists used the memory of Bleiburg, where partisans had killed thousands of their opponents after the British had prevented their flight to the west. Like a boomerang, the suppressed stories returned and fostered the thirst for revenge.

“The ideational connection which had arisen as ‘fraternity and unity’ in the common partisan movement, the link connecting the Yugoslav peoples which transcended all historical and everyday barriers, was thus broken. The last threads broke when the same massacred corpse was shown at the same time on the television news in Belgrade and in Zagreb – as the victim of Croats and of Serbs, respectively. Planned murders, often of moderate, peace-oriented and sensible people, spread fear which increased to panic. The tension produced the feeling of having to defend oneself and one’s own people, as the partisans and the other earlier heroes had done. In coloured uniforms obtained from a variety of modern armies and adorned with etnik and Ustaša decorations, the insanity of the civil war of the Second World War era was revived. The calls to ‘defend hearth and home’ returned as the terror, the suppressed, the unspoken, to the new generation. And the nerves of the people were stretched to the breaking point.” (Report, p.97)

The reality of war finally shocked public opinion throughout Europe. Bosiljka Schedlich’s report recalls the atrocities of this war up through the Dayton Agreement, and asks:

“The key question however is, who wanted the war and who was forced into it. The Yugoslav people believed until the end that there would be no war – and that if there were, then only where both sides wanted it. Everyone ignored Kosovo and the Albanians. In the case of Slovenia, everyone was horrified. In the case of Croatia, everyone thought it must

have something to do with the Ustaša. When the shooting started in Bosnia, people thought it only involved the people in the burning neighbouring village. Only when their own village burned did they realize that the armed paramilitary units and the army were waging war against the civilian population. When people were rounded up, they thought they themselves were blameless, and would soon be let free. When they were taken to the camps, tortured and killed by the thousands, they couldn't think anymore. The people in Sarajevo thought they were part of the civilized world, having hosted the Olympic Games in 1988 with great success, and that they were actually a good example of Christians and Muslims living together. They lost their faith in humanity and their hope when they were besieged, shelled and shot at from the surrounding mountains for over three years. The snipers got DM 100 for each person shot, for each dead child, for each dead woman, for each dead man, regardless of nationality. The free world could be reached only through a narrow tunnel dug under the airfield. Anyone trying to escape from the city was shot by the UNO soldiers, who proclaimed their neutrality. In the other cities too, the non-Serbian population was to be bled to death and driven out by starvation. In 1993, when more than fifty-one thousand people were driven together in Srebrenica by the 'ethnic cleansing' of eastern Bosnia, the French General Philippe Morillon promised desperate women preventing him from leaving town that the UN would defend Srebrenica from further attacks as a protected zone. Two years later, after they had been left to endure starvation and constant shelling, UN soldiers stood idly by as the greatest massacre in Europe since the Second World War was carried out.

"Shortly thereafter, Serbian officers left the Croatian Krajina, the 'border area', with their families and their property. Two weeks later, some two hundred thousand Serbs fled before Operation Storm. For the USA, it was important after the massacre in Srebrenica in July 1995 to end the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina and to bring the Bosnian Serbs to the negotiating table. Since they themselves did not want to intervene militarily any more than their Nato allies did, somebody else had to do it. That somebody was Croatia, which received strategic assistance from the USA for that purpose. The Croatian armed forces expanded their operations

in Bosnia-Herzegovina so far that the USA had to forbid them from taking the city of Banja Luka, which had already been deserted by its residents, to prevent a possible humanitarian catastrophe. Thus was the Serbian Republic within Bosnia-Herzegovina maintained, so as to establish a balance of forces." (Report, pp. 101-102)

The situation of women in socialist Yugoslavia was relatively good. "...Many women completed their education. Although housework, and hence the double burden, remained exclusively their responsibility, many women climbed to the highest levels in politics, the economy and culture. Before the war of the 1990s, women were amongst the best journalists, writers and politicians."

With the war, this situation changed radically. "They were not only expelled, shot and tortured, they were also raped on a massive scale. The rapists explained that they actually wanted to humiliate their husbands by violating their women, so that they would never again return to their homes. The 'ethnic cleansing' was to be achieved by means of violence against women." (Report, p. 109)

"Major Yugoslav resistance against the war was impossible, due to the lack of any party or other opposition. In a country in which the partisans were the great models, and which maintained an armed defence against foreign attackers in which all adult citizens were involved, there was little chance for non-violent resistance by the citizens. Nonetheless, even during the periods of the worst fighting, there were in all parts of the country and in all societal strata people with the courage and the silent solidarity for those affected who, alone or in groups, provided help and peaceful resistance. "

An appeal by mothers of soldiers was signed by 64,000 citizens of Zagreb in the course of just two days. "It remained unanswered. In the summer of 1991, thousands of women demonstrated in Belgrade", and were dispersed by the soldiers. In the spring of 1992, a major demonstration was held in Sarajevo; "eight snipers fired at the demonstration from a building, ...; several people were killed." (pp. 114).

“The feminist movement arose as early as the 1970s and ‘80s as a common movement in Zagreb, Ljubljana, Belgrade and Sarajevo. Ties and friendships created at that time have lasted to this day. Women have been the first to use their old networks for communication with other women from other nationalities and countries. That helped to keep them from adopting the prejudices and nationalist stereotypes subconsciously themselves, and enabled them to ward off the propaganda. Such women as Biljana Kaši , Nadežda a inovi , Rada Ivekovi , Vesna Pusi , Jelena Zuppe, Vesna Kesi , Lydia Sklevicky, Maja Miles, Slavenka Drakuli and Djurdja Kneževi built up the first feminist work in Yugoslavia and organized the first women’s groups, ecological associations and hotlines for woman victims of violence. The war did not end their cooperation with their connections. Rather, they were the first to organize support for the victims of war and to speak out against prejudice, nationalism and war. They were attacked, threatened and labelled as ‘witches’”. (Report, p. 117)

The Court of Human Rights in The Hague is the primary framework within which the aftermath of the war in Yugoslavia is being dealt with, but this is also being done in the context of such civil society organizations as the regional network RECOM, founded in 2006, in which NGOs and associations of war victims from all regions work together. The major goal of RECOM is to set up an independent commission to investigate and solve the crimes carried out during the war.

Currently, the pressure which the European Union is putting on Croatia and Serbia in the context of negotiations for accession is important. The economic situation of people is much worse than it was before the war, and this process of rapprochement shows how important it is that economic and structural support from the outside also be used to deal with the war crimes.

The Southeast European Cultural Centre, founded in Berlin in 1991 by Bosiljka Schedlich, was a contact point for refugees from all over Yugoslavia, of whom 45,000 live in Berlin alone. It has established its own network for counselling, self-help and therapeutic trauma work. In the foundation ÜBERBRÜCKEN (bridging), the experiences of the Centre are incorporated into international work for overcoming the effects of

war, as the precondition for the process of peace-building. Bosiljka Schedlich sums of her experience as follows:

“Personally dealing with one’s experiences from the war means not only ending the nightmares, but also developing trust in human society. Indeed, this is the basic precondition for process from which personal and societal capacity for peace and nonviolence can emerge. This is true both for the victims and for the perpetrators.” (Report, pp. 123).

Contemplating the War in Yugoslavia

The disintegration and war in Yugoslavia is of particular importance for Europe. First, because Europe – and particularly the EU – fell into a state of shock when faced with this war, and became incapable of action; second, because the development of the conflict and of the war in Yugoslavia certainly provide a scenario for what could happen if the EU were to fall apart. Yugoslavia was a multiethnic state, a leader of the so-called neutral nations during the Cold War, a model of far-reaching federalism, and the model for democratic and non-authoritarian socialism, and hence was for a long time an example for development in other countries. None of this did any good when it came to preventing the insanity of war. The essential lesson for Europe from the Yugoslav War is that historic conflicts can break out anew at any time, and that war can returned to Central Europe.

The first violent conflicts, the students’ and workers’ strike in Kosovo, began in 1981. For ten years, until the outbreak of the war, the national and ethnic conflicts developed before the eyes of the Yugoslav and European public without anybody taking any notice. The outbreak in the course of the war ultimately took place in the shadow of the upheaval in Europe in 1989, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. Nonetheless, the fact that the emergence of the conflict was not noticed at all is unique, and requires deeper reflection, beyond the scope of the present project.

The composition of Yugoslavia after the Second World War, with six republics and two autonomous provinces, with various nationalities and religions, had after all stuck together for thirty-five years until Tito’s death, passing through various reform processes. The transformation

from a kind of socialism that was in no sense Stalinist, and was marked by a high degree of citizens' participation, to capitalism, took place here very much earlier, at the beginning of the 1980s. There were two groups of people who particularly suffered discrimination here: the Albanians and the Roma. It is also notable that the Serbs always saw themselves as the winners of the Second World War, and long before the development of the violent conflicts, claimed predominance over Croatia and Slovenia.

There are existential economic crises to be overcome: the famine after 1945, Stalin's economic blockade in 1948, the industrialization of the country, and the struggle against illiteracy, which at the outset included 80% of the population, the transition from the socialist-centralist system to the Yugoslav model of workers' self-management, to name but a few. The economic crises in the '60s led to an opening of the borders and to growing labour migration by Yugoslav citizens, who, with their transfer payments, contributed to a great degree to the survival of the country, right up until the outbreak of the war. In 1983, reforms were adopted for the economic consolidation of the country, but they could not be implemented because each republic and province was fighting for its own particular interests. In this case, it is clear that at ethno-nationalism and economic interests derived from domination were closely connected.

All this does not however explain how such an incredible outbreak of hatred and violence, and genocide against the Muslim population, could occur. In order to find even the beginnings of an explanation, the change in the interpretation of history would have to be examined more closely. The common Yugoslav identity rested on the history of resistance against Hitler and the liberation of the country by the partisans. Under the surface of this common identity and its great historical narrative, there was evidently the history of a bitter and violent nationalism, especially of the Croats and Serbs, before and after the First World War. This nationalism in turn overlaid the history of Habsburg rule, and the struggles against the Ottoman Empire. And perpendicular to these historical data, which can be ever updated and reinterpreted, run the boundaries between the religions: Islam, Catholicism and Orthodoxy. Particularly in the Christian churches – unlike among the Muslims – the development

of the conflicts have proven to be incapable of peaceful resolution, by supporting the particularly prevailing ethno-nationalistic tendencies. An examination of the development of the ideological training of the population for war reveals a number of distinct phases of the country's development:

- The discrimination and the growing racism against the Albanian and Roma population groups were an indicator of the incapability of Yugoslav societies to realize the legally rooted equality and participation of various population groups, apparent long before the outbreak of hostilities between other groups.
- Long past historical dates, such as the Battle of Kosovo Field, were recalled and documented in the media, and thus linked to current patterns of interpretation.
- Economic problems were no longer seen as common problems, but rather in the context of the strong and the weak: The strong no longer wanted to share with the weak; at the same time, the weak suffered from discrimination justified by their supposed incompetence.
- Neighbours become enemies: From a certain point on, enmity began to no longer be restricted to the public realm, far removed from the real relationships between people, but was rather lived at the individual level.
- The new patterns of interpretation in the new national identities demanded that one defend oneself against one's respective enemy. No one saw himself as the aggressor, but rather as the defender of his own well understood national interests.
- No party to the war could do without legitimating ideological contexts. Fighting for justice for one's own cause was part of the self-legitimation of war propaganda.

The fact that women were well integrated in Yugoslav society did not contribute to the peace capability of Yugoslavia's component societies. Yet women's self-help groups attempted to make European and Yugos-

lav public opinion aware of the possible developments toward war – albeit without success. Moreover, many women’s groups refused to let themselves be split apart along nationalistic lines, but continued to maintain contact during and after the war, and organized self-help projects for peace-building. Thanks to this work, the victims of rape and mistreatment gained the courage to publicly describe their experiences before the Court in The Hague, and thus to contribute to the condemnation of sexual violence in conflicts and wars as a war crime by the UN.

Only when the massacre of Muslim men from Srebrenica became known, after, in the spring of 1995, a shell had killed eighty young people in a disco in Sarajevo, was international public opinion ready to accept military intervention. That was the only way this insanity could have been stopped at that point. Yet that would have been possible long before 1989, and even late, long after the war had started. It would have been possible to alleviate the economic difficulties by cooperation. It would also have been possible to address the perhaps unstoppable process of secession, and thus to control it, so as to prevent a war of everybody against everybody. But all this is speculation, with no basis in reality.

The result of this war was the breakup of former Yugoslavia into new small nation-states, and ethnic cleansing. Ethno-nationalism is still massively present. While Bosnia-Herzegovina has formally been preserved as a unit, it is in fact split into Serbian and Croatian-Bosnian parts. Kosovo is still a trouble spot. Many refugees have been unable to return to their homes, due to the ethnic cleansing. The wounds of war are still festering, even sixteen years after the end of the fighting.

Peace work during the war and since the end of the fighting has been concentrated on re-establishing the dignity of people by means of trauma work and many often small projects for the reestablishment of an acceptable socio-cultural climate. Of particular importance is the work of the International Court of Justice in The Hague. The legal proceedings against those responsible for the war are important; so, too, is the identification of those murdered at Srebrenica, so that the survivors can carry out a mourning process. Being able to mourn is the basis for healing the wounds of war – as is the acceptance of guilt and of its consequences.

We can draw many lessons from the war in Yugoslavia:

- Conflicts and wars can break out in the shadow of upheavals in interregional and global power relationships.
- Ethno-nationalism can lead to civil war in the middle of Europe, and anywhere in the world; no country is immune to it. For this reason, particular vigilance is necessary. Ethnic homogeneity is the reactionary myth that justifies violence.
- War does not solve a single societal problem. The social structures of all societies are conflict-laden. The key is to find strategies for solutions which do not end in destruction and war. Violent conflicts and wars all have long pre-histories. Knowledge of the danger must become engraved in the consciousness of the international community.

Information about the worsening conflicts and the changes of public opinion in the process of the ideological preparation of war can remain unperceived and unpublicized in the early stages, both by the international and the domestic public, and even by the diplomatic representatives in the countries involved. That information comes from civil society groups and women's initiatives, which have a high degree of sensitivity for the worsening of violent relationships. To note this and take it seriously would be an important first step.

- The development of an early warning system of conflict observation from the local to the national and on to the international level is absolutely necessary.
- The interrelationship between economic difficulties and the development of violent conflicts is obvious. An international and inter-regional strategy and aid for economic stabilization could therefore contribute to reducing the potential for conflict.
- Considerable peace dividends during the war and after the end of fighting can be provided by those groups which do not let themselves be broken apart into friend/foe categories, do not permit themselves to be corrupted, and which are socially rooted, and can

act as honest mediators. Civil resistance work is of inestimable value for the development of peace capabilities. The work of women is of extraordinary importance here.

- Developing peace capability is a long and difficult process. It needs all the support it can get. Without such a process of development of peace capability, experiences of violence, often from the distant past, will continue to fester. In this way, victims can become perpetrators, and the cycle of violence will never be broken.

The Case of Somalia

The road to peace for Somalia seems uncertain at this time. However, ordinary Somalis, whether living inside or outside Somalia, are fed up with this senseless violence. They want peace, stability and a state. (Shukria Dini, Report, p. 152)

Somalia has been a failed state for the last two decades. In its recent history, the country has been marked by colonial and post-colonial conflicts and wars. The constellation of power of the Cold War and the historic upheaval after 1989 also significantly affected the history of conflict in the country.

After the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the region attracted the interest of the colonial powers. Initially, Britain and France shared control of the region; Italy joined them later. In 1960, the British and Italian areas became independent, while French-ruled Djibouti achieved separate independence later. The period from 1960 to 1969 is called the Democratic Period; it was followed by a period of military rule, lasting from 1969 to 1991. Since 1993, Somalia has been considered a failed state.

Shukria Dini starts her report with a description of the results of colonialism: "Before the time of colonial rule, the Somalis relied on a pastoral-traditional governance system to govern their affairs. Men were, and still are, the leaders and members of this government; women are only represented. ... The colonial system was in contradiction to the traditional decentralized system of government which Somalis had exercised." (Report, p. 127). Colonialism led to the emergence of a new colonial So-

mali elite, which competed with the traditional leadership for power. Mistrust, jealousy, and conflicts between clans and social classes were engendered by the colonial system, and remain deeply rooted to this day. "The Somali local leaders, who became the leaders of the nation, merely took over from their colonial rulers; they did not change the practices of the former colonial powers." (Report, p. 128).

Since its independence, Somalia has been tied to the interests of its former colonial powers, and of the two Cold War superpowers. The military regime was supported both by the USSR and by the USA, especially with military aid, which helped feed the war with Ethiopia in the Ogaden region during the 1970s. However, it then lost the support of Cuba and the USSR. "The conflict between Somalia and Ethiopia led to death, destruction, the displacement of ethnic Somalis from Ethiopia, and to lasting enmity between the two countries." (Report p. 131). After this war, a militant opposition arose in Somalia, but it was crushed by the military regime. Unfortunately, the militarized violence at the beginning of the 1990s was perceived by the international community only as an internal struggle between local clans. It was not until the international aid organizations withdrew from the country as a result of the violence, and TV images of dying Somali children were broadcasted throughout the western world, that the UN Security Council addressed the issue of Somalia and passed a number of resolutions. In 1992, a military peace mission was carried out in Somalia under the leadership of the US, to secure the distribution of humanitarian aid. At the same time, an attempt was made to move toward peace between the parties to the violent conflict, and to achieve their disarmament. This caused several of the warlords to turn their weapons against the international troops and the US military. In 1994, the US withdrew from Somalia, the troops of other countries followed suit, and Somalia was left to its own devices once again. "From 1994 to 2006, Somalia remained a stateless nation run by violent warlords and their militias. From the early 1990s until 2008, the international community sponsored sixteen peace/reconciliation conferences. All of these international efforts, including the peace processes, failed to solve the political problems of Somalia. They failed because the processes were not Somali-owned." (Report, p. 134).

In 2004, following one of the peace conferences in Kenya, the “Transitional Federal Government” (TFG) was formed to create peace. At the same time however, the TFG found itself in opposition, particularly, to the religious opposition of the United Islamic Courts (UIC), which was successfully able to win the support of the people, and introduce Islamic law. The UIC succeeded in reducing the power of the warlords. “Due to the stability and order created by the UIC, many Somalis in the diaspora returned to Mogadishu, and were able to get their property back ... The era led by the UIC was a promising period that offered alternative solutions to Somalia’s protracted anarchy through some sort of governance, based on Sharia Law, that sought to oust the warlords, protect civilians from violence, and bring law and order in the capital city and beyond.” (p. 135). In 2006 however, Ethiopian troops intervened militarily and ended the predominance of the UIC. The presence of Ethiopian troops in Somalia led to new waves of deadly violence, destruction and flight. However, they also made it possible for the TFG to establish itself in Mogadishu in 2007. Shukria Dini divides the development of violence into four phases:

“The first stage, from 1990 to the mid-’90s, is what I call the era of warlords vs. the military government. During this stage, the armed opposition groups were organized on a clan basis, and the warlords who were their leaders waged war against Siad Barre’s military government. ... Both the opposition groups and the military government used extreme violence against one another – indiscriminate killings, looting and destruction of property, as well as violence against women.

This stage was followed by a second stage in the latter half of the 1990s that I call the era of warlords against civilians, which was characterized by lawlessness, statelessness, anarchy, a political vacuum and the looting of public and private property. This stage marks the era where warlords waged deliberate violence and terrorized civilians, including women. The targeted civilians were seen as enemies who had either close relationships or clan affiliations with the military government, from which they benefited. ... Violence against women and minority groups increased.

The third stage, which I call warlords against warlords, the warlords and their militias collided and waged deadly wars against each other, with the civilians were once again caught in between. ...

The fourth stage is that of radical religious groups vs. former colleagues claiming to be non-radical; the latter are the current leaders of the transitional government/ international peacekeepers. ... The armed religious groups constitute the new aggressors of the Somali war, who oppose the TFG, its institutions and the overall international support for this administration. ... The civilians are caught in the crossfire between government and AU forces and the religious opposition groups." (Report, p. 140-142)

In all the areas affected by the Civil War, civilians, women and children are trapped, and directly or indirectly drawn into the conflict. However, the war affects young males most directly. "The warlords recruited them in the name of their clans, and exposed them to an extremely dangerous situation. They were given guns and khat to do the dirty job for the warlords. ... They continue to be the most exploited and endangered group in war-torn Somalia. With no security, state protection, livelihood or educational opportunities, young Somali men continue to be targeted by all the warring groups, and used to carry guns and serve as cheap foot soldiers and as pirates." (Report, p. 145).

Women and children are particularly affected by the militarized violence. For over two decades due to the violence, they have been forced to flee from their homes to internally displaced camps within Somalia and refugee camps in neighbouring countries. They have been subjected to sexual violence and rape. Warring groups used rape as a weapon of war – against women and girls belonging to 'enemy clans'.

Nonetheless, women have committed themselves in many ways for compromise and peace-building in Somalia. Informally, women who lived in mixed-clan marriages, and who have not allowed themselves to be separated by clan divisions, are often the most active. In addition, they use a particular form of art in order to rally for peace.

“They also use poetry known as buraanbur to express their opposition to the conflict and their support for peace. Through poetry, women discuss the ways in which they have been affected by the violence, and the importance of peace, by promoting unity and solidarity across clan boundaries. Interviews with female poets in Puntland and Somaliland have revealed that poetry is used to resist violence. Female poets pressured warring groups to reconcile, while other women organized and held peace rallies and prayers to avert violence and promote reconciliation, and launched direct appeals to clan leaders and warring groups, to stop the violence. In the appeals, women made it clear to their clan leaders that they will not morally or financially support violence against another community. ... Women’s efforts in averting violence and building peace enabled communities such as Puntland and Somaliland to achieve relative peace.” (p. 149). When North and South Mogadishu were divided in the mid-’90s, women found many creative ways to overcome the border and to meet women on the other side, “to collect information on the impact of the violence, and to deliver goods to those who were affected by the violence.” (Report, p. 150)

Of particular importance is the work of Asha Haji Elmi, who today is one of the 40 female members of the Transitional Parliament. She received the Alternative Nobel Prize in 2008 for her work, and is involved in all processes of peace-building. Living in a mixed-clan marriage, Asha Haji Elmi stood up against the enmity between the clans. But she went even further. In view of the lack of participation of women in the clans, Asha in 2000 declared “my only clan is womanhood”, and founded the women-only Sixth Clan in response to the five traditional male-dominated Somali clans. Asha’s organization, Save Somali Women and Children (SSWC), put pressure on clan elders, religious leaders, Islamic scholars and politicians to bring women to the negotiating table as equal partners and decision-makers. Asha fought for women to have a voice, but with the constant threat of violence hanging over her head, she is now based in Kenya for her own safety. SSWC supports women and girls who want to go to school and get an academic education, so that women can help design and build the future society of Somalia as lawyers, teachers, physicians and other professionals. This is her particular contribution to a peace dividend in time of war.

Shukria Dini concludes her report with the statement that there have been a number of opportunities at which it would have been possible to end the conflict, but that they have repeatedly been missed. She says that instead of addressing the roots of the conflict and the social, cultural and economic facts as a point of departure for peace-building and the reconstruction of state structures, solutions on the basis of military action have always been sought. These approaches have unfortunately also been pursued by the international community – and they have always failed. She calls for an alternative peace-building approach.

- “There is need to move away from a top-down, male-dominated and militaristic approach and start relying on non-militaristic, participatory, gender-inclusive, bottom-up approaches, which will heal the deep wounds of the war and address the immediate needs of the population. I argue that the current approach is undemocratic and relies on military force, which not only exacerbates the insecurity of the war-affected population, but also prolongs the violence.” (Report, p. 150).
- “Somali women’s experiences, particularly their new identities as the primary providers and their important contribution to peace-building and recovery, needs to be recognized, valued and supported by both national and international institutions.” (Report, p. 151)
- “Somalia desperately needs genuine and continuous support from the international community. ... Resolution of the protracted conflict in Somalia will require a new mind-set and engagement which moves away from the project and piecemeal mentality, to a holistic, genuine and solid approach, so that the scourge of the protracted violence in Somalia can be tackled successfully. The people of Somalia must also be provided with the opportunity to reconcile.” (Report, p. 151).
- “Somalis must be at the front seat of the reconciliation process.” (Report, p. 151)
- “If and when the firing dies down, there will be a need to address the traumas caused by the conflict. Currently, ‘forgive and forget’

is emphasized in Somalia. Forgiveness is important, but forgiveness alone will not mend the hearts of traumatized people.” (Report, p. 152).

Thoughts about the Civil War in Somalia

The situation in Somalia remains complicated. On top of the horrors of civil war, there is now the threat of death by starvation, due to the drought and famine. However, the development of the wars does provide some lessons.

The colonial structures which were adopted by the elites in the post-colonial period have remained in place. This led to a clash between the traditional power structure embodied in the clans, and the new centralistic power structure. The friction between these structures appears to be at the centre of disputes to this day.

External military intervention by the UN in order to break the cycle of violence and destruction has failed, because it was not in a position to mediate in the internal conflicts. International attention for the civil war depends on spectacular pictures – such as those of the famine – or from the overall geostrategic orientation of the United States. Military intervention by neighbouring countries is interest driven. That precludes these countries from assuming an honest broker’s role.

The experience of Somalia suggests that external military interventions – regardless of who carries them out – will be seen by some of the civil war parties as new military aggression, against which they believe they have to fight. External military interventions in Somalia have contributed to the further destruction of internal structures important for peace-building.

The specific role of the diaspora in the Civil War has not yet been sufficiently developed in terms of its capacity for peace-building. Evidently, the war dividends for the warlords are so lucrative that all attempts at peace-building are doomed to failure. These war dividends must first be identified before anything can change.

To date, the women's initiatives are what has built the peace dividends. The strategy of Asha Haji Elmi and her group is of extraordinary significance. With the formation of the Sixth Clan, the women have rooted themselves in the traditions of Somalia. At issue here is not the destruction of traditional power structures, but rather their expansion to include respect for women as partners.

The conclusion which Shukria Dini's draws is first of all that it is important to build the peace-building process on the basis of the inner strengths of Somalia, and not from the outside; and second, that the international community can help where productive approaches for civil development in Somalia itself can be realized: infrastructure, education, health, protection for small peasants and nomads in the drought, building of administrative structures, and nation-building. These are the issues that must continue to be discussed.

The Case of Rwanda

In Rwanda, the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa always lived together as brothers prior to colonization. Certainly, there were power struggles at court, but when it came to defending the territorial integrity, the whole population rallied without distinction. Every adult male went to the front to defend the integrity of the country. Everything started with the colonial ideology, which spawned the ideology of genocide against the Tutsi. (Yolande Mukagasana, Report, p. 161)

Rwanda is not a state created by the colonial powers, but rather has a long history as an independent kingdom. The population consists of three groups, the Twa, the Hutu and Tutsi. In her report on the history of the country, Yolande Mukagasana writes: "In Rwanda, the groups Hutu, Tutsi and Twa never existed as ethnic groups. The ethnic groups were created by the imagination of the colonizers. Tutsi, Hutu and Twa were socio-economic classes." (Report, p. 154).

The first colonial power in Rwanda was Germany, followed after the First World War by Belgium. Yolanda Mukagasana describes the process of ethnization and separation of the population groups in Rwanda by the Belgian colonial authority in stages: "In Rwanda, the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa

always lived together as brothers prior to the colonial period. Certainly, there were power struggles at court, but when it came to defending the territorial integrity, the whole population rallied without distinction. Every adult male went to the front to defend the integrity of the country. Everything started with the colonial ideology, which spawned the ideology of genocide against the Tutsi.” (Report, p. 161)

During the 1930s, a massive programme of Christianization was carried out. The Catholic Church thus became the educational institution for Rwandan children. It played a special role in virtually wiping out the traditional culture and religion of Rwanda: “The culture of Rwanda has been killed, and no people has survived the death of its culture.” (Report, p. 157). In 1959, the first Hutu massacre of Tutsis occurred in Rwanda, and many people fled to neighbouring countries. In 1961, Rwanda was proclaimed an independent state, and the Hutu majority took power. Tutsis continue to be persecuted or excluded from the life of society, and murdered. Neither at the national nor at the international level did anybody take note of the persecution of the Tutsis: Since killing Tutsis had become normal, nobody cared, either nationally or internationally. “Nobody was ever punished for killing Tutsis between 1959 and 1994. Thirty-five years of impunity. Rwanda has become the largest producer of refugees.” (Report, p. 160)

In answer to the question as to why the genocide became possible, certain socio-cultural factors must be considered. The colonial masters and the Catholic Church destroyed the identities of the people in Rwanda, and forced them to see themselves as deficient and in competition to one another. They were told that they belonged to different ethnic groups, and that one ethnic group was better than the other two. They were told that they had come to Rwanda from different areas, first the Twa, then the Hutu and finally the Tutsi. “The Tutsi obtained, without their knowledge, three poisoned gifts: racial difference, racial superiority (which earned them a monopoly on power), and alien status. The Hutu were relegated to the margins, a marginalization which would lead to resentment, then to conflict ... and finally to the violence of 1959 that led to the genocide of 1994 ...” (Report, p. 164). In 1959, the issue of the separation into a Hutu country and a Tutsi country was raised; in 1960,

the expulsion of the Tutsi from Rwanda was demanded; between 1962 and 1994, Tutsis were excluded from all important areas of society – until, in 1994, the genocide finally began. “A genealogy can be traced from the ideas of difference (affirmed by western observers) to the action of extermination (undertaken by the killers of 1994).” (Report, p. 165). The term genocide was used by the Hutu leaders starting in 1964 – that was when the idea became current. The preparation followed, and was then carried out in 1994.

Thus was the hatred of the Tutsi continually stoked until, at the beginning of the '90s, it broke out into violence. In 1991, the international community took note of the worsening conflict. Tutsi rebels attempted to force the return of refugees from Uganda; thereupon, mass arrests of Tutsis took place inside Rwanda. Of the 7887 persons arrested, 4300 were released again under international pressure. France sent troops to protect the French people living in Rwanda, and the French Foreign Legion occupied the Kigali airport. In 1993, a UN peace-keeping mission was sent to Rwanda, under Chapter 6 of the UN Charter. In 1994, the Rwandan president was killed when his airplane was shot down under circumstances which are not clear. This event sparked the genocide. Between April and June 1994, according to official Rwandan statistics, 1,074,017 people were killed, primarily Tutsis, but also Hutus who oppose the killing. The French and UN troops stood by helplessly. Many people seeking protection in churches and schools were handed over to the militias by Catholic priests and teachers. The UN then reinforced its presence through a peace-enforcement mission under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter; however, these troops were seen as more of a party to the conflict than as a peace mission.

Thereafter, many people, especially the Hutu militias who have carried out the genocide, fled to surrounding countries. Since 1998, Rwandan militias have been fighting in the Second Congolese War in neighbouring Congo. Many of the simple participants have however returned to Rwanda. Since 2000, the situation in the country has settled down under President Paul Kagame. Since 2002, a process of dealing with the trauma through the Gacama courts has been taking place.

In 1992, there were thirteen women's associations in Rwanda which united under the slogan "*Pro Femmes/Toutes Ensemble*". After the genocide, this cooperation was initially destroyed, some members had been killed, while others had fled the country. After the genocide, Rwanda had 600,000 orphans; it was the women who cared for them. Prior to the 1995 UN conference in Beijing, woman activists who had returned from exile came together. "After they had formed a common group, they decided to meet in order to get to know one another. Neither side trusted the other, due to the genocide and the dehumanization which some had undergone as a result of the politics of division which had reigned in Rwanda prior to the genocide. ... They therefore decided to open themselves up to a culture of peace. They created a project called 'the campaign for peace'." (Report, p. 171)

The women developed many initiatives for peace and reconciliation, and they struggled to ensure that today, women play an important role in the politics of the country. "When Rwanda established the National Commission for Reconciliation, the Committee was headed by a woman. When popular Gacaca Courts were created, the majority of judges of integrity appointed were women. These are women who fought for the rights of women and children. They have a number of political associations, and all these associations are in an umbrella group which does excellent work – ultimately, for Rwanda. Thanks to women, there is now collaboration between the police and the women's associations in Rwanda against violence against women in couples and households." (Report, p. 170). Moreover, more than half the members of the Rwandan Parliament today are women.

Today, the development of Rwanda appears to be on a good path – but especially in the diaspora, there are still people who see the return of the Tutsi to society and politics in Rwanda, if not as unacceptable, then at least as temporary. The thorn of hatred has not disappeared.

Contemplation of the Genocide in Rwanda

The process of the destruction of the cohabitation of the various population groups in Rwanda continued from the great massacre in 1959 until 1994. For thirty-five years, and open development of hatred continued.

In 1961, the destruction of the Tutsi was openly broached for the first time; nonetheless, this development was not noticed internationally.

Only starting in 1991 did the international community register the fact that a serious and dangerous conflict was developing. Initially, France sent troops to Rwanda to protect its own citizens, before the UN sent a peace-keeping mission and later, during the period of the genocide a peace-enforcement mission. The dramatic failure of French and international military missions can be highlighted by two facts: the French troops and the UN peace-keeping troops watched the genocide proceed without intervening. They failed dramatically. And the UN peace-enforcement troops were seen as a party to the conflict – and were thus likewise condemned to failure.

The case of Rwanda therefore raises the fundamental question of how the possibility of various population groups living together in the same country can be made possible without repeatedly falling victim to the ideology of the superiority of one group over the other.

Rwanda has since 2000 begun to address the trauma of the genocide. The very strong presence of women in dealing with the trauma, and overall in the political rebuilding process of the country, is a sign of hope that a true process of reconciliation may take place in future. But in the adjoining areas, hatred continues to smoulder, especially through the participation of Hutu militias in the Congolese War.

The Middle East

The war between Israel and its neighbours, and the struggle for the right of a Palestinian state to exist alongside Israel, have become a permanent part of global politics, with increasingly severe outbreaks of violence.

The conflict did not in any way begin with Resolution 181 of the UN in 1947, which provided a plan for the division of the territory of Palestine between a Jewish and an Arab state. Throughout the history of this area, from the mythological – and historically poorly attested – accounts of the Bible, through the expulsion of the Jewish population (likewise not attested) by the Romans in 73 and 135 CE, the conquest of Jerusalem in 638 CE by the Caliph and the construction of the Dome of the Rock

in 691, the Crusades and the temporary rule of the area by the Crusaders, the area has been the subject and object of war and conquest. Only the period of Ottoman rule of the region from 1516 to 1917 seems to have been more or less peaceful.

At the end of the nineteenth century, when Jewish immigration began, there were only about half a million people in the area, 90% of whom were Muslims, so that only a few tens of thousands of Jews and Christians lived in Palestine.

After the British victory in the First World War over the Ottoman Empire, the area was divided between Britain and France, under a system of "mandates", which included the promise of independence over the medium term. At that time, France occupied Lebanon and Syria, and Britain got all of Palestine – including modern Jordan – and Iraq; the mandate was issued in 1922. In 1917 however, Britain had, in the Balfour Declaration, pronounced itself in favour of founding a national homeland for the Jewish people – albeit with the express statement that this could not be carried out in a way injurious to the rights of the non-Jewish communities in Palestine; moreover, similar promises had been made to the Arabs as well. When the mandate was issued, Britain determined that the area west of the Jordan River be provided for settlement by the Jewish people, and that east of the Jordan would become an Arab emirate. The promise made to the Arabs of independence was thus broken, so that the battle for Palestine began anew, for the Arab side was in no way prepared to tolerate Jewish immigration and the creation of a Jewish state. Thus did the conflict begin; its origins go much further back into history than 1948, when the Israeli state was proclaimed against the wishes of the British and the Arabs.

Jewish immigration into Palestine in large numbers began at the end of the nineteenth century, and involved the purchase of land. The pogroms against Jews in Eastern Europe, and the idea of Zionism motivated many Jews to emigrate to Palestine. Starting in 1919, there were violent uprisings by the Arab population against Jewish immigration, leading, after the rebellion of 1936 to 1939, to a complete ban on Jewish immigration. This again led to militant attacks by Jewish underground organizations

against British facilities. The rest is part of the sixty-year struggle between two nations for one country.

The basis for the current conflict is UN Resolution 181 of 1947, which awarded the Jewish population 55% of the country, and only 45% to the Arab population, with a special status for Jerusalem. With the foundation of the State of Israel and the Palestinian War of 1948, Israel expanded its territory even beyond that amount. With the Six-Day War of 1967 and the occupation of Gaza, Sinai, the West Bank, the Golan Heights and East Jerusalem, with the Yom Kippur War of 1973, the wars in Lebanon in 1982 and 2006 as well as, finally, the war against Gaza in 2008, Israel has expanded its military power in the region and occupied all Palestinian territories.

After the Six-Day War, the nationalist religious Israeli settlement movement in the occupied territories began, and was reinforced after 1977. It did not stop even during the time of the peace process after the Oslo Accords. Although Israel did dismantle twenty-one settlements in Gaza and four in the West Bank in 2005, it did not generally stop the expansion of settlement construction. With the construction of the wall straight across the country, and other measures for the protection of the settlements in the occupied territories, additional confiscation of land and severe restrictions have been imposed on the Palestinian people.

The expulsion of a large part of the population of Palestine from the territory of Israel began in 1948. This first expulsion is remembered by the Palestinians as the *Naqba* (catastrophe). Even today, the descendents of these refugees live in refugee camps in Gaza and the West Bank, as well as in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. The question as to what status the refugees are to receive and where they can settle is the most difficult problem to solve in the peace negotiations.

The Palestinian PLO originally demanded all of Palestine as a state for the Arab people. It fought Israel militarily, including with terrorist attacks. Only in 1974 did the Palestine National Council change its demand and call for a common state of the Jewish and Arab populations, which however would have an Arab majority. Starting in 1987, primarily young people in the occupied territories launched the First Intifada, which Israel countered with brutal violence.

In the context of the global political transformation of 1989, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the First Gulf War, the Madrid Peace Conference was convened in 1991 and ultimately led to the Oslo Accords of 1993 to 1995. Hopes for the development of peace were, however, not fulfilled. A further round of negotiations – Camp David II – failed. Militant action and suicide attacks by the Palestinian side, and intensive settlement construction and provocations from the Israeli side ultimately led to the Second Intifada, which was considerably more violent than the first, primarily due to the suicide bombings against the Israeli civilian population and the fact that autonomy had given the Palestinians, who had previously fought with stones, access to firearms. In addition, primitive missiles were fired upon Israeli territory from southern Lebanon; after the Gaza Strip was evacuated by Israel, that too served as a “launching pad”.

The reports by Lama Hourani about Palestine, Gahda Al-Jabda about Gaza and Molly Malekar about Israel tell very different, even contradictory stories. There are stories which might have taken place on different planets – and yet they are similar: they are stories of flight and expulsion, misery, violence and extermination.

In her very personal report, Lama Hourani expresses her rage over the continual humiliation, and the constant pressure and threats imposed on the Palestinian people. Gahda Al-Jabda, Director of the UNWRA Health Service in Gaza, reports of that organization’s many projects to provide children and young people with civil education and women with socio-cultural and economic projects, in spite of the catastrophic situation that exists in Gaza. Finally, Molly Malekar recounts attempts at peace-building and cooperation within the peace movement, but also the disillusionment of Israeli peace activists in view of the hopelessness of the situation.

Palestine

There are no secrets in this century-long conflict; the reasons for opening and closing doors for peace are known. (Lama Hourani, Report, p. 209)

“For the Palestinian people, the core issue of the conflict has never changed: The conflict is about land and the right to existence” (Hourani, Report, p. 209). In the report by Lama Hourani, the conflict is viewed from the start as being directly in the context of aggressive Zionism and imperialist Interests. By contrast, she sees such other factors as “the retardation of the Palestinian social, political and economic structure, including gender inequality, patriarchal society and the prevailing feudal agricultural relations” (Report, p. 200) as secondary. She says, “The alliance between imperialism and Zionism had a dual aim: the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine as a base to protect imperialistic interests in the Middle East, and the engaging of the Arab countries in a conflict that was doomed to defeat, in an attempt to deprive these countries of their natural growth, control over their own resources, and their destiny.” (Report, p. 201).

By proclaiming the land to be their property, the Zionists, “allowed themselves to commit crimes of any kind and size, and to keep the people of the land from living freely in their own land. The Palestinians, on the other hand, have justified their violent resistance as a legal action against British-Zionist, and later Israeli-American, double aggression. The violence has flared up and escalated. There have been victims every time Israel decided to expand – and has been confronted with Palestinian resistance.” (Report, p. 201) Lama Hourani does not have a particularly positive assessment of the peace process after the Oslo Accords. Nonetheless, she says, the opinion in Palestinian society during this time predominantly supported negotiations and non-violent resistance as the right way to convince Israel that international law would have to be recognized, and to win them over to a permanent political solution of the conflict. Their frustration in view of the stalled peace process and the provocations ultimately led to a Second Intifada, which, according to Lama Hourani, sparked an Apartheid policy by Israel.

She identifies a number of factors for this:

- “Israel today controls more than 80% of the water resources in the West Bank, and allows Palestinian citizens to use no more than (50) cubic meters per capita a year. At the same time, the illegal Israeli settlers use more than 2400 cubic meters of water per year per capita.
- The Israeli GDP per capita averages around \$26,000 per year, while the GDP per capita in Palestine is no more than \$1000 per year. Yet, due to the imposed market and tax union, Palestinians are forced to pay the same prices for goods as Israelis. Palestinians are also forced to buy water and electricity from Israel – at double the price that Israeli citizens pay: Palestinians have to pay NIS 5 per water unit while Israelis pay NIS 2.4. Palestinians pay NIS 13 per unit of electricity, while Israelis pay NIS 6.3.
- The system of road segregation that has been initiated by Israel, where most of the main roads in the West Bank are exclusively for Israeli settlers or the Israeli army, separates Palestinian villages and cities from each other, and restricts their access to different places and resources.
- The building of the Apartheid Wall in the occupied territories. It is a huge wall that will extend for about 850 km when finished. It is three times as long and twice as high as Berlin Wall used to be. And even when it is not a concrete wall, it is a fence system between 60 and 104 meters wide, depriving Palestinians of vast areas of land. This wall destroys the Palestinian social fabric; it deprives pupils and students of the possibility of reaching their schools or universities and deprives hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from reaching medical care or health systems. In East Jerusalem, the wall separates the Palestinians on the right side of the wall from those on the left side. Jerusalem itself is not accessible to Palestinians living in the rest of the West Bank Areas.
- Colonial settlement activities: The Israelis started building these settlements in the West Bank in the mid-1970s.”
(Report, p. 204-205).

At the same time, Lama Hourani recognizes the efforts of peace activists on both sides. “But the results of these modest efforts are less than is needed to achieve true reconciliation for a very long conflict. The persistent failure of the peace processes is reflected in this area, too. It is more difficult to achieve reconciliation if the main issues remain unresolved. Without addressing the asymmetry between the two parties, without recognizing that one party is living under daily humiliation, while the other is trying to defend the state that is imposing this humiliation on its counterpart, and without admitting that the representatives of the occupying country are calling to fight against the oppressed, rather than being in solidarity with them, the conflict will not be resolved.” (Report, p. 208). She says that fundamentally, there will be no permanent political solution unless the asymmetry between the parties is first addressed, and concludes: “Unless Israel is forced to accept a solution that gives the Palestinians what the UN resolutions and international law provide, the chances for peace will remain remote, and the door to peace will be closed – but the doors of violence, extremism and terrorism will be opened.” (Report, p. 209).

Special View on Gaza

Years of occupation, conflict, high population density, limited land and sea access, a blockade with continuing isolation, and strict internal and external security controls have degraded the economic conditions in the Gaza Strip, the smaller of the two areas in the Palestinian Territories. Israeli-imposed crossing closures, which became more restrictive after Hamas violently took over the territory in June 2007, and Israeli military operations against Gaza during the December 2008 – January 2009 war, resulted in the near collapse of most of the private sector, extremely high unemployment, and high poverty rates. (Ghada Al-Jadba, Report, p. 215)

Ghada Al-Jadba provides a brief overview of the extreme situation of life of the 1.5 million people who live in Gaza. Approximately half a million people live in the eight refugee camps in Gaza. “Refugees remain the most vulnerable under present circumstances, and the community continues to experience rising levels of unemployment, food insecurity and

poverty. Since Israel's twenty-two-day military action against the Gaza Strip on December 27, 2008, the blockade of the Gaza Strip has prevented the United Nations from conducting any significant repairs or reconstruction. It also places severe restrictions on the goods and services which UNRWA supplies. An estimated 325,000 refugees are believed to be living in abject poverty, unable to meet their basic food needs. A further 350,000 are now below the official poverty line." (Report, p. 216).

In all areas of basic supply, Gaza faces extreme problems, including electric power, water, the destruction of the economic infrastructure, the health conditions of the population, and basic food supply. In all these areas, UNRWA is active. "Operating through more than 10,000 staff in over 200 installations, UNRWA provides education, health care, relief and social services, microcredit, and emergency assistance to the registered refugees in Gaza." (Report, p. 217). In addition to supplying refugees with basic food, UNRWA is particularly involved in education for children and young people, and in supporting women.

More than half the UNRWA budget is spent on education. The poor conditions resulting from the continued blockade do not permit any expansion of the schools, so that they have to operate in shifts, and the educational situation of children is hampered. Nonetheless, UNRWA attempts to continue to carry out its educational mission. "At UNRWA, each child has the right to an education to help them achieve their full human potential. UNRWA's education system helps the refugees' children to thrive, achieve, and grow up understanding their rights, and respecting the rights of others. Moreover, UNRWA provides young people with the opportunity to learn new skills that will lead to work. This helps individuals and families escape poverty and attain their goals. We at UNRWA believe that to invest in the education and training of Palestinian refugees is to invest in peace." (Report, p. 217) The pupils at the UNRWA schools are among the best educated in the region. Moreover, half of them are girls. The Schools of Excellence Programme has been carried out since 2007, "emphasizing remedial education, focus on core subjects, extra-curricular activities, basic support to pupils, pupils' values and behaviour, improved pupil-teacher contact time and at-

tention for children with special needs. It prepares pupils to become global citizens, respectful of one another and of differences among people.” (Report, p. 218). Special emphasis is placed on the curriculum of human rights. For that, more than 200 teachers are being trained in human rights. In addition to school education, UNRWA organizes vocational education centres to provide young people with marketable skills.

Another important area of activity is the health service. “UNRWA’s past achievements in health have been impressive, particularly in the areas of maternal and children’s health, but the impact of deteriorating socio-economic conditions on the physical and mental health of people in Gaza poses a growing challenge. Nearly 200 community mental health counselors in UNRWA schools assist troubled and special needs children through targeted individual and group intervention.” (Report, p. 219)

The social service programme, organized in more than 100 community-based organizations (CBOs), includes a broad variety of social, cultural and leisure time activities, including vocational education and rehabilitation measures. “The programme particularly addresses the needs of women, refugees with disabilities, young people and the elderly. It also helps vulnerable refugees through its micro-credit programme, which is managed by community-based organizations” (Report, p. 225). The programme supports small businesses, especially those run by women: “Many of the microfinance department’s clients operate small, often informal businesses on the margins of the economy. They include vegetable stallholders, home seamstresses, garage owners and fishermen. Many run businesses that are not registered with the government, let alone the municipal or tax authorities.” (Report, p. 226)

In spite of all the restrictions, big summer recreation programmes for children and young people have been carried out in Gaza since 2007. “Children constitute the majority of the people in Gaza. For these children, life is overwhelmingly characterized by conflicts, poverty and despair. In UNRWA schools, they spend their days in overcrowded classrooms. Years of destruction, conflicts and deprivation have left few or no spaces in which children can participate in recreational or artistic

activities, particularly during the long, hot summer months. ... The games give Gazan kids a chance to have fun and a sense of normality, in an environment which is anything but normal." (Report, p. 231)

The main basic activities initiated by UNRWA can be seen as the resistance of the people of Gaza against the destruction of their condition of life. Ghada Al Jadba concludes with the following:

"As the blockade enters its fifth year, the summer games for Gaza's children also enter their fifth year. Those children have proved to the world that inside all of this despair and darkness, they still can play and laugh. They will never be broken. They blocked the blockade by enjoying their freedom. They are the centre of our investments, so we invest in them – in their education and their health. They are the future, by believing in peace, love and hope. They believe in limiting the imposed blockade only to the land, the air and the sea, but not to their minds and hearts." (Report, p. 233)

Israel

The conflict, from my point of view, is a political national struggle between two national movements, who wish to exercise their fulfilment of aspirations over one land. (Molly Malekar, Report, p. 188)

Molly Malekar's report explores the attempts of peace building between Israel and Palestine, and provides insight into the efforts of the Israeli peace movement, and particularly the Israeli women's movement, to work against the occupation policies of the Israeli government, and to build cooperative projects and strategies together with Palestinian groups.

In her view, the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is as follows: "The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a political conflict directly connected to and born alongside the rise of the national aspirations of the Jews for an emancipation of the Jewish collective in the territory of the historic biblical land of Israel." (Report, p. 173). With the foundation of the State of Israel, the division of Jerusalem and the victory of the Israeli troops against the Arabs in 1948, the conflict that has continued to this day took shape. With the victory in the war of 1967 and the occupation

of the Golan Heights, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula, more than one million Palestinian citizens were brought under Israeli rule. After this war, the religious Jewish settler movement began to grow. "The remarkable victory of Israel gave rise, or more precisely, encouraged the existing messianic and religious sentiments. These elements, which had been 'tamed' or 'monitored' by the more secular and socialist leadership of the Zionist movement and the state of Israel, began to flourish, and, from now on, to dictate to the mainstream of Israeli politics and its decision-makers." (Report, p. 175). After 1977, settlement-building became official Israeli policy after the takeover of power by the Likud government. However, the settlement strategy should not be seen only as a political problem, but also as a massive social and economic problem within Israel, for the economic and social structure that had existed up to that time, which had been more or less socialist, was massively transformed into the support of settlement activities in the occupied territories. The government offered huge subsidies and benefits to the Israeli-Jewish citizens who moved to build their centre of life in the occupied territories. The huge allocation in the national budget for the settlements and the settlers, at the expense of the citizens living within the Green Line – Israel prior to 1967 – was an incentive to the less privileged elements of society and to those living in poor development towns and the periphery. (Report, p. 175). The incentive was not just economic. Building and living in these settlements provided to the citizens of the periphery the self-image of patriots, of "new pioneers" following the legacy of the pioneers who had built the country.

The first major uprising of the Palestinians in the occupied territories – the First Intifada – began in 1987. The weapons of the rebels consisted largely of leaflets and stones. Given the popular nature of the Palestinian uprising, the Israeli reaction is totally inexplicable. Israel killed a large number of Palestinians in the initial part of the Intifada, and most of them were apparently killed in demonstrations and riots. (Report, p. 176). The Israeli society has gone through an identity crisis – the common concept known as the "enlightened occupation" collapsed. The UN reacted and condemned Israel's military action, and thus contributed to the events' reaching an international audience.

In 1989, the world changed. There followed the First Gulf War, and the collapse of the Soviet Union. These events had their effect on Middle East politics. In 1991, the International Madrid Conference on Peace in the Middle East took place. Between 1993 and 1995, the PLO and Israel signed an interim agreement in Oslo, under which the Palestinian national leadership was to be recognized by Israel. The agreement included the withdrawal of the Israeli army from Gaza and most of the cities of the West Bank, but also divided the West Bank into three categories, which permitted continued administrative and military controlled by Israel. During this period, Israel also intensified settlement activities in the occupied territories. Below the level of the agreed-upon peace, the battles between the settlers, backed by the Israeli government and the Israeli army, and the Palestinians continued. In February 1994, an extremist settler opened fire on Palestinians at the Tomb of Abraham in Hebron, and killed twenty-nine people, before being killed himself. Hamas thereupon organized suicide bombings in the centres of Israeli cities. On November 5, 1995, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was murdered by another Israeli extremist. In the spring of 1996, in the midst of the Israeli election campaign, Hamas again organized suicide bombings, and thus contributed to the victory of Benjamin Netanyahu, an opponent of the Oslo process. Nonetheless, an agreement was signed in 1997 for the withdrawal of the Israeli army from Hebron, except for the protection of a small group of settlers in the middle of the old town. These settlers were – and still are – one of the most vocal and provocative groups, engaged in attacking Palestinians, actions commonly known as “price tag” attacks – terrorist acts against Palestinian civilians.

In 1999, Ehud Barak of the Labour Party became Prime Minister. In his election campaign, with the support of the peace movement, he called for continuing the peace process, and at the same time for continuing the settlement policy. He returned from Camp David with no results. By now, the time appeared ripe for a new wave of violence on both sides. Ariel Sharon provoked that with his visit to the Temple Mount. Renewed attempts to restart the peace talks, such as Bill Clinton’s Taba initiative, failed; suicide bombings continued. The Second Intifada broke out, and was considerably more violent than the first, due to “targeted assassi-

nations and clashes between the Israeli army and armed Palestinian militias." (Report, p. 181)

After 9/11 and more suicide bombings, President Arafat was demonized as a Palestinian Bin Laden, and his residence in Ramallah, as well as the streets and homes of the civilian population, were destroyed. The atmosphere in Israel changed. "Peace became unpopular. The general atmosphere on the streets, in buses, cafés, banks etc. was of fear and panic. People were afraid to gather in public." Violence and retaliation dictated the relationship between the two societies. (Report, p. 179)

The main issue in the Labour Party election campaign of 2003 was the construction of a separation wall between Israel and the West Bank. After the victory of the Likud Party and of Sharon, that project was implemented, but in such a way that it pushed forward into Palestinian territory and encompassed the major settlement areas in the West Bank, so that Palestinian land and villages could only be accessed as exclaves. In 2005, Israeli government, headed by Ariel Sharon, decided to evacuate twenty-one settlements in the Gaza Strip and four in the West Bank. These settlements, built in thickly settled Palestinian areas, became costly to safeguard. The protests of the settlers were directed not only against the Israeli police and government, but also against the Palestinians. The settlers warned of a civil war in Israel if their settlements should be dismantled. The aggressiveness of the settlers prior to and during their evacuation made it clear to normal citizens in Israel what dimensions the struggle might assume. Yet, the majority of Israeli society supported the government, and resenting the settlers' aggressive actions towards the police and military forces assigned to dismantle the settlements.

In 2006, Hamas won the elections in the Palestinian territories. In 2007, militant Hamas fighters in Gaza shot members of the Fatah, causing Fatah fighters to flee to Egypt and Israel.

In 2006, the Second Lebanon War took place, so that Israel found itself fighting both on that northern front and on the southern front in Gaza. At the end of 2006, Israel launched a new diplomatic initiative with the goal of negotiating on the basis of a peace plan drafted by the Arab Lea-

gue. However, at the Annapolis negotiations, it was only possible to agree to hold future negotiations for permanent solution to the settlement issue. At the same time however, the Israeli government published contradictory positions on the future of Jerusalem, on settlement construction, on the annexation of parts of East Jerusalem, and other issues.

At the same time, as the exchange of fire between the Israeli army and the Hamas militia continued, an increasing number of rockets were fired from Gaza against Israeli territory; on December 24, 2008, a total of sixty rockets were fired on Israeli towns and cities. Soon thereafter, Israel began the Gaza War, in which 1300 Palestinians and thirteen Israelis were killed, and a large part of the infrastructure in Gaza was destroyed. "The war was perfectly used by the right-wing parties, who came to power in the elections held on February 10, 2009. The accession of the current government, made up of the extremist right, fascists and religious parties, marked the total defeat of the more moderate parties. This parliament is characterized by a weak opposition, peace-oriented parties are almost non-existent, and civil society groups which work on human rights, democracy and peace are under harsh attack ..." (Report, p.185).

Molly Malekar describes Israeli national identity as highly complex. "The Jews in the world, as is claimed by many, do not share a common language, culture, ethnic or genetic ancestry, have no common territory or history, and the beliefs of Jewish communities vary. The only common element is religion and religious civilization, either directly (among the orthodox) or vague and distant, or even rejected (among the secular). With the definition of the Israeli state as a 'Jewish' state, the Israeli state cannot but fail to become an entity that safeguards and regulates the common interest of a pluralistic civil society and of the communities within its boundaries." (Report, p. 187). This confusion, she says, as well as the battle with the Arab world for the land and the domination of it, have given Israel's political establishment the possibility to propagate a national identity built on the fear of persecution and destruction as a common historical experience of all Jews in the Diaspora.

- “Collective trauma and the epidemic of violence have dictated the environment, and reproduced more violence and trauma, and have prevented people from perceiving the other’s victimhood as well. The symptoms of the traumatized society are:
- “Israeli society is made up of immigrants and refugees. The majority of the Israelis experience the fragility of their existence in their new land, although spiritually and religiously, they do not doubt their connection to the land.
- The long and endless state of war has created emotional numbness. Lack of sensitivity to pain of the other is necessary for existence and the ability to function in state of ongoing emergency.
- There is agony and anger, which are unmanageable, and which obviously block the option to see the other’s pain and anger.
- People look for a strong leader to lead them out of their distress. Abuse of power is tolerated and justified. Society has lost the immunity to resist the abuse of power.
- There is a collective addiction to violence, a call for revenge and retaliation.
There is widespread escapism, and a passive acceptance of the ‘situation’.
Alienation and a lack of solidarity mean that each person is on his or her own.
- Internalized violence: The legitimation of the use of violence against the enemy is internalized, so that all opponents are perceived as the enemy, even within one’s own society.”
(Report, p. 188).

In addition, militarization, as a factual institution and as an ideology determines societal life in Israel. This includes the subordination of women in military service as much as the functionalization of the family. “The importance of the family in Jewish society is magnified in the context of the political conflict. The family is used as the connecting link between the collective and the individual recruited to military service, and,

in time of crisis, to war. Women, identified with the private sphere, the family, are expected to furnish maximum support to their men, and occasionally even sacrifice their dearest in time of war. The shadow of war makes the family an important factor." (Report, p. 189) Molly Malekar questions the ability of Israeli society to make peace in such a highly militarized society

"The biggest attempt of reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians was made in the so-called people-to-people processes and encounters after the Oslo Accords. The rationale behind this programme was to enable the individual and the collective to get to know the other, to encourage a process of re-humanization, and to create a greater sense of empathy, cooperation, and understanding among Israelis and Palestinians. It was assumed that this process would ultimately lead to reconciliation, which is one of the most meaningful conditions for a true and stable peace." (Report, p. 191). This approach did not meet with success, and was rather hampered by the political leadership on both sides.

Especially women took the possibilities of cooperation seriously. Bat Shalom, the organization of which Molly Malekar is the director, organized many meetings and projects together with Palestinian women. Looking back, she says: "There is a romantic perception that women from both sides of the national conflict will be able to transcend national boundaries. But nationalism tends to use the privilege of women's institutions to force women to demonstrate their ultimate loyalty to their own national collective." (Report, p. 193). The relationships between Palestinian and Israeli women remained asymmetrical. "Palestinian women hoped that Israeli women would mobilize support against the occupation within Israel, and would acknowledge the asymmetry of power defining their relationship." (Report, p. 194). However: "Israeli women, especially the core group of activists, who came to the meeting as individuals, are already positioned in their own society as 'non-conformists', and as critical towards their own government and society..." (Report, p. 195). Molly Malekar concludes her report with the assessment: "Yet, long years of dialogue between the two sides have produced many personal relationships and trust. Joint meetings have been resourceful. It

has been an opportunity to exchange sentiments, deliver messages, provide analysis, and learn about each other's society directly and authentically. But these rare occasions and this trust-building did not hold very long, once things on the ground got violent. We could still meet informally, talk over the phone, exchange e-mails – but the friendly personal trust did not soften the content of the conversation.” (Report, p. 197).

Bridge-Building (by Simone Susskind)

During the past forty years, peace activism has been a central pioneering precursor – and often a substitute – for official attempts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Women have played a central role in these efforts, both in mixed-gender organizations and, since 1987, in a variety of Israeli, Palestinian, and joint women's peace initiatives.

Israeli-Palestinian women's peace action has developed in three distinct phases:

The initial phase, which coincided with the First Intifada (1987-1993), witnessed the emergence of separate grassroots women's organizations, such as Women in Black, and the convening of the first Palestinian-Israeli women's meeting held in Brussels in May 1989, under the title: “Give Peace a Chance – Women Speak Out”. Phase Two developed around the Oslo process (1993-2000); it was accompanied by the emergence of a number of Israeli and Palestinian women's groups dedicated to supporting gender-based encounters, but also by the consolidation of a common framework for political action, the network “Jerusalem Link: A Women's Joint Venture for Peace”. Jerusalem Link was founded in 1994, following a second encounter between Israeli and Palestinian women organized in Belgium in September 1992. The third phase started in 2000, and has been accompanied by the creation of additional grassroots women's groups, such as Machsom Watch or the Coalition of Women for Peace, and by a renewed effort to revive the diplomatic process.

Palestinian and Israeli women's peace initiatives have differed from those of their mixed-gender counterparts in several important respects.

They have been pioneering, clearly defining central political agenda items, a step ahead of the bulk of the peace camp: For instance, in May 1989 in Brussels, Israeli and Palestinian women called for mutual recognition between the State of Israel and the PLO, and an end to the occupation. Second, women's peace action has been extremely persistent in refusing to give in, in the face of the deterioration of the situation on the ground. And third, it has focused on a series of concrete actions: It was Jerusalem Link which took the initiative in organizing an international political, academic and cultural event in June 1997 on the theme "Sharing Jerusalem – Two Capitals for Two States", at a time when this idea was taboo for the immense majority of Israeli public opinion, even within the peace camp. However, woman activists have been consistently excluded from official or semi-official initiatives, and their distinctive perspectives have been largely ignored.

Over time however, in the face of the deterioration of the peace process, Israeli-Palestinian women's peace movements progressively lost their impact, both in Palestinian and in Israeli public opinion, as did the peace camps. It was within this context that a group of veteran Israeli and Palestinian woman activists decided to take a critical look at their past efforts, with a view toward increasing their efficacy. Building on years of joint peace work and the personal trust that had developed as a result, they looked for ways to overcome existing pitfalls, and design a more efficient and productive framework for action.

The conceptual starting point for what was eventually to become the International Women's Commission for a Just and Sustainable Palestinian-Israeli Peace (IWC) was the adoption of the landmark UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which calls for ensuring not only protection for women in conflict situations, but also recognizes women's contributions and advocates their active participation in all stages of peace-making and peace-building. Besides highlighting the potential power inherent in women's peace efforts, Resolution 1325, by furnishing a broad international umbrella, indirectly suggested a way to overcome the bilateral impasse in Israeli-Palestinian relations at that time.

In July 2005, at a strategic planning meeting in Istanbul, forty Palestinian, Israeli and international woman leaders and advocates founded the International Women's Commission for a Just and Sustainable Palestinian-Israeli Peace. Its Charter of Principles stresses the goal of ending the Israeli occupation through immediate final-status negotiations on a two-state solution. It also underlines the need to hold all parties accountable for fulfilling their obligations under UNSC Resolution 1325, to include women in the process.

The mission of the IWC was clearly stated in the charter: First, to work for an end to the occupation, and for genuine negotiations towards a just and sustainable peace; Second, to promote a process of political dialogue in order to rectify ongoing asymmetries and address all elements of reconciliation; third, to ensure the meaningful participation of various women, including those from civil society, in any Israeli-Palestinian peace process; and fourth, to guarantee that women's perspectives and experiences be incorporated in any accord, in order to enhance gender equality and societal well-being.

The list of activities elaborated at the founding meeting of the IWC to carry out this agenda was ambitious and innovative, ranging from the formulation of political positions on key issues or events taking place on the ground, through advocacy at the highest level, to the mobilization of broad constituencies.

The activities of the IWC focused on several main areas: The first involved monitoring political developments and formulating gender-driven political positions; the second focused on lobbying decision-makers, and advocacy in society; and the third focused on the mobilization of local constituencies.

At the end of 2010 however, the IWC members agreed to end the activities of the organization, because they were not able to all work together anymore. This was directly linked to the 2008 Israeli military operation against Gaza. It is important to bear in mind that some 80% of the Israeli public approved of the military intervention – including women who were members of the IWC. For Palestinian women, there

was no way to work with partners who justified the Israeli attack. And the attack on the Gaza aid flotilla, which left nine Turkish crew members dead, raised tensions still further.

On top of these polarizing events, a general fatigue about the entrenched conflict had afflicted the group. The women involved had been fighting for a cause they considered just, but then they came to see that the conflict was moving in the opposite direction.

All along, throughout the more than twenty years of common activities for a just peace, the relations between the Palestinian and the Israeli woman activists were in effect based on asymmetrical conditions, due to the huge differences in the daily lives of women in the two societies.

Some considerations about the Middle East conflict

The Middle East conflict is not comparable with the other cases in terms of international ramifications and the development of violence within it, even if certain aspects are certainly similar. It shows, in all its phases, how dramatically the international community can repeatedly fail, and how mutual disillusionment over unfulfilled hopes for peace can again and again lead to the escalation of violence. The spiral of violence and cynicism shows a degree of negative creativity that never fails to shock. The main issue in the conflict is the struggle for land, and state autonomy. In the background however, both sides are continually mythologizing history and using religion as legitimation. It also seems that both sides understand each other's wounds perfectly well, and know best to direct their attacks.

Unlike the other cases of war and conflict examined in our project, the Middle East conflict has been going on for over sixty years, with no solution in sight. Another difference from the other cases is that here, we are dealing with a peace movement on both sides, so that we have here, in terms of the cooperation in the framework of our project, a reverse asymmetry: while in real life, the superior power of Israel and the factual inferiority and weakness of the Palestinian side is evident, the relationship in the cooperation between the Israeli peace movement and those Palestinian groups willing to cooperate with it is exactly reversed: the

Israeli peace movement is a weak, currently vanishingly small minority in Israel, which is ignored by its own public opinion and by the majority of its own people. Publicly prominent personalities who make a commitment to the peace process are often subjected to attacks and insults. By contrast, the representatives of the Palestinian side who are prepared for civil society cooperation always also represent the collective interests of the Palestinian people. This reverse asymmetry is, in the difficult process of understanding between Palestinian and Israeli peace forces, impossible to overlook. On the other hand, the small peace projects, the participation of Israeli-Jewish activists in protests, and the cooperation between women of both sides represents a peace dividend in time of violence and war – a peace dividend which depends on the hope for peace, and refuses to abandon this hope.

The history of the Middle East conflict is marked by the effects of colonialism just as much as by the effects of the rule of the Nazi regime in Europe and the extermination of European Jewry. The colonial power Great Britain initially supported the settlement of Jewish immigrants, and then ended it during World War II, during a time of the greatest existential emergency of European Jews. In 1948, it supported a two-state solution, and then vanished from the scene under pressure from the Jewish uprising. In 1948, after the murder of six million European Jews by the Nazis, no western country could dare to fight against the founding of the state of Israel.

We must not forget the experience of the survivors who were able to flee that inferno: virtually no country in the world had been prepared to accept them without conditions, and many refugees did not succeed in finding a safe haven, since they had to wait too long for a visa, or had no chance of getting one in the first place. Without a doubt, Israeli policy cannot be understood without the background of this collective Jewish trauma.

Psychological warfare is being carried out by it both sides with extreme precision:

The Palestinian reaction to the expulsion from their country has from the start targeted this trauma of the Jewish population: first, as a threat

to destroy the state of Israel and drive out all Jews from the country, and more recently, through suicide bombs against the civilian population. Thus has Palestinian resistance in its most militant form from the start contributed to that mixture of a feeling of victimization and a security phobia in Israeli society which can only be explained socio-psychologically.

On the other hand, the Israeli occupying power in the Palestinian territories, viewed socio-psychologically, in the same way precisely targets the collective trauma of the Palestinian people. The trauma of the *Naqba*, the catastrophe of expulsion from one's own country, the trauma of over sixty years of life in refugee camps for relevant part of the Palestinian population is permanently being called to memory, even for the non-refugees in the occupied territories. The policies of separating off villages and Palestinian land, the ghettoization of the Palestinian people and the continuing appropriation of land for settlement construction, the aggressiveness of the settlers, the arbitrary closing of checkpoints, and the fundamental restrictions on the freedom to travel for the Palestinian people, all the way to the closing off of the Gaza Strip, have revealed directly to every Palestinian, every day, that if he or she is not a refugee now, they could become one tomorrow – homeless in the world, or ghettoized in a camp.

The willingness to engage in a peace process can only emerge in both societies, the Israeli and the Palestinian, if civil society is strengthened and peaceful neighbourliness becomes a worthwhile goal for the majorities of both peoples. War and violence, collective punishment and psychological humiliation are permanently destroying the willingness for peace on both sides. In this context, the situation in Gaza is especially dramatic. Here, not only is the entire population being made responsible for the actions of a few militant groups, but the UN's refugee aid system is permanently being hampered in its efforts to provide the refugees with the basics of life.

The failure of the international community is highlighted directly by the large number of resolutions on the Middle East conflict passed by the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council. There have been a

total of thirty resolutions of the General Assembly since 1947, and 233 resolutions of the Security Council, all aimed at a solution of the Middle East conflict, or of a particular situation of war and violence current at the time. The disregard for the United Nations as the only instance with international legitimation for peace processes and for ending violence and war is a shocking fact of life in the Middle East conflict. The delegitimizing and demoralizing effect of this fact, extending far beyond the bounds of this concrete conflict, should not be underestimated.

In this situation, the strategy of non-violent resistance to defend access to closed-off villages and oppose the expulsion of Palestinian families from East Jerusalem, the reconstruction by the Palestinian administration and international aid organizations of the infrastructure destroyed by the military actions of the Israeli army in the West Bank, and the tireless work of UNWRA in Gaza, are rays of hope – as is the participation of young Israelis in demonstrations and actions of non-violent resistance.

General Conclusions

1. Peace work by women is very often based on the daily work they perform to ensure the survival of their families. In times of war and violent conflict, they in addition assume the role of breadwinner, even in such traditionally patriarchal societies as Somalia. Especially in societies in which they are prevented from playing any public role, women organize daily resistance against the separation of the population into friend and foe. Often they try to help each other across the ideological and military divides. In many cases women generate a peace dividend under conditions of war, by maintaining relationships which circumvent the enmity created by war, through direct cooperation between women of the opposing parties. The experience and wisdom of women is of incalculable value for the peace building process.

2. In three of the four cases documented in our project – Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Somalia – women were subjected to extreme sexual violence during the hostilities. The recognition of sexual violence against women as an action of war, as a war crime, and as a violation of human rights by the UN is an important factor for dealing with the traumas.

We have come a long way, but we still have a long way to go: The condemnation of sexual violence as a violation of human rights was confirmed by 189 countries in the Action Platform of the 4th UN World Women's Conference in 1995 in Beijing. Five years then passed until the passage of UN Resolution 1325 in 2000 and Resolution 1820 in 2008, but at least a beginning had been made, an irreversible process of great importance had been launched.

3. The Middle East conflict is not comparable with the other cases in terms of its international ramifications and the development of violence within it, even if certain instances are certainly similar. This conflict shows, in all its phases, how dramatically the international community can repeatedly fail, and how mutual disillusionment over unfulfilled hopes for peace can again and again lead to the escalation of violence. The spiral of violence and cynicism shows a degree of creativity that never fails to shock. The main issue in the conflict is the struggle for land and state autonomy. However, both sides are continually mythologizing history, and using religion as a source of the legitimacy of their positions. Moreover, both sides understand each other's wounds perfectly well, and know where best to direct their attacks. For instance, it must be assumed that the suicide bombers attacking the Israeli civilian population know that they will awaken memories of the helplessness faced by the victims of the Holocaust during the Second World War. On the other side, the pressure placed on the Palestinians recalls their flight and expulsion in 1948 and 1967: the many daily restrictions they suffer, and the attacks directed against them send the signal: "You Palestinians will not be able to find safety anywhere here, except by leaving." This is, in effect, a constant threat of another expulsion.

4. The case of Somalia clearly shows that military intervention in inner-state violent conflicts or wars which have already broken out is a very serious issue, particularly if these forces are themselves seen as a party to the conflict with special interests, intervening from outside. They can then in no way contribute to pacification, but rather exacerbate the conflicts. Peace-building in Somalia has to be turned over to the ownership of the Somali people.

Yugoslavia is to some extent an exception, since the intervention by NATO put an end to the genocide. At the same time however, the post-war order in ex-Yugoslavia is highly problematical in some regions, because ethnic cleansing could not be stopped and the conflicts continue to smoulder, as in Kosovo.

The UN peacekeeping missions in Rwanda and Yugoslavia under Art. 6 of the UN Charter also dramatically failed in their missions, since those soldiers looked on and did virtually nothing as the genocidal actions unfolded in Srebrenica and in Rwanda.

5. The conclusion widely drawn by the UN that, given the failures of peacekeeping operations, peace-enforcing operations should now be carried out instead, is however a dramatic mistake. For in conflicts and wars which have already broken out, military intervention has not led to any pacification of the situation, but rather has caused wars to drag on and turn into long-lasting civil wars. The experience from Somalia during the 1990s, the experience of wars in Iraq, and our presumed future experience in Afghanistan and Libya should have a consciousness-raising effect here.

6. International development agencies must be clear that humanitarian aid in violent and warlike conflicts often serves at least partially as a war dividend for the war-making parties, and hence reinforces violence. It would make much more sense, it appears, to orient international development agencies, such as those of the EU, towards cooperation with regional actors, so as to develop solutions to conflicts – which may not yet have broken out – and to implement in that context.

7. In all cases examined here, the conflicts developed over a long period before exploding into violent warfare. It is inconceivable that today, with all our possibilities for exchanging information, societal conflicts should continue to remain unnoticed for so long, until they escalate, and the world pauses to consider them for a moment, due to the shocking pictures.

8. In every society, there are civil actors who have developed a sensitive antenna for upcoming change with regard to the development of conflict. That includes journalists, who can ascertain changes in public opinion, school teachers who teach history and can tell when the man-

ner in which history is portrayed begins to change, artists who need to act in freedom, and all those who work in public services with responsibility for the entire population, and can perceive when prejudices against certain groups of the population begin to worsen– to cite only a few examples. All these civil actors must be given the possibility to feed their observations into a monitoring network.

In addition to such specific civil actors, the monitoring network can depend on the cooperation of a usually small group of civil action organizations. In the case of Yugoslavia, these were women's groups which, prior to the outbreak of the war, attempted without success to inform European public of the looming danger. Developing a systematic "early-warning" method is essential and crucial in potential conflict zones.

9. In those regions where conflicts develop, they need to be analyzed at the regional and international level:

- What motivates the conflict – economic problems, ethno-nationalistic power struggles, or religiously motivated disputes?

- What relationship do these conflicts have to post-colonial, post-socialist and/or imperial geostrategic power interests?

- To what extent is the development of potentially violent conflict today influenced by the power shift towards new multi-polar geostrategic fields of conflict?

Here again, the role of civil society groups, which have the means to monitor the shift of socio-political change and growing tension, must be given the opportunity to provide their findings to the regional and international community.

10. Monitoring is the first step toward the sensitization of international opinion and awareness-raising.

Such networks should build on the hybrid structure of civil society, and on bottom-up structures. Participation, transparency and democratic structures are fundamental. Independence and seriousness is crucial in the politically highly sensitive field of information on conflict development.

Women's networks show the effectiveness of such networking, and Amnesty International has provided the pattern for the structure of such networking.

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REPORTS ON CONFLICT HISTORY, ON CIVIL RESISTANCE TO CONFLICTS, AND ON RECONCILIATION WORK

REPORT ON EX-YUGOSLAVIA

BOSILJKA SCHEDLICH, BERLIN

The lost country

Yugoslavia, which no longer exists, is frequently seen as a country which met all the prerequisites for disappearance, although shortly before the outbreak of violence, 80% of Yugoslavs did not consider the disintegration of their country – let alone a war – possible. The little country had fought successfully during the Second World War against domestic and foreign fascists, and had contributed to the victory over Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany. The memory of the victorious struggles of the partisans was proudly cultivated, with the message that Yugoslavs should be ever ready to defend their country once again. During the Cold War, Yugoslavia tried to find its own "third way" between the blocks, something which had never been done before. It was an example amongst the socialist countries, social and open. Yet Yugoslavia failed, after much experimentation and many unfinished attempts, to establish a place for itself midway between socialism and capitalism. After the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, Yugoslavia was destroyed in a war, when the leaders of its six autonomous republics couldn't agree on a common path to the future.

Since the war broke out in 1991, and was ended by the intervention of NATO in 1998, many questions have remained unanswered. Did the war have its roots in history, or was the present to blame? Was Yugoslavia doomed to fail because of its national diversity, or was the "peculiarity of the Balkans" to blame? There are a number of answers to all these questions – but no general answer.

I am convinced that this war need not have been; that wars need not be at all. There were alternatives, as there are in every conflict, even though

much of history remains alive in the present. People are different, always and everywhere. They belong to different groups and religions. But is that a reason to wage wars?

With this article, I would like to spark curiosity and raise new questions. I hope that you will do it too; join with me until we understand why people abandon a time of peace and transformation for a time of wars. It is a common task of all people to strengthen peace and to prevent wars.

The ancient history of humankind in south-eastern Europe

Thanks to its mild climate, the Balkan Peninsula was inhabited by humans even during the last Ice Age, fourteen to sixteen thousand years ago. After the Ice Age, some people emigrated northwards; others came and settled here. As their numbers grew, they fought over territory. The winners and the losers intermingled.

The Greeks developed the cradle of European civilization here. The Romans did the same in their time. Their empire fell apart into Roman and Byzantine segments along the present border between Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia. After 1054, the church leaders in the Byzantine part no longer wanted to subordinate themselves to the Pope in Rome; they split off and developed the Orthodox variety of Christianity. In the West, in the Catholic areas, humanism, the Renaissance, the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation all developed; in the east, the Orthodox Church remained tied to the ideal of harmony between church and state – and has to this day.

The Roman Empire succumbed to the pressure of the Great Migration. New states, large and small, came into being, including a Croatian and a Serbian kingdom, only to disappear again in the rise of larger empires. Slovenia and Croatia became part of the Habsburg monarchy; the other parts of Balkans were conquered by the Ottomans in the fourteenth century. The Ottomans pushed forward to the borders of the Habsburg Empire – today's border between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina – and remained there for 500 years. Refugees from Serbia who belonged to the Orthodox Church were settled in the Habsburg borderlands. They were given tax advantages, like the Catholic population there, in return

for which they had to defend the monarchy against the Ottomans. In the Ottoman areas in turn, because of tax and other advantages, some Christians converted to Islam. They were seen as traitors by the Christians – and are to this day. Peasant resistance built up against the severe violations of existing village autonomy and justice – the Ottoman administrator usually claimed the “right of the first night” of a bride – and the unbearable tax burden; if no money or goods could be produced, male children were taken and brought up as soldiers, “Janissaries,” who might later, as adults, even be sent against their own relatives.

These struggles still are sung of today in epic songs, including the traumatic battle of the *Kosovo Polje* – the “Field of the Blackbirds” – in 1389, when the Serbian kingdom was crushed and Prince Lazar killed. Only afterwards would this battle be developed into a mythical, identity-creating super-tale of heroism and betrayal, the “curse” of which might only be overcome by the restoration of the old kingdom – so says the Serbian Orthodox Church. What the church doesn’t say is that the other Balkan peoples, Albanians and Croats, also fought together with the Serbs, and that they, too, were slaughtered there. It would be a good thing if it would say that, so that the hatred might be overcome.

The yearning for freedom and the formation of nations

In the nineteenth century, the Serbs rose up several times against the overwhelming Ottoman power. They gained autonomy, and then continued their rebellions. A small vanguard trained in the west tried to impose the idea of nationhood, to which the majority of the peasant population developed strong resistance. In 1844 Ilya Garashanin, the then foreign minister, formulated a secret programme for the liberation of the “fellow tribespeople” and the restoration of the Serbian kingdom. His programme and the idea of a Serbian state became the guiding concept of Serbian nationalism – and remains so to this day. After additional areas were conquered, the independence of Serbia was declared at the Berlin Congress of 1878. The wars over territory continued – against Turkey, against Bulgaria, against the Central Powers in the First World War.

Expansionist Serbian nationalism developed in harmony with the then existing nationalistic hysteria and euphoria all over Europe. However, the Austro-Hungarian Empire was in the way of any expansion of Serbian territory. The Austrian annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908 and the foundation of the Albanian state in 1912 foiled Serbia's plans to gain access to the Adriatic Sea, for which reason Austria-Hungary was declared the number one enemy. This was a major factor in the assassination of Sarajevo in 1914 – and provided the idea of the Serbian nation with its breakthrough.

The Croatian nation was formed primarily after the conflicts of the mid-nineteenth century in opposition to Hungarian claims to Croatian territory. It started as a movement of cultural renewal called "Illyrianism", with a south-Slavic, not a Croatian orientation. Croatia had a certain degree of autonomy within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which provided a framework for the formation of a Croatian national identity. The same was true of Slovenia. The national identity of the Bosnians was oriented towards denominational factors, with Orthodox Christians defining themselves as Serbs, and Catholics as Croats. The Bosnian Muslims, unlike the Christians, have a positive attitude towards the Ottoman Empire to this day; they define themselves neither as Serbs nor as Croats, but as Muslims or Bosniaks, although their ancestors are descended from the Serbs or the Croats.

The decisive circumstance was that these nations came into being before the foundation of Yugoslavia, and brought their own ideas into the founding process. That gave rise to conflicts. Victorious Serbia experienced the foundation of Yugoslavia as the fulfilment of its dream, according to which all Serbs were to live in one state, and other nations were to melt together into the Yugoslavian – and ultimately, the Serbian – nation. Nobody asked the Macedonians – they were divided up between the Serbs, the Bulgarians and the Greeks. Nobody asked the Albanians or the Muslims either. Montenegro was annexed by Serbia in 1918. All nations continued their struggle for equal rights within the new state, and thus came into conflict with Serbia.

A "young Bosnian Serb" shot Austro-Hungarian Crown Prince Francis Ferdinand in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914, the 525th anniversary of the mythical

Battle of Kosovo. Exactly one month later, politicians in Vienna declared war on Serbia. The European leaders of that day, themselves locked in struggles over territory, weren't interested in trying to find a peaceful solution to the conflict. Russia came to the aid of its Orthodox brethren in Serbia, other countries followed suit, and supported their allies.

Twelve million people died during the four years of the First World War, four empires collapsed, and the political map of Europe was fundamentally redrawn. The disappearance of Austria-Hungary left a power vacuum in which many problems remained unresolved, and later led to the Second World War.

Ideas and identities in the first common state

The Serbian leadership fought on the side of the victorious Allies to expand its territory. In Croatia, after the declaration of independence from Austria-Hungary, there was as yet no broad consensus on union with Serbia. However, when the Italians started to occupy the Croatian and Slovenian areas promised them by the Allies, the formation of a common state was hastily agreed to by the Slovene leadership, and by parts of the Croat leadership as well. A three-quarters majority of a constituent assembly was to decide on the question of whether to establish a republic or a kingdom. With no consideration for this agreement, Prince Regent Alexander Karageorgevich on December 1, 1918 announced the foundation of the "Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes".

The news that Croatia was now under the supremacy of a Serbian dynasty raised doubts in Zagreb as to the realization of the longed-for "national right to self-determination". The response of the state leadership in Belgrade was the myth of a triple-named Yugoslav nation. The conflicts were now to be settled by drafting a common constitution. The fight for national and economic special interests broke out immediately, however. The constitution was adopted on June 28, 1921, again the anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo, by a simple majority in parliament. The Serb majority thus asserted itself against the representatives of the Croat and Slovene peoples. The officially proclaimed unitarism was raised to a constitutional principle, the administration was centralistically

structured, and the monarch was given power in a constitutive, rather than a parliamentary monarchy. With the establishment of the principle "We are all Yugoslavs", all supporters of a union of several states with equal rights were treated as enemies of the constitution. The constitution accorded only Serbs, Croats and Slovenes the status of "constitutive peoples of the state"; the others were not mentioned. Albanians and Macedonians who fought for their national rights were combated like terrorists or criminals, by force of arms. By decree of King Alexander, the names of these peoples and their symbols were proclaimed abolished; only the name "Yugoslav peoples" was permitted. Thus, historic and traditional identities of various natures were denied, which led to discontent amongst all peoples, including the Serbs.

After having propagated the idea of "ancient Serbian territory" for decades, Serb politicians could imagine Yugoslavia only as an enlarged Serbia. The recognition of independent Slovene and Croat nations, the respect for the rights of self-determinations of the Albanians, Macedonian and the non-Serbian population in Bosnia-Herzegovina was no longer communicable in Serbia. The Albanians, whose ancestors had been pushed into the mountains in the sixth century by the Slavs, had settled in Kosovo in large number again shortly after the arrival of the Turks, and many had converted to Islam. They were considered intruders by the Serbs, and treated as such. There were times in between in which these two peoples, in accordance with their leaders, respected and supported each other, and of course spoke both languages, Serbian and Albanian. The disagreement over the type of state, which had already led to dissonance at the time of the founding of the common state, could never be overcome. On the Serbian side was the desire for a modern state on the classical French model – "one state, one nation"; on the Croatian side, by contrast, was the idea of "national self-determination". However, because of the mixed ethnic structure, no clear border between various nations could be drawn. In the discussion about territorial claims, the right of national self-determination was frequently projected into the past. In the mind of the nationalists, the nations had already existed in their respective medieval kingdoms. They derived their territorial claims from pre-Ottoman times, and demanded the restoration of their historic rights.

In order to bring historic rights into line with the demand for independence, an ethnic harmonization of the population was now the goal of the new state. For the non-Serbian population and for the minorities, this meant for all practical purposes compulsory assimilation and marginalization.

This first royal Yugoslavia was in essence not a state under the rule of law. The problems built into its foundations spread throughout the population, most of which lived in agricultural village communities, and traditionally conducted neighbourly relations in certain ways, regardless of national or religious affiliation, since they depended on them for subsistence. In those days, without travel or media use – the population was 80% illiterate – the new citizens living in remote regions hardly knew each other at all; they had no idea how others lived and what they wanted. Thus, the Serbs thought they had liberated the others, and expected gratitude and material recognition in return. The economic gap between industrially developed Slovenia and Croatia and war-ravaged Serbia strengthened this attitude. In turn, the people in Slovenia and Croatia rejected the new state because of its higher taxes, because of the disadvantage to which they were subjected by the currency reform, and because of the strong preferential treatment given Serbs in the administration and the army.

The first shots

Frustration and quarrels soon dispelled the joy of liberation from foreign rule. The power struggle was determined by politicians and intellectuals, and carried out in strong language in the press and in parliament. In the common state, many Slovenian and Croatian representatives felt oppressed as they had never before been in their history. Stjepan Radic, the Croatian leader of the Peasants' Party, demanded in parliament the transformation of the state into a confederation. In response, on June 28, 1928, as so often the anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo, a Serbian representative shot at Radic, fatally injuring him, killing two other representatives, and seriously injured two more. These were the first casualties in the battle between the Serbs and the Croats.

The representative of the constituency of the city of Zagreb, Ante Pavelic, was among the horrified witnesses. Soon thereafter, when the Serbian king proclaimed the royal dictatorship under the name "Kingdom of Yugoslavia" and pronounced himself king of all Yugoslavs, dissolved parliament and abolished the constitution, Pavelic founded the armed resistance movement, the *Ustaša* (the Rebels) in his Zagreb flat. He thereupon left Yugoslavia and settled in Rome with a small group of his supporters, where he gradually became a Serb-hating extremist.

Public life in Yugoslavia during the next few years was dominated by corruption and nepotism. There was discontent not only in Croatia, but also in Macedonia, where Serbianization triggered terrorist counteractions. The Albanian majority and the Serbian minority in Kosovo conducted bloody battles. Guerrilla units supported by Italy, Bulgaria and Albania infiltrated Yugoslav territory they claimed, and made the lives of the people even more difficult.

In 1918, an integrated Yugoslav society had still seemed possible; now however, it was beyond all reach. Nationalism as an ideology of external exclusion and of internal integration had split the population and become an instrument of discrimination of all non-Serbian segments of the population of Yugoslavia. On October 9, 1934, King Alexander was murdered by Croatian and Macedonian terrorists in France. No change resulted. Not until only a week before the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 was limited autonomy within the Yugoslav state granted to Croatia for the first time.

The union of the south-Slavic peoples was carried out after the large multinational empires, the Habsburg monarchy and Ottoman Empire, broke apart and Europe was divided up into sovereign nation-states. Apart from the medieval kingdoms of the Serbs and the early kingships of the Croatians and Bosnians, the Yugoslav peoples have lived for the greatest part of their history under foreign rule and separated from one another, their populations greatly mixed, their various regions very differently development, their life-styles and their legal traditions different. Nevertheless, there had been no major conflicts amongst them during this long period. That provided a good opportunity for the foundation of

a common state and the creation of the unity and understanding between all southern Slavs. This opportunity was initially missed. There was a lack of the essential prerequisites for the success of peaceful cohabitation, the knowledge and experiences of democratic political culture. That was no different from other European states which were also led into war at this time by nationalists.

The Second World War

When the Yugoslav government in 1941 signed on to the Tripartite Pact with Italy, Germany and Japan, memories of their heavy losses in the First World War were still fresh in the minds of many Serbs. The pro-British officers' corps staged a *coup d'état* against that move, whereupon Hitler ordered the bombing of Belgrade and the smashing of Yugoslavia. Young King Peter fled to Great Britain, where he formed a Yugoslav government in exile. Since the leaderless Yugoslav army put up no resistance to the German invaders, the state collapsed within a few days.

For Hitler, Yugoslavia was initially of no great importance. To save forces for the invasion of the Soviet Union, he decided upon a "*divide et impera*" (divide and rule) strategy. The acting chair of the Croatian Peasants' Party was advised to proclaim Croatia's secession from the Yugoslav state. He refused, in the hope of preventing war within Yugoslavia. However, Ante Pavelić who, in exile in Rome, had by this time become a fervent supporter of Italian fascism and German Nazism, was happy to assume this task. The "Independent State of Croatia" was proclaimed under the protection of German tanks in Zagreb on April 10, 1941, a week before the surrender of the Yugoslav army. This state, which also included Bosnia-Herzegovina, was never recognized internationally, and its territory was always occupied by Italian and German troops. The Germans ordered Pavelić to exterminate the Jews and the Gypsies. He was praised in writing by Hitler for having already completed this task by 1943. Pavelić had to hand over the Dalmatian coastal region to Mussolini, which caused great indignation in Croatia, and led to massive participation by the population in the resistance movement, which recruited some 250,000 combatants. The Ustaša, a relatively

small organization with only some 30,000 members and characterized mainly by arrogance, capriciousness greed and corruption, was never able to win broad support amongst the Croatian people.

Just as Hitler in his blind hatred wanted to make Europe “free of Jews”, Pavelić wanted to make Croatia free of Serbs. Serbs, orthodox Christians, made up some 30% of the Croatian population at that time, and were ethnologically indistinguishable from the Croats, who were Catholics. According to his plan, one third of the Serbian population, primarily the men of military age, were to be killed, one third deported, and one third, primarily women and children, forced to convert to Catholicism. Nor did other Yugoslav peoples escape the nationalistic madness. Royalist Serbs organized themselves in Četniks (troops), particularly after the Ustaša started persecuting Serbs, and committed great massacres against the Croatian and Muslim people; at times, they collaborated with the Italians and Germans, helped exterminate the Jews and Roma people, and fought the partisans. Their goal was a Greater Serbian kingdom, including Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia and large parts of Croatia. Some other peoples also collaborated with the Germans and Italians, such as Kosovar Albanians and Macedonians seeking protection from the attacks of Serbian nationalists. However, the period of the Second World War was primarily marked by the Serbo-Croatian war, which was waged on both sides with utmost brutality.

The resistance movement

In 1941, the Yugoslavian Communist Party was called upon by the Comintern to organize resistance to tie down German troops in the Balkans. At first, the party found hardly any support in the sorely afflicted, insecure population, which was at the mercy of attacks by all kinds of armed groups, and in their need, as always, depended on the good relations with their neighbours. Therefore, the party members carried out some attacks on the Germans themselves. The revenge exacted by the *Wehrmacht*, which, for every one of its men killed, executed one hundred local people herded together at random, and even including schoolchildren, caused peasants, members of other parties, people from all national and religious groups, and for the first time in history even women,

to join the resistance. The “Antifascist Front” fought against the Germans, against the Italians and against the Croatian and Serbian nationalists, and it was attacked by all of them.

The Communists propagated the equal rights of all peoples and also federalism; they were disciplined and introduced strict ethical and moral rules, and unlike their opponents, respected the property of the people. This won them the confidence of the people, who frequently sought refuge with the partisans as they fled from the attacks of the nationalistic units. Josip Broz Tito became the unchallenged leader of the Communists. The plan of the Cominform had panned out; German *Wehrmacht* units were tied down by the resistance in Yugoslavia and couldn't be sent to the eastern front. The Wehrmacht conducted seven major offensives to break the Yugoslav resistance and kill Tito. There were heavy losses on all sides, but the resistance could not be overcome. Tito requested that the Allies recognize the partisan movement and provide it with heavy weapons. Great Britain, seeking to prevent the “Bolshevization” of the Balkans, in 1944 succeeded in pushing through a joint government consisting of members of the Antifascist Front and the Yugoslav government in exile. The forced admission of the ethnic troops into antifascist units at that time led to long-standing uncertainty and to conflicts within the resistance movement and amongst the population.

The ideology and the foundation of the second common state

After the partisans had liberated large portions of the country by their own efforts, the Soviet army marched into Belgrade at the end of the war. In the first elections held in the summer of 1945, the Popular Front organized by the partisans during the war defeated the bourgeois parties. All important positions in society were shared out amongst the members of the Communist Party; this was the beginning of their period of one-party rule. The residences of “enemies” and of expelled and expropriated people were also given to deserving party members. The monarchy was abolished and the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia proclaimed by the Constituent Assembly in November 1945. A British attempt to prevent this and reinstate the king failed in the teeth of the determined resistance of the communist government. The second Yu-

goslav state presented itself as the legal successor to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The legitimacy for this was derived from the struggle for liberation and the great number of the war victims.

The state was divided into six republics and two autonomous provinces, promising a balance in the multinational country. At the same time, it was hoped that the “socialist” social structure would ensure a new integration based on “equality for all” and “fraternity and unity”, which were regularly celebrated politically, in which national particularities were to dissolve in favour of a future “socialist nation”.

For the Communists, the Soviet Union remained the model to be followed and the most important ally, even after the war. Thus, the new Yugoslavia was only nominally a federal state; at its core, it was centralist and bureaucratic. Fear cast a long shadow over the post-war period, in which the killing continued without interruption. Real and putative “collaborators” were eliminated, political opponents and competitors removed, and the influence of the church on society terminated by show trials. Without opposition, no checks on the power structure or critical discussion were possible, so that a new opportunity to build a democratic society was lost.

The close relationship with the ideology of the Soviet Union claimed further victims. In the Yugoslavian Gulags, on the Adriatic island of Goli Otok and at other places, opponents of Stalin were forced to beat each other; thousands didn’t survive it. Then, on June 28, 1948, once again on the commemoration day of the Battle of Kosovo, the close ties to the Soviet Union were cut; Stalin himself suddenly and unexpectedly expelled the Yugoslav Communists from the Communists world alliance. He could no longer tolerate the growing self-confidence, born in the resistance, and the pride of Tito and his Communists in their own successes. The massing of Soviet tanks at the Yugoslav borders ended only when the USA announced that it would support Yugoslavia in case of attack. Those who continued to adhere to Stalinism felt the results of the changed party line. From now on, it was they who were “re-educated” by torture in the camps.

The conspiracy of silence and the missed opportunity of rehabilitation

Personal experiences in these camps were as little a topic of conversation as were the traumatic experiences of the Second World War. That was how it was everywhere at that time. Never during the following forty-five years were these bloody wartime events ever dealt with – psychologically, in the press, in parliament or in the courts. During the first years after the victory, a few spectacular war crimes trials were held against the Četnik and Ustaša leaders, but none against members of the victorious People's Army, which had killed thousands of defenceless prisoners of war. Moreover, the dictators feared that a widespread prosecution of crimes would in effect prolong the war, and that the liquidation of former opponents after the war could weaken the reputation of the regime. Thus, everything was sublimated which was contradictory or problematic. After an initial phase of settling of scores, the word was: let's let bygones be bygones, don't tear open old wounds, let sleeping dogs lie. Evil had been removed, Good had triumphed.

Since the media were under the control of the party, no one stirred up the terrible events of the past. A blanket of "fraternity and unity" was spread out, and the memory of the heroic struggle for liberation was propagated to entertain, educate and indoctrinate the "masses". The partisans, their leader Tito, and the break with Stalin became an integral part of the new pan-Yugoslavian identity.

Silence about the mass murders had the psychological effect of a taboo which must not be violated. The events were neither forgotten nor extinguished from the memory of the surviving relatives. Rather, they built up a parallel, private truth, different from the "truth" taught in the schools. At the same time, fear and violence were part of natural human interaction in society, and the most unquestioned component of all relations within families. The most frequent victims were women and children. Brutality to animals was unquestioned.

The lack of reliable information fed speculations. While in Germany, under the pressure of the victorious powers, Nazi crimes were uncov-

ered and led to painful realizations and to a transformation of society, in Yugoslavia, the uncovering of a crime was more likely to provoke state repression, or revenge from the murderer on whom one had informed. The count of the victims officially set at a very high level just after the war, to justify demands for reparations, generated great frustration and resistance to the state from all sides. Thus for example, Serbs and Croats still argue about the number of people killed in the Jasenovac extermination camp. During the '60s, the Yugoslav Statistical Office had stated the number of killed as 59,000, but never published this figure. The question of guilt and responsibility grips Croatia like an octopus, although the Ustaša was defeated precisely because of the massive participation of Croats in the partisan resistance.

The break with Stalin temporarily provided space for some critical voices within the party, who demanded economic reforms and attacked top-down state control. However, the discussion was broken off from above, to thwart the supposed danger of "anarchy and the restoration of bourgeois society", as soon as some members questioned the sole power of the party – and some saw it as a "new class"; it was another lost opportunity for democratization.

Deprivation, expropriation and reconstruction

As elsewhere in the Europe destroyed by Nazi madness, Yugoslavia after 1945 suffered greatly from famine. Most villages and towns were in rubble, the most important industrial plants, the infrastructure, and the currency and financial systems had been destroyed. The urban population tried to survive by trading sewing machines, cloth or tools for flour or potatoes. After Stalin's economic blockade against Yugoslavia in 1948, the hungry population was provided with Care packages from the USA.

As in other socialist states, the private property of "collaborators" and "enemies of the state" was expropriated; by the end of 1948, banks, companies and large estates had become state property. Out of consideration for the discontent of the peasants, many of whom had been resistance fighters, the Soviet model of agricultural collectivization was reversed after two years. The fertile areas in the north of the country

from which some half a million ethnic Germans had fled or been expelled after the war, were nationalized, and in many cases, people from poor, underdeveloped parts of the country were settled there. Land was also confiscated from over half a million Turks who were expelled from the southern regions, together with Albanians who were proclaimed to be Turks.

Education and industrialization were to alleviate the greatest deprivation. Some 80% of the people lived in the countryside in traditional, patriarchal communities; most were illiterate. The development of raw materials and heavy industry had priority in the area of development. The rise from an underdeveloped, backward agrarian country was carried on with great ambition and great hope. The enormous destruction of the environment and damage to the cultural heritage that that entailed was not an issue, nobody was interested in it. Many people suffered work accidents. Another group of victims were the goats, killed in the whole country in 1952, because they hindered "reafforestation".

Young people in the countryside were recruited as workers for industry; first, they participated in large numbers in the voluntary services as part of the international work campaigns. At the training sessions conducted there, many were enthusiastic about the idea of building up not only the country's infrastructure, but also its industry, and thus attaining secure economic progress. A major wave of migration from the land began. The desired proletarianization of the population was implemented irreversibly. Forty years later, in 1991, only 20% of the Yugoslav population still lived in the countryside. In many regions, the villages were deserted, the fields overgrown, and the roofs of the houses had collapsed. Only the cemeteries got ever bigger. At the same time, the cities and their suburbs sprawled.

The uprooting of the village communities, and with it the patriarchal way of life, strengthened people's feelings of uncertainty in the municipal surroundings, where they felt inferior in any case. Broken family relations were frequently among the results. While the first generation still travelled back and forth between work in the factory and their rural homes, accepting long trips and great effort, the second generation no

longer returned to the countryside. Young people no longer wanted to stay in places where there was only hard physical work, but nothing that was important to modern people: schools, jobs, modern technology, shops, cinemas and discos.

The Third Way

After the collapse of relations with Stalin, the Yugoslavian Communists had to find their own way. Tito co-founded the movement of non-aligned states, which provided Yugoslavs with still more pride in their country, and with recognition abroad, while also helping the development of the country. The recipes for reconstruction and industrialization came from the West, and enabled a growth rate which was at times higher than that of Japan.

In 1950, the phase of centralism was ended, and replaced by “workers’ self-management” as a home-grown type of “socialist market economy” system. A self-managed society in free association was to emerge, in which the role of the state was to be restricted in the areas of economic, social, cultural and educational policy, so as to achieve the long-term goal of the “withering away of the state”. To safeguard the access of all citizens to capital, “socialized property” was introduced. The means of production were subordinated to work collectives as common property.

The first crisis of the economy became visible as the development phase came to an end, and quality and competitiveness were also required, rather than merely production on a massive scale. The key positions of political and economic power remained in the hands of the party, which thus controlled the profits of the enterprises. The contradiction between the party’s monopoly on political power and the proclaimed grass-roots democracy became even more obvious when workers’ self-management was extended to the entire society. The time-consuming system and the demand for uniformization, in the guise of “solidarity”, hampered the release of private initiative and the efficiency of production.

Another factor at the beginning of the '60s was the Vietnam War, in which the USA suffered heavy losses. Moreover, at their first meeting, President John F. Kennedy and Soviet Leader Nikita Khrushchev inaugurated the era of détente, which meant that Yugoslavia lost its significance as a country "between the blocks", and was left to its own devices. The money needed for the growing economy now had to be borrowed from foreign banks. With the economic reform initiated in 1965, a breakthrough was reached in the economic sphere. In addition to economic decentralization achieved through the self-administration of the enterprises, companies were also given greater freedom to use foreign currency reserves in foreign trade. The market for foreign capital was also opened, and the national currency devalued. That spelled the end of the planned economy. However, a war of attrition began between the "liberal" politicians, who wanted decentralization at the policy level and the "unitarists", who wanted to retain a strong central power.

As the number of unemployed grew rapidly, the borders, which, like those in other socialist states, had previously been closed off by armed guards with orders to shoot, were opened. With a Yugoslav passport, one could now travel visa-free to more countries in the world than with a West German one. Over one million people left the country and worked abroad. Before their departure, they were sworn to remain proud patriots, to engage in no political activities, and to avoid all contact with post-war émigrés. In Yugoslavia, they were seen as foreign exchange earners "employed temporarily abroad"; abroad, they were cheap labour with "temporary residence permits". Only later would they be courted, when the new national leaders wanted their money for the "defence of the homeland", and briefly led them to believe that after the victory, they would be able to assume important functions in the new national states. Their savings in Yugoslav banks amounted to \$7.5 billion by the end of the '80s – before the war. Most of that – and most of what they voluntarily paid into the accounts of the war leaders – was used for the destruction of Yugoslavia, including the houses they themselves had newly built back home.

However, the changed economic situation also brought the old, almost forgotten differences in development back to the surface, and with them

the old national tensions. In the search for generally viable models, the structure of the state leadership was reformed and organized according to a fixed proportional representation system. It satisfied no one; rather, all sides felt that their national rights had been constricted. During the early '70s, some segments of the Communist Party in all regions of the country, including Serbia, developed liberal ideas designed to reform the country, and turn it into a democratic multi-party system. New tensions emerged; weapons were used against demonstrators in Kosovo. In 1971, the reaction to the suggestions to seriously implement the necessary liberalization and decentralization of the country was the arrest and dismissal of critical activists. This was a tragic situation in which Tito became aware that his power was slipping away. To protect it, he stressed the significance of the army for the safety of the state, and pronounced the reformers nationalists. At the same time however, he tried, in this first serious crisis of post-war society, to ward off, by a reform of the constitution, the apparent danger that any ethnic group might place itself ahead of the others.

In the labyrinth

Under the amendments to the constitution of 1974, Serbia, as the largest republic, was weakened by the fact that the provinces of Kosovo and Voivodina were now treated equally to the republics in the national government. A perpetual motion machine was introduced at all levels: everything rotated – the party leadership, the state leadership, the regional leaderships, everything. The monopoly of the party was shifted to the oligarchies of the six republics and two autonomous provinces. The newly-created “associated labour” system fundamentally transformed the organization of enterprises. The smallest sub-unit, the enterprise section, constituted the “base organization of associated labour”, two of them constituted “a work organization of associated labour”, and several of them a “composite organization of associated labour”. The coordination of interests was carried out via a “self-management agreement”, “social accords”, “organs of workers’ self-management”, “workers’ councils”, an “administrative committee” and the director. Additional “self-managed communities of interest” were created for coordination in the

areas of production, domestic and foreign trade, municipal supply, health care, social welfare, science, education and culture, and funded from contributions of the base organizations. These little "base organizations" thus became the decisive supports of the self-management of the economy and of society. This negotiation economy moved away both from the planned economy and the nascent market economy. Instead, there were long and expensive processes of coordination, atomization of the economy and dominance of social property. Those who participated in self-management by way of the innumerable meetings were primarily interested in rapidly increasing their own income. Long-term goals and achieving high quality for foreign trade fell by the wayside, as did the necessary cooperation. The enterprises took no responsibility for their losses; this accrued to the municipalities, the republics and the federal government. At the same time, the legal competences of the republics had been increased, and those of the federal government weakened; the organs of the republics even received veto power. Old and new conflicts of interest between the republics led to a fragmentation of the Yugoslav market into eight partial markets. Serious production losses ensued. To permit implementation of a variety of uncoordinated development programmes, public expenditure had to be increased. Additional measures were designed to limit the negative impact of the new strategy; however, they were realized only half-heartedly and actually led to still more bureaucratization and additional expense. By the end of the '70s, the possibilities for achieving higher growth rates by means of further foreign indebtedness had been exhausted. Demands for repayment grew, while the local banks and enterprises were unable to adapt to the new situation. Out of a desire to overcome the national divisions and injuries of the Second World War, a crushing economic monster caught in a trap of its own making had been created.

After Tito's death in 1980, the national debt, inflation and the impoverishment of the people grew apace. The people's confidence in the communist leadership faded rapidly as its measures were confined to short-term administrative patchwork, price freezes, wage freezes, investment restrictions, currency devaluations, import restrictions, foreign currency rationing and debt restructuring negotiations.

The Programme for the Long-Term Consolidation of the Yugoslav Economy, adopted in 1983, remained a mere proclamation, for nothing could be implemented without the consent of all six republics and the two autonomous provinces Kosovo and Voivodina. The country was in the stranglehold of regional self-determination. Neither the reform projects nor the Commission to Reform the Economic System, convened at the end of the '80s, succeeded in imposing a decisive turnaround. While the experts were demanding a market economy, pluralism of ownership, deregulation and privatization, abandonment of the fixed organizational structure, creation of a uniform market for goods, labour and capital, reform of the banking system, opening of the Yugoslav economy and the restriction of the function of the state to indirect control of the economy, new legislation was passed in the areas of foreign investments, invoicing, financial aid, the export financing bank and foreign trade law that actually heightened the sense of legal insecurity amongst investors. These laws were frequently amended or suspended shortly after being passed.

Out of the dead end of nationalism

The dissension between the eight regions led in the parliament to biased considerations, and to changes without any real change. Instead of addressing economic questions, the League of Communists – the Party – preferred to concern itself with staff and nationality issues that escalated to the breaking point. The party became a church without faith, leaving a spiritual void into which nationalism moved. The ideological décor, the bottle, remained the same, only the liquid it held was now completely different.

The crisis was most clearly noticeable in the poorest region, Kosovo. Income there was just one seventh of income in Slovenia. Many people sought possibilities to earn money in other parts of the country, so as to feed their families. While the Albanians went abroad on a massive scale, where they could usually only work illegally, many Serbs sold their possessions and moved with their families to Serbia. In the language of the nationalists, this process was equated with the expulsion of the Serbs from their homeland.

In 1981, one year after Tito's death, students in Prishtina demonstrated for better food at the university canteen. Workers all over Kosovo joined them, and demanded higher wages. The police shot into the demonstration and killed thirteen people. The persecution, arrests and torture of Albanians became an everyday occurrence, they were dismissed from all important positions and their children expelled from the schools, since they were no longer allowed to speak Albanian. The deaths in Kosovo aroused no indignation in the country. In the national pecking order in Yugoslavia, Albanians were just one rung above the Roma people. Their demand for the status of a republic was misinterpreted and condemned as separatism; their poverty was unimportant. Instead, of a wave of support and helpfulness, an avalanche of Serbian nationalism was unleashed which labelled the Albanians in Kosovo as intruders.

Later, Milošević would very rapidly destroy the Yugoslav system, without anyone trying to stop him. The others responsible are those who accepted the shots at the demonstrators and the persecution of the Albanians with no great uproar, in fact without any protest. Special police units from all parts of Yugoslavia participated in the ensuing hunt for the "separatists". All those then in leadership must take responsibility for the fact that all Albanians were treated as terrorists.

Unfortunately, this attitude was also supported by the Serbian Orthodox Church. In 1945, the communist regime had banished all religious communities, Christian and Muslim, from public life and nationalized their property. Now the Orthodox Church returned with a vengeance – in education, in culture and in the Serbian national consciousness. The clergy celebrated the "Kingdom of Heaven", invoked in memory both of the Serbs killed in Kosovo by the Ottomans 600 years earlier and in the Second World War by the Croatian Ustaša. The remains of Prince Lazar, killed at the Battle of Kosovo, were carried from village to village, from town to town, along the boundaries of the future Greater Serbia. The church ideologues fixed three criteria for determining the national boundaries: recognized ethnically pure Serbian areas, areas with a "Serbian spirit", such as Kosovo, where a Serbian kingdom had been founded in the tenth century and where a number of orthodox monasteries are located, and areas where there are Serbian graves.

No rational analysis which balanced the relationships and prospects of the nationalistic movements was possible, not even one that secured Serbian interests. An irrational attitude won out against the politicians who demanded sensible policies. Even many intellectuals defined the central arguments of the movement. The Academy of the Sciences and Art issued a "Memorandum" in 1986 in which it accused the Titoist regime of being anti-Serbian and of having prevented a Serbian state within the federation, of having suppressed Serbia politically and economically, and of having thrust Serbia into a subordinate role. Claiming that Serbs in Kosovo and Croatia are threatened and forced to emigrate or assimilate, they urgently demanded intervention to protect their cultural and national integrity.

The authors of the Memorandum had thus reversed the thesis of the Communist Party during the period between the World Wars, according to which Yugoslavia was a prison-house of non-Serbian nations; now, they said, Titoist Yugoslavia was a prison only for the Serbian people. The supporters of the Greater Serbian idea put heavy pressure on the Serbian and Yugoslav leaderships to get tough with the Albanians in Kosovo. Kosovo was pronounced the issue determining the survival and destiny of the Serbian people, and main factor demanding a historic re-examination of the reasons for the existence of Yugoslavia. The constitution of 1974 was used as a key argument to support the thesis that the Serbs were threatened in Yugoslavia. The revision of this constitution was declared the condition for the restoration of Serbian dignity.

The Serbian leadership started an initiative in 1985 to change the constitution of 1974; however it failed to pass the State Presidium. Large parts of the disappointed Serbian elites reacted to that aggressively, determined to wage the battle further. The moderate faction, the "cooler heads", who were ready to accept the status quo, were removed, and in 1986, Slobodan Milošević was elected chairman of the Serbian Communist Party. In 1987, he went to Kosovo and stood at the side of Serbian demonstrators. He returned to Belgrade as the leader of the Serbian people. Starting in 1986, his "anti-bureaucratic revolution" regularly and successfully used organized mass rallies with paid demonstrators to dis-

miss individual politicians and entire leaderships. Within a few months, some 5000 activists were sacked.

In March 1989, under his leadership, the Serbian constitution was changed and placed above the Yugoslav constitution. With this act, Serbia in effect seceded and withdrew from the Yugoslav state. Unfortunately, the act and its implications were taken seriously neither in Yugoslavia nor abroad.

The Albanians protested in Kosovo against the simultaneous unilateral Serbian abolition of the autonomy of the provinces, which was imposed at the same time. Again they were shot upon, twenty-two demonstrators died. The battle against the Albanians strengthened the Serbian nationalistic movement, its mass rallies which drew ever more people. On June 28, 1989, two million people assembled on the "Field of the Blackbirds" to commemorate the 600th anniversary of the lost Battle of Kosovo. In his speech, Milošević announced that Serbs were once again fighting a battle – without weapons, although these were not precluded. This remark too was not taken seriously, it provoked no reactions.

The later war criminal Zeljko Raznjatović, "Arkan", organized thousands of unemployed young men in paramilitary units to give them a sense of importance and belonging which they frequently missed so – like their parents, who had left their villages after the Second World War and settled in industrial areas. They were ready to fight for Serbia and at the same time wanted to gain status symbols for themselves: stereos, money, recognition, respect.

Milošević thought that control of the party would secure him control of Yugoslavia. At the Party Congress on January 22, 1990, his attempt to abolish the autonomy of the party in the republics failed. Since no agreement could be reached, the Slovenian Communists left the hall early. That demolished the political leadership of the country as its bearing pillar. This event was interpreted in Europe as a conflict between Serbian nationalism and the new democracies in Slovenia and Croatia. Once again, there was no reaction.

Within the government, there were various attempts to get out of the Yugoslav crisis peacefully. The Slovenian and later also the Croatian lead-

erships made several suggestions during the nineties, first for of a modernized federation, then for an asymmetrical federation, and finally for a confederation. None of the suggestions was accepted. The last attempt was made by the presidents of Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kiro Gligorov and Alija Izetbegović, who proposed uniting Serbia and Montenegro in a federation with their republics, which would then form a confederation with Slovenia and Croatia. Milošević and Tudjman turned it down.

The Croatian politician Ante Marković, who became head of the Yugoslav government in 1989, took radical steps to solve the real problem, the economic crisis: He hoped to reduce the national debt from \$21 to \$12.2 billion with the support of private industry, open up the markets for foreign capital, and support oil refining, agriculture and tourism. Pegging of the currency to the German mark and the decontrol of imports brought short-term successes in the battle against inflation, too. Marković tried to modernize Yugoslavia and lead it into the EU. But it was too late, the destructive, nationalistic forces increasingly won out against the constructive forces. The republics had grown so far apart that the Federal Government no longer had any scope for action with its measures. During the dispute, Serbia even introduced an economic blockade, special taxes and customs against Slovenia and Croatia, and printed new banknotes without agreement. Inflation soared. Ideology overcame economic rationality, nationalistic lunacy overwhelmed sanity. Although the European governments gave moral support to Marković policy, they mostly withdrew to a wait-and-see position, or got caught up in a discussion about the rights of nationalities – until it was too late.

Voted out

Parallel to Serbia, the other republics too developed their national programmes. Slovenia went its own way. Life there had become much freer than in other regions since the mid-'80s. Dissenters, oppositionist and dismissed Yugoslav politicians could speak freely there. The Slovenes strove for the creation of a free civil society with a multi-party system and a market economy. They talked about the ecology and criticized the Yugoslav exports of armaments to crisis regions around the world.

After three Slovenes were sentenced to imprisonment by a court martial for “betraying secrets”, protests broke out.

Since the outbreak of the crisis in Kosovo, Slovenia had been the only Yugoslav republic to take the side of the Albanians and shown solidarity with the 1500 Albanians who were on strike in a mine for higher salaries in 1989. This attitude triggered anger in Serbia, which still expected gratitude from Slovenia for its “liberation” from Austria-Hungary in the First World War. At that time, Petra Kelly and Gerd Bastian of the German Greens had been the only prominent figures from Europe to travel to support the miners. However, they were prevented from leaving the airport in Belgrade, and were sent back to Germany by the police.

In the first free elections in Slovenia in April 1990, the opposition won, but the people elected a communist president, thus safeguarding the stability of power.

The Croatian communist leadership was paralysed between the demand for maintaining socialist Yugoslavia on the one hand, and the desire for a free market economy on the other. Private enterprise and political pluralism could no longer be prevented. Speech liberated itself. The magazine *Danas* became the organ of Croatian critical public opinion.

The leadership for a long time silently accepted Serbian endeavours for hegemony. They hoped to be able to accomplish more by a policy of quiet and stability, and were afraid that a wrong step would associate them with the Second World War-era “Independent State of Croatia”, which would provide support for the Greater Serbian movement. In addition, some Communists were afraid they could be called to account for the crimes of the partisans at the end of the Second World War. They also had consideration for the majority of the Croatian Serbs, who feared the return of wartime era of extremism, and couldn’t imagine a life without a common Yugoslavia.

Only in view of the collapse of European communism and with the growing danger from Serbia did the long silence evaporate in Croatia. Convinced that they would win in the elections, and in the hope of regaining their fading legitimacy in the population, the Communist Party held the

first free elections in June 1990. However, the Croatian Democratic Community (HDZ) won.

Instead of a programme, the HDZ made great promises, wanted to lead Croatia into the EU, and bring about a level of prosperity similar to that of Switzerland. Its chairman, Franjo Tuđman, also called on all Croatians in the Diaspora for help. They gave him money, and hoped for political careers in their own new state. Tuđman rallied people around him who strengthened him, but at the same time aroused fears of Croatian extremism harking back to the time of Ante Pavelić and his "Independent State of Croatia". Mass dismissals of Serbs and their family members made this fear grow. Although the HDZ hadn't openly proclaimed the smashing of Yugoslavia and the foundation of an independent state, the rhetoric of its chairman showed that this was obviously his primary objective.

In Macedonia too, the opposition won in November 1990, but as in Slovenia, the people voted for the old, experienced president.

In the elections in November 1990 in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the citizens voted only for their national parties: Croats for the HDZ, Serbs for the Serbian Democratic Party, and Muslims for the Party of the Democratic Alternative. Only in Serbia and Montenegro did the Communists win the elections in December 1990, as carriers of the Greater Serbian movement.

It was impossible to hold elections at the federal Yugoslav level, for Serbia and Slovenia prevent it with their vetoes. Prime Minister Marković thereupon founded a federal party, the League of Reform Forces of Yugoslavia. But this idea failed; it was already too late.

After the transition of power in 1990, the process of the decomposition of Yugoslavia continued and was radicalized. Virtually all Serbs considered the elections in Slovenia as the Slovenian secession from Yugoslavia and those in Croatia as the triumph of the Ustaša. The results were used as a message and a call to the masses to continue the national struggle, even with weapons. The Serbian leadership and the Yugoslav People's Army accelerated their preparations for war, and the new governments in Slovenia and Croatia accelerated their secession and their autonomy. Everyone rushed to accomplish his own goal.

The war against the people

In deference to its nationalistic supporters abroad, the new Croatian leadership reintroduced the state and national symbols which had been used, too, by the fascist Croatian state. This was grist for the mill of Serbian nationalism. With support from Serbia, the Croatian Serbs in the area along the Bosnian and Serbian borders, in the Krajina, reacted with a rebellion, declaring their autonomy and declined loyalty to the new Croatian government. They took control of the state and police apparatus and the weapons of the territorial units. Paramilitary units adorned with Četnik symbols drove the Catholic population out with armed attacks. They were housed in hotels on the Adriatic coast, from which the last tourists were just departing. It was said that “the world is abandoning us”.

After the years of propaganda, the Serbian aggression was approved of by most Serbs, and there were both emotional and material reasons for that. At stake was the permanent gain or loss of areas which had been annexed to Serbian territory in earlier wars, but where Serb losses had been very heavy. A Serbia or Yugoslavia without the two highly developed republics of Slovenia and Croatia, and particularly without its pearl, the Adriatic coast, was something that people could imagine only as a small, truncated state – and nationalists couldn't imagine it at all.

In the spirit of their national programmes, the new governments in Slovenia and Croatia strove to secede from Yugoslavia as soon as possible and to declare their independence. The Serbian movement had already completed its preparations for war, which broke out in the summer of 1991: Serbia and the Yugoslav People's Army attacked Slovenia and then Croatia. From the spring of 1992 until August 1995, it was waged against Bosnia-Herzegovina. After seven years, in 1999, the last act of the war took place in Kosovo.

Power and interests

When Milošević broached the possibility of war in 1989, Serbia had greatly superior military power, compared to its potential opponents. Since its national movement was fully developed, the Serbian leadership expected to be able, together with the Yugoslavian People's Army, to

overwhelm the others. The Serbian leadership thought that the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, the state structures, the president, the governments of the republics, and the diplomatic corps, would support the Serbian side, as would the banks concentrated in Belgrade, and also the international community, which would want to protect the unity of Yugoslavia, i.e., a Serbian Yugoslavia. It was assumed that such a superior force would be sufficient to break any resistance and win, even without actually using force, without war. It was also assumed that there would be strong pro-Yugoslav forces among other peoples, which would free the country "from the Croatian and Slovenian separatists".

In 1989-'90, all these conditions favourable to Serbia disappeared overnight. In January 1990, the League of Communists dissolved itself. When the People's Army intervened, no Croat or Slovene took the Serbian side to defend Yugoslavia. Bosnia-Herzegovina too withdrew from Yugoslavia in 1992.

The collapse into chaos

The slowly growing nationalism in all parts of the country was the result of the serious economic crisis and the great uncertainty in the population. The 2700% inflation before the outbreak of the war in 1991 – like that in Europe during the 1920s – threatened people's very livelihoods, especially in the larger towns. There were reports of people who killed themselves because they were hungry and couldn't pay their electricity bills.

In this situation, the interest in the preservation of the state was lost. The media had a major part in this, interpreting and disseminating the daily news in national terms. Anti-nationalism was discredited as the heritage of the socialist regime, and Tito demonized as a "totalitarian Bolshevik" by the Croatian and Serbian nationalist leaders alike. A new memorial culture was to be forged, nationalism rehabilitated and anti-fascism called into question. In Serbia, the etniks were celebrated as anti-fascists, and in Croatia, the Ustaša were revered as heroes and defenders of their people. This process was underpinned by the disclosure of the covered-up crimes of the communist government at the end of the Second World War. To spread hatred and panic, Serb nationalists

used the memory of the Jasenovac extermination camp, in which the Croatian Ustaša had killed thousands of Jews, Roma, Serbs and anti-fascists. The Croatian nationalists used the memory of Bleiburg, where partisans had killed thousands of their opponents after the British had prevented their flight to the west. Like a boomerang, the suppressed stories returned and fostered the thirst for revenge.

The ideational connection which had arisen as “fraternity and unity” in the common partisan movement, the link connecting the Yugoslav peoples which transcended all historical and everyday barriers, was thus broken. The last threads broke when the same massacred corpse was shown at the same time on the television news in Belgrade and in Zagreb – as the victim of Croats and of Serbs, respectively. Planned murders, often of moderate, peace-oriented and sensible people, spread fear which increased to panic. The tension produced the feeling of having to defend oneself and one’s own people, as the partisans and the other earlier heroes had done. In coloured uniforms obtained from a variety of modern armies and adorned with Četnik and Ustaša decorations, the insanity of the civil war of the Second World War era was revived. The calls to “defend hearth and home” returned as the terror, the suppressed, the unspoken, to the new generation. And the nerves of the people were stretched to the breaking point.

Tito and his army

Such a development would have been unthinkable while Tito was alive. Tito was the epicentre of the state, he as a person played a decisive role, both internally and abroad. To the outside, he was a powerful friend, the people saw him as their patriarchal unifying leader, later even as an immortal super-father. At the same time, during his period, the country developed from an agrarian state to an export-oriented industrial nation in which life had gained in quality. It had become a matter of course that all children attended school and got an education, that medical care was available to all, and that there were no more beggars. Due to their history, the Yugoslav peoples had no developed political culture, so that the personality cult took on mythical proportions, even during Tito’s lifetime. The feeling prevailed that after his death, nothing fundamental would

change. In the underground and during the war, Tito had risen to the leadership of the people and then to the presidency of a prosperous country on the side of the non-aligned states; it was an international beacon of hope.

During the last decade of his life, nothing politically important happened in the country. Tito's reputation as a leader of the non-aligned states merely grew. When he died in 1980, the whole country was in mourning. "Comrade Tito, we swear to you that we will not deviate from your path", was one song sung to ward off the fear of change in a state which had lost its most important integrating identity figure.

Tito always emphasized the importance of the army, which guaranteed his power, and was to defend the country externally and internally. He therefore gave it political decision-making powers greater than those of the party. As the successor to the partisans, the army in Yugoslavia enjoyed an unchallenged, specially privileged position. Its command had a seat in the Presidium, the highest political body in the country. The salaries of the officers were among the highest in the country; they got the best flats, and could start their well-paid retirement at the age of forty-five, their children received preferential treatment for university applications, grants and the best jobs. Since Yugoslavia saw itself as a country threatened from both east and west, the Yugoslav People's Army was the fourth-strongest in Europe. It had many weapons factories, which also produced for personal use and for export. With the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the army command saw its communist ideals collapse, and was threatened with the loss of its privileges, and of some 70,000 professional soldiers.

After the Second World War, communist Yugoslavia was initially the most faithful and devoted ally of the Soviet Union. After the break between Tito and Stalin in 1948, Yugoslavia made use of its status as a non-aligned country, which meant that it was tied into the Cold War in a special way. Independence from the Soviet Union was achieved before the founding of Nato in 1949 and the Warsaw Pact in 1955, so that both blocks tolerated Yugoslavia's special position. Even during the Cold War, Yugoslavia played an important role as a model socialist country; after

the collapse of communism and the Soviet empire, Yugoslavia lost this position. Starting in January 1989, when the Hungarian parliament introduced a multi-party system, through November 1989, when the Berlin Wall came down, until the end of the Soviet Union in 1991, communist power collapsed throughout East Europe – largely without bloodshed. But not in Yugoslavia, where the army shot at its own citizens.

The Serbian leadership and the army leadership prevented Stipe Mesić, as a member of a non-communist party, from assuming the office of president and commander-in-chief of the army. Thus, Yugoslavia and its army remained leaderless. While the overthrow of communism was celebrated in other European countries, the tanks of the Yugoslav People's Army drove from Belgrade towards Vukovar to protect the grip on power of the last communist leadership. Vukovar and many other towns and villages were soon reduced to rubble. With no foreign enemy, against which they had been trained to fight, the army waged war against its own people.

The new leaders and the people

Milošević had been the first to realize that Tito and his era had died; he appeared as a saviour and offered a way out for all the frustrations of the Yugoslav and later the Serbian people. He became their catastrophe, for never have their losses been as great as under his leadership. His success was in his ability to suggest to different groups that he represented exactly their positions – the communist, the fascist, the liberal, the Yugoslav position, whatever was just then needed. His power was a product of a Greater Serbian ideology which had been created long before his time, and had received legitimacy from the "Memorandum". Milošević only implemented it; otherwise, someone else would have done so. The spirit of war had been growing for a long time. In many books published before the war, the Yugoslav concept of Yugoslavia was described as a Serbian prison, and it was said that the time spent in Yugoslavia had been lost time for the Serbian people, which must now return to its roots.

The anti-bureaucratic revolution was a populist movement which consolidated Milošević as a leader and entrusted the national mission to him. The conviction predominated that, after the end of the Cold War and with Tito gone, and with no outside power apparently willing to intervene, the time had finally come to raise the Serbian question and to answer it either by the Serbianization of all of Yugoslavia, or by the delimitation of Serbia within ethnic boundaries.

The Serbian people were the only ones who had the strength to destroy Yugoslavia. With 36%, it was the largest people in the federation, it held most of the positions in the army leadership, and Serbs lived in all parts of the country. Parts of the Serbian elite were convinced that they would be powerful enough to get their way.

Tudjman gave expression to Croatian nationalism, with all its frustrations. The new element was his goal of an ethnically homogeneous state. Croatian nationalists had for centuries seen Bosnia-Herzegovina as their territory, and the Drina River as their national boundary. This changed under Tudjman for the first time: he saw as Croatian only what was inhabited by Croats. This meant splitting Bosnia-Herzegovina, and was to be achieved by forced or voluntary ethnic resettlement.

Bosnia-Herzegovina had the highest price to pay for the disintegration of Yugoslavia. Its misfortune was due to the efforts of Serbia and Croatia to extend their territories by dividing up Bosnia-Herzegovina. The thesis of the Islamic danger which allegedly emanated from Bosnia was disseminated, although neither Sarajevo nor anywhere else in Bosnia-Herzegovina was marked by any atmosphere of fundamentalism during the 1990s. The war for a time put the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Muslims under extreme pressure, and its leadership, out of a feeling of powerlessness and in view of the genocides against the Bosniak people during the war, copied some of the same nationalistic arguments its neighbours were using. And since Bosnia-Herzegovina was actually attacked from Serbia and Croatia, hence by Christians, and felt abandoned by other Europeans, it was practically forced to accept the help which was proffered – and this came from the Islamic states in the form of food, medicine, weapons, and some extremists.

The key question however is: who wanted the war and who was forced into it? The Yugoslav people believed until the end that there would be no war – and that if there were, then only where both sides wanted it. Everyone ignored Kosovo and the Albanians. In the case of Slovenia, everyone was horrified. In the case of Croatia, everyone thought it must have something to do with the Ustaša. When the shooting started in Bosnia, people thought it only involved the people in the burning neighbouring village. Only when their own village burned did they realize that the armed paramilitary units and the army were waging war against the civilian population. When people were rounded up, they thought they themselves were blameless, and would soon be let free. When they were taken to the camps, tortured and killed by the thousands, they couldn't think anymore. The people in Sarajevo thought they were part of the civilized world, having hosted the Olympic Games in 1988 with great success, and that they were actually a good example of Christians and Muslims living together. They lost their faith in humanity and their hope when they were besieged, shelled and shot at from the surrounding mountains for over three years. The snipers got DM 100 for each person shot, for each dead child, for each dead woman, for each dead man, regardless of nationality. The free world could be reached only through a narrow tunnel which was dug under the airfield. Anyone trying to escape from the city was shot by the UNO soldiers, who proclaimed their neutrality. In the other cities too, the non-Serbian population was to be bled to death and driven out by starvation. In 1993, when more than fifty-one thousand people were driven together in Srebrenica by the "ethnic cleansing" of eastern Bosnia, the French General Philippe Morillon promised desperate women preventing him from leaving town that the UN would defend Srebrenica from further attacks as a protected zone. Two years later, after they had been left to endure starvation and constant shelling, UN soldiers stood idly by as the worst massacre in Europe since the Second World War was carried out.

Shortly thereafter, Serbian officers left the Croatian Krajina, the "border area", with their families and their property. Two weeks later, some two hundred thousand Serbs fled before Operation Storm. For the USA, it was important after the massacre in Srebrenica in July 1995 to end the

war in Bosnia-Herzegovina and to bring the Bosnian Serbs to the negotiating table. Since they themselves did not want to intervene militarily any more than their Nato allies did, somebody else had to do it. That somebody was Croatia, which received strategic assistance from the USA for that purpose. The Croatian armed forces expanded their operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina so far that the USA had to forbid them from taking the city of Banja Luka, which had already been deserted by its residents, to prevent a possible humanitarian catastrophe. Thus was the Serbian Republic within Bosnia-Herzegovina maintained, so as to establish a balance of forces.

New Legends

In socialist Yugoslavia, the truth about the Second World War was covered over by ideological interpretations. History served the purposes of political propaganda, in which there were always very many heroes and very few war criminals. After the war of the 1990s, this tradition was continued. All sides equated their own actions with the war of liberation during the Second World War, and gave their fighters flats and war pensions; all have felt themselves the victim, and have denied or downplayed their own crimes. Under the pressure to change – so as to attain admission to the EU, but particularly as a result of the trials before the International Court of Justice in The Hague – the truth about the war crimes has been disclosed. It isn't easy to speak about guilt and responsibility, particularly one's own. Many people were involved directly or indirectly, as criminals or as passive spectators; frequently they were neighbours, friends, employees, fellow citizens. It would be much simpler if only lunatics or monsters – abnormal cases – were responsible for the war and its crimes. Now, the victims are talking constantly about the violations of the Geneva Convention on Refugees, about the torture and murder camps, about the sieges of the cities, about the targeted shooting of innocent people, about the mass murders, rapes and expulsions – as long as the perpetrators do not.

Abroad too, new legends have emerged about this war, such as the claim that Germany supposedly triggered it by recognizing the independence of Slovenia and Croatia. That recognition was carried out on De-

ember 15, 1991, after the Croatian cities of Sisak, Zadar, Dubrovnik and Osijek had already been shelled by the artillery of the Yugoslav People's Army under Serbian leadership. A month before the recognition, on November 19, 1991, Vukovar was completely destroyed and then taken by this army. Many thousands of casualties resulted. The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the temporary uncertainty in Russia made it easier for the western countries to recognize the independence of the attacked states, Slovenia and Croatia. They could thus become UN members, and UN troops entered the crisis region (the Pink Zone), which prevented further bloodshed and destruction there.

The fact that the war then broke out in Bosnia-Herzegovina was due not to this recognition, but to the same unresolved issues which had also led to the war in Slovenia and Croatia. There, the Yugoslav People's Army, the Serbian paramilitary units and the outraged, panicky Serbian people tried to drive out people of other nationalities by torture and murder, simply because they had cast their votes for the independence of Bosnia-Herzegovina in a referendum.

There also is a legend that Nato triggered the war in Kosovo. It would have been naïve to think that Nato air raids could have solved the Balkan problems. It was, however at that moment an opportunity to stop the war and to end the killing. The Nato intervention was a step by which the international community demonstrated that bestialities happening there were not of no importance. If this step had been carried out ten years earlier, the lives of hundreds of thousands would have been saved. If the Yugoslav problem had been recognized early and taken seriously, had the European countries taken a common position with a well thought-out, serious policy of prevention oriented towards the future of this region, there might have been neither the war nor the Nato intervention. If the international community had been able to oppose Adolf Hitler in 1938, there might have been no Second World War, with its millions of dead.

After 1945, the USA never cared much about southern and Eastern Europe, except in connection with its main problem, Russia. It was considered a marginal region, for which no major commitment was neces-

sary. Of course there were exceptions in situations in which western credibility was questioned. The intervention in Kosovo too was not carried out because of the terrible situation of the Albanians, but because of the reputation of Nato, which had to show that it had teeth. After waiting for four years in Bosnia while terrible crimes were committed – in Srebrenica alone, Serbian units killed 8000 people within a few days – they now reacted promptly after the expulsion of the Albanian population from Kosovo. In 1992, there had been no common will to exert determined influence on the region. At Dayton in 1995, Milošević even was considered a stabilizing factor for Bosnia-Herzegovina. Only in Kosovo did relations with him completely break down.

Of course, the open question is whether there might not have been means other than the bombing campaign. These certainly had been available, especially during the time prior to the outbreak of violence. But they weren't used – as they had not been during the time when Hitler had led Europe to disaster. Then, Europe's weakness made Hitler possible. This time, Europe didn't take nationalism seriously once again, and was surprised when it erupted into brutality.

Many mistakes were made; in particular, there was a lack of a uniform line of the western European countries, which for a while supported completely different sides and programmes. There were controversial positions even within each country. For the British and French, fear of a Germany once again large and united was mixed with memories of the First and Second World Wars, which had been worked through psychologically. While the war raged in Yugoslavia, perhaps also in fear of it, a politically unified Europe was confirmed by Chancellor Helmut Kohl and French President François Mitterrand in the Maastricht Treaty. Germany was in fact fairly reticent with regard to Yugoslav issues, perhaps so as not to endanger the reunification of Germany by alienating its Allies, who had not yet withdrawn from Germany. This sensible behaviour let the aftermath of the Second World War come to an end for Germany, while in Yugoslavia, everything that the people there had built up since 1945 was destroyed in a chaos driven by nationalistic passions. People were dying in Sarajevo under fire from the surrounding mountains at the same time as the German Reichstag was wrapped in white cloth in a huge,

lively public festival of peace. Europe didn't want a war in Yugoslavia. More than that, however, it didn't want all the refugees.

Yugoslavia, a mistake?

Yugoslavia came into being in the context of great political changes in Europe during the First and Second World Wars. The great powers were involved in the emergence, the maintenance, the life and the death of Yugoslavia. In the First World War, Great Britain, France, the USA and Italy supported its foundation to strengthen the barrier against Germany's "drive to the east", and against Bolshevik Russia. The Axis powers – Germany and Italy – destroyed it in 1941. The victorious powers of the Second World War, Great Britain, USA and the USSR, supported the revival of Yugoslavia, because it had been successful in its fight against Hitler. Just as the victorious powers of the First World War had seen Yugoslavia as a guarantor for the political balance in Europe, those of the Second World War had similar expectations of the second Yugoslavia.

Yugoslavia was a conglomeration of several nations, languages, cultures and religions. It has been heir to four different cultural/civilizational realms: the Byzantine, the Mediterranean, the Central European and the Islamic. Foreign rulers have left deep traces on the cultural identity of the population. Nevertheless, the differences in development were greater than between the poorest and richest parts of Europe. In Yugoslavia, all the problems of modern civilization clashed. The peoples had lived in one state only since 1918, in which there were eight years of restricted parliamentary democracy, six years of royal dictatorship, and six years of pseudo-parliamentarianism. During the Second World War, the country also experienced a brutal civil war alongside the struggle for liberation. During the forty-six years thereafter, Yugoslavia was Stalinist for seven years and then grew from a centralist state to the most open socialist state that ever existed. Thus, Yugoslavia experienced capitalism and communism, fascism, occupation and civil war.

Yugoslavia was an artificial and at the same time a natural area, depending on how one looks at it, just as other countries are. At its foundation

in 1918, it had satisfied the needs of its founders. The Serbs got their state, in which all of them could live together, while the Slovenes and Croats were protected against the territorial appetite of Italy. In trying to satisfy all sides, Yugoslavia failed to solve its internal contradictions. The Yugoslav state that came into being during the Second World War was founded on the basis of the needs of its peoples, and it later disintegrated because of its unresolved internal contradictions.

One great problem was the underdevelopment of the first and also the second Yugoslavia. The first had looked for a way out in integrated Yugoslavism and then in dictatorship. The second had seen a federation supported by communist ideology with dictatorial traits as the solution. In both cases, the dictatorships were a substitute for general development and for political democracy. Attempts to establish a centralist state have always awakened resistance.

The essential nature of the conflicts involved different concepts of Yugoslavia. For the Serbs, it was their country, their war spoils; for the other peoples, it was an attempt to create their national identity. At the threshold to a new, democratic type of state, the worst possible solution was implemented – dissolution. The Serbian side fought for its preservation in a manner – military force – which could only lead to its destruction. Mass parades and a leadership cult were the fuel with which Yugoslavia was destroyed during the last war.

In Serbia, the opinion became widespread that the Croats and Slovenes had never seriously wanted Yugoslavia, that they had exploited it as a transition leading up to their independence. The common opinion in Slovenia and Croatia is that the Serbs never saw Yugoslavia as anything but an extended Serbia. The Yugoslav idea had been born in Croatia and developed, too, in Slovenia. However, there was resistance there to an integral Yugoslavism. The Communist Party had picked up on that during the Second World War, developed it in the context of the common resistance movement, and used it as a basis for the federal state in post-war Yugoslavia.

Of course the crimes could have been avoided had there been a different intellectual climate and the will to prevent them. However, there

was only the will to create a greater Serbia. Milošević had the enormous war machine of the Yugoslav People's Army. Yugoslavia couldn't have been smashed; the people couldn't have been forced into massive flight, had the terrible crimes not been committed.

Amongst the officers there were also those who preferred to kill themselves in the face of this war, rather than shoot at their own people. This powerful army could have wrought even more destruction, had there not been moderates amongst its officers. But there were also those amongst the officers, such as General Ratko Mladić, who ordered the massacre of Srebrenica, who connected their military skill with the hatred and the euphoric will to avenge the victims of their own families and of all Serbian victims of earlier times.

There were many groups of young men who felt like the losers of society, who were in most cases unemployed before the war, let off steam as football hooligans, and got a feeling of security and importance in the paramilitary units, and who took revenge on the successful, modern and prosperous citizens by robbing their possessions, mostly electrical appliances and cars, burning down their houses, locking them in torture and extermination camps, and killing them.

There were also normal people, who worked abroad, even here in Germany, who took organized bus trips to the war region on the weekends, to shoot and to loot there. And there was terrible violence and murders amongst the victims.

None of this needs to have happened. A Yugoslavia fully integrated into Europe, with a developed protection of human rights and economic development, with its identity consolidated by care of language, culture, tradition and religion, was absolutely possible. It could have been preserved as a free and flexible union and not as a gaggle of small, questionable nation-states. Civil society in Serbia too was against the war, and felt abandoned by the world in view of the lack of demonstrations against nationalism and the war outside Yugoslavia. It is still hard for people to understand that the view predominating in Europe was that all Serbs, all Croats, all Muslims, all Albanians and all others were sunk in hatred for each other and wanted war. For it was the political, religious

and intellectual elites who led the conflict and who dug the remains of the dead of earlier wars out of their graves, so as to drive more people into the abyss. The numerous attempts by initiatives and individuals, clergymen, mothers, professors or artists, who tried to prevent the war by meetings, conferences and large demonstrations, were disregarded. Their behaviour before, during and after the war is the link to the process of peace and reconciliation.

The disintegration resulted from the interplay of various internal factors at the moment when Yugoslavia no longer felt threatened from the outside – and indeed was not. The collapse came when the country's own politicians were no longer able to turn the wheel around and lead the country out of the crisis peacefully. Like the people, they thought they were part of the modern and developed, civilized world, and hoped for foreign assistance in the economic and political crisis. The help didn't come, or it came too late, when the armed power struggle was already being waged.

Yugoslavia was possible only as a homogeneous, liberal state, not as a community sufficient unto itself, but as space in which the national differences are considered an enrichment.

The equal rights of women

The fact that some two million women had supported the people's war of liberation, and that 110,000 of them had fought as partisans, ensured them the right to vote in 1945, and the constitutional guarantee of equal rights. At their first congress in 1944, the Yugoslav women had founded their organization, the Antifascist Women's Front. After the war, educated women organized literacy classes, health and political education, cultural programmes and social assistance for the population in the whole country. They helped clear the rubble, and participated in the large-scale work campaigns to build housing and infrastructure. The Antifascist Women's Front was a good platform from which they could also fight against the patriarchal structures, against discrimination against women, and for their participation in education and the work force. When the movement acquired great importance socially and politically, this became its

downfall. The Antifascist Women's Front was dissolved in 1953, and transformed into a women's association which was to deal exclusively with the education of women in the countryside. It was a way to keep potential woman competitors out of socially respected positions, and force them back into the household, where they should care for their new image, complete with make-up and beautiful homes. Even socialist ideology could not bypass patriarchal values. The initial democratization was throttled again.

The legal foundation of women's rights and the conviction that education is decisive for a better life could not, however, be taken away again. Thus, many women completed their education. Although housework, and hence the double burden, remained exclusively their responsibility, many women climbed to the highest levels in politics, the economy and culture. Before the war of the 1990s, women were amongst the best journalists, writers and politicians.

In the new war, women were completely pushed out of these positions. The war was waged against them, they were not only expelled, shot and tortured, they were also raped on a massive scale. The rapists explained that they actually wanted to humiliate their husbands by violating their women, so that they would never again return to their homes. The "ethnic cleansing" was to be achieved by means of violence against women. The women were permanently damaged, but so were their children and their families, their very lives.

Nevertheless, it was primarily the women who healed the wounds again, cared for the refugees, the traumatized children, women and men, and built up a social supply system for the population. They were the ones who made the first contacts to the "others", and thus initiated the peace process. They were now forced to regain their rights in their families and in society, against the new ideology coloured by nationalism and religion. This time, for the first time in human history, the raped women have talked about their experiences frankly in front of cameras, and have made contacts with women from other parts of the world. Thanks to the great commitment of an international women's network and the courage of individual women who were willing to speak about

their experiences in court, the UN has now recognized rape in war as a crime against the humanity, and has adopted Resolution 1325, so that the perpetrators can be punished. That has an encouraging effect. Today, many women worldwide are speaking about their experiences – in former wars and in today's wars.

The results of war: Winners and losers

War is an act of violence with which no conflicts can be solved. It is always the worst way. There are no sensible reasons for the aggression which has led to the disintegration of Yugoslavia.

The war in Bosnia-Herzegovina was ended by the Dayton Treaty, which projected a state onto the foundations on which national divisions had flowed. The treaty was a way to end the war and the killing; however, as the result of the division of power, its population remains hostage to the national quotas of their respective nationalisms. The country is unable to find a way out of its negative inner tensions and its permanent threat of disintegration. Before the war, there were many other possibilities. The three-year war caused the inner disintegration of the country, and ethnic divisions which cannot be undone by a new state structure. Serbia suffered a defeat in this war. The public was exposed to terrible propaganda. Many people supported a wrong programme; now, they have trouble seeing that they were on the side of inhumanity and of the murder of innumerable people. Montenegro has now said goodbye to the common state, and Serbia has thus lost its direct access to the Adriatic coast. Kosovo has declared its independence, and the Serbs still living there have become a minority.

Croatia is now without most of its Serbs. The Muslims have been driven out of the part of Bosnia-Herzegovina governed by the Serbs, the Serbian Republic. Western Herzegovina is also ethnically pure. In all new states, the standard of living has fallen far below what it was before the war. Many people are suffering from unemployment, poverty, and corruption, they are depressed and resigned.

The winners of this war are the nationalists who have implemented their goals. The new governments claim to have nothing to do with the crimes, but they are willing to take the spoils of the war. The relationship of the religious communities to the crimes is also telling. All religions condemn them, but each justifies the crimes committed by its own community.

As new small states, all the former Yugoslav republics are undergoing deep social and economic crises. The road to confidence-building is very long and complicated. In order to start social and personal healing, it would be urgently necessary to remove the taboos from the stories, and disclose the past, both for the victims and for the perpetrators. That will require much knowledge and a common will – and important support from the outside. The foundations of change must be human rights. They apply everywhere; they are universal.

Only after what has happened has been dealt with can it be called past, can it have no more meaning, no more power over people. History cannot be corrected. People have committed many crimes. How can the horrors of our ancestors be compensated for? At the level of the citizen, living together is successful everywhere in the world. In the fight for power and territories, the political leaders develop a different attitude. For them, membership in different ethnic groups, coincidental ties, become the highest of all things, to be defended against all higher values – against humanity, against the living together of people of different origins or denominations, against the civic principle, against everything which connects us. An attack of the darkest past is then launched against a liveable future.

In our world of today, we are at a historic crossroads. We can develop a new responsibility from the universal experience of people, and respect the moral message that emerges, or we can make the same fatal mistakes again and again, and close our eyes to the evil of contagious nationalism. The hope of defeating what threatens us continuously springs only from human understanding, from which solidarity and the desire for understanding and a common life arises.

Resistance to the war in former Yugoslavia Yugoslavism as an integrative state concept

The people in former Yugoslavia never had the opportunity to learn how to live in a democracy. When the Yugoslav state was created at the end of the First World War from entities that had previously been separated, and were in some cases foreign-ruled, the foundation for conflict and disintegration was already laid. The struggle around the centralist state constitution included shots fired in Parliament, a royal dictatorship and finally a civil war. Yugoslavism as an integrative state concept threatened to collapse from the outset.

During the course of the Second World War however, the Communists seized upon this idea and expanded it into an ideology. They were successful in winning the majority of the population to the partisan struggle, and ending the war as victors, and then in establishing themselves as the leading force in socialist Yugoslavia. No serious political opposition was allowed to develop in the new state; neither did the Communist Party want one, nor did it seem necessary under the “soft” Yugoslav socialist system.

At the beginning of the 1960s, voices were raised in several parts of the country complaining that they were economically disadvantaged. In the hope of stabilizing the country politically over the long term, the leader, Josip Broz Tito, instituted an economic reform, followed twenty years later by a new constitution. However, the conflicts broke out anew just a year after his death in 1980. The Serbian leadership wanted the old constitution back, so as to regain their old dominant position. Since the other parts of the country refused to go along with this, the acute economic problems were, as usual, transformed into a nationalistic struggle.

While the citizens of the country had never lived in a democracy, they wanted no war – nor did they hate each other in a manner that might have led to war. Rather, the conviction prevailed that with the end of the Second World War, wars in that area had been ended for all time. The formation of a Yugoslav identity also seemed irreversible. Until the first shots were fired in 1990, most people believe that “the world” would

help solve the problems peacefully. Surprised, unprepared and dismayed, they watched as one place after another was attacked and destroyed by the tanks of their own army and by paramilitary units.

Peaceful Resistance and Repression and War

Major Yugoslav resistance against the war was impossible, due to the lack of any party or other opposition. In a country in which the partisans were the great models, and which maintained an armed defence against foreign attackers in which all adult citizens were involved, there was little chance for non-violent resistance by the citizens. Nonetheless, even during the periods of the worst fighting, there were in all parts of the country and in all societal strata people with the courage and the silent solidarity for those affected who, alone or in groups, provided help and peaceful resistance.

For example, the mothers of soldiers of the Yugoslav People's Army on January 18, 1991, shortly after the brief war against Slovenia, sent an appeal to the General Staff with a plea to solve Yugoslavia's political problems peacefully, and not to lead their children into war against their own people. In Zagreb alone, 64,000 citizens signed this appeal in the course of just two days. It remained unanswered.

In the summer of 1991, thousands of mothers from all parts of Yugoslavia travelled to Belgrade to confront the generals. Without success. When young soldiers pointed their guns at them and demanded that they leave the University Hall, one of them said, "We have to go now, otherwise they will have our children shoot at us." Many people in Yugoslavia hoped that such courageous action would lead to a restoration of sanity. A protest against the hitherto almighty army had been an unthinkable step up to that point.

Abroad, the actions of the mothers were just as unsuccessful. A trip by several hundred mothers to Brussels and Strasburg to call on the women's organizations and peace movements in Europe to take action against the looming war in Yugoslavia sparked no reactions. During the second year of the war, a group of peace-minded women from Germany travelled to Sarajevo; this action no longer impressed anybody.

At a few places in Croatia, several clergymen and police were able to take successful action. By soothing persuasion and conversations with excited people, they were able over the long-term to prevent the outbreak of violence in their areas of influence. The weapons were piled in front of the altars.

The nationalistic warmongers did not like such actions; indeed, they had several of these courageous people murdered – in some cases together with their families. The murders were even staged, and used with the persuasiveness of television images to split the population by nationality. The uniformized media disseminated hate propaganda; the symbols of the partisans, which stood for unity and solidarity, were replaced by nationalistic symbols which additionally reinforced fear and panic.

The only major demonstrations against the war took place in April 1992 in Sarajevo. Up until then, the people had watched the war rage in Slovenia and then in Croatia. They couldn't believe that it would come to their city as well, where so many nationalities live together in peace. However, once the city had been surrounded by the Serbian paramilitary units and the Yugoslav People's Army, and was being shelled from the surrounding mountains, several hundred thousand people spontaneously took to the streets. They occupied the parliament and proclaimed a citizens' parliament that was to preserve peace. Thousands of people who had come from other places to take part were prevented by roadblocks from entering Sarajevo. When eight snipers fired at the demonstration from a building, the demonstrators ran away in panic; several people were killed. The TV programme JUTEL, which up until that time had reported in a non-nationalistic manner and had provided objective information for the citizens, was then closed down forever in Bosnia and Herzegovina, too – as it had been a year earlier in other parts of the country, after the nationalists had won the elections.

Peace organizations which arose during the war

In spite of years of siege, hunger, death and deprivation, peace organizations arose during the war with international support, several of which are mentioned below:

The Sarajevo International Peace Centre works for human rights; it is a cooperative effort of various groups. It supports the construction of youth organizations, ecological programmes, solidarity and humanitarian actions, and works for cultural education and interreligious cooperation.

The Osijek Centre for Peace, Nonviolence and Human Rights, was founded in 1992 to build peace, protect human rights and freedom, and develop creative methods for non-violent communication. It has organized as many local and international encounters and congresses.

The Helsinki Committees in all post-Yugoslav states fight internationally for human rights in the region, especially for the rights of refugees and for the documentation of war crimes.

The Humanitarian Law Centre (HLT) was founded in 1992 by the Serbian lawyer Nataša Kandi who works to uncover the war crimes committed by Serbian military police and paramilitary groups during the 1990s, and to bring the perpetrators to justice. She documents human rights and war crimes violations by the Serbian authorities, and supports the victims and their families in court.

The Antiwar Campaign, founded in 1991, has spawned many human rights organizations, including the Centre for Direct Protection of People, the Centre for Woman War Victims, Delfin Pakrac, the Centre for Education, Counselling and Research (CESI), the Pakrac Volunteer Centre, Sunflower, and the b.a.b.e. Women's Centre. Starting in September 1991, it published the newspaper *Arkzin* to counteract the effect of the uniformized media.

The Centre for Peace Studies was founded in 1997 to unite all activities of the anti-war campaign. One important action was the anti-war charter in which signatures were collected on a large scale in Croatia and other parts of former Yugoslavia in favour of living together in peace. Today, a new generation has grown up which has little or no memory of the pre-war and war era. At the same time, interest in researching history has increased, with a focus on civil and political rights.

Women in Black in Belgrade was founded in 1991 with reference to the Israeli organization of the same name, to protest against the war policy

of the Serbian government, and founded centres for deserters and war victims.

The Rosa Women's Centre in Zagreb runs a hotline for women and victims of human trafficking, and a women's safe house. In order to strengthen the discourse around human rights as an alternative to the hitherto dominant patriarchal stereotypes, encounter projects such as seminars and conferences are carried out with women from various parts of the region.

Feminist movements and resistance against the war

The transformation of Yugoslavia from the socialist to the capitalist system and from a federal union to an almost ethnically homogenous state has raised the question of ethnic and also gender identity. Women were subject to extreme acts of violence during the war, including torture, rape and murder; 80% of the refugees were women and children. At the same time, they were forced to assume greater responsibilities for their families and society, since the men were at the front or in prison.

The broad societal obsession with identity, stoked by propaganda, led to the formation of many new women's, feminist and humanitarian groups, even in the vicinity of the nationalist parties.

At the same time, parts of the feminist movement from all parts of Yugoslavia were determined to create a common anti-war movement. They demanded respect for universal human rights, regardless of ethnic or other affiliation. That led to serious confrontations; they were attacked by those women's organizations which were close to the official political system, particularly for their cooperation with organizations from the "enemy" parts of the country. Even the demand for respect for human rights regardless of national and religious affiliation was proclaimed to be a hostile act, as treason, and as "placing the aggressors and the victims on the same level". At international meetings, there was no unity regarding the debates over the question of whether rape in war should be seen as "part of the ethnic strategy" or as "a crime against women on the enemy side". The women's movement split and polarized itself even further.

Nonetheless, the cooperation of some feminist organizations was not torn apart. Their numerous activities gave rise to new groups and organizations, as well as to the network *Zamir* ("forpeace"). Once the war started, this work, and many important meetings, could only be carried out in neighbouring foreign countries, and only with the support of local organizations, particularly women's organizations.

The feminist movement arose as early as the 1970s and '80s as a common movement in Zagreb, Ljubljana, Belgrade and Sarajevo. Ties and friendships created at that time have lasted to this day. Women have been the first to use their old networks for communication with other women from other nationalities and countries. That helped to keep them from adopting the prejudices and nationalist stereotypes subconsciously themselves, and enabled them to ward off the propaganda. Such women as Biljana Kašić, Nadežda Čačinovič, Rada Iveković, Vesna Pusić, Jelena Zuppe, Vesna Kesić, Lydia Sklevicky, Maja Miles, Slavenka Drakulić and Djurdja Knežević built the first feminist work in Yugoslavia and organized the first women's groups, ecological associations and hotlines for woman victims of violence. The war did not end their cooperation with their connections. Rather, they were the first to organize support for the victims of war and to speak out against prejudice, nationalism and war. They were attacked, threatened and labelled as "witches".

In the post-Yugoslav countries, basic human rights continue to be denied by the conservative, nationalistic state policies, and by massive nationalism; in some places, rights already achieved have been called into question. An attempt has been made to force women back into their traditional roles as mothers and wives, and to limit their rights and freedoms to the privacy of their family surroundings. The war introduced new dimensions of physical and psychological terror against women, and dramatically restricted the material and social status of women. Since the war, society has generally become more militant. The character of family violence has changed, and the figures for rape, prostitution and human trafficking have risen. Even children are strongly affected by this. The societal and economic condition of women has deteriorated because of inflation, minimal social supports and discrimination.

Working conditions for women's organizations are today in some cases even more difficult than immediately after the war. At that time, work with refugees and displaced people was more concrete and more clear, and European feminists supplied sufficient funds for the work. Now, many organizations have had to close down for lack of funds. The pressing issues are the same as ever: violence against women and children, equal pay for women and men (men's salaries are 11 to 20% higher), revising schoolbooks in which disinformation about gender roles are stated, etc. Poorly paid sectors, such as school, health and journalism, are increasingly being abandoned by capital – and by men; more women than men today work at universities. Men dominate in the well-paid construction and energy projects.

After the war, women first fought to regain their old positions. Women who had previously worked on these issues and were networked before the war took over this task. After the war, they built democratic organizations in which they could train women for work in the public sector and in leadership positions. They travelled from school to school in the "peace schools", and taught non-violence, human rights, women in politics, international solidarity etc. They held summer solidarity camps, published books and newspapers, and participated internationally in building the pacifist movement. This work is continuing. In order to be more effective, many women's organizations have come together in networks.

For example, in 2006, Nataša Kandić put together RECOM, a regional association of NGOs and associations of war victims from all parts of former Yugoslavia. Its goal is to establish an independent commission to investigate and clear up incidents and crimes in the region during the war in former Yugoslavia. The coalition consists of many hundreds of NGOs for human rights and democracy, victims' associations, veterans' organizations, media and individuals from the victims groups, academics, artists, journalists lawyers and others. By mid-2010, the Coalition for RECOM had held a constituent to meetings to talk about its goals and forms of work. An attempt was made to collect one million signatures to be submitted to the parliaments in the region, to get them to establish RECOM at the parliamentary level.

The success of these actions would be a sign that the time had come to address the issue of the war, to reach unity over historical facts and to present them in schoolbooks, to re-examine the relationship to the perpetrators who are being celebrated as heroes, to condemn war crimes and to provide reparation to the victims. Until this is dealt with, the door will remain open for manipulation. That holds just as true for the war in the 1990s as for earlier wars which have also not been addressed seriously.

Steps in the Process of Peace and Reconciliation

Since the climate in the post-Yugoslav societies for dealing with one's own crimes of the past is not good, REKOM takes the facts established by the International Court of Justice for the former Yugoslavia as the basis for its own work. On the one hand certainly, under pressure from the European Union, but on the other hand also due to the growing willingness to change, the awareness of the citizens is growing. Increasingly they are finding the words to condemn corruption, poor economic conditions and policies, and to demand human rights – all signs of slow change for the better.

The peace process requires time, money and energy. Under the leadership of the Human Rights Tribunal in the Hague, the remains of tens of thousands of those killed have been exhumed and identified, but only a few of the guilty can be brought to trial and sentenced there. The military intervention by NATO stopped the shooting in 1998; but some parts of the former nation are controlled by NATO troops to this day, in order to maintain peace.

Even to this day, the willingness to address the crimes, especially those of one's own nation, has not yet developed. Apparently, it will have to be forced from the outside. Everyone expects from the Tribunal that it restore justice in accordance with the interests of one's own respective nation and provide re-compensation for its own victims. As long as each participant sees itself at the same time as both the victim and the victor, only the pressure of the Hague Tribunal and the EU can bring about change. The court in The Hague, through its sentences against the most

important war criminals, is creating a climate which will permit similar procedures within the countries themselves.

A documentation of the events drafted in The Hague provides a basis for the long-term creation of justice and freedom, for a historiography accepted by all sides, including that of the preceding wars and crimes, has yet to be written and adopted. The events in the Second World War are part of that, for they too are controversial to this day. Nationalistic and conservative church circles are even today falsifying the history of the Second World War for their own purposes by criminalizing the People's Liberation War of the partisans, and denying the achievements of the communists in the liberation process.

In spite of all progress, it is still necessary to struggle for and develop the organization of civil society. The role of public advocacy in public policy, i.e. the support by civil society for certain general interests, must be strengthened in such areas as the struggle against corruption, support for human rights and minority rights, and ecology and education.

As a result of war, corruption and the transformation of society, the economic condition of the majority of the population is much worse than it was before the war. While many people are reduced to rummaging through waste bins in order to survive, the political leaders are still riding the nationalistic wave, without any acceptance of their own responsibility. The societal sources of a new value system are very meagre. Only a minority is concerned with human rights. The major nationalistic blocs continue to oppose Europe, and also national and other minorities.

Currently, the EU transformation in Croatia is showing that new standards of political decision-making will in fact only succeed if there is pressure from the outside flanked by economic and structural support. Only after former Premier Ivo Sanader was arrested for corruption did a transformation in the key areas involving human rights gradually establish itself. This permitted a new attitude and a new language among politicians, in the media and finally in society at large. The beginning of the functioning of government also meant a new start for the police and for the courts. New laws bring with them new standards and new practice. Democracy helps one live without nationalism, and to accept

oneself and others the way they are; it helps one live without violence. And it has to be re-learned and re-practiced anew every day, especially where it is being built on piles of rubble.

Trauma work and dialogue in the diaspora (Berlin)

Prior to the 1990s, approximately 600,000 people from the former Yugoslavia lived in Germany. When the war broke out, another 260,000 refugees were added

Südost Europa Kultur e.V. was founded to promote the peaceful common life of the 32,000 people from former Yugoslavia living in Berlin in the late 1980s, for even far from home, many of them could not resist the nationalistic propaganda. The results were conflicts among colleagues at work, firings without notice, many divorces, and children torn between loyalty to the families of their mothers and those of their fathers, for Serbia or for Croatia. *Südost* sought to create a bridge of reason and understanding by way of culture.

Before the war broke out, thousands of deserters arrived from Yugoslavia. In Europe, they had no rights. They tried to make out without money; many were still students. When the war broke out, 45,000 refugees came to Berlin, and received help mostly from those Berliners who had themselves been victims of expulsion and flight. But for most people, the events in Yugoslavia remained simply horrible news bulletins, things one could neither understand nor associate with one's own life.

Südost immediately provided psychological and psychiatric counselling for the refugees; some of them in fact accepted. Only when the Dayton Agreement was signed, and the refugees were told two days later that they had to leave Germany immediately, did they seek counselling in large numbers. The prospect of having to meet the perpetrators again psychologically forced people back into the war. They could now no longer submerge their experiences from Srebrenica, or from various concentration camps. Desperately, they sought someone who could understand and help them.

Many came to *südst*. It was not possible to send them away, for there was now nowhere else for them to go. In therapeutic facilities, they would have had to wait up to two years for the treatment slot. *Südst* offered them the opportunity to come to a supervised self-help group for two hours, one day a week. They didn't want to speak in front of others, for fear of being considered crazy. In the group, they soon learned that the others had the same symptoms – the normal results of the horror they had experienced. The first group session was attended by eight people, the second by twenty, and the fourth by 540. Soon, a hundred men and women gathered for every meeting. Some had trembling hands, others had no voices, still others feared closed windows.

The women needed their own group, for many had suffered rape and could not talk about it in front of men. Initially, the psychotherapist Christiane Angelmann-Küster took over the women's group with over 300 women. The group of former camp inmates included 178 men. After a while, the group was broken down into smaller groups. At times, forty-five psychotherapists at *südst* accompanied thirty groups and a number of traumatized individuals.

In the groups, the people learned that each person has his or her own set of scales, and that there can be no comparison, since for each person, what he or she has experienced is what is the worst. In those two hours a week, some people could only listen before they were able to speak; some could only do so after two years. The group sessions developed into places of trust, in which they learned again to be a part of a living society. In war, people become part of a mass, they are robbed of their individuality and feel afraid and lonely. In the therapy group, they were able to share their bitter experiences, and also their feelings of shame and guilt. Some fathers reported that they were unable to bear the noises that their children made, or if their wives said something they didn't like, and that they even became violent. They needed a lot of time to feel and act "normal" again.

Many people were far enough along after two or three years of therapy that they were able to speak about their hatred and their revenge fantasies. They told how they wanted to torture or kill their tormentors. One

day, a man said, "Once you've said something, you don't have to do it anymore." Thereafter, the issue was discussed that in crisis situations, people look away in order to survive. By expressing what they had suffered in speaking about hate and revenge, they were able to create a link between their identity as a victim and their identity before the war, and draw strength from that for their future.

Personally dealing with one's experiences from the war means not only ending the nightmares, but also developing trust in human society. Indeed, this is the basic precondition for a process from which a personal and societal capacity for peace and nonviolence can emerge. This is true both for the victims and for the perpetrators.

In Berlin, the people faced not only what they had experienced, but also concern about what was happening here in Germany. For years, the refugees were in a state of social and legal limbo, victimized by expulsion policies, and humiliated. That turned the trauma chronic for many of them.

It was important that there were people like Protestant Bishop Wolfgang Huber and Catholic Cardinal Georg Sterzinsky, who, at the initiative of *Südost Europa Kultur e.V.*, called for a round table on Bosnian refugees. Representatives of counselling centres, Members of Parliament and administrative officials participated. Reports were received from experts from Bosnia, from former Bremen Mayor Hans Koschnick, the EU's representative in Bosnia, and also from German soldiers. As a result, the repatriation of traumatized individuals was suspended, and in 2000, the conference of German state ministers of the interior decided that traumatized people could stay.

The refugees needed therapy, but they also needed support in a political struggle for legal security just as much. In order to regain their trust in humankind, they needed the right to an education and to work – in other words, human rights.

Therapy work was only a part of what was built up at *südost*. There were various counselling opportunities, educational projects, political events, congresses, exchanges of therapists etc. The same rooms in which so much

was told about war and horror were also used for cultural events, for artistic exhibitions, for music and for theatre. Refugees visited them in large numbers. They know that it is culture, which is an expression of human relations free of fear, that is the first thing to be destroyed in a conflict.

For the refugees, it was easier to go to a facility that was not exclusively for people who were sick or in need of therapy. The aid is more effective, and stigmatization is avoided, if the healthy resources are perceived and strengthened within it.

Many therapists discovered through their work with traumatized refugees their own connections to their own old wartime traumas in their families. Prior to 1992, no psychology department at a German university taught the subject of wartime trauma; today, all do. The word trauma has become ever-present. Even the German military now employs 200 therapists. Psychologists work in schools, and are involved in the aftermath of all accidents and catastrophes. Our society seems to have learned to look at its own scars and talk about them, including those from the Second World War.

Südost supports war victims and their children and grandchildren in their efforts to settle in Berlin and integrate here. Today, the smiles have returned to many faces, and many children of refugees have concluded their university studies. They are a firm part of their new homeland.

The foundation *Überbrücken* (roughly: "bridging the gap"), founded by *südost*, is working internationally to overcome the effects of war on people in order to free up the time and energy necessary for the tedious process of peace-building and reconciliation, and so that no more children will one day become victims or perpetrators.

REPORT ON SOMALIA

SHUKRIA DINI, NAIROBI

Understanding the origins of Somalia's conflict

Somali women who have been affected by protracted statelessness and militarized violence do have their unique experiences, stories of survival, coping mechanisms, and strategies in responding to war challenges and building peace, to share with the rest of the world. Such stories and experiences are crucial not only to fully grasp the gendered outcomes of the collapse of the Somali state and the militarized violence, but also to share the women's war stories that can help us comprehend their activism, and their initiatives in times of war. I argue that women's particular experiences and initiatives can enrich and complement the top-down efforts of building peace, and the overall recovery process. The Rosa Luxemburg Foundation office in Brussels has brought together woman experts from countries affected by militarized violence, to share their analyses of the conflicts with each other. Women from conflict zones, including women from Somalia, have met to tell stories about their resistance to the conflict and peace-building strategies, which is a form of solidarity and peace-building in itself. This report only tells one of the many stories of Somali women. Somali women's experiences do vary, and such diversity needs to be recognized and accommodated in peace-building and post-conflict transformation, as well as in state building processes. Through interviews, women in war-torn Somalia noted that the world has either forgotten or ignored their plight compared to other women living in some of the most violent zones. I hope that this report can amplify the voices of Somali women, so that they can gain both the attention and support of the world, including women of the Global North. As the author of this report, I was also affected by the collapse of the Somali state, following the protracted militarized violence, thus officially becoming part of the statistics of a population forcibly displaced. It is worth noting that Somali women are classified in various groups, and the effects of the collapsed state and militarized conflict impact them differently based on their age, class, geographical location, and clan.

The on-going conflict in Somalia is a product of many factors including colonialism and its legacy, the post-independence era, the military government and its militarization project, and the Cold War. Thus, in order to understand the causes of the current political instability in Somalia, it is essential to revisit past historical events in Somalia. Doing so will enable both national and international actors to come up with solutions that will address the root causes of the Somali conflict. This report will discuss the ways in which different events have led to the political disaster which Somalia has undergone, Somali women's experiences of colonialism, the post-independence era under Siad Barre's military government, the collapse of the state, the on-going violence, the peace-building processes, and the nation-rebuilding efforts, which were supported by the international community. It will also assess ways in which Somali women are marginalized in the clan system. In the following section of the paper, I will touch on factors that have led to the protracted militarized violence in Somalia and their gendered impacts. They include the country's colonial history, its independence years, the eras of military rule, and the processes of peace and nation building.

Colonialism as a factor that led to political disintegration and civil war

The primary goal of the colonial project was to enable colonial powers to exploit the colony's resources, and Somalia suffered politically and economically under colonial rule. However, after fifty years of independence, colonial policies continue to haunt Somalia. Colonialism left indelible scars, which have perpetuated Somalia's socio-economic and political insecurity, and indirectly contributed to the on-going militarized violence. These insecurities have paved the way for the political disintegration and the protracted militarized violence which continue to trouble Somalia, even today. To grasp the effects of colonialism on Somalia and its people, it is important to briefly discuss the powers that colonized Somalia, the geographic locations they controlled, and their effects. The following section of the paper will highlight the effects of colonial power on Somalia and its people.

The colonial powers Britain, Italy and France divided Somali into five parts in order to assert their colonial rule and exploit the people. The British took control of the north-western region of Somalia, called British Somaliland, and the south-western region, which became part of British Kenya. The French took the northernmost tip, which is now Djibouti, while the large south-central area came under Italian control; this is the bulk of today's Somalia. The western region largely inhabited by Somalis was grabbed by Ethiopia's Menelik monarchy.

Colonialism affected Somalia's socio-economic and political life. Before the colonial era, there was a pastoral traditional governance system which Somalis had relied on to govern their personal and community affairs. Men were, and still are, the leaders and members of this government; women are only represented. Upon the arrival of colonial powers, Somalis were forced to submit to the rules and regulations of the colonialists' centralized system of government, where all the decision-making and resources lay in the hands of the colonial administrators. The colonial rulers viewed the local governance system as backward and considered theirs progressive. This colonial system was contrary to the traditional decentralized system of government which Somalis exercised. This does not mean that there was gender equality in Somalia prior to the arrival of colonial powers. The introduction of the colonial governance system not only affected the traditional Somali system of governance in which Somalis had a sense of ownership, but it also produced a new political elite and perpetuated gender inequalities. For example, like the pre-existing traditional system, the new system of governance favoured certain men hailing from certain clans over other men and women and so a few Somali men were appointed to promote the interests of the colonial powers in order to completely subjugate the Somali people. Some of these interests included assisting the colonial rulers to maintain their rule over the people of Somalia and collecting taxes from an already impoverished population. Colonial appointees from certain clans were also provided with education and training to carry out their duties while the majority of the people, including women, were denied access to education. This was also done to create clan and class division, mistrust, envy, and competition among the people. The method became

an effective strategy for the colonial rulers to divide and rule the people of Somalia. To date, division, competition and envy continue to affect the unity, trust and cooperation of Somalis in a militarized regime.

Somalia gained its political independence in 1960. In the post-independence era, the men who had the benefit of education from the colonial rulers and served as administrators became the political leaders of the nation. While these men received colonial education and experience, they lacked the depth and skills needed to govern their newly independent nation, which suffered high unemployment levels, illiteracy, poverty, and a lack of proper infrastructure and human resources. In addition, they lacked gender sensitivity, and failed to include Somali women in either the state or the nation-building processes. Thus, the nation-building process from colonial rule to independence was not only difficult, but also male-dominated. The Somali local leaders who became the leaders of the nation only took over from their colonial rulers, and did not change the policies of the former colonial powers. Thus, what changed in newly independent Somalia was that the colonial powers were no longer physically present in Somalia, but their policies and legacies continued to affect the lives of the Somali people.

Like their colonial rulers, the new post-independence leaders relied on certain clans as a tool to perpetuate divisions among Somalis and to advance their political interests. In the early years of the military government, there were attempts to outlaw clan favouritism. Through its principles of scientific socialism, the military government emphasized building a political system that promoted the equality of all Somalis, including gender equality. It symbolically "buried" the clan and encouraged the people to rely more on the state than on their clans in order to benefit the state and the people in general. By having the trust of the people, the military state would become legitimate in the eyes of the people. Moving away from one's clan weakened the clan system which co-existed in a parallel fashion with the military government. Thus, the military government decided, in its earlier years in power, to outlaw the clans. To ensure that people move away from clanism, men and women was obliged to address each other as "jaalle", or "comrade". Such salutation was considered to be the right way to do away class, clan hie-

rarchy, superiority and gender inequality. However, the same regime that outlawed clanism and its reliance, heavily used clans to divide and control people. It used policies favouring certain clans over others and provided more opportunities to certain groups over others, and this perpetuated hatred, tension and inevitably paved the way for social and political disintegration. Under military rule, Somalis were expected to totally submit to the powers of a central state based in the capital, which collided with Somalis' loyalty to their clans. People resented the military state's push for loyalty and trust in the state over their clans. If they handed over their complete trust and loyalty to a military state which did not represent their clans and could not guarantee their interests, they were considered to be undermining their own clan.

Colonial rulers also relied on violence to maintain their rule over the people of Somalia. Such violence was intended to dissuade Somali men and women from challenging and resisting colonialism. Those brave Somalis who demanded their rights were dealt with violently and imprisoned. The military government of Siad Barre relied on violence to remain in power for twenty-one years. Somali opposition groups also used violence to topple down the military regime, killing, destroying and displacing civilians. I argue that even today, violence remains the most preferred tool, often used by armed groups opposing the current transitional government, and by the international community, who employ peace-keepers to reconstitute the state and rebuild the war-ravaged nation. Reliance on violence, be it by opposition groups as a means to oppose the transitional state, or by the international community, to build peace and the state, have failed to achieve a sustainable peace. Thus, there is a need for an alternative approach to building peace and the state in Somalia. It is pertinent that such approach be gender inclusive, participatory and democratic, where all men, women and youth are involved in all stages of peace and state-building during the recovery process.

Another negative effect of colonialism is that it perpetuated gender inequality in pastoral and traditional Somalia. For instance, during colonial rule, the colonial administrators, who were mostly men, relied on the local colonized men to carry out their activities. Somali women did not receive free education, training, or employment, as did some Somali

men, who profited from their colonial superiors. Lack of education and skilled training then hindered Somali women from obtaining political representation in the post-independence period. In addition, colonial administrators neither consulted women as community leaders nor appointed women as tax collectors. It is worth noting that Somali women gained some access to education, employment and some level of recognition as equal citizens of their country under the military government of Siad Barre, even though they faced certain challenges and restrictions under the military regime. They were expected to provide full support and to participate in state run programmes and projects. Despite efforts by the military state to empower women, discrimination and marginalization of Somali women persisted during the post-independence years, and have persisted in war-torn Somalia to this day.

This is not to say that the post-independence years, 1960 to 1969, were easy for the new Somali leaders. This period brought many challenges to the new nation, particularly among the new national leaders, who lacked the resources and the institutions to embark on participatory nation-building. Thus, Somalia, under the rule of its "sons" became dependent on foreign aid from its former colonial powers, Italy and Britain. Somalia's over-reliance on foreign aid spawned corruption, which in turn affected the transparency and accountability of its post-independence political system. Foreign aid also solidified the clout of the ruling class, leading to abuses of power.

The protracted militarized violence in Somalia does have an international dimension. For example, during the Cold War, both the Soviet Union and the United States engaged in ideological rivalry, with each country wanting to extend its ideological and military influence in the newly independent countries, including those in Africa. Somalia, a young and poor nation with a long coastline and a strategic location, was a desirable ally for both superpowers, who sought to establish military and naval bases. The leader of the military government, Siad Barre, also saw an opportunity to tap into the resources from both superpowers. Under his rule, Somalia gained received both financial and military assistance from both the Soviets and the Americans, to build its military and other sectors, which strengthened the regime's military power and its authority over

its people. Despite its poor human rights records and high levels of corruption, foreign and military aid continued to flow until the mid-1980s. This aid, channelled into the military rather than to such sectors as health and education, impacted on those Somalis who attempted to challenge the military, and also especially upon Somali women. It also perpetuated the tension between Ethiopia and Somalia: after 1977, Siad Barre waged war against neighbouring Ethiopia over the Ogaden region, which was part of Somalia prior to colonialism. The region is inhabited by the Ogaden clan, a sub-clan of the Darood clan to which Barre belonged. Before this war, the Soviets were allies of Somalia, but this changed swiftly when the Soviets sided with Ethiopia militarily. With this betrayal, Siad Barre broke off relations with the Soviets and ordered them out of Somalia. With Soviet and Cuban military support, Ethiopia emerged as the victor in the war, which caused death, destruction, the displacement of ethnic Somalis from Ethiopia, and lasting enmity between the two countries. It also paved the way for opposition groups in Somalia, particularly among the disenchanted generals and colonels from the Hawiye and Darood clans, who had participated in the war. This group which felt neglected, saw the war against Ethiopia as a waste and began their opposition against the military regime they had once supported both morally and intellectually. Some of the generals organized a military plot to topple the Barre regime, but failed due to premature action. In retaliation, the military government took drastic action, including violence against anyone who criticized the regime. As a result, some members of the opposition lost their jobs, while others were jailed and died in prison. Others like Abdillahi Yusuf fled to neighbouring Ethiopia, to carry out a decade long political campaign and military actions against Barre's regime. Women and children were negatively impacted especially when their spouses and fathers were targeted by the regime. The following section examines how the international community and international organizations responded to Somalia's conflict and how their responses impacted on the overall militarized violence in Somalia.

International community responses to Somalia's militarized violence

When the militarized violence finally brought the total disintegration of the Somali state in early 1990s, the international community was hesitant to intervene and was instead preoccupied with other conflict zones,

such as the liberation of Kuwait from the invasion of Iraq, and the former Yugoslavia. Somalia was neither strategic nor did it have oil, and thus it drew no attention or immediate intervention, as did some other countries struck by militarized violence. The absence of international intervention led to the deterioration of the conflict. It also enabled the warlords to commit gross human rights violations against civilians. The conflict in Somalia was seen as a tribal clash which would eventually die out, and the international community could then easily intervene later and solve everything. I argue that the conflict in Somalia is more than clan warfare. It is a conflict resulting from many factors, including the legacy of colonialism, post-colonialism and independence. It is also a resource-based conflict due to Somalia's under-development and poverty, which has led to land grabbing by major clans. At present, Somalia's conflict has become one where numbers of religious groups are flexing their muscles to gain political and territorial control. As the security situation in lawless Somalia deteriorated, many international aid agencies pulled out their staff and downsized their humanitarian activities, so that many Somalis who desperately needed international aid and protection perished. It was not until the mid-1990s that the world finally recognized the magnitude of Somalia's militarized violence and lawlessness, and western media began to cover dying Somalis, mostly women and children dying of starvation, and brought these images to the living rooms of citizens of the international community. UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali encouraged the international community and the members of the Security Council to immediately respond to the humanitarian crisis in Somalia. This led to the appointment of a Special Envoy to Somalia, a former diplomat from Algeria, Mohamed Sahnoun. In 1992, a number of resolutions¹ were passed, with the intention of imposing an arms embargo on Somalia, carrying out and protecting the humanita-

¹ They include: Resolution 733 which supported the arms embargo, humanitarian assistance and a ceasefire; Resolution 751 which supported the establishment of the United Nations Somalia Mission (UNISOM) to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid to the vulnerable population; and Resolution 775 which called for the deployment of large troops in order to protect and facilitate the distribution of such humanitarian intervention.

rian assistance effort, and implementing an immediate ceasefire among the warring groups. Such resolutions also provided for the deployment of UN observers to monitor the ceasefire in Mogadishu. However, neither could the ceasefire be monitored, nor could the assistance effort be protected from the heavily armed militia groups. That same year, another resolution was passed, calling for the deployment of thousands of armed troops to protect and facilitate the distribution of a large-scale humanitarian intervention effort in Somalia. This coincided with the US presidential election in which President George Bush Sr. was running for re-election against Bill Clinton; he supported the deployment of American troops in Somalia to facilitate the distribution of the much-needed humanitarian aid. Other countries such as Italy, France, Germany and my adopted country Canada also sent troop contingents.

In November 1992, these multinational troops entered Somalia, enabling the international aid agencies to return and re-establish their life saving activities. Their presence also discouraged the warlords and armed militias from looting the humanitarian assistance, and enabled aid agencies to distribute humanitarian aid packages to dying people in various locations in Somalia. In addition, both the USA and the UN attempted to facilitate political reconciliations amongst the warring groups in Somalia. However, these attempts failed because the warlords were not willing to reconcile and stop the violence. The UN peacekeepers, including the US troops, thereupon attempted to forcibly disarm the warlords and their armed militias, particularly Mohamed Ali Farrah Aydid, leading to tensions between the two. In June 1993, one of the warlords and an armed militia group belonging to Aydid, killed twenty-four Pakistani peacekeepers when they attempted to seize weapons from the Mogadishu radio station controlled by Aydid and his militia. The tension then worsened, resulting in the killing of nineteen US marines and hundreds of Somalis. The dead body of one of the marines was dragged by an angry mob through the streets of Mogadishu. In response, the US government placed a reward of \$25,000 on Aydid's head; in 1994, he was killed by a stray bullet. In March 1994, the United States pulled its troops out of Somalia, and other countries followed suit. The withdrawal of international peacekeepers from Somalia meant that Somalia and its people lost a golden

opportunity to emerge from the violence. Once again, the international community was turning its back on Somalia and its people.

Once the international peacekeepers left Somalia, the ruthless warlords and their armed militias re-asserted their power and control over the impoverished and war-ravaged people. From 1994 to 2006, Somalia remained a stateless nation run by violent warlords and their militias. From early 1990s until 2008, the international community sponsored sixteen peace and reconciliation conferences; however, all these international efforts failed to solve the political problems in Somalia, the reason being that they were not Somali owned. They were designed and organized by external sponsors and not the Somalis who were supposed to do the actual reconciliation. In addition, the warlords were the main Somali participants in the conferences, and they did not support the transitional governments which emerged from these meetings. One of them, the Arta peace process in Djibouti, was noted by all Somalis as the only participatory and successful peace conference where members of the civil society, women, youth, Somalis from the diaspora, traditional leaders and intellectuals participated and collectively drafted political solutions for their war-torn nation.

The Arta Conference offered an opportunity for Somalis to rebuild a state and recover from violence, and also produced the Transitional National Government (TNG), with a two-year mandate to establish the rule of law and reconstitute state institutions. In 2002, when the TNG's mandate ended, another peace conference was held in Nairobi, Kenya, which lasted until 2004 and led to the formation of Transitional Federal Government (TFG), with a similar five-year mandate. The TFG led by Abdullahi Yusuf spent its first year in Nairobi, as it was unable to relocate to Mogadishu, which was still under the control of warlords. In 2005, it succeeded in establishing itself in Jowhar, a small town outside of Mogadishu, for a year and a half, and moved to Baidoa in south-central Somalia the next year. Like its predecessor, this TFG too faced a number of challenges, including religious opposition groups like the United Islamic Courts (UIC), which succeeded in dismantling the control of warlords in southern and central Somalia. The UIC did not support the TFG, and considered themselves the legitimate rulers.

UIC was successful in gaining the support of the population and thought such support would enable them convince international community that they were a force to be reckoned with. They restored justice through the adoption of Sharia Law, peace and order, and by getting rid of the rule of warlords and their armed militias. Because of this, they had the full support of Somalis inside and outside of Somalia. They also provided social services, including free education and health care services to widows and orphans who were among the most vulnerable groups. In six months, the UIC were able to delivered tangible results. The people in Mogadishu were able to walk through the city without having to pass the warlords' checkpoints, and without fear. Mogadishu's port and airport which had once been controlled by the warlords and had been closed down, were re-opened. Because of these results, the UIC had the full approval and support of the public, who were tired of the warlords and their armed militias' oppression. Due to the stability and order created by the UIC, many Somalis in the diaspora returned to Mogadishu and were able to get their property back with the support of UIC. The era led by UIC was a promising period that offered alternative solutions to Somalia's protracted anarchy, through some sort of governance, albeit based on Sharia Law, that sought to oust warlords, protect civilians from violence and bring law and order in the capital city and beyond. The UIC therefore considered themselves the rightful actors in the restoration of peace, justice, and order in lawless Somalia.

Ethiopia, a neighbouring country which has welcomed large numbers of Somali refugees, on one hand hosted some meetings in the 1990s intended to help warring groups to reconcile, but on the other remained a "spoiler" in war-torn Somalia. Ethiopia provided military and political support to some of the warlords who brought destruction and anarchy since the collapse of the Somali state in 1990s, and militarily invaded Somalia in December 2006, when it saw the UIC as a threat to its "national security". This invasion brought to an end the grassroots and religious movement of the UIC. One mistake the UIC made was their failure to recognize the TFG, which cost them the opportunity to take Somalia onto the right path of peace and recovery. As a result, when some members of the UIC threatened Ethiopia with military attacks and invasion,

Ethiopia felt justified in military action to halt the danger of an attack on Ethiopia, and to protect the fragile TFG. Despite this threat, the UIC lacked the military power to attack and invade Ethiopia; indeed, Ethiopia's invasion led to the defeat of the UIC and provided an opportunity for the TFG, led by President Abdullahi Yusuf, to move into Mogadishu in January 2007. The presence of the Ethiopian troops in Somalia led to new waves of deadly violence, killings, destruction and displacement.

Gender Relations in Somalia

Somalia is a traditional nomadic and patriarchal society. Somali women occupy a position inferior to that of men; they own less, control less and lack opportunities. Through socialization, men and women are assigned particular gender roles and responsibilities. In a traditional family setting, the man is the head of the household while the woman is the house manager. As the head of his house, depending on the socio-economic position of the family, the husband owns all property and livestock, and has the responsibility to protect and provide for his family financially. Like other women in traditional societies, Somali women spend many hours cooking, cleaning, fetching water and firewood, and caring for their family and animals. As result of the social, political and economic disintegration, the rigidly defined gender roles and responsibilities have forced Somali women to take on new roles and responsibilities without spousal and state support, to meet the immediate needs of their families.

Social practices and social institutions do affect women's access in the decision-making arena. An example of this is the clan system in Somalia, which is a patrilineal system. Through this system, men have the legitimacy to pass their clan identity to their children. They also have rights and entitlements within the clan system, unlike women, who are in a subordinate position. Women are not considered to be rightful clan members, but temporary members who will later join other clans. Due to the patriarchal nature of the Somali people, women cannot pass their clan identities on to their children. Thus, the clan system in Somalia is a discriminatory system and is therefore detrimental to gender equality. In the clan system, men are the decision-makers. They are also the leaders and spokesmen of their clans. Somali men hold titles such as *Ugan*,

Isim, Suldan, Boqor and Malaaq. In the clan system, women occupy a marginalized position and are absent from the decision-making arena. However, this marginalization enables and provides Somali women the space to develop alliances, and build networks and relations with men and women from other clans. Somali women utilize their marginalization to tap into the resources and support from men and women belonging to the opposing clans, which allows them to build peace and promote reconciliation among groups within their communities.

Despite their subordinate position, Somali women remain very resourceful actors in their families, clans and communities. For example, they provide resources in times of crises, and also provide free labour, particularly logistical support services, such as cooking, cleaning, and caring for the wounded and the sick in times of conflict or of peace. In addition, precisely because of their lack of formal power, women are able to appeal to warring groups to avert violence and pressure them to reconcile with each other.

Within the discriminatory clan system, there exists a customary law known as *xeer* that constitutes verbal contractual agreements that govern individual and collective rights and entitlements of men and women belonging to specific clans. Each clan has male jurists that define such rights and entitlements, most of which are granted to adult men. For example, women do not participate in the meetings at which *xeer* contracts are made. Under *xeer* law, Somali women are not recognized as independent adults, but as dependent on their male relatives and their spouses. Women's exclusion from the *xeer* signifies that women are not recognized as persons with the required skills, experience, knowledge and abilities to qualify them to be part of the decision-making process in the clan system. The exclusion of women from *xeer* negatively affects their access to justice and protection, which can have grave consequences. *Xeer* is still used in the nation-building processes in war-torn Somalia, the intention being obtain political security; however, this denies Somali women the opportunity to be equal partners in the decision-making arena. For instance, in past national reconciliation conferences when the transitional president was chosen, he and some of his close male friends selected the prime minister in an exclusive meeting.

The manner of holding such discussions has serious consequences on gender equality in post-conflict Somalia.

Xeer is also used in the 4.5 clan formula, a formula for power-sharing among major and minority clans of Somalia to build peace and the state. Through *xeer*, each clan appoints and approves its own men and women to represent them as parliamentarians and ministers in the TFG parliament and cabinet. In response to this discriminatory formula, women like Asha Haji Elmi formed the *Sixth Clan*, a separate clan for women across clans. This was not only a political gesture on Asha's part, but also a tool to advance women's representation and participation in the peace and state-building processes. Through the *Sixth-Clan*, Asha and other like-minded women were able to unify and mobilize women as one group, and push for a women's agenda and political recognition. *It is initiatives such as these that need nurturing and international support in order to advance women's participation in post-conflict Somalia.*

Despite societal and cultural restrictions, Somali women use their marginalization as a tool to overcome social restrictions and gender discrimination. For instance, they take advantage of their second-class clan position to build relationships across clans. Through such linkages, women were able to travel across regions and carry out business. *During the militarized violence, Somali women who were married to men belonging to the opposite clans – clans that were deemed the enemy by own their clans – were able to provide refuge to men, other women and children.* Interviews with women in Puntland and Somaliland in 2005 and 2006 who were in cross-clan marriages indicated that women who were positioned between different clans felt that they had the responsibility to "protect" other women, men and children who could not find refuge from women who had different clan affiliations. They used their subordinate position to their advantage, enabling them to protect the lives of family members, neighbours and friends who were targeted by warlords and their armed militias. Through their individual experiences following the collapse of the state, Somali women have also recognized that they have the responsibility to build and maintain peace in their communities. And as the conflict in Somalia remains protracted, women continue to care for the displaced population, the injured and victims of sexual violence.

Women's resourcefulness

The political and economic disintegration following the militarized violence led to the death of sole bread-winners, resulting in loss of livelihoods. Families that survived the violence were left penniless and vulnerable. This brought drastic changes in gender roles to war-torn Somalia. Like other women in militarized violence regions, out of necessity, Somali women adopted survival mechanisms to safeguard their families' survival. Following the divorce or the death of a husband, women in female-headed households continue to be the main providers for their families. Even in families where the men survived the violence, but lost their livelihoods, women have remained the primary breadwinners for their families. These new roles and responsibilities shouldered by Somali women have enabled them to not only feed their families but also to emerge as new entrepreneurial actors in their communities. In every city, town and village in Somalia, women constitute the majority of petty traders and owners of small businesses. Women who got involved in small-scale income-generating activities during the civil war used their family members, friends, and contacts with people from other clans to facilitate their business activities. Such business interactions have the potential to rebuild trust, friendship and cooperation among rival clans, factors essential for building peace and recovery in a nation ravaged by protracted militarized violence. Interviews with women in Puntland and Somaliland indicated that they had no choice but to take up new roles and responsibilities. I argue that the drastic switch in gender roles which emerged as a result of the political disintegration and the militarized violence is not equally shared by Somali women and men; more women than men shoulder numerous new roles and responsibilities without support and safety. In terms of security and resources, such responsibilities have physical and psychological ramifications for Somali women living in a restricted environment.

The trigger of the protracted conflict in Somalia

Bad governance, corruption, lack of trust in the military regime that had governed the country for twenty-one years, lack of development and opportunities, unemployment, gender inequality, social, economic and

political insecurities, debt and poverty, were some of the issues that triggered and led to both the collapse of the Somali state and the militarized violence. In their war against the military government, the armed opposition groups who were organized along clan lines indirectly promised the Somali people that they would bring good governance, justice, and better opportunities for all, and sought the support of their clansmen and women. After the armed opposition groups succeeded in ousting Siad Barre from power, they failed to restore order and establish a civilian government that could deliver security, development, justice, fairness and democracy. Instead, they subjected the people whom they were liberating from military dictatorship to more violence, killings and displacement. Thus, chaos, lawlessness, and militarized violence have continued to haunt the people of Somalia.

The protracted militarized violence has destroyed trust among Somali people. It has also eroded respect of the young generation for the elderly including any respect for social authorities like clan and religious leaders. One of the outcomes of the militarized violence and the lawlessness is that it shifted the authority once held by the elderly in the clan and among religious leaders, to the younger generation. In other words, heavily armed young men were no longer interested in abiding by the authority of the elderly leaders from their respective families and communities. This loss of authority of the clan and religious leaders to young men led to massive killings, rape, destruction and displacement. The revival of clan and religious leaders' authority in some parts of Somalia, such as Puntland, has enabled the people to bring peace and order, and most of all, to break the chain of violence by rehabilitating the youth through education and employment. Members of civil society, often led by women, also play an essential role in diminishing the vulnerability of youth through the provision of education, skill training and livelihoods.

Warlords and their clan-organized militias were the aggressors of the tragedy that has been haunting war-torn Somalia. In my view, the protracted militarized violence in Somalia has gone through four stages:

The first stage, from 1990 to the mid-'90s, is what I call *the era of warlords vs. the military government*. During this stage, the armed opposition groups were organized on a clan basis, and the warlords who were their

leaders waged war against Siad Barre's military government, which was toppled in January 1990. This was the bloodiest of all the stages of militarized violence. Both the opposition groups and the military government used extreme violence against one another – indiscriminate killings, looting and destruction of property, as well as violence against women.

This stage was followed by a second stage in the latter half of the 1990s that I call *the era of warlords against civilians*, which was characterized by lawlessness, statelessness, anarchy, a political vacuum and the looting of public and private property. This stage marks the era where warlords waged deliberate violence and terrorized civilians, including women. The targeted civilians were seen as enemies who had either close relationships or clan affiliations with the military government, from which they benefited. During this stage, the warlords and their armed militias controlled the country, committing human rights violations against defenceless civilians, seizing or destroying public and private property and competing for access to resources, land control and power over the people. Violence against women and minority groups increased.

The third stage, which I call *warlords against warlords*, the warlords and their militias collided and waged deadly wars against each other, with the civilians were once again caught in between. An example was the demarcation of the capital city into two parts – Mogadishu North and South, each controlled by one warlord and his militia. This occurred against the wishes of the inhabitants of Mogadishu.

The fourth stage is that of *radical religious groups vs. former colleagues claiming to be non-radical*; the latter are the current leaders of the transitional government and the international peacekeepers. The current TFG is headed by one of the leaders of UIC, Sheikh Sharif, a moderate religious man whose former friends, including Sheikh Dahir Aweys, now oppose his administration, which receives international support. That is the prime cause of enmity between the two. The armed religious groups constitute the new aggressors of the Somali war, who oppose the TFG and the overall international support for this administration, including the African peacekeepers from Uganda and Burundi. The civilians are caught

in the crossfire between government and AU forces and the religious opposition groups.

Of all the warring groups including warlords, the religious opposition groups felt that they were the legitimate force for bringing good governance and justice to Somalia. Initially, the warlords who fought against the military government felt that they were liberating the people of Somalia from dictatorship and that they would restore democratic state institutions, where the Somali people would be able to participate fully in decision-making. The armed religious opposition groups such as Al Shabab and Hisb-ul-Islam present themselves as the only legitimate groups that can restore order and the rule of law through the adoption of Sharia Law and the establishment of an Islamic state in war-torn Somalia. They also see the TFG under the leadership of Sheikh Sharif as an illegitimate state, and claim it is their duty to destroy it by all available means. The presence of AU peacekeepers from Uganda and Burundi, supported by the international community and the UN, has enabled the TFG to establish its presence and to operate from Mogadishu, and it has also encouraged and increased the militarized violence there. Without the military support of the AU backed by the international community, the TFG would not be able to defend itself from the hostile armed opposition groups.

However, the presence of the peacekeepers from Uganda and Burundi provides the armed opposition groups with the justification to use violence as a means to achieve their political goals – to defeat the TFG and drive these external forces out of Somalia regardless of the human cost. The groups oppose international aid agencies, humanitarian and development aid, and the international peacekeepers' presence in Somalia. Somali religious groups see humanitarian aid agencies as the institutions that perpetuate the dependency of Somalis on food aid, rather than allowing them to build their capacity to become self-reliant. They accuse international aid agencies of enriching warlords who have destroyed the country. Aid agencies are labelled by these armed groups as the actors that impoverish the Somalis by making them rely on the hand-outs of foreign entities rather than on their own strength. In their own areas, international aid agencies are banned from operation, thus affecting the

delivery of the much needed humanitarian aid to vulnerable groups. In addition, the religious groups have applied extreme measures like the amputation of limbs and beheading of individuals – both men and women – in public spaces in order to instil fear in those who may commit crimes against civilians. They also target anyone who works for and provides support to the current TFG. Even local NGOs that rely on external support are a target.

While the majority of Somalis admire the ability of these groups to re-establish security in an area which once was lawless and extremely violent under the control of warlords and their armed militias, they do not support their methods of amputation of limbs and beheading. Moreover, the civilians under the control of armed religious groups are expected to provide moral and financial support, and to contribute to the religious groups' "just" war against the government and the international peacekeepers. If they resist, they may be labelled as traitors, and punished severely. But the TFG too wants to gain the support of the public, and may take drastic action against those suspected of being supporters of the armed opposition. For instance, in Mogadishu, whenever the opposition groups fire at government forces, the AU peacekeepers retaliate with sophisticated weapons, often killing or displacing innocent civilians, and destroying property. The injured and displaced people continue struggling to access basic health care, food and water. This cycle of violence intensifies the suffering of the Somali people and makes reconciliation impossible.

Prior to the collapse of the state and the on-going violence, the media as an institution had been state-controlled; there had been no independent media in Somalia. However, the collapse of the Somali state ushered in the establishment of private and independent websites and also radio and television stations run by ordinary people all over Somalia, and thus provided journalists with the space to establish and run their own media without state restrictions. While the majority of the journalists who worked for the earlier regimes have fled the country, new journalists, including women, have emerged who, although they have no adequate journalistic training, have been running most of the radio and television stations that have emerged since the collapse of the state,

and have been the ones covering the conflict and the political situation in Somalia. They too have suffered from the violence of the warlords and, currently, of the religious groups who may not approve of their reporting. Many journalists have either lost their lives or been jailed without legal recourse, so that that local media in Somalia operate in a very restricted and militarized environment. However, their presence and work remain crucial in providing information to Somalis living inside and outside Somalia. In the mid-1990s and the early 2000s, some of the local media risked hosting radio programmes where civilians were provided the opportunity to confront warlords in debates. From 2006 to 2008, the Somali media was critical of such policies of the Abdullahi Yusuf government as the presence of Ethiopians in Somalia and the support of the armed opposition groups, and journalists suspected of disapproving of the government were often assassinated.

The media as an institution has a crucial role to play in promoting peace and providing the people with information that will help them become informed citizens. Thus, it is paramount to support this sector technically and financially. Due to the security situation, the mainstream media has no visible presence in Somalia, and often covers the country only sporadically. Perhaps the mainstream media could solidify the capacity of local media, and form genuine partnerships that could enable both the local and mainstream media to cover Somalia in depth.

While there are no reliable statistics, discussions with men and women who served in the military sector have informed me that the military regime channelled more resources into the military sector than the health and education sectors. The military was also the main sector offering basic literacy training, military training and overall employment to many men and women. Thanks to the military aid received from both sides during the Cold War, Somalia remains awash with all kinds of weapons that have enabled the warring groups to continue their violence against civilians. After the deadly clan warfare that led to the collapse of the state, warring groups gained access to weapons that were once the property of the state. Some of the warlords received military support from Ethiopia, others from clansmen and women living in the Middle East, Europe and North America. Some members of the Somali diaspora,

fund-raised for their clansmen, and used the money to purchase weapons, medicine and other material that supported the war directly or indirectly. On the other hand, the Somali diaspora also contributed to building peace in their respective communities and continued to remit funds to their family members in Somalia, a much needed financial boost to the local economy and necessary support for millions of Somalis during the past two decades.

The ramifications of the conflict

In any conflict zone, affected civilians, including women and children, directly or indirectly participate in the conflict. Whether by choice or pressure, some women contributed to the violence in various ways. For instance, in Somalia, some of them cooked, cleaned, cared for the wounded clan militias, and provided psychological and material support to their clansmen who were involved in the clan warfare. The conflict has been fought on the backs and by the limbs of male youth. The warlords recruited them in the name of the clans, and exposed them to an extremely dangerous situation. They were given guns and hat to do the dirty job for the warlords. Once these young men got killed and lost their limbs to. They continue to be the most exploited and endangered group in war-torn Somalia. With no security, state protection, livelihood or educational opportunities, young Somali men continue to be targeted by all the warring groups, and used to carry guns and serve as cheap foot soldiers and as pirates. Peace cannot come to Somalia as long as its youth remain unemployed, uneducated and vulnerable. They need to be provided opportunities such as access to education, skill training, and employment, so that they can escape from the forced recruitment and exploitation of the armed groups who threaten the vulnerable youth.

Somali women and children were specifically affected by the state collapse and the on-going violence. There were no state institutions and social authorities to provide protection to women and girls, making them easier targets. They lost loved ones and their homes, were displaced and forced to live in refugee and internal displaced persons camps inside and outside of Somalia, for the past two decades. They have lost state protection, security, access to basic social services and livelihoods.

As in other conflict zones, women in war-torn Somalia have been subjected to rape. Raped women were simply seen as representatives of their clans, families and particular communities. Often, sexually violated women lacked male protection. Most of the clan-based armed militias used rape as a tool against the women and young girls of “enemy” clans. Interviews with refugee and internally displaced women who suffered and escaped from such sexual violence informed me that rape in war-torn Somalia, particularly in the early 1990s, was carried out deliberately to destroy and humiliate women belonging to the opposing clans and that there were some rape incidents where male relatives were forced to watch when such violations were carried out. Rape against Somali women in war-torn Somalia adds to examples of mass rapes that occurred in other conflict zones such as former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Congo (DRC), and thus demonstrates the nature of gender-based violence that takes place in a militarized time and zone. Female scholars who studied gender-based violence carried out in conflict zones noted how rape is often used as a weapon of war to destroy the dignity and integrity of women belonging to specific ethnicity (Brownmiller 1994, Seifert 1994, Olujić 1998, Ticker 2001, Zeigler and Gunderson 2006). In times of militarized violence, women’s bodies become a type of battleground that is subjected to violation. In fact, the reproductive ability of women belonging to the “enemy clan” becomes an issue and is often perceived as a threat to other clans involved in the conflict. Pillay argues that rape is waged against women due to their lower status in their own society (Pillay 2002). In war-torn Somalia, women are the most disadvantaged and vulnerable of the social groups.

Warlords and their armed militias have used rape as a tool to displace minority clans from one their locations, expand territorial control, and seize the property belonging to raped women, their families and their clans. These minority groups subjected to sexual violence and forced displacement include the Rer Hamar and Barawe. It is worth noting that in Somali culture, women had a kind of protection from sexual violence during clan conflicts. This is not to say that there were no rapes in the pre-conflict period in Somalia. But the political disintegration and clan-warfare caused the imperitive to spare women and young girls from vio-

lence, including sexual violence, to be totally neglected and ignored by warlords and their militias.

As for the children, they lost access to education, health and the opportunity to grow up in a peaceful and normal environment, as they were exposed to militarized violence. Thousands of Somali children were born and are growing up in fenced refugee camps in neighbouring countries such as Kenya. Other children, particularly those displaced from their homes, are living in deplorable conditions in internal displaced persons camps, as in the Ceelasha Biyaha – also known as Afgoye Corridor – in Mogadishu, where they cannot be reached by international and local aid agencies. due to insecurity. The current insecurity, political and socio-economic situation in the south and central regions of Somalia continue to affect the well-being of Somali children.

It was not only the local armed militia groups that negatively affected the security of Somali women and children. Neighbouring Ethiopia has politically and militarily supported a number of Somali warlords since the Somali state collapsed in 1990. It also invaded Somalia militarily on December 26, 2006, to fight against the United Islamic Courts and to protect the TFG led by Abdillahi Yusuf. The Ethiopian forces militarily defeated the UIC forces in the capital, which enabled the TFG to move to Mogadishu in January 2007; however, their presence has led to military resistance led by former warlords, their armed militias and also ordinary Somalis who opposed the use of violence. It also revived nationalism and a religious movement opposed to the occupation by Ethiopia, a Christian country, and affected the efforts of reconciliation and rebuilding a transitional state. The resulting waves of violence caused thousands of deaths, destruction of property and displacement. From the end of 2006 through January 2009, when Ethiopia pulled its troops out of Somalia, Mogadishu was the scene of death, where artillery shelling and roadside bombs were daily occurrences.

TFG President Abdullahi Yusuf supported the presence of the Ethiopian troops; some of the members of the Transitional Parliament, including cabinet members, vehemently opposed it. This political rift led to the resignation of Yusuf as president, and another national reconciliation pro-

cess was held in Djibouti, which led to the selection of Sheikh Sharif Ahmed, a former UIC leader who had earlier opposed Ethiopian troops and external peacekeepers in Somalia, on January 31, 2009. While some Somalis considered this rift as necessary and an opportunity to take another political direction without Ethiopia's interference, it also hampered the opportunity to move forward politically and bring Somalia with a new reconciliation process. There is now a new leader, a new transitional government, a new parliament with more members than ever before, including former warlords who have that agreed to joint the negotiations and enter the transitional government. The number of women in the current Parliament is not more than forty, including Ms. Asha Haji Elmi, so that Somali women continue to be under-represented in the current TFG and its institutions and in the state-building processes. The TFG is however doing its best to establish the rule of law and build state institution, despite the lack of resources and security to operate and deliver services to its citizens. The presence of African peacekeepers from Uganda and Burundi remains a thorny issue. Opposition groups do not support their presence in Somalia and have continued to fight against the government and international peacekeeping forces. The TFG continues to call for the deployment of more peacekeeping troops in Somalia in order to eradicate foreign fighters and local religious extremists. The clashes between these groups continue to cause death of civilians and displacement.

The warring groups, particularly the warlords, have used violence against civilians, forced them out of their dwellings and making them either internally displaced people or refugees in neighbouring countries such as Kenya, Djibouti, Yemen and Ethiopia. The insecurity and the lawlessness have created a looting culture, in which those who had the deadliest firearms have taken the property of those who have been forced to flee. Civilians belonging to the clans targeted by the warlords and their armed militias have fled from their homes in the capital and in certain towns and villages, and gone to zones where they could get the protection of their clans. Other civilians belonging to the same clans as the warlords and armed militias have also been affected by the violence, as they had no safe zones to flee to, and have therefore remained in the capital and

in areas controlled by the warlords, where they have faced violence, exploitation and rape, especially in Mogadishu. Civilians who lived in such zones could not resist the abuses and forced taxation imposed to cross the illegal checkpoints set up by the warlords and their militiamen, for anyone who attempted to do so they were severely punished or even killed. This, however, does not mean that the civilians fully accepted the injustices committed against them. They resented warlords and their militias and expressed their views through radio talks, peace rallies and poetry.

Women's resistance to violence

There are a number of ways in which Somali women have resisted the militarized violence in their communities. Whenever conflicts have arisen, women serve as peace envoys known as "ergo nabadeed", to reach out to warring groups and encourage them to reconcile. In addition, women in cross-clan marriages monitor the conflict occurring inside and outside their community, sharing valuable information with each other to prevent further bloodshed and build peace. They also use poetry known as buraanbur to express their opposition to the conflict and their support for peace. Through poetry, women discuss the ways in which they have been affected by the violence, and the importance of peace, by promoting unity and solidarity across clan boundaries. Interviews with female poets in Puntland and Somaliland have revealed that poetry is used to resist violence. Female poets pressured warring groups to reconcile, while other women organized and held peace rallies and prayers to avert violence and promote reconciliation, and launched direct appeals to clan leaders and warring groups, to stop the violence. In the appeals, women made it clear to their clan leaders that they will not morally or financially support violence against another community. They also put pressure on their spouses, sons and other male relatives not to participate in the violence. On various occasions, women were able to avert violence and maintain peace in their communities while in others, their appeals to warring groups were ignored. Women's efforts in averting violence and building peace enabled communities such as Puntland and Somaliland to achieve relative peace. Somali women's peace-building efforts have also saved many lives. In the mid-1990s, Mogadishu was divided by the warlords, into two parts, separating relatives and friends.

Somali women used all kinds of creative excuses to resist this forced separation, increasing interaction with each other. Whenever women were stopped and interrogated about their frequent crossing to the other side of the city, they often used convincing excuses such as borrowing salt, sugar and other food items from relatives and friends. Women crossed the green line to check on other women, to collect information on the impact of the violence, and to deliver goods to those who were affected by the violence. They were also able to organize protests opposing the separation of the capital.

The way forward

The search for a lasting solution to Somalia's protracted statelessness and militarized violence now continue for twenty years. The people of Somalia continue to lack access to essential services and state protection, and still, there is no light at the end of the tunnel. Instead of relying on an approach that addresses the root cause of the conflict, the preferred approach – preferred, too, by the international community – towards state and peace-building has remained a military one, an approach which has failed. There is need to move away from a top-down, male-dominated and militaristic approach and start relying on non-militaristic, participatory, gender-inclusive, bottom-up approaches, which will heal the deep wounds of the war and address the immediate needs of the population. I argue that the current approach is undemocratic and relies on military force, which not only exacerbates the insecurity of the war-affected population, but also prolongs the violence. The current political insecurity and humanitarian crisis in Somalia urgently demand the adoption of alternative approaches that emphasize reconciliation, participation and gender inclusivity, and takes into account the people's views. In order to build a genuine and sustainable peace in Somalia, it is paramount to avert the return of patriarchy, and to promote gender equality in all stages of building-peace in Somalia. The international community needs to channel more resources to tackle chronic unemployment, revive livelihoods, and alleviate poverty, marginalization and corruption.

Despite the effects of the civil war and the collapse of the state, Somali women emerged as important actors for their families and communities.

The new gender roles and relations that have emerged from the political disintegration and the violence need to be recognized and maintained in the post-conflict stage. Somali women's experiences, particularly their new identities as the primary providers and their important contribution to peace-building and recovery, needs to be recognized, valued and supported by both national and international institutions. Somali women's contributions to maintaining the basic survival of their families, peace and recovery hold the potential for transforming post-conflict Somalia. It is thus pertinent to place women at the centre of all peace-building, state-building and post-conflict transformation efforts.

Somalia desperately needs genuine and continuous support from the international community. The international community needs to stop seeing Somalia purely as a project for logistic band-aid exercises. Somalia is a nation ravaged by prolonged militarized violence and political insecurity. Resolution of the protracted conflict in Somalia will require a new mind-set and engagement which moves away from the project and piecemeal mentality, to a holistic, genuine and solid approach, so that the scourge of the protracted violence in Somalia can be tackled successfully. The people of Somalia must also be provided with the opportunity to reconcile. They need to be the given space to sort out their differences. Grassroots peace-building also needs to be supported. In the past, every time something promising has emerged in Somalia, both internal and external forces have failed to nurture that opportunity, and in most cases, have acted to destroy it. Peace projects designed outside of Somalia will not work, and will not bring stability, only more violence and mistrust among warring groups. Somalis must be in the front seat of the reconciliation process.

There is also need for neighbouring countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti who are attempting to "solve" the conflict in Somalia to become genuine peace partners, and not simply opportunists who add more fuel to the ongoing conflict by arming various groups. A peaceful Somalia will not only be beneficial to its people, but also to other nations in the Horn of Africa.

The road to peace for Somalia currently seems uncertain. However, ordinary Somalis, whether living inside or outside Somalia, are fed up with this senseless violence. They want peace, stability and a state. The important activities such as the delivery of basic social services by the Somali civil society, including those led by women, are not only pertinent to maintaining the survival of vulnerable groups, but also for paving the way for peace and recovery. The work of Somali civil society and NGOs needs to be recognized, nurtured and supported. They are indeed important actors who can contribute to the recovery and rehabilitation of a war-traumatized population.

If and when the firing dies down, there will be a need to address the traumas caused by the conflict. Currently, "forgive and forget" is emphasized in Somalia. Forgiveness is important, but forgiveness alone will not mend the hearts of traumatized people. It is important that the legal system in the post-conflict period provide victims of violence with justice and protection. Psychosocial programmes need to be made available to victims of all forms of violence. Healing prayers can also help some of the war victims, and post-conflict programmes must be designed to meet the particular needs of war victims and gender-based violence.

REPORT ON RWANDA

YOLANDE MUKAGASANA, KIGALI

Presentation of Rwanda

To better understand the genesis of the Rwandan conflict, we must first understand Rwanda and its people during the pre-colonial period, and follow the thread of events. Rwanda provides certain exceptions, compared with other African countries discovered by European explorers.

Rwanda has been a state for several centuries. Despite its small size of 26,338 sq. km., Rwanda enjoys a temperate, mild and humid climate. The terrain is particularly mountainous, since the entire country is more than 1000 m above sea level, and half its total area is between 1500 and 2000 m above sea level. Nicknamed the “land of a thousand hills” for its beautiful lush greenery, the areas of moderate altitude are home to the majority of the population. Rwanda is a nation populated by three major human groups: the Twa, the Hutu and the Tutsi, which all constitute one and the same ethnic group, the Banyarwanda. According to legend, all Rwandans are originally brothers, because they have a common ancestor, Kanyarwanda. Per capita GNP was \$230 in 2005.

Rwanda is not the creation of the colonizers, nor did they give it its name. Rwanda has always called that, except that the colonizers decided to spell it Ruanda instead of Rwanda, because the “w” is pronounced differently in German and French. Otherwise, Rwanda never changed its name.

The history of Rwanda can be divided into four periods:

- The pre-colonial period
- The colonial period, 1889-1962
- The independent period, from 1962 to 1994, and
- The post-genocide period, from 1994 to date.

Summary of the pre-colonial period

The political system in Rwanda was always a monarchy, certainly since the thirteenth century, under the Nyiginya dynasty. Rwanda was one of the last African countries to be incorporated into the European colonial system in the late nineteenth century (1890).

The political administration of Rwanda was well structured. The monarchy was composed of the king, his advisors, and the chiefs and sub-chiefs. The king was at the top, below him were three chiefs, and below them, the sub-chiefs, scattered throughout the territory. The king was not sedentary, but travelled around the country continually. The royal capital was Nyanza, in what is now the Southern District.

The courts were called the Gacaca (pronounced Gachacha), a kind of assize court based on confession, in which the entire population was called together. There was neither a counsel for the defence nor for the plaintiff. Everything was done by the people. On the other hand, for anything concerning a crime of blood, a royal court was responsible. Everyone had access to the king.

No Rwandans had an identity card. The identity of Rwandans was their common language, Kinyarwanda, their common culture and their common traditions. All Rwandans prayed to the same God, Imana.

In Rwanda, the groups Hutu, Tutsi and Twa never existed as ethnic groups. The ethnic groups were created by the imagination of the colonizers. Tutsi, Hutu and Twa were socio-economic classes. These groups existed before colonization, of course, but changed their meaning under colonial rule, and were then frozen. Before the invention of identity cards by the colonizers, it was common to move from one class to another by marriage or acquisition of wealth.

The colonial period

Certain dates which mark the history of conflict in Rwanda:

1884 -1885: The International "Congo Conference" in Berlin awards the regions of "Ruanda-Urundi" and Tanganyika to the German East Africa Company. The British explorer Henry Morton Stanley becomes the first white man to set foot on Rwandan soil, on an island in Lake Ihema in eastern Rwanda. He encounters fierce hostility from the inhabitants, and withdraws immediately.

1892: Oscar Baumann, a German doctor, crosses Rwanda from the east. Not daring to proceed into the interior, he continues to neighbouring Burundi.

- 1894: Count Gustav Adolf von Götzen is received by King Kigeli IV Rwabugiri
- 1896: In the “Rucunshu Coup”, Musinga succeeds Mibambwe IV under the dynastic name of Yuhi V.
- 1899: Rwanda becomes a German Protectorate.
- 1900: King Yuhi Musinga receives the first European Catholic missionaries, the “White Fathers” (the missionaries of Africa), who first settle at Save, in the South. This is the beginning of a religious colonization and forced Christianization.
- 1919: After the defeat of Germany and its withdrawal in 1918, the Supreme Council of the Allied Powers awards Belgium the Mandate for “Ruanda-Urundi”. The League of Nations, the precursor of the UN, ratifies the mandate in 1923; later, in 1946, it is transformed into a “trusteeship”.
- 1923: The League of Nations awards a mandate to Belgium to administer Ruanda-Urundi. The king no longer has any authority, and is forced to remain in Nyanza, the capital. Everything is destabilized.
- 1925: Ruanda-Urundi is formally annexed to the Belgian Congo and placed under the authority of a Belgian Vice-Governor-General.
- Nov. 12, 1931: King Yuhi V Musinga, who is very suspicious of the Belgian Government and Catholicism, is removed and replaced by his son Rudahigwa Mutara III, age twenty (crowned on November 16, 1931). Musinga is exiled to Moba (near Kalemie) in the Belgian Congo, where he dies on December 25, 1944. For Rwandans, it is as if the sky has fallen on them.
- Nov. 16, 1931: Belgium imposes a Christian king, Mwami Mutara III, and an identification system indicating membership in one of the communities of Hutu, Tutsi or Twa, which the colonizers view as ethnic groups.

After the christianization of the kingship, the population was baptized en masse, since it was attached to its king. The church thus pulled off a successful coup. Here it should be noted that the Rwandans were a monotheistic people. They prayed to one God, Imana, who had nothing

representing him. The God of Rwandans could not be depicted. The Rwandans never had idols, and never prayed to any other god. They all prayed the same way throughout the country. To impose another God meant transforming everything about their beliefs and their religion. The Catholic Church built schools, and only children of chiefs had access to school education. This educational system was already an extension of the colonial programme. These young people were trained to become assistants to the colonial administration. They were taken out of their families and brought together in boarding schools, the better to instil in them the values of the colonialists. The church also established religious education in seminars, in search of priests. Until very recently, for a child to be admitted to school, parents had to present his or her baptism card. That indirectly made Christianity compulsory.

1926-1935: Administrative reorganization of Rwanda: The Resident Georges Morthéan abolishes the triple administrative hierarchy; the position of chief of the army is abolished; those of chiefs of farmland and of pastureland are assigned to the territorial administrator, always a Belgian, and a key post in the colonial administration.

1931-1935: The Rwandan people are subjected to a unique kind of "census", a survey carried out at the level of sub-chiefdoms, and applied to registered adult men. Here, the administration imposes as a criterion for membership in the Tutsi "ethnic group" the ownership of at least ten head of cattle. The rest of the population is assigned to the "ethnic groups" Hutu or Twa, depending on their occupation. The identity booklet carrying the assignment of each citizen to an "ethnic group" is now introduced in Rwanda. It has the immediate effect of freezing every Rwandan citizen into the particular ethnicity of Hutu, Tutsi or Twa, in contradiction to the sociological reality of the country. Previously, a Rwandan has been able to change status according to certain criteria. A Hutu could become a Tutsi, or vice versa.

Oct. 17, 1943: Baptism of the young king Rudahigwa Mutara III, followed by his chiefs and sub-chiefs, which earns him the favour and support of the Catholic Church. The same year, the Belgian administration replaces all Hutu chiefs with Tutsi chiefs appointed by the king. It is a complete upheaval which divides the Rwandans.

1945: King Mutara III proposes the abolition of the ubuhake, the pastoral client contract, which he considers “inappropriate” and “inequitable”. It is abolished in 1954. Shortly thereafter, the colonial administration, in spite of itself, accepts the abolition of unpaid forced public labour.

1946: Ruanda-Urundi becomes a UN trusteeship territory on October 27, with the Belgian League of Nations “mandate” becoming a “trusteeship”.

1949: Mutara III comes out in opposition to whipping, to the great displeasure of the colonial administration (a punishment for adult men: they were beaten in public, often in front of their families). He also, in 1958, states that the terms Hutu, Tutsi and Twa should no longer appear on identity documents, school records, etc., that all inhabitants of the country had only one name: “Rwandans”.

1950: The Vatican consecrates Rwanda to “Christ the King.”

These dates have had a profound impact on the fate of Rwanda and the Rwandans, starting with the merger of Rwanda and Burundi; since each was a separate nation with its own culture and traditions, that changed everything. At least Rwanda and Burundi had languages which, while not identical, were more or less mutually intelligible. But the annexation to Congo completely destabilized Rwanda, in view of the completely different cultures. The culture of Rwanda has been killed, and no people has survived the death of its culture.

With the currents of independence flowing across Africa, including Rwanda, King Mutara III Rudahigwa began to demand the independence of his country.

1955: Belgium appoints J-P. Harroy as Governor of Ruanda-Urundi.

The latter will admit that he does not know Rwanda, and that he has read only one book about the country.

1956: Rudahigwa demands complete independence and the end of the Belgian colonial occupation. The same year, the Vatican appoints André Perraudin, a Swiss, as bishop.

The Supreme Council of the country demands equal treatment for European officials and Rwandans, according to the principle of

“equal pay for equal training and competence”. More or less open warfare breaks out between the colonizer and the colonized. From now on, everything moves very quickly, leading the country into violence. The Rwandans, having failed to identify their problem, make themselves violent. The Supreme Council demands that the assumption of the office of chief and sub-chief be subject to election. This claim is repeated in 1959, together with a timetable for the country’s move towards autonomy and independence.

March 24, 1957: A Bahutu Manifesto supported by the Belgian authorities and the Catholic Church through Archbishop André Perraudin challenges the privileges of the Tutsi monarchy and demands political and economic equity and access to education. At that time, all education of young Rwandans is in the hands of missionaries.

Feb. 15, 1959: Birth of the political party Aprosoma, Association for Social Advancement of the Masses, founded by Joseph Gitera, with the help of missionaries.

July 25, 1959: At the sudden death under mysterious circumstances of Mutara III Rudahigwa in Bujumbura. Kigeri V, his younger brother, succeeds him. An unexpected event for the colonizer, as it is organized by the sages of the Court. Belgium loosens its ties to the Tutsi and moves to cement relations with the Hutu majority – a major policy turn-around.

July 28, 1959: Funeral of Mutara III and coronation of Jean-Baptiste Ndahindurwa, half-brother of Rudahigwa, under the dynastic name of Kigeri V, a refugee in the United States.

Sept. 3, 1959: Creation of the Rwandan National Union (UNAR), founded by Tutsi monarchists for independence. The first President is François Rukeba.

Sept. 14, 1959: Birth of the Rwandan Democratic Movement (RADER), founded by the Resident André Preud’homme.

Oct. 9, 1959: Investiture of Kigeri V.

Oct. 18, 1959: Foundation of the Movement Party of Hutu Emancipation, founded by Father Andriatis Ernotte, it was officially launched by Kayibanda as a movement in May 1957.

Oct. 18, 1959: Supporters of the manifesto of 1957 create the Party for Hutu Emancipation (Parmehutu)

Nov. 1, 1959: "The Rwandan All-Saints Day": For the first time, the Hutu massacre Tutsis in Rwanda. These massacres will be called the "Revolution of 1959" – a revolution assisted by Jean-Pierre Harroy, the last governor of Ruanda-Urundi.

The Parmehutu "social revolution" results in the massacre of Tutsi and the flight into exile of thousands of them, particularly to Burundi, Uganda and Congo-Kinshasa. No justice is done, for everything is supervised by the authorities.

July 30, 1960: The Parmehutu wins more than 70% of the vote.

Oct. 26, 1960: Formation of the first provisional government; Gregoire Kayibanda becomes Prime Minister.

Jan. 28, 1961: Abolition of the monarchy, its Kalinga emblem is replaced by a red, yellow and green flag with the letter "R", and a republic is proclaimed. Dominique Mbonyumutwa is elected provisional President of the Republic.

Sep. 25, 1961: Legislative elections and a referendum on the old and the new regimes are held under the auspices of the UN, under disputed conditions; they confirm the proclamation of January 28, 1961.

Independence: The First Republic

At the time of independence, as people in all African countries mobilized to remove the colonial regimes, in Rwanda, the Hutu forces hunted the Tutsi, whom they considered their colonizers. The killings continued, and the exile of the Tutsi survivors continued. Those who could not leave the country suffered exclusion in all aspects of life. Tutsi children were excluded from school, those who could, struggled to change their identification, with Tutsis trying to buy Hutu identity cards. The children of those who succeeded would have the opportunity for access to education. But in the minds of their Hutu neighbours, they were still Tutsis, and would be exterminated like the others during the genocide. The First Republic was established through the exclusion of the Tutsi, the second surpassed it.

Oct. 26, 1961: Grégoire Kayibanda of Parmehutu is elected President of the First Republic. The massacres and exiling of Tutsis continues. Nobody cares, not at the national or at the international level.

1 July 1962: The independence of Rwanda is proclaimed. Kigeri V is driven out of Rwanda. He goes into exile; this is, as always, accompanied by a bloodbath.

The Second Republic

July 5, 1973: Major General Juvenal Habyarimana, Minister of Defence, carries out a military coup. Some say there has been no bloodshed, yet Tutsis are killed. But since killing Tutsis has become normal, once again, nobody cares. Nobody is ever punished for killing Tutsis between 1959 and 1994. Thirty-five years of impunity. Rwanda has become the largest producer of refugees.

Whenever the Tutsis are massacred, the survivors flee the country. Young people excluded from education risk escaping the country to try to study abroad – for Tutsi are not issued passports. And since the regime of Juvenal Habyarimana has become dictatorial, even the Hutu begin to flee the country.

1 Oct. 1990: Led by Major Fred Rwigyema, the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) launches an offensive against Rwanda from Uganda. Fred Rwigyema is killed on the second day. He is replaced by Major General Paul Kagame. This is known as the Inkotanyi invasion.

Oct. 4, 1990: The Rwandan authorities complain of a Inkotanyi invasion from neighbouring Uganda. The regime organizes a staged farce to “prove” the entrance of the RPF into Kigali. The soldiers spend the night shooting in the air to scare the Westerners, who flee the next day, and to make the people of the city of Kigali believe that the Patriotic Front fighters have arrived in the capital as the result of an internal plot. The authorities conduct extensive raids in the Tutsi community, arresting a total of 7887 individuals by the final official count, of which 4300 are released in February 1991, following international pressure. France accepts the charge of external aggression and dispatches two companies and a “military-technical unit” armed with mortars in “Operation Chillwind”,

with the mission of evacuating or protecting some 500 French nationals in Rwanda, the majority of whom refuse to leave. A company of French Foreign Legionnaires occupies Kigali Airport and guards the major roads in the capital.

In Rwanda, the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa always lived together as brothers prior to colonization. Certainly, there were power struggles at court, but when it came to defending the territorial integrity, the whole population rallied without distinction. Every adult male went to the front to defend the integrity of the country. Everything started with the colonial ideology, which spawned the ideology of genocide against the Tutsis.

Analysis of the ideology of genocide against the Tutsis²

The Three Pillars of Ethics in Rwanda: Rwandan ethics, the justification for values and deeds, and even Rwandan philosophy, such as the design and concept of the world, are based on three pillars:

The fact of being, and of being one thing or another (*kuba*)

The fact of being at a certain time and at a certain place (*kubaho*)

The fact of being with others, or the social nature of human beings (*kubana*).

These three factors are necessary and sufficient. Necessary, because we cannot conceive of a human being who is not, in one way or another, one thing or another, or a human being who is, without being somewhere at some time. This is what philosophers have called the space-time nature of being. As for the social nature of human beings, it has applied to all humanity. Attempts have been made to transcend human society, by desert hermits, Robinson Crusoe, etc. It is the same thing for men and women, who cannot move from one category to the other, except in appearance or by resorting to subterfuge or substitutes, or to ersatz love – all however without lasting success. In Rwanda however, we are not familiar with such attempts. To see that these three factors

² This section was written by Servilien M. Sebasoni, Kigali/Brussels, March/April 2004. He cited: "Blacks have no history", with reference to the philosopher Hegel. Source: Clarence E. Walker: *We can't go home, an argument about Afrocentrism*, Oxford University Press, New York 2001.

are sufficient, it would be enough to try to find some human reality that is not subsumed under them, and depended on factors different from those three. One might make it a parlour game.

In addition, these three factors outline the current core issues for Rwandans. *Kuba* is the issue of identity: What are Rwandans, that do they want to be, what do we want them to be? *Kubaho* is the problem of survival of the one and the other, particularly the survival of those whose extermination was attempted. *Kubana* is the problem of coexistence, particularly among victims and perpetrators. This is the problem of the rules of coexistence, hence the choice of a project for society. All these problems may appear theoretical at first glance, but are really very concrete and immediate.

The Cornerstone of Coexistence: Rwandaness (Being Rwandan): Everything is as if, in the beginning, the Rwandans, finding themselves in each other's presence and discovering that they were different, had felt the need to be the same in some way. They were (*kuba*), that was obvious; and they were there, and at that time (*kubaho*); all that remained was to organize their coexistence (*kubana*).

The best way they found to be somehow the same was to invent (in the sense of discovery, invention) the myth of *Gihanga*: Gihanga was the man of creativity (*guhanga*) and accomplished knowledge (*ubuhanga*), whose son Kanyarwanda begat Gatwa, Gahutu and Gatutsi. Thus did Kanyarwanda, son of Gihanga, combine the three sons to a new common identity: Rwandaness. Myth or history? That is of small consequence.

On this cornerstone of Rwandaness, the three brothers became one (Rwandans), built a country together, initially with set boundaries, even if they were expandable, a nation, with a common home, a common language, a common culture, etc.; in short, Rwanda.

The Failure of Equality: Throughout Rwanda's history, the myth of equality between brothers experienced many difficulties in embedding itself in the concrete facts of everyday life, it even experienced failure. We will first see the origins of the failure of the idea of equality and then the journey from the idea of difference to the idea of extermination.

The origins of the failure of equality: The myths of inequality: Very early, it seems, was born the myth of inequality between the three Rwandans, Gahutu, Gatwa Gatutsi, which contradicted the fraternal equality of origins. We will cite two here: the myth of the keeping of the milk, and the myth of the eldest month. There are others of the same genre:

Imana, the God of Rwanda, confided to the custody of the three brothers three jars of milk. Gatwa, unable to control his thirst, drank his milk; Gahutu fell asleep and spilled his jar; only Gatutsi kept his jar of milk intact until Imana returned. Recognizing his superiority, he then appointed him as chief over the other two.

The father of the three brothers had poor harvests because, not knowing the eldest of the months, he sowed at the wrong season. He sent his three children in Kimenyi (the man who knows), King of Gisaka, to ask him which was the eldest of the months. En route, Gatwa stuffed himself with everything he found on his journey, and arrived at Kimenyi ill; Gahutu trusted in the first response of Kimenyi, who did not want to give his knowledge to a competitor; Gatutsi, hidden in a corner of Kimenyi's house, caught him bragging to his wife that he had deceived the naïve Rwandans and, in fact, the eldest month was *Mutarama* (January) and not *Ukwakira* (October); Gatutsi reported the good answer, and was appointed by his father as the chief over his brothers.

These myths tend to explain the inequality between Rwandans *post facto*, there are others, which are all of the same genre. Even though they represent a current of thought, these myths are all still part of the context of Rwandan imagination and permanently block any creation of real equality.

Clientelism: Clientelism, based on the granting of a cow in usufruct, is known under the name *ubuhake*. It is practiced much more between Tutsis and Tutsis than between Hutus and Tutsis, and it is therefore inappropriate as an explanation of the origin of the genocide of Tutsis. Certainly, it delayed democratic equality and even the spirit of democracy for all Rwandans. One cannot say, except opportunistically, even if it is a misconception, that *ubuhake* has exacerbated the Hutu-Tutsi confrontation, and that it is thus at the roots of ethnic conflict and genocide.

Western ideology: Ideology must here be understood to encompass all new ideas introduced by Westerners during the colonial conquest of Rwanda. To appreciate the importance of Western ideology, two factors must be taken into account: the structure of personal identity and the prestige of the Western intruder in Africa generally, and specifically in Rwanda. The personal identity of each individual consists of what he or she is in their own eyes, in the eyes of others, and of what he or she really is. The Western view, which ignored what the Rwandans were for themselves, and told them what they were for the West, resulted in a fission of Rwandan identity. In effect, what the Westerner said to the Rwandans was:

that they were of different races: which they rejected;
that one race was superior to the other two, which they rejected, since they still only had, at most, a hierarchy of three brothers;
that they were of different origins and had arrived in Rwanda at different times, successively, the Twa, then the Hutu and finally the Tutsi.

But the Westerner who said that was equipped with an immense prestige of knowledge and power; Rwandans believed them and did not, moreover, doubt that it would one day be of consequence. Consequences there would be, and they would be significant:

The Tutsi obtained, without their knowledge, three poisoned gifts: racial difference, racial superiority (which earned them a monopoly on power) and alien status.

The Hutu were relegated to the margins in terms of political power, a marginalization which would lead to resentment, then to conflict – when the Hutu Manifesto, published in 1957, challenged the Tutsi monopoly of power – and finally to the conflict of 1959 that led to the genocide of 1994: “The path does not notify the traveller” (*inzira ntibwira umugenzi*).

The Rwandan nation would experience a collapse, which would lead to the first attempt at Hutu-Tutsi separation.

In 1959, in a telegram to the UN, Kayibanda, founder of the MDR-Parmehutu and of the First Republic, called for the establishment of a Hutuland and a Tutsiland; by 1960, this demand had been transformed into one for the exile of the Tutsis; between 1962 and 1994, within Rwanda, to the institutionalization of the exclusion of Tutsis; and by 1994, to the attempt to exterminate the Tutsis by genocide, which is the extreme form of refusal to live together (kubana), and thus the rejection of the nation.

A genealogy can be traced from the ideas of difference (affirmed by Western observers) to the action of extermination (undertaken by the killers of 1994):

The alien status of the Tutsi served to justify their status as second-class citizens within Rwanda (the Tutsi is nothing more than a resident citizen who has duties to the Hutu, Rwanda's sole owners), which produced, externally, the Tutsi refugees. The ideology proclaimed in 1960 by the MDR-Parmehutu in its "Moving Appeal", called on the Tutsis to leave Rwanda, which was not their country, and to return to the place of origin assigned them by the "Western scholars". Rather than departing for any such hypothetical place of origin, the Tutsis fled to the countries bordering Rwanda.

There soon developed among the Tutsi refugee an attitude of rejection towards exile, which conflicted with their attitude of rejection of return and coexistence, based on the argument of the smallness of the country. The Tutsi refugees believed since the '60s that all that remained for them was to force a return to Rwanda. The looming forcible return of the Tutsi probably engendered the idea of extermination. Since 1964, the word "genocide" had become common; Kayibanda delivered it in a speech in March 1964 by announcing that if by chance the Tutsis should want to take Kigali; that would mean the extermination of their race – in other words, genocide. He shouted it out; the word and the idea were in the air, and the idea slowly began to circulate in certain circles of the Hutu elite that the extermination of Tutsis would be somehow feasible, given their small numbers. In 1994, this idea was nourished by other factors, which appeared on the scene when the transition to action arrived. Thus, first came the word (in 1964), then the feasibility (throughout

the period of the first two republics), and finally the ultimate transition to action (in 1994).

There were, as we have said, additional factors to nurture and grow the idea of exterminating the Tutsis:

Various authors have, each according to his or her own taste, taken one or the other of these factors as the cause of the genocide; one could also argue that it was the combination of all these factors which made the genocide possible or even inevitable, when the mixture reached an irreversible stage, a point of no return. But no single element – population pressure, poverty, etc. – can reasonably explain the genocide by itself. The following factors are often forgotten or have not attracted enough attention from analysts:

The harassment of the *inyenzi*

The fear of Tutsi superiority

Hutu triumphalism

Burundi as a mirror

The routine of killing, or the trivialization of the act of killing a Tutsi.

The harassment of the *inyenzi* created a sort of obsessive complex in the country, the feeling of being constantly under siege, which lasted throughout the two republics and until the genocide. The *inyenzi* are cockroaches which attack under cover of darkness, and when light comes, are elusive. They became a metaphor for the Tutsi, an irreducible force, and one impossible to get rid of; in short, the Tutsi/*inyenzi* became an image of a fate impossible to be rid of. Another symbol was the bird *maten*, which every morning buries its mother, who always returns to its heels, and whom it must re-bury the next day, and forever.

The fear of Tutsi racial superiority, inoculated by Western ideology, fuelled by stereotypes of colonial language, and transformed into reality by the Tutsi monopoly on power, embedded itself among the Hutu like a cancer, and continued to gnaw, feeding a deep resentment.

This obsession may explain the persistent animosity during the genocide with which the killer not only killed, but killed with refinement and jubilation (*agashinyaguro*).

The fear of Tutsi superiority may also explain the importance that rape assumed during the genocide. Rape of Tutsi women was, for the killers, a kind of completion of the self after a long fascination with the Tutsi woman.

The fear of Tutsi superiority also explained the desire to humiliate that ran throughout the genocide.

Hutu triumphalism expressed itself excessively in the songs sung during the various episodes that punctuated the seizure of power by the Hutu "revolution" of the 1960s. They had gone very far, and thought the situation irreversible, it would be difficult to throw the machine into reverse and achieve the return of the Tutsi, and when that return did loom after October 1990, it seemed intolerable to many. The leadership exploited this sentiment to mobilize the Hutus against the common danger. Even today, in the recent diaspora, people can be found who considered the return of the Tutsi to Rwanda, and to power, to be unthinkable, or at most as temporary. There is room for the assumption that the so-called "Hutu Power", the Hutu extremists who perpetrated the genocide, were those who pushed to an extreme precisely this feeling of the unbearable return of the Tutsis. They literally could not and cannot "digest" the return of the Tutsis. In 1994, they needed to exterminate them; later they need to try to finish the job. It is this ideology that we must constantly fight and eradicate.

The Burundian mirror: It has often been said that the two countries, Rwanda and Burundi, are like twins. This is true because of their historical and social similarities, and it is also true because they have grown like twins, raised together by the same colonizer, who took care not to create jealousy between them, and did in one place the same things as had been done in the other, like a mother who dresses twins alike. This was also true when African independence appeared on the horizon: in both countries, the colonial administration, Western civil society and the churches formed parallel projects to empower the Hutu – for liberation not from colonial rule, but from the rule of the Tutsi, which they themselves had established by means of their theory of racial superiority, and which had become inappropriate as soon as it allowed the Tutsi to oust the Westerners. Thus did the argument of the foreignness of the Tutsi prevail, and

was even refined to the point of advocating the departure of Tutsi first, since they had arrived first, even at the risk of demanding the departure of the Westerners later, since they had arrived more recently. Kayibanda and the MDR-Parmehutu supported such returns home in that order, at the risk of appearing ungrateful in the eyes of those who had developed “assisted democracy” – such as Governor Harroy. Similar plans existed for Burundi, where the Tutsi had retained power after independence; the Burundians had the chance to see them start in Rwanda, and thus had the advantage of the forewarned. Also because of the mirror effect, Rwandans, terrified by the Inkotanyi attack of 1990, saw in the 1993 murder of Burundian President Melchior Ndadaye, the first Hutu to hold that office, a foreboding of their own fate: this haunting image now whipped up Hutu extremism and revived the “twin syndrome”, in which nothing could happen to one without happening to the other.

The habit of killing had been established in Rwanda since 1959, and soon became a routine, the routine of killing Tutsis with impunity. Routine dulls the senses and the sensitivity: when it comes to killing Tutsis, killing one or killing two, killing many or killing few – what difference does it make, so what? To kill them all, without the idea becoming unbearable, all you have to do is assign a large enough number of killers to reduce the average number of murders per individual to the point where the idea becomes acceptable. You only have to read the numerous testimonies (see the latest book by Jean Hatzfeld, *Machete Season*) to see that this statement was part of ordinary conversations, and emerged, somehow, from its macabre feasibility.

Conclusions: After all that, the genocide took place. We have seen that genocide is the ultimate outcome of the refusal and inability to live together (*kubana*). Others have told you that, or you tell it to others. I would like to conclude with three thoughts.

The first is that, since and after the genocide, all reasonable Rwandans, Hutu, Tutsi or Twa, reflected and made their choice in a trilemma: separation (*gutura ukubiri*), extermination (*kumarana*), or living together (*kubana*). The Rwandan nation has chosen, once again, to live together. Ultimately, Rwanda has found that the best way to live together is nei-

ther that of the juxtaposition of ethnic groups – in separate territories, in different political organizations – nor that of ethnic conflict, by region, clan or religion, but in that of coexistence within a nation, in which the citizen has an individual relationship with the state.

For this, finally, Rwanda must seek to achieve real equality in daily life, cultivating democratic equality and for this secular nation, once enamoured of conquests. Now, the conquests to be made are within the country's own territory: the new frontier of Rwanda is democracy.

Women as the victims par excellence of the Rwandan conflict

Women have long been left behind in Rwanda. Apart from the Queen Mother, no woman ever engaged in politics until sixteen years ago.

Among the clichés given to the Tutsi by the colonizers which made them superior beings, was that of the Tutsi woman, who was also seen as the most beautiful and who sparked the desires of all men, especially the Hutu, who had been told that they were inferior. It also fanned the jealousy of Hutu women, who believed that their husbands dreamed of having Tutsi women. Whenever there were massacres of Tutsi, Tutsi women were raped before being killed.

This explains how rape – extending even to little Tutsi girls – has been a formidable weapon used against women during the genocide. Hutu women, once the demonization and dehumanization of Tutsi women had begun with the Hutu rebellion, did not even care, as their Hutu husbands raped Tutsi women, because they knew this was no longer a desire to sleep with a Tutsi woman, but a weapon of torture before death.

When the killers fled, taking hostage the population, Hutu women also suffered, with their daughters, in the refugee camps. For murderers, it was absolutely imperative to regain Rwanda, which they had lost by losing the war. They have also never lost the hope of re-conquering Rwanda and finishing the job.

Thus, women and little girls in the refugee camps were raped, because according to the policy of the murderers, each woman had the duty to bear a soldier, since they always had confidence in the politics of the ma-

jority – an “ethnic” majority which they held to be a political majority. The majority of women in Rwanda were victims of the conflict. Even if some among them also killed, they lost their loved ones – their husbands and their children – and they were taken as sexual hostage by the murderers.

The role of women in reconciliation and peace building in Rwanda: Genocide, post-genocide and the Third Republic

After the genocide, Rwanda had over 600,000 orphans. It is the women who cared for them. Sometimes these women also had their own children to support.

Once women had the opportunity, they entered politics. Currently in Rwanda, women make up more than half of the members of parliament, and a woman is President of the Parliament. Women are ministers and judges; they are at all levels of power, even in the diplomatic representation and the presidency.

When Rwanda established the National Commission for Reconciliation, the Committee was headed by a woman. When popular Gacaca courts were created, the majority of judges of integrity appointed were women. These are women who fought for the rights of women and children. They have a number of political associations, and all these associations are in an umbrella group which does excellent work – ultimately, for Rwanda.

Thanks to women, there is now collaboration between the police and the women’s associations in Rwanda against violence against women in couples and households. For that, a green phone has been created for women assaulted in marriage, to call the police for help.

Rwanda would not be able to rise up again without the efforts of women.

The effort of women

In 1990, women got together and established several women’s associations to fight against the problems women faced in everyday life. Of these associations was *Duterimbere* (Moving Forward Together), the goal of which was the economic empowerment of women. Another, created at the same time, was *Haguruka* (stand up!), which had the goal of defending the rights of women and children; it operated only in the

judicial realm. Later, other associations such as “the Guides of Rwanda”, “the Christian Youth Association”, etc., were formed.

By 1992, there were thirteen women’s associations. They decided to create an umbrella group of women called “*Pro-Femmes/ Twese Hamwe*”, i.e., for women/all together. They were all opponents of the regime of President Habyarimana; the members were mostly women from the disadvantaged south of the country, while the president was from the north. To combat this group, the President established the association Urunana (the name also used in French).

After the genocide, all these associations were virtually non-existent. Some members had been killed, others had fled the country.

Before the Beijing meeting, the women, including Marie-Immaculée Ingabire, decided to merge the associations of women returning from exile, including such associations as Benimpuhwe, the Mothers’ Sports Club, Benurugwiro, Benishyaka, Amaliza, etc.; those which had existed in Rwanda before the genocide; and those established after the genocide, including Avega, Arfem, Asoferwa, etc.

After they had formed a common group, they decided to meet in order to get to know one another. Neither side trusted the other, due to the genocide and the dehumanization which some had undergone as a result of the politics of division which had reigned in Rwanda prior to the genocide. Hutu women called those returning from exile *inyenzi* (cockroaches), while the Tutsi women returning from exile called the Hutu women genocidal killers. As for the survivors, they trusted neither side, in view of the situation after the genocide.

Gradually, they were able to build trust amongst themselves, because they have found that what separated them was less than what united them, since they realized they had the same concerns, as women.

They therefore decided to open themselves up to a culture of peace. They created a project called “the campaign for peace”. Through this programme, they organized a number of actions for peace and reconciliation, beginning with themselves. They fought for women to enter politics and today, Rwandan women are at all levels of power.

REPORT ON ISRAEL

MOLLY MALEKAR, TEL AVIV

THE HISTORY OF THE CONFLICT

The genesis of the conflict

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a political conflict directly connected to and born alongside the rise of the national aspirations of the Jews for an emancipation of the Jewish collective in the territory of the historic biblical land of Israel.

The Balfour Declaration, issued by Britain in 1917, is a most significant document, in which Britain manifests its support of the efforts of the Zionist movement to create a Jewish national home in Palestine, without violating the civil and religious rights of the non-Jewish population.

The waves of immigration of Jews from Europe and the land settlement project by these immigrants ran up against the native Palestinians who had already been living in the same land for many generations. The 1920s and '30s were characterized by the growing conflict between the Zionist national movement and the local population, and by the growing national awareness of this conflict.

The Second World War and the tragedy of the Holocaust gave the international community the final impetus to support a plan for the partition of the land between the Jewish and the Arab-Palestinian community. Palestinians perceived the idea of sharing the land with the newly-arrived immigrants from Europe as unjust. The partition was intended to produce two areas, with Jewish and Arab majorities respectively. Jerusalem and its environs were to be internationalized. The Jewish leadership accepted the partition plan, the Arabs refused.

On May 14, 1948, the Jews proclaimed the independent State of Israel, and the British withdrew from Palestine. In the following days and weeks, neighbouring Arab nations invaded Palestine and Israel. The fighting was conducted in several brief periods, punctuated by ceasefire agreements (truces were declared on June 11 to July 8 and July 19 to October 15, 1948).

The Arab defeat and the birth of the refugee problem

Despite initial setbacks, better organization and intelligence successes, as well as timely clandestine arms shipments, enabled the Jews to gain a decisive victory. The Arabs and Palestinians lost their initial advantage when they failed to organize and unite. When the fighting ended in 1949, Israel held territories beyond the boundaries set by the UN plan – a total of 78% of the area west of the Jordan River. The UN made no serious attempt to enforce the internationalization of Jerusalem, which was now divided between Jordan and Israel, and separated by barbed wire fences and no man's land areas.

The Arab countries refused to sign a permanent peace treaty with Israel. Consequently, the borders of Israel established by the armistice commission never received de jure international recognition. Arabs call the defeat and exile of the Palestinian Arabs in 1948 the Naqba – “the Disaster”.

The war of 1967 and its aftermath

The Arab world refused not only to sign any peace treaty with Israel, but as well never accepted de jure the creation of the State of Israel.

The 1967 Six-Day-War changed the perceived balance of power in the Middle East and created a new reality. With the Sinai desert, the Golan Heights and the West Bank, Israel had acquired extensive territories several times larger than its 1948 borders.

It must be mentioned here that the Israel-Arab war was nourished not only by the genuine conflict, but was also part of the Cold War between the two dominant powers of the time, the USA and the USSR.

While Israel had acquired territories and a military victory, it also marked a new day for Palestinian aspirations. The defeat brought about a million Palestinian Arabs under Israeli rule. After the war, the fate of the Palestinians came to play a large role in the Arab-Israeli struggle.

Religious and nationalist groups began agitating for annexation and settlement of areas in the West Bank and Golan Heights.

The remarkable military victory of Israel gave rise to, or rather, encouraged the existing messianic and religious sentiments. These elements, which had been “tamed” or “monitored” by the more secular and socialist leadership of the Zionist movement and the State of Israel, now flourished, and dictated policy to the mainstream of Israeli politics and to decision-makers.

Meanwhile however, after the opposition right-wing Likud party came to power in 1977, settlement expansion became official Israeli policy, which it continued to be even after the Oslo Accords of the mid-’90s, the peace process which followed upon the first Palestinian Intifada. That was a symbolic turning point in the history of the conflict, as it ended the era of secular and socialist oriented leadership by the Labour Party. The settlement of the occupied territory as an official and open policy of the new government was not only a political change, but a social and economic transformation as well. The socialist economic and social structure which had previously prevailed was now transferred from the State of Israel to the occupied territories – and its benefits restricted to the Jewish settlers.

The government offered huge subsidies and benefits to the Israeli-Jewish citizens, who moved to build their centre of life in the occupied territories. The huge allocation of national budget for the settlements and settlers, at the expense of the citizens living within the Green Line (pre-1967 Israel), was attractive for to the less privileged elements of society and those living in poor development towns in “the periphery” – areas remote from the core areas of Israel.

The First Intifada

Since the Six-Day War of June 1967, Israel had occupied Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. After some initial violence in 1970, it was relatively quite in the occupied territories. Borders were open. Israelis went shopping in the West Bank and Gaza. Thousands of Palestinians went to work to Israel daily. From the Israeli point of view, this reality could have lasted forever, but the Palestinians were displeased with the occupation. They saw their land slowly disappearing, especially after the right-wing Likud Party came into government in 1977. Israel did not im-

plement the solution for the territories it had promised under the peace agreement signed with Egypt in 1977; negotiations came to nothing. Jordan washed its hands of the Palestinian territories in 1987 by relinquishing all claims to sovereignty over the West Bank, so that its moderating influence was lost there. The PLO failed to achieve anything for the Palestinians.

Palestinians felt abandoned by their Arab allies. On the one hand, the PLO had failed to destroy Israel and establish a Palestinian state in its place as they promised. To many Palestinians it seemed they were probably doomed to remain politically impotent forever unless they took their fate into their own hands.

It is hard to specify the official date of the beginning of the Intifada. The stabbing of an Israeli by a Palestinian in Gaza, and an incident in which four Palestinian workers were killed by an Israel car, rumoured to have been deliberate revenge for the stabbing, are often cited. Then, a seventeen-year-old threw a Molotov cocktail at an army patrol and was killed by an Israeli soldier. His death supposedly became the trigger for large-scale riots that engulfed the West Bank, Gaza and Jerusalem. Unlike the Second Intifada, the First Intifada was evidently unplanned, and there was less violence. The PLO was relatively weak in the occupied territories. It was headquartered in Tunis, and was concerned with the survival of its organization, after having been expelled from Lebanon.

The First Intifada was characterized largely by leafleting and rock throwing, primarily because Palestinians did not have many weapons.

The Israeli reaction to the First Intifada: The collapse of the false notion of the “enlightened occupation”

Given the non-dramatic nature of Palestinian challenge, the Israeli reaction is totally inexplicable. Israel killed a large number of Palestinians in the initial part of the Intifada, most of them apparently in demonstrations and riots. It is easy to claim it was due to brutality or insensitivity, but most aspects of the policy were actually counter-productive. Brutalization of the Palestinians and mass arrests could only sow the seeds of the next Intifada.

The continuous official Israeli pronouncements and rhetoric about “terror” were also strange. Demonstrations took place, but fatalities remained the same compared to previous years. There may have been many more non-fatal violent attacks. However, it was in the interests of Israel to downplay the Intifada, since the more publicity it got, the more it seemed that the Palestinian “David” was successfully challenging the Israeli “Goliath.” The large number of Palestinian fatalities brought UN condemnation during very early stage in the Intifada. It helped to draw world attention to the Palestinian plight and created a growing anti-Israel and anti-occupation lobby around the world.

The Oslo Process

The Gulf War, the collapse of the USSR and international pressure helped pave the way for an international conference for peace, the Madrid Conference (1991). Between 1993 and 1995, Israel and the PLO signed the Oslo Interim Agreement (Oslo II), which created the Palestinian National Authority (1994). The agreement led to the withdrawal of Israeli military force from Gaza and from most cities of the West Bank by 1996. The West Bank, according to the agreement, was divided into three categories, with different levels of civil and military control by Israel.

Alongside the political process, Israel not only continued, but accelerated the settlement programme, building thousands of housing units in the West Bank, and doubling the number of settlers there by 2004.

Though both sides agreed to forego violence, attacks on settlers continued and the Israeli army continued arresting and harassing Palestinians. In February 1994, an extremist settler from Hebron opened fire on worshippers in the Cave of Abraham and killed thirty people before being killed by the survivors.

The general shock and anger among many Israelis was a rare opportunity to evacuate the extremist settlers of Hebron. Rabin, the then prime minister, hesitated. The Hamas movement used this massacre as an excuse to carry out several suicide attacks in city centres in Israel. The peace process became increasingly unpopular in Israel. On the evening of November 5, 1995, Rabin was assassinated. The same morning, a

group of thirty activists and staff of Bat Shalom met for an intensive seminar, to design the next programme for the organization. Many argued that it was time to move from the phase of protest and street action to that of peace building, to widen the activities beyond the direct political work, and to build a culture of peace.

In the spring of 1996, in the midst of the election campaign in Israel, another set of suicide attacks by Hamas caused the Labour Party to lose the elections, and brought Benjamin Netanyahu into power, an opponent of the Oslo process.

Despite his opposition to the Oslo peace process, Israel and the PNA signed an interim agreement on Hebron in January 1997. Israeli forces withdrew from most of Hebron, leaving an enclave of Jewish settlers in the middle of this Arab city. The settlers were distressed, and acted aggressively.

Bat Shalom women decided to organize a peace rally of Israeli and Palestinian women on the streets of Hebron, to counter the provocations made by the settlers. A small group of women travelled to Hebron, to plan and coordinate the rally. The Israeli military conveyed friendly messages to us, asking and “advising” us to cancel the rally. The rally was perceived as a provocation, an act which may cause clashes with the settlers, etc. The organization of such an action became an extra sensitive issue. Every sign and slogan was negotiated; the route of the rally was planned carefully, so that it would not pass by the settlers’ homes. We agreed to not invite men to the rally, and to conduct it strictly peaceful.

In May 1999, Ehud Barak of the Labour Party became Prime Minister. Bat Shalom became active in the pre-election period, convincing women to vote for peace. Slogans, stickers and leaflets were issued and distributed to women in supermarkets, parks, and streets. Barak vowed to actively pursue peace negotiations, though simultaneously proceeding with the settlement expansion programme.

The failure of Camp David and the Second Intifada

Barak returned from the Camp David summit declaring that he had done everything for peace, bringing a generous offer, but that the Palestinians had rejected the plan.

The time was ripe for the next violent phase between the two sides. The violence was triggered by Ariel Sharon's provocative visit to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. As terrorism, suicide bombing and Israeli retaliation were going on, two attempts to bring the sides to the table failed. One was President Clinton's proposal (the "Clinton Parameters"); the other was the Taba Talks of January 2001.

The terrorist attack in New York on September 11, 2001 and the accession to power of Ariel Sharon, with the image of a "strong man" who would provide security, were used cleverly by the Israeli government and the army to push the view that Israel was on the front line of global Islamic terror, and Arafat was the local Bin Laden.

The next spring, a suicide attack on the eve of the Passover holiday killed twenty-seven Israelis at the Park Hotel in Netanya, giving the signal for the "defensive shield" operation, intending to root out terrorism. The army re-occupied major West Bank, captured or killed numerous militia fighters, and confiscated papers and documents in an attempt to show the direct involvement of President Arafat in planning the terrorist attacks. Buildings, roads, offices and other civilian facilities were destroyed as well.

The peace camp in Israel now faced a serious crisis. Many believed Ehud Barak's claim on his return from Camp David that his generous offers had been rejected by the Palestinians. The harsh suicide attacks in the city centres created zero tolerance towards peace. Peace became unpopular.

The general atmosphere on the streets, in buses, cafés, banks, etc., was one of fear and panic. People were afraid to gather in public. No queues were seen, as these situations would have been potentially dangerous. The epidemic of fear was shared not only by the "person in the street".

In the midst of violence, while worried calls to friends and family following every terrorist attack, and calls to Palestinian colleagues in Ramallah following every bombardment and military operation, a close friend offered me few moments of spirituality. We had to heal our souls.

A perfect opportunity came with the concert of the famous Emma Kirkby. It was the March 8, 2001, International Women's Day. However, few days prior to the concert, she cancelled her trip to Jerusalem. In a phone interview with a music critic of Haaretz newspaper, she explained that she couldn't sing while people are getting killed. The Israeli journalist acted aggressively, accusing her for taking sides and criticizing Israel. Kirkby, it must be noted, did not explicitly do so. She spoke about human suffering and her moral dilemmas.

We decided to write her a letter of support: "... in times of political madness, when political clichés fail to express the complexity of the situation, it is the compass of human conscience that can be relied upon to guide us. This was the message you expressed so wisely, and we thank you for this reminder".

The same year, 2001, one of the most popular daily newspapers, Maariv, dedicated its main weekend magazine article to the group of Israeli women who were leading and organizing the protest vigils and demonstrations against the Israeli violence. It received attention, as not many people dared to question the violence, and those who did were mainly women. A personal as well as a group portrait was offered to the readers of the newspaper. The huge headline the editor decided to give this article was "The outcast". The group photo of us, wearing black and holding signs, next to the title, implied "subversives", "danger".

The same year my daughter, then seven years old, attended a mixed Jewish-Arab school, just established in Jerusalem. A birthday party took place of one of the Arab girls, who lived in the village of Beit Zafafa, near the Israeli neighbourhood of Gilo and the Palestinian village of Beit Sahour. It was a busy evening, as the Palestinians were shooting at Gilo, while the Israeli army was bombing Beit Sahour. In the midst of another round of violence, some twenty Jewish and Arab kids were playing together, while their parents were sharing coffee and common concern,

in a very intimate, yet sad, manner. Had it been a scene in a movie, I would have dismissed it as a “tacky” one.

The years 2002 and 2003 were marked by continuous terrorist attacks, targeted assassinations and clashes between the Israeli army and the armed Palestinian militias. While the arms of both sides spoke, the peace activists lost contact with one another – except that the Israeli and Palestinian women decided to continue our dialogue. We issued “exchanges of letters” and statements in the Israeli and Palestinian press. We hoped to reach others through the media. At this point, many Israeli women who had been engaged in peace work during the Oslo period cut off contact with us. Only the committed hard-core group remained, holding tight to the margins, acknowledging the responsibility to hold on to the margins, in times of total chaos.

Constructing the Separation Wall

The election campaign of 2003 mainly centred on the issue of the separation wall, proposed by the Labour Party. Ironically, it was the Likud Party who opposed it, as it would create a de-facto border, which they feared and which would leave most of the settlements on the other side of the wall. The Likud Party won the elections, sending the weakened Labour and Meretz parties into opposition, totally defeated.

Sharon eventually adopted the wall concept, but redrew the line. The new line would include major settlements, while creating Palestinian enclaves. Israeli people needed protection from terrorist attacks; the wall provided it. They paid little attention, if any, to the fact that this wall was used for political aims, grabbing more of the Palestinian lands for Israel.

Palestinians and Israelis came back to work jointly around the issue of the wall: Joint vigils and demonstrations were organized. Yet the mode of cooperation was different. The Palestinians, involved in protest work came mainly from the areas and villages next to the course of the wall. They were local farmers, unlike the elite of Ramallah, with whom the Israelis had met during the Oslo period. Now, joint work involved popular direct action between Israeli hard-core activists and the Palestinian rural communities.

The Israeli army showed zero tolerance towards these joint actions, which undermined the fundamental goal of the separation of the two people. Israelis and Palestinians have experienced harsh violence from the Israeli border police units.

In March 2004, an Israeli activist was shot by an Israeli soldier, next to the separation wall, while demonstrating.

April 2004, a group of Israeli women travelled to a village north of Jerusalem called Bidu. We planned to march peacefully and jointly to the spot near a beautiful olive orchid, where tractors were working to build the wall. We marched singing and holding signs; it felt almost like going on a picnic. The police unit was less amused. They started arresting Palestinian women. Israeli women decided to negotiate. We knew that we had to provide protection to the Palestinians. We thought that being Israelis would provide us immunity from violence. We were wrong. The police did not distinguish; without warning, we were blanketed by tear gas. Three mounted policemen attacked the demonstrators with heavy sticks. A policewoman hit me several times; I was dragged by a local medical team to the village clinic. My head and my shoulder were broken.

The Israeli government was determined not to have its plan disrupted by those who insist upon meeting each other. The symbolic threat of joint peace voices was a major threat to them.

The year 2004 was relatively quiet, in terms of terrorist attacks. This quiet was attributed to the separation wall and the targeted killing of Palestinian militia leaders. However, Hamas succeeded in carrying out double suicide actions in Beer Sheva, in the southern part of Israel. The terrorist entered Israel via the Hebron area, where no wall had been built. The attack accelerated the building of wall, providing clear evidence that the wall could stop terrorism.

With the death of President Arafat, and the succession of Mahmoud Abbas in January 2005, it was hoped that this more civilian oriented president would bring a change in the political climate. Everyone spoke of a "window of opportunity". But as usual, reality was different. The Israeli mantra of "no partner" still prevailed. If Arafat was no partner, but a ter-

rorist, Abbas was no partner because he was “weak and not able to deliver the goods”.

With Sharon’s insistence upon not negotiating with the Palestinians, and the heavy burden of safeguarding the Israeli settlements in the Gaza Strip, a unilateral disengagement idea emerged. By the summer of 2005, a plan to evacuate twenty-on settlements in Gaza and four in the West Bank took shape.

Aggressive protest actions of the settlers against Sharon’s plan were the reaction, included blocking main roads in Israel, violence against Palestinians, and attacks on police and soldiers. The settlers called on the soldiers to refuse to obey the government’s orders. Any evacuation of Jewish settlements would create a civil war in Israel, the settlers warned.

In mid-July the army closed the Gaza Strip to Israeli citizens. Between August 15 and 24, all Gaza settlements and the four West Bank settlements were evacuated. Violence used by the settlers against the police and the army created anger among the Israelis towards the settlers. For the first time, an average Israeli could witness the conduct of behaviour of the settlers and their attitude towards law and order. Some of the settlers’ leaders admitted that although they settled the land of Israel, they had failed to settle into the hearts of the Israelis.

The Hamas victory in the elections of January 2006 sent Fatah, the ruling party for forty years, into the opposition. The international community reacted by suspending aid to the Palestinian Authority. The creation of a new militia unit, founded by Hamas in Gaza, intensified the tension between Fatah and Hamas; fighting, killing and kidnappings became a norm. These clashes came to a peak in July 2007, as Hamas fighters executed Fatah officers and soldiers, captured weapons of Fatah groups, and executed Fatah related people. Fatah fighters fled to Egypt and Israel.

The Second Lebanese War

In July 2006, Hezbollah fighters crossed the Israeli border, killing and capturing members of an Israeli army patrol. Other soldiers got killed, as their tank hit a mine, while searching for the captured. At the same time, Hezbollah launched rockets on Israeli villages and towns. Israel

decided to carry out massive attack on Hezbollah headquarters in Beirut, killing around 900 people. Hezbollah retaliated by launching hundred of rockets towards Israel, killing about forty people. The air attacks were followed by a ground invasion of Lebanon. The concrete aims of the military operation were not clear to the army. The Israeli media questioned whether the policy-making authorities had any strategic plan, or were merely being carried along by circumstances.

This war found the Israeli civilians vulnerable and frightened. The rockets reached almost to the centre of the state, Haifa and beyond. The civil administration and the local authorities were not prepared for the war; many citizens began questioning the dysfunctional nature of the government and the army.

Continuous violence on the southern border

During the ensuing war in southern Lebanon, the Israeli army and the Hamas militia groups continued fighting. Arms from Iran and other sources were smuggled through the Rafah tunnels. Israel's harsh attacks on the tunnels, the killing of innocent civilians and the destruction of their infrastructure, sparked major international criticism and condemnation.

At the end of 2006, Premier Ehud Olmert announced a new Israeli diplomatic initiative, offering peace agreement based on the Arab Peace Initiative; it was the first Israeli leader to refer positively to the Arab initiative. President Abbas welcomed it, while Hamas and the Israeli right-wing parties condemned it.

A meeting of Abbas and Olmert on December 2006 ended with Israel's approval of some concessions to make life easier for Palestinians, including the release of tax funds being held in Israel, and the Israeli media reported of a new peace plan. These moves which were seen as attempts to support and encourage the moderate leadership in Ramallah.

The Annapolis summit

Building upon the Arab Peace Initiative, the concern caused by the Hamas takeover of Gaza and the potential explosive situation in the area, USA calls for a peace summit for November 26, in Annapolis, near

Washington. Although they met several times, Abbas and Olmert were not able to issue a statement until the last moment. It was agreed to renew the negotiations for a permanent agreement. Parallel to this statement, the Israeli government issued contradictory statements as to the future of Jerusalem, the building of settlements, the annexation of parts of the Palestinian side of Jerusalem, etc.

The Arab world for its part, mainly Egypt, continued its efforts to bring Hamas and Fatah together to national reconciliation, which was seen as essential for a joint position during negotiating with Israel.

War on Gaza, “Operation Cast Lead”

As Hamas continued launching rockets on Israeli civilians, and Israeli army bombarding their infrastructure and killed people, the date of the expiration of the official “pause” was drawing near. On December 24, 2008, Hamas bombarded Israel with some sixty rockets. Three days later, Israel began Operation Cast Lead, intensively bombing Gaza for an entire Saturday morning; some 225 people were killed. The number of killed grew day by day. Hamas responded with rocket attacks on Israeli towns and cities, including Ashdod and Ashkelon. Israel prepared for a ground invasion. The fighting ended officially by January 18, as Israel announced a unilateral ceasefire. This war ended with 1300 Palestinian and thirteen Israeli citizens killed.

The war was used by the right-wing parties, who came in power in elections, held on February 10, 2009. The current government, made of the extremist right, fascists and religious parties, marked the total defeat of the more moderate parties. The parliament is characterized by a weak opposition; peace oriented parties are almost non-existence, and civil society groups which work on human rights, democracy and peace are under harsh attack, through well-organized incitement of the government’s speakers. Moreover, proposed legislation by coalition members in parliament aims at restricting the work of human rights and peace movement groups.

RELIGION AND POLITICS: ISLAM AND JUDAISM – A RELIGIOUS OR A NATIONAL CONFLICT? A SMALL ANECDOTE FROM MY POLITICAL WORK

On the eve of the Israeli military disengagement from Hebron in the mid 1990s, I was asked by Bat Shalom to organize a women's joint rally for peace in Hebron. Intensive meetings were held with the Palestinian women leaders of Hebron, including negotiations over jointly agreed-upon messages and slogans for the rally, in the context of a very tense climate, with extremist Jewish settlers threatening Israeli woman activists, and the Israeli army pressuring us to prevent the women's joint march on the streets of Hebron.

When the women finally met for the rally at the spot, they pulled out banners in Arabic, Hebrew and English. One of the banners in Arabic stated: "Hebron – a Palestinian, Arab and Muslim city." Among the Israeli women, a group of religious women was present. They were rightfully irritated by the banner. Religiously, Hebron is as Jewish as Muslim. Though I am a secular woman, I do not ignore that the common legend and the Jewish collective consider Abraham as the father of the Jewish community. Personally, I felt deceived by those with whom I had negotiated so long for agreeable slogans. Spiritually, I do not deny the Jewish connection to Hebron, although politically, I call for an end to Israeli control of Hebron.

Certain earlier positions refer to the peaceful co-existence between Jewish communities and the Muslim world – in contrast to the relation between Jews and Christians in Europe, characterized by persecution and discrimination. Well, it is true. Yet, tolerance towards the Jewish communities by the Muslim world was only conceivable *as long as non-Islamic communities committed themselves to the rules of the game, dictated by Muslim domination.*

This state of affairs underwent a radical change with the emergence of the Zionist idea. The main meaning of the Zionist idea for Jews was the transformation of power distribution. Jews became, by the virtue of the Zionist idea, a distinctive political entity, claiming a separate, political sta-

tus in place of that of protected religious communities. The Zionist challenge also ran up against emerging Arab nationalism, with its Western notion of affairs.

From the Jewish-Zionist point of view, the definition of the Jewish collective identity is contradictory and confusing. The usual definition of nationality is complex enough: a common language, a common culture, common ethnic origin, history, territory, and/ or a combination of all or some of these?

The Jews in the world, it is claimed, do not share a common language, culture, ethnic or genetic ancestry, have no common territory, and history and beliefs of Jewish communities vary. The only common element is religion and religious civilization, either directly (among the orthodox) or vague and distant, or even rejected (among the secular). With the definition of the Israeli state as a "Jewish" state, the Israeli state must necessarily fail to become an entity that safeguards and regulates the common interest of a pluralistic civil society and the communities in its boundaries.

This confusion between religious and secular definitions and terminologies derived partly from the existential conflict with the Arab world, in which Israel and the Zionist movement were engaged since its inception, a century ago.

This national-political conflict over land and domination provided the political leadership the opportunity to translate the political and the military threat by the Arab world into the terminology of ancient collective fears of the Jewish communities, experienced in the long history of Jewish Diaspora. This common fear of the Jewish communities in the diaspora created and deepened their solidarity with the Jewish collective, the citizens of Israel. This fear brings with it an entire cultural aspects and environment: the hatred of the "goyim", the fear of "pogroms", Jewish pride, etc.

Ironically, this culture, exactly what the founding fathers of Zionism wished to rebel against and reject, is encountering "renaissance" within the independent state, equipped with arms and nuclear weapons.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a national-political one, as it is mainly carried through political instruments (occupation, war, economic and military control, etc), yet religion plays its part.

The struggle, from my point of view, is a political national struggle between two national movements, who both wish to fulfil their aspirations of control over one land.

The social elements of war and conflict: Patriarchy, militarism, unhealed traumas, and the culture of victimhood

In 1996, following another phase of violence between the Israelis and the Palestinians, Bat Shalom issued an advertisement in the newspaper, titled "Every human being has a name" (a title from a famous poem by the Israeli-Jewish poet, dedicating it to the victims of the Holocaust during the Second World War), including an alphabetic list of the Israeli and Palestinian victims of these clashes. The next day, the office phone was flooded with angry phone calls from both Israelis and Palestinians, all offended by the notion that the victims received the same attention and were mentioned in one list. Israelis were not used to seeing the names and faces of the Palestinian victims, and the Palestinians were offended by the fact that the "aggressors" received the same space as the "real" victims – the oppressed Palestinians.

The collective trauma and the epidemic of violence were dictating the environment and reproducing more violence and trauma, and prevented people from perceiving the other's victimhood as well. *The symptoms of the traumatized society are:*

Israeli society is made up of immigrants and refugees. The majority of Israelis have experienced the fragility of their existence in their new land, although spiritually and religiously, they do not doubt their connection to the land.

The long and endless state of war has created emotional numbness. Lack of sensitivity to pain of the other is essential for existence and functioning.

Agony, and anger, which are unmanageable, obvious block the option of seeing the other's pain and anger.

The search for a strong leader who can lead the people out of their distress: Abuse of power is tolerated and justified; society has lost its immunity to resist abuse of power;

There is a collective addiction to violence, a call for revenge and retaliation.

Escapism and passive acceptance of the "situation" prevail.

Alienation and a lack of solidarity are widespread; each person only worries about his or her own fate.

Internalized violence: The legitimization of the use of violence against the enemy has been internalized. Opponents are perceived as the enemy, even within one's own society.

The military and militarization in the service of the ongoing war

The military and militarization as both ideology and institution dominate the Israeli collective sphere. The military as ideology accepts organized violence as a legitimate solution to conflict, and believes that the military response to political conflict is sensible; militarism as a social process involves the mobilization of a huge budget as well as the spiritual and cultural resources for war.

Gender inequality in Israel is manifested at all levels of life, e.g.: "The best (men) for the Air Force; and the best (women) for pilots". In spite of non-discriminatory legislation, women are not able to translate their options into practice. The concept of separation between the private and the public spheres is maintained, due to the socio-political reality of a militarized society.

The importance of the family in Jewish society is magnified in the context of the political conflict. The family is used as the connecting link between the collective and the individual recruited to military service, and in time of crisis, to war. Women, identified with the private sphere, the family, are expected to furnish maximum support for their men, and occasionally even sacrifice their dearest in time if war. The shadow of war makes the family an important factor. As their children are to join military service, women prolong their role as mothers by two or three additional years.

During these years, women's traditional roles are strengthened; the concern for the soldier is expressed by washing and ironing the uniform, by preparing meals when the soldiers are on vacation, baking cakes for them to take back to the base, etc. The family is conceived as the most important support for its soldier-children. Here, I can recall a very popular radio programme, broadcast for many years every Friday noon, called "the voice of mother", in which soldier's mothers described the special meals they prepared for their sons that come home for Shabbat.

In its need for legitimacy, the army creates cooperation between parents (the family) and the military system. Parents are invited to open-house days on the military bases, commanders provide open lines for the parents' appeals, etc. This special role that mothers of soldiers have to carry, as well as the glorification of the family, deepens the traditional role of women, and preserves concepts of inequality.

Women in Uniform are Sexy

Women who grew up in the 1970s and '80s can recall the rear page of the popular daily newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth. A special space was allocated to photos of Israeli woman soldiers, obviously all beautiful. The represented girl-soldier changed every day, but the concept stayed the same: images of beauty in service of the country.

Jewish Israeli women are subjected to conscription at the age of eighteen, unless they are orthodox. However, for the vast majority of them, this service means a submissive and heavily gendered role, providing services in secretarial, educational, social-work and similar jobs, which are perceived and represented as supportive to the real job, which is executed by the men.

Their central role in the base is to create a more "normal", homely and pleasant atmosphere by virtue of their presence, providing male soldiers with the "other" through which they measure themselves, and define their masculinity and their male brotherhood. As so, in spite of their presence, women are for all practical purposes excluded from any decision-making or important roles in the system of the army.

The cooperation with the system and the life in the shadow of the war, as well as the impact of tradition, encourages families to have more children compared to other western countries, thus further increasing women's dependence on men.

Wives of high rank officers, interviewed in the media, occasionally speak proudly of their functioning as single mothers, freeing their husbands from taking part in raising and educating the children, and releasing them from any obligations as fathers or partners. The media represents these wives as admirable women and role models.

It must be said that the conflict and war are not the only origin of gender inequality in Israel. Nevertheless, they constitute a factor perpetuating this inequality, and even serve to legitimize its continuation.

Peace and Reconciliation

The Polish poet Wislawa Szymborska writes in her poem "The End and the Beginning" (1993): "Someone has to clean up when the war is over. It is not photogenic, you know. It takes many years. The cameras have long since wandered on to another war."

The most ambitious attempt at reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians was made in the so-called people-to-people processes and encounters after the Oslo Accords (1995). The rationale behind this people-to-people programme was to enable the individual and the collective to get to know each other, to encourage a process of re-humanization, to create a greater sense of empathy, cooperation, and understanding among Israelis and Palestinians. It was assumed that this process would ultimately lead to reconciliation, which is one of the most meaningful conditions for a true and stable peace.

The saddest notion, retrospectively, is that no synchronization between the political dimension and the civic-rapprochement was made.

It must be stated that neither political leadership of the two sides put any serious effort into promoting it. Moreover, the conduct of behaviour of the political leadership jeopardized and hampered the genuine sentiment of both peoples to meet each other.

Juggling between the fantasy of peace and the reality of oppression

One of the Palestinian colleagues involved deeply in the dialogue groups observed, "Israelis make the journey to meet Palestinians so they can sleep better at night, while the Palestinians making the journey to meet Israelis to make sure they do not sleep well at nights".

In this context, one must pay attention to the text of the mutually signed agreement, by the official negotiating parties of September 1995, under the chapter "Protocol of Israeli-Palestinian Cooperation Programmes". One article stipulates "... efforts leading to full reconciliation based on the agreed political process, and smooth implementation of a permanent settlement based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338."

On the face of it, the text is extremely positive. It acknowledges international resolutions as a basis for a political arrangement. However, reading it in the context of the realpolitik, the success of these "people-to-people" endeavours was doomed.

"Party poopers", or telling the truth about joint peace work

In the midst of the peace process and the growing popularity of joint programmes and meetings of the two civil societies under the auspices of the people-to-people project, the political committee of Bat Shalom, which I was part of as the programme director, decided to invite the famous Israeli journalist and reporter Amira Hass, who moved to Gaza to live. Around 80 people gathered in the "political club" of Bat Shalom. All of them affiliated with the peace camp, and supporters of the political process. We asked Amira, who has gained a reputation as a courageous and sharp observer of the peace process, to share with our audience how things look from the other perspective, from that of the people of Gaza. She drew a gloomy picture. Gradually the audience turned uneasy, even angry – and for good reason, from their own point of view. Many were political activists, and had participated in protest movements against the Israeli occupation. A very dear friend, a political activist since the late 1970s, called the next day. He was distressed, and accused me of a lack of historical perspective, and not giving peace a chance. And he was not alone.

Travelling often to the occupied territories, intensive meetings with Palestinian colleagues, reading reports of human rights groups and settlement monitors – the reality hit on the face. Upon returning back home to Israeli reality, where growing numbers of women were asking to take part in peace work and meet Palestinian women, I turned schizophrenic.

A series of meetings with foreign diplomats, experts and journalists all ended with the same reactions as that of my friend. Peace needs time, the politicians are still talking, arrangements will be made – we were told. Our job, we were also told, is to create a positive climate which will provide the moral support to the political leadership to come to an agreement. Women have a special role in creating that positive environment; we were encouraged by all agencies and foundations for peace.

Indeed women were keen to play their part in peace-building. The most popular of all programmes of Bat Shalom were joint meetings with Palestinian women. This was an opportunity for many Israeli women to practice their universal feminist views. Yet this authentic search for meetings with Palestinian women faced the gloomy reality of politics, as described above.

Who are you, and who do you represent?

There is the romantic perception that women from both sides of the national conflict are able to transcend national boundaries. But nationalism tends to use the privilege of women's institutions to force women to demonstrate their ultimate loyalty to their own national collective. The majority of Israeli women find it hard to challenge the hegemony of the narrative. Almost in every family, there is a soldier. The fundamental demand upon Israeli women is to serve as the devoted mothers of those soldiers. It is painful for them women to start investigating what kind of mission and operation their own son, husband, or brother is engaged in. The harsh distinction between traitors and patriots created a distress that was hard to live with.

On the other hand, the core group of feminist peace activists held a set of beliefs and an ideology that goes beyond nationalism and local patriotism. These women "gave up" nationalism, were critical towards the na-

tionalistic sentiment, and were in search of universalism, as part of their feminist beliefs. They found, while meeting with Palestinian women, a set of ideas and beliefs different from nationalism. Palestinian women spoke from a collective loyalty as Palestinian nationalists, and were not apologetic about holding such beliefs.

At the very first meeting between the two sides, while introducing ourselves, the difference in representation was demonstrated. Israeli women came to the meetings as individuals; Palestinian women would state their political and party affiliation. Israeli women were outside the circles of decision-making, Palestinian women had stronger connections to the institutions of power.

What have you done today, sister, to end the occupation?

Palestinian women hoped that Israeli women would mobilize support against the occupation within Israel, and that they would acknowledge the asymmetry of power defining their relationship. In other words, Palestinian women wanted Israeli women to acknowledge the existing power relations, the fact that Israeli women are part of the structure of the oppressive occupying power, which gives them privileges.

The majority of Israeli women were and are not ready to accept this assumption. They have a self-perception of being part of an underprivileged group within their own society, without access to power, or the ability to change policy.

Israeli women felt the need to meet the other women on an individual basis, to create not mainly political alliances, but rather social ones. For most of the Israeli women who were not involved in political action, the joint ventures were rare opportunity to meet face to face with Palestinian women. These women believed that first they had to build and establish personal relationships and trust, address their common destiny as women, and share their experiences as women in patriarchal societies. Israeli women were not keen to open up the political side of the occupation. Many times, Israeli women felt offended.

Israeli women hope that through an intimate dialogue, women on both sides will be able to overcome the political tension, and create some

kind of “global trans-border sisterhood”. The Palestinian women insisted on staying in the context of national liberation. They were hoping that, by sharing their suffering under the occupation with Israeli women, they would be able to ultimately move the Israeli leadership towards a peace oriented policy.

The tactics of “stories of sufferings” were occasionally counter-productive. Many Israelis felt they are pushed into a corner, and were in a constant apologetic stance. The ritual of stories of suffering, perceived by the Palestinians as the path to trust building, was perceived by the Israelis as counter-productive and destructive.

Behind the curtains vs. the real world

Paradoxically, the naïve assumption that women might conduct different politics, or demonstrate more flexible behaviour, was not necessarily proved in reality.

The “real world” penetrated all aspects of the dialogue. Not only the unequal distribution of power between the occupier and the occupied, but women had to carry the extra burden of gender.

Among the Israeli women, especially the nuclear group of activists, who came to the meeting as individuals, had already been positioned in their own society as “non-conformists” and as critical towards their own government and society; they had not much to lose, they presumed. This marginality allowed them more freedom to exercise political thinking, to dare to cross red lines, and to carry proudly the banner of the avant-garde. They were less concerned about repercussions. Presumably, they suffered no repercussions; however, they were less effective in enlarging their impact beyond the circle of those already convinced.

Palestinian women on the other hand felt that the “big brother” was watching them all the time. Their vulnerability occasionally led them to militancy. They were afraid to appear as compromising their national cause, their party line and their surroundings.

In this context, the asymmetry of power between the sides caused a shift in favour of the Palestinians, as they would appear to be the ones

with access to political parties and institutions, while Israeli women had less backing from their own political structures.

In fact, following the assassination of Rabin (1995), and the coming to power of the Likud Party in Israel, a few Palestinian women, notably leaders of women's organizations, have raised the idea that it would be more effective to build connections with women of the Likud Party. They assumed it would be more productive, and more of dialogue between equals, simply because of the easier mutual access to power.

What good will this peace dialogue bring for me?

The basic clash which accompanied the entire post-Oslo process was over the fundamental legitimacy of Israeli-Palestinian dialogue. The question: Was dialogue still legitimate only as part of the anti-occupation struggle for Palestinian liberation in line with the "traditional" PLO thinking, which saw dialogue as a tool for convincing the Israeli public and decision-makers of the legitimacy of Palestinian rights? Or, should the definition of "legitimate dialogue" be widened to include other issues such as state-building, democracy, non-violence or even reconciliation?

Those supporting the first position criticized the dialogue as "apolitical", "identity" and "reconciliation" oriented, as a "normalization" that legitimized Israel and provided a fig-leaf for the continuation of the occupation. Those advocating the second position claimed that the dialogue should be neither contingent on political agreement between the sides nor held hostage to the peace process; i.e., that dialogue couldn't be postponed until such time as the occupation ended. It is also clear that while the Palestinians involved in the dialogue were motivated largely by the more political and collectivist agenda, Israelis were motivated largely by a more individualistic, "post-conflict" and "apolitical" agenda.

The controversial interdependence between the civil society engaged in peace work and the political level has been viciously used and misused by the politicians.

A successful dialogue could be meaningful and effective, mainly as they were carried out in times of a non-violent atmosphere, which were rare moments. The “spoilers” of peace, in this context, triumphed.

Both sides were subjected to the willingness of the Israeli security establishment, in providing permits for the Palestinian participants, while the Palestinian decision makers used their power to “bless” certain groups to meet with Israelis, or to condemn other groups, who were in opposition to President Arafat.

Yet, long years of dialogue between the two sides have produced many personal relationship and trust. Joint meetings were resourceful. It was an opportunity to exchange sentiments, deliver messages, provide analysis, and learn about each other’s society directly and authentically.

But these rare occasions and trust building did not hold much when things on the ground got violent. We could still meet informally, talk over the phone, exchange e-mails – but the friendly personal trust did not soften the content of the conversation.

REPORT ON PALESTINE I

LAMA HOURANI, RAMALLAH

I will talk about the conflict from my personal experience; the way I lived and understood it through the development of my personality and knowledge. I have had the opportunity of special circumstances which have contributed to the development of my consciousness regarding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and which have shaped my progressive perspective on the conflict and other aspects of social life. I was born to progressive parents who were liberated from any religious or racist influences that might cause misconceptions regarding the conflict, which is mainly a political one. My parents went to Damascus after the Naqba in 1948, where I was born and raised. Damascus is a city with vibrant political and social activism. Both my parents were active in the public sphere, where at that time the majority was anti-imperialists, anti-colonialist and reformists. I grew up in an atmosphere where I developed my awareness of Zionism and Israel, based mainly on secular progressive perspectives.

Genesis of the conflict

The conflict started when two movements found broad common ground and allied against the people of Palestine and the peoples of the Middle East. On one hand, imperialism, concentrated in Britain at that time, sought to expand its influence in the world, mainly in the Middle East. On the other hand, the international Zionist movement, which originated among different right-wing, left-wing and other Jews. Different factors stimulated the formation of this movement, but all of these fractions agreed on the desire of implementing a special status for the Jews by gathering a majority in Palestine and establishing their own state. The Zionist movement looked for allies, and found one in Britain, which issued the famous Balfour Declaration on November 2, 1917, stating that Britain supported the establishment of "a national home for the Jewish People" in Palestine. Of course, this declaration could only be carried out after the division of the Ottoman Empire due to its defeat in the First

World War. The joint interests of the two movements allowed a great coordination of efforts in Palestine: The British mandate in Palestine, which forms the heart of the Arab World, with the Zionist colonial activities. These two activities lead to the Naqba in 1948, which destroyed the national Palestinian entity and deprived the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination. The Naqba lead to the displacement of the majority of the Palestinians in different countries. It destroyed the social fabric of a nation and deprived it of its homeland. It also lead to the division of Palestine into three parts: the largest, called Israel, formed 78% of historic Palestine, another part, known as the Gaza Strip, was under Egyptian administration, and the third part, known as the West Bank, was under Jordanian Administration. Although there were other reasons why the Naqba succeeded, the most important was the complete superiority of power of the imperialist and Zionist alliance and the enormity of their ambitions. Other factors were the retardation of the Palestinian social, political and economic structure, including gender inequality, patriarchal society, and the prevailing feudal agricultural relations; however, the Zionists and imperialism targeted Palestine for their own reasons, regardless of these socio-economical structures. The British mandate supported Zionist colonialism, while its policies withheld development opportunities from the Palestinian people.

The trigger of the conflict/war

Zionist colonialism leaned on the British occupation before 1948, as it depended later on the American superpower, and then on its own power. The Zionists – and, after its establishment, Israel – used all available means to gain control of Palestinian land: power, money, destruction, and various forms of violence. The main goal was to clear the land of its people, and to subject those who refused to leave to the worst forms of oppression in their own land. They undertook huge efforts to eliminate the existence of the Palestinians as a people on their own land, which some people, including myself, consider political extermination. The British army and later the USA used all available developed weapons to allow the Zionists and then Israel to control the land of Palestine and build its colonial settlements in it. This also would not have succeeded without the excessive use of power. On the other hand,

the Palestinian resistance, which was defending its people's right to existence, had no choice but to use violence, regardless of the asymmetry of power and resources. The conflict was bloody and violent from the outset; legal and illegal violence was the main means used in this conflict. The Zionists justified their use of force and violence as a response to the Palestinian resistance, resistance to a project that aims at controlling their homeland. The Zionists claimed that the Palestinian land is theirs; therefore they allowed themselves to commit crimes of any kind and size, and to keep the people of the land from living freely in their own land. The Palestinians, on the other hand, have justified their violent resistance as a legal action against British-Zionist, and later Israeli-American, double aggression. The violence has flared up and escalated. There have been victims every time Israel decided to expand – and has been confronted with Palestinian resistance.

Course of the conflict/war

As mentioned above, the alliance between imperialism and Zionism had a dual aim: the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine as a base to protect imperialistic interests in the Middle East, and the engaging of the Arab countries in a conflict that was doomed to defeat, in an attempt to deprive these countries of their natural growth, control over their own resources, and their destiny. So the conflict is internationally motivated and aimed. The division of Palestine was decided by UN Resolution 181 in 1947; it gave 55% of the land to the Jewish population, and gave the owners of the land, the Palestinians, less than 45% of the land, with a special status for Jerusalem, which was also to be outside of the control of the Palestinian people. At that time, Palestinians owned 93% of the land and represented 77% of the total population. The conflict was and continues to be international. After the seizure of land carried out during the Naqba, Israel was established not on 55%, but on 78% of historic Palestine. What remained was the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, with less than 22% of the land.

The children have always been part of the conflict, they are the victims of all the kinds of violence, but on the other hand, the children have also always been part of the resistance. According to Islam – as for Judaism

– twelve or thirteen-year-old boys are considered adults, and take on adults responsibilities and rights; families depend on them in the public and private sphere. There are also of course other factors, related mainly to the Palestinian situation. Palestinian society deteriorated during Othman rule; then, the British mandate, which was committed to the Zionist project, prevented any development of Palestinian society, and pushed it further toward deterioration. In spite of all of that, the spirit of defending their country and their threatened existence prevailed. With the frequent aggression and resistance to aggression, the children have lacked the opportunities that other children in stable countries have. Even the schools that were built during the British mandate, which were very moderate at that time, offered education only to one quarter of the Palestinian children. So the children found themselves deprived of their rights, and at the same time threatened, like others, by the Zionist project. To show their distinction, the children had only one way, which was to be involved in the resistant against the British and later the Israelis. The percentage of the children involved in the conflict increased with the increasing pressure on Palestinians and the limited opportunities, despite the imposed hardship and long closure of Palestinian areas by the Israeli army. Mostly, this children's participation was in the forms of demonstrations and throwing stones at the Israeli soldiers. The fact that the Israeli army has always intentionally targeted the children participating in the demonstration by killing, wounding or arresting them, formed a challenge to the children and pushed children to more demonstrations.

Resistance to the war

Israel continues to pursue its goal of removing the Palestinian people from the land, to be replaced by people coming from outside of Palestine. The nature of the conflict as a conflict over land and the right to existence diminishes the influence of forces who oppose violence. The Palestinians have developed their perception of the appropriate form of resistance. When the Palestinian National Charter was approved in 1968, it considered the armed struggle the only means for liberating Palestine and practicing self-determination. Later, the number of those calling for the use of peaceful political means increased, until they reached a majority at the famous 1974 Palestinian National Council meeting which approved the well-

known Ten Point Programme. In 1978, the Palestinian National Council called for coexistence between the Palestinians and the Jews, together in one democratic state. The Palestinians agreed on the establishment of a Palestinian Authority on the West Bank and Gaza Strip only if Israel fully withdrew from these areas. In 1993, the PLO signed the Agreement of Principals known as the "Oslo Accord", under which the PLO recognized the right of Israel to exist, and Israel recognized the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The most important political development was in 1998, when the Palestinian National Council voted by a majority of 82% for the Palestinian Peace Initiative, which accepted UNSCR 242 as the point of reference for a political settlement that would lead to the establishment of an independent Palestine on 22% of historic Palestine, side by side with Israel on 78% of historic Palestine. On the other side, in spite of all these political developments, Israel continued its aggression, clinging to the occupation, confiscating Palestinian private and public lands, continuing colonial settlements building, imposing closures, destruction, arrests, restriction of movements and killings, all to prevent the Palestinian people from practicing their right to self-determination.

In the pursuit of peace, the forces calling for a renunciation of violence and a condemnation of terrorism prevailed in Palestinian society. These are the forces which urged using negotiations and non-violent resistance as methods to push Israel to withdraw from the occupied land and accept international law as the point of reference for a final political settlement and an end to the conflict.

Currently, there is a legal Palestinian Authority led by the PLO, which has the support of two thirds of the people in the occupied Palestinian territory and in the diaspora. This leadership continues to renounce violence, and is wedded to the necessity of formulating a political settlement based on international resolutions and international legitimacy. On the other hand, there is an intransigent Israeli Authority which is only persistent in the excessive use of military power, state terrorism, and encouraging settler terrorism. The continued Israeli aggression is designed to preserve their annexations, and prevent an acceptable and sustainable settlement to the conflict. After more than sixty-two years of dispossession of Palestinian refugees who represent more than half of

the Palestinian people, there are more than five and a half million dispossessed Palestinians outside the territory of Palestine, all over the world. And after forty-two years of military occupation of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank including East Jerusalem, Israel has developed a system of apartheid. It is very clear in every aspect of the daily life:

Israel today controls more than 80% of the water resources in the West Bank, and allows Palestinian citizens to use no more than (50) cubic meters per capita a year. At the same time, the illegal Israeli settlers use more than 2400 cubic meters of water per year per capita.

The Israeli GDP per capita averages around \$26,000 per year, while the GDP per capita in Palestine is no more than \$1000 per year. Yet, due to the imposed market and tax union, Palestinians are forced to pay the same prices for goods as Israelis. Palestinians are also forced to buy water and electricity from Israel – at double the price that Israeli citizens pay: Palestinians have to pay NIS 5 per water unit while Israelis pay NIS 2.4. Palestinians pay NIS 13 per unit of electricity, while Israelis pay NIS 6.3.

The system of road segregation that has been initiated by Israel, where most of the main roads in the West Bank are exclusively for Israeli settlers or the Israeli army, separates Palestinian villages and cities from each other, and restricts their access to different places and resources.

The building of the Apartheid Wall in the occupied territories. It is a huge wall that will extend for about 850 km when finished. It is three times as long and twice as high as Berlin Wall used to be. And even when it is not a concrete wall, it is a fence system between 60 and 104 meters wide, depriving Palestinians of vast areas of land. This wall destroys the Palestinian social fabric; it deprives pupils and students of the possibility of reaching their schools or universities and deprives hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from reaching medical care or health systems. In East Jerusalem, the wall separates the Palestinians on the right side of the wall from those on the left side. Jerusalem itself is not accessible to Palestinians living in the rest of the West Bank Areas.

Colonial settlement activities: The Israelis started building these settlements in the West Bank in the mid-1970s.

The Gaza War

According to the Goldstone report, the Israeli army was guilty of war crimes during the war on Gaza, which came close to constituting a crime against humanity. Seven war crimes are cited:

Attacks upon civilians

Killing of civilians

Preventing medical assistance from reaching civilians.

Attacking ambulances and killing medical personnel

The use of illegal weapons

Total destruction of infrastructure

Totally disproportionate use of force.

No less than 1400 people were killed, 410 of them were children, and some 5300 people were injured, including 1850 children. A total of fourteen Israelis were killed, eleven of them soldiers killed while attacking Gaza, and three Israeli civilians were killed because of missiles shot by Gazan militants. Out the eleven soldiers, seven were killed by friendly fire.

Since the beginning of the conflict, women have been in the midst of all the complications of the issue, and have had a major role – that of saving the social fabric of the Palestinians. The Palestinian people are subjected to constant and accelerating aggression and are under siege, all of which influence their lives, even in their bedrooms. The Palestinian woman was always part of the struggle for freedom. She has participated in the different stages and forms of struggle. Since the *Naqba*, the suffering of the women doubled, since women have to fight both at the national and the societal level. As mentioned above, the Palestinian society is a patriarchal society which discriminates against women. It was mainly an agriculture society where women had the tasks of working in the fields and at the same time fulfilling the role of the housewife. Since these roles were not reflected in the power relationships in the family and society, women were oppressed and discriminated against. After

the *Naqba*, the majority of the Palestinians became refugees. After the dispossession of all their property, both women and men had to go to work. Education became the most important weapon for all men and women. The role of women in the refugee camps became important. Women were responsible of obtaining the distributed aid to the “poor refugees”. Men started to emigrate to the surrounding countries for work, mainly to the Arab Gulf countries, leaving women solely responsible for the families in the refugee camps. The new situation gave women more freedom of movement, but never to the level of participation in the decision-making. The struggle for freedom started and women participated in this struggle in different ways, but women were denied the struggle for their rights and equality in the society. The national agenda has always had priority over the social agenda in all Palestinian political organizations, left or right. Still, women played a big role in this struggle, whether in the occupied land or in the diaspora and the refugee camps. The economic hardships and education allowed women to start being the breadwinners in the families and they also started to leave the country and the refugee camps for work in the Arab Gulf countries. The General Union of Palestinian Women was one of the main organizations of the PLO. This union had its representation in the Palestinian National Council, which was the Palestinian parliament. All political groups had their women’s organizations. In the West Bank and Gaza Strip, women’s volunteer groups emerged, and concentrated on the national struggle against the occupation. Many women were jailed; others were wounded. The turning point that changed the role of women was the First Intifada, in which women had a particularly big role. Women actively participated in the demonstrations and stone-throwing; women were beaten, arrested and killed by the Israeli army. The army started to invade the houses, searching for women as well as men. Women organized public education campaigns. In addition to their traditional role, women started to enter the political public arena. Yet they suffered from the loss of their sons, husbands and brothers, who were being killed or arrested. This increased the burden on them. Women’s grassroots organizations formed before the Intifada became more visible, and assumed a role in the society. Some taboos started to be slackened, and women started to ask for a reflection of their role in fighting the occu-

pation in the decision making level in the political parties and organization. When the Palestinian Authority came to the West Bank and Gaza, women organizations started to grasp some of the fruits of this struggle. The women movement began to realize that the struggle for national freedom has to be combined with the struggle for women's rights and equality. That struggle is still continuing, although it is more difficult now with the growth of political Islam in Palestine. The civic resistance to violence in Palestinian society is shown by the support of the majority of the Palestinians for the efforts of the Palestinian Authority to ban the use of weapons. There is continuous support for the political means of struggle and growth in its usage, for example the non-violent resistance movement in Jerusalem and in various villages, such as Ma'asara, Bi'lin, Ni'lin, and Budrus. This is continuing in spite of the Israeli aggression and Israeli efforts to scuttle any attempts at a political resolution, which has led to the growth of extremist forces in the Palestinian society.

Peace strategies

As mentioned above the Palestinians have tried to find a peaceful solution to the conflict by accepting the two-state solution and by accepting to have 22% of the land only, although the UN had originally given them 45%. However, Israel's offers to the Palestinians are much less: at Camp David in 1999, they offered only 18%, and now they talk about 11%, considering the rapid building and expansion of colonial settlement activities.

The role of the international community is very important in this conflict, as it is mainly an international conflict. There are many resolutions concerning the Palestinian issue in all the international organizations. Most of these resolutions condemn the Israeli aggression and call for an end to the conflict, which shows that the majority of the international community supports the right of the Palestinian people to enjoy a free life in their homeland. Although the American veto at the Security Council can prevent the implementation of measures that lead to the establishment of the Palestinian state, but it cannot change the fact that Israel has been condemned by the international community. The continued failure of the peace processes has deepened the frustration among the Palestinians.

The lack of trust in the international community is also growing. An example is the reaction of the international community to the Palestinian election of 2006. Hamas won the elections, with 41% of the vote. This was mainly due to the collapse of the peace process and the failure of Israel and the international community to deliver freedom and dignity to the Palestinians. In Israel, the same thing happened, but for different reasons, as the elections also brought to the fore the most extreme representatives in an aggressive government that seeks to spoil any efforts for peace.

Reconciliation work

In addition to the peace processes, there have been efforts made for reconciliation between the two peoples, most of which are carried out by civil society organizations. But the results of these modest efforts are less than is needed to achieve true reconciliation for a very long conflict. The persistent failure of the peace processes is reflected in this area, too. It is more difficult to achieve reconciliation if the main issues remain unresolved. Without addressing the asymmetry between the two parties, without recognizing that one party is living under daily humiliation, while the other is trying to defend the state that is imposing this humiliation on its counterpart, and without admitting that the representatives of the occupying country are calling to fight against the oppressed, rather than being in solidarity with them, the conflict will not be resolved. This means that the Israelis have to pay a high price not only as individuals, but also collectively as a people, since they have democratically elected the leadership of their country. Most of the Palestinian and Israeli groups which tried to work together could not mobilize a large constituency on both sides, and could not continue when they were faced by the facts on the ground, and when the Israelis are asked to be held accountable for their actions as individuals and a collective. In principal, there is no sustainable political resolution to the conflict, unless the asymmetry between the occupied and the occupier is addressed. As long as decision-makers in Israel refuse to abide by international law, as long as the international community is not willing to impose effective pressure on the Israelis, and as long as Israel's leaders, supported by the majority of their population, insist upon keeping their country supe-

rior and able to benefit from all the spoils of their aggression, the struggle will continue and most probably will become worse and more intense. The doors could be opened or closed, intransigence or reconciliation could prevail, for all these are human-made. The struggle is between the just, the legal and the beneficial on the one side, and the unjust, the illegal and vicious on the other. The demand from all forces and people who want peace is clear: to concentrate their efforts on the essential and not get lost in the details. They should not be influenced by any propaganda, no matter how powerful it is, and they have to give all their positive support to the oppressed, and not equate between the two for the sake of an inappropriate neutrality. For a just and lasting solution, there must be clear reference with unambiguous criteria, applied with no confusion. The majority of the Palestinians believe that the international resolutions guarantee that respected and clear reference. Unless Israel is forced to accept a solution that gives the Palestinians what the UN resolutions and international law ensure, the chances for peace will remain remote, and the door to peace will be closed – but the doors of violence, extremism and terrorism will be opened. There are no secrets in this century-long conflict; the reasons for opening and closing doors for peace are known. The real intentions and the efforts needed are obvious, and are demanded of the parties, who can push for a real solution.

In ancient, medieval and modern history, people have been subjected to different kinds of violence with their lives permanently affected by its implications, even when circumstances have changed. In the case of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, it is the continuation of the Israeli aggression that sustains the effects of the violence. There is no reason why history shouldn't repeat itself: i.e. an agreement on peace-building could cancel the impacts of the violence that had occurred prior to a peace agreement.

Forms of popular peaceful resistance

Since the beginning of the Zionist colonial settlement activities in Palestine, the Palestinians used different forms of resistant, mostly popular. At the beginning of the twentieth century, people boycotted any Palestinian who sold land to a Jew or a Zionist organization.

One of the first collective popular acts was the Al Buraq Revolution of 1929, when the Palestinians demonstrated against the presence of the Jews at the Al Buraq Wall (the Western Wall). Another famous act was the general strike of 1936, which lasted for six months in Palestine. At that time, everybody all over Palestine was on strike against the Zionist colonial activities and against the British mandate, seeking the independence of Palestine.

As mentioned above, after the *Naqba*, the Palestinians outside Israel were trying to gather and rebuild their destroyed society. The main weapon they used at that time was to concentrate on education; one could always hear that our only weapon against the Israelis and our most powerful means to win is education. That's why the Palestinians have the highest rate of education in the Arab world. At the same time the Palestinians inside Israel were fighting peacefully against military rule, and for the preservation of their identity, language and education.

After the adoption of the 1974 Programme of the PLO, the Palestinian political forces in the West Bank and Gaza started to mobilize people for resistance against occupation; thousands of Palestinians were arrested by the Israeli occupation forces. There was a growing anti-occupation resistance by demonstrations and strike. One of the main actions was the Land Day, March 30, 1967, when the Palestinians inside Israel demonstrated against the confiscation of their land, this was supported by the Palestinians all over the world, those who lived in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, as well as the refugees who lived in the diaspora. All of them consider Land Day a symbol for the struggle against colonial settlement activities.

Even in the 1970s, the Palestinians started to organize themselves in the occupied territory, and resisted the Israeli occupation authorities who tried to impose local councils in the cities. They participated in the elections at that time, and elected people who represented the Palestinian Liberation Organization.

During the '80s, the Palestinians continued with different forms of civil popular resistance, such as strikes, demonstrations, and volunteer movements to protect the land and provide services to the population in the

medical, education and agriculture sectors. Demonstrations also took place during the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon and against the PLO. Huge demonstrations took place not only in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, but also inside Israel, including both Palestinians and Israelis.

One important form of the popular resistance was the hunger strike of the Palestinian prisoners that was also supported by the Palestinian population, the most famous being the strike in March 1987 which lasted for twenty-one days and was supported with strikes and demonstrations all over the occupied territory.

The First Intifada started at the end of 1987 as a non-violent resistance movement all over the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with a united leadership that organized all the actions against the occupation. These included demonstrations, general strikes, refusal to pay taxes to the occupation authorities, and public education as a reaction to the closure of education facilities, both schools and universities. During this Intifada, the social solidarity grew among the Palestinians, as did the international and Israeli solidarity movement with the Palestinian struggle for their self-determination and anti-occupation. Many solidarity movement groups were very supportive of the Palestinian struggle for freedom. Politically, it led to the Palestinian Peace Initiative, which resulted in the recognition of the PLO as the only and legal representative of the Palestinian people.

After the Oslo Agreement and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, the Palestinians continued with their non-violent resistance to the Israeli aggression, which took the form of land confiscation, building colonial settlements, house demolitions, arresting of Palestinians etc. After the building of the Apartheid Wall by the Israeli occupation authorities in the West Bank, which started in 2002, a non-violent popular resistance started in the villages and areas directly affected by the Wall. There have been continuous activities in these villages, the most famous being Bi'lin, Ni'lin, Ma'asar and Budrus. The people of these villages, with the solidarity of other Palestinians, Israelis and international people, are trying to resist the building of the wall through regular demonstrations and also through the Israeli legal system. International support and solidarity for this struggle is growing in Europe and the USA.

Another form of the non-violent resistance to the occupation is the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement which is growing in the whole world with the support of international solidarity groups.

The continuous ethnic cleansing of East Jerusalem and the confiscation of the Palestinian houses by the Jewish colonial settlers has been resisted non-violently by the Palestinian people in Sheikh Jarrah, Silwan, Esaweieh and other areas of East Jerusalem. The people have regularly demonstrated, and some live in tents near their confiscated houses, after they tried the Israeli legal system which has, as usual, disappointed them.

The most recent major action was the demonstrations on the borders of historic Palestine on May 15, 2011, when thousands of Palestinian refugees marched peacefully to go back to their homeland. This was also a non-violent act by which the Palestinians wanted to bring back the issue of Palestine to its roots and core reason, the deportations of Palestinians from their homeland and the denial of their right of return, which is guaranteed by international law, by the Israelis.

The common factor of all these and other non-violent forms that were used by the Palestinians was the brutal reaction of the Israelis to these forms. In all the cases and during the years of the struggle, the Israeli occupation forces reacted to all these non-violent actions with violence and brutality, with killings, tear gas, arrests, more confiscation of land, and demolition of houses. All forms of non-violent resistance provides space for all components of society to participate; therefore, not only was women's participation very evident in this form of resistance, so too was women's leadership.

REPORT ON PALESTINE II

A SPECIAL VIEW ON GAZA

GAZA UNDER THE BLOCKADE: THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINIAN REFUGEES (UNRWA) FACING THE CHALLENGES

GHADA AL JADBA, UNRWA GAZA

Introduction

The Gaza Strip is a part of the occupied Palestinian Territories. A narrow piece of land on the Mediterranean coast, it is home to a population of more than 1.5 million people. Gaza covers an area of just 360 square kilometres and is one of the most densely populated areas in the world. Gaza is in a strategic location along the Mideast-North African trade routes, and has thus experienced an incredibly turbulent history. The town of Gaza itself has been besieged countless times in its history; today, people in Gaza live under the blockade imposed by Israel, which, in its fifth year, has had a massive impact on all aspects of the lives of Palestinians in Gaza – political, economic, social, demographic, and health-related.

Background

The September 1993 Israel-Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements provided for a transitional period of Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Under a series of agreements signed between May 1994 and September 1999, many Palestinian-populated areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip were placed under the security and civilian responsibility of the Palestinian Authority (PA). Negotiations to determine the permanent status of the area stalled following the outbreak of the Intifada in September 2000. In April 2003, the “Quartet” composed of the US, the EU, the UN, and Russia, presented a roadmap for a final settlement of the conflict by 2005, based on reciprocal steps by both parties, leading to two states, Israel and a democratic Palestine. Following Pal-

estonian President Yasir Arafat's death in late 2004, Mahmud Abbas was elected president of the Palestinian Authority in January 2005. A month later, Israel and the PA agreed to the Sharm el-Sheikh Commitments in an effort to move the peace process forward.

In September 2005, Israel unilaterally withdrew all its settlers and soldiers and dismantled its military facilities in the Gaza Strip, as well as from four small northern West Bank settlements. Nonetheless, it still controls the airspace as well as all maritime and most land access to the Gaza Strip; and it enforces a restricted zone along the border inside Gaza.

In January 2006, the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, won control of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC). Hamas took control of the PA government in March 2006, but President Abbas had little success negotiating with Hamas to present a political platform acceptable to the international community, so as to lift the economic sanctions against Palestinians. Violent clashes between Fatah and Hamas supporters in the Gaza Strip in 2006 and early 2007 resulted in numerous Palestinian deaths and injuries. In February 2007, Abbas and Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mashal signed the Mecca Agreement in Saudi Arabia that resulted in the formation of a Palestinian National Unity Government (NUG) headed by Hamas member Ismail Haniya. However, fighting continued in the Gaza Strip, and in June 2007, Hamas militants succeeded in a violent takeover of all military and governmental institutions in the Gaza Strip. Abbas dismissed the NUG and through a series of presidential decrees formed a PA government in the West Bank led by independent Salam Fayyad. Hamas rejected the NUG's dismissal, and despite multiple rounds of Egyptian-brokered reconciliation negotiations, the two groups have failed to bridge their differences. Following the takeover, Israel largely sealed its border crossings with Gaza, on the grounds that Fatah had fled and was no longer providing security on the Palestinian side. Israel's twenty-two day military action against the Gaza Strip known as Operation Cast Lead, which began on December 27, 2008, left about 60,000 homes damaged or destroyed. Since then, the blockade of the Gaza Strip has prevented the UN from conducting any significant repairs or reconstruction. It also places severe restrictions on goods and services which UNRWA supplies (World Bank Report, 2010).

Demography of the Gaza Strip

An estimated 1.1 million people, or three-quarters of the entire population, are Palestinian refugees registered with UNRWA. About half a million refugees live in Gaza's eight refugee camps.

The population in Gaza is young, with children under fifteen accounting for 43%. The population growth rate of 3.2% is one of the highest in the world, as is the fertility rate of 4.7. Life expectancy is 73 years, which is good in comparison with other developing countries, but the main challenge is not only to let people live long lives, but also to enable them to have good lives, rather than suffering from disease, disabilities and hopelessness, with no vision for a good future for them or for the coming generation. The literacy rate, the percentage of those above the age of fifteen who can read and write, is 96.7% for males and 88% for females.

Economic overview

Years of occupation, conflict, high population density, limited land and sea access, blockade with continuing isolation, and strict internal and external security controls have degraded economic conditions in the Gaza Strip. Israeli-imposed crossings closures, which became more restrictive after Hamas violently took over the territory in June 2007, and Israel military operations in Gaza during December 2008 and January 2009, resulted in the near collapse of most of the private sector, extremely high unemployment, and high poverty rates.

Shortages of goods have been met by large-scale humanitarian assistance, led by UNRWA which is the largest humanitarian agency in Gaza, together with other UN agencies and international civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in addition to the Hamas-regulated black market tunnel trade that flourishes under the Gaza Strip's border with Egypt. However, changes to the blockade in 2010 included moving from a "white list" system, under which only approved items were allowed into Gaza, to a "black list", under which all but non-approved items are now allowed in. Israeli authorities have recently signalled that exports from the territory might be possible in the future, but currently, regular exports from Gaza are not permitted.

Refugees remain most vulnerable under present circumstances, and the community continues to experience rising levels of unemployment, food insecurity and poverty.

Since the Israeli military action in December 2008, the blockade has prevented the UN from conducting any significant repairs or reconstruction. It also places severe restrictions on goods and services which UNRWA supplies. An estimated 325,000 refugees are believed to be living in abject poverty, unable to meet their basic food needs. A further 350,000 are now below the official poverty line.

As the Gaza blockade moves into its fifth year, a new UNRWA report says that unemployment in the second half of 2010 reached 45.2%, one of the highest in the world. Real wages continued to decline under the weight of persistently high unemployment, falling 34.5% since the first half of 2006 (UNRWA: Gaza Blockade Anniversary Report, June 13, 2011, Jerusalem).

“These are disturbing trends,” said UNRWA spokesman Chris Guinness, “and the refugees, who make up two-thirds of Gaza’s 1.5 million population were the worst hit in the period covered in this report. It is hard to understand the logic of a man-made policy which deliberately impoverishes so many and condemns hundreds of thousands of potentially productive people to a life of destitution.”

One out of four Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip was living below poverty line in 2010, reported by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) – 18.3% in the West Bank and 38.0% in the Gaza Strip.

Amid this economic gloom, UNRWA will continue with its human development work serving Palestinian refugees in health and education, running schools for some 213,000 children in Gaza, helping them towards having a belief in an educated, dignified and peaceful future. But the number of people in abject poverty, living on just over one dollar a day, has tripled to 300,000 since the blockade was imposed and with many reconstruction projects still awaiting approval, the future looks bleak.

UNRWA facing the challenges

Operating through more than 10,000 staff in over 200 installations, UNRWA delivers education, health care, relief and social services, microcredit and emergency assistance to registered Palestinian refugees in Gaza. UNRWA's work exemplifies the international commitment to the human development of Palestinian refugees, to help them acquire knowledge and skills, lead longer and healthier lives, achieve a decent standard of living, and enjoy human rights to the fullest possible extent.

UNRWA is unique in terms of its long-standing commitment to one group of refugees, and its contributions to the welfare and human development of Palestinian refugees. Originally envisaged as a temporary organization, the Agency has gradually adjusted its programmes to meet the changing needs of the refugees.

Unlike other UN organizations that work through local authorities or executing agencies, UNRWA provides its services directly to Palestinian refugees. It plans and carries out its own activities and projects, and builds and administers facilities such as schools and clinics. Because such UNRWA services as education and healthcare are the type of services normally provided within the public sector, the Agency cooperates closely with governmental authorities in the area of operations, who also provide some services to Palestinian refugees.

Education

At UNRWA, all children have the right to an education to help them achieve their full human potential. UNRWA's education system helps refugee children to thrive, achieve, and to grow up understanding their rights and respecting the rights of others. Moreover, UNRWA provides young people with the opportunity to learn new skills that will enable them to find work. This helps individuals and families escape poverty and attain their goals. We at UNRWA believe that to invest in the education and training of Palestinian refugees means to invest in peace.

Due to a lack of funding for extra teachers and facilities, as well as to the ongoing blockade, about 90% of UNRWA schools are run on a double-shift basis, leaving pupils with a truncated education.

UNRWA also provides technical and vocational training opportunities to about 1300 pupils through two training centres.

Education is UNRWA's largest programme, accounting for more than half of the Agency's regular budget. UNRWA pupils are among the most highly educated in the region. Since the 1960s, girls have made up around half of UNRWA's pupils.

Millennium Development Goals

One of UNRWA's main goals is to provide refugees with appropriate knowledge and skills through universal primary education. This is in line with our commitment to human development for refugees, and to the Millennium Development Goal Two. UNRWA is committed to provide education of a high quality and content in accordance with international standards and good practices, measured by actual learning outcomes for children.

Vocational training centres

In addition to running schools, UNRWA has developed further educational opportunities. The Agency has two vocational training centres in Gaza, which provide skills training in a number of fields. The centres teach market-relevant skills to help Palestinian refugee youth find employment after graduation, and reduce the high levels of refugee unemployment.

Initiatives and projects adopted and implemented by the education programme to overcome the challenges in Gaza

Schools of Excellence

Educational standards have collapsed under the strain of poverty and chronic under-funding. Through its Schools of Excellence project, introduced in 2007, UNRWA seeks to reverse this decline, by emphasizing remedial education, a focus on core subjects, extra-curricular activities, basic support to pupils, pupil values and behaviour, improved pupil-teacher contact time and attention for children with special needs. It prepares pupils to become global citizens, respectful of one another and of differences among people.

Human rights education

UNRWA's existing human rights education programme has been enhanced to address the environment in Gaza. In 2009, the Agency developed a stand-alone human rights curriculum, based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and identified and trained more than 200 human rights teachers. Using practical, real world examples, children learn about their rights, their responsibilities that accompany those rights, the historical context of the Universal Declaration and the mechanisms that enforce it. The programme promotes non-violence, healthy communications skills, conflict resolution and human rights. It also emphasizes the importance of tolerance and good citizenship.

A further dedicated human rights curriculum was developed. Specialists from UNRWA, the Red Cross, human rights NGOs and the wider academic community have developed a comprehensive curriculum anchored in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. All children are taught about fundamental human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration, their individual responsibilities, including tolerant behaviour, the history of the global struggle for human rights and the historical context that gave rise to the Universal Declaration.

Health

UNRWA's overarching goal is to enable refugees to live long and healthy lives. UNRWA delivers basic health services and tries to provide a healthy living environment for Palestinian refugees, guided by the Millennium Development Goals on health and by the standards of the World Health Organization (WHO). Its past achievements in health have been impressive, particularly in the areas of maternal and child health, but the impact of deteriorating socio-economic conditions on physical and mental health in Gaza poses a growing challenge. Nearly 200 community mental health counsellors in UNRWA schools assist troubled and special needs children through targeted individual and group interventions. Although UNRWA mainly focuses on primary health care, it also helps refugees access secondary and tertiary care services.

Challenges

Electricity

The siege has led to a significant lack of power in the Gaza Strip. In 2006, Israel carried out an attack on Gaza's only power plant and never permitted it to be rebuilt to its pre-attack capacity of 140 MW; it now produces only 80 MW. The majority of houses have power cuts at least eight hours per day. Some have no electricity for as long as twelve hours a day. The lack of electricity has led to reliance on generators, many of which have exploded from overwork, killing and maiming civilians. Oxfam reported that "(in 2009), a total of seventy-five Palestinians died from carbon monoxide gas poisoning or fires from generators, and fifteen died and twenty-seven people were injured in the first two months of that year."

Water

Israel has not permitted supplies into the Gaza Strip to rebuild the sewage system. Amnesty International reports that 90-95% of the drinking water in Gaza is contaminated and unfit for consumption. The United Nations even found that bottled water in Gaza contained contaminants, likely due to the plastic bottles recycled in dysfunctional factories. The lack of sufficient power for desalination and sewage facilities results in significant amounts of sewage seeping into Gaza's coastal aquifer, which is the main source of water for the people of Gaza.

Industry

Prior to the siege, the industrial sector employed 20% of Gaza's labour force. One year after the siege began, the Palestinian Federation of Industries reported that "61% of the factories have completely closed down, 1% were forced to change their scope of work in order to meet their living expenses, and 38% were partially closed" (which sometimes means they operate at less than 15% capacity). A World Health Organization report from 2009 states: "In the Gaza Strip, private enterprise is practically at a standstill as a result of the blockade. Almost all (98%) industrial operations have been shut down. The construction sector, which before September 2000 provided 15% of all jobs, has effectively halted.

Only 258 industrial establishments in Gaza were operational in 2009, compared with over 2400 in 2006. As a result, unemployment rates have soared to 45% (up from 32% before the blockade)."

Health

Gaza's health sector, dramatically overworked, was also significantly damaged by Operation Cast Lead. According to UNOCHA, the infrastructure for fifteen of Gaza's twenty-seven hospitals, forty-three of its 110 primary care facilities, and twenty-nine of its 148 ambulances were damaged or destroyed during the war. Without rebuilding materials like cement and glass, which are unavailable due to Israeli restrictions, the vast majority of the destroyed health infrastructure has not been rebuilt. Many medical procedures for advanced illnesses are not available in Gaza. In 2009, 1103 individuals applied for permits to exit the Israeli-controlled Erez crossing for medical treatment; 21% of these permits were denied or delayed, resulting in missed hospital appointments, and several have died waiting to leave Gaza for treatment.

Food

A 2010 World Health Organization report stated that "chronic malnutrition in the Gaza Strip has risen over the past few years, and has now reached 10.2%. Micronutrient deficiencies among children and women have reached high levels about 50%." According to UNOCHA: "Over 60% of households are now food insecure, threatening the health and well-being of children, women and men". In this context, agriculture offers some practical solutions to a humanitarian problem. However, Israel's import and access restrictions continue to suffocate the agricultural sector and directly contribute to rising food insecurity. One particular concern is that farmers' and fishers' lives are regularly put at risk, due to Israel's enforcement of its access restrictions.

A safe and healthy environment

People's health is hugely affected by their living environment, so UNRWA works to provide refugees with a healthy and safe environment, and the highest possible level of social security. The Agency's health programme has worked in collaboration with the education and the relief and social

services programmes to reduce poverty, increase health awareness and fight environmental conditions that favour the spread of disease. The environmental health programme monitors the quality of drinking water, provides sanitation, and carries out rodent control in refugee camps.

Protecting victims of violence

As an organization working in Gaza in a chronically unstable environment, UNRWA is continuously challenged by upsurges of violence. New services such as mental health care, physiotherapy and rehabilitation have been established to deal specifically with the consequences of protracted violence and insecurity. UNRWA's health programme is decentralized and able to adapt rapidly to different security concerns and logistical problems. Almost 1500 people were killed during Operation Cast Lead, launched in the Gaza Strip between December 27, 2008 and January 18 2009, including 358 children, more than 5300 were injured, and some 60,000 housing units were demolished or damaged. Fifty-two UNRWA installations were damaged in the fighting, including seven health centres and the Agency's Gaza field office. As a result of severe shelling, some of UNRWA's warehouses were destroyed. The estimated cost of repairs was more than \$3 million. The cost of replacing supplies, of which medicines were a substantial part, required an extra \$3.6 million. During the conflict, UNRWA provided temporary shelter to over 50,000 Palestinians who sought refuge in the Agency's schools. Although security constraints severely limited the movement of staff, UNRWA continued delivery of its health services, adjusting to the needs of displaced people and to deterioration in local environmental health standards. The Agency also continued its high levels of disease surveillance after the conflict, making sure that no outbreaks took place among refugees in the Gaza Strip, who make up 70% of the population.

UNRWA also has an extensive domestic violence protection programme, focusing on prevention and protection, through awareness-raising amongst community members and staff members, along with referral pathways for domestic violence victims across UNRWA's service programmes, ensures that women who have experienced violence receive a coordinated and appropriate response to their needs. The blockade has seen an increase in domestic violence in the Gaza Strip.

The Millennium Development Goals

UNRWA is committed to the Millennium Development Goals. The fourth goal aims to reduce child and infant mortality by two-thirds of its 1990 rate by 2015. Infant and child mortality among Palestinian refugees is declining steadily, because of close to 100% vaccination coverage, a tight network of surveillance and control of communicable diseases. As the Palestinian refugees' life expectancy has increased to about seventy-three, the demography has changed. About 50% of the refugees are still under eighteen years of age, but there is also a growing elderly population. Thus, an increasing number of refugees find themselves in the least active phases of life. Generalized poverty and unemployment aggravate the economic challenge presented to families by these developments.

Promoting long and healthy lives in Gaza

As a result of years of socio-economic decline, conflict and closure, the health sector across the Gaza Strip has suffered from a lack of adequate physical infrastructure, insufficient training opportunities, overstretched facilities and frequent interruption of services due to power cuts. At the same time, the health of the population is increasingly at risk. Food insecurity and rising levels of poverty have meant that most of the population do not receive their daily caloric requirements, while over 90% of the water in Gaza has been deemed unfit for human consumption. Through twenty health centres across the Gaza Strip, UNRWA offers comprehensive primary health care to cover 1.1 million Palestinian refugees from birth through to active aging. Since 2007, the Agency has promoted excellence in its health care to improve the quality of health care services provided to refugees. In recent years, the Agency has prioritized improving psycho-social support to a population in need and raising awareness and acceptance of family planning.

Quality health services

Despite the Agency's impressive achievements in health care, there has over the past few years been a sharp rise in the number of visits to health clinics. The Agency is addressing this by focusing on such areas as im-

proved school health services, computerized data management, improvement of prescription practices, enhanced health management through health education, and longer patient consultation through more efficient use of resources.

Assisting under-achieving children through in-depth health assessments Across the Gaza strip, psychological trauma, poverty and environmental degradation have had a negative impact on children's physical and mental health. In order to assist those affected, UNRWA has established Special Education Needs Clinics in six of its health centers. It has identified pupils who have failed every subject in their exams, and provided them with a comprehensive physical and mental health assessment. The diagnoses have enabled UNRWA to immediately improve the daily lives of some pupils by providing hearing aids, reading glasses and treatment of other medical conditions. This initiative is funded by the Gaza Emergency Appeal.

Offering psycho-social support to a population in need

Many Palestinian refugees in Gaza suffer from anxiety, distress and depression. UNRWA has offered support to a population in need by placing psycho-social counsellors in its schools where they support children whose problems include lack or absence of motivation in schools, violence, fear and inability to concentrate. The Agency increased the scope of its psycho-social support, placing one counsellor in each health centre to assist the chronically ill, those with depression, and victims of violence.

Relief and social services

Direct relief and social services assistance remains critical to tens of thousands of refugee families in Gaza. The Agency works to alleviate their burdens and protect the most vulnerable. Food and cash assistance is based on needs determined through a poverty survey. Community-based organizations specifically target women, children, youth, orphans and people with disabilities with social services offers. UNRWA also oversees the Rehabilitation Centre for the Visually Impaired and its school.

Relief services

UNRWA's relief services programme works to alleviate poverty among Palestinian refugee families, with a priority on the "abject poor". The programme provides social safety-net assistance that includes basic food support, cash subsidies and additional family income supplements to the most vulnerable Palestinian refugees caught in the cycle of abject poverty. It also provides selective cash assistance, such as one-off cash grants for basic household needs, or for family emergencies.

The programme also provides direct aid during emergencies caused by violence and political unrest, along with shelter rehabilitation in coordination with the department of infrastructure and camp improvement. The social safety-net programme is the only programme that caters to the needs of the most vulnerable Palestinian refugees by delivering food aid and cash subsidies on a regular basis.

Millennium Development Goals

UNRWA's integrated approach to fighting poverty is part of its strategy to achieve the first Millennium Development Goal, eradicating extreme poverty and hunger.

Social services

UNRWA's social services programme addresses some of the most pressing socio-economic needs of the Palestinian refugee community. It promotes community-based action that enables particularly vulnerable refugees to become more self-reliant. The programme is committed to developing the institutional capacity of more than 100 community-based organizations (CBOs) that organize a wide range of social, cultural and recreational activities, as well as skills training and rehabilitation services. To systematically fulfil this commitment, UNRWA developed the capacity assessment tool, which was piloted in one out of five CBOs. The tool contributes to building the governance, management and leadership, programmes and services, and financial management of the CBOs, as well as assessing their operations each year. The programme particularly addresses the needs of women, refugees with disabilities, young people and the elderly. It also helps vulnerable refugees through its

micro-credit programme, which is managed by community-based organizations.

Microfinance

UNRWA's microfinance department provides income-generating opportunities for Palestinian refugees, as well as other poor or marginal groups who live and work near them. It extends credit and complementary financial services to small-business owners, microenterprise entrepreneurs and households. These investments sustain and create jobs, reduce poverty, and empower our clients, particularly women. It provides working capital loans to small businesses and microenterprises. It is the largest financial intermediary to these sectors in Gaza. Its solidarity group lending specifically targets women entrepreneurs, providing them with critical employment and income opportunities. Improve the quality of life for small business owners, micro-entrepreneurs, and poor households through the provision of credit, aiming at sustaining jobs, decreasing unemployment, reducing poverty, economic empowerment of women, youth and the aged, and the provision of income generating and asset building opportunities for Palestinian refugees and other poor and marginal groups. The microfinance department grew out of one of the most difficult microfinance environments in the world, overshadowed by decades of occupation and unique restrictions on enterprise and trade. It began operating in Gaza in 1991, when an Israeli closure of the Gaza Strip sharply curtailed local access to the Israeli labour market. Resulting hardships were exacerbated by a fall in Palestinian remittances from the Arab Gulf following that year's Iraq war. To bolster local employment, UNRWA provided credit to small and medium-scale businesses, working with an initial capital fund of US\$407,000. Since then the department has become the largest microcredit institution in Gaza, and a uniquely positioned regional microfinance organization. Many of the microfinance department's clients operate small, often informal businesses on the margins of the economy.

They include vegetable stallholders, at-home seamstresses, garage owners and fishermen. Many run businesses that are not registered with the government, let alone municipal or tax authorities.

Affordable credit

The vast majority of loan beneficiaries are unable to secure affordable credit from commercial banks, yet they are able to repay. These loans enable the entrepreneurs to generate sustainable incomes for themselves, their families and employees, many of whom are drawn from the poorest segments of society.

Sustainability

The microfinance department works in accordance with the global standards and best practices of the microfinance industry. The services are based on the understanding that microcredit and related financial services should be sustainable. Aimed to recoup the operating expenses, while charging rates of interest that are affordable to the clients and competitive with other microfinance providers. The programme strives to make the outreach operations as cost-effective as possible, by focusing our work on poor urban areas, which are centres of commercial and industrial activity and host a high concentration of Palestinian refugees.

Supporting women

Empowering women, who face additional difficulties as entrepreneurs, has been an integral part of UNRWA work. Some 30% of our loans have been to woman micro-entrepreneurs.

Infrastructure

The Agency works for camp improvement in all eight camps, through environmental health services, shelter reconstruction and rehabilitation and infrastructure maintenance and construction.

Large-scale, donor-funded re-housing projects remain frozen as a result of the blockade on Gaza and its associated ban on imports of building materials.

Emergency programme

In the last ten years UNRWA in Gaza has implemented emergency measures in response to security and economic crises caused by Israeli military actions and the ongoing closure regime by providing short-term

job creation, food and cash distribution and shelter for refugees with damaged or destroyed homes.

Each month, more than 750,000 refugees receive basic food rations and 14,000 people receive short-term employment. Through its job creation programme, UNRWA provides much needed support to farmers, fishers, the private sector, and new graduates. The socio-economic situation in Gaza has steadily deteriorated since the onset of the Second Intifada in September 2000. Tightened restrictions on the movement of goods and people have led to the collapse of the private sector, eroded the productive base, and left hundreds of thousands of people unemployed. The policy of blockade imposed on Gaza since June 2007 has prompted unprecedented poverty levels. Society is disintegrating, as every aspect of people's daily lives is affected. About three-quarters of the population are now aid dependent, and receive food assistance to ensure their mere survival. Young, creative and skilled people have no jobs and no prospects for a job. Parents are no longer able to provide for their families after years of unemployment and steady depletion of saving and other resources. Children have rotating classes and spend hours in the yard as no one is able to build new classrooms to accommodate them. At the same time, industrial estates stand idle as if in a ghost town. This loss of dignity threatens the fabric of civilized society, with children worst affected by the crisis. During and after the recent conflict in Gaza, UNRWA staff provided essential services and in-kind assistance to a population under severe stress. More than 50,000 Gazans took shelter in UNRWA schools in the midst of the conflict. The Agency offered basic food, water, blankets and mattresses to tens of thousands of displaced families and individuals. Since late 2000, we have operated our emergency programme to protect and safeguard the rights of Palestinian refugees in difficult circumstances. Our activities address the immediate and longer-term consequences of protracted conflict in support of individual and community coping strategies. Our humanitarian assistance mitigates the negative effects of the violent environment, giving special attention to those most affected and vulnerable, especially children and the poorest of the poor.

Reconstruction and early recovery

Since the end of 2010, the Israeli Government has instituted a new regime of approval of UN construction projects that require Israeli approval of each project before construction materials will be allowed to be imported to Gaza. This long and cumbersome process, while an improvement over the situation since 2007, still restricts UNRWA's ability to carry out essential construction for the benefit of the Palestinian refugees, including re-housing projects, schools and health centres. As at June 30, 2011, seventy-three UNRWA construction projects worth \$187 million have been approved by the Israeli authorities. This represents 28% of the UNRWA Recovery and Reconstruction Plan. Of these, sixteen have been completed, while eighteen are ongoing and thirty-nine are pending, awaiting completion of their final design, the tendering or contracting processes, or the availability of donor funds. The approved projects include:

Forty-two schools

Fifty-six classrooms in seven different schools

1466 shelters for construction

147 shelters for repair

five health centres (conversion, reconstruction or construction)

three water and sanitation projects

one kindergarten

one community building

three UNRWA facilities (a refugee service centre, an emergency building and a warehouse).

In addition, forty-seven submitted UNRWA projects are under review by the Israeli Army's Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT), including three fully funded large-scale housing projects, a teacher training college, water and sanitation infrastructure rehabilitation and thirty-two schools. These projects have a total budget of \$163 million.

Job creation

UNRWA alleviates the impact of unprecedented unemployment and poverty through the provision of 7000 to 15,000 work contracts per month, supporting tens of thousands of indirect beneficiaries. This provides much-needed employment to men and women, injects cash into the local economy, and supports the development of skills among unemployed young graduates. In any one year, UNRWA will provide 25,000 - 40,000 such jobs, and could provide up to 55,000 jobs, if funds were available.

Food assistance

Around 80% of Gazan households are dependent on food aid. Recent UNRWA data indicate that more than 300,000 refugees in Gaza live below the abject poverty line and are unable to meet their basic food needs. Through emergency food aid, UNRWA seeks to meet the needs of the most vulnerable, and counter the impact of the chronic difficulties many people face in being able to afford food. At present, 750,000 refugees receive food aid. A separate school-feeding programme ensures that all 207,000 pupils at UNRWA schools receive basic nutrition.

Cash assistance

To complement job creation and food assistance, UNRWA offers targeted cash assistance for which 60,000 of the poorest families are eligible, but limited funds means that it is possible to help only 20,000 families. Financial support is also provided to pupils at UNRWA schools. Paying for uniforms and other essential items ensures that every child, however poor, is able to go to school.

Strengthening essential services and emergency response

As part of the emergency programme, UNRWA has enhanced support for essential services, especially health, education and environmental health. The Agency closely monitors its interventions and maintains a rapid response capacity to ensure an effective response to acute crises affecting refugee communities.

Recreation

Summer Games

Since 2007, the Agency has run a huge summer recreation programme for children and young people, who are the most vulnerable of Gaza's residents. The annual Summer Games season is the largest recreational programme for some quarter of a million children in Gaza. Children constitute the majority of 1.5 million people in Gaza. For them children, life is overwhelmingly characterized by conflicts, poverty and despair. Pupils in UNRWA schools spend their days in overcrowded classrooms. Years of destruction, conflicts and deprivation have left few or no spaces in which children can participate in recreational or artistic activities, particularly during the long, hot, summer months.

The Summer Games in 2011 gave about 250,000 children in Gaza an experience typical for most children on summer holiday – a safe place for playing, making friends, learning and expressing themselves freely. Summer Games is a key pillar in UNRWA's human development programming in Gaza, promoting human rights and gender equality through action on the ground. Through art, theatre, sports, beach games, music and dance, the children participate in camps across the Gaza Strip at almost 300 locations, in school, on beaches and in orphanages and hospitals. The Games give Gazan kids a chance to have fun and a sense of normality, in an environment which is anything but normal.

World champion children

In the past two years, children in Summer Games have proved they can be the best in the world by breaking four Guinness World Records were broken. On June 30, schoolchildren from across the Gaza Strip gathered at Khan Yunis stadium, southern Gaza, in an attempt to set a new record for the "most simultaneous games of parachute at one venue", comprising 3520 children playing with 176 parachutes, more than doubling the previous record set by pupils at Plymstock School in Plymouth, England, on April 4, 2006, when 1547 children played with 58 parachutes. On July 14, the children of Gaza set their second Guinness World Record for the largest number of footballs dribbled simultaneously; there had

been no previous record. And on July 21, again at the Khan Yunis stadium, some 1500 children gathered to unveil a canvas that covered 5,922.2 square metres, smashing the previous record by over a thousand square metres.

Finally, on July 28, 13,000 children taking part in UNRWA's Gaza Summer Games crowned a golden season by smashing a fourth by becoming the largest number of people to fly kites simultaneously, breaking the previous record of 10,465 kites flown in China in 2011.

Equality in Action

The Gender Initiative

The declining economic, security, and social circumstances in Gaza have had a negative impact and have left women and girls particularly vulnerable. Across the Gaza Strip, UNRWA's grassroots gender project focuses on achieving equality through domestic violence prevention, training and education for local organizations and enhancing women's participation in their community. Since 2008, the project has provided recreational and skills-building activities for tens of thousands of women. UNRWA works for women by establishment of UNRWA Gaza Women's Committee (UGWC), officially launched on March 8, 2008 during celebrating of International Women's Day. This Committee contributes to foster equality and equity amongst staff by providing UNRWA female staff with mechanisms through which their voices are more often and more clearly heard. The Women's Committee works to promote an institutional culture that respects and adheres to the values of gender equality. It seeks to provide tools to help woman employees improve their day-to-day work life and explore future opportunities to develop themselves professionally. UGWC empowers female staff to reach their fullest potentials by providing them with different kinds of training courses according to their assessed needs, such as courses in computer science, English and stress management, in order to help them to cope with the stress at work and at home, and with the requirements of social life.

UNRWA and Gazans blocking the blockade

Through all these services UNRWA strives to help Palestinian refugees achieve a decent standard of living, long and healthy lives, knowledge and skills and full enjoyment of human rights. These goals are formulated according to the UN criteria for human development.

As the blockade entered its fifth year and the summer games for Gaza's children also entered its fifth year, those children proved to the world that inside all of this despair and darkness, they can still play and laugh. They will never be broken. They have blocked the blockade by enjoying their freedom. They are the centre of our investment, so we invest in them – in their education and their health. They are the future by believing in peace, love and hope. They believe in limiting the imposed blockade only to the land, air and sea, but not in their minds and hearts.

REPORT ON WOMEN'S PEACE INITIATIVES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SIMONE SUSSKIND, BRUSSELS

Give peace chance – women speak out: The fight of women for peace in the Middle East

Peace activism has been a central pioneering precursor and often a substitute in official attempts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict during the past forty years. Women have played a central role in these efforts, both in mixed-gender organizations and, since 1987, in a variety of Israeli, Palestinian, and joint women's peace initiatives. Only recently, however, with the creation of the International Women's Commission for a Just and Sustainable Palestinian-Israeli Peace, established in July 2005, have these activities undergone a conscious strategic re-conceptualization with the objective of strengthening their impact on the formal process and its outcomes.

Israeli-Palestinian women's peace action has developed in three distinct phases. The initial phase, which coincided with the First Intifada (1987-1993), witnessed the emergence of separate grassroots women's organizations (such as "Women in Black") and the convening of the first Palestinian-Israeli women's meeting held in Brussels in May 1989, under the title: "Give Peace a Chance – Women speak out". Phase Two developed around the Oslo process (1993-2000), and was accompanied by the emergence of a number of Israeli and Palestinian women's groups dedicated to supporting gender-based encounters, but also by the consolidation of a common framework for political action, the Jerusalem Link: A Women's Joint Venture for Peace. It was founded in 1994, following a second encounter between Israeli and Palestinian women organized in Belgium in September 1992. The third phase started in 2000 and has been accompanied by the creation of additional grassroots women's groups such as Mahsom Watch or the Coalition of Women for Peace, and by a renewed effort to revive the diplomatic process.

Palestinian and Israeli women's peace initiatives have differed from those of their mixed-gender counterparts in several important respects. They have been pioneering, clearly defining central political agenda items a step ahead of the bulk of the peace camp: in May 1989 in Brussels, Israeli and Palestinian women called for the mutual recognition between the State of Israel and the PLO, and the end of the occupation. Second, women's peace action has been extremely persistent in refusing to give in, in the face of the deterioration of the situation on the ground. And third, it has focused on a series of concrete actions: it is the Jerusalem Link which took the initiative of organizing an international political, academic and cultural event in June 1997, on the theme "Sharing Jerusalem – Two Capitals for Two States", at a time when this idea was a taboo for the immense majority of the Israeli public opinion, even within the peace camp. Women activists, however, have been consistently excluded from official or semi-official initiatives, and their distinctive perspectives have been largely ignored.

As time progressed, Israeli-Palestinian women's peace movements increasingly saw their impact within both Palestinian and Israeli public opinion fade, parallel to the deterioration of the peace process. With violence raging everywhere and with it the hope for a negotiated agreement fading away, women's peace organizations were engulfed by a sense of failure, frustration, and fatigue. Mainstream peace movements such as "Peace Now" no longer dared organize "mass demonstrations", knowing that they would have been unable to mobilize a popular support.

It is within this context that a group of veteran Israeli and Palestinian women activists decided to take a critical look at past efforts, with a view to increasing their efficacy. Building on years of joint peace work and the personal trust that had developed as a result, they looked at ways of overcoming existing pitfalls, and designing a more efficient and productive framework for action.

The conceptual starting point for what was eventually to become the International Women's Commission for a Just and Sustainable Palestinian-Israeli Peace (the IWC) was the adoption of the landmark UN Security

Council Resolution 1325 that calls for ensuring not only protection for women in conflict situations, but also recognizes women's contributions and advocates their active participation in all stages of peace-making and peace-building. Besides highlighting the potential power inherent in women's peace efforts, Resolution 1325, by furnishing a broad international umbrella, they indirectly suggested a way to overcome the bilateral impasse in Israeli-Palestinian relations at that time.

The idea of creating a tripartite partnership involving not only Israeli and Palestinian, but also prominent international women with considerable experience in diplomacy and political negotiations was first raised in a joint appearance by a Palestinian woman, Maha Abu-Dayyeh Shamas, and an Israeli woman, Terry Greenblatt, at a special session of the UN Security Council in 2002, convened to mark the anniversary of UNSC Resolution 1325. They suggested that such a framework could contribute to a gendered peace agenda. It could, they believed, address the obvious inability of existing Israeli and Palestinian women's groups – separately and together—to communicate vertically with policy-makers, and might act as a vehicle for greater horizontal mobilization within each society. It could also leverage support and visibility for the work of women's peace organizations at the highest regional and international levels.

Following a series of informal preparatory meetings, Zaheera Kamal who became Minister of Women's affairs of the Palestinian Authority, and Naomi Chazan who was then a Deputy President of the Knesset, the Israeli Parliament, approached the then Executive Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), Noeleen Heyzer, with a request to support and facilitate the process of translating this concept into reality. In July 2005, UNIFEM, with the support of the Belgian government, convened a strategic planning meeting in Istanbul that brought together forty Palestinian, Israeli and international woman leaders and advocates. After intense deliberations, a Charter of Principles was adopted which lays out the political programme, the mission, and the objectives of the IWC.³

³ For the IWC Charter and other documents, see the IWC website: www.iwc-peace.org

The Charter stresses the goal of ending the Israeli occupation through immediate final status negotiations on a two-state solution. It also underlines the need to hold all parties accountable for fulfilling their obligations under UNSC Resolution 1325 and to include women in the process.

The mission of the IWC was clearly delineated in the charter: first, to work for an end to the occupation and genuine negotiations towards a just and sustainable peace; secondly, to promote a process of political dialogue aimed at rectifying ongoing asymmetries and addressing all elements of reconciliation; third, to ensure the meaningful participation of a diverse range of women, including those from civil society, in any Israeli-Palestinian peace process; and fourth, to guarantee that women's perspectives and experiences be incorporated in any accord in order to enhance gender equality and societal well-being.

The detailed objectives of the IWC underlined the connection between political work (setting forth principles and concrete measures to facilitate political progress between Palestine and Israel based on the principles of fairness, justice, and equality; pushing for transparency and accountability within a human rights framework), and gender-based action (increasing representation of women at the negotiating table, injecting gendered perspectives on the process; mobilizing women and other groups in civil society in support of these goals). The list of activities elaborated at the founding meeting of the IWC to carry out this agenda was ambitious and innovative, ranging from the formulation of political positions on key issues or events taking place on the ground and advocacy at the highest level, to the mobilization of broad constituencies.

In retrospect however, what has become the most powerful tool of the IWC is the decision to operate as a unified group speaking with one voice. In this respect, the IWC is unique in the Israeli-Palestinian landscape, as it seeks to achieve internal consensus among its members on critical issues before it disseminates its positions to decision-makers and the public. The IWC has thus become the only major organization in which Palestinians, Israelis and key members of the international community act with a unity of purpose to bring an end to violence and to in-

sist on the resumption of negotiations based on a set of clear political principles.

Following the Istanbul meeting, the founding members of the IWC began to organize internally and create the mechanisms needed for the implementation of their programme. They launched a process to identify an initial group of sixty members – twenty from each group – who could promote the IWC Charter and begin to develop activities on the ground. The aim has been to ensure that IWC members represented as broad a political spectrum as possible, and the diversity of sectors, social groupings, religious communities, political positions, and localities within each society, as well as key women in decision-making positions and civil society. In Israel, besides woman parliamentarians and prominent public figures, a decision was made to allocate places to Ashkenazi, Mizrahi, and Israeli-citizen Palestinian women. On the Palestinian side, geographic and political considerations were central, so that provision was made for members from Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Although the composition on both sides has failed to include key groups in each society – Hamas, and, on the other side, the Jewish settlers and their backers – it does extend far beyond the familiar scope of existing peace movements.

Internationally, UNIFEM has been recruiting prominent international, Israeli and Palestinian members. The honorary co-chairs at the head of the organization are the presidents of Finland and Liberia; the members include the foreign ministers of Switzerland, Iceland and Austria, as well as Nobel laureates, ministers, parliamentarians, and key NGO leaders from the European Union, Africa, North America and Asia.

The international steering committee of the IWC is composed of four members from each group. It coordinates activities and maintains overall responsibility for decision-making. The secretariat consisting of an Israeli, a Palestinian, and international coordinator works together at the international level. The local coordinators administer internal activities in each society.

The activities of the IWC have focused on four main areas. The first has centred on monitoring political developments and formulating gender-driven political positions on events as they take place, on permanent

status issues, and on questions related to daily life. This process has been based on discussions in joint Palestinian-Israeli meetings (usually attended by at least one international member) and the subsequent circulation of drafts by e-mail until consensus is achieved. The IWC has issued position papers on the January 2006 Palestinian elections, the deteriorating situation in Gaza, the Second Lebanon War, the Mecca Agreement on the establishment of a Palestinian National Unity Government, the Arab League Initiative, in the wake of the Annapolis Conference in November 2007, and on the necessity of launching inclusive negotiations on a permanent settlement. Position papers and press releases were issued in the wake of the Israeli intervention in Gaza in December 2009 and around the tragic episode of the flotilla to Gaza. These papers have then been disseminated widely, transmitted to decision-makers, and used as the basis for discussion both internally and internationally.

The second area of activity has focused on lobbying decision-makers and advocacy. In Israel, the local branch was launched in the Knesset in November 2005, and since then meetings have been held with then Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, parliamentarians, and key members of the press. Then-Prime Minister Ehud Olmert sent a letter promising to include women in negotiating teams. The Palestinian members of the IWC received a presidential decree issued by President Mahmoud Abbas in support of their work, and actively lobbied the negotiating team and prominent politicians.

The advocacy work internationally has been extensive. An IWC delegation visited Brussels several times and met with European Union officials, including the president of the European Parliament, and the EU Commissioner for External Relations, Benita Ferrero-Waldner. Meetings were held in Washington with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and members of Congress, and in New York with senior UN officials, including the Secretary General. IWC delegations have participated in various international meetings, including and met with foreign ministers and numerous delegations visiting the region. The political analysis offered by the IWC has been welcomed by officials, and its members now have access to the main actors involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The third activity of the IWC has focused on the mobilization of local constituencies. It has involved meetings with women's organizations and leaders in Israel and Palestine. It has also led to the beginning of a series of hearings, first within Israel and lately in Palestine, aimed at collecting gender perspectives on the resolution of the conflict and consolidating supportive networks. In May 2007 an international conference attended by over 150 Israeli and Palestinian women was held in Jerusalem, bringing together activists from various backgrounds for the first time in many years.

The fourth area of work has dealt with communications and the media. Besides the construction of a website and the transmission of press releases, efforts have been made to attract media attention and to influence public opinion. Here, achievements have been mixed: the IWC has received greater notice internationally than at home.

Indeed, to date, the IWC's international achievements have outstripped those within Palestine and Israel. Nevertheless, its distinct position as a link between civil society and the official sector is beginning to achieve some impact locally as well. More emphasis is to be placed on activities within Palestine and Israel, capitalizing on international connections and achievements.

Since its establishment, the IWC has emerged as a creative, strategically defined, peace initiative with a unique, gender-based political profile. Its members have been able to start mobilizing women's power at the grassroots and to begin to translate it into a significant force for constructive change at the decision-making level. Nevertheless, it has yet to achieve a significant rise in female representation in negotiating teams, or have a direct impact either on the substance of talks or on the process of negotiations. To realize these objectives much more extensive efforts are needed locally, jointly, and internationally.

Some of the obstacles impeding the work of the IWC deserve mention. The first and the most problematic, is logistical. Heavy restrictions imposed by Israel on the movement of Palestinians has meant that it is difficult to arrange joint meetings, and when these do take place, they entail days and weeks of intensive work on entry and exit permits, as

well as very high costs, since to ensure ongoing consultations, it is necessary to hold some meetings outside the region. Secondly, Israeli women are not allowed to enter the Occupied Territories, which impedes extensive contacts with Palestinian civil society organizations. Thirdly, the asymmetry in daily conditions inevitably reflects the broader inequality between the occupiers and the occupied, which still needs to be addressed by all members of the group. Fourthly, the outreach to new women, and the construction of groups of supporters of the IWC Charter and a broader circle of friends, still requires substantial work within Israel and Palestine. Fifth, much more effort has to be put into refining the gender-related facets of the conflict and translating them into detailed policy proposals. Sixth, modes of cooperation with other peace movements have to be developed, in order to increase the collective effect of these efforts. Seventh, the institutional capacities of the IWC branches must be fortified, which calls for additional funding. To date, support for the IWC has been received from the Norwegian, Belgian, Spanish and Austrian governments, the Heinrich Böll Foundation and OXFAM/Novib, as well as from UNIFEM. And finally, the IWC must reinforce both its working and its evaluative tools – something that requires not only additional resources but also substantial expertise.

The IWC is an original mechanism designed by women to strategically advance a workable and lasting Israeli-Palestinian peace, based on the perception that the conflict requires international involvement, and that it is essential that this undertaking encompass grassroots and official efforts simultaneously. It is also the first full-fledged experiment in practically implementing UNSC Resolution 1325. Its experience, therefore, has implications at two levels. In Israel and Palestine, the IWC's capacity to influence activities may have a critical impact on the prospects for the realization of a two-state solution. Moreover, the value-driven, goal-directed and gender-defined model that it is developing may have applicability for other conflict areas. In any event, the IWC initiative constitutes yet another path-breaking effort designed by Palestinian and Israeli women who refuse to be defeated by the exacerbation of the conflict, and are committed more than ever to its peaceful resolution.

Looking retroactively to all the years of activism of women for peace in Israel and Palestine, I notice that their numbers have shrunk. There are new ways of activism of younger women which have developed within activities that are less specifically gender-oriented. In Israel, the leaders of most of the Human Rights organizations dealing with justice and rights in Palestine and in Israel are women, including Hagit Ofran, director of settlement monitoring within Peace Now, Sara Benninga who leads the weekly demonstrations in Sheikh Jarrah in East Jerusalem, B'tselem Director Jessica Montell, New Israel Fund Director Rachel Liel, and many others.

In Palestine, women have concentrated on women's rights organizations rather than peace. The feelings of the huge asymmetry between the situations of the two peoples have led to this situation. During the more than forty years of the occupation, and mainly during the First Intifada, most of the initiatives of women for peace in Palestine and Israel were launched abroad. In times of progress and hope, such cooperative efforts have been enhanced, but in times of crisis or wars, they have regularly been paralyzed. The real question is: when and how to develop real processes of reconciliation when the conflict is not over, and even when it formally ends. Reasons of hope exist: the quality of the relations that develop within new formal and informal groups working above the divide, mainly younger people, is astounding. But they are so much involved in daily activism and action that I am not sure that reconciliation is not somewhere within their agenda.

INTERVIEWS WITH PEACE ACTIVISTS

INTERVIEW WITH BOSILJKA SCHEDLICH, BERLIN

Childhood in Yugoslavia/Croatia

What made me strong and unruly as a child was the desire to escape from violence. Men beat women, children and animals, but for women and children too, blows were an everyday means to get your way. In our village, as soon as children could walk, they had to work, and I didn't have any toys either. My father wasn't there, he lived near Split with my older brother and sister, where he worked, and they went to school. I thought that there, in the city, was another world, one without brutality. At that time, I had never been to Split, or any town. And I wanted to go there.

In school I understood that progress lies in learning – in Yugoslavia after the Second World War, that was an important idea in any case. I also saw it as a way to escape from the village and its violence. In school, I learned that women have the same rights as men. But my mother too, who took care of everything alone, everything that men and women otherwise did – the household, the animals, the field – she was the one who gave me strength, and the feeling I could do anything I wanted, too.

When I was eight, I moved to town with my father. Only seldom could my mother come, because of her work with the plants and the animals. It was very beautiful when she was there, and the house smelled of food when I came home from school. Otherwise, I had to manage the household and take care of my younger brothers and sisters. The feeling of responsibility for my surroundings developed from that – and also the feeling that I could be at home anywhere, in the country or and in town. After primary school, my father wanted me to go to vocational school, but I simply registered for secondary school. Since he never went to my school, he didn't find out about it until two months after the beginning of the term. He accepted it because the school was nearer to our house, and I could get home faster after school. But after I got my leaving certificate and wanted to go to another town to college, he wasn't so under-

standing any more. He wanted me to stay in Split and continue to take care of the household and my brothers and sisters. He didn't want to give me money. I was desperate, and found out that it was possible to go to Germany and earn money there. I thought that I would earn enough in a year to come back after that and be able to study literature and philosophy.

Early work and political life in Germany

I was of age, so I could go to Germany against my parents' will. When I went, my father had to be held down by three men. He threw himself on the ground, a doctor was called and only when he started to take the syringe out of his bag did my father get up and say, "I'm not crazy, doctor. Pack the needle up."

I went from Split to Zagreb by train, which took all night, and flew from there to Schönefeld Airport in East Berlin, together with eighty other women. After that parting from my father, it was as if I were drugged. I only came to when I was in the aeroplane and was aware of my surroundings. Next to me was a man reading a book by Dostoyevsky. He lent it to me. I never saw him again, and I still have the book.

Porcelain holders for the electric cables were fastened to the high wall on the border to West Berlin. The soldiers held submachine guns and wore jackboots. Stiffly, without any expression, they scrutinized our passports and our faces. I thought of the Second World War, of the death of a young woman in the electrified barbed wire of a concentration camp in the Yugoslav film "The Ninth Circle" (*Deveti Krug*, 1960).

Then we drove through the city. I saw houses with walls scarred by shelling, many old, pale women with little dogs and many men whose legs or arms were missing.

There was barbed wire strung on top of the wall around the hostel to which we were taken. Eighteen years later, when I prepared an exhibition on Yugoslav women in Berlin, I learned that before the Second World War, this building had been part of the Argus Works, in which parts for dive-bombers and tanks were made. Forced labourers worked there, for each of whom the SS was paid eight marks per day. I learned

that many German workers secretly brought the forced labourers food, and that they purposely made faulty products. During the Second World War, the building was rebuilt as a military hospital, and later as a hostel for German refugees from the East. Twenty-three years after the end of the war, we, the daughters of the partisans, slept in the same beds, on the same mattresses and with the same sheets. In the basement, there were still a few little white-haired people living, who hid when we young women ran through the long windowless hallway after work. Because of the eeriness of it, we were loud in groups, and quiet if we had to walk through the hall alone. That too was Berlin.

At that time, in 1968, I worked in a factory for six months, and at the same time went to a private school and learned German. After half a year, I was given a job as the hostel interpreter, and after a year I was able to register at university and study German. At twenty-one, I became headmistress of a hostel with forty-eight women, which was always described as exemplary. I worked and studied at the same time. I think I was very serious and very old at that time. I feel privileged because I was allowed to study and didn't have to go to the factory so early in the morning. Most women were older than I, had many problems with their families, and with each other. Most of them came from villages, and frequently didn't even know how a toilet worked. They were like people from my village; I had to show and explain this new world to them. Later, I became a court interpreter and gave up working in the hostel. I didn't want to take over hostels with 800 women and men.

In 1971, I met a Berlin student who was from an anti-fascist family. That made it easier at the beginning for me to get to know him, a German, to go to the cinema with him. Although I became acquainted with many kind Germans, it was important for me to make sure that my new friends weren't people who had been enemies of my country, and of my father, during the war. Later we married, and had two babies. I am very proud about the friendships which have arisen between my new and my old family, between my father and my husband, who, like my father, wanted to build a house for us in Yugoslavia.

I always had intensive contacts to my compatriots, and became aware of how many of them were having ever greater difficulties, because they had the idea of having to be better than the Germans and the Turks, and therefore always worked more than the others. At the same time, they wanted to prove – even to their former enemies – that it had been worthwhile to go abroad for work, by taking home many presents for relatives and acquaintances, and by building houses in Yugoslavia. At the same time, they lived in cheap flats in Berlin, ate bad food and held several jobs at a time. To stand the pressure, the men drank and the women swallowed pills. Their children wanted to take root in their new country, and be at home there, but their fathers wanted them to be part of their village communities, for they were stuck in the era in which they had been when they had left their villages. The mothers stretched themselves between their husbands and their children, were frequently beaten, and took even more pills. For these women, I organized the first women's group in Berlin, then the first and the second women's shops.

After I had worked the stories of innumerable women and my own experiences into an exhibition, I wanted to start doing what I had always wanted to do, study literature and philosophy. I actually registered, but never started to study. For in 1989, I noticed how my compatriots who were so familiar to me gradually began to change. First, they read the newspapers from home about the economic crisis, then about the national conflicts which became ever more violent. They founded national organizations in Berlin which became more and more nationalistic, matching the sharpening of the tensions in Yugoslavia. In these organizations, they watched the evening TV newscasts from their respective capitals together. Even so far away from home, and living in a tolerant city, they couldn't resist the influence of the propaganda. With helplessness, despair, rage and hatred they spurred each other on; they claimed to be all good citizens of their respective nations. They got caught up in the propaganda nets, and began to peer ever further back into the past. Like psychotics, they talked about threats from the "others", who, in their eyes, had forfeited their human countenances. No words could serve to move them away from these visions, for it was as if their minds had been switched off. There was deep distrust, even against their own

surroundings, against marriage partners and workmates. There were divorces and firings after quarrels or brawls in workplaces. The results were long-term unemployment and unhappy children, who lost a parent or a whole side of their families.

German friends could hardly understand all this, they saw these nationalistic overtones as threatening, and wanted nothing to do with them. They thought they had overcome nationalism for all time. The press, the politicians, the peace movement, too, did not understand the development; and the opinion predominated that this was something incomprehensible to them, something Balkan-like, primitive, that Tito had been able to suppress with his dictatorship, and that was inevitably breaking out again after his death, since it had always been there.

Founding of Political Organization

I too felt the deep helplessness and despair. To escape from the paralysis, I founded the organization "Southeast-Europe Culture" (*Südost*) with friends. Philosophy seemed senseless to me, if even people who spoke the same language couldn't reach agreement, if all confidence was gone. It was my desire to create a place in which every person would be welcome, regardless of his or her national or religious affiliation, a place at which words give expression to the mind, and support understanding, a place where confidence exists. Culture, the expression of both understanding and mind, had been turned upside down and misused to stir up hatred against others. In *Südost*, we wanted to turn culture back the right way up again. The Berlin Senate (the state government) understood and welcomed our request, and granted us money, so that we could move into our rooms in January 1992.

My work has become my university. I learned that the refugees who came to Berlin starting in 1991, fleeing the war that had now broken out, mainly needed practical assistance. To meet their needs, we developed humanitarian aid, counselling advice and educational opportunities, therapy for the traumatized, later support for those who were returning, and then integration assistance.

Cultural events form a framework in which people meet. Even today, fourteen years after the end of the war they are well-attended. During the war however, they played a special role. Art on the walls, in all the rooms, music, theatre and readings ensured that people felt welcome, and that, without always being conscious of the fact, that art was the opposite of violence and destruction, that it was the expression of human creative strength.

There has never been any destruction on the walls or of the art in the rooms of the organization, even during the war, although all nationalities from the former Yugoslavia were constantly there. Of course, many Germans and other Berliners work in or visit Südost. "There's a good atmosphere here," we hear many people say.

In the therapy groups, men and women reported week after week what had happened to them in the camps and in the besieged cities, in Sarajevo, in Srebrenica, and during the refugee treks: lootings, murder, expulsion, torture, rape; quietly, during the first months, then ever more loudly. After two years of group work, they were therapeutically supported to imagine what they would do to their torturers. Thoughts of hatred and revenge arose. It was very loud in the groups at that time. One day, a man said, after another man had expressed a terrible revenge fantasy, "And now that you've spoken it out, you don't have to do it anymore." That was the turning point. Because this virtual brandishing of fangs helped the people to defend themselves in their imagination, to find a way out of their helplessness, and thus to regain their dignity. They now started telling the stories of their neighbours on the other side who were killed because they didn't want to take part in the actions. In the camps, they were tortured worst. After that came the stories about the times before the war, when they had lived together peacefully with the others. The meetings got quieter. There was even understanding expressed for those who had looked down or aside during the war. "I don't know how I would have behaved in such a situation," they would say.

These were very festive moments for me, because these people were deeply ashamed that they had remained alive at all, while others had been killed. And they were ashamed that people are able to do such ter-

rible things. By means of these stories, they were able to build a narrow bridge across the ravine of the terror which they had survived, to their lives before the war, to overcome the chasms within themselves, to leave behind their identities as victims, and to reconnect to their lives before the war. That helps them to overcome the self-destructive hatred, and to get to where their lives are today, in Berlin: here, where their children live and their grandchildren were born. They have thus not only overcome the terrible past, but have also regained their previous lives, and gained the future.

Conclusion

I learned a lot about myself through this work, and about the effect on me of the experiences of my relatives, primarily those of my father. I have become happier, more courageous and freer, and can better grasp and appreciate the value of life. The lesson which I draw from the stories entrusted to me so openly and so trustingly is that wars can break out again and again, if the groups concerned are left to themselves in a crisis. The experiences from earlier conflicts not dealt with have an effect through the generations, and can facilitate and promote the outbreak of new violence. After all, that's true in personal relationships, too. I think we have to have the courage to look at the potential dangers, so that we can react preventatively, before the shooting starts.

This realization was the motivation behind the creation of the foundation *Überbrücken* ("bridging"). We are working here against forgetting and against sublimation, not only in former Yugoslavia. We want to keep alive the knowledge about human violence and wars, so as to promote the creative and the positive through art, and to thus also work for peace. The thin line between wartime and peacetime must be redrawn anew – through education and training for every single person, everywhere in the world, everyday, so that the children will become neither victims nor perpetrators. I look forward to this task, and to everyone who is willing to join in it.

Interview: Birgit Daiber, Berlin, August 27, 2009

INTERVIEW WITH SHUKRIA DINI, NAIROBI

I was born in 1969 and grew up in Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia. It used to be such a beautiful and peaceful city where I could visit my cousins, uncles, aunts, and grandparents. I grew up with my extended family and felt fortunate to be surrounded by a large family. I lost my mother when I was four years old. My father was in prison, and so my grandparents became my caregivers. My father, grandparents and my other extended family were a strong sources of strength in my childhood. I was very fortunate to have the care and love of my extended family. My grandmothers were great storytellers and they told me many interesting tales. Older generations tell stories to their young generations to pass on wisdom and family values. The stories that my grandmothers told me as a young girl are a precious treasure, and I will pass them on to my children one day.

I attended primary and secondary schools in Mogadishu and had many friends. On my first day to school, it was my grandfather Dini who held my hand and accompanied me since my father was in prison. I cried my eyes out because I did not want him to leave me behind at the school. Even though I was too young to understand the importance of education, my grandfather told me about its importance. He understood the essence of education for a young girl like me. Today I feel indebted to him and grateful that he instilled in me a love for education. My grandfather was a unique man indeed because, he took his granddaughter to her first day in school, which inspired and energized me to obtain higher education. Until his eighties, he was a nurse by profession; nursing was and still is a male dominated profession in Somalia. He worked in a big hospital in the city of Beledweyne, in Hiiraan region. He was and still is my hero and a great role model, although he passed on more than two decades ago, just before the start of the conflict. He was also a farmer and loved farming and nature. My grandfather was kind man and he loved helping people.

On completion of my secondary school education and as I was waiting for a University placement, the Somali conflict started. Prior to collapse of the state and the civil war, we had a military-socialist government in Somalia which provided free education for all. Women also had access to health and employment, and enjoyed some level of “equality”. My opportunity to continue my university studies was interrupted because the militarized violence began at the end of the 1990, which led to the total disintegration of the Somali state and its institutions. The rule of law broke down, and anarchy and violence became the order of the day. The violence displaced many Somalis around the world. My family lives in various countries in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and North America. Some of my aunts, uncles and cousins live in Somalia.

I fled together with some family members to Nairobi, Kenya, where I became a refugee. In Nairobi, I was able to do some volunteer work with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) that led to a one-year short-term employment.

In 1993, I left Nairobi for Canada for settlement and secured a one-year scholarship through the Refugee Students Sponsorship Programme of World University Service of Canada (WUSC), leaving behind family members in Somalia and in Nairobi. The one-year scholarship enabled me to do my undergraduate studies at the University of Winnipeg, Manitoba. After completing my BA in 1998, I decided to pursue my graduate studies in International Development Studies at St. Mary’s University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, where I obtained my MA. In 2001, I started my doctoral studies in Women’s Studies at York University in Toronto. That means that I lived and studied in three different regions of Canada, probably reflecting my nomadic heritage. I believe I fit everywhere and belong to the world as a global citizen.

In June 2010, I finished my Ph.D. and went back to Nairobi, Kenya where I once was a refugee, but this time I was a woman equipped with education and experience. I returned to Africa because I wanted to make my own contribution to Somalia, particularly to the advancement and empowerment of Somali women and girls. This is not to say that I know what is best for Somali women, but I want to be part of Somali women’s efforts to building a safer and better Somalia for all.

With my education and experience, I am more privileged over other women who have not had the opportunities I got, but with this privilege I want to do something for Somali women and I believe that Somalia is a calling for me. Of course there will be challenges having been away from Somalia for over a decade, and having been trained in western institutions as a social scientist, I will have a lot of learning to do, and Somali women have a lot to teach me as well. There has to be some kind of solidarity between Somali women, and we must learn from each other regardless of our education and experience. As feminists, we need to build bridges and partnerships among women and across communities. In my estimation, feminism is about doing the impossible – fighting for social justice and being committed to gender justice and equality. Feminism is about searching for alternative approaches that are gender sensitive, inclusive and empowering for all. In Somalia, we need alternative approaches to building peace and recovery. And I want to contribute to these alternative approaches to rebuild Somalia.

In October 2010, I went back to Mogadishu for the first time after twenty years. Believe me, it was a very emotional experience. When the plane was landing at the airport, I looked through the window and saw the tiny airport and I could not stop crying. Good and bad memories flooded back to my mind. This was a city destroyed by the ongoing conflict and most of the people who lived in this city left twenty years ago and have not returned. The ones who remained still live insecure lives. But despite all this violence and problems, I argue that Somali people, including women, are resilient people who coped with violence and scarcities. They want to live a normal life and have access to social services. It is indicative that human beings have this ability to cope with tragic and destructive situations and keep hope alive.

My general impression is that all the people I met through my short visit are tired of this senseless conflict and violence. They want to live in peace, have security, a functioning state, state institutions, and access to opportunities. The youth I talked to want to have jobs, access to education and security. I would say they also need psychosocial services to address and heal the prolonged trauma they have experienced for the last two decades.

In Somalia, the youths are one of the most vulnerable groups. For the past twenty years, they have been exploited and recruited by all warring groups to kill, destroy, loot, displace and rape women. If we need to find durable and lasting peace in Somalia, we must address issues affecting Somali youth and create opportunities for them.

I think Somali women have been the bedrock on which the Somali society has been resting for the past twenty years, and even before, they were extremely resourceful agents who maintained the survival of their families and the overall Somali society. There is recognition of the important roles which Somali women played in maintaining the survival of their families and communities, but recognition is not enough. It is important that Somali women be included in the decision-making processes. They do have their own unique concerns, opinions, inputs and visions for building a new and peaceful Somalia. How can 50 or 60% of Somalia's population be ignored from the decision-making of peace-building and rebuilding processes?

Interview: Birgit Daiber, Brussels, November 17, 2010

INTERVIEW WITH YOLANDE MUKAGASANA, KIGALI

It was not only in my childhood, it's a matter of a life where resistance was necessary to stay alive.

I received lots of love from my family. My father and mother were very much in love until the end of their days. I was born into a family that seemed poor to us ourselves, but rich to all the neighbours. We all lived serenely in the family. We were a very united family, a signal on the hill. I have never experienced violence in my family. But what sparked my resistance was what I saw and experienced at the age of five. I saw the massacre of Tutsis. As a result, I received an education from my parents to resist. That is what also helped me to bear my exclusion as a Tutsi child in school. I was the only one in my family who was able to go to high school. My brothers and sisters were excluded after primary school. This exclusion also made me realize how injustice hurts, especially for children. The only values that I had left were the values of my family; everything else was broken. My father was very attentive to my reactions: I was shocked to see all these killings go unpunished. My father always made me hope that one day justice would be done, and I've never lost hope.

I also think that all the Hutu extremist political forces who ran Rwanda until 1994 strengthened my ability to resist, because they always tortured me, physically and psychologically.

They killed everything that I was, including even my own blood, by killing my children. They made me fall into indescribable misery that I did not expect, because I had nothing and nobody when I stopped growing, but I aged. But I think, after having received much love in my life, I am unable to hate. After the genocide, I never thought I could get up again. But since life has chosen me and I survived, I must do something. The life of a survivor is itself resistance. When you hit bottom, you either stay there, or you decide to get back up, since you can't sink any deeper. Surviving and taking a step towards life is great act of resistance towards life, since any other choice means death.

Immediately after the genocide, I did not want to take vengeance on any person. I wanted to burn my country; I wanted to burn the trucks of the NGOs, because they had abandoned us. I could not stand the Westerners, because of the Western powers and their responsibility during the genocide, because I had seen everything, I had just experienced everything, I'd just lost everything. Even my friends could do nothing for me, they had just called me on the phone to say goodbye.

Even though at one point, I wanted to go visit the killers and tell them to kill me, the idea then left me, and I thought of giving testimony about the genocide. I thought I had been the only one to survive, and testifying became a duty for me, even while the genocide was still going on. I wrote the information on cigarette paper; I always had a pen in my pocket. Everywhere I went during my flight, I tried to listen to the radio to find out where the chiefs of the murderers were going to coordinate the genocide, because all the briefings were being carried out by radio. I was sometimes able to manipulate the killers, when there was almost no hope left. But I can't say I was cleverer than they, or than any other of the genocide victims or the women who were raped. When I got to the area of the Patriotic Front (RPF), which was fighting to stop the genocide, I didn't give myself any time to think. I asked to care for the wounded of the war and the genocide, to resist despair.

I had to leave my country to rebuild myself. Before leaving my country, I also felt guilty about leaving my children in a mass grave in Rwanda, and fleeing. I went to ask their forgiveness for letting me go, with the promise that I would return to them, so that justice might be done. I begged them to let me give my love for them to other children and not to be jealous. In that way, I was able to go to Belgium without blaming myself. This is also how I was able to care for other children, orphans.

I know that love has triumphed over hatred and that life has triumphed over death. This allows me to get up every morning, to put one foot in front of the other, and to do positive things.

I testify, but I don't have much energy. I only know that I have the will to do it, which means to accept reliving the genocide. Because every time I testify, I relive the genocide of the Tutsis. I do it because I am a

witness, and that's the only thing I can do, both for the dead and for the living. For the dead, because I live more with them than with the living. I do it for their memory, to make them live again by speaking about them, by giving them the names that others tried to wipe out. For the living, because it's the only way to protect them. To testify to what we have lived through in Rwanda will prevent others from living through it, because they will protect themselves. I do it for the human generations, so that they can build a humanity of peace and without impunity.

Genocide is like a viral disease; you can only vaccinate against it, for a viral disease cannot be treated once it has broken out. Vaccination is the only hope, otherwise we just treat the symptoms. And the same is true of genocide. It is better to prevent it, because once it's there, even its effects will be difficult to treat, for they will affect coming generations.

Interview: Birgit Daiber, Brussels, autumn 2009

INTERVIEW WITH MOLLY MALEKAR, JERUSALEM

My childhood was very confused because my family migrated from India to Israel in 1971 when I was nine years old; it was my parents' decision; they wanted us to grow up in a Jewish society. Although a Zionist, my father was never an extremist. He grew up on the myth of Mahatma Gandhi in India. It was a very soft, even naive Zionism. My childhood was disrupted and had no clear continuity. When I look back, it was in a way traumatic, disconnecting me from all I knew, setting me into a totally new environment. It was a big struggle for me to integrate in this new society, and at a certain point, I had to understand that I would never entirely assimilate. This is my existential feeling to this day: that I'm always a little bit outside. It's an advantage, too, having had the chance to see things a little from the outside. Take for example the military service and the myth around it. It was always strange to me and to my family; we didn't have grandparents who had fought in the 1948 war.

When Anwar el-Sadat came to Israel in 1977, it was my eleventh school year and I remember there was an option at high school to choose French or Arabic as a foreign language and I was sure, with the arrival of Sadat, that things would change, and I was sure I would be part of this new prospective – and, rather romantically, I chose Arabic as my second language. And I also made another decision: we were given the option either to go immediately to the army or to study first. I chose the academic path and joined the army afterwards; I applied at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem to take Arabic Studies. They have a distinguished Middle East studies department with very good experts. Many Jewish students in this department, especially those who study modern Arabic history, are military people, working for the army. You could see in the same seminar Arab-Israeli students and army people, with and without uniform. The military service was not so attractive for me, and I became involved in political discussions with my Arab comrades – it was at the same time a political and also a social cooperation. This was the beginning of my political activism.

Certainly I see myself living on the borderline, it is not easy, but I come to live in peace with this, being able to be flexible. I have to pay a price for it, but it's ok today for me. My parents have a strong Jewish identity, but they still have an Indian identity too, they follow Indian literature and news.

I grew up in the city of Ashdod. It is a mixture of cultures, there are big communities from Morocco and Latin America; in the '70s, a big wave of Russians came in, so we were all immigrants and we were new. My first boyfriend was from Montevideo; my sister's boyfriend was from Leningrad.

In the '70s, the pressure of the melting pot was very strong. When we arrived in Israel, there was a pressure on my parents to change their children's names; in the '90s, with the Russian immigration, this pressure was not so strong. In this city of so many immigrants, the peripheral people were able to keep their original identities. This is a kind of advantage of being in the periphery.

After finishing my first degree, I served in the army and something interesting happened. With a degree, you become an officer, and I was supposed to serve in the intelligence services, and they looked in my file and they saw that I had been arrested twice for political reasons. However, at the beginning in the first three months, I was positioned in the civil administration in Samaria, and I was in the Ramallah headquarters. It was a military camp. Those dealing with civil issues, be it water or education, are military people. This is an "enlightened occupation", as Moshe Dayan called it. It was freedom of movement, no Intifada, hitchhiking in the streets in military uniform was possible. After three months they found out I shouldn't be there, but I experienced how the occupation functioned from the inside; how every single act in the lives of the Palestinian farmers is controlled. Also their biographies, everything, was written down in the files. After three months I was called back to the headquarters, and was transferred to office work in Jerusalem.

Going to military service in those times was normal; in a way, serving in the army was another path for a young woman into Israeli society. Later on, when I became a mother, I realized how helpless you can be as a parent.

In those days, military service for women was two years and three years for men; now it is a little bit less. I had the rare opportunity to see how things work inside. I was part of the system; I was happy that they kicked me out, but it was another era. There was no third path, only at a personal level could you keep a distance in your heart and mind.

In 1983, the army had a general ceremony to present awards for the war in which you had participated. I went to the ceremony, and we were supposed to wear our best uniforms, but I decided not to participate and escaped. The result was that I was restricted to base for three weeks – but had I been a man, I would have served time in jail. It was my way to keep my distance. I was in a constant dilemma, and even today, I don't want to be totally separated from my own society. I feel I'm part of the Jewish collective. Hebrew is the language I think best and express myself, and it's Zionism that created the revival of Hebrew and its culture. I don't want to get out of Israeli society.

After leaving military services, I was more involved in women's issues. I became the director of the Jerusalem Women's Rape Centre, which was very interesting work, based on voluntary work; the hotline is available twenty-four hours a day. In this centre, you meet women from all parts of the society; some of them are feminists, some are social activists. The feminist movement in Israel consisted of women of all parts of the society, with and without a political background.

In 1993, sixteen years ago, I had my daughter; my husband was also a political activist. In 1995, I joined Bat Shalom.

The Madrid Conference seemed to be similar to the moment when Sadat came to Jerusalem, the first time Israel acknowledged other political actors. At the Madrid Conference, the Palestinians were for the first time recognized. The enemy was now visible, and not a ghost.

It was a very interesting period. The Oslo Accords also liberated people inside Israel, as they addressed many liberation issues such as the gay movement; but beyond that, Israeli society felt accepted in the region, and no longer alien.

Today, we have been thrown back further than ever, and are disillusioned. When hope fails to materialize, the backslide is all the stronger.

Working with Bat Shalom and working with Palestinians, we understood what was happening. I remember, in the mid-'90s, Bat Shalom was one of the few places where Israeli and Palestinians could meet; I remember hundreds of phone calls from psychologists, artists and doctors, and I remember that my instructor approached me asking, what are you doing? It was genuine, that the will of the Israeli people has something to do with Palestinian people.

Interview: Birgit Daiber, Jerusalem, October 26, 2009

INTERVIEW WITH LAMA HOURANI, RAMALLAH

I was born in a refugee family in Damascus in 1965; my mother is from Safad, and my father from Al Massmiah, which is in southern Israel today. They were transferred to Syria in 1948.

I always knew that I was a Palestinian refugee; even in school I introduced myself as a Syrian-Palestinian refugee. I always knew I was Palestinian.

My mother's mother in Syria and my uncles always talked about Safad and Palestine, and how they had to leave their houses; and my great-grandmother on my father's side always talked about Al Massmiah and about our relatives who fought for the village. They told me how the Haganah came in and how they immediately – within two hours – had to surrender, if not they would have been killed. My father's mother fled to Gaza and I dreamed I would meet her, but this was not possible. I was raised with these stories.

My father was a journalist. He was independent, but at the same time active in the PLO, and a politician. Even at school, we were told about the Naqba of 1948. I was always convinced that I would go back to my homeland and fight for Palestine. When I was six or seven years old, one of my dreams was that I met Yasser Arafat, and he asked me to join military operations in Palestine, to liberate Palestine.

One of my direct experiences with war was the war between Israel, Syria and Egypt in 1973. I remember that we had to stop going to school. Our life changed. We were happy that we did not have to go to school, but we were always afraid of the bombings. As we had no shelters in the district, we stayed in our flat during the bombing of Damascus. We stayed in the big middle room without windows. We were afraid. My mother had packed a big bag with all our documents, passports, school materials, clothes and some food that was changed every day. Whenever the bombing and fighting was distant from our district, our parents encouraged us to go to the balcony. During this time, the neighbours stayed together. It made me happy to see that the Israeli Army could be fought.

A very hard experience with war was in 1980, when we moved to Beirut, together with my father. There, we experienced the civil war. We lived in West Beirut, surrounded by PLO militants and by Lebanese military. But life was also normal: we went swimming in the sea and had love stories. I was only a teenager, but I clearly understood the situation in which we found ourselves. I participated in first aid and civil aid training courses. My father insisted on that, arguing that although we attended school and lived normal lives, we should be able to help ourselves and others.

The first time I saw clashes was in Lebanon in 1981. We are three sisters; I was fifteen at that time, I'm the eldest. We returned from school. It usually took twenty minutes to get home. As we approached our house, we heard the Kalashnikovs. We stopped and observed the roads for some minutes; we couldn't see anything particular, and decided to continue on our way home. As we walked down the hill toward a square, the sounds of the Kalashnikovs got stronger and we saw the fighting. I have no idea why we didn't realize that earlier. I remember hiding behind a Mercedes Benz, but that's all; from there on, my memories stop. How we got home. I don't remember. We never talked about how we got home. But I remember that the same night, as we slept, all three sisters in the same room, the shooting started again, and we woke up. We heard shooting and saw muzzle flashes. We kept awake listening to the sounds of the shooting. We stayed in our beds, and didn't go to our father's room. The following morning, we talked about it with him. He said, "Don't worry, go to school, I will go to work", and we continued with our lives, we went to school, on the same route as always.

The first time I saw injured people was in 1981, when Israeli airplanes bombed two buildings of the famous Arab University area, which was then the headquarters of all Palestinian organizations. The two high buildings exploded and many injured and dead people were lying on the floor. A young journalist, a friend of ours, came and asked me to follow him to the place, and we smelled the smoke and burned meat. I always remember this smell. I was sad, but I was holding back and did not show emotions; at the time I felt strong and proud about that, thinking: "Whatever they do, we keep on fighting".

We went to the hospital, which was shocking: a crying baby in a big bed, with two broken legs in casts. We found out that the baby's mother was badly injured. She said what happened is like a dream now: when it happened, she was on the balcony, watching the planes coming in, with the baby in her arms. Suddenly she had the impression that she was flying, with the baby in her arms, like on the moon, weightless, before falling injured to the ground.

In 1982 came the invasion of Lebanon and the surroundings of Beirut. I stayed in Beirut during the entire war, from the beginning. My sister's and my choice was to volunteer in hospitals and refugee camps, which we told my father. As we were members of the Lebanese Democratic Youth Organization, we went to their centre, and signed up. The first day we still slept at home, but after that, we lived and slept at the centre. We were the only girls there – between all the boys. The girls came in during the day and went home at night – except my sisters and me. I worked in the ambulance, hospitals, and with the refugees. The first two weeks of war we only slept two or three hours a day, but then I had strong migraine attacks, and the doctors told me to go home and sleep. This was my first direct war experience.

At the same time we were living our lives. The football World Cup was underway, and we gathered whenever we could to watch the matches, on TVs running off car batteries. And we celebrated our birthdays.

The first time I saw the word "peace" written was in Moscow in 1976, where we lived together with my father for one year. He had managed to include me and my younger sister in a children's delegation of Palestinians. In the Soviet Union, the word "*mir*" (peace) was written everywhere: "*mir*" for children and "*mir*" for everybody". The opening of the international camp took place in Moscow; the camp itself took place near the Black Sea, which had already under Lenin been established as an area of peace for the children of the world. In the camp, children from all continents participated, of course including from all countries of the USSR. But I don't remember whether any Israeli young people participated. The year we went to the camp, they decided to have short speeches by Palestinian and Vietnamese children. I didn't speak Russian, and they

had to teach me the paragraph about “*mir*” (peace), and I gave a speech in Russian in front of all public and official personalities, including Leonid Brezhnev. I was wearing a beautiful Palestinian dress. This is how I pronounced “peace” for the first time in my life. Peace for happiness, for the liberation of Palestine, and for returning home.

During all my childhood, I never saw an Israeli civilian. But, as my parents were part of the Left, I was raised to believe that there is no difference between people with different religions, that Jews had suffered a lot during the Nazi regime, that there are Palestinians who didn’t flee and live in Israel, that there are good and bad Jews the same way as there are good and bad people everywhere, and that there is no difference between black and white.

Books and reading played an important role in our family, and the books we had were mainly translations from Soviet and Russian literature. Before going to the USSR, it was most interesting for me to read about the Second World War. I read all the stories about heroes, about the concentration camps, the stories of Jews, and the resistance in the villages against the Nazi, and I was convinced that Nazi had been undemocratic and if they had come to our area, they would have killed and treated us the same way, because we too, were Semites.

So this was my experience of war and peace in my childhood. My choice during the war in Lebanon was not to take a weapon and not to fight at the front, like so many others of my age have done. I chose to work on the inner front in hospitals and refugee camps. Nobody told me to do so, it was my choice.

Back to 1982, the eighty days of destruction: We saw dead people, people cut in pieces; we worked with traumatized and wounded people every day, we heard the screams of people covered by rocks, but were unable to help them, because the bombers came back. And normal life went on. Today, having a child myself, I realize how generous my parents were at that time, that they let us go to work, to experience ourselves and therewith be part of our people.

After the end of the fighting and the agreement that the PLO should leave Beirut, we wore a red ribbon on our heads, as a sign that we would never give up, and never leave Beirut. My father told us that we were now illegal in Beirut, and that we would have to go back to Syria. Together with friends, we developed plans to hide from my father, so that he would not find us. We were registered to leave with the ships, but my father allowed us to go with our friends to a farewell party. We listened to the Barbra Streisand song "Endless Love", and all of us teenagers were lying in our arms crying. My sister and I were sent back by ship to Damascus. We listened one week to the tape with "Endless Love" and did not want to see anybody.

After leaving Beirut, the Israeli Army entered Beirut. My father had stayed in Beirut, hiding. He sent us messages via telex every day, to tell us that he was still alive. When we heard about the Sabra and Shatila massacre, we were very worried about my father. Sometimes, we had no news from him, and heard contradictory news from people. Some said he had been in Sabra and Shatila, others said that he had been arrested and was in a camp. Finally, somebody brought the good news that he was alive.

I finished high school in Damascus, and went to study in Prague, Czechoslovakia, from 1983 to 1989. I studied economics and foreign trade, and got a master's degree. I was active in the Palestinian Communist Party, and I fell in love with my husband whom I met in Prague. He is Palestinian, born and raised in Nablus, but he is a refugee too, from Jaffa.

In the summer of 1989 we married and decided to live in Palestine. But as he had not finished his MA yet, and my residence permit for Prague was ending, I decided to take the offer of a scholarship in East Berlin. I left Prague and arrived in Berlin, which was in a revolutionary situation. I was on Alexanderplatz when Mikhail Gorbachev came and everybody was screaming "Perestroika, Perestroika". After a few weeks the wall came down; I went with the masses to West Berlin and got a big stone from the wall.

My stay in Berlin ended with the school year. I went back to Syria and tried to enter Jordan for several months. In August 1990, Saddam Hus-

sein invaded Kuwait, which made it even more difficult to get a visa for Jordan, but I got it eventually and started to look for a job for the first time in my life. At the end of August in 1990, I started working in the economics department of the PLO in Amman, when all the Palestinians from Iraq and Kuwait showed up at the same time. It was then that I realized for the first time in my life that I am a woman with no autonomous rights, living in a conservative traditional society that doesn't recognize women's rights, and my husband not being there made it worse. I had to fight the struggles on my own without any support – such little daily fights as smoking in public, or looking for a job. All the people I knew from Jordan who had studied with me in Prague were men. I insisted on keeping my habits and my personality, to prepare the ground for our future relations. I found a job, but the next challenge was to find a flat and to live alone, without a husband or family members. My husband realized that this was a big battle for me, and he came during the Christmas holidays. He convinced his parents that it was also his decision that I would live alone and asked them to support me. Finally I found a flat and lived there alone. Another challenge for the family was that I'm a good *dapke*-dancer, the folklore dance. I got involved with a group, went to practice until midnight, and participated in shows. That also turned out to be difficult for the family, but here too, I set the rules for their relationship with me. It was a challenge to keep my identity.

In summer 1991, my husband came in. Our relationship had changed, as we were no longer boyfriend-girlfriend as in Prague, but as he was also a communist and progressive, so we continued living in Jordan. I changed my workplace and worked for the Quakers for a while, and then for a private company.

We submitted a family reunification application to the Israeli occupation authorities for approval to go to Nablus ,and had to wait for it. I had problems with my identity card in Jordan all the time. In 1994, I got approval from the Israeli occupation authorities to go to Palestine for the first time. I was really excited; I called every person I knew: I got a permit! Everybody told me what to do: go to your mother's house, go to your grandmother's house ... I packed my bag and one of the first things I

put in was the stone from the Berlin Wall. My husband said, you are not allowed to bring in stones, remember, the Intifada is going on.

When I arrived at the bridge, I saw an Israeli soldier face to face for the first time – with mixed feelings. I was happy to go to the land I had dreamt of all my life. Everybody told me how wonderful it was. But I was shocked at how the soldiers were checking my luggage, and how they treated me, like an insect, without respect. This was after the Oslo Treaty. I was unable to define my feelings about the soldiers.

On the bridge, the soldiers asked us to step out of the bus, and I looked at one of them, and the thought flashed through my mind, “This man has to be killed”. Then I woke up, and thought, what a crazy idea, just enjoy coming home. My husband had accompanied me; he saw my feelings and calmed me down. After these procedures, we found my brother-in-law and went to Jericho. I expected to see the Dead Sea, but I did not see it. I expected to see rich fields in the valley, but I did not see that either and I started to become disappointed. This was not what my grandmother and my mother had talked about, and I got calmer and calmer, and did not say a word. My husband saw the tears in my eyes and said: “What is with you? You are in Palestine!” I replied: “But this is a desert; this is not the Palestine they have been talking about.” I had expected to see green land and water on the way to Nablus, as my mother-in-law had told me. All these mixed feelings made me start crying. We reached Nablus, and the city was still full of soldiers. When we arrived back home, I had forgotten all the disappointments. This was my first encounter with my homeland. At that time, my father lived in Vienna. When he called me I told him that this is not the land I had been told about, and that I had expected.

We restarted our lives, we looked for jobs. The Intifada was still going on, and there were no jobs. A few days after arrival, my husband was arrested for several hours. We went to the city centre, trying to find out where they had put him. Children threw stones at the soldiers, and I was following my mother-in-law, like a child, running to a police station. The men taken prisoner were there; and many women were in the station, too, watching the soldiers. Meanwhile the soldiers were

bringing in other men and even children. A six-year-old child was brought in; my mother-in-law went to a soldier with the child she did not know, and shouted: "How many times did I tell you!", and hit him. The soldier was shocked, thinking she was his mother or aunt, and said, "Next time, you have to obey your aunt," and let mim free. We stayed there for many hours; the women were talking to each other and watching out for the men that got released. They knew the functions of the different buildings; they knew who was kept only for hours, and who would go to prison. My mother-in-law told one of the lawyers that my husband had had an operation just some days before and that he couldn't squat. And the lawyer convinced the soldiers to let him sit comfortably and my husband looked at us with deep anger because he felt advantaged over the others. People sent some warmer clothes from home, but they were not handed over, they didn't even give the men water. I wanted to go home, but my mother-in-law said, "Stay here, he needs to see us", and after a few hours, the men were released.

We couldn't find jobs. We decided to visit my grandmother in Gaza, and got a special permit to go to there for ten days. On the way to Gaza, on the highway, I saw the Palestine I had heard about, the green fields and the water irrigation systems. When we got to the Erez crossing, the soldiers didn't stop us, and we went to the centre of Gaza City. Driving through Erez, we saw the difference, roads with holes, garbage everywhere, hardly any difference between refugee camps and villages, as most houses were unfinished. My uncle waited for us at the main intersection of Erez, and we met many relatives. I enjoyed Gaza, but it was shocking at that same time. I liked many things in Gaza: I liked the Gaza people, I liked the fact that the Israeli army was not present, the way it was in the West Bank, that there were no settlements on hills, and I loved the Mediterranean Sea. It seemed to be a better place than the West Bank. Both of us loved it and we decided to look for jobs there. In December 1994, we moved to Gaza.

With that, a rather good period started. Gaza became an enormous workshop for everything. Funds started to come in, the Authority was there, and for the first time in years, the Gazans could stay outside at

night and go to the beach. Electricity was functioning, constructions projects and building activities of all kinds took place everywhere. There was an active Authority, an active civil society, a legislative system was established, the first elections were held, and I became an activist, particularly for women's rights.

Before moving to Gaza, we had asked my husband's uncle if I would have to wear a scarf in Gaza, and denied, I wouldn't. With the new Authority, and the arrival of PLO people, who felt safe there, the Hamas lost ground, and women started to take off head-scarves in the cities. However, even in 1996, I was working in a refugee camp, and children threw stones at me because I was not wearing a scarf. I turned to them and tried to explain that there are different styles and people.

We worked very hard for civil society; we worked on the laws and started campaigns. And we lived our lives.

With the beginning of the Second Intifada in 2000, thousands of people protested in the streets of Gaza. Eventually, the Israelis were more brutal, and the Intifada became more militant. During the first air bombings, I was alone at home with my father and we heard huge explosions. We knew this sound already from the Beirut bombings. We went out of the house to help people who had never experienced bombing; we brought children and adults to our house. The bombings continued and people got used to it. There were no shelters, nothing, and as in Beirut, people went in the streets and onto the balconies to watch the planes and rockets coming down.

In 2001, I got the chance to leave Gaza for a while to go to Jordan. On the December 31, 2001, I got the news that I was pregnant. When I still got back to Gaza, we were heard that Ariel Sharon had come to power. I placed the bag my mother prepared for us by the doorway, in case we should have to leave instantly. For me, Ariel Sharon meant the war in Lebanon, the bombing of civilians, and the Sabra and Shatila massacre. There was breaking news on Al Jazeera about the first bombings after Ariel Sharon came to power. All relatives in the outside world called me to calm me down. I gave birth to my son in August 2002 in the Gaza Red Crescent hospital.

I got out of Gaza in 2007. I still had my career there and I loved Gaza, but it felt like living in a jail, and I imagined that after the Hamas takeover, it would be even harder. In the mosques, Hamas announced the victory over secularism and the PLO, and I had criticized Hamas openly, so I was personally in danger.

Enough is enough, and as we had a residency in the West Bank, I left with my child. My husband had to wait four more months to get his permit. We moved to Ramallah, had to find new friends and to establish new professional lives.

I became a member of IWC in 2005. It's a way to prove to myself that I am involved in the struggle for peace, and I keep my values by working with IWC. It is currently the only group in which I am active.

Interview: Birgit Daiber, Ramallah, May 25, 2010.

INTERVIEW WITH GHADA AL-JADBA, GAZA

I believe I'm a strong person because my mother and father were strong people. My mother was strong – but not as I wanted her to be. She was a teacher for ten years and a substitute teacher for 40 years, she was a good teacher in her school and in the community; my mother was different from her peers. She married at eighteen; my father was her cousin. We lived in Rafah Camp – they came originally from Yibna, formerly in northern Gaza District, now in southern Israel. It is not easy to live in a camp. My mother was an educated woman and her family was wealthy. She wanted to create some change in the society of the Camp – and she did, in fact. She was a model for me.

My father was not educated like my mother, and he worked with his father to support his large family, but he was very intelligent, and since he had no opportunity to pursue his education, he was very interested in educating his sons and daughters; not all men at that time supported their daughters' education. We were five daughters and three boys. When I was five years old, my father called me "doctor". That made me happy, because I felt my father had faith in me. And doctors were important personalities in Gaza. It made me proud and it was a challenge for me, and it made me feel my father thought I could be like boys, and even better than them.

From the beginning of my life, I felt with the misery of the people around me – especially when I was in school, and I saw the restrictions placed upon my girlfriends. When I was thirteen, I had a shock when my close friend had to leave school to get married – we were just children! From that time on, I thought about women in Gaza, and that they don't have the right to choose what they want. This shock made me stronger, and better capable of living in this tough society. I decided to help the girls, and spent most of my time discussing and trying to encourage them. Sometimes I succeeded; one of my friends from a very traditional family was so strong that she succeeded in pursuing her education, and now she is a doctor. It was not easy for her. Sometimes we called her brother, to convince her father to let her go study together with me in Libya.

I faced a great challenge to do well in school, and to get the highest score in Gaza. The most important thing for me was to make my parents proud of me. The first year, I studied architectural engineering in Nablus. I lived there, because it was too difficult to get out of Gaza, but during the First Intifada, it was too complicated to travel inside the West Bank. During this time, Libya opened the door to students from Palestine to complete their studies there. So I lived for seven years in Tripoli, studying medicine. These years were wonderful; the quality of the studies was very high. Then I returned to Gaza, I got married, got my three babies, two daughters and a boy, and after that I decided to complete my studies and entered a master's programme in public health in Gaza, which I completed in 2006. In 1995, when I returned from Libya to Gaza, I was so happy to be a medical doctor. I had the opportunity to live somewhere else, but this idea was a very far from my mind, since I wanted to serve my people in Gaza. I worked as a physician and general practitioner in primary healthcare, dealing mainly with women's and children's health. Since getting my master's degree I started to manage health centres, and today I am responsible for six health centres providing care for 350,000 Palestinian refugees living in Gaza City and to the north of it. We face many challenges every day. We are subject to constant constraints, and the burden of the crisis on the refugees is high, and getting higher, which increases the demand for our interventions every day. That's our situation today in Gaza.

Besides my work for the health service, I was elected by the UNRWA female staff as the chair of the UNRWA Gaza Women's Committee, which was established in 2008. Our main goal working in the committee is to empower women working at UNRWA to reach their fullest potentials, and also to foster gender equality by helping the female staff with mechanisms and tools to enable them to be more competent and to make their voices clearly heard.

Interview: Birgit Daiber, Gaza, December 20, 2011

INTERVIEW WITH SIMONE SUSSKIND, BRUSSELS

My parents were Jewish immigrants from Poland and Transylvania. They were survivors of the Shoah. After the war, my father rejected his Jewish faith, arguing that no God could have allowed the massacre of millions of human beings. He believed that the best way to protect his children was to reject Judaism and to assimilate. But his efforts were not successful; the social environment of my parents was Jewish. They tried to teach my younger brother and me that the world is dangerous and that the only safe place you can trust is the family. As for many survivors, the strength of my parents was to fight to build a new life. I developed my personality in opposition to them; I wanted to prove that it is possible to change the world and that you can do this as a Jew.

I have never been afraid of opening myself to other people. As a teenager I joined a Zionist youth organization. We developed our Jewish identity on our own. Soon I became one of the leaders of this organization.

At the university, I was active in a Jewish students' organization with close connections to the left, and there, for the first time after the War of 1967, we got a sense of the Palestinian problem. We understood that the only way to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was the creation of two states for the two peoples. There were very few proponents of such a vision at that time.

It was then that I met my husband David, who, as a leader in the Belgian Communist Party, had founded the CCLJ (Centre Communautaire Laïc Juif), a Jewish cultural centre based on the fact that Jewish identity is not only a religious identity, but that you can have a strong Jewish identity without being a religious person.

The visit of the Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat to Jerusalem in November 1977 was a historic event: it led to a peace agreement between the two countries. For many Israelis, it meant that if peace was possible with Egypt, there was a possibility to work toward peace with the Palestinian people, too. The movement "Peace Now" was founded during this period.

In the mid-'70s, Yasser Arafat and the PLO slowly moved towards accepting a two-state solution. Some PLO representatives in Europe started secret contacts with Israelis and diaspora Jews; they were assassinated by Palestinian extremists. One of those meetings took place in our home, between Issam Sartawi (1935-1983), an envoy of Arafat and Arie "Lova" Eliav (1921-2010), who had been a general secretary of the then Israeli socialist party, the Mapai. Sartawi was killed in 1983.

In 1985, I became the president of the Secular Jewish Centre in Brussels. In December 1987, the First Intifada started. In March 1988, we organized a public conference "Give Peace a Chance" in Brussels, with prominent Israelis and Palestinians. It was the first public encounter between Israelis and Palestinians.

In December 1988 an international Jewish feminist conference took place in Jerusalem. One of the speakers was the leader of the "Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo" in Buenos Aires, Renée Epelbaum. Her three sons had disappeared during the dictatorship. She told about the struggle of the mothers to find out about their children. It was a very emotional moment; many women in the room in the Jerusalem hotel were crying.

Considering the fact that the Intifada was taking place only a few hundred meters from where we were, we discussed it and came to the conclusion that we could use the experience of the women of Buenos Aires to bring Israeli and Palestinian women together. It was obvious that Brussels was the best place to organize such an encounter. It wasn't easy to get the project accepted, because some of the members of the board of the CCLJ believed that a women's encounter would be too emotional and not political.

In May 1989, the conference "Give Peace a Chance – Women speak out" was organized with a series of public panels. The first day was awful. The Palestinian women spoke about their suffering. In the afternoon of the second day Suad Amiry, a Palestinian, said: "So far we have only listened to the suffering – but we want to try something else, we want to look at the future. I know, I will never go back to Jaffa, but you Israeli women will not stay in Hebron." This was the breakthrough and

within two hours we discussed the terms of a declaration, the “Brussels Declaration”, which stressed the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people alongside the State of Israel.

We agreed to open the newly established network to other Israeli and Palestinian women, and to work informally but effectively. In December 1989, a human chain around the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem was organized mainly by Palestinian and Israeli women. But then the First Gulf War started, and everything blew up. All formal contacts stopped. In 1992, we decided to meet again, and to establish the “Jerusalem Link – Women’s Joint Venture for Peace”. It was founded in 1994.

The same year, we organized a conference in Marrakesh, gathering women from south-Mediterranean and European countries. The conference focused on the questions of how women can help develop regional peace, and how peace can empower women. In 1997, following serious discussions, the members of Jerusalem Link organized a challenging event on “Sharing Jerusalem – two capitals for two states”.

In 2000, after the failure of the Camp David Summit, the Second Intifada started and the voices calling for peace were marginalized. In 2004, we decided to ask the director of UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women) to bring together Israeli, Palestinian and international women. In July 2005, the IWC (International Women’s Commission for a Just and Sustainable Palestinian-Israeli Peace) was founded. Its main objectives are to influence decision-makers to work for peace, and to enable women to have their say with one voice in the process. We worked hard with twenty Israeli, twenty Palestinian and twenty international women to give legitimacy to the IWC. We had meetings in the USA, at the UN level, and in Europe.

We are currently working to reinforce the IWC and to be more efficient in our advocacy work, promoting the contribution by prominent international women, heads of states and ministers.

Interview: Birgit Daiber, Brussels, May 2009

ANNEX

PROJECT CONCEPT

**Women's Contribution to Peace and Reconciliation:
Attempt of a systematic analysis in order to formulate key
elements for a general concept of civil conflict prevention
and resolution**

The project is based on the fact that it is in particular women who over and over give brave and dauntless examples of civil action against war and violent conflicts. In the aftermath of the Yugoslav wars the courage of women to speak about their suffering has led to the inclusion of sexual violence in the International Criminal Court catalogue of Crimes against Humanity. However, this has been the only case where an aspect of female peace activities has found its way into the legislative framework of the UN. A few of these brave women are given awards for their work and for a short time the mass media tell their story. The prize money then helps them to continue their work. But it is not being talked about what can be learned from their activities and from the work of many other unnamed peace and reconciliation fighters. For example one could learn that armed internal conflicts often have a long background, or that subsidies in war situations often don't serve the development of civil structures but the increase of power and violence of warlords.

The project "Women's Contribution to Peace and Reconciliation" collects women's testimonials from two different sources:

Personal interviews and
Reports about possible steps to the resolution of violent conflicts,
on how to come to terms with the past and how to create peace
for the following generations.

In the beginning the project will focus on the four regions:

Israel
Palestine
Former Yugoslavia
Somalia
Rwanda

In doing so it is crucial to pay attention to the differences in the origins and the actual shape of war and violence.

In a first step personal interviews will take place and the experts will be asked to give reports:

On the origins of the conflict situation in their country

On the development of the conflict situation in their country

On the actual state of the conflict

On the activities against the conflict

And as key-question: why is it so hard to break the circle of violence and destructive behaviour?

And finally: Which are the basic elements for "peace-learning"?

The experts are invited to present their findings in three seminars and to discuss together from the different experiences key-elements for

Awareness about conflict-development

Instruments for conflict-prevention

Resistance in conflict-situations

Cooperation structures in peace-building

Prevention measures against ongoing destruction of peace-building strategies

Concepts for reconciliation

In two seminars these documents will be analysed together and it will be decided whether the study has to be extended on other conflict regions to receive a more complex understanding of the issue.

In a second step the core questions for a systematization of peace and reconciliation approaches will be drafted and lead into a concept that is discussed in a further seminar. Finally, in a conference, the concept will be presented to the public.

Duration of Project: 3 years. | Preparation: First half of 2009

Interviews and Reports: 2009/2010 | 1st Seminar: Autumn 2010

2nd Seminar: Spring 2011 | Drafting of concept: First half 2011

Final conference: End of 2011.

KEY POINTS FOR REPORTING ON CONFLICTS / WARS

In the following, we are providing key points for reporting on the genesis and course of conflicts and wars by our experts. These key points are structural aids; they need not be “checked off” in order, nor do all aspects necessarily have to be represented equivalently. We want narrative stories from our experts.

Genesis of conflict:

- Historical facts which have been seminal for the development of conflicts – colonial history, victories or defeats in struggles for liberation, conquest by regional powers or status as a hegemonic regional power, regional/national “nation-building”, etc.
- The international political context – the effect of imperial powers, the role of the UN.
- The relationship of power and violence within societies. Family structures, the intensity of patriarchal power over women and children, questions of ownership of property, the legal structure, the role of religion as a tool of power in social relationships (men, women, children, animals).
- The economic situation: wealth/lack of resources, wealth /poverty of the society

The trigger of the conflict/war:

- The situation prior to the outbreak of violence: How did the presentation of the country’s own history change, and who caused that change? How did power constellations change, and how has violence been expressed from the outside and within the society? Were processes destructive to social cohesion apparent?
- What events triggered the violence?
- Was there an obviously identifiable aggressor?
- What were the stages of the escalation of violence?

- What arguments did the belligerent parties use to legitimize their escalation of violence?
- Which role did the media play?

Course of the conflict/war:

- How and when did the international community/ the UN react to the out break of violence?
- Were the warring parties supported with weapons/money from abroad?
- How was the civilian population involved in the conflict/war? What was the situation of women and children, participation of teenagers in acts of war, what was the context of argumentation used by the participants to legitimize their causes?
- What pressure/ violence did the warring parties exert upon the civilian population? Violence/rape of women and children?
- Which resistance movements were formed?
- What were the decisive events for the escalation of processes of violence?
- When and where in the course of the conflict/war were there factors which made pacification seem possible? Why couldn't these factors be used?
- What role did the UN play in the conflict, e.g., via peace-keeping forces? What effect did the presence of these troops have upon the warring parties involved? Or the other way round: what effect did the absence of the UN in the conflict have?

Resistance to the war:

- Which resistance movements existed?
- How did resistance movements behave towards the civilian population?
- Which civilian forces were there which opposed the violence?

- What role did the work of women played in maintaining the social life of families?
- Which forms did civilian resistance take?

Pacification strategies:

- What attempts at pacification were made?
- What role did outside powers, including the UN, play?
- Which attempts at pacification were successful, or temporarily successful?
- Why were there setbacks?
- What were the consequences for the civilian population of unsuccessful attempts at pacification, e.g. destruction of social cohesion?
- What are the most important factors permitting enemies to find a peaceful compromise?

Reconciliation work:

- Is there reconciliation work despite violence and war?
- What are the immediate and indirect effects of reconciliation work?
- Which collective traumas must be addressed?
- How can attempts be made to heal traumas?
- Under which conditions can a settlement between perpetrators and victims take place?
- Are there hidden points of approach which permit a mutual respect between former enemies?
- How can people with extreme experiences of violence become peaceable?

NETWORKS AND INSTITUTIONS

Women's Networks

OpenDemocracy, www.opendemocracy.co.uk
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, WLPF, www.peacewomen.org
Women in Black, www.womeninblack.org
Code Pink, www.codepinkalert.org
Women's Portal of the International Action Network on Small Arms, www.iansa.org
Medica Mondiale, Support for traumatized women and girls in war and crisis zones,
www.medicamondiale.org

Environment and Peace

EEA, European Environment Agency www.eea.europa.eu
Green Net: Networking for the Environment, Peace, Human Rights and Development, uk, www.gn.apc.org
Greenpeace International, www.greenpeace.org
IGBP, International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme, www.igbp2008.co.za
UNEP, United Nations Environment Programme, www.unep.org

Disarmament

ABACC, Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials, www.abacc.org.br
Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy, uk, www.acronym.org.uk
Archivio Disarmo, it, www.archiviodisarmo.it
BASIC, Brithish-American Security Information Council, www.basicint.org
BICC, Bonn International Center for Conversion, de, www.bicc.de
Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, us, www.thebulletin.org
CBTBO, Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization, www.ctbto.org
Coalition to Reduce Nuclear Danger, www.ctbto.org
IALANA, International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms, nl,
www.ialana.de
IANSA, International Action Network on Small Arms, uk, www.iansa.org
ICBL, International Campaign to Ban Landmines, www.icbl.org
ISODARCO, International School On Disarmament and Research on Conflicts,
it, www.isodarco.it
OPANAL, Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and
the Caribbean, www.opanal.org
OPCW, Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, nl,
www.opcw.org
SIPRI, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, se, www.sipri.org
UNDC, United Nations Disarmament Commission, [www.un.org/disarmament/
HomePage/DisarmamentCommission/UNDiscom.shtml](http://www.un.org/disarmament/HomePage/DisarmamentCommission/UNDiscom.shtml)
UNIDIR, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, www.unidir.org
United Nations Conference on Disarmament, www.unidir.org
United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs, www.un.org/disarmament
United Nations Secretary General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Affairs,
www.un.org/disarmament/HomePage/AdvisoryBoard/AdvisoryBoard.shtml

USPID, Unione Scienziati per il Disarmo, it, www.uspid.org/ENindex.html
VERTIC, Verification Research, Training and Information Center, uk, www.vertic.org

Study Centers

ASPR, Austrian Study Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution, at, www.aspr.ac.at/
Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, de, www.berghof-conflictresearch.org

Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, Wayne State University, us, www.clas.wayne.edu/PCS

Center for Global Peace and Conflict Studies, University of California, us, www.cgpacs.uci.edu

Centre for Peace and Development Studies, University of Limerick, ie, www3.ul.ie/cpds

Centro Studi Sereno Regis, it, www.serenoregis.org.

CPACS, Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Sydney, au, www.sydney.edu.au/arts/peace_conflict

CUSRP, Centro Studi e Ricerche per la Pace, Università di Trieste, it, www.units.it/cusrp

Department of Peace and Conflict Research, University of Uppsala, www.sydney.edu.au/arts/peace_conflict

Department of Peace Studies, Bradford University, uk, www.brad.ac.uk/peace
GRIP, Groupe de recherche et d'information sur la paix et la sécurité, www.grip.org

Hiroshima Peace Center, Hiroshima City University, jp, www.hiroshima-cu.ac.jp/Hiroshima-and-Peace

ICAR, Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University, us, www.icar.gmu.edu

IFVH, Institute for the International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict, Ruhr-University Bochum, de, www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/iffhv

INCORE, Initiative on Conflict Resolution and Ethnicity, uk, www.incore.ulst.ac.uk

IPACS, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Waterloo, ca, www.grebel.uwaterloo.ca/academic/undergrad/pacs

IPRA, International Peace Research Association, www.iprafoundation.org

IWA, Institute of World Affairs, us, www.iwa.org

Life & Peace Institute, se, www.life-peace.org

Matsunaga Institute for Peace, Hawaii University, us, www.peaceinstitute.hawaii.edu

Menno Simons College, University of Winnipeg, ca, www.mscollege.ca

Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Toronto, ca, www.munkschool.utoronto.ca/trudeaucentre

Peace Studies Resource Institute, University of Wisconsin, us, www4.uwm.edu/letsoci/certificates/peace

PRIF, Peace Research Institute Frankfurt, de

PRIUB, Peace Research Information Unit, Bonn, de, www.hsfk.de

Richardson Institute for Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution, Lancaster University, uk, www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/centres/richinst

SHIP, Schleswig-Holstein Institute for Peace Research, Christian Albrechts University, Kiel, de, www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/centres/richinst

TARI, Trans-Arab Research Institute, us, www.tari.org
TFF, Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research, se,
www.transnational.org

Human Rights

Amnesty International, www.amnesty.org
Archivio Pace Diritti Umani, University of Padova, it, www.unipd-centrodirittiumani.it
Derechos, Human Rights, www.derechos.net
EMHRN, Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network, www.euromedrights.org
FIDH, Federación Internacional de los Derechos Humanos, www.fidh.org
Human Rights Centre, University of Essex, uk,
www.essex.ac.uk/human_rights_centre
Human Rights Watch, Defending Human Rights Worldwide
IHF, International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, at, www.ihf-hr.org
Norwegian Helsinki Committee, no, www.humanrightshouse.org
OMCT – WOAT, World Organization Against Torture, www.omct.org
SHRC, Syrian Human Rights Committee, uk, www.shrc.org
University of Minnesota Human Rights Library, us,
www1.umn.edu/humanrts

International politics

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, us, www.carnegieendowment.org
Centre for International Peace Operations (ZIF) Berlin www.zif-berlin.org
Center for International Policy, us, www.ciponline.org
Center for Security Studies and Conflict Research, Swiss Federal Institute of
Technology (ETH), ch, www.isn.ethz.ch
Centro de Investigación para la Paz, es, www.ceipaz.org
CIPDD, The Caucasian Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development,
www.cipdd.org
CISAC, Center for International Security And Cooperation, Stanford University,
us, www.cisac.stanford.edu
CNS, Center for Non proliferation Studies, Monterey Institute of International
Studies, us, www.cns.miis.edu/
COPRI, Copenhagen Peace Research Institute, dk, www.copri.com
EPLO, European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, www.eplo.org
GIPRI, Geneva International Peace Research Institute, ch,
www.gppplatform.ch/pbguide/organization/geneva-international-peace-research-institute-gipri.
ICG, International Crisis Group, www.crisisgroup.org
IISS, International Institute for Strategic Studies, uk, www.iiss.org
OSCE, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, www.oecd.org
Pacific Institute for Studies in Development, Environment, and Security, us,
www.pacinst.org
PRIO, International Peace Research Institute of Oslo, no, www.prio.no
Pugwash, The Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs,
www.pugwash.org
TAPRI, Tampere Peace Research Institute, fi, www.uta.fi/yky/en/research/tapri

Toda Institute, for Global Peace and Policy Research, jp, www.toda.org
UNIDPKO, United Nations Department of Peace-Keeping Operations,
www.un.org/en/peacekeeping
United States Institute of Peace, us, www.usip.org

Science and Peace

FAS, Federation of American Scientists, us, www.fas.org
INES, The International Network of Engineers and Scientists for Global Responsibility, de, www.inesglobal.com
IPPNW, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War,
www.ippnw.org
SGR, Scientists for Global Responsibility, uk, www.sgr.org.uk
Union of Concerned Scientists, Citizens and Scientists for Environmental Solutions, us, www.ucsusa.org

Cooperation and life support

AAR, Association for Aid and Relief (AAR), jp
AIETI, Asociación de Investigación y Especialización sobre Temas Ibero-americanos, es, www.aieti.es/newaieti
ASPAs, Asociación andaluza por la solidaridad y la paz, es
Ayuda en Acción, es, www.ayudaenaccion.org
CTM altro mercato – fair trade, it, www.altromercato.it
Emergency, Life support for civilians war victims, it, www.emergency.it
GRET, Groupe de recherche et d'échanges technologiques, fr, www.gret.org
ICS, Italian Consortium of Solidarity, it, www.icsitalia.org
Landmine Monitor, www.the-monitor.org
Mani Tese, Un impegno di giustizia, it, www.manitese.it/a-commitment-to-justice-since-45-years/
NPA, Norwegian Peoples Aid, no, www.npaid.org/en/
WFD, Weltfriedensdienst, www.wfd.de

Others

ACCORD, African Center for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, za,
www.accord.org.za
Fourth Freedom Forum, Exploring Options for the Non-violent Resolution of International Conflict, www.fourthfreedom.org
ICG, Institute for Global Communications, CA, us
NISAT, Norwegian Initiative on Small Arms Transfers, no, www.prio.no/NISAT
Non-violent Peaceforce, www.non-violentpeaceforce.org
SCI, Service Civil International, www.sciint.org
Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society, se, www.svenskafreds.se

AUTHORS

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Birgit Daiber has life-long experience in European policy and project-development, and has been involved in women's peace networks since 1990. She was the director of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation's Brussels Office from 2008 to 2012, and co-founder of the AAA Network in Brussels.

Shukria Dini is a Somali-Canadian feminist and researcher who has been researching on gender issues in war-torn Somalia for over ten years. She holds a Ph.D. in Women's Studies from York University, Toronto, Canada, and is the director and founder of Somalia Women's Studies Centre (SWSC).

Marlis Gensler is a social anthropologist and worked in development cooperation and research before joining the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation in Brussels in 2009. She coordinated the project "The Contribution of Women to Peace and Reconciliation".

Lama Hourani was born in a Palestinian refugee family. She is a women's rights activist and has been a member, since 2005, of the IWC, the International Women's Commission for a Just and Sustainable Israeli-Palestinian Peace.

Molly Malekar, Born in Mumbai, India, to a Jewish family of the Benei Israel community; lives in Jerusalem, Israel . B.A. in Middle East studies and International Relations at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem , political and feminist activist. Former director of Jerusalem Rape Crisis Center, former director of Bat Shalom of the Jerusalem Link, Israeli-Palestinian Women's Initiative for Peace. Founding member of the International Women's Commission for Peace (IWC). Currently, Director of the Counseling Center for Women, a feminist based therapy centre in Israel.

Yolande Mukagasana is a widow and survivor genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, in which her children were killed. A writer and lecturer, she is also the founder of the "*Nyamirambo Point d'Appui*", an association for the memory of the genocide. Advisor to the National Commission for the Fight against Genocide (CNLG).

Bosiljka Schedlich worked in the field of cultural and educational work with immigrant women. Since 1991 she has been director of the South-east Europe Culture Association (*südost Europa Kultur*) in Berlin, which seeks to promote and develop tolerance and understanding between different national and religious groups.

Simone Susskind was the president of the *Centre Communautaire Laïc Juif* (1985-1996) in Brussels. She is an activist for human rights, for a just and sustainable Israeli-Palestinian peace, and for the role of women in conflict resolution and women's rights in the Middle East and the Mediterranean region.

