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New Routes

A JOURNAL OF PEACE RESEARCH AND ACTION

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Freedom and Humiliation

Originally, we planned Truth and Justice as a theme for this issue of New Routes. With a new kind of global conflict evolving in early 2006, we decided, however, to include important reflections regarding the Danish cartoons and the associated global rage.

Jan Henningsson, out of his Alexandria perspective, reminds us about "collective humiliation" and "personal degradation". Muslims feel robbed of their dignity. So, what is freedom of expression and what is sheer provocation? Noticing a widening chasm dividing the Arab Muslim and the Western world, Bishop ***Munib Younan*** hopes that Palestinian Christians can help act as a bridge.

I would suggest that the different contributions in this issue fit the new theme of Freedom and Humiliation quite well. In addition to ***Jesper Wiklund's*** report from Peru about the important follow-up of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, we offer you updates on the peace processes in Sudan and Congo Brazzaville. LPI is in the middle of the work in these two fragile post-conflict settings. Of course, this has a lot to do with humiliation in the past and expectations of a new freedom.

Does it really make a difference when faith-based organisations are engaged in peacebuilding? Good question. There is certainly growing attention for religion in international policy. Clingendael, The Netherlands Institute of International Relations, has mapped and analysed the work of 27 Christian, Muslim and multi-faith actors. Don't miss ***Hanna Jagtenberg's*** summary of the report.

As usual, feel free to send your contributions and comments to New Routes. We are happy to note more and more reactions from readers of the journal, as well as our new website www.life-peace.org, which offers a lot of resources.

Thanks for your support in our work and good progress with your peace work in 2006!

Tore Samuelsson
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New Routes

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Cover photo: A young Tanzanian Muslim during a protest march against the Muhammed cartoons.
Photo: Mwanzo Millinga/Pressens Bild

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Humiliation and degradation behind cartoons protests

In January and February thousands of Muslims began filling the streets, demonstrating in protest against Denmark, while more and more European newspapers rally to the support of the Danish Jyllandsposten and the principle of freedom of press. The rhetoric concerns belief in God and religious symbols. But on a deeper plane it has reference to individuals, living in a cultural circle filled with inferiority complexes, who feel personally offended. Jan Henningsson, Director at the Swedish Institute in Alexandria, reflects on clash and encounter between cultures and "freedoms".

Many Europeans have difficulties in understanding the intensity of the reaction of the Muslims. For Christians in Europe, Jesus is probably not an immediately or easily accessible identification object; he did not live on our latitudes and spoke a language that is totally marginalised today. As an example for ordinary people, Jesus can be apprehended as inimitable.

For today's Arab Muslims, however, Muhammad is no culturally distant figure. He lived in this region and spoke a form of Arabic that is possible to understand even today. Muhammad, the simple merchant whom God had chosen, grew up as an orphan. He married and had a family and through his normality became a very immediate figure for the faithful, also for modern Arabs "The Prophet was like one of us", not divine, and therefore it should in principle be possible to live like him, say the Muslims.

Therefore, if you smear Muhammad and deform his face, it is "I" - a now living Muslim who is attacked. The cartoons turn into an encroachment on my deepest identity. It does not matter if I am really an active practitioner of Islam, who faithfully follows *shari'ah* and Muhammad's example. It is not in the first place a matter of theology and religious ethics but of psychology – and politics, of course.

The Arabs, who in October decided to make an affair of the cartoons, probably misjudged the solidarity of the EU with one of the smallest member countries, which can be an expensive business in the long run. But in the short-term another misjudgement is more dangerous: it is not the most devoted followers of the Arab socialist regimes in office who are on the march today – but the rank and file of the Islamitic movements. And they have tasted blood after the landslide victory of HAMAS in the Palestinian elections.

There are underlying connections between the progress of HAMAS among Palestinians (and for Hizbollah among Shi'a Muslims in Lebanon and for the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt), two phenomena that can be noticed with many Arabs: the feeling of humiliation and religion as a refuge.

Humiliation and degradation

Humiliation is called ihāna in Arabic – that is what many Muslims felt when they saw the malicious portraits of the Prophet Muhammad in Jyllandsposten, even if the Prophet himself is inviolable and his honour remains spotless. Degradation is called idhlāl; as an illustration my Arab friends mention the treatment to which Iraqi prisoners in Abu Ghuraib were subject. But the most common example, a topic for innumerable debates, inflammatory speeches, lectures and articles, is this: when Palestinians are degraded at Israeli road blocks, all Arabs feel humiliated.

The press and the broadcasting media continuously come out with information about "Arab brothers" who are humiliated in Gaza and on the West Bank. The pictures from Iraq have a shorter history and are not as emotionally loaded. But these reports function as a projection screen for the frustration, a screen which, moreover, is sanctioned from above and which

Islam is authentically Arabic, not imported like socialism or liberalism.

does not immediately have to lead to a political uprising at home.

Egyptian and other Arab Muslims of today have over and over experienced what is called collective humiliation: at the repeated military losses against Israel, when the statue of Saddam was overthrown in Iraq, or when Egypt did not get one single vote, as the Federal International Football Association chose a hosting nation for the World Championship in 2010. But most Egyptians also experience a personal everyday degradation – not as obviously offending as the Israeli occupation – but still crushing: soldiers are treated as dogs by their officers, students as cattle by their teachers, service staff as slaves by rich Arabs from the Gulf, women as servants by their husbands, children who are beaten or get lower marks if they ask too much. A student visits an Internet café and finds an interesting website; then the sign of the censorship comes up and says: "This site is not open for Egyptians". Young Saudis have the same experience, when they are surfing beyond the sphere in cyberspace that is permitted by the censorship.

It is also humiliating to watch the TV commercials night after night, knowing that you will never be able to buy any of those gadgets, which distinguish the new globalised world, maybe not even a cell-phone … that you will never be able to travel or learn to speak "the language of the new world" (Farag Fouda), neither English nor the high-technological language that goes with it. It is humiliating to be unemployed, but it is also frustrating to have a permanent job as a doctor or teacher and earn some hundred pounds per month, that is, far less than the monthly rent in most towns. What mentality does it create to be forced to corruption in order to support one's family? Don't forget that Saddam Hussein was forced with violence to go out and steal to get something to eat, when he was a school child!



A hand holding the Koran appears above the crowd at Trafalgar Square in London. Photo: AFP/Ben Stansall/Pressens Bild

The magazine *Wara al-Khabar* of the Arab TV-channel al Jazeera on 30th January dealt with Jyllandsposten. Symptomatically enough, the Islamitic debater (from Amman) took up the concept of "dignity" (*karâmah*) as the crucial point. His message was simply that Muslims feel robbed of their dignity – by the cartoons and even more by the (putatively) disregarding attitude which makes up the "iceberg under the water surface" that Muslims in Europe feel every day.

Experts on religion

According to the Arab Human Development Reports (2002-), published by UNDP, the Arabs lag behind in largely all spheres of society. The worst is the area of democracy/civic influence, equality and ability to read/development of knowledge. You can hardly speak of a civil society with popular movements as a basis for awareness rising and influencing public opinion. Neither are they internationally very prominent in the arenas of sport or culture. But there is one area where Arabs – both Christians and Muslims – really feel superior, namely religion.

A useful definition of religion says that it offers "another world in which to live" (Santana), and that is just what many Arabs of today need as a counterbalance to the reality of everyday life (cf Shaalan). V S Naipaul sharply catches this attitude, which can become a kind of compensatory arrogance: "Yes, we fell behind intellectually in terms of pursuit for material and secular education. But in terms of being more human, more responsible persons, I think we are a lot better than them. Morally we are a lot better than them".[1]

Religion, in this case Islam, offers a world where the injustices and disappointments of reality have been adjusted, a world where one can even take revenge. You can at least be a "world champion in religion", if nothing else. But if you are offended in this area too, then the cup is full to the brim. And that's exactly what

happened, according to my Muslim friends, when the cartoons of Muhammad became publicly known.

The cartoons in Jyllandsposten

"It is humiliating, of course", sags a highly educated Egyptian middle class woman, who normally is not very religiously engaged. "They should not touch the Prophet." It reminds me of the Muslim immigrants in Bradford, who could hardly read or write, but who made a bonfire of Salman Rushdie's The Satanic Verses (1987). Shabbir Akhtar analysed this in a booklet, *Be Careful with Muhammad*, a recommendation that is still valid. Whatever you say in this affair, you cannot belittle the Other's (in this case the Muslim's) feeling of humiliation. As one of my young male employees said: "Certainly you can criticise Islam and Muslim societies and tell us that we are backward, etc, but you don't have to stab the knife right into our most tender spot. Then you enforce a reaction, which we – the very most of us – would have wished to avoid. Regardless of how actively believing you are – in our country religion is the life of people. When the prayer call sounds, we automatically turn down the stereo, even if we are rather slack in issues like the prohibition of wine and such things."

You can argue about the freedom of press and the freedom of expression with European Muslims, who have their own safe personal and social identity, and who accept the rules of the secular democracy, where everyone has to argue and tolerate contradiction, but they are in minority just now. Another discourse is dominating among spokespersons for Muslim communities, as when in Sweden parallels are drawn between Jyllands-posten and the anti-Jewish Nazi campaigns. Clever rhetoric, maybe, but objectively unfounded. Still, there is a huge difference in the social and political starting point between the European Jews of the 1930's on one hand, and on the other, Muslims living in today's Europe. There are about 50 states with a Muslim majority – comprising almost one billion people – who can take diplomatic action, and with economic sanctions, to defend their belief and their fellow-believers. The diplomatic visit of the ambassadors to Copenhagen made this obvious.

"The Prophet was like one of us", say the Muslims.

If it was Egypt that initiated the campaign against Jyllandsposten, it should be seen against the background of the then ongoing parliamentary elections in the country. In the first round it was clear that the Islamitic movement (the Muslim Brotherhood, MB) was stronger than the government wanted. The National Democratic Party, NDP, then took a number of measures to prevent MB from having too much progress. Jyllandsposten gave the NDP-government an excellent opportunity to show the surrounding world – but most of all the population in the country - with the big drum, that one is at least as eager in one's zeal for Islam and Muslim values as MB.

As living in the secularised Europe one should perhaps remind oneself that this campaign takes place in a cultural circle where blasphemy is punished with death (cf the so-called Blasphemy Laws in Pakistan). In Egypt there is a kind of Islamitic action called *hisbah*, that is, somebody makes himself a solicitor for God and – on behalf of God – prosecutes someone for a crime against this God. At the entrances of all big groceries in Alexandria, including the French-owned shopping-centre Carrefour, one can nowadays see giant signs with the text "Because of the Danish abuse of the Prophet Muhammad Danish products are prohibited". It has the same kind of health declaration that we are used to concerning *halal*-meat: "Totally free from pork" …

One can, though, ask oneself if the violent reaction among millions of Muslims is proportionate to the provocation. Some cartoons in a Danish paper, which hardly is read by a worldwide public, can hardly be compared to a military invasion of Muslim countries (Afghanistan, Iraq) or an occupation of Palestinian territories, can they? The explanation might be found in exactly this: you cannot beat the Big Enemies, in this case USA and its allies in the first place – on which one, besides, is heavily dependent (this is especially true for Egypt). The result is a long pent-up national anger, which is now given an appropriate vein. Denmark is not powerful enough or economically important for the Arab world to be protected by enlightened self-interests. A cynical – and obviously incorrect - calculation might have led Arab regimes to the conclusion that Europe would be prepared to sacrifice a pawn. Thereby one would get a channel at an appropriate distance through which to divert this strong

It is humiliating to be unemployed, but it is also frustrating to have a job as a doctor or teacher and earn some hundred pounds per month.



The road blocks between Israel and the West Bank lead to humiliation and unacceptable obstacles in the daily life of the Palestinians. Photo:EAPPI

discontent, which otherwise could have turned into dangerous political energy (like the example of HAMAS).

The election victory of HAMAS

The religious symbols of Islam are deeply rooted in the Arabic mother tongue, they are domestic, they are understood by everybody: rich and poor, young and old, women and men, townspeople and villagers. Islam is authentically Arabic, not imported like socialism or liberalism. The secular ideologies have not given the Palestinians either freedom, dignity or welfare. What remains is the religious card, which HAMAS has played skilfully. Most Arabic commentators that I have read make the following analysis of the result of the elections:

The Palestinian voters punished al-Fath for its corruption and political incapability. They punished Israel for its arrogance and degradation of the occupation. They punished the international community for its obvious lack of genuine political will and sincerity regarding the peace process. An argument against HAMAS has been that Israel would refuse to negotiate with them. But will there really be any difference from the past? the Arabs ask themselves. Israel did not want to negotiate with al-Fath either, not even with Abu Mazen. Will any representative for the Palestinians ever be *kosher* in the eyes of the Israelis?

If the US and EU now decide to stop their financial assistance to the Palestinian territories, this might not be noticed much on the grassroots level. Have these millions ever reached the really needy? Have not UNRWA-leaders and other privileged Palestinians for decades laid hands on this so-called assistance and put it in their own pocket?

Some expect that HAMAS in office will be forced – or voluntarily choose – to modify their programme and learn to compromise in order to function as a party of government and avoid international isolation. But one should not be too sure; there may be allies who support their tough line.

Balanced and well-formulated, wearing a green baseball cap with an Islamic slogan, the spokesperson of HAMAS, Ismail Haniyeh, declared at the press conference of the victors at the night after the elections: "We live in a political reality that we must handle. The occupation and its consequences is our reality just now, and we will tackle it. But in our own reality, the world we look forward to and want to create, there is not split among the Arabs, there the umma of the Muslims is not divided into national states.

What did he see before himself? Well, not necessarily a new caliphate.

An interesting reinterpretation of the expression "wipe out the state of Israel" was conveyed to me the other day through Rosemary Hollis (research director at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, England). This interpretation implied that HAMAS might be thinking (or could be brought to think) that the nation-state as a construction is on its way to becoming obsolete; we need other geopolitical entities. In the light of such a development – which is already in progress in Europe – both Israel and Palestine might become uninteresting as polities in the traditional sense – and so the state of Israel will be "wiped out". It sounds almost as Martin Buber's and Moses Mendelsohn's thoughts about the Jews as a moral salt in the world community or Asher Ginsburg's (Ahad Ha'am) cultural Zionism. Maybe it is utopian. For political Zionism it is, of course, unthinkable. But as a challenge for confirmed nationalists and étatists on both sides, it might possibly provoke new thinking face to face with seemingly hopelessly locked positions.

Jan Henningsson
Translated by Kristina Lundqvist

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[1] *Among the believers*, 1981:225. Here is a Malaysian Muslim comparing himself to his Chinese neighbours, but it could as well have been an Arab criticising Americans.

"Your freedom ends where the freedom of the other begins."

Palestinian Christians stand over the chasm dividing the Arab Muslim and the Western worlds, dividing Islam and Christianity. We can help act as a bridge where and when one is needed, says Bishop Munib Younan of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land in a statement. In this time of crisis we must transform hostility into common values of mutual respect.

These weeks the world has shown how polarized it can be in the controversy over cartoons of the prophet Mohammed, in which freedom of speech and religious sensitivity have been cast as mutually exclusive. We condemn the defamation of all religious symbols, prophets and Holy Writings, because it only provokes offense and builds walls of hatred between East and West. We also condemn all violent acts that threaten others as intolerable and unacceptable. We urge all to re-assess their attitudes and actions, and to ask themselves how we can transform this global volatile hostility into a worldwide willingness to seek common values of mutual respect and care for our neighbor.

This crisis illustrates how vital it is that we also learn to understand one another. Europe is becoming increasingly secular and less religious. Recent polls show that less than a quarter of Europeans still believe religious values are very important. In the Middle East, religion is still at the heart of identity and values for both secular and religious people. The European world needs to understand and be sensitive to this reality, just as the Muslim world needs to learn how to live in a global, pluralistic world, while remaining true to religious values and sensitivities. Globalization should not promote mono-culture but blessed pluralism.

Arab Palestinian Christians and Muslims have learned many ways to live as neighbors. During the fast of Ramadan, many Christians here will refrain from eating or drinking during the day in public, not because there is a law against it, but out of respect and care for Muslims. Similarly, during our cross processions on the Via Dolorosa, Muslims will show respect and even help us when they can, even though they don't believe in the theology of the cross. These small acts of respect are the seeds of a strong and resilient relationship of mutual understanding and respect. Arab Palestinian Christians stand over the chasm dividing the Arab Muslim and the Western worlds, dividing Islam and Christianity. We can help act as a bridge where and when one is needed. Our long history of peaceful co-existence has taught us how to deal with our neighbors as human beings with dignity and worth.

If we fail to learn to understand one another, we may fulfill the forecasts of those calling this a "clash of civilizations". We stand at a crucial juncture in the Middle East, Europe and the West, and these times call for thoughtful prayer and action. This is not the time to further inflame an already volatile context by attempting to prove a point that individuals should have unlimited freedom to offend without regard to the common good. Freedom is enfolded in responsibility, and it is time we built a community that is more concerned with the care of its people than with short-term individual victories. People certainly have a right to protest peacefully, yet we should remember the wisdom of the Muslim Caliph Omar Ibn Khatab: "Your freedom ends where the freedom of the other begins."

If people of faith and living conscience do not stand up and call our religions and our people back to the common values and commitments of love, justice, peace, mutual respect – even forgiveness - who will?

Bishop Munib Younan

Peru: Truth, violence and reconciliation

An estimated 70 000 persons have been victims of the political violence in Peru between 1980 and 2000. Still, many people claim "they had no idea" what was going on.

In December 2000 a Truth Commission was established to investigate the human rights violations committed.

In its report the Commission concludes that the underlying reason for the violence is racism that is part of Peruvian society. Human rights organisations put pressure on the government to implement the recommendations of the Commission.

Behind a great mural in the district of Jesús María, illustrating the universal declaration of human rights, hides the office of Aprodeh, one of the many prominent Peruvian human rights organizations. Within the walls of the building a number of persons are carrying out a job that would be central to the duties of any democratic government, but in this case hardly makes it to the political agenda. One of those struggling behind the mural is Gloria Cano, human rights lawyer and in charge of the organization's legal sector. Aprodeh carries nine central cases related to the work of the Peruvian Truth Commission (also called CVR – Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación), among them the well known case of "grupo Colina", one of the operating death squads suspected to have acted under high military command.

Twelve of Gloria's seventeen years as a lawyer have been dedicated to the organization and its work. But she is not alone. Within the same walls many others work with related issues. Raúl Rosasgo, also a lawyer, works with the reparations to victims of the political violence during the eighties and nineties. Behind another set of walls in another part of Lima, the Institute of Legal Defense carries out a broad spectrum of activities, including work with the recommendations of the Truth Commission through TV and radio series', the publication of a magazine and through a pilot project in Huancavelica. Behind yet another wall in yet another district, Tarea Association of Educational Publications is working with the reformation of the education system and the curriculum – also integral to the recommendations of the CVR.

So we could go on, for what appears to be infinity, naming NGOs, social movements, academic networks, individuals and not least families and victims' organizations involved in the work that has followed the final report of the Commission. This is an attempt to look into the post-commission phase of Peru's transition from political violence and authoritarian rule to democracy and a reconciled society. To do this there must first be a short look back at the violence and political circumstances that led to the creation of the Commission.

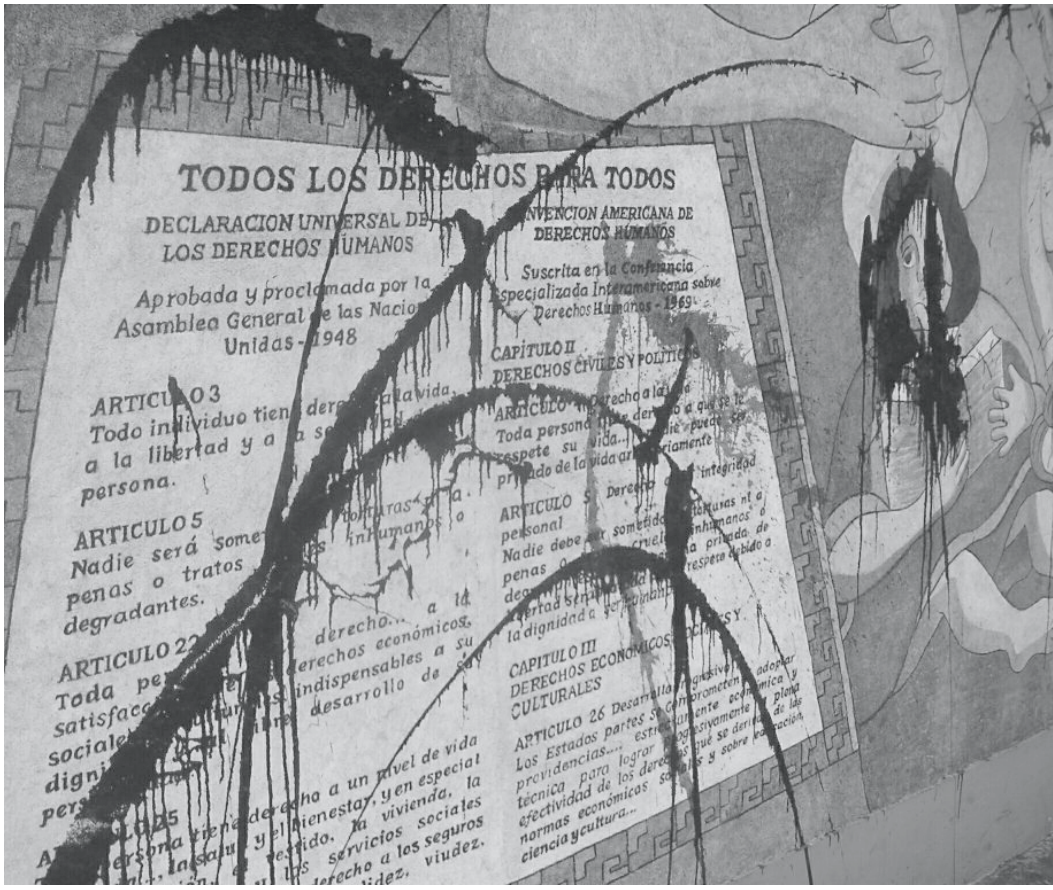
Blindfolded military

The background to the political violence in the eighties and nineties is the armed rebellion by Sendero Luminoso (the Shining Path) initiated in 1980, the very same year that fair and equal elections were first held in the country after years of shifting military governments. The rebellion was not similar to the traditional Latin American leftist guerrilla movements. One difference is that they also targeted the organized left – or any part of organized society at large – in the areas where they operated.

The military and the police that met this uprising were blindfolded. They did not know their enemy, and the idea was that it was a struggle against international communism as part of a global agenda. The design of the anti-subversive methods was in the hands of military officials. This resulted in escalated political violence in which the civilians became the primary target of the Shining Path, which saw them as part of the bourgeoisie society, and the military, who many times mistook them for Shining Path integrants. Some additional actors were involved, including the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) and various armed groups of self defence (armed by the state to fight the Shining Path, but their weapons came to be more

part of inter-communitarian disputes than fighting the terrorists).

Throughout the eighties and some years into the nineties Peru continued to be an electorate democracy in spite of the terror actions of the Shining Path. From 1980 to 1985 the country was ruled by president Fernando Belaúnde Terry, with support from his party Acción Popular. From 1985 to 1990, Alan Garcia and the political reformist party American Popular Revolutionary Alliance was in power. In 1990, however, as a result of the pressure of the civil war and the economic crisis, a political outsider was elected for president: Alberto Fujimori. The democratic institutions remained intact for some years, but in 1992 he carried out the so-called "self-coup", abolishing the Parliament and giving more power to the military high commanders. This marked the end of democratic rule for the rest of the twentieth century, but even so Fujimori remained largely popular – much thanks to his victory over both the economic crisis and the Shining Path (after their leader Guzman had been captured). Although most of the real fighting had ended in 1992, the following eight years of Fujimorismo was characterized by authoritarian rule, corruption and state agents abuses of citizens' legal rights - motivated by the war against terrorists - and have therefore been included in the period that was to be investigated by the CVR.



The declaration of human rights is stained and there is still a long way to go in Peru… Photo: Jesper Wiklund

First steps to Truth Commission

The fall of the Fujimori regime did not come as a result of a public outrage against the oppression of political and civil rights, but as a result of the exposure of a number of so-called "Vladi-videos" (named after the leader of the secret service, Vladimiro Montesinos). They revealed the corruption of a number of high-ranking military officials, politicians and media figures. This eventually led to the escape of Fujimori to Japan, and Congress offered the presidency to Valentin Paniagua from Acción Popular. It was during his interim presidency that, after pressure from well-organized civil society actors, the first steps towards the formation of a Truth Commission were taken. Alejandro Toledo, who won the elections in 2001, added the word Reconciliation to the Commission, thus altering its name to Commisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación.

The Commission was to analyze the political, social and cultural conditions that lead to the political violence, to contribute to the clarification of crimes and violations of human rights carried out by terrorist organizations or state agents, to try to identify those responsible for the acts and to locate the whereabouts of the victims. The Commission was also to make suggestions for reparations to the victims and their families, to recommend institutional, legal, educational and other reforms to prevent the violence from being repeated and to establish mechanisms to ensure the accomplishment of the recommendations.

The types of crimes and violations of human rights included in the mandate were: murder, kidnapping, forced disappearances, torture, violations of collective rights of Andine and other native communities in the country, and other severe violations of the rights of persons. Any of these crimes carried out between 1980 and 2000 by the actors in the conflict were to be reported. The Commission did not have any jurisdictional rights but investigated 73 cases in detail, out of which 43 have been presented to the National Prosecutors office. The Commission was funded up to 50 percent by the state and the rest came from international cooperation.

In 2003, only two years after its

formation, the Commission presented its final report. The results were discouraging. It concluded that the underlying reason for the violence was the racism that has been part of Peruvian society since the days of the conquistadors. There were five features that characterized the victims. First of all there was a direct relation between poverty, exclusion and the risk of being a victim to the violence. The great majority of the victims lived in the poorest of the Peruvian departments, 85 percent of the total number of victims came from the six departments of Ayacucho, Huancavelica, Junín, Huánuco, Apurímac and San Martín. Ayacucho alone answered for 40 percent of the victims. 79 percent of the victims lived in the countryside.

75 percent of the killed did not have Spanish as a native language; at the national level 85 percent have Spanish as mother tongue. Finally, there was an educational dimension that characterized those most gravely affected by the violence. 68 percent of the victims lacked secondary school education, whereas the national average is 40 percent. These are the findings that led the Commission to draw the conclusion that there is a fundamental injustice in the country, a gruesome structural violence that excludes large groups of the population from their political, social and civil rights. This was the reason that the Shining Path could reach such dimensions of terror. The state had the capacity to act with so much violence that the number of dead could reach the horrifying figure of 69 280 persons, and yet many would say: "We had no idea this was going on".

There is a gruesome structural violence that excludes large groups of the population from their political, social and civil rights.

Prevention of future conflict

As a result of their findings the commissioners made recommendations in several areas, aiming at the prevention of future conflict and reconciliation between citizens and between society and state. There are four areas of recommendations. The first is the institutional reforms necessary. These include to ensure state presence also in the remote areas of the country, to ensure civil and politically responsible command of the army and police forces, to reform the legal system so that it can guarantee the civil rights of all citizens, and lastly to reform the education system in order to promote democratic values.

The second issue treats the matter of reparations of the victims and their families. It consists of six areas: symbolic reparation, reparation of health with a focus on mental health, reparation in order to offer access to education, restitution of civil rights like holding a birth certificate, financial reparations including housing projects, and finally, collective reparations related to destroyed institutions and infrastructure. The third is a national plan for the over 4 000 clandestine graveyards produced by the conflict. The fourth consists of mechanisms designed to ensure the implementation of the previous recommendations.

Apart from these recommendations is the naming of chief designers of the violent counter-surgery methods deployed by state agents and the documentation of 47 cases that the CVR have handed over to the legal system. 22 of these are currently in court trial, while the rest are still under the prosecutor's investigation.

The definition of reconciliation chosen by the CVR is a literary definition related to an interpersonal level, a societal level and between state and society. Important to notice is that the Commission has consistently put reconciliation as following truth and justice in its discourse. Reconciliation is to come as a result of first truth and then justice in its widest sense. This, together with the fact that two of the candidates in the presidential elections of 2006 are actually criticized in the final report, indicates some of the problems that the Commission has faced in presenting its suggestions. It has suddenly become a hot potato that most politicians prefer to keep off the political agenda. Most have recognized the great work of the Commission, but at the same time they distance themselves from the critique that the report might have been directed towards their political wing. Since the release of the report, silence has swept over the Limeñan political landscape, turning any intent to debate the issues of the recommendations with political representatives into a monologue. This has limited public knowledge of the report and its recommendations.

Reconciliation is to come as a result of first truth and then justice in its widest sense.

There is also a general fear among

many of high ranks within the military that their part in the anti-subversive strategies will render them a court trial. To avoid this, military trials are currently being held for those accused of human rights violations. This is probably against the Peruvian constitution, which states that military courts should only deal with internal matters, and human rights violations can hardly be said to be an internal matter. Several human rights organizations have also denounced these courts.

Regarding the reparations some have been done; the military combatants had already received different kinds of reparations before the creation of the CVR. A plan regarding the compensation of the victims has been passed by Congress with only a few, but central, changes to the recommendations of the CVR. First, no member of the Shining Path or MRTA will be considered a victim and will not receive any reparations, this meaning that they and their families are being left outside the formal recognition of the state. Second, there is no mentioning of monetary reparation of the victims, even though the CVR found that this was a necessary part of the reparations.

Provoking debate

In spite of these negative features many things have been achieved since the presentation of the report and also through the mere existence of the Commission. Although limited in reach, the report has been read, especially among what is perceived as a key target group – young academics. It has also provoked some debate, and even though unwillingly, most serious politicians must form an opinion regarding the recommendations. The report, and the archive that the Commission has left as a monument of its investigations, exist and function as a reference point in the political debate and for civil society actors to pressure political actors.

Also, through the work of the Commission in localizing all of the victims produced by the conflict, the families and victims organizations have gained strength and grown a great deal in numbers. The ones most affected by the violence find themselves better organized and better documented than before the work of the Commission. At the same time, on the local level reparation and reconciliation may advance a bit faster than at the national. In Huancavelica the regional president has made the national plan for reparations a central document in relation to the general development plan of the province.

A memorial park has been inaugurated in Lima only a few months ago, giving some sort of symbolic reparation to the victims. Many municipalities work to formally register all those left without documents after the downfall of public administration during the conflict. Receiving these documents means renewing access to public services and citizen rights - in effect a confirmation of existence in the eyes of the authorities.

Behind the mural in Jesús María, Gloria Cano and Rafael Rosasgo continue the struggle to realize the great plan for reconciliation and the justice needed to get there. The mural illustrates the universal human rights - carrying a promise of a brighter future. But it is stained with strokes of black paint, a reminder that the military is still a political actor and that human rights are far from mainstreamed in Peruvian politics. This is even less so when it comes to the marginalized citizens inhabiting the poorest zones of the mountains, the jungle or the urban areas of settlements stretching out north and south of Lima following the Pan American Highway through the desert landscape.

Jesper Wiklund

Background to the conflict in Peru

In 1980, Sendero Luminoso (the Shining Path) launched their military campaign against the democratically elected government of Peru. The fighting was mainly concentrated to in the poor rural areas of the Peruvian Andes but eventually moved closer to the capital, Lima. In 1992, President Alberto Fujimori realized his renowned "self coup", abolishing the Parliament and the Supreme Court and replacing the old constitution with a new one. In the same year the government achieved a major tactical victory in capturing the head of the Sendero Luminoso, Abimael Guzman. After this the government soon won the war, although elements connected to Sendero still operate in distant areas of the country.

Following the self coup and motivated by the threat of Sendero, Fujimori continued to be in power for eight years, backed by the chief of national intelligence, Vladimiro Montesionos. During their rule corruption and human rights violations became part of political reality. After the release of videos showing Montesionos bribing members of the Parliament, Fujimori fled to Japan, where he held citizenship. He has been in custody in Chile since November 2005, while the government of Peru is negotiating extradition.

The interim president, Valentin Paniagua, created a Truth Commission. Following the presidential elections in 2001, the winner, Alejandro Toledo, altered its name to Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It finished its work in 2003 with the presentation of a final report including an analysis of the root causes of the conflict and the actors, and recommendations to promote reconciliation and prevent the return of armed violent struggle in the future.

Civil society actors playing central role

An overview of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions in Latin America

After the shift in a number of countries in Latin America from military rules to democracies, a need arose to investigate and document the atrocities and violations committed. The concept of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRC) was first born on the continent, and has since then had several followers over the world. A survey shows many differences in the approaches of the TRCs, but also points to the civil society as an actor of common importance in all countries.

During the last two decades most Latin American countries have gone from authoritarian rule or a high level of political violence, to a society of democratic regimes with a relatively low level of armed conflicts. These transitions have not come out of the blue. The matter of how to deal with the past and how to approach the future has been a frequently discussed, often also uncomfortable, issue in the majority of these countries. Ways to treat the past have of course varied, depending on factors such as the kind of authoritarian rule the society evolved from, the igniting event that started the transition and the character of the civil regime that followed.

A solution that has become more and more common in relation to these transitions is the formation of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRC), either sanctioned by the national government, the United Nations or carried out by civil society actors. Despite the differences, a comparison between some of the most well documented cases is of interest, not only as an example of different ways to approach the difficulties of transition but also to relate the impact they might have had on the transition process.

Civil society actors have played a central role as very influential actors when it comes to documenting atrocities committed.

Although there might be many similarities between the different cases, the differences are still greater. If we look first at the event that started the transition in Argentina, it can be said to have been the loss of the Falkland war, while in Brazil and Uruguay the military exercised substantial control over the process. Also in Chile the military remained in a position of political influence long after civilian takeover of power. In all these cases national civil society has played an important role in documenting government abuses in an initial phase, and in producing and demanding trials for those guilty of human rights violations.

In *Argentina* there was a government-initiated Commission on missing persons. This completed a report documenting the years of state-sponsored political violence, a report that came to be one of the best selling publications in the country's history. The Commission also handed its material over to the state prosecutor's office after completing the report. But military pressure, three intended coups, made later civilian government pass legislation pardoning many of those in charge. Lack of access to military archives also left the exact whereabouts of the remains of the missing persons unknown.

In *Brazil* no government initiative was taken to form a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Instead, civil society actors took the lead. A group headed by the church secretly photocopied thousands of documents from military archives and out of these produced a report, "Brazil – nunca maís", revealing the abuses committed by the junta. The civilian government did not follow up on this report to file charges against the perpetrators, nor did it endorse the report.

In *Uruguay* there was a Commission

but with a very limited mandate. Instead, initiative was taken through the formation of a national chapter of the Peace and Justice Service. They produced a report on the atrocities committed during military rule, leading to heavier accounts of its abuses than the government-sponsored Commission. Civil society movements in Uruguay also managed to achieve a national referendum to appeal against the government-imposed amnesty. The campaign was successful in terms of public attention and debate, but a failure in that the vote was lost and the amnesty remained in effect.

In *Chile* there was a combination of these different experiences. During military rule human rights organizations systematically reported and documented violations. When the civilian government was installed in 1990, the president created a TRC that investigated disappearances, kidnappings and torture leading to death. The report was released to the public, but a number of assassinations of right wing politicians thwarted the attention away from its findings. However, when Pinochet was asked to be extradited by a Spanish judge, this claim was based extensively on the documentation done by the human rights organisations during the military years.

In *Guatemala* a Commission was founded through an agreement between the government and the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity. The head of the Commission was appointed by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. It had no right to name perpetrators and only received limited cooperation from the armed forces. More help came from a parallel Commission initiated by the church, taking up testimonies from victims and naming perpetrators. Information also came from the U.S. that agreed on releasing what they had in their archives. Not unlike Peru, the Commission found that a root cause of the conflict was racism and structural injustice. A difference from the Peruvian experience was, however, the fact that government abuses corresponded to 93 percent of the cases reported by the Commission. The Guatemalan government commented on the report claiming that most of its recommendations had already been met through the signing of the peace accord.



Elections are part of the solution, but it is important that they are free and fair from the first day of campaigning throughout the actual election day. Photo from El Salvador: Tore Samuelsson/LPI

In *El Salvador* the formation of a Truth Commission was included in the peace accord. It was administrated by the UN and funded by its member states. The report named over forty persons, including the Minister of Defense, for their role in the war and also concluded that the government had been responsible for 95 percent of the atrocities. The president claimed that the report failed to meet the Salvadoran people's "yearn for reconciliation", and five days after the report was released, an amnesty law was passed to prevent prosecution of those named by the Commission.

Following this very short overview of the different approaches to the challenges of political transitions, there are a number of things that can be said in regard to the work of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions. First, the role of civil society actors cannot be underestimated. In virtually all cases, civil society actors have played a central role, if not as the de-facto agents for carrying out the investigations, then at least as very influential actors when it comes to documenting atrocities committed and later to lobby for the creation of a government-backed Commission.

Civil society actors can also play an important function as allies with actors at the international level, especially within the UN family. Many times national amnesty laws have been found incompatible with international treaties signed by the respective governments. This gives individuals the possibility to appeal for justice at a higher level than the national courts.

A final, and perhaps more negative, conclusion that can be drawn from these different experiences is that the struggle against impunity and the pursuit for truth and justice seldom ends with the production of a final report. Even though the mandate might have been ever so broad, it is of crucial importance that the fruitful cooperation between international and local civil society actors continues in order to maintain the questions of truth *and* reconciliation on the political agenda.

Jesper Wiklund

Teaching children to handle conflicts

Conflicts are part of normal human life, but much suffering can be avoided if children are taught at an early age how to handle and resolve them without using violence. Peace education for children has been practised for a long time, yet the general development of the discipline has been fairly slow. A holistic approach, a continuous process and an early start in children's lives are some of the keys to equip them with tools to reduce violence.

Violence in its various forms at all levels of society is a severe problem. For almost five decades peace education has been committed to addressing and responding to this major problem in the world. Peace education is now included in the UN policy, and UNESCO and other organisations have also taken up the challenge to do research and provide training for the purpose of developing better resources in the practise of peace education.

Today's world is crying out for peace, since violence is increasing. The majority of people desire and argue for a better world where children can play in the streets, have fun and enjoy peaceful environments. We dream of children whose parents value them as persons and contribute positively to their healthy development. We want to see children who live in a community where peace is a *modus vivendi* opposite to violence. We hope for a new generation of children whose lives are productive, whose relationships are based on respect, and whose hearts are filled with a spirit of peace. We want children to know who they are, where they have come from and who their Creator is, in order to better understand how precious their lives and the lives of everyone around them are.

Peace education can be described as the transmission of knowledge and development of skills needed to achieve and maintain peace. It is important to place peace education within a larger framework of international education with its sub-fields of multicultural studies, development education, civic education and citizenship studies, environmental education, and human rights education. Each of these sub-fields has its specific practices, perspectives, assumptions and goals, which are related to the peace education movement.

Effective peace education should aim at meeting the many needs of children, and in this article a holistic approach will hence be advocated that employs multi-disciplinary insights and methods. Peacemaking is the continuous task of humanity, a dynamic process and not a static state, which consequently requires a continually renewed process of education.[1] Peace education should also strive to develop the critical and reflective capacities of children and to apply knowledge in order to control, reduce and eliminate as many forms of violence as possible.

Research on peace education

There is what is called 'negative peace' and 'positive peace'. Negative peace refers to practices to limit and prevent war and collective violence. This includes disarmament, the international court system, conflict resolution, school security, and peacekeeping forces. There is also 'positive peace' that is more concerned with establishing enduring human rights values, which are necessary preconditions for peace.

Another relevant notion concerns the fact that aspiration for peace implies prevention and elimination of violence at both micro and macro levels. How then can conflict and violence be defined and distinguished? Conflict is usually understood as a clash, opposition and lack of agreement. Violence, on the other hand, refers to force and aggression[2] and is always destructive in nature[3]. In contrast, conflicts should be seen as normal and natural aspects of our lives, and can even foster development if they are resolved in a fair and peaceful way. They should hence not be judged as inherently evil. Acquiring competence and skills for conflict management is therefore crucial in all educational interventions for peace.

Peace education is directly linked to human needs and two pivotal thinkers in this field should be mentioned in this context: Abraham Maslow, an American psychologist, and Johan Galtung, a Norwegian sociologist and perhaps the most famous peace and conflict researcher today. Maslow formulated a basic human needs theory where he identified a hierarchy of needs, which includes physiological needs (hunger and thirst), safety and security needs and needs for love and belonging.[4] Maslow's research on human needs is very helpful when trying to understand how to alleviate

fear, frustration and the pain of children, an ambition which in itself comprises an overarching motivation for peace.

Galtung defines violence as deprivation of basic human needs, which in their turn include the needs of survival, well-being, freedom, identity and ecological balance. Violence can, according to Galtung, then be divided into direct forms, such as assault or war, and indirect or structural forms, like political, economic, social, or cultural repression and exploitation.[5] Galtung's analysis is important for understanding various types of violence and their root causes that affect children, particularly those children living in countries at war or in violent societies.

Regarding theories particularly dealing with peace education, there is a limited amount of research done so far, due to the relative lack of interest in the field, as well as a certain degree of resistance from governments whose policies do not prioritise peace building.[6] Åke Bjerstedt, a Swedish professor in education, dissects the term 'education for peace' by identifying four interacting 'goal areas': preparedness for non-violence, egalitarian attitudes, readiness to search for alternatives and world citizen responsibility. Each of these four areas is in its turn subdivided by three psychological aspects: cognitive components and skills, value perspectives and preparedness for action.[7] Although somewhat dated (1995), this example of systematisation is still valid and useful for analysing curricula of peace education.

Holistic understanding of children

As we have already stated, projects with the objective to promote a culture of peace through peace education for children are greatly needed worldwide. However, the general development of peace education has been fairly slow, which is confirmed by the experts and by the very limited number of projects implemented in relation to the dimension of the need. In a study done in the 1990's it was shown that the term 'peace education' was regarded as problematic and that researchers and educators tended to avoid it[8].

The term 'peace education for children', as it is understood and advocated in this article, embodies a holistic understanding of children, their needs and their environment. This emphasis was not that pronounced by the interventions included in the study mentioned above, where only facets of the holistic thinking behind peace education were represented. Galtung insightfully describes the problem with the complexity of peace education: "The intellectual problem with peace studies is not that it is too soft, but difficult, hard to comprehend in its extension"[9]. Indeed, an appropriate strategy for peace is, in theory, as multifaceted as are human nature and human interactions.

Peacemaking is the continuous task of humanity, a dynamic process and not a static state.

Spiritual needs of children

There are other dimensions and levels than the psychosocial ones that need to be taken into account when dealing with holistic promotion of constructive attitudes. Danesh & Danesh point out that "human violence is an indicator of the spiritual as well as biological and psychosocial conditions of the individual and the society alike."[10] If this description is correct, then one may suggest that adding the spiritual aspect of humanity gives a fuller and deeper understanding of human needs and is necessary for truly holistic interventions against violence.

The stance held here is that inclusion of the spiritual dimension of the child provides a deeper understanding and hence can produce long-term results more effectively. Identity and sense of belonging are elements with spiritual bearing that should be taken seriously and be given the proper attention for the development of the child.

Most religious views may agree up to this point. However, one may go one step further, suggesting that the Christian faith, which is founded on the forgiveness and reconciliation between God and humanity, is uniquely capable to equip people practising reconciliation in daily life. Indeed, a recent study by Nancy Peddle, a researcher at Prevent Child Abuse America, shows that among adult and adolescent victims of violence from various parts of the world, personal acts of forgiveness greatly facilitated recovery and restoration. Moreover, this inclination to forgive was more frequent among subjects with background value systems upholding forgiveness as a fundamental virtue.[11] Consequently, educational peace interventions for children will have a great therapeutic advantage when including this element in their strategy.[12]

It is also argued here that the spiritual element should be included as a key for deeper understanding of causes underlying violence, and thereby help children to break violent trends as well as to give a sense of, and ground for, hope. A child without hope wants to die. Introduction to the spiritual dimension can help gaining a deeper understanding of his or her own identity, value and purpose in life fuelling hope for the future. Peace educational interventions, where open communication, cooperation, sensitivity and a spiritual dimension of love and forgiveness become the norm, will naturally result in children beginning

to bring these ideas out of the classroom and influencing other people. In conclusion, peace education can stimulate huge and positive changes in a child, if the approach interacts with all levels of his/her humanity.

A child without hope wants to die.

Early childhood interventions

The rationale for focussing on children from three years of age is twofold: They are the most vulnerable category in areas of conflict and at the same time the most receptive for positive peace-oriented stimulation. Flannery agrees: "We should start with the very young... The sooner we create caring attachments for the country's children and teach them that rights carry with them responsibilities towards others, the more quickly will societal violence subside".[13] This idea is in accordance with Aline Stomfay-Stitz, who states: "Early childhood educators have generally recognized that the critical ages of children between the ages of two and three are years where early influences of care giving, nurturance, and schooling have the potential to affect their attitudes toward life and especially their relationships with others. Those responsible for the care of children in these early years 'have to invest a great deal of attention into monitoring both the child and the environment, to make sure that the latter is not threatening'".[14]

Moreover, children at a pre-school age are already able to absorb peace education intervention, which is in accordance with Helen Penn, who argues that "children, even young children, are capable of reasoning and thinking logically within the limits of their knowledge and experience"[15]. This early capacity to receive positive stimuli prompts inclusion of children for participation in peace education projects that present and implement constructive peace values from a holistic perspective.

A core purpose of peace education is to engender the learning that leads to both a commitment to building peace and the capacities to do so. Teaching ways to constructively deal with conflict is an important focus in peace education, as is development of citizenship skills and moral values. Children whose needs are met at all levels are more prone to develop peaceful behaviours. Knowledge will make a child intelligent, food will make a child healthy, love will make a child secure and religious values will give a child a greater sense of purpose and help to better understand both the happy and painful realities the child experiences.

A child that undergoes peace education is thus enabled to act more responsibly and to better understand himself/herself and respect others. These skills empower the child to deal with conflict constructively so that violence does not develop.

Long-term investment

The fact that peace education is an ongoing process and does not happen in isolation has to be clear for teachers and facilitators. Peace education is not simply a matter of quick fixes, but rather a long-term investment in children. Hence, peace education requires planning for a long-lasting intervention, of course combined with short-term planning adjusting for changing conditions. In addition, indicators need to be determined for continuous evaluation of children's progress and good use of resources.

The setting for peace education should be a warm and affirming support system for both the children and the adults. The classroom is, apart from the family, the most accessible place to begin building a caring community. The church is also a resource, provided that it is interested in improving the lives of the children in the community; here peace education has an informal character.

Experiential programs are essential for peace education. Experiential activities provide powerful opportunities to make knowledge and information more real and easy for the children to put into practise. The children are given new ways to explore conflict and other issues as well as to develop solutions. Children are encouraged to model and operationalise the acquired knowledge into real life situations. Participants have fun while strengthening skills and learning alternative approaches and techniques.

Cooperation is another necessary element in successful peace education. It is based on the contributions of everyone involved and on mutually acceptable decisions and solutions. Children learn these processes through cooperative games and activities and through learning exercises, which help them work together toward a common goal. This approach creates a sense of community, co-responsibility and togetherness.

Communication is obviously another important skill, and the lack of communication increases the risk of misinterpretations, presumptions and fears. In the classroom, the children can instead develop a sense of trust and sharing through the skills of observation and expression of feelings and fears. This should be done in a respectful manner, with attentiveness and active listening. Everyone is important and unique in the group.

Affirmation, mutual respect, appreciation, and acceptance of others and their points of view are necessary attitudes stimulated in peace education. Participants learn all of this through affirmation activities, which focus on recognizing and accepting positive qualities and abilities in themselves and others. The children should be encouraged to examine and learn how to deal with bullying, derogatory labelling, stereotypes, and other forms of attacks on their self-esteem and

dignity. The aspect of affirmation is intimately linked with identity and sense of value.

People and media abusing children

Children with deeper wounds and more complex problems need more specialised help, which is met by inner healing and counselling therapies. The child is expected to be supported by the teaching or facilitating group, other children and, if possible, by his or her parents. Forgiveness and reconciliation are integral in this part of the healing process towards freedom to enjoy life. Peace education projects should also take into account children whose parents were members of a guerrilla group. Children whose parents are robbers and prostitutes will have questions and behaviours, which teachers and peace educators must know how to handle and transform realities into manageable experiences. The child who was sexually abused or the child who is beaten at home has burning issues that also need to be solved. What should one do with a child that knows his/her rights but is not respected? Child soldiers and street children have special needs and constitute a great challenge for society. What can peace education programmes offer these children? Peace education should aim for identifying and documenting the combination of needs of the individual child in order to meet these crucial needs.

Although other people in their vicinity do not expose most children to violence, the media often constitute a negative influence, an indirect abuse by portraying violence and promoting destructive values and attitudes. In general, most people are fascinated by the media and spend a good amount of time watching entertainment shows, sometimes also those portraying violence. We can draw the conclusion that our societies have an ambivalent and contradictory attitude toward violence. On the one hand, society rejects and dreads violence and invests enormous resources in order to reduce it, and on the other hand the same society is extremely fascinated by violence.

As a matter of fact, there are already proven cases where the media have been the direct cause of children's violent behaviours. Chilean children killed themselves after having watched a Japanese TV programme, and a Brazilian child set fire to his brother's body after having watched a TV show. These are unfortunately not unique examples. It is generally known that children have less filters to judge clearly what is real or not on TV and do not have the capacity for a critical distance from TV programmes and other media. Thus, it is highly relevant to include the development of critical skills and training in educational peace interventions to help children better understand broadcasting in different forms, particularly those that portray real or acted violence.

The most effective approach to curb violence is always its prevention and peace education is a vehicle that can effectively be used to achieve it. Despite the complexity inherent in the terminology and theoretical discussion on peace education, a thorough theoretical framework expressed in a holistic and long-term intervention is required for successful peace education projects.

Sandra Pineda

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Fragile peace in Republic of Congo

The three years that have passed since the ceasefire agreement was signed in the Republic of Congo have brought both hope and doubts. With elections approaching in 2007, elements in politics and society begin to stir, causing great uncertainty of what will be the next step, in the corridors of power and in the towns and villages. The fragile peace is threatened by changing power balance and the unknown outcome of the interaction by political leaders.

An armed conflict, almost completely forgotten by the western media, has taken place in the Republic of Congo. It opposed the governmental forces to the Ninjas led by the mystical "Pasteur" Ntoumi, who is also the leader of the *Conseil National de Résistance* (CNR), created by the military commanders and political leaders of the 1998-1999 civil resistance against the imposition of state authority in southern Congo. The coming pre-electoral year might be crucial for peace and stability in Congo. This article throws light on three interconnected issues of great importance for the future of the country: the situation in the Pool, the renovation of the *Parti Congolais du Travail* and the consequences of the return to Brazzaville of former exile leader Bernard Kolelas.

The Pool and the security issues

A ceasefire agreement was signed in March 2003 between the Congolese Government and Ntoumi's troops. It aroused a great deal of hope amongst the population in the country, but observers were doubtful. The treaty, which followed a threat by the European Union to cancel a substantive promise if the peace agreement had not been signed by the end of March 2003, leaves many unanswered questions.

Since the signing of the agreement, the Ninjas, initially supporting the former Prime Minister and Mayor of Brazzaville, Bernard Kolelas, offloaded from its units that refused to swear allegiance to Ntoumi, have never really stopped guerrilla warfare in the Pool region. Hundreds of ninjas have left the forest for Brazzaville, where they have allegedly been disarmed and demobilized. However, a principle obstacle is the central question of the surrender of the CNR President in the Congolese capital, a large compromise that had been seen at the time as a concrete sign of the return to peace in the Pool region.

In April 2005, an attack by former ninjas against a United Nations humanitarian convoy in the district of Mindouli in the Pool region was a signal of the persistence of insecurity in the region, which has moreover faced a humanitarian situation since the war started in 1997. But, at the same time, this event permitted a return to the question of disarmament and the reintegration of combatants.[1]

The President of the CNR, Pasteur Ntoumi, began a process of sensitization in specific localities in the Pool region to demobilize his ninjas. For its part, the Government made an effort to withdraw public force agents, such as soldiers, police, and military police forces in rural areas, which were supposed to control the routes to the Pool region. These actions between the months of May and July 2005 permitted the reestablishment of freedom of movement for people and goods in the region, while humanitarian organizations could also move without fear for their security. During the same period, the High Commission for the Reintegration of Ex-Combatants created an urgent programme for Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR), which permitted the demobilization of around 450 former ninjas in Brazzaville and gathered close to 500 small arms. The demobilized former combatants benefited from job training and financial support from this project.

However, questions regarding the effective collection of arms arose because the process was not completely regulated. Although agreed upon by the CNR and the Government, the actions of the DDR Programme were, indeed, not jointly managed. Yet, this did not stop the Congo from preparing to launch a national programme of DDR with the support of the international community.

Things became more complicated and blurred during the month of November 2005, as units of the Congolese army attacked, with heavy weapons, a small number of Ninjas who

had taken up position in and around the residence renovated by the Government in anticipation of Ntoumi's return to Brazzaville, and which is located in the southern neighbourhood of Bacongo. This attack took place after repeated incidents at the Total market, the latest in date leading to the death of a couple of civilians as well as five militaries and policemen in an armed clash.

Although it seemed to be necessary to deal with the serious security issue due to the presence of armed Ninjas in town, the demonstration of force by the army faced criticisms. Firstly, because it created a widespread feeling of fear among the population, with tens of thousands of people spontaneously leaving their homes, taking whatever they had with them on their heads. It was a harsh reminder of the violence that occurred both during the 1993-94 and 1997-98 armed conflicts.

Secondly, because the attack started while a high-level mediation was going on between the Government and the Ninjas. It leaves the Government in a position of weakness in front of the military leadership, but most of all, shows the internal contradictions at the highest political level on how to put an end to this conflict. Finally, most of the Ninjas fled to the forest, with an immediate danger of destabilizing the security situation in the Pool, and eventually, of putting the peace process at risk. While it is too early to get a clear picture concerning the peace process, as it contains more complicated elements of internal politics, the security situation has deteriorated since then, leading to the withdrawal of most humanitarian agencies from the Pool.



LPI's programme officer, Jérôme Gouzou being interviewed by Radio Congo. Photo: Tore Samuelsson/LPI

The renovation process

As stated in an article published in New Routes some months ago[2], there is a very interesting phenomenon in today's Congolese political life: the renovation of the former single-party ruling, the *Parti Congolais du Travail* (PCT). Tensions between hard liners and renovators have always been at the origin of often-violent power shift in Congo: power at the party level, indeed, meant power at the country level. Although the period of a single-party ruling has been over since the beginning of the 1990's, the PCT is still, and by far, the most powerful party in the country and the ruling one. In other words, controlling the party is still necessary to control the political power in Congo.

The actual, and sometimes violent, debate is officially about a renovation of the ideological line of the party. In 2005 it has placed in direct opposition those who believe that it should keep its socialist profile, and those who think that, as times are changing, the PCT should move towards a social-democratic line. What is at stake, however, is more profound and of great meaning for the fragile peace in the country. Since President Sassou officially took side in favour of a renovation, the conservators have crystallized around them all those who are disappointed by Sassou's regime. There still is, indeed, a strong bitterness among the barons of the regime, as well as among the former militias, who both won the war for Sassou, but who feel more and more excluded from the political power. They have the feeling that they have not been rewarded enough for their war efforts, and they have started to openly severely criticize the clan-like derive of Sassou's regime.

The issue of renovation is no longer a matter of ideology, but a political fight for power. Many observers have feared that this camp for the control of the PCT might thus as well be a repetition of history, and eventually lead to a violent shift of power.

In order to avoid this conflict taking uncontrollable dimensions, a mediation process was engaged, led by the Head of the Committee for the Follow-up of the Peace Agreement (*Comité de Suivi des Accords de Paix*), Marius Mouanbenga. It eventually led to the meeting of the PCT's Fifth Extraordinary Session of the Central

Committee in January 2006. President Sassou used all his influence to convince the different protagonists of the need to reach a consensus. This meeting might have helped decrease the internal tensions for a short while, mainly because the issue of renovation has been postponed up to the next Party Congress in April 2006. But the main bone of contention remains, as the divergence has not been dealt with. Since then, the debate has resumed and become more personal and targeted against President Sassou. According to the Conservatives, the renovation is Sassou's project, as he wants to weaken the PCT in order to create a new party before the parliamentary elections.

Hundreds of ninjas have left the forest for Brazzaville, where they have allegedly been disarmed and demobilized.

Kolelas' return

A new element may, however, totally change the deal in the Congolese political life. President Sassou allowed Bernard Kolelas, the charismatic leader of the Pool who was living in exile since 1998, to return to Brazzaville in November 2005 to bury his wife who had just passed away. Sassou annulled, without consulting the Parliament, the death sentence that he had himself promulgated against Kolelas, for the time of the mourning period. After official contacts had been taken between Sassou and Lissouba, the latter having sent an envoy to Brazzaville with a letter to President Sassou in August 2005, Kolelas' return sounded like the beginning of a true reconciliation between the main protagonists of the past conflicts, a reconciliation that the Congolese themselves consider, wrongly or rightly, as the key for true and sustainable peace in the country.

Many contacts were made between Kolelas and Sassou during, but mainly after the mourning period, which might lead to a political agreement that was almost unthinkable before[3]. This new alliance, which would also mean Kolelas' political comeback, is, however, far from being problem-free.

Although the two leaders seem to have reconciled, a strong opposition to Kolelas' sudden strategic change is not only growing within his party in Congo, the Mouvement Congolais pour la Démocratie et le Développement Integral (MCDDI), but also among the very influential Congolese Diaspora in France. Many understand how beneficial an alliance between the MCDDI and the PCT would be, but very few accept that Kolelas deals with the man whom they consider as being the main instigator of the war that has ravaged the Pool, which is the stronghold of the party.

What might happen is a complete reshaping of the political arena either on the basis of break-ups of traditional political parties into new ones, or on the division of the traditional political parties and the creation of a new major political pole. Kolelas will never join the PCT, all his political career being based on his militant anticommunism, but he knows that he, and his party, need an alliance in order to have a chance to win the coming Parliamentary elections.

Power at the party level, indeed, meant power at the country level.

However, most of the other leaders of the MCDDI will probably not follow him, as they have based their opposition, in Congo and internationally, on the fact that the current regime is responsible for crimes against humanity. Kolelas, without his historical party, does not carry much weight at national level, but he still seems to have kept his popularity intact in the Pool, which is of great interest for President Sassou if he is to create his own political party. In this light, the renovation of the PCT takes on a new dimension.

What preoccupies the Congolese politicians the most, as well as the civil society, is the coming Parliamentary elections in 2007. It is generally perceived that there is a climate of deficiency of political legitimacy, and of economic crisis despite all-time high oil prices, which do not seem to benefit the majority of the population. Secondary institutions such as the Social and Economic Council, the National Commission for Human Rights or the High Council on Freedom of Communication have difficulties functioning as they should. The political opposition demands the institution of an Independent Electoral Commission for the legislative elections in 2007 and the presidential elections in 2009, but nothing has been done so far. Taking into consideration the fact that every election has led to an armed confrontation since the 1990s and the end of single-party rule, the Republic of Congo faces a very important year for its peace and stability.

Jérôme Gouzou

[1] Since 2001 the Life & Peace Institute (LPI) has developed a Conflict Transformation Programme in the Republic of Congo. LPI Representative, Mr Runo Bergström, was a member of the convoy.
[2] New Routes No 2:2005, p 20 ff
[3] It is important to remember that Sassou and Kolelas had already built a political alliance against Lissouba, which broke when Kolelas decided to join Lissouba's regime. This broken alliance is partly responsible for the 1997-1998 armed conflict and for the continuation of the war in the Pool until today.

LPI in Sudan:

Supporting a vital process

The Life & Peace Institute (LPI) has a long-standing engagement in the peacebuilding efforts in Sudan. Since the peace agreement was signed, new possibilities and challenges have opened up. LPI sees its role as that of a facilitator, supporting and encouraging the churches in their mandate as instruments for peace. Johan Svensson, LPI's regional representative for the Horn of Africa, presents an outline of the situation today and some years ahead.

Since the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed in January last year, Sudan entered a new phase. A lot of problems have to be solved and a number of changes are expected to take place in the interim phase of six years. Elections will be held in the middle of the period, and at the end, the people in South Sudan will decide in a referendum whether they want a united Sudan or to have their own independent state. Many big issues are at stake, to say the least.

The Life & Peace Institute's Horn of Africa Programme (LPI/HAP) has closely followed the development in Sudan for a long time. Johan Svensson from Sweden has been the regional representative for the Horn of Africa and based in Nairobi for eleven years. He has visited Sudan many times and was one of the observers in the Wunlit conference in 1999, which managed to put an end to eight years of internal strife between the Nuer and Dinka tribes in the South.

- This is an extremely important period for Sudan, says Johan Svensson. From LPI/HAP we have a deep engagement, and it is encouraging to see that, so far, one step leads to another. There is certainly no stalemate.

LPI's work in the Horn of Africa was coordinated from Uppsala in Sweden up to 1999, when Johan Svensson took over the coordinating role, based in Nairobi, Kenya. The lion's share of LPI's work had focussed on Somalia, where, apart from other peacebuilding work, a civic education material had been launched. It was then suggested that the material would be adapted to Sudanese conditions.

- The material was used by the organisation Sudan's Women's Voice for Peace, by the churches and by civic social organisations, remembers Johan Svensson. This was the only material for civic education in 1999, so we were a bit ahead of our time.

An important step in the middle of the 1990's was taken when LPI, out of its Horn of Africa Programme, took the lead role in the formation of Sudan Focal Point-Europe (SFP-E). During the civil war in Ethiopia and Eritrea, the European Working Group on the Horn of Africa followed the situation in the region closely. When the war ended, and as the situation in Sudan deteriorated drastically, the group decided to shift its focus to supporting the churches in Sudan, and to change its name. Apart from LPI, the church development agencies in the Netherlands, Germany, Norway and Denmark took part in the work. In 1999 a second office, the Sudan Focal Point-Africa (SFP-A), was set up.

The role of SFP is to be an advocacy tool of the Sudan Ecumenical Forum (SEF), which was initiated in 1994 under the auspices of the World Council of Churches. It was established in response to the challenge from the churches in Sudan to the ecumenical partners "to get their act together" concerning their role in advocacy work in the north, and for the churches in Sudan to have a safe outlet for human rights and advocacy information.

Churches as peacebuilders

- An important stepping stone for LPI's support to the churches' activities for peace in Sudan came in 2003, when a church leaders' conference was held in Jinja, Uganda. The aim was to increase the awareness of the church mandate as an instrument for peacebuilding and civic education. They discussed their role towards the state and analyzed the concept of reconciliation, among other topics.

Johan Svensson points out that this was the first time out of its Horn of Africa Programme that LPI had a workshop of this kind with church leaders, bishops and executive committees from both the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) and the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC). A

We are stressing the importance of interfaith dialogue.

number of interesting resource persons contributed to the conference, for example Charles Villa-Vicencio, Executive Director at the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation in Cape Town, South Africa, David Gitari, retired Archbishop of the Anglican Church in Kenya, and Tarekegn Adebo, Research Coordinator in LPI Uppsala.

- All participants realized the potential in this effort, notes Johan Svensson.

It was important, however, not to let things come to a halt at this point, so a Training of Trainers workshop was held in Khartoum in March 2004. The participants, who represented SCC in five regions, planned a follow-up training, which was held six months later. The different groups reported from their work to fulfil the plans. Some had been able to implement their planned activities, like in Juba, El Obeid and Wau, while the group in Malakal had had problems because of the conflict and the division among churches in the region.

- We are further stressing the importance of interfaith dialogue, says Johan Svensson. The process started in 2004 and led to an interfaith workshop in Jinja in September 2005. This consultation was planned jointly with the All African Conference of Churches, the New Sudan Islamic Council and NSCC.

The intention was to hold the workshop in Yei, but after SPLM-leader John Garang's death in August, there was an outbreak of disturbances, so it was decided to change the venue. This workshop was followed up by an interfaith meeting in Juba. Some months later LPI/HAP also supported an interfaith meeting in the Nuba Mountains.

- People in Juba told LPI/HAP that it was very urgent to have an interfaith meeting there, says Johan Svensson. We were informed that the youth were waiting for a mistake by the Muslims as an excuse to restart the violence. And the Muslims viewed it as even more important, as they now felt more vulnerable. It was a really good meeting, which ended with the Muslims inviting the Christians to tea in their compound. That was a breakthrough!

Confession and prayer

At the annual meeting of the international ecumenical network Sudan Ecumenical Forum in 2005, Johan Svensson had a discussion with three Sudanese bishops about possible ways for LPI/HAP to support their work for peace and reconciliation. A meeting was arranged with all church leaders from the Upper Nile, which is a region with serious problems. Many of the military leaders come from the region, there are many militias, and there is



Praying for lasting peace. Representatives for all five Christian denominations were gathered in Malakal late 2005. Photo: Johan Svensson/LPI

tribal fighting. There has been disunion among the churches.

Continues Johan Svensson:

- The church leaders told me they have decided to work for peace together in their region, and they have created a committee where all the churches are represented. They have had a People to Peace Conference, but there is still no real reconciliation. 'We feel that the young soldiers in the militia, that's our sons too. They belong to our people, and we must take care of them', they said.

These preparations led to a peace building workshop in Malakal, Upper Nile, in December last year, where all the five denominations and all the six ethnic groups in the region were represented. Some sessions were broadcast by Radio Malakal, which attracted great attention among listeners both in Malakal and in Juba. According to one of the Moderators of the Presbyterian Church, this was the first time since the missionaries left the country in 1964 that all churches were assembled in a similar conference.

- Because of the split among the churches, an important part of the workshop was confession, remarks Johan Svensson. The church leaders knelt down, and the people, especially women, prayed for them. This was indeed a new start for true reconciliation and future co-operation.

The initial workshop is the beginning of a process of peacebuilding and reconciliation in the Upper Nile. As part of this process, a follow-up of this meeting is planned, too. At the Malakal workshop a number of committees were elected to continue the work for peace in their respective regions. The importance to win the support from the Government of South Sudan in the process stood out very clearly. LPI/HAP will give some contribution to the realisation of the idea.

As a consequence of the workshop, a one day meeting is held in Khartoum this spring to win the confidence of the people who have their origin in the Greater Upper Nile, but who presently live in the North, as displaced persons, as students, or for special assignments. About 5 000 persons are estimated to take part in the meeting. It is hoped and planned that the people in the North will resettle in their home villages or towns well ahead of the elections and the referendum.

With the support from LPI/HAP, an effort is made to translate the CPA into some ten local languages in the South and to broadcast them on the radio. As a preparation for the referendum, it is also important that local workshops with information and discussions will take place in the five coming years.

- This is an extremely important task for civic education in order to make people fully understand the implications of the peace agreement, comments Johan Svensson.

Questioned strategy

Many problems need to be solved and many question marks have to be straightened out in the near future. Has the government in Khartoum got what it takes to win the confidence of the South? Will they vote for Sudan as an undivided whole in the referendum? Many southerners do not feel that there is a genuine attitude from the North. They doubt the seriousness in the intentions of the North to strive for a united and equal Sudan. Some assume that the North has already given up the hope for Sudan to remain united.

- Some analysts question the strategy of the government: Why is, for example, the whole budget for the South not disbursed? Why are all efforts not made to speed up development in the South? Why is the power and responsibility not shared equally, as provided in the CPA?

The CPA has been criticised as only to settle the conflict between northern and southern Sudan and not taking into account the crisis in Darfur and the East. As long as violence, poverty and unrest prevail in parts of Sudan, there will never be a *comprehensive* peace, according to analysts. Johan Svensson agrees:



Johan Svensson, resident representative for LPI/HAP. Photo: Jim Elfström/IKON

- Religion and ethnicity are not the only great problems. The root causes are also economic, financial and natural resources and political power. It is a matter of core and periphery, and in that context one must not forget that the East and Darfur are equally, if not more, marginalised as the South. The East is perhaps the most neglected region, both by the Sudanese government and by the international community.

LPI/HAP is now entering a phase of strengthened engagement in Sudan. The main goal is to support the activities of the partners: churches, Christian Councils and civil society organisations, and to facilitate interfaith dialogue.

One of the difficulties is the co-ordination of all actors.

- We need to be even more engaged in the future, but at the same time our role is only to be facilitators, not to take over the responsibility, explains Johan Svensson. Our aim is to support the process as long as it is needed.

LPI's work in the Horn of Africa Programme is currently supported by Sida, FinnChurchAid/Ministry for Foreign Affairs Finland, the Church of Sweden, ICCO and Bread for the World.

Kristina Lundqvist

Dutch study:

Faith-based organisations important in peacebuilding

A new study shows that faith-based organisations play a vital and positive role as contributors to peace in situations of conflict all over the world. Most Western countries advocate a separation of state and church business. However, since September 11 and other major events, policy makers are increasingly taking into account the role of religion in international relations, especially in conflict situations.

In November 2005, the Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael' published a report in cooperation with the Salam Institute for Peace and Justice, Washington DC.[1] It is the result of a study conducted at the request of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA). In the study, the authors map and analyse the work of 27 Christian, Muslim and multi-faith actors, of which LPI is one. The selection criteria for the chosen organisations were institutionalisation, faith-based work (not secular) and a focus on peacebuilding activities. At the presentation of the report in The Hague, LPI was represented by Mrs Claudette Werleigh, Director of the Conflict Transformation Programme of the Institute. She feels that the study and the conference deal with an important issue.

The overall aim of the authors of the the joint Clingendael and Salam report is to shed more light on the peacebuilding potential of faith-based organisations, and in particular to advise donors – not only MoFA - how to deal with faith-based peacebuilding in policy. In total, 27 Christian, Muslim and multi-faith organisations that are working with peacebuilding in conflict situations are analysed.

The content of the study is valuable for a broader public audience, as the existing literature on the role of faith-based organisations in peacebuilding is, so far, marginal. Although the authors have 'only' studied a limited number of organisations, they are able to make some important general observations about their work, and identify a number of typical strengths and potential pitfalls.

Altering behaviour

The first main observation is that faith-based organisations have contributed substantially to peacebuilding in various ways. The key contributions of faith-based peacebuilding actors are identified as altering behaviour, attitudes and negative stereotypes and re-humanizing the 'other', healing trauma and injuries, contributing to the more effective dissemination of ideas such as human rights, justice, development and peacebuilding, the ability to draft committed people from a wider pool in society, challenging traditional structures, reaching out to governments and specific groups in society, mediating between conflicting parties, encouraging reconciliation, interfaith dialogue, disarmament, demilitarisation and reintegration, and the ability to connect faith-based communities and others worldwide.

A second important observation concerns the struggle of various faith-based peacebuilders to measure the impact of their work. This can make it difficult to assess the actual effect of their efforts. The authors provide three possible answers to this struggle. First, they observe that some organisations use narrative evaluations in which the activities at stake are described along with events or processes that followed the activity to assess the impact of their work. Other organizations strategically integrate their peacebuilding activities into relief and development programs, to which relatively common monitoring and evaluation tools can be applied. Still others are in the process of developing impact indicators in order to check whether their peacebuilding efforts actually contribute to the objectives set.

The third and last general observation of the authors is, as stated before, that faith-based peacebuilding actors seem to have a number of specific strengths and weaknesses. Among their strengths are characteristics such as strong faith-based motivation, long-term presence of local religious actors, long-term commitment of international faith-based actors, moral and spiritual authority, a niche to mobilize communities for peace, and the possibility to create a transcendental environment that encourages overcoming personal and religious differences.

The first potential pitfall that is mentioned is the risk, and often the

accusation, of proselytism, especially if the organisations do not properly separate their religious mission work from their peacebuilding work. Secondly, a lack of focus on results is a potential weakness, because some faith-based actors are inclined to concentrate on long-term peacebuilding efforts rather than shorter-term peacebuilding deliverables. Finally, a weakness could be a lack of professionalism compared to other peacebuilding organizations, as some faith-based peacebuilders seem to engage in peacebuilding because their religious mandate urges them to do so, and not because of their specific skills and experiences.[2]

Support to Muslim peacebuilders

Next to these observations, the authors draw three other tentative conclusions that are worth mentioning here. Firstly, they found it was more difficult to identify institutionalised Muslim faith-based peacebuilding actors than Christian and multi-faith actors. Muslim organizations and bodies have less experience with formally constituted bodies and institutions. Therefore, not as many organizations are structured as stable institutions, which makes them hard to find. Besides, many Muslims do not explicitly refer to their organization or work as specifically 'Muslim' or 'Islamic', because Islam is mostly not separated from everyday aspects of life. This being the case, it becomes hard for an outside observer to distinguish Muslim peacebuilding organizations. Furthermore, the authors conclude that the institutional development of international Muslim peacebuilders lags behind that of international Christian and multi-faith peacebuilders. Their analysis has only found six international Muslim peacebuilders. The authors therefore call for additional support to Muslim peacebuilders.

A second conclusion is that faith-based peacebuilding is not limited to religious conflicts. The organisations subjected to this study have attempted to build peace and prevent conflict in a wide variety of conflict settings, irrespective of whether religion is one of the key factors for conflict or not. They are active both in situations of religious and non-religious conflict. Also, the actors involved have not only targeted beneficiaries that share their own religious convictions, but also beneficiaries from different religious communities and secular ones. Furthermore, they have been involved in all sorts of peacebuilding activities, including advocacy, education, inter-faith and intra-faith dialogue, mediation, observation and transitional justice. These activities are carried out at different levels, ranging from the grassroots to the international.

A last set of interrelated conclusions of the report concerns the relatedness and complementary characteristics of faith-based and secular peacebuilding, the role of peacebuilding work for both 'religious moderates' (to which all of the organisations examined belong) and for 'religious conservatives' – how they can both be drivers of change – and the potential for both single-religious and multi-religious efforts to contribute to peacebuilding in specific situations.

The findings and observations made in the report suggest a number of recommendations for donors – governmental and non-governmental - with regard to faith-based actors. These include: donors should take notice of faith-based peacebuilding in policy, i.e. policy makers should take into account the potential of faith-based peacebuilding actors to contribute positively to peacebuilding; increase cooperation with faith-based actors in the domain of peacebuilding; examine the role of faith-based peacebuilding actors in Stability Assessment Frameworks; demand international attention for the contributions of faith-based actors; sensitise and train embassy staff, as well as staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Development; address faith-based peacebuilding in multi-annual strategic plans of embassies; pay attention to 'religious moderates' and 'religious conservatives' as possible drivers for change; and develop tailor-made approaches for identifying and strengthening Muslim peacebuilding actors.

"The authors call for additional support to Muslim peacebuilders"

It is important to put the study into the current context of growing attention to religion in international policy. Therefore, the role of faith-based peacebuilding actors in contributing to conflict transformation should be taken seriously and further investigated. LPI is supportive of further research in this field. New Routes devoted a volume to the subject of faith in peacebuilding in 2004 (No 3). LPI itself cooperates with churches, as well as with Muslim and inter-religious organizations, in order to further the cause of justice, peace and reconciliation.

Hanna Jagtenberg

The complete Clingendael & Salam Report can be downloaded as a pdf-file from the Clingendael website:
http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2005/20051100_cru_paper_faith-based%20peace-building.pdf

[1] Bouta, T. et al. (eds.), (2005) *Faith-based Peace-building : Mapping and Analysis of Christian, Muslim, and Multi-Faith Actors.* Netherlands Institute for International Relations 'Clingendael' in cooperation with *Salam* Institute for Peace and Justice, Washington DC, November 2005.

[2] The authors remark, however, that only one actor in this study indicated these last two weaknesses, and that they thus call for further research.

LPI News and Reviews

Staff changes



Hanna Jagtenberg is a new intern at LPI in Uppsala for Spring 2006. She comes from Utrecht University in the Netherlands, where she is an MA student in Conflict Studies and Human Rights. Her internship includes research on LPI's work in the Sudan from the beginning of the Horn of Africa Programme until today.



Salpy Eskidjian is employed by LPI as a consultant for the project Nordic Advocacy Initiative on Security, Development, Justice. The project is run jointly with Norwegian Church Aid, DanChurchAid, Diakonia and the Church of Sweden. Salpy Eskidjian is based in Geneva where she has been a programme executive in International Affairs, Peace and Human Security at the World Council of Churches. We will report more about this new project in a coming issue of New Routes.

Role of civil society

A study on the role of civil society in the peacebuilding process will be carried out in the Democratic Republic of Congo by the Swedish-based Central Africa Group. The network represents a number of ecumenical partners in DRC. LPI has been given the task to do the research which is commissioned by Sida.

Human Rights in Congo Brazzaville

A national conference on Human Rights was for the first time been arranged in Brazzaville February 8-11. The deliberations, in the Parliament building, were attended by 150 participants including ministers, representatives for the police, the army and UNDP, along with all major human rights organisations and churches. A joint Congolese Human Rights Committee, chaired by Mr Roger Bouka Owoko, Observatoire des Droits de l´Homme, organised the meeting in collaboration with LPI's Mr Runo Bergström and the Swedish Foundation for Human Rights, represented by General Secretary Ms Anita Klum.

Project in Timor Leste

With the support from Swedish Mission Council, LPI has initiated a new project relating to Timor Leste (East Timor). The aim is to strengthen the capacity of the faith-based community in Timor Leste to contribute to sustainable peace in the country. A conference is planned for May. The Christian Council of Asia endorses the project. LPI works in collaboration with the Catholic Institute for International Relations, and has engaged Dr. Kjell-Åke Nordquist from Uppsala University as a consultant for the project.

LPI expands website

The new website offers many of LPI's publications as pdf files. The journal *New Routes*, as well as a number of books and reports, can be printed free of charge. Furthermore, the website that uses English as the main language, offers separate pages in French and Swedish. The software is provided by Stockholm based PRIMAT. Visit www.life-peace.org to check it out!

Publications for Peace

Publications for Peace Education (PPE), a successful project funded by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, continues. The second phase 2006-2007 includes re-publishing additional publications. In the distribution pipeline are books like *Reaching Reconciliation* (Eastern Europe cases), *Civilian Peacekeeping* (global experiences) and *Reshaping the Everyday* from the Democratic Republic of Congo (an English summary of *Réinventer le Quotidien*). Within a couple of months, two bestsellers about LPI's work in Somalia, Wolfgang Heinrich's *Building the Peace* and Thania Paffenholz's *Community-based Bottom-up Peacebuilding*, will be out in new editions.

LPI has already distributed more than 11 000 (!) copies of the PPE books for teaching purposes to 120 institutions and centres in more than 40 countries. Four regional educational seminars are also being planned. The first, with students, faculty and civil society from five countries in the Horn of Africa region, will take place in Nairobi, Kenya, in April. Other conferences are planned for the Great Lakes, Southern Africa and the Middle East.

Relevant facts about conflicts

Lotta Harbom (ed): States in Armed Conflict 2004. Uppsala University, Department of Peace and Conflict Research 71, 2005

The Department of Peace and Conflict Research at the University of Uppsala has recently released the 17th edition of its *States in Armed Conflict* series. It represents the culmination of extensive data collection, analysis, and reporting.

States in Armed Conflict 2004 describes ongoing conflicts in the world for the period 1946-1998, and 1989-2004. For each conflict it is possible to discover the duration of the conflict, the actors involved, and the level of violent intensity.

The report includes armed conflicts between organized actors in which one is a state, where the incompatibility or

contested position of the belligerents concerns either government or territory. In addition, the report addresses the relevant issue of human security by incorporating information regarding two types of organized violence directed at civilians. These are: armed conflict between non-state actors and one-sided violence where only one party is organized.

States in Armed Conflict 2004 is a useful resource for both students and researchers, as it compiles a substantial amount of statistical data and presents it in a highly accessible format. It also offers links to a myriad of additional resources for research.

The Department of Peace and Conflict Research provides a complete list of all armed conflicts between 1946 and 2004, a detailed conflict database, and a multitude of relevant definitions on its website. The Department is constantly expanding the scope and inclusiveness of the database. Information on armed conflicts between organized actors may be found at: http://www.pcr.uu.se/database/index.php. Datasets on non-state and one-sided violence are available through the Department website: http://www.ucdp.uu.se under "Our Data".

Lindsey Weber

Suffering and God

Isaiah Majok Dau: Suffering and God. A Theological Reflection on the War in Sudan. Paulines Publications Africa, Nairobi, 2005

Isaiah Majok Dau, a senior pastor of the Sudan Pentecostal Churches, goes deep into the subject of suffering and death in his book Suffering and God. He himself lost his parents, two brothers and several close relatives and friends in his early childhood. But his situation was not unique. From 1983 to the present two million people have died in the conflict and twice as many have become displaced or refugees.

For Dr Isaiah it became important to connect the reality to his Christian faith. As a student and researcher he visited refugee camps in Kenya and Uganda. He made several trips into war-devastated areas in South Sudan. Given the fact that he believed in an omnipotent loving God, the reality of suffering and evil perplexed him. "Is God with us when we suffer and does he share our suffering or does he stand off? Having suffered myself, I am living a life that involves both a protest against and an acceptance of suffering, as well as a belief in God of Love."

This tension between the reality of suffering and faith became the subject of Dau's doctoral thesis. Describing the problem and the hypothesis of the subject, he explains his methodology in his research, using an integrative (interpretative) and comparative approach. It includes a literature review and theological reflection.

The study does not end with a description of how people in Sudan tackle suffering and faith. The author widens the perspective including a thorough look into the problem globally, including how western theologians and thinkers have handled the problem, from Augustine, Luther, Calvin into more recent explanations by Barth, Moltman, Liberation Theology and African Theology of today.

In the final chapter Dau attempts to construct a biblical and theological response to the problem. He argues that suffering is insoluble, if the solution means a total elimination of suffering and death. For the author the incarnation "still remains the only possible answer to the problem of suffering and evil, providing a solid framework in which the believer can positively respond to suffering and transform it into good both in his/her own life and that of others."

The result is a very interesting study, helpful for everyone who does not hide from confronting deep existential questions. I have had the opportunity to meet with Dr Isaiah on two occasions. I was impressed by his deep love for this people and country, but also by his realism, a sincere and humble person loving his people but also his God.

Sture Normark

Understanding civil wars

Civil War, Civil Peace. Edited by Helen Yanacopulos and Joseph Hanlon. Bath Press, UK, 2006

This book is about understanding civil wars and their roots and participants. The editors' primary aim is to provide the understanding and analysis tools to increase the chances that outside interventions will have a positive impact. It is argued that only by understanding the specificities of the civil war, the country, and the various stakeholders, interveners can be both peacebuilding, fair, enabling and acceptable.

The book evolves around three main themes, which are essentially the acknowledgement that, first, every war is unique and interveners must act according to the specific context of the conflict in question, second, that understanding the conflict context in which you are operating is a prerequisite for action ('conflict-sensitivity') and third, that there are no right answers to interventions, only better or worse ones.

The targeted audience of this book are practitioners and policy-makers to help them give interventions a more peacebuilding focus. Furthermore, it is essential reading for students of peace-, conflict-, and development studies. The editors, who also are co-writers, are both lecturers in Development Policy and Practice at the Open University, Milton Keynes, in the United Kingdom.

Hanna Jagtenberg

New book from LPI:

Civilian Peacekeeping

"Something must be done!" This cry came as the genocide began in Rwanda, as the civil war in Colombia escalated, as Sudanese refugees began pouring out of Darfur, and in countless other dark moments of history.

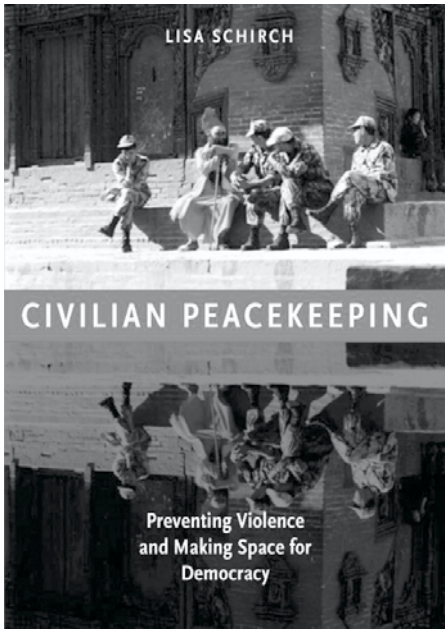
In a new book from the Life & Peace Institute, Lisa Schirch, Associate Professor of peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University presents both valuable information and offers a basis for discussion.

Excerpt from **Civilian Peacekeeping**:

> *Peace does not just "happen." It is a complex, dynamic process. Peace emerges as people take great care in their decision-making by planning for the long term, anticipating potential problems, engaging in ongoing analysis of the conflict and local context, and coordinating different actors and activities in all stages of conflict and all levels of society. Peacebuilding is strategic when there is coordination of resources, actors, and approaches to accomplish multiple goals and address multiple issues within a long-term time period.*
>
> *The field of peacebuilding is wider and more complex than most people realize, encompassing actors in many different arenas. Until recent efforts to create networks of civil society actors in conflict zones[1], many of these actors using different approaches to peacebuilding were unaware of each other and overlapped with each other's work. The complete inventory of civilian actors who contribute to peacebuilding is too large to detail here. This list of interveners could include groups such as Amnesty International who use letter-writing campaigns to combat human rights abuses; international media and freelance journalists who observe, document and alert the international community to violent conflicts; a variety of dialogue and relationship-building programs such as Search for Common Ground; trauma healing workers; peace and human rights education trainers; environmental groups such as Greenpeace who intervene on behalf of the environment, and international relief and development groups such as the International Red Cross, Oxfam, CARE, who deliver humanitarian assistance and do social, economic, and community development projects.*

The book **Civilian Peacekeeping** outlines how various initiatives are planned, and explores the dilemmas and international contradictions between approaches to civilian peacekeeping. Lisa Schirch, a former Fulbright Fellow, has worked in every region of the world as a researcher, trainer and facilitator in the fields of conflict transformation and peacebuilding for the past 15 years.

The book is particularly relevant for non-governmental organizations, groups in conflict situations, government, UN or regional organizations, and students or other interested in these issues. The book has been selected for teaching purposes in a LPI project "Publications for Peace Education", which is funded by Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Finland. Around 120 academic institutions and resource centres in some 40 countries, mainly in Africa, receive a set of copies of each selected publication for teaching purposes.



The price of the book is 15 EUR or 20 USD. For book orders contact LPI by e-mail info@life-peace.org or phone +46 18 16 95 00, fax +46 18 69 30 59. More information on LPI publications on www.life-peace.org

[1] The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict is an example of a movement to create a network of civil society actors who know and understand each other's work. http://www.gppac.net/

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