

Dear Reader

This issue of the CCTS Review contains details of our recent Committee-only seminar on 'Campaigning Power and Civil Courage: Bringing 'People Power' back into Conflict Transformation'. It contains the paper by Howard Clark on which the seminar was based and, starting on page 10, a summary of the seminar itself. We hope you will find it interesting.

Campaigning Power and Civil Courage: Bringing 'People Power' back into Conflict Transformation

a discussion paper by Howard Clark

This paper begins with some reflections on the early history of the CCTS and on the characteristics of Conflict Transformation as an approach. The second section moves on to discuss the need for Conflict Transformation workshops to include the dimension of nonviolent struggle, even of combat – not just of empowering the peace forces in society but also *undermining* the forces for war. This can be seen as strengthening the adversarial element of conflict transformation. The concluding section notes some of the pitfalls and dilemmas of People Power, while also identifying what conflict transformation thinking adds to the approach.

1. CCTS early history

The CCTS began in 1992 – under the name the Coordinating Committee for Conflict Resolution Training in Europe¹ – with the goal of multiplying the number of conflict resolution trainers in East and Central Europe, a need expressed repeatedly by people from that region at the Helsinki Citizens Assembly in Bratislava in March 1992. Yet the very first activity funded by the Committee – a trip to Osijek, Croatia, by Adam Curle and Judith Large – fundamentally changed our understanding of that need. Adam and Judith found the would-be trainers flat-sitting, to prevent an eviction, and they found them threatened – both their safety and their livelihood.

From then on, it was clear that what was needed was not so much the transfer of conflict resolution and in particular mediation skills as a range of types of support for emerging values-based groups that were challenging the dominant social attitudes.

¹ I will refer to the Committee as CCTS, whatever its name was at the time to which I am referring.

1a) Human rights advocacy and conflict transformation go together

This statement has always seemed self-evident within CCTS. It was part of the platform of the Helsinki Citizens Assembly itself. Moreover, most founder members of the Committee favoured 'active nonviolence', in particular nonviolent struggle for justice by oppressed groups. Then the first additional organisation to join CCTS – International Alert – was a body born of the need felt by human rights activists to address the conflicts underlying the violation of rights.²

For CCTS, it was clear that the people within a conflict who are stirred to respond to human rights issues are often those most motivated to engage in dialogue and other conflict resolution initiatives. However, various dilemmas occur in combining human rights advocacy with conflict resolution work – some of which we discussed in the first CCTS seminar, *A Time to Take Sides*.

1b) Civil courage and a sense of empowerment are essential for peace work

The theory of conflict resolution tends to concentrate more on the relationship between the conflicting parties than on the relationship between would-be peacemakers and their own community. In the situations CCTS initially addressed – the context of ethnic violence in former-'Communist' Europe – people were frequently rejected by their own ethnic group for refusing to hate 'the Other'. Moreover, many well-meaning people felt helpless when conflicts that had previously existed as undercurrents swelled into a tidal wave sweeping all before them. Part of our work has therefore revolved around the theme of empowerment, including strengthening group cohesion, debating values and clarifying strategy. There has, of course, been work to maintain, revive or establish connections between hostile communities, but – especially in the CCTS's early days and in the Balkans – my impression is that we paid more attention to strengthening the 'peace constituency' within particular communities.

1c) Conflict transformation has to address the realities of power

This insight has been central to the approach of CCTS members. Power relations, power imbalances, power structures – examining these is a critical part of conflict analysis. In particular, I think CCTS members have recognised that conflict transformation can require shifts in power, and that it can be a sign of progress when a latent conflict moves into a phase of overt confrontation. Workshop design has been informed by the analysis of stages of conflict and changing power relations. (See Fig. 1 below – a diagram by Committee chair Diana Francis and one-time Treasurer Guus Meijer on stages in conflict and shifts in power.)³ Sometimes, this analysis would lead to questioning some lines of work or even rejecting invitations. In 1993 someone was lobbying Adam Curle to train Kosovo Albanians in negotiation and – although Adam later made light of his response, as if it was just a way of side-stepping further commitments – he made a profound remark: 'No, the power imbalance is too grave for negotiation'. In discussing and agreeing what is appropriate in a workshop we need what hispanophones might (and John Paul Lederach does) call *conjunctural analysis* – 'the capacity to identify, understand, and strategically analyse the immediate situation-in-context'.⁴

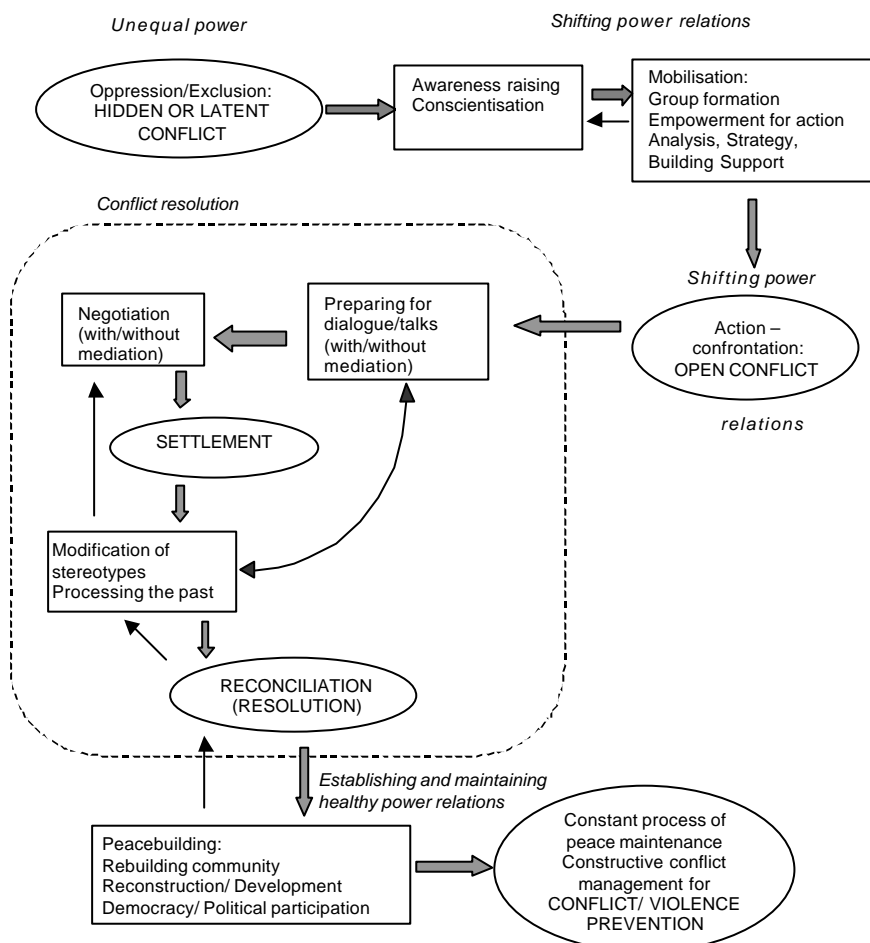
I think the Committee has always defined 'waging nonviolent conflict' as being within its remit, and indeed the existence of groups making demands and exerting pressure for social justice is intrinsic to the very idea of conflict transformation.

² I believe that International Alert grew out of Martin Ennals's frustration as secretary-general of Amnesty International. Recognising that reports of human rights violations are often an early warning of severe conflict to come, he saw the need for a fuller response than the restrictive Amnesty mandate would permit.

³ Fig 1 published in Diana Francis, *Peace, People and Power: Conflict Transformation in Action* (Pluto Press, 2002), pp 49-51.

⁴ John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (US Institute of Peace, 1997), p. 119

Fig. 1 Stages and Processes in Conflict Transformation



2. The dimension of waging conflict

The main purpose of this section of the paper is to suggest how the element of nonviolent combat can be strengthened in peace-building strategies and in thinking about conflict transformation.

2a) Renouncing violence will not automatically reduce the violence against you

One of the aims of conflict transformation trainers is to show that there are alternatives to violence in a situation – alternatives both to joining the perpetrators of violence and to trying to avoid simply becoming a victim of violence. There is no point, however, in underestimating the evil that has been unleashed once armed conflict is underway.

In Colombia, in the early 1990s, several guerrilla factions decided that armed struggle was counter-productive and so opened negotiations with the government in order to hand in their weapons and re-enter civilian life. The government agreed various types of support for re-integration – mainly money

and re-training – and 5,470 guerrillas and militia fighters were ‘demilitarised’. What followed is a warning. Hundreds of unarmed former-combatants were then cold-bloodedly murdered – extrajudicially and with impunity for those who carried out the assassinations. The other former-fighters then faced the choice of fleeing or returning to the gun (as guerrillas, criminals or even paramilitaries).⁵

Clearly ‘demilitarising’ guerrillas is an especially tricky problem. But grass-roots peace initiatives by people who have never taken up arms might also face violence in situations of armed conflict. Turning to Colombia again, the thousands of displaced people who opted to form nonviolent communities face a high degree of violence. This strategy for displaced people seems a model constructive response to close the cycle of violence: it channels the grievances of the displaced while supporting them in avoiding recruitment to any of the armed bands. After a series of workshops usually with Church facilitation and very sober consideration, those who have formed these communities renounce cooperation with any armed group (including those of the State) and concentrate on rebuilding their lives and farming. The first such community, founded on Palm Sunday 1997, was San José de Apartadó. This community – and those that have followed – has been permanently harassed. Its leaders have been threatened; drivers taking the community’s crops to markets have been intimidated; and several times paramilitaries have attempted to mount an economic blockade. Meanwhile the Colombian government denounces the community’s declared ‘neutrality’ and says the refusal to accept any armed force on its territory is nothing more than a ruse so that it can aid and abet the guerrillas of FARC. From San José alone, some 130 members have been killed – that’s around 10%.

This community has its ‘defensive’ and ‘offensive’ capacities. Defensively, members have been escorted by PBI, US FoR has a placement scheme for volunteers interested in living there for a year, and the Justice and Peace Commission of the Catholic Church has ‘accompanied’ the whole process (‘accompanied’ in the wider sense, not just protection). Offensively, it has carried its challenge to the opponent with actions such as organising a caravan of vehicles carrying produce to market in defiance of paramilitary intimidation. Also, it has been building up a network of international support – indeed the latest leader to be killed, in February this year, Luis Eduardo Guerra⁶, was a speaker at one of the annual School of Americas Watch blockades at Fort Benning, the US training centre for Latin American counter-insurgency troops.

Systems of violence are so entrenched – especially in a country like Colombia that receives more US aid than any country outside the Middle East – that any nonviolent initiative that attempts to break the cycle of violence will itself have to be prepared to pay a high price.

2b) Defensive and offensive capacities

John Paul Lederach has given us a rich array of concepts and images, in particular on peace-building, and has a clear view on the necessity for structural change and to build a ‘peace constituency’ capable of applying pressure. However, even in his work, I think the element of nonviolent combat needs strengthening. His fine phrase ‘infra-structure for peace-building’ suggests a concept that should be of central importance in contexts of civil war. It is very much a concept still in need of development – and there’s no harm in that – and what is perhaps most missing at this stage is the dimension of combat.

In *Building Peace*, Lederach uses ‘infrastructure for peace-building’ mainly to refer to the set of capacities and linkages and the web of relationships needed to sustain a peace process. His thinking

⁵ See my interview with Pastor Jaramillo, *Peace News* #2449, available at www.peacenews.info. The Current for Socialist Renovation of the ELN was by no means the most heavily hit, but of its 640 former-combatants who agreed to disarm, 92 have subsequently been murdered.

⁶ Luis Eduardo, who was also a negotiator with the government on behalf of the community, was – it seems – taken by members of the Colombian army, tortured, killed and mutilated, along with other adults and three children.

has developed since then, and in the Caritas manual on Peacebuilding (partly written by Lederach)⁷, this concept has become one of five operating principles. Caritas notes that ‘an infrastructure is needed to provide the social spaces, logistical mechanisms, and institutions necessary for supporting the process of change and long-term vision of peace’. Using this manual at a Caritas Asia workshop, we saw the need to bring in other capacities, more reflecting on the cut-and-thrust of combat between peacemakers and a force intent on wreaking violence and spreading hatred.

Most of the capacities enumerated by Lederach are framed in positive, optimistic terms. This is typical of conflict transformation writing – we prefer hope to fear as a motivator. Not one of the capacities even hints at the need to weaken or undermine a dominant and aggressive power. Rather buried within the overall framework, two capacities suggest the need for precautions:

- ‘Violence prediction’ (in turn opening the way to possibilities for violence prevention), and
- ‘Contextualised conflict response mechanism’ (‘the capacity to design and implement specific processes for handling and responding to critical, often violent expressions of the conflict’).

I have to admit that – until I was writing this paper – the second is expressed so abstractly that it completely passed me by. Surely it needs spelling out that where violence cannot be prevented, it is vital to document it and bring it in evidence against its perpetrators – if not in a formal court, at least ‘in the court of public opinion’ and especially the opinion of those who might be prompted to rethink their support for the perpetrators.

In the Caritas Asia workshop, after hearing from a priest (who, incidentally, has had the benefit of participating in one of Lederach’s courses) about responding to the riots and communal tensions in Ahmedabad, Gujrat, we added two specific types of capacity to the concept of infrastructure for peace-building. Both include elements that are defensive – in terms of protecting those at risk – and offensive, in terms of undermining the support base for those who foment violence.

One additional capacity was for ‘**protection**’:

- i. to shelter and protect sections of the population particularly threatened by upsurges of violence,
- ii. to restrain members of one’s own community from violence or to protect those they are threatening,
- iii. to provide protective accompaniment of movement activists and leaders,
- iv. to offer accompaniment in a particular crisis or strategic phase, eg the return of displaced people.

Another addition to the infrastructure was ‘**channels of communication**’:

- i. among peacebuilders,
- ii. based in the community – generally to inform and educate, but in particular to dispel rumours that might spark violence, and to counter smears against leading peacebuilders,
- iii. towards external actors – eg potential allies, international institutions, or backers of the dominant group.

Whatever the experience of internationals engaged in peacebuilding processes, the peacebuilders who really matter – the ones based in their own communities – face unpopularity and danger.

2c) Beyond self-empowerment

I think many workshop leaders and writers substitute a notion of social empowerment in place of nonviolent combat. A clear example from a text by a founder member of CCTS is in the RTC book

⁷ *Peacebuilding: A Caritas Training Manual* (2002). I think that this manual really is ‘state of the art’ – which partly goes to highlight how a number of our concepts are still under development.

*Working With Conflict*⁸. This is a good book: it has a section on ‘active nonviolence’ and is very clear that at times the appropriate way to address conflict is to *intensify* it by ‘siding with a disadvantaged group’.

But siding with them and doing what?

Well, it goes on ‘using strategies for empowerment’. That, however, is it. There is no hint that to engage in nonviolent conflict one has to take up the strategic challenge of finding points of leverage *against* an adversary, for instance identifying where the regime might be vulnerable, or what pressure can be applied to various sources of influence on the adversary.

A theory of empowerment popularised by Starhawk and Joanna Macey and widely used among nonviolence trainers begins with ‘power-within’/‘inner power’/‘personal power’ and moves on to ‘power-with’, what we can do when we combine with others either in groups or in coalitions. By ‘power’, in this context, we are referring to ‘power to do’ (and also ‘power to be’), rather than to ‘power over’. However, this empowerment stops short of what I have not so catchily called ‘power-in-relation-to’ – that is ‘power-in-relation-to’ the desired goals or even ‘power-in-relation-to’ adversaries (‘power-against’). When working to counter prejudice and change social attitudes, this might not be such a grave omission, but I think it is fatal when addressing power structures. Yet it is typical of quite a range of activists.

A few years ago I attended a pretty high-powered international seminar of activists and researchers in nonviolent struggle convened by the Albert Einstein Institution, with some of the top US researchers and participants from some high-profile movements. Peter Ackerman⁹ introduced a session on strategy by talking about analysis of the opponent. Most of us rebelled, and we went on to thoroughly enjoy an excellent discussion about mobilisation and social empowerment. A couple of hours later, Ackerman complimented us on a fascinating session but asked if we had noticed something missing. We had never returned to his original question about analysing the opponent, but had only talked about our movements, our strengths and weaknesses.

2d) Making violence cost

When some writers on nonviolence do talk about an opponent it is often with unanalytical terms such as ‘awakening the humanity of an opponent’. Well, certainly that is desirable, and there are some inspiring instances of nonviolence achieving this. But the world of organised violence is one of power structures and chains of command. Even if one succeeds in awakening an *individual’s* sense of humanity, one quite likely effect is to weaken that person’s position within the particular command structure. Primarily, one has to expect a collective opponent to be calculating what will best serve their particular interests. Any nonviolent movement therefore should seek to affect a collective opponent’s calculations and to exact a cost for the violence they perpetrate.¹⁰

A number of books commend the work of Peace Brigades International without taking heed of the most serious study of PBI.¹¹ Former volunteers and key theorists for PBI, Liam Mahoney and Quique Eguren interviewed generals connected with some of the ‘death squads’ in Guatemala whose activities

⁸ Simon Fisher et al, *Working With Conflict: Skills and Strategies for Action* (Zed Books, 2000)

⁹ Peter Ackerman is co-author with Christopher Kruegler of *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict: The Dynamics of People Power in the Twentieth Century* (Praeger, 1994) and is president of the International Center for Nonviolent Conflict.

¹⁰ This also relates to the distinction between Richard Gregg’s concept ‘moral ju-jitsu’ and Gene Sharp’s ‘political ju-jitsu’. Gregg, in the 1930s, referred primarily to a dynamic in which those who suffer violence succeed in awakening the moral sense of those inflicting it, while Sharp expanded this to include a range of political considerations, and above all the impact on external parties.

¹¹ Liam Mahoney and Enrique Eguren, *Unarmed Bodyguards* (Kumarian Press, 1997). I admit that I would have preferred the authors to have spoken of ‘dissuasion’, rather than ‘deterrence’, but their point is that those who controlled the death squads saw PBI as capable of posing some kind of threat.

had been inhibited by the presence of international escorts and witnesses. There is no suggestion of their humanity being awakened. Rather Mahoney and Eguren turn to the theory of 'deterrence' to explain the kind of calculations that inhibited such commanders. The generals didn't know what damage the network behind PBI was capable of doing them, what pressures it could bring to bear on their regime.

2e) Know your enemy

A writer and workshop leader who is very clear on the importance to nonviolent groups of 'knowing your enemy' is Bob Helvey – Colonel Robert Helvey, for 30 years a US Army infantry officer. Of the innumerable training workshops in the Balkans since 1991, probably his are now the most famous. At a macro-political level they were certainly the most influential: they helped activists learn lessons from the previous *Zajedno* coalition (the winter of daily demonstrations, 1996-97) and frame a strategy that ultimately toppled Milošević. He repeatedly emphasises the need to 'target the enemy's pillars of power'.¹²

In contrast to 'win-win', this style of nonviolence looks at posing the antagonist with dilemmas where they cannot win. The classic example is convening an event that a regime would wish to prevent but where it would have to pay a high propaganda price if it resorted to repression.

And, of course, this has demonstrated to various bodies in the USA that if they are interested in changing anti-democratic regimes, there are methods much more cost-effective than missiles. The video about the movement in Serbia – *Bringing Down a Dictator* – is currently being shown in education programmes in Iraq, while Otpor also ran training workshops with parts of the 'orange' opposition in the Ukraine.

3. Some propositions

3a) Lists of responses to conflict need to include 'waging conflict'

I have seen lists with various terms for responses to conflict, such as analysing, coping with, handling, managing, mitigating, preventing, regulating, resolving, settling, transforming conflict – but invariably 'waging conflict' or, even the less harsh, 'engaging in' conflict is missing. Yet none of the other verbs as much as hints that adversarial action might be necessary.

3b) 'Winning' conflict is not enough

- i) Any action strategy has to be prepared for the reaction.
- ii) Goals for a people power movement need to be framed in a way to offer an alternative to mere 'defeat' to those aligned with the ruling power.
- iii) Pursuing a non-negotiable goal and seeking to overcome rather than include antagonists can create the conditions for war.

3c) 'Regime change' is never a panacea

- i) People power has been decisive in securing a transfer of power but, in a number of situations, has then fallen short of achieving a social transformation to a more participatory society.
- ii) A movement for social reform is also a movement for self-reform – changing social values and introducing different social practices (the role of 'constructive programme' in Gandhian thinking).

¹² Robert Helvey, *On Strategic Nonviolent Conflict: Thinking about the fundamentals* (Albert Einstein Institution 2005), available gratis as a pdf file (178 pages, but less than 1MB) from www.aeinstein.org

iii) Those who provide funding, training and other support to help in the process of de-stabilising a regime have their own agenda, which may be transparent and motivated by genuine solidarity or self-interested and manipulative.

iv) Those who are invited to do workshops on 'regime change' need a clear conflict analysis of the situation into which they would be going and an understanding of who they would be working with.

3d) Populist manipulation can masquerade as People Power

Populist manipulation is usually based on finding ways to polarise the situation. It identifies scapegoats and hate figures, accentuates a population's own sense of its 'victimhood', and inflates expectations of future benefits. The phrase 'the people are happening' was coined in Belgrade, but not during the *Zajedno* protests nor with the ouster of Milošević. Back in November 1988, it was used by Milošević's political machine at the climax of their 'anti-bureaucratic revolution', when 'meetings of truth' fomented Serbian hatred of Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnian Muslims, and above all Kosovo Albanians.

In contrast, a strategic nonviolent approach to People Power usually emanates from a core acting as a carrier for civil society values. They are concerned to build unity for these values among the broadest possible range of the population and to offer avenues for people to 'detach themselves' from the regime. The Philippines in 1986 seems to have established a template, of electoral contest followed by mass civil disobedience. However, that episode – and most subsequent climactic episodes of People Power – was possible because the movement matured through a gradual build-up, made coalitions, and won over key allies.

3e) Civil courage versus People Power?

Civil courage often requires standing against the dominant tide of a community – in support of despised minorities, against various forms of intolerance and prejudice, in extending the claims for justice and rights we make in the name of our own community to all people. These concerns, however, tend to be minoritarian – they are not usually the issues that will unite an opposition movement in order to unseat regime. Rather, a more probable 'lowest common denominator' will be corruption, an economic issue or a particular set of restrictions.

It may be that our emphasis on 'civil courage' is preparing people for a role as a 'permanent minority', the 'conscience' of their community. In so doing, do we ignore the potential for an activist minority to become the catalyst for a majoritarian coalition? We usually talk about 'civil courage' in the context of upholding values, being a person of integrity, but actually forming a wider coalition takes 'civil courage' too. Personally, I don't see how groups playing a key role in a coalition can avoid some change in their own identity.¹³

In the circumstances of an effective People Power movement, its leaders will face dilemmas between their own values and their sense of what is 'realistic' if their movement is to 'win'. How far to go in challenging attitudes among coalition partners or indeed their own base of support? One thinks of situations where women's oppression has been treated as a diversion from a 'greater struggle', or where the rights of Roma or untouchables or tribal peoples or gays were excluded from the agenda for change.

Another dilemma: how much to make concessions to certain interests to secure what is considered vital support or to minimise what could be a bloody reaction to the movement?

¹³ Gandhi, to some extent, found a personal solution. As 'father-of-the-nation', he directed campaigns bringing together many who did not share his values, while the Gandhi-of-the-ashram was able to 'experiment with Truth' and observe his highest-minded principles even in the details of everyday life. Moreover, he repeatedly declared 'constructive programme' – the vector of the values of social transformation – as being more important than civil disobedience.

In the nearly 20 years since the term People Power was coined, we have seen civil society groups playing a key role in orchestrating opposition to a regime. Yet the outcome has rarely led to an extension of civil society or the spread of civil society values. I find it depressing that in Serbia today it is the same NGOs as 10 years ago who have the civil courage to face the attitudes that gave rise to war and ethnic crimes.¹⁴

3f) Conflict transformation attitudes can strengthen People Power

- i) The personal empowerment basic to Conflict Transformation encourages people to grow beyond a victim identity, to participate, to take responsibility for changing the situation. Conflict transformation methodology is about developing people's potential for good and their leadership capacities; this 'capacity-building' is a vital element in any nonviolent movement of people power.
- ii) Conflict transformation usually involves some seeking of common ground between conflicting parties and even generating an experience of co-operation across the conflict lines. When a nonviolent strategy calls for 'targeting the pillars of power', sometimes what that involves practically has to be the search for common ground with members of key sectors that currently don't question the regime.
- iii) Negotiation on the basis of recognising human needs is a central feature of conflict transformation. Robert Burrowes¹⁵ argues that, more than targeting the 'pillars of power', strategic nonviolence should focus on 'altering the will' of the opponent (which might include undermining their power). Thus, whilst it might take pressure to bring an opponent to negotiate, Burrowes believes that the best conclusion to a campaign is a conflict resolution process based on acknowledgement of each other's legitimate needs.

3g) The importance of context

Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence shared much with the approach of Conflict Transformation. His central concept – *satyagraha*, the firm adherence to Truth – also contains the element of a mutual search for Truth, learning from 'the Other's' truth, and he was especially concerned to include 'the Other' in seeking a solution. Strategic nonviolence in action, however, often includes practices that Gandhi would have eschewed or that run counter to the norms of conflict transformation:

- * Clandestinity and even subterfuge.
- * Sabotage (without threatening life).
- * 'Schweikism' – carrying out orders badly – offers ways for people to withhold acquiescence while minimising the risk to themselves.
- * Theatrically withdrawing from communication with an aggressor is the strategic move at certain moments in a nonviolent struggle.

Conflict analysis is essential. The point is not to dwell on ethical imperatives, but to recognise that when extreme contexts justify exceptional behaviour, what is happening is pertinent to that stage of a bigger overall process – and, indeed, is exceptional. There is a time for 'trust-building' between antagonists – and a time for confrontation.

¹⁴ A clear illustration is the demand for official investigation into the May 1999 incineration of Kosovo Albanian cadavers in factory furnaces in the south of Serbia. The signatories to this demand remain limited to 'the usual suspects'.

¹⁵ Robert Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense: A Gandhian Approach* (State University of New York, 1996)

Seminar report

Report of a seminar held on Tuesday 12th April 2005 at Peace Direct, 56-64 Leonard Street, London, EC2

This latest CCTS seminar was designed to give organisations participating in the committee an opportunity to reflect together on current practice and, in particular, to consider the need for more power-awareness and more emphasis on the role of active nonviolence in conflict transformation. It was attended by 15 people (the planned limit) and facilitated by Alan Pleydell and Andrew Rigby. The seminar began with a brief presentation from Howard Clark, whose paper, 'Campaigning power and civil courage: Bringing 'people power' back into conflict transformation' is reproduced above (with minor editing to the version circulated before the seminar). Howard has a long history of work with CCTS, particularly in the Balkans, as well as being a council member of War Resisters' International and convenor of its Colombia Working Group.

Opening remarks

Howard began by reminding participants of the history of CCTS – and its name change from the 'Co-ordinating Committee for Conflict Resolution Training in Europe' to the 'Committee for Conflict Transformation Support'. The change from 'Conflict Resolution' to 'Conflict Transformation' was made in recognition of the fact that most approaches to conflict resolution 'ignore the demands of justice and the realities of power, and lay too much emphasis on the role of third parties and non-partisan action, particularly on the role of outsiders'¹.

Howard commented that in this context his paper might seem to be stating the obvious, were it not for the fact that the approach it describes is so little used in practice. He put forward three possible reasons: that many practitioners are oriented more towards the search for common ground in conflict, rather than preparing for confrontation; that funders of conflict transformation are, in general, not interested in paying for confrontation; and that there is often inadequate separation between mediation, which is predicated on strict impartiality, and conflict transformation, which does permit the taking of non-neutral positions.

He stressed the importance of Conflict Analysis in identifying and examining the power structures that are at the root of any conflict situation. In

the Balkans, for example, ethnic grievances were suppressed during Tito's long reign, but encouraged and exploited by later politicians as a means of gaining power. In such circumstances it is not enough to work to resolve the ethnic conflict without doing something to address the underlying politics. Today, extremist politicians in Serbia are seeking to whip up feeling against a different enemy – gays.

Much of the work done by CCTS members in the Balkans has focused on supporting the courageous minority seeking to act as the 'conscience' of their community, and has therefore involved activities most relevant in the earlier stages of a conflict process (see Fig. 1 in the paper above). This has tended to ignore the potential of minority groups to join together with members of the majority to challenge the political regime. The group Otpor in Belgrade, for example, began in 1998 as graffiti artists, but after the Kosovo war and having had nonviolence training from Col. Robert Helvey and others linked with the Albert Einstein Institution (see Howard's paper for details), they played a decisive role in the bringing down Milošević.

CCTS members have rarely been approached for training in nonviolent resistance. Moreover, there can be a tension between workshops for NGO capacity-building (a more common CCTS activity) and work with volunteer nonviolent activists.

Howard stressed the high cost of refusing to be a victim. In Colombia, for example, displaced people who have chosen to form nonviolent communities have been the objects of continued violence from the Government. 130 of the population of 1300 of San José de Apartadó have

¹ from Diana Francis, *People, Peace and Power: Conflict Transformation in Action* (Pluto Press, 2002)

been killed since it was established in 1997. The whole community, which has renounced any co-operation with armed groups, including those of the State, has recently been forced to move, following the imposition of a Police Post in their former location. Now their situation is desperate, but they still refuse to give up. It is not only hope that keeps them coming but also the lack of acceptable alternatives: they prefer to affirm their own dignity than to be forced into prostitution or crime in the cities.

The first action in nonviolent resistance to some act of usurpation (such as an occupation or a coup) is usually to send a signal that an illegitimate act has taken place. The strategic move then is often to break off communication with those deemed illegitimate power-holders. But there can also be other times for such a break. Thus several of the peace communities in Colombia have assiduously documented the acts of repression and violence against them and have asked the Government to investigate these actions. Now they no longer call on the Government of Colombia to do anything other than to leave them alone – knowing that the Government is implicated in the violence. The implications of cutting off communication are profound, and deserve further study.

Howard's presentation was followed by plenary discussion which was then continued in two groups. In the afternoon discussion continued in a further plenary session. Much of the discussion throughout the day focused on the factors that limit the scope of CCTS organisations to engage in support for nonviolent conflict. Some of these factors can be described as practical: for example, that this type of work tends not to attract funding, or that it may not be how our partners in conflict areas want to work. Other factors of a more ethical nature include our responsibility as outsiders and our political goals, and those of our organisations. Plenary and group discussions are summarised together below under the headings proposed by the seminar's facilitators.

Our role as outsiders

This was considered to be at the heart of Howard's paper for at least one participant, and this view was borne out by the amount of discussion that this issue stimulated. In practice

CCTS organisations *are* outsiders – third parties in conflict situations. Is it ethical for outsiders to take nonviolent action or to stimulate it, when they aren't going to pay the personal price? On the other hand, as outsider organisations do we not have a moral responsibility to intervene when local people are being attacked? And as individual citizens, do we not have a responsibility to stimulate our own governments to intervene non-militarily? Participants differed in attitude about how far an outsider should intervene.

The definition of outsider was also challenged. Is there a spectrum, ranging from, at one extreme, putting nonviolent action training material in the public domain to be used however people see fit, through in-person short-term training courses, to long-term engagement in a country? Some participants felt that, in the latter case, one would be much less of an outsider, while others felt that it was impossible to be an insider 'unless you move your heart to a place'.

An important factor that influences our scope as outsiders is the source of our funding. The UK Government's agenda for conflict prevention will generally have a bias towards stability (as will most other funder governments). So if we depend on Foreign Office or DFID funding we are unlikely to be working with groups whose aim is to destabilise their local regime. (This is why WRI doesn't take government funding.) But, as one participant pointed out, the UK government *is* willing to fund work developing active citizenship – thus empowering people to engage with and (if they so decide) to work to change the political status quo.

The source of funding certainly affects an organisation's credibility, and even its welcome in a country, as its work will be assumed to be influenced by the political and commercial agenda of the funding country, even if it is not. If you are identified with particular groups, you may lose the capacity to work with some other groups. You may be welcomed, but assumed to have more influence than you can actually deliver. It was noted that members of the local civil society are often reluctant to tackle the militarism and extreme nationalism of their own government, and over-estimate the influence of the West in bringing about political change. This seemed to be the case in Russia (over the war in Chechnya) as well as in the Caucasus.

Our citizenship as individual outsiders can also be an issue. One participant, a US citizen working for a UK organisation, commented that she is sometimes assumed to be associated with both the UK and the USA. Another commented on the ethical sensitivity of discussing one's work with one's home country's Embassy or High Commission staff (whether or not that work is directly funded by government). On the one hand, there is the legitimate desire to ensure that any government action in a region is based on good information. On the other hand, there is the risk of betraying confidences, as well as reinforcing perceptions of political allegiance. There is generally a middle line to draw. Nonviolent Peace Force, for example, do talk to the German government, but they are selective about what they report (and never discuss military information).

Howard suggested that we have a responsibility to educate our funders. If, for example, a government were funding a program that encouraged guerrillas to disarm, it would be necessary for it to engage with the future security of those guerrillas (and not leave them to be slaughtered, as they were in Colombia). Similarly, the concept of building a 'peace constituency' has to encompass the possibility of having an impact on society.

Our organisations' agendas are seldom neutral, and nor are our own, as individuals. We all make choices about who we work with, and we are not always as aware as we should be about our motives. Some seminar participants could not imagine working *without* a political goal, particularly in countries with repressive regimes.

One participant recently heard someone in Baku complaining that he was tired of Internationals imposing their own agendas – wanting to influence local processes for external advantage. While he agreed that a lot of this does go on, he felt that it is entirely possible to have an agenda, and to openly acknowledge it, without *using* the local community in order to deliver it. His expressed agenda (and that of the UK government, his funder) is to introduce and develop more representative and democratic processes into the country. He feels that this benefits both Azerbaijan and the UK.

There was some discussion about whether benign-seeming agendas necessarily benefit everyone. 'Security', for example, might have

different connotations for the owner of the oil pipeline that crosses a country and the people who live there. And working to legitimise democracy might itself be destabilising, at least in the short term. Similarly, although openness about one's agenda was generally agreed to be important, some participants felt that wasn't necessarily enough. You need to ask who has the leading role in the relationship.

Volunteers or NGOs

It was generally agreed that the people who engage in active nonviolence tend to be volunteers rather than paid NGOs. This is work that is motivated by strongly-held political beliefs rather than emanating from a professional affiliation. At the very least, there has to be a local agenda that isn't set by the availability of external funding. Volunteer activists can go without funding, even in the long term, because they are generally only giving some of their time. Even so, there was some agreement that volunteer movements can be more effective if they can raise the funding to employ one or two people. (As one participant pointed out, peace activism in the UK is the work of volunteers who have no external funding. That limits the degree to which they are able to be strategic, since they are confined to doing what is possible to volunteers.)

Clearly, volunteers will use any funding that becomes available, but they don't want to spend significant time writing proposals or reports. For this reason they are more likely to depend on local or ad-hoc funding, targeted to specific objectives. For example, Dekha Abdi (a peace worker from Sudan) had impressed one participant by raising \$4,500 from local businesses for one project for which she was applying for funding.

Nevertheless, as Howard pointed out, when there is a massive amount of international money available (as there was in the Balkans during the period of major international press interest) even the genuine local activists tend to depend on it, and to find it hard to adjust when the funding goes away.

The notion that funding corrupts local voluntary groups and turns them into 'carpet-bagging' NGOs was a real dilemma for one participant. Having worked for a UK-based NGO she

recognised that, although she was dedicated to its objectives, she couldn't have given it her full-time attention without a salary, and felt that it was unreasonable to expect people to be any different in other countries. But she was horrified to see how much antagonism local NGOs attracted in South Africa. She felt that the onus was on Western funders to seek out people who have both values and professionalism.

Whether we are working with volunteers or NGOs, it would be of paramount importance that we maintain our support for the long term, not just for the duration of funding, because of the personal risks that nonviolent activists take.

Is there good and bad nonviolence?

Do we see nonviolent action training simply as a set of techniques that could be made available to any group (as Gene Sharpe is seen to do, by making his 'tool-kit' freely available) or would we want to be selective? The seminar's facilitators suggested that a useful way of evaluating our own approach would be to consider whether we would be willing to work with Israeli settlers on nonviolent action training.

A number of participants felt that they would not be prepared to train anyone in the techniques of nonviolent action unless they were sympathetic to the group's aspirations. They might, however, be willing to engage in conflict analysis or other work that explored the group's ethics and the nonviolence of their goals.

Howard acknowledged that he would rather avoid the debate about the difference between values-based and techniques-based nonviolence training. But he commented that, if he had been working with Otpor in 1998, he would not have focused on bringing down Milošević. Partly this would have reflected his own lack of foresight but also his orientation towards achieving a more gradual community change that encompassed what people wanted to *build* as well as what they wanted to *destroy*. This approach requires more long-term commitment to change – an attitude described in South America as 'firmeza permanente' (steadfast persistence).

Like most of the day's discussion, this topic proved less clear-cut on examination than it initially seemed. One participant gave an example from Georgia, where she was doing

conflict resolution work with IDPs – who have the capacity to be forces for peace or for continued violence. Many IDPs enter a conflict resolution programme not because they believe in its principles but because they see it as their best hope of getting home. In reality, their chances of return are not high, and it is important to create an opening in the training where this can be discussed. She finds that motives can change and deepen, and that the commitment to peace for its own sake can grow.

Howard commented that it is always important to look at the motives of the 'home' government when considering the fate of IDPs. The Serbian government, for example, does not want to provide a home for the Kosovan Serbs. It prefers to leave them dispossessed, in order to perpetuate Serbia's territorial claims over Kosovo.

Similarly, Palestinian leaders prefer their people to remain in refugee camps rather than settling in the wider community, because it maintains the focus on the Palestinian demand for a homeland – even though with the passing of time it is one that an increasing number of refugees have never visited.

Training in moral courage?

It was generally agreed that people who engage in 'waging nonviolent conflict' require a degree of moral courage, but less certainty about whether you could train people to possess it or whether it was inherent.

At least one participant felt it was condescending to suggest that we could offer such training, or to suggest that it could be funded. A number of others, however, felt that it depended on the model of training offered, suggesting that providing a space for people to express their fears, and explore the possibilities open to them, could not be seen as patronising.

A number of specific training courses were mentioned. One participant commented that there had been a number of courses in Germany in the 1990s training in civil courage – to help individuals handle issues such as racism, harassment and robbery, using role plays to work through the options open to the victim. While she knew of no systematic evaluations, there was good anecdotal evidence that the people who attended these courses learned new strategies –

and gained in courage. Many CCTS organisations train in active citizenship, which is related to civil courage. Another participant has worked work with people in more dangerous situations. She commented that, for many people, 'hearing the worst' is less harrowing than imagining it, and makes it easier to face. It is also possible to train in risk minimisation, and in doing so to raise the confidence and safety of the activist. For example, learning practical techniques for going through police lines safely can develop personal courage. Howard emphasised that training does not try to instil heroism but to enhance group cohesion and functioning – the group is a place from which people can draw strength, express fears and assess risks. Another participant added that military training on facing danger relies largely on group bonding.

There were other, more general, suggestions of training that would develop people's capacity to take direct action. You can train for assertiveness, encouraging people to remember and share times when they have been assertive, and where they have intervened in a social situation. You can also train in leadership, and can be inspired by other people's actions and experiences. And it isn't necessary to suppose that only people with 'superior' moral courage can train others. You can be a good tennis coach, for example, without being a better player than the person you are coaching.

Some participants remained uncomfortable with training for, or supporting, courage 'in the moment', but there was a growing agreement during the discussion that longer-term training towards civil activism was an acceptable facet of our work.

One person had observed that initiatives in South Africa were often led by religious leaders or women. He wondered whether the fact that women are seen as posing less of a physical threat gives them greater scope to act. Others commented that the world is changing, and that there have been a number of cases recently where women and children have been targeted specifically. But in patriarchal societies it probably remains true that women have a degree of protection.

Another participant commented that people with moral courage can seem like 'nutters' or, at least, nuisances. Another agreed that people who

show *too much* moral courage are in danger of detaching themselves from their communities, and losing credibility and protection as a result. For this reason it is generally better to work with groups rather than individuals. In general the first people from an oppressed community to step forward tend to be the most marginal, and they often move to the sidelines as more mainstream participants engage. Someone else commented that, as more people become active, it becomes easier to act heroically.

At least one participant remained impressed with the courage of marginalised activists. She recalled a man who regularly took a loudspeaker into the local market place to address shoppers and passers-by. He was laughed at by fellow activists, but he persisted – and he was making a difference – engaging with people and prompting dialogue that would not otherwise be taking place.

Escape routes for opponents

Several participants were uncomfortable with the simplistic vertical model of conflict: an oppressive regime and an innocent oppressed minority. Many conflicts fit a more horizontal template, with wrongs on both (or all) sides. One of the facilitators pointed out that last-minute 'rescue' interventions by the so-called 'International Community' almost inevitably cast the problem in the 'vertical' mould, and almost always involve force, or the heavy threat of force. He suggested that we need to find ways of addressing the problem at an earlier stage, and with a more subtle analysis of motives, so that we can find more constructive ways of intervening that avert head-on partisan confrontation.

In Howard's opening remarks he had suggested that withdrawing from communication or participation is a dangerous strategy. He now gave as an example the refusal of the Kosovans to engage in elections – initially a strong move signalling aggression, but a stance that became unchallengeable within the Kosovan community. This was repeatedly raised as an issue by potential Serbian allies. Such tactics should always be open to review, and Howard would generally favour keeping some level of dialogue open, whether directly or through intermediaries, so that alternative options can be explored.

In one participant's opinion there are very few showdowns, even violent ones, which don't leave open some negotiation channel. Very often, impunity is given to political leaders, so that military intervention is avoided but they can 'escape'.

Mediators can have a key role in avoiding military intervention – seeking ways of allowing both sides to save face by, for example, making the first move themselves.

Concluding remarks

As proceedings drew to a close, Michael asked whether anything said in the seminar would affect the way that member organisations would behave. One participant felt that the discussion had broadened her view of the range of activities that her organisation might consider. Another felt that it had provoked her to think more deeply about the people with whom her organisation might choose to work. A third felt that it had encouraged her to be more explicit about her organisation's own agenda.

Others felt (unexpectedly) that there was less distance between the various approaches taken within CCTS membership than they had thought beforehand, and more work along the lines suggested in Howard's paper than they had expected. Howard commented that the suggestions he made in his paper were not made on an 'either-or' basis. Successful capacity-building is based on both offensive and defensive strategies.

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