

EDITORIAL

With great pleasure we introduce the *Europe edition of IFOR in ACTION*. This issue focuses on IFOR actions and BGAs of Europe. In using this new approach we take a closer look at the work being done in different regions of the world, and the challenges faced due to environmental factors.

The Spring issue of *IFOR in ACTION* will focus on *the Americas*. We especially invite contributions from our members in the Americas, we're sure they will be as plentiful. We now call on all our Branches, Groups and Affiliates to send their contributions by Friday, 20 February 2009 for inclusion in *IFOR in ACTION* #50.

— Stan Morris, Editor

Building trust and unity – women of the Balkans

by José de Vries

*IFOR's Women Peacemakers Program (WPP):
The Balkans Case*

e-newsletter

Women and women's organizations throughout the world are active in conflict prevention, peace building, and post conflict reconstruction efforts. Women's engagement for alternative solutions to armed violence is supported by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325), which was unanimously adopted in October 2000. This resolution calls for the increased representation of women at all decision making levels in conflict prevention, management, and resolution, attention to the specific protection needs of women in conflict, including refugees, and increased support for women peace builders.

Under the umbrella of The Netherlands Women's Council (NVR), 6 member organizations (including IFOR's WPP) of the Platform Women and Sustainable Peace (Platform VDV) launched a joint project named 'Women Create Alternatives for Armed Conflict' (WCA 1325).

From September 16 to 26, 2008, 26 women activists – supported by their Dutch counterpart - from six conflict areas (called 'cases') visited the Netherlands. The conflict areas included Afghanistan, the Balkans, the Great Lakes (Africa), Israel and Palestine, Kashmir (both Indian and Pakistan administered side), and Sudan. The visit aimed at building a learning community on women's work for peace, to strengthen functional networks around each case, and to give visibility to women's work in the context of Resolution 1325. The visit started off with a three-day closed conference in Soesterberg, allowing participants to exchange experiences and deepen their knowledge on UNSCR 1325.



Isabelle Geuskens, WPP's Director, taking notes at the white-board during the Balkans strategic planning process.

On September 19th, 2008, the 6 delegations spoke at a Public Day Meeting at the Peace Palace in The Hague, where they presented an Action Plan for their respective regions, which they had developed during the conference in Soesterberg. Most delegations remained in the Netherlands for another week, in order to meet with Dutch NGOs and increase the visibility of their work.

IFOR's Women Peacemakers Program (WPP): The Balkans Case

The conflict in the Balkans was very violent, and a UN mission is still present in the region. Tensions continue to exist, and this climate influences daily life in all aspects. The country may look peaceful on the surface, but the political

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Building trust...

situation and the social structures are divisive and violent. The wounds of the war are not yet healed, and the scars are still visible in destroyed houses and damaged buildings. Women's organizations play an important role in creating alternatives by opening up possibilities for resolving conflicts through dialogue and fostering a culture of peace. For this reason, WPP decided to invite four women from the Balkans, including:

1. Shura Dumanic, a writer and trauma counselor. She is founder and director of SCILS, a NGO focused on reconstruction and development with a gender perspective;
2. Džidža Hatidža Pecenkovic, a university professor who has been a peace and human rights activist since

Photo: IFOR's WPP stock



1992. She is the founder and director of the NGO Women from Una in Bihac, and has received awards for her humanitarian and peace work;

3. Nadežda Radović, a former member of the Women in Black group in Belgrade. She is a writer and university teacher, and active in peace initiatives throughout Serbia. She is also co-writer of the book "Women's side of the War"; and

4. Arjeta Rexhaj Arjeta, the Executive Director of the Gender Training and Research Center in Kosova. She lobbies for women's rights, and in 2003 worked on the "Political Parties Work for Women" campaign together with the Kosovo Women Initiative.

The Balkans Strategic Planning Process during the Soesterberg Conference

The first evening of the conference welcomed the women from the different cases, and provided them with an opportunity to get to know each other. During the conference days, the different delegations worked intensively on a strategic planning process by drafting Action Plans for their specific regions. These were commented on by several experts (including representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as civil society) at the end of the three days.

During the strategic planning sessions, the Balkans delegates noted that all the countries of the Balkans feel that

"our victims are the only victims; and our heroes are their criminals", which implies that each group feels victimized most by the war, and blames other ethnic groups for its suffering. Women's and other human rights groups tend to operate within their own country and ethnic group, and do not look beyond these borders. This attitude of thinking in categories is also kept alive by the ones who are in power. The four women felt therefore that education for non-violence is absolutely necessary to overcome this.

Analysis

Three strategies were identified in order to deal with the existing divisions:

- a) To be explicit about the division between the states and the ethnic groups, without jeopardizing the activists;
- b) To invest in awareness-raising and capacity development amongst the population;
- c) To undertake actions to overcome the divisions that those in power keep up.

A Balkans-wide initiative

When analyzing how to improve the current situation, the delegates concluded that lack of communication and trust among the different groups needed to be tackled first in order for other projects to be sustainable. Therefore, it was unanimously decided to create a joint initiative named: "Bringing women of the Balkans together to get to know each other and to build trust." The Balkans delegation decided that this initiative's primary aim should be to bring about a Culture of Peace in the Balkans, by building awareness and developing society's capacity for peace.

In order for the initiative to be a success, the group decided that it should be a Balkans-wide initiative, bridging the

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Building trust...

divide between the different states and ethnic groups, and involving both men and women. It was decided that the first step would be to gather 'key players' from the Balkans region in an easily accessible venue, in order to decide on and sign a partnership agreement on this initiative. For this, the group proposed to organize a three-day conference, during which the participating organizations would agree on the network principles and agree on both methodology and joint activities to be organized. The conference would invite participants from women's and pacifist groups from 11 Balkans countries: Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, and Slovenia.

The Balkans delegation decided that the conference should focus on the following points, in order for it to be a success:

- 1) Clear explanation of the rationale of the conference to the participants, including the current situation in the Balkans and the need for joint action;
- 2) Present and discuss UNSCR 1325;
- 3) Establish a Balkans-wide network agreeing on network mission and future plans;
- 4) Create a structure to further develop the plans.

The three days of intensive brainstorming and working together also had an effect on the delegates themselves. For instance, the participant from Kosovo explained how she always identified herself as a woman from "Kosovo – the youngest nation in the world." However, the conference had helped her to see how much she had in common with the other activists from the Balkans, and made her identify with being "a woman from the Balkans," as well.

At the time of this writing, the delegates have written a project proposal in order to fundraise for their ideas. The first preparatory meeting for the conference will take place in early December in Banja Luka, and two follow-up meetings are planned for the beginning of 2009. The conference will likely take place in April 2009.

IFOR's Women Peacemakers Program will keep you updated on the developments of the Balkans project. For more information, please visit the WPP's website at: <http://ifor.org/WPP/index.html>.

José de Vries is IFOR's WPP Information Officer and a regular contributor to IFOR in Action. José can be contacted at: j.devries@ifor.org ■

Photo: IFOR's WPP stock



Teaching Peace, EMPATH.EU: a cooperation of European branches

by Abe Thijs

*An exchange between organizations on
Adult peace education*

Since September 2007, three European Peace organizations, two of which are IFOR-branches, are working together on a project on peace education. The Dutch branch Kerk en Vrede, the German branch Versöhnungsbund, and the French Coalition pour la Decennie (of which the French Mir France is a member organization) received funding from the European Grundtvig Learning Partnership funds.

The project that was started has the name: EMPATH.EU

The proposal was written by the Austrian Netzwerk für Frieden und Gewaltfreiheit (closely linked to the Austrian FOR), and they still have a strong advisory role in the project. The main purpose of the project is an exchange between organizations on Adult peace education, to get to know each other better, and to work together on trainings and projects regarding peace education in different forms. The funding enabled all the partners to travel to different meetings, which since September 2007 have been held in Paris, Minden, School, Paris and Kehl. During these meetings, the partners discussed their own work on peace education and tried to combine this work into a series of trainings and training material.

Although the project is still ongoing, the biggest success was a presentation at the Salon de la Paix in Paris in June. For an audience of about 30 people, the partners explained the idea of the project, and the work that had been done up to that point. The reactions were very positive, and it was great to have a presentation at such a big event.

The goal of the partners is to come up with a training that is based on best practices of the partners and that covers the different levels of Non-Violent Communication. This training could for example be used by trainers in Non-Violent Communication, but also might be very useful for teachers in high school or primary school.

The training wants to show that Non-Violent-Communication and Non-Violence is not only a way to solve conflicts, however small they can be, but is also a way of life and can very much prevent conflicts, especially among students



Photo: Abe Thijs, Kerk en Vrede

and youth.

The project is now in the phase where work on the end product has begun, and the project will end in the summer of 2009. The next project meetings will be in Amsterdam in January, in Paris in March/April, and the final seminar will also be in the Netherlands, in the summer of 2009, when hopefully the training will be presented and perhaps even taught to a group of volunteers.

The partners are considering applying for a second project for the years 2009-2011, which could be extended to other European partners. If any European partners are interested in this project and its results, or are interested in participating in a follow-up, you may contact me (Abe Thijs, Kerk en Vrede) at: abethijs@gmail.com.

Also, for this project a website was set up, where you can find the presentations that were given at Salon and a little bit more about the partners: www.empath.eu

EMPATH.EU is a very good example of cooperation on a European level, and the different branches of IFOR are showing that they can really learn from each other, which was exactly the goal of the project!

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Vicenza: crossroads of the contradictions that afflict our time

by Paolo Candelari

BGA REPORT

Preface

In the last 2 years many peace and nonviolent associations have been engaged with the protest against a new US military base, projected in Vicenza. There, convinced that we don't need new military plants, but a new politics of peace, a MIR local group is present to organize many events, involve citizens, groups, churches. MIR brings with this popular resistance campaign the position of nonviolence, its richness and the many opportunities it could give to the struggle.

In this article we want to explain what is happening in Vicenza and how this campaign is important not only for the peace movement but for democracy, as well.

The context

In recent years, the US Army has been reorganizing military bases around the world to adjust their military strategy. The decision to establish a new military base is within this design. The logistical and operational structure of the 173rd Airborne Brigade will be composed of six battalions, bringing together the two already based in Vicenza (2,600 soldiers), with four stationed in Germany (1,700 soldiers) according to the so-called "Future Combat System." This is a program of modernization of the Armed Forces USA, which provides a network of modular units equipped with high technology measures "pre-emptive attack, deterrence and nuclear deterrence, also called Punta diamond;" and it will be the largest in Europe and the only one on this side of the Alps with an area of influence throughout the Mediterranean and the Middle East.

On 26 March 2003, after Turkey denied the use of its territory, the brigade was sent into Northern Iraq, where it was parachuted into the area of Bashur and thus began the northern front. It was used in Afghanistan too, in support of "Enduring Freedom." Now the brigade is partly located in Afghanistan.

The U.S. military operation on 26 March 2003 violated the Constitution and specifically the Italian Art. 11: "Italy rejects war as an instrument of offense to freedom of other peoples and as a means of settling international disputes..."

Vicenza military city



Photos: Paolo Candelari, FOR Italy

The area used for the military (including Dal Molin airport) and by the U.S. army is approximately 3,049,000 square meters. Therein are: "Ederle" barracks (612,000 square meters), the American Village for soldiers and officers with their families (289,000), 2 underground military posts (10 km from Vicenza) and other posts for military vehicles.

The airport Dal Molin, where it is expected the new U.S. post will be located, is located about 2 km. from the center of the town and will occupy 600,000 square meters. Even if the government continues to deny this, we have the conviction that the whole area of Dal Molin will be used for military purposes.

Cost of the U.S. posts, paid by Italian citizens?

The U.S. posts in Italy will be a significant cost to the State and to the community. In 2004, Italy paid 41% of the expenses; this amounted to € 440,000,000.00—called "sharing of the costs in managing and maintaining barracks of the troops." In the case of divestiture of the posts, the Italian government pays compensation to the U.S., as economic costs of urban improvements are made by the armed forces. In addition, the reimbursement increases within three years, if the structures and the land will be used. The Municipality of Vicenza has other expenditures for infrastructure: roads (the ring road connecting the two U.S. bases will cost € 500,000,000.00), drainage systems, electricity, etc.

The protests against the construction of the new U.S. military post at Dal Molin

Demonstrations and mobilizations have been various, and with great participation. The movement in Vicenza is

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Vicenza: crossroads...

composed of different souls and not always in harmony with each other.

For more than two years, every week there has been a Vicenza event related to the opposition of the new military post. Principal actions taken can be summarized as:

- Events
- Demonstration outside the Municipal Council
- Awareness of the American military (meeting with American deserters, sit in/out of Ederle to ask for the desertions)
- Conferences (theologians, lawyers, environmental

ised a referendum to decide what to do with Dal Molin area. The mayor and municipal council on 8 July voted on the resolution, authorizing the referendum, against pressure from provincial, regional and from the government, showing courage and consistency.

The question submitted for consultation on 5 October 2008 is: "Is she supporting the adoption by the municipal council of Vicenza, as the body of administrative policy, a decision to start the process of acquiring the assets, after sdemanializzazione (expropriation/seizure of), of the Municipal airport 'Dal Molin' – where there is planned the construction of a U.S. military base – to be allocated for purposes of collective safeguarding the environmental integrity of the site?"

The state council (an administrative court), following an appeal of government, on 1 October, issued an order to block the Consultation.

The mobilization is immediate and movements against the base, together with the majority party, formed the Committee for consultation. In less than three days they organized the consultation themselves. The committee produced a regulation, appointed guarantors for electoral operations, established polling stations. Vicenza has 108,000 inhabitants, with 84,000 voters. The result (given the institutional fury against the junta and the movement) was positive, considering government boycott: 28.56% of the electorate (24,094 votes) voted and 95% (23,050 votes) voted "Yes." The result indicates that the city is beginning to question the presence of the U.S. military on its territory, wants to understand the details: Why are they there, for what purpose, what impact will

this have on the territory.

Conversion from military to civilian

A conference was formed to analyze alternatives to militarization of the area and to show some alternative proposals:

- Space for a University.
- Scientific-Technological Park: offer services to new firms and make research on new technologies.
- Renewable Energy Project: a project for research and developing technologies for the production and use of energy from renewable sources. This would be connected with the research on the product, accessories and solutions to use innovative installation with the purpose of reducing CO2 emissions. The recent stance of the

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e-newsletter



impact, nonviolent popular defense)

- Initiatives for the referendum
- Collect signatures
- Vigils and marches
- Petition for a moratorium on military work
- Conference on the conversion of U.S. bases from military to civilian

This should be remembered: the great, national march on 17 February 2007 with the presence of over 130,000 people.

The change of mayor and referendum
In April 2008, the people elected a mayor who had prom-

Vicenza: crossroads...

European Union is precisely in this direction, having set an objective to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases by 20% in the coming years.

- Youth Center: In the military area of "Dal Molin" there are two swimming pools and a gym. There are also buildings which, in part, could be used as a meeting place, for young people.

- Fire Brigade: "Dal Molin" could host a center for emergency aid (fire brigade, interventions in forest areas, to protect environments and in the case of other natural disasters).

- Cultural Center: Creating a center dedicated to cultural events, exhibitions, conferences, meetings, etc.

At the moment, the Government, despite referendum results, decided to continue the building of the new U.S. military base at the airport Dal Molin. The mobilization will continue and will turn into nonviolent resistance with the conviction that as long as there's life, there's hope for a better world. MIR members will be on the front lines, together with other Vicenza citizens, in this important resistance.



Vicenza, November; 2008-11-30 MIR section of Vicenza

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HOPING AGAINST HOPE

by Makios Phiri

BGA REPORT

A peacemaker's perspective in Zimbabwe

When I woke up this morning I found myself singing the song, "We shall overcome: We shall overcome someday; deep in my heart I do believe we shall overcome someday."

While still meditating upon the words of the song and wondering where on earth am I drawing such hope, my phone rang. That was about 4.45am Zimbabwean time. The person on the line was a friend in Mount Darwin, a small town in Mashonaland Central province. She is a nurse by profession but along with other nurses has not been going to work for weeks now and technically the hospital she works at is down, and that is one of the biggest referral hospitals in the province.

What pained me most is she was celebrating and thanking God for a 20 kilogram pack of maize meal she got yesterday. To think of somebody of her profession celebrating over a small 20 kilogram pack of maize made my heart bleed. If nurses can view such as a privilege my question then was how is the ordinary person in Mount Darwin surviving and upon questioning she told me there is mass starvation.

My mind quickly went back to a meeting of pastors we had yesterday in Harare where a Bulawayo pastor explained how he recently buried eleven people who died not of cholera, not of HIV AIDS or any of those common diseases but people who died of starvation. But still the words were coming and are still coming into my heart even as I write this, "We shall overcome someday"

I look outside my window, this is now 7.23 am Zimbabwean time, and crowds of people are queuing at a borehole we drilled at our place, (I stay in a church premise). What they are all hoping to get is at least a bucket of clean water as there has not been mains water in Warren Park for sometime. Something strikes me, within those waiting to get water are children of school going age who have not been going to school for weeks now as schools have technically closed as no teachers are reporting for duty.

I am still wondering where I am still getting my hope. Is there a reason to be hopeful in Zimbabwe? What with the news I received on Monday that my HIV positive sister, who lost her house during the election violence, was diagnosed TB but is failing to get the first course drugs. Even

if she gets the drugs, where is she going to get the necessary nutrition along with many such people not only in Epworth where she stays but the country over?

Probably my hope is coming from the knowledge that God is always in control of situations and His knowledge is superior to ours. That is why this Sunday I shall ask the 250 membership of our church to dedicate some time to pray for Zimbabwe.

I still have hope.

If only we can build a strong nonviolent constituency at grassroots level, a community of peace lovers and peacemakers, we can be assured that our suffering will not turn into violence and launch us into yet another vicious cycle. I reflect on the debate our youths had recently. The topic was, "Do I need peace or do I need food" Such is a reflection of the mood on the ground. Still I do believe we shall overcome someday.

It is times like these that one really feels a need to be loved, a need to be supported, a need to be prayed for, a need to be remembered. Is the world watching and waiting for a worse disaster or has the world become so blind and deaf that all the cries of the children of Zimbabwe are not loud enough to awaken it. I am always surprised by this paradox that when things were well in Zimbabwe, our peace initiatives used to get a lot of moral, material and financial support. Now that we are in a desperate need it seems everyone has joined the ever growing crowd of spectators watching the game unfolding in Zimbabwe. But the game may turn very nasty and even the spectators may end up wishing if only they had become involved.

But I still have hope. What drives my hope is at least I am doing the best I can. Even if my grandchildren will ask me where was I when all these things were happening, I will tell them. I will tell them that I traveled the country over attempting to create a culture of peace and nonviolence, I will tell them I initiated reconciliation programs, I will tell them I did the best I could. I will tell them I initiated programs to train young people in vocational skills in order for them to be productive, I will tell them I never kept quiet and I will tell them I allowed the whole community to come and have water at my place when Warren Park was dry. I will tell them we ran a small school for high school children at our church when all other public schools had no teachers.

I still have hope. We shall overcome someday.

(Peacemaker's perspective is an article written by Makios Phiri; contact Makios at makios@yahoo.com)

Makios Phiri is a pastor with a local church in Harare, Warren Park and a coordinator of FOR Zimbabwe's Nonviolence Education and Training Program. ■

Peace Makers Society Cameroon

by Wirlen Aver Lucas

BGA REPORT

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Peace Makers Society Cameroon, in partnership with IFOR's WPP African Regional Desk based in Ghana, organized an intensive three (3) day "Participatory Grass-roots Nonviolence Education and Training for women group leaders from villages involved in bloody inter-tribal conflicts in the North West Region of Cameroon at the Baptist Centre conference hall Nkwen Bamenda from the 3rd to the 5th of November, 2008.

e-newsletter The training, using the participatory methodology of role play, case studies, group discussions, lectures and presentations by participants, was aimed at bringing women group leaders from different conflict affected areas to share experiences on their different situations and pave the way forward to improve on their understanding of conflict and how to understand resolution 1325, to produce effective anti-conflict female advocates who have responsibility of training group members, and finally to reduce the level of women's involvement in conflicts.

The participants were drilled on definitions of peace and non-violence, telling local stories of peace and non violence, gender and conflict, discussing gender role in conflicts how to start and maintain a women action group; Resoultion 1325, coping with conflicts, rules of mediation, mediation role play, analyzing conflicts in the media, using the media for peace, religion, women's rights, how to start a zonal consultation and amnesty.

There was a review of each module to ascertain whether participants understood the training and a final evaluation. By press time, participants had returned to their work stations, and already 926 women have been trained in conflict zones by creating a local early warning system mechanism, which has greatly reduced the conflicts in these villages. There will be an additional review in January and a public offer of restitution in March 2009.

This training is a sequel to the three (3) day training in March for youth leaders from universities, schools and youth groups on nonviolence education and training co-sponsored by the Non-violence Action Community of Cascadia, Seattle.

Wirlen Aver Lucas is Programme Coordinator of Peace Makers Society (Cameroon), and Wirlen can be contacted at:

Christians and Muslims together for peace

by Karin Haglind

BGA REPORT

In late November, SweFOR co-organized a conference on religion and peace with the new organisation Swedish Muslims for Peace and Justice. About 25 people, half Christian and half Muslim, congregated in the city of Sigtuna to talk about how to work together for peace and how faith can be a great inspiration in our work. One idea that came up was that to hold joint workshops in schools and other arenas.

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Photos: FOR Sweden, Karin Haglind



A Call for Action addressed to the International institutions and State representatives concerning security in South Caucasus

Submitted by Isabelle Nilsson

Kvinna till Kvinna

Photo: Kvinna till Kvinna website



At a meeting in Istanbul from 22nd to 25th September, representatives of more than twenty civil society organisations throughout South Caucasus who reach out to hundreds of thousands of people in the region, agreed on key measures to ensure security in the region. We urge the leaders to listen to us.

To ensure lasting peace in the region the international community must look at the situation in the whole South Caucasus. For over fifteen years the conflicts in South Caucasus were frozen. The political leaders were unable to solve the conflicts by peaceful means with the consequence that one of the conflicts burst out into the open this summer. Good relations between countries must, in all conflict resolution, be based on solving conflicting views on security, borders and natural resources through talks and negotiations. Conflict resolution must be built around dialogue and respect for the views of the other party.

The UN, the EU and OSCE, and the concerned States must respect the following demands if they are serious in their efforts to help resolve the conflicts:

1. Leaders of various countries and international organisations should meet not only with high-profile state leaders, but also with local civil society representatives, in particular women's organisations, when they visit South Caucasus. Since the beginning of the conflicts we have worked to find peaceful solutions. We have mobilised and educated women and worked over conflict lines. We have knowledge, experience and are ready to partake!
2. The international community should facilitate the establishment of a South Caucasus civil society committee with the purpose to monitor the security situation for the population in the region, including for women. Regional leaders as well as international actors should consult the committee through a structured dialogue on a regular basis and ahead of high level political meetings.
3. The international community should give financial support directly to civil society organisations. They should also follow up financial support channelled through the government, to prevent corruption and ensure that money reaches out in a democratic way, i.e not only to organisations favouring the ruling party.
4. Support to displaced people must be based on consultation with these groups and organisations working for their rights. The international community, as well as regional leaders must acknowledge that displaced persons are a diverse group and ensure that support measures are adjusted to individual needs. There is a great risk that men's violence against women increases in refugee camps, including trafficking. In the whole South Caucasus there are over

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Call for Action...

1.5 million displaced persons, of which a majority are women. Many have lived away from their homes for almost 15 years and have been subjected to discrimination and used for political purposes.

5. To ensure democracy, measures must be taken to eradicate discrimination between men and women. Women's rights and status in society must be strengthened. In a majority of the countries in the region there are no laws criminalising men's violence against women. Throughout the region women are discriminated in work places and in politics. Old traditions still prevail, hindering women to inherit, to own property, and permitting early marriages.

6. In accordance with UN Security Council resolution 1325 women of South Caucasus must be invited to official peace negotiations and get information well in advance to be able to influence the agenda. International civil and military peacekeeping missions should appoint gender advisors.

We, the signatories of this call for action, firmly believe that women's equal participation is a prerequisite for development, peace and democracy.

e-newsletter

Signed by:

Democrat Woman of Samtskhe-Javakheti
 Women's Hope
 Cultural Humanitarian "Fund Sukhumi"
 Association Imedi – IDP women for peace
 Women's Political Resource Centre
 Association Gaenati
 Anti-Violence network of Georgia
 Women's Information Centre
 Union of Wives of Invalids and Lost-Warriors
 Association Avangardi
 Union of Business Women of Gagra
 Union of Business Women of Abkhazia
 Peace Without Violence
 Centre of social and Psychological assistance for women
 Association of Women of Abkazia
 Journalist for Human Rights
 Association of South Ossetian Women for Democracy and Human Rights
 Women's Rights Centre
 Democracy today 3
 Women's Resource Centre
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 Feminist Group of YUVA
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 Lira Kozaeva
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 Lara Aharonian
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 Novella Jafarova
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Follow this link to the call for action on Kvinna till Kvinna's webpage: <http://www.kvinnatillkvinna.se/article/3344>

In Kvinna till Kvinna's press section you will soon also find our letter to the World Bank with their reply concerning their needs assessment for the development assistance to the region in connection to the crisis: <http://www.kvinnatillkvinna.se/article/3014>

The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation supports women's organising in conflict regions. They collaborate with women's organisations that play an active part in peace and rebuilding processes. Kvinna till Kvinna supports all 24 women's organizations in the South Caucasus, and they are also present in the Middle East and in the Balkans where they began their work at the beginning of the 1990s.

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Secretariat Update! *We are happy to announce a new addition called the "Secretariat Update." In this section you will learn more about what's happening around the IFOR office in Alkmaar from IFOR's Executive Director John Schot.*



Last month was a busy month for all staff members within the International Secretariat in Alkmaar. John Schot, IFOR's Executive Director, spent 20 days in the USA visiting the FOR USA branch and traveling with Mark Johnson (FOR USA's Executive Director) through the States, visiting FOR USA chapters and related institutes. The aim of the visit was to strengthen ties between the International Secretariat and IFOR's biggest branch FOR USA. Discussions took place with the board of FOR USA, as well as with FOR USA's staff, for further cooperation amongst others in the field of interfaith dialogue.

Last month was also focused on meeting with the WPP program evaluator and fine-tuning his terms of reference. The WPP staff put tremendous efforts into the final phase of the current program cycle. The external evaluator will conduct a survey into the decentralization process of WPP's desks in Accra and India and see how the process of decentralization (January 1, 2009) went. During this busy period, IFOR also received good news that the African Desk in Accra has received a grant of € 1.5 million from the Dutch government (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) to continue WPP ef-

forts in West Africa.

IFOR's Non Violent Education (NVE) program also received a boost by getting approval on a grant from UNESCO. NVE will now be able to organize a conference on this same topic with its European partners.

IFOR's past interim manager, Mark Forget, went to Spain to give a lecture on non-violent action for the University of Barcelona, and he is currently working on a proposal (Focal Point) for FOR Zimbabwe. IFOR still receives alarming news from our brothers and sisters in Zimbabwe, and IFOR continues to update the rest of the movement with as much information as possible via our website and newsletters. Our thoughts are always with FOR Zimbabwe and our other BGA's in troubled areas throughout the world, especially during these difficult times. ■



UNESCO Conference in Paris, France on September 2008 attended by John Schot and José de Vries, representing IFOR

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS: IFOR in ACTION

IFOR in ACTION #50 will appear in February of 2009, a special edition on peace and nonviolence initiatives in *the Americas*. We are looking for contributions in the form of articles, interviews, upcoming events, recent activities organized, resources, photos, important dates, and absolutely anything else you wish to share with the rest of the IFOR movement. The International Secretariat warmly invites you to contribute to the next issue of IFOR in ACTION. We especially hope to hear from Branches, Groups and Affiliates located in the Americas.

Contact Stan Morris, Editor (s.morris@ifor.org)

BOOK WATCH

Panther Soup: Travels Through Europe in War and Peace

Author: John Gimlette
Hardcover Book
Retail Price: \$26.00
Abunga Price: \$16.38

Amazon - Tue, 26 Aug 2008:

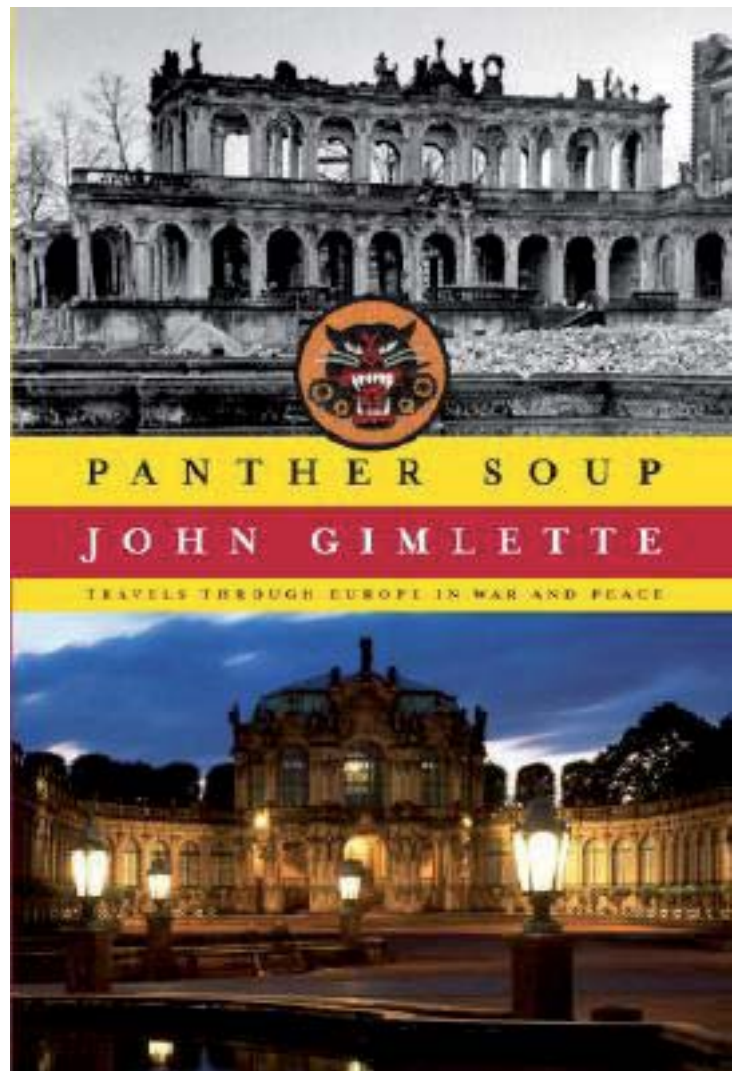
In 2004, John Gimlette set off across Europe, following in the footsteps of one of the greatest armies ever assembled: the United States forces of 1944-45. His guide (emotionally if not geographically) was Putnam Flint, an eighty-six-year-old Bostonian who had landed in Marseille in the midst of World War II with his tank destroyer battalion, nicknamed The Panthers. With Flint's help, Gimlette traveled back through the war to try to grasp the physical, social, and psychological realities of the smashed and sodden continent that Europe had become. "Panther Soup" is the heartfelt, keenly observed--and often unexpectedly humorous--chronicle of that journey: a brilliant hybrid of travelogue and personalized military history.

From Marseille, north to Dijon and Alsace, Paris and Lorraine, across the Rhine into Germany, and eventually south through the Alps into Austria, Gimlette provides a vivid impression of the route as it is today, from spectacular landscapes to cities that have risen from cinders. He reveals the ways in which the war is both memorialized and buried, and meshes his account with recollections from Flint and other survivors they meet along the way: former enemies and refugees, heroines and "resisters, children of the blitzkrieg."

Here is an uncommonly evocative mixture of past and present, a meeting of cultures, and a deeply personal assessment of one of the most tumultuous moments in world history.

About John Gimlette

John Gimlette has won the Shiva Naipaul Memorial Prize and the Wanderlust Travel Writing Award, and he writes regularly for "The Daily Telegraph, The Guardian, and Conde Nast Traveller." When not traveling, he practices law in London, where he lives with his family.



Media: Hardcover Book

ISBN-10: 0307265420

ISBN-13: 9780307265425

Publisher: Alfred A. Knopf

Published: 4/2008 Pages: 400

Height: 1.5" Weight: 1.6lbs

Length: 9.5" Width: 6.6" ■

EVENTS

Church and Peace International Conference and General Assembly 2009

“Guide our feet into the way of peace”

60 years peace witness and ecumenical dialog

Program: meeting, encounter, exchange, sharing, informations, celebration of the 60th anniversary of Church and Peace, theological reflections.

The conference will discuss and approve a contribution of the Peace Churches to the Decade to Overcome Violence and especially to the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation, planned for the beginning of May 2011 in Kingston, Jamaica.

Dates: June 11 – 14, 2009

Venue: Theological Seminary and Conference Centre Bienenberg, Liestal, Switzerland

Church and Peace is a European, ecumenical network of peace churches and peace church-oriented congregations, communities and service agencies.

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Wi'am, Christmas Smile Project

Christmas in Bethlehem, “The ancient dream: a cold, clear night made brilliant by a glorious star, the smell of incense, shepherds and wise men falling to their knees in adoration of the sweet baby, the incarnation of perfect love.”

— Lucinda Franks “Pilgrimage” NY Times 23 Dec 84

Christmas is to be a time of peace and celebration; however, life in Bethlehem (the place of Jesus’ birth) has become difficult due to economic deprivation and the occupation, making an atmosphere of celebration difficult. As a result, many children in Bethlehem do not experience the joy of Christmas or the excitement of a Christmas gift.

Every year Wi'am provides the opportunity for Christmas celebration and the restoration of hope, through its Christmas Smile Project. This program reaches out to children, who are often most affected by the general situation, and tries to restore joy in the season. The project usually attracts around one thousand children and their families in Bethlehem and the neighboring cities.

Part of the Christmas program is to give every child a small educational gift of 10 dollars in value. In order for this project to take place, we need the support of your churches, families, philanthropist, and social committees. Through prayer, warm thoughts, and financial support, you can help hundreds of children and their families have a joyful experience at Christmas.

Learn more about Wi'am and the “Christmas Smile Project” at <http://alashlah.org/>. Any support that is given will be greatly appreciated by Wi'am.

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NEWS

FOR England Delegation to Israel and Palestine November 2008

Four members of Fellowship of Reconciliation, England traveled to Israel and Palestine for a two week delegation from Monday the 10th to Saturday 22nd of November as part of a joint delegation with Interfaith Peace Builders and American Friends Service Committee. With 20+ other British and American delegates, they visited Palestinian and Israeli grassroots peacemakers.

“We will be experiencing and engaging in nonviolent peacemaking in a region where violence has prevailed as the solution to conflict. It is our hope to be empowered as peacemakers, to gain a first hand understanding of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, to learn new peacemaking skills, and to make lifelong friends,” emailed Martha Beale, one of the delegates, just before leaving for Tel Aviv.

“We really hope you will want to hear about our experiences and the people and places we will be visiting. If so, please visit our blog, ‘Stories of Peace’ at <http://storiesofpeace.blogspot.com/> and feel free to leave comments for us. We hope to be able to read any comments and update the blog every few days while we are away.”

During the delegation IFPB also sent out reports about the trip, and one final email after the delegation to promote media coverage. To review these reports please visit their Stories of Peace blog at <http://www.ifpbdel.org/contact.html>.

Martha continues, “Your support, thoughts and prayers mean a lot to all of us who are going, and our friends and family. We thank you for all the support you have and are offering and look forward to telling you all about it upon our return!”

Fellowship of Reconciliation <http://www.for.org.uk/>

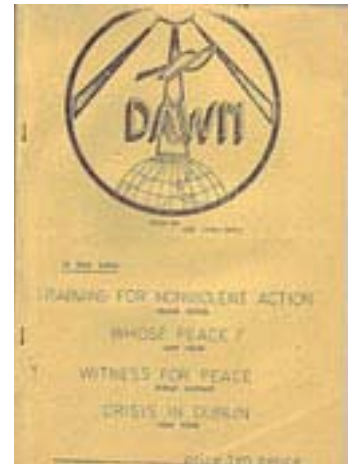
The FoR began in 1914 when, on the brink of war, a German and an Englishman parted company on Cologne station with the words “We are one in Christ and can never be at war.” Inspired by that pledge, about 130 Christians of all denominations gathered in Cambridge, England at the end of 1914 and set up the FoR. ■

INNATE: New on our photo site!

New images have been uploaded to the INNATE photo website at flickr:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/30253151@N07/sets/>

1. INNATE events; INNATE has organised a wide variety of seminars and other events over the years and this photo set features publicity material for just some of them.



2. Dawn, 1974+; The Dawn group, and its associated magazine, began in 1974 and was a predecessor of INNATE. This photo set shows a magazine production weekend at work, a couple of nonviolence trainings (Dublin and Belfast), and a war toys action in Belfast, all at the start of the 1980s – yes, more than a quarter century ago.

The Dawn group produced a monthly magazine, ‘Dawn,’ from 1974 until 1984-5. The occasional publication ‘Dawn Train’ continued for some time and became associated with INNATE. Like INNATE, Dawn had associations with the War Resisters International (WRI) and International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR).

Some ‘Dawn’ pamphlets are on the INNATE website at www.innatenonviolence.org/pamphlets/index.shtml and more Dawn material will be added in due course.

To see the latest photos and images uploaded by IFOR Affiliate INNATE, please go to <http://www.flickr.com/photos/30253151@N07/sets/>.

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OPPORTUNITIES

**Invitation to the Associated Organisations,
National Councils of Churches and Partner
Organisations of the Conference of European
Churches for the 13th CEC Assembly**

Lyon, France, 15-21 July 2009

In accordance with the requirements of the Constitution and following the decisions taken by the CEC Presidium in Cartigny (April 2007) and the CEC Central Committee in Vienna (November 2007), the Conference of European Churches (CEC) has the pleasure of inviting you to

nominate one delegated representative to the 13th CEC Assembly, with the theme:

“Called to One Hope in Christ”

The theme is inspired by a passage from the Letter to the Ephesians (chapter 4), where the Apostle Paul underlines the unity of the body of Christ. It was agreed upon by the Central Committee of CEC, which met in Vienna, Austria, from 14-17 November 2007.

The Assembly is the highest decision-making authority of CEC, at which the previous six years’ activity is reviewed and the future direction is set for the Conference. As stated in the Constitution, the Assembly “shall promote fellowship, the determination of a common purpose and cooperation between the churches in Europe” particularly through discussion of a common theme as well as carrying out the important business which includes the election of the next Central Committee.

The Assembly will begin on the afternoon of Wednesday, 15th July and end on the evening of Monday, 20th July 2009 (departures are foreseen for Tuesday, 21st July).

Learn more about the 13th Assembly of the Conference of European Churches and an opportunity to nominate one delegated representative to the 13th CEC Assembly at: <http://assembly.ceceurope.org/> ■

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The International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR) was founded in 1919 and now has member organizations in over 48 countries around the world. IFOR supports the activities of these member organizations through worldwide programs, active nonviolence training, supporting and linking women peacemakers who live in conflict situations, empowering young people in making a contribution to non-violence, and campaigning for disarmament.

IFOR members are committed to active nonviolence and come from every major religious tradition. IFOR has consultative status with the United Nations and UNESCO.

For more information about IFOR, visit our website at www.ifor.org.

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Layout / Design: Stan Morris

Proofreading: Virginia Baron

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