



THE BROKEN RIFLE

Newsletter of War Resisters' International

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Dealing with the Past

A new War Resisters' International project



Photos from the WRI workshop in Batticaloa

War Resisters' International and Dealing with the Past

Roberta Bacic

The past shapes the present and the future. This is even more true after war or dictatorship. How we deal with this past determines our future. Working with the relatives of victims of political repression, and having lived it personally, has led me to conclude that dealing with the past means 'learning to live / cope / struggle with it in the present.

WRI's project aims to evaluate the experience of such a traumatic past by looking into different ways of dealing with it – truth commissions or war crime tribunals are only two examples, taken from state and international initiatives promoted and demanded by social actors. Civil society also has its own way of dealing with the past, and we have been exploring memorials which bring up the issue of memory and what people need to remember and not to forget. WRI also wants to support grassroots organisations which engage in the struggle for truth, justice and – perhaps – rec-

onciliation. Dealing with the past is part of the struggle for truth, social justice, for overcoming violence and a way of dealing through non violence when faced with conflicts.

As a Chilean I cannot forget the events of September 11th 1973. In her last book, *My Invented Country*, written in 2003, 30 years after the military putsch, Isabel Allende writes: 'Memory is conditioned by emotion; we remember better, and more fully, things that move us, such as the joy of a birth, the pleasure of a night of love, the pain of a loved one's death, the trauma of a wound. When we call up the past, we choose intense moments – good or bad – and omit the enormous gray area of daily life. . .'

The exhibition 'Memory and memorials from Chile: 30 years since the military coup' is my current contribution to memory.

We invite you to go to our web page www.wri-irg.org and go into Dealing with the Past.



Dealing with the past

The WRI Statement of Principles reminds us that "War is an avoidable form of organized violence. However, its roots go deep. WRI seeks to address these roots, including by changing processes of socialisation, and by transforming the patterns of domination that affect every aspect of life, both within society and between societies."

There are many ways to address the roots of war, and in the War Resisters International we work on a number of them. WRI's Dealing with the Past programme recognizes that the "past shapes the present and the future. This is even more true after war or dictatorships. How we deal with the past determines our future." Violence begets violence, war begets war. To move past this, we must deal with the past. While this programme was originally inspired by the work done in Chile, this work needs to be done everywhere.

Joanne Sheehan
WRI Chair



Sri Lanka

The ceasefire between Sri Lanka Security Forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), has lasted now for two years though many issues have not been dealt with and tensions remain. Nevertheless people are now turning their attention from the immediate fear of direct attacks to reconstruction, rehabilitation, and resettlement of displaced and war affected communities. In addition to this some who have long-term vision want to pose questions related to the responsibility for war crimes and the remedial measures for those who under went trauma. Unfortunately, many people from the international communities as well as national agencies do not see the importance of this aspect. They would like to focus on the physical and physiological changes. But what is really missing there is the social and psychological changes and the need for healing of the memories of people who were exposed to the direct violence and atrocities. There is a question of how the war damaged minds could be rebuilt to face the world reality. As there has been much work done in Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka, WRI has decided to focus its work in Batticaloa, which is now an almost exclusively Tamil city, beautifully sitting between lagoons, rivers and the sea on the east coast of Sri Lanka. The Batticaloa region has distinct and complex conflict dynamics as it has been a crossroad at the centre of most of the war's conflicts. Batticaloans have experienced tendency and violence between government soldiers, LTTE, muslim groups and various non LTTE tamil paramilitary groups.

Dealing with the past in Batticaloa in Sri Lanka

Roberta Bacic

WRI had already visited Sri Lanka and had been in Batticaloa in March 2003. As a follow up of this we decided to accompany the process of dealing with the past with war affected women. Rajan Iruthayanathan organised the workshop with local organisers and activists who know well the people, history and politics of the area. The women came from two villages, where almost each family has lost somebody during the war.

We wrote in our proposal:

'They will have produced a set of photographs. Through this process they will have a clear sense of those things which provide a strong connection to their dead relatives, will value their own story as part of their life but not as their only life experience. This self-knowledge will lead to greater confidence and purpose.'

In practical terms after the initial sharing of experiences and story telling, the participants were provided with disposal cameras and invited to take their own photos. Before coming to the workshop the coordinators had asked the women to bring objects and/or photos associated with their lost ones. These photos were developed so they were ready for the second day and the participants had the chance to comment on their own photos, their peers and also on the experience reflected in the choice of subject.

They valued the possibility of having the photos before leaving because they could share with their families what they had done during the two days, something absolutely unusual in their lives.

Before concluding the workshop, each woman was given a second camera to take home to take photos of their home, community and what they found relevant of their past and present life.

The workshop went beyond the planned outcome as the women identified four needs:

1. to meet once a month in their own villages
2. to follow up on the initiated healing process. There was a consensus that it had been specially meaningful to have been able to go from crying, to laughter and also to silence
3. they needed some training in skills regarding the way they could improve their capacity to be economically self sufficient (e.g. poultry rearing and growing vegetables, etc)
4. they would welcome for themselves and other groups the chance to meet at least once a year away from home so as to be able to have a short break and the capacity to discuss amongst peers their own daily life and life experiences, as well as mechanisms of coping.

The following steps were agreed:

Plan a possible photo exhibition in the community of the shots taken during this workshop
 Try to organize a follow up for the first week in June so as to collect the photos taken with the last camera, have them processed and

share the process since the meeting in January

Plan an exhibition in London at Saint Ethelburga's Peace and Reconciliation Centre of some of the photos. We would aim through this to share this sample of meaningful work with the wider society and also commit members of the Sri Lankan community living in the UK to this work. If possible we would also animate groups and individuals to support this group. We would welcome the chance of being able to invite to London at least one organizer and one participant of each village.

Initial reflections on this preliminary sharing experience included:

1. Even if the photos are a concrete outcome of the experience and this is in itself most valuable, it is not an end in itself.
2. The taking of the photos allows the participants to express themselves around the feelings and experiences in a very concrete and creative way, without feeling pushed to speak it all out.
3. In some specific programs and/or projects, the use of this means would allow complex topics to be approached in a way that is difficult to achieve by simple conversations

The participants made many positive comments, and a few recommendations for future planning:

- relief and a bit of rest
- evidence that in 'old age' new things can happen, that I can learn well and then share that too
- to have lived together these two days as a family was a real support and leaves us with a feeling of contentment
- share with others and open in front of other people and women whom I did not know was very important and liberating
- the photos allow me and us to take back memories and also share them with the family and community if possible will be very important
- I feel very satisfied and happy. I was very worried before coming as had never been away for so long, but now I am relaxed and will have much to share and bring some happiness back
- I am looking forward to the follow up
- I value that we were not questioned, but invited to open and share what we wanted and felt like sharing
- I came with a great burden, it was difficult to start but feel that I have been able to break the circle of question and answer and feel in peace. Would really like to continue.
- I feel I have gained courage and can face new moments, I am less afraid of crying and sharing
- Loved eating together and not having had to cook myself. I also loved sharing with a woman stories before going to bed
- I had not laughed so much for a long time, but I also was able to cry what I rarely do and never in public
- I am thankful for this chance of hope and nice shared moments, we need a bit of joy, we have suffered so much

Dealing with the past in Serbia

Katarina Putnik

The topic of Serbia and its political situation has been lingering in the news since the wars in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo, including the NATO bombing. Many things about this country and the region as a whole have been exposed to the world, apart from one: *the truth!* All sides involved, from the republics of ex-Yugoslavia to the international community, tell only their version of the conflict. This is not the way forward. If it continues, there is a dark future ahead for Serbia, as well as for many neighbouring countries.

Serbia has not been for some time top news, and as there is no overt war going on, people may think that the situation is stable and under control. Unfortunately this is not the case. There is a lot of potential for future violence and something needs to be done *now* to prevent it.

What am I suggesting?

What is needed at the moment is to deal with the unresolved issues while the situation is still peaceful, or to be more precise, under ceasefire. Now is the time to confront the past and deal with it: establish the truth and bring out the facts that would be accepted by all sides! How can this be done? One of the ways in which truth has been brought in to the open in countries like Chile, Argentina and South Africa was by establishing a Truth Commission. However, one of the main differences between the above mentioned countries and Serbia lies in the fact that, in those countries, human rights violations were committed mostly by the governing regime on its own people. Although this does apply partly in the case of Serbia under Milosevic, by far the biggest concern is about the human rights violations among various ethnic communities, committed in almost all parts of ex-Yugoslavia. This involves the following main ethnicities: Serbs, Croats, Bosniaks, Kosovo Albanians, Macedonians and Macedonian Albanians. So one possible suggestion is to have a regional truth commission authorised to investigate the abuses of and from all of the nationalities involved in the war. It would aim to give a voice to every side and be objective in its work. It may be difficult to decide in which country such a commission would operate, since every side may want to have it in their own out of mistrust towards the others. Possibly, having separate national truth commissions cooperating regionally and sharing the information could overcome this obstacle.

The history of the region is very complex and hazy, with different ex-Yugoslav republics having conflicting views. Therefore, finding the very beginning of the problems and truth about them would be hard. Neither would it be easy to decide on the time frame needed to complete the work. The region has faced many conflicts and people from all sides have suffered, so dealing with the past would be a long and painstaking process. However, ignoring past history would not be useful, since many causes of the wars fought during the 1990's arose from deep historical grievances. At the same



Mourners at the funeral of people who died when NATO bombed RTS (TV station) Belgrade
taken from www.sramota.com/nato/belgrade/rts

time, it is important not to be lost in historical debates, but to focus on the contemporary problems. A balance between the two has to be found in order to move forward constructively.

One may ask: how crucial is it to establish the truth about past events in countries facing many other challenges, from economic to political to educational issues?

Dealing with the past would take away the collective guilt, hopefully removing collective prejudices and stereotypes against different ethnic groups. At the end of this process people should be able to see and begin to accept who were guilty of atrocities and why they did it.

Besides bringing out the truth about the violence and atrocities that occurred, if the society is to have a whole picture, then these facts should be paired with the experiences and testimonies of people who stood together and helped each other despite the danger. Presently the commissions focus only on the testimonies of victims and perpetrators, which without doubt is important for establishment of hidden facts and experiences. However, there are other unheard facts and stories that relate to examples of inter-religious and inter-ethnic support during the conflicts. I believe this helps establish the real truth, the one that consists not only of bad examples, but of the good ones as well. Focusing exclusively on the negative side may threaten stability in some regions. It is healthier for the society to include the good examples as well in this process. If this is done, people will more likely be able to see that, despite the horrors of war and terrors of repression, certain human relations can remain stronger than the evil around them.

In the name of future peace and security for the people in the affected countries, it is important to know what happened in the past and try to understand it; stop the hate-breeding propaganda; provide support to the victims; insist that the guilty are not simply exonerated; create measures that would prevent the same problems arising in the future and start building new relations. As a result of dealing with the past to build the future, hostility and bitterness may one day be replaced by neighbourliness and mutual respect.

Katarina Putnik was a WRI intern in January and February 2004. She studies at the European Peace University in Stadtschlaing

A message from Women in Black

Stasa Zajovic, on behalf of Women in Black from Belgrade, wrote on July 15th 2002 a letter to Serbian war veterans' and refugee organisations of Bratunca and Srebrenica, explaining why they had paid tribute to the Srebrenica massacre:

"... We write to you in good will and in the hope that you will manage to overcome the prejudices that are deep set among the majority of the population of all the countries that participated, in one way or another, in the 1991 – 2000 wars. These prejudices are the consequence of both intentional manipulation that led you and your enemies to disaster, tragedy and often to disgrace, and of the lack of information among a large number of inhabitants of Republika Srpska about the motives and goals of the peace activities of Women in Black and our supporters from all over the area of our former country.

For us, every victim has the same weight and every crime is a crime and deserves equal condemnation and regret. We have always strongly opposed accepting any hierarchy of victims according to any grounds whatsoever. In the same way, we reject any attempt to seek amnesty for the crimes committed by one side, or to compare and weigh them in relation to the crimes committed by the other or a third side . . ."

"We believe we will find ourselves on the same side, on the side of truth, justice and reconciliation, as opposed to the side that persists in justifying crime. This is the only demarcation line there is today."

Zene u Crnom protiv Rata
Women in Black Against War
Jug Bogdanova 18/5, 11000
Beograd, Srbija; tel /fax +381 11
623225; email
stasazen@eunet.yu; website
www.wib-zeneucmom-belgrade.org/



Dealing with the past in Kosov@?

Howard Clark

The past has been a battlefield in Kosovo for the past century. Since Serbia's bloody conquest of Kosovo in 1912, the rival "victim" historical narratives of the Serbian and Albanian communities in the territory have fuelled cycles of ethnic domination and sometimes atrocities. What people choose to remember or know and what people choose to honour or celebrate continue to shape the future.

A decade of repression under Milošević culminated in massacres and the expulsion or flight from their homes of more than half the territory's 2 million Albanian population. Some troops carried out this operation self-consciously with an eye to cheating future war crimes investigators – hence lorryloads of corpses were taken out of Kosovo and dumped in Serbia (the post-Milošević authorities in Serbia have exhumed 936 corpses from mass graves). The fact that there are several thousand people missing - the majority Albanians who "disappeared" in 1998-99, but also Serbs and Roma who disappeared in the second half of 1999 – and that there are larger numbers of displaced people (including perhaps 100,000 Serbs who fled to Serbia where they are not wanted) mean that for many families yesterday's violence does not belong to the past but is an open wound today.

Memory was denied after the Second World War: Tito pretended that the ethnic conflicts fought within that war did not exist. But ethnic memories survived as "hidden transcripts" carried in families and oral culture, eventually surfacing after Tito's death when dissident historians began to retrieve what had been denied. In contrast, after the wars of Yugoslav succession, truth-telling has been viewed as a central facet of social reconstruction. Post-war Kosovo was swarming with foreign journalists wanting to interview Albanians about the horrors, with human rights activists compiling evidence for far-off trials, and with trauma counsellors offering their model of "emotional healing".

Four years since the war, ethnic violence in Kosovo is at a lower level, but the ethnic polarisation has eased only in a few areas. Meanwhile there are sections of both communities prepared for further violence and the past remains a battlefield.

Memory is partly a matter of choice. From the flag to street names and statues, the Albanians who now staff the state-in-embryo are choosing exclusive symbols. Two of the pivotal bodies of the 1990s' nonviolent struggle – the Council for the Defence of Human Rights and Freedoms and the (humanitarian) Mother Theresa Association – showed a different

approach by choosing to honour certain (Belgrade) Serb co-workers, but their gestures did not have much echo.

The ethnicised memory in Kosovo is homogenised and stereotyping rather than the product of a many-sided search for truth that is open to the experience and perceptions of the Other.

In my view, the press is a symptom rather than a cause of such social attitudes. It ought to challenge stereotypes about all Serbs, for instance by honouring Serbian war resisters – or by backing the recent call by Belgrade human rights activists for the reinstatement of the 30 police officers dismissed in 1999 for refusing to go to Kosovo. But it follows rather than leads opinion. These days anybody with other attitudes and with a desire to know about a different type of Serb can make their own connections.

More insidious than press filtering is how people marginalise their own experience. While many Kosovo Albanians were betrayed by Serbs they knew personally, many also owe their lives to an act of humanity at the height of the ethnic cleansing by a Serb (or a Roma or a Montenegrin). However, acts of humanity across ethnic barriers do not form part of the ethnicised narrative in Kosovo – neither for Albanians nor for Serbs.

Fortunately, there are some people who recognise that everybody in Kosovo has suffered. For Igballe Rogova of the Kosova Women's Network, one of the first tasks in her work of support for the



Monument in Prishtina

emerging Serbian Women's groups in Kosovo is sharing experiences. It took her two years after her family's own betrayal during the war for her to be able to reach out in this way, but now she is emphatic on the need "to hear about each other's past to construct a relationship for the future".

Howard Clark is a WRI Council member and author of Civil Resistance in Kosovo (Pluto Press – just published in German by Verlag Weber-Zucht & Co). A 40-page paper published by the Coventry University Centre for the Study of Forgiveness and Reconciliation in 2002 includes a more detailed discussion of strategies for dealing with the past in Kosovo – download from <http://legacywww.coventry.ac.uk/legacy/acad/isl/forgive/about/public.htm>

War Resisters' International Seminar and Council Meeting

War Resisters' International and Peace Action, WRI's Macedonian affiliate, invite to the WRI/Peace Action seminar, and to the WRI Council meeting in Ohrid, Macedonia.

20-23 June: Conscientious Objection and Peace - International Seminar in Macedonia. Costs: €120 (including food and accommodation).

24/25 June: War Resisters' International Council Meeting. Costs: €50.

Contact: War Resisters' International, 5 Caledonian Rd, London N1 9DX, Britain
email info@wri-irg.org, <http://wri-irg.org/en>

More information will be available on WRI's website soon!

Systematic forced disappearance is a crime against humanity and is not subject to statutes of limitations

Susi Bascon

During the last three years, Peace Brigades International (PBI) has been providing an international presence in Mexico for human rights defenders whose lives and political space have been under threat as a result of their struggle for human rights. At the request of local NGOs, PBI set up two teams of international volunteers: one in Mexico City and one in the state of Guerrero.

They provide a presence for threatened lawyers, families and relatives of the disappeared; community workers; and human rights defenders. This international presence has been backed by a network of international support that is activated in emergency situations. Non violence, non partisanship and non intervention are central to the philosophy of the organization.

On 27 November 2001, the National Human Rights Commission of México (CNDH) issued a recommendation that included an investigation of human rights violations carried out in the past. The recommendation concluded that, out of 532 case files, 275 were victims of forced disappearance at the hands of state security officials.

Following that recommendation, in January 2002, Mexican president Vicente Fox announced the setting up of a special attorney's office to deal with the human rights violations that were committed directly or indirectly by state civil servants against people belonging to social and political movements of the past. Specifically, this office, the Special Attorney Office (FEMOSPP), is in charge of investigating and establishing penal responsibility of civil servants involved in human rights violations carried out in the "dirty war" of the 1970s.

However, the office faces serious

obstacles to fulfilling its brief, since it is not allowed to take penal action in cases where a body and/or those responsible for the offense is not found. This leaves the cases at the discretion of the judicial system with the consequent possibility that, on a purely legal basis, the guilty will be given impunity.

In the year 2000, two army officers, Francisco Quirós Hermosillo and Mario Arturo Acosta Chaparro, were arrested and charged with narcotics trafficking. Simultaneously, they were also accused of the assassination of people presumed to be members of the armed group lead by Lucio Cabañas in the state of Guerrero. Currently, the General Attorney Military Office (PGJM) is investigating the generals.

Since February 2003, members of the General Attorney Military Office have been showing up unexpectedly at the homes of the families of the disappeared in the state of Guerrero to convince them to testify about disappearances carried out by the two generals against social and political activists. Hermosillo and Chaparro are accused of assassinating 143 people, who were disappeared and known to be drowned in the sea, according to the declarations made by their families in 2000.

The presence of army members from the PGJM has brought fear and uncertainty to the families of the disappeared. Because the families claim that the military was responsible for the disappearances of their loved ones in the first place, they cannot trust the military with the current investigations of these disappearances. In addition, they also fear for their own safety.

The fact is that having the PGJM deal with the penal responsibility of the two generals for crimes committed on civilians in the 1970s goes against interna-

tional law and Mexico's own constitution.

The fact that the PGJM and the FEMOSPP are dealing with the same issue is in itself a violation of human rights since contradictions between the findings and decisions of the two institutions could lead to impunity for the accused generals.

AFADEM, an organisation made up of families of the detained and disappeared, is campaigning to stop military justice officials from judging the responsibility for the crimes presumably committed by the two army officers. They argue that military courts lack independence and impartiality and insist that the matter should be taken to civilian courts.

Tita Radilla, vice-president of AFADEM, requested international support from PBI in May 2003, fearing for her life due to her work in defence of human rights. Since the organisation was founded in 1978, the relatives of the disappeared have ceaselessly protested to governmental institutions about the disappearances. "There is not much response from the Mexican government so far, but we have hope in international justice," Tita Radilla says.

Fox's government has raised expectations for human rights defenders. The new administration meant that there is a possibility of rooting out institutional violations of human rights by state security forces. Since the year 2000 the Mexican Senate has ratified a number of international treaties for the protection of human rights. But at the same time, it has approved reservations or interpretative declarations that defy the validity of such treaties. This was the case with the 1968 convention on the imprescriptibility of war crimes and against humanity and the 1994 Interamerican Convention on the forced disappearance of persons. The government argues that signed international treaties cannot be applied retroactively and will only apply to those crimes committed from the signing of the convention onwards. However, AFADEM and other NGOs working for the disappeared claim that Mexico must comply with the laws that say that systematic forced disappearances are crimes against humanity, and therefore they are not subject to any statute of limitations.

Susi Bascon works for Peace Brigades International, Mexico Project

Peace Brigades International (PBI)
UK Section
1b Waterlow Road
London N19 5NJ
Tel/Fax: 020 7 281 5370
email: pbiuk@gn.apc.org
Web: www.peacebrigades.org



Susi Bascon with Tita Radilla, from Cerezo Brothers' Committee which works with political prisoners and prisoners of conscience in Mexico city.



About the origin of our statement



Oscar Huenchunao
from Ni Casco ni Uniforme
(Chile)

The debate around what happened on 11 September 1973 and its subsequent dictatorship is a topic that does not leave any organisation or grassroots group in Chile indifferent. We (Ni Casco ni Uniforme / No Helmet, No Uniform) are not an exception, even if we are a young group: young as regards the amount of time we have been established, young as to our ages. We do have an opinion about the issue. This statement is the result of many discussions about the meaning and impact of the 30 years since the military coup by Pinochet - the dictatorship left marks in our society in such a way that, even at present, these affect our work as antimilitarist activists. Although we have had over 10 years of democracy, the military presence and influence is, unfortunately, still strong. In the past we did not always participate as a group in marches or demonstrations. This was not due to a lack of an opinion, but more so because we felt that there was no audience for an antimilitaristic perspective. We think that the mood this year has been more responsive, more open, and that there is room for many visions about the same topic - even for our vision as expressed below.

October 2003



Public Declaration

Today, 11 September 2003, these are our reflections about the transition, the dictatorship and the military coup:

We have been invaded by a series of commemorative acts. Faced with this, we think that the memory should not be spent in the form of remembrances and commemorations, that the act of remembering should not paralyse nor bring to a close the construction of a freer society that respects the dignity of all men and women.

More than military, the dictatorship was militarist. Today its spirit can be felt not only in the military world but also in all the related parts of the civil world and, what is worst, in the world of the Concertación (political pact that agreed the terms for the transition), that for 13 years has not been capable of shaking off the seal imposed by the dictatorship in the forms of making politics, and in general on the social life of this country. The Concertación also has one other party: the Armed Forces. It is not possible for a government to understand the Con-

certación without bearing in mind the Armed Forces, as a threatening party in the conglomerate of parties, almost like an ideological vanguard, its hard wing, its armed front.

To end impunity would be an excellent experiment in this country where impunity has been the cultural and political framework before, during and since the Dictatorship - one of those lethal traditions that has to be undone once and for all.

To understand this allows us better to understand our tasks: to deepen democracy, to expand liberties and the exercise and respect of rights; to end racism and all forms of discrimination and to finish with the school for crime that is Military Service: in sum, to demilitarise society.

Such are our reflections 30 years on from the military coup.

MOC Ni Casco Ni Uniforme

11 September 2003

Visit: <http://www.objecion.cl>

15 May 2004: International Conscientious Objectors' Day: Chile and Latin America

International Conscientious Objectors' Day 2004 focuses on conscientious objection in Chile and Latin America. Jointly with Ni Casco Ni Uniforme War Resisters' International is organising an international seminar and non-violent action training in Santiago, culminating in an international nonviolent action on 15 May - International Conscientious Objectors' Day.

The activities will start with an international seminar "Social Militarisation in Latin America:

Experiences of Resistance to the New World Order" at the Universidad Bolivariana in Santiago, Chile, on 10/11 May 2004.

The nonviolent action training then follows from 12-14 May, at a venue close to Santiago. There, the action for 15 May will be developed.

For information, please contact War Resisters' International, 5 Caledonian Rd, London N1 9DX, email andreas@wri-irg.org, <http://wri-irg.org/en/>

The legacy of disappearances

Dr Ruby Osorio

Thirty years after the military coup in Chile, one of its principal "humanitarian legacies" continues to be the task of working out the pain of the unforgettable memories left by the merciless disappearances. Much has been written and is known about the devastating impact that someone's disappearance can have on an individual, a family and a community.

There is also a known impact on those who are not seen as involved. For some of them, the horror of these deeds is so hard to contemplate that they debate between not wanting to know and accepting the idea that what happened to so-and-so must have been done for a reason. The disappearance of an individual leaves a vacuum impossible to fill and a grief very difficult to express. The lack of the physical body of the disappeared deprives the survivors of the ritual of leave-taking, of the funeral, the burial, and the possibility of expressing the loss through the offer of a final ceremony in which to pay the last respects to the body that represents a loved being in the desire of mitigating the pain of parting. It is this process that permits grieving, the healing of the wound and loss. Because of the necessity of this process, the ritual of funeral and wake remains prevalent despite social changes.

Aborting this grief through the lack of a body leaves the mind and soul of the individual survivors in a state of limbo: the person who has disappeared is not here, but neither has he or she gone. In seeking emotional healing over the lack of the object, the mind and the psyche grasp at the intangible. This is limited to speaking of memories of unfinished situations, at times even related to the last moments shared with the one who disappeared. It is this combination of attempts and feelings that serves as fuel for the genesis and maintenance of psychiatric states such as depression, general anxiety and attacks of panic, among others. It is this same fuel that compli-



A cross with José Beltrán's name, plus a plastic flower crown, placed on his tomb after filling the grave with earth

Personal archive Roberta Bacic

cates the treatment and makes recovery difficult for those who that seek counselling. It is not the lack of medicaments or varieties of therapy, but rather the difficulty of establishing a state of pain without a body. On the other hand, the accounts of the experience of horrors in the cases of disappeared people who have reappeared, frequently adds guilt fantasies and self-recrimination, making a little harder the process of healing. Fortunately, human beings have inner resources and find strengths in their own frailty and in the support offered by others to seek alternatives that permit a recovery, if not complete, sufficient to reduce the suffering and to continue living. Some of these alternatives are ceremonies of remembrance, be they personal, family or community, with physical memorials commemorating the disappeared. As symbols, these memorials are an act of farewell. This allows the individual, family or community to open the way to the possibility of reparation, although not perfect, a grieving at last.

Dr Ruby Osorio is a Chilean psychiatrist living in London

The Anglican Pacifist Fellowship's support for WRI's Dealing with the past project

Tony Kempster



Tony Kempster playing the guitar at a WRI event

Photo: Roberta Bacic

APF is an organisation whose members are pledged 'to renounce war and the preparation to wage war, and to work for the construction of Christian peace in the world'. It has members in some 30 countries around the world

some of which are experiencing military conflict. The latest (October issue) of its newsletter, *The Anglican Peacemaker* focuses on the ongoing conflicts in Africa which are of real concern to some APF's members. The Fellowship supports the Dealing with the past project because unresolved violence and repression from past military conflict can so easily fuel future conflict. The history of conflicts in many parts of the world confirms this. Hence Dealing with the past is a means of war prevention, which is consistent with the APF pledge. Attempts to remove anger and hatred, to assist people on the path to reconciliation, are, in themselves, forms of peacemaking and also consistent with the pledge.

Tony Kempster is APF's secretary and works on WRI's Dealing with the Past project

The Broken Rifle

The Broken Rifle is the newsletter of War Resisters' International, and is usually published in English, Spanish, French and German. This is issue 60, March 2004. This issue of *The Broken Rifle* was produced by Roberta Bacic and Andreas Speck, with help from Katarina Putnik, Susi Bascon, Howard Clark, Oscar Huenchunao, and many others, who provided the information used in this issue. This issue is part of War Resisters' International's Dealing with the past project. If you want extra copies of this issue of *The Broken Rifle*, please contact the WRI office, or download it from our website.

War Resisters' International,
5 Caledonian Road,
London N1 9DX, Britain
tel +44-20-7278 4040
fax +44-20-7278 0444
office@wri-irg.org
<http://wri-irg.org/>

The Broken Rifle in other languages

The Broken Rifle is published regularly in English, Spanish, German, and French.

You can order paper copies in the language of your choice by contacting the WRI office in London. You can also download a PDF file from the WRI website as soon as it becomes available. Feel free to make your own copies.

WRI relies on volunteers for translations of *The Broken Rifle* and other materials. If you want to offer your help with translations, please contact the WRI office. Translators are always urgently needed! Thank you.



War Resisters' International

A nonviolent movement to end war

War Resisters' International was founded in 1921 under the name "Paco". It is based on the WRI declaration:

War is a crime against humanity. I am therefore determined not to support any kind of war, and to strive for the removal of all causes of war

War Resisters' International exists to promote nonviolent action against the causes of war, and to support and connect people around the world who refuse to take part in war or the preparation of war. On this basis, WRI works for a world without war.

Nonviolence

WRI embraces nonviolence. For some, nonviolence is a way of life. For all of us, it is a form of action that affirms life, speaks out against oppression, and acknowledges the value of each person.

Nonviolence can combine active resistance, including civil disobedience, with dialogue; it can combine non-cooperation - withdrawal of support from a system of oppression - with constructive work to build alternatives.

As a way of engaging in conflict, sometimes nonviolence attempts to bring reconciliation with it: strengthening the social fabric, empowering those at the bottom of society, and including people from different sides in seeking a solution.

No to war

WRI will never endorse any kind of war, whether it is waged by a state, by a "liberation army", or under the auspices of the United Nations, even if it is called a "humanitarian military intervention". Wars, however noble the rhetoric, invariably are used to serve some power-political or economic interest. We know where war leads - to suffering and destruction, to rape and organised crime, to betrayal of values and to new structures of domination.

Internet resources on Dealing with the Past

Truth Commission reports and related matters

<http://www.truthcommission.org>
Strategic choices in the design of Truth Commissions

<http://www.neveragain.net> Memory, Truth-Telling and the pursuit of Justice

www.nuncamas.org/index.htm. (Argentina)

www.derechoschile.com/derechos/sitios_eng.html (Chile)

www.easttimor-reconciliation.org (East Timor)

www.truth.org.za (South Africa)

<http://hrdata.aaas.org/ceh>. (Guatemala)

www.derechos.org/nizkor/salvador/informes/truth.html (El Salvador)

www.cverdad.org.pe (Perú) English & Spanish

www.usip.org/library/truth.html (Truth Commissions Digital Collection)

Other interesting webs

www.healingthroughremembering.org (Northern Ireland, Healing Through Remembering Project and its Report)

www.wri-irg.org go to Dealing with the Past page
www.legacy-project.org/about/index.html global exchange on the enduring consequences of the many historical tragedies of the 20th century.

www.derechoschile.com/derechos/chrono_eng.html provides a general overview of the period beginning September 11, 1973 to the present.

www.menschenrechte.org Human Rights NGO in Nuremberg in German, Spanish and English

www.ecomemoria.com (Struggle against Impunity, Chilean project)

www.memoriaviva.com (Human Rights Violations in Chile, done in London and only in Spanish)

Support War Resisters' International

War Resisters' International needs your support to carry on its work on Dealing with the past.

- Keep me informed about WRI's work.
My email address is:
- I make a donation of £.....
- Please put me on your mailing list and keep me informed about the work of WRI.
- Please send me a sample copy of Peace News.



Please send your donation and this form to:

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Thank you for your solidarity