Dear Readers,

In this issue freelance consultant Paul Clifford writes about the Child Advocacy and Rehabilitation programme (CAR), run by the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society, which works with children traumatised by war; and Diana Francis reviews a new annotated bibliography, 'People Power and Protest since 1945'. The rest of the issue is taken up with a discussion of the concept of a Responsibility to Protect (R2P). This was first enunciated in the Canadian government-sponsored 'Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty' of September 2001 and subsequently taken up in various UN documents and at various gatherings, including Kofi Annan's report on UN reform, 'In Larger Freedom', and at the 2005 UN World Summit. We publish here a statement on R2P that has been agreed by a consortium of British NGOs and other representatives of civil society, which will be officially launched and open for signatures in October; an article on the subject by Alan Pleydell, the representative on CCTS of Quaker Peace and Social Witness; and reflections from a pacifist perspective by Diana Francis, freelance consultant and Chair of CCTS.

Child advocacy and rehabilitation in Sierra Leone

by Paul Clifford, Freelance Consultant and RTC Associate

Introduction

I have been working with the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRCS) since the height of the civil war in 1999. This latest piece of work I was asked to do was commissioned by the British Red Cross Society (BRCS) in conjunction with SLRCS and was undertaken by me as an Associate of Responding To Conflict (RTC). The work was to evaluate the work of SLRCS's Child Advocacy and Rehabilitation (CAR) programme in conjunction with a Sierra Leonean consultant hired by SLRCS.

Background

The decade long civil war in Sierra Leone is one of the most brutal in history. As well as those who willingly fought the government, thousands of children were abducted from their families and were forced to become child soldiers or sexual and domestic slaves for the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). Many of the child soldiers were forced to commit atrocities against their own families and communities. This had the effect of traumatising the child soldiers and cutting them off from family and community and making them totally reliant on their new 'family', the RUF.

The child soldiers were mainly, but not exclusively, boys. The fate of the abducted girls was usually to be used and abused as domestic and sexual slaves. They might be assigned to a particular officer or

passed around the men. Many of those who survived returned with children and/or sexually transmitted diseases.

When the war officially ended in 2002, the children were 'free'. But, whereas there was a state rehabilitation process for the adults, there was no such provision for the children. Mostly unwelcome in their own communities, many of the boys slept rough and wandered aimlessly in gangs and many of the girls went into the commercial sex trade. They had lost their education so had no education or other skills to fall back on, to try and survive.

SLRCS, along with other agencies, set up programmes to work with some of these children. One of the difficulties SLRCS faced at the beginning of the work was that there were false rumours circulating during the war that the Red Cross movement had aided the RUF. This arose partly because of the Red Cross charter which states that they will offer humanitarian help to people regardless of their affiliation. Thus the Red Cross movement did give help in an impartial manner to people on both sides of the conflict. Because of these rumours, SLRCS had to overcome a lot of hostility and suspicion from some communities.

The work of the CAR centres

There are five centres currently operating: in Waterloo, just outside of Freetown, in the west of the country, in Port Loko, Kambia and Kabala in the north and in Kailahaun in the east. These are areas that were behind RUF lines for most, if not all, of the war, and where people suffered greatly. Waterloo was the first to start in 2000 (before the war had ended) and Kailahaun, the last in 2005.

There is an initial assessment undertaken by the Red Cross branch and staff in each area, to assess the need based on agreed criteria. The branches play an important role in community sensitisation and getting the crucial support of local chiefs. Community sensitisation is undertaken with communities to explain the aims of the project and to advocate on behalf of the children in order to meet the eventual aim of reintegrating the children back into their communities. This is particularly relevant because of the hostility many of the communities were feeling towards their children for their roles during the war and their behaviour after it.

This is followed by a registration of children, according to the project criteria. The community is involved in this process, bringing vulnerable children to the attention of staff; this is important to get the community involved from the outset. Hundreds more children meet the criteria for registration than can be accommodated on the project since each centre can only accept 150 children per year. A selection of the most vulnerable children is thus made by the CAR centre staff, with priority often being given to girls and especially, child mothers. This means that, overall, more girls than boys are accepted at the centres, though the numbers and ratio varies from centre to centre, as the circumstances in each catchment area are different.

The programme is designed with a number of components. The 14-18 year olds undertake a 10 month training whilst the 10-13 year olds spend a minimum of 3 months at the centres. Basic training is given to all children in literacy and numeracy. Each child is allocated an activist as counsellor and key worker to give trauma counselling and healing (each activist has a caseload of 15 children). A meal is provided for each child each day, which for many is their only meal of the day.

After the basic training the 10-13 year olds then leave the centres to go to school while the 14- 18 year olds are trained in a specific trade in order that they become self reliant. There is a range of sporting and social activities and education on health related issues. Activists keep in touch with the families of current beneficiaries and undertake follow up on past beneficiaries. Community sensitisation work continues, including issues of child protection and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and regular meetings are held with parents/guardians. Community support activities are undertaken to try and ensure that the children return to child friendly communities. These activities are also designed to alleviate the plight of these communities following the war and to raise the profile of the Red Cross. Upon graduation each child is given a start up kit to help them establish themselves in their chosen trade. The centres meet with the communities to sensitise on the purpose of the start up

kit and that it cannot be sold. They also advocate with the communities to help the children get established, sometimes paying rent and creating structures for them to work in.

By the end of 2005, some 2400 children had enrolled in CAR centre programmes: 1565 had graduated, 750 were enrolled on current programmes and 85 did not graduate.

All the testimonies we received from the beneficiaries themselves, project staff and the communities described the beneficiaries as being traumatised when they enrolled at the centre. Through counselling by the activists, the attitudes and behaviour of the children have changed dramatically. Previously withdrawn children are now participating; previously wild and unruly children are now behaving in a disciplined and respectful way. The communities are delighted at the change in the children and are welcoming back children they had previously rejected.

Many of the beneficiaries attested to the fact that they felt isolated and uncared for prior to coming to the centre. Current and past beneficiaries described how they have made good friends at the centre and feel part of a strong peer group. Many of the past beneficiaries are now working in co-operatives with their peers. We witnessed for ourselves very positive interactions between beneficiaries. It is inevitable that some tensions do arise. Wherever possible these are dealt with immediately by staff and where appropriate through counselling.

Child and human rights are promoted and advocated in the communities through the use of regular community sensitisation activities. Communities are informed about relevant provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). They are also informed about how to deal with traumatised children and their responsibility towards enhancing the welfare of the children. They are encouraged to see the children as useful members of the community rather than as problems. They are also encouraged to provide protection for the children during difficult times.

All the past beneficiaries we spoke to attested that the skills they learned at the centre have given them the possibility to generate income and become more self-reliant. The start-up kits have allowed them to set up in business, become apprentices or work in their own communities. Inevitably some are more successful than others and some are struggling to generate enough income because of the poverty of the communities in which they live. Some of the centres help where they can by paying initial rent for premises, helping them get apprenticeships and by constructing production centres where the beneficiaries can work co-operatively. Some centres also lobby on their behalf to get contracts for them to help them get started. Many of the beneficiaries we spoke to talked to us about their development plans.

Some of the communities have been helped through community development activities such as micro credit, seed rice, animal re-stocking, stores, dry floors and sinking of wells in co-operation with the branches and other agencies. The communities are also benefiting through the skills the beneficiaries bring back, such as re-building, furniture making, clothes making and sewing, agricultural skills and baking. Many of the beneficiaries are also teaching the skills they have learned to others in the community, creating a multiplier effect.

All the communities we talked to expressed great satisfaction at the work the centres undertake with the beneficiaries. By their own admission, many had given up on the children and did not believe that it was possible for them to change. Even at Kailahaun, which has only just started, parents were expressing their admiration for the staff and the way they work with the beneficiaries, bringing about positive changes in their attitudes and behaviour. They are appreciative of the basic literacy and numeracy skills which enable the younger children to go on to school and the older children to carry out their trade. They appreciate the support given to the younger children throughout their first year at school; the start-up kits for the older children as this helps the children get established in their chosen trade; the seeds and tools given to agriculture students as these are a benefit for the whole community; the efforts the centres make to help the children get established, such as paying rent and building production centres; the skills the beneficiaries bring back, which did not previously exist in the communities and from which community members benefit.

The communities also value the community support that they receive from the centre. One community had used the micro credit facility from the centre to set up a revolving fund, which has grown enormously and has benefited a large number of them. Others had used the seed rice they had been given not only to help themselves but also other neighbouring communities. The community support has also promoted group work, where community members work co-operatively with each other, e.g., creating a market garden. This fosters unity in the communities and is much appreciated by them.

The satisfaction the communities feel is also indicated by their desire for the centres to continue their work in future and all the communities stated that there were lots more children in their own and other communities that would benefit from attending the centres.

The dissatisfaction the communities expressed was that they need more community support than they are being given. Many expressed problems concerning water and sanitation, the need for proper structures for primary schools, the desire for more micro credit, especially the women, who are normally the primary carers for the children. Some of the communities expressed the need for better feeder roads, including the repair and construction of bridges.

Conclusion

The work that SLRCS has undertaken in its CAR centres is tremendous, as attested to by the beneficiaries themselves and the communities they come from. One of the difficulties is that these and other centres are only able to deal with relatively small numbers of the war-affected children. There are still thousands of traumatised children who have not had the benefit of attending one of these programmes.

Another difficulty is that Sierra Leone remains one of the poorest countries on earth. Large numbers of people do not have access to sufficient food, safe drinking water or adequate health care. Unemployment is still very high and corruption is still endemic.

One of the main factors giving rise to the war was the disaffection and alienation of youth, who felt that they were completely marginalised within society. Unless these issues of poverty, unemployment and corruption are addressed, there is a real danger that large numbers of youths will remain disaffected and alienated and that, at some point in the future, they may once again join a violent movement whose aim is to overthrow the government.

People Power and Protest Since 1945: A Bibliography of Nonviolent Action

reviewed by Diana Francis, freelance consultant and Chair of CCTS

This bibliography was compiled by April Carter, Howard Clark and Michael Randle and was published this spring by Housman's Bookshop Limited. (Those of us who participate in CCTS meetings have followed its progress from idea to completion.) It has clearly been a painstaking work, backed by commitment and passion. It is also, I now see, a work of great learning and profound understanding.

The reasons why these three scholar-activists undertook it are stated clearly in the introduction:

> One reason for bringing out a bibliography on nonviolent action now is to draw attention to the growing number of primarily nonviolent popular campaigns (some much better known in the west than others). The other is to provide an up-to-date guide for those interested in nonviolent action in general, or those who wish to study particular types of campaign or specific movements.

And the next paragraph explains the structure and scope of the book, which goes far beyond what one might expect from a bibliography:

> The bibliography is organized to indicate the historical evolution of nonviolent action, the different contexts in which it has been used and the varying types of campaign. Introductory comments elaborate on the reasons for classification, sketch in the background and political context of campaigns and also note some controversial issues.

The book was written for 'activists, students and peace researchers', in the first place those based in Britain, with the hope that it will be of interest and use to those elsewhere. English language texts are, for practical reasons, its focus.

This is not, of course, the kind of book one simply sits down and reads from start to finish. It is rather a mine of information, scholarship and insight. After the General Introduction, it is organised into nine different sections. The first is an *Introduction to Nonviolent Action* and is subdivided by topic. Then follow several sections whose subdivisions are made according to what was done, in terms of nonviolent action, in different places. These include *Elements of Nonviolent Resistance to Colonialism After 1945*, *Campaigns for Rights and Democracy in Communist Regimes*, and *Resisting Rigged Elections, Oppression, Dictatorship, or Military Rule*. Each section has a general introduction and the subsections have their own – so that a reading of these introductions alone gives a 'story line' and a wide view of nonviolent action around the world. The many items in the bibliographical lists that follow have a line or two of explanation – sometimes more – so that potential readers can see what they can expect to find in the work cited.

The sections on *Campaigns for Cultural, Civil and Political Rights* and *Campaigns for Social and Economic Justice* are organised thematically, and then by specific examples. Then follows a substantial section on *Nonviolent Action in Social Movements*, which give both an excellent overview and many helpfully classified and fully introduced subsections.

At the end of a book there is a list of *Bibliographies, Websites and Libraries*, a brief introduction and bibliography on *Preparation and Training for Nonviolent Action*, and both an author and a subject index.

Doubtless, the coverage of different topics and examples that can be found in this book will be open to criticism. Some are no doubt treated more thoroughly than others; gaps will be identified. But I find this to be a work of extraordinary thoroughness, cogency and elegance. I believe it will be a powerful instrument for the scholarship of others and, even more importantly, for me, for making known the extent and power of nonviolent action in recent history. We need this to be recognised, since we so sorely need to maximise its potential now.

Civil Society Group of the United Kingdom Statement on Responsibility to Protect

*A group of UK NGOs and other civil society representatives convened by One World Trust have recently produced the following draft statement on the Responsibility to Protect (R2P). It will be published in its final form and open for signatures in the autumn. For enquiries about this statement, contact Claire Wren of One World Trust, email address: **cwren@oneworldtrust.org***

The undersigned organisations wish to show their support for the doctrine of the "Responsibility to Protect" (R2P)

The Responsibility to Protect is a tripartite doctrine, establishing an internationally recognised 'Responsibility to prevent', 'Responsibility to react', and 'Responsibility to rebuild'. These principles of the Responsibility to Protect were recognised by the international community in the United Nations statement issued at the September 2005 world summit. Following this acceptance by the international community we would like to note that:

1. The existence of a clear doctrine obliges the international community to respond consistently to large-scale violence and loss of life and its application would avert the high costs, human and economic, of failing to protect civilians;

2. The responsibility to protect is first a responsibility on national governments to protect their own populations;

3. The exercise of the responsibility both to prevent and react should always involve less intrusive and coercive measures being considered before more coercive and intrusive ones are applied in accordance with Chapter VI and VII of the UN Charter, and particular consideration should be given to the graduated response contemplated in Articles 33(2), 34, 36, 38 and 41;

4. Prevention is the single most important dimension of the responsibility to protect. Prevention options must always be exhausted before coercive measures including the use of force of any sort are contemplated. Prevention includes addressing the root causes of conflict, including development assistance, trade mechanisms and support for better governance;

5. In each of the three interconnected elements of the doctrine gender-sensitive perspectives shall be incorporated taking into particular account Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security;

6. In preventive and protective initiatives, particular attention should be paid to the situation and rights of ethnic and religious communities and indigenous peoples, as the most common victims of genocide;

7. The United Nations Security Council is the primary body to authorize military intervention for human protection purposes, permanent members should refrain from using their veto in cases of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. An appropriate regional body, where one exists with such authority, may also take action;

8. If as a last resort the Responsibility to Protect reaches the use of force, it should only be considered based on the five precautionary principles set out in the report of the 'High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change' and listed in the appendix to this statement;

9. If as a last resort the Responsibility to Protect reaches the use of force, it should only be considered based on the five precautionary principles set out in the report of the 'High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change' and listed in the appendix to this statement;

10. The mandate and size of military deployment must reflect the nature and scale of the threat faced by the target population.

We call for:

1. More commitment and resources to be devoted to prevention including the development of United Nations institutional capacity for early warning and translating early warning into concrete recommendations for action;

2. The international recognition that making a reality of prevention involves the detailed construction, international legitimation of and support for a single, well-resourced voluntary, consultative machinery, under UN auspices, developed on the model of preventative diplomacy, such as the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities;

3. The international recognition that prevention also requires all external parties including major powers explicitly to adopt the role of 'good offices', to publicly commit to a coherent wider international multilateral diplomacy;

4. The use of a transparent menu of available sanctions gradually escalating towards the more coercive, to be held in reserve alongside open channels of communication, which would make clear to disputant parties the cost of absolute non-cooperation and/or continuing violence;

5. The United Nations Security Council to make explicit reference to the doctrine of responsibility to protect and the five precautionary principles in all relevant resolutions; and

6. Countries to provide timely and adequate logistical support and personnel according to capacity.

The UK Government should:

1. Commit to refrain from using the UK veto at the UN Security Council in cases relating to genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity;

2. Provide access to the United Nations Security Council for the UN Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide, and support his early warning role;

3. Consult with civil society organisations as to the application of the Responsibility to Protect;

4. Co-ordinate between the relevant UK Government departments to ensure that R2P is addressed coherently between government departments, producing a joint DFID, FCO and MOD annual report to Parliament detailing UK Government progress on the development and implementation of the Responsibility to Protect; and

5. Co-ordinate between the relevant UK Government departments to ensure that R2P is addressed coherently between government departments, producing a joint DFID, FCO and MOD annual report to Parliament detailing UK Government progress on the development and implementation of the Responsibility to Protect; and

6. Provide sufficient resources and training for the UK, and other countries, to fulfil their obligations, as part of the international community, to provide practical support for the implementation of the principles of the Responsibility to Protect.

Signed by the following civil society organisation and individuals:

…

Appendix A

The Precautionary Principles for the use of force under the Responsibility to Protect are:

(a) **Just Cause:** Military intervention for human protection purposes is justified to halt or avert large scale loss of life, actual or apprehended, with genocidal intent or not, which is the product of either deliberate state neglect or inability to act, or a failed state situation; or large scale "ethnic cleansing" actual or apprehended, whether carried out by killing, forced expulsion, acts of terror or rape;

(b) **Right intention:** The primary purpose of military intervention must be to halt or avert human suffering.

(c) **Last resort:** Military intervention could only be legally justified when every non-military option for the prevention or peaceful resolution of the crisis has been explored with reasonable grounds for believing lesser measures would not have succeeded.

(d) **Proportional means:** The scale, duration and intensity of the planned military option for the prevention or peaceful resolution of the crisis has been explored, with reasonable grounds for believing lesser measures would not have succeeded.

(e) **Reasonable Prospects:** There must be a reasonable chance of success in halting or averting the suffering which has justified the intervention, with the consequences of action not likely to be worse than the consequences of inaction.

Giving meaning to 'Never Again':
the International Responsibility to Protect

by Alan Pleydell, Quaker Peace and Social Witness

Following the UN's institutional shame over its failure to avert the massacres in Rwanda in 1994, and Srebrenica in 1995, there has been some concerted international effort to rewrite the rules of engagement in such situations. Specifically the focus has been on severe abuses of power within state borders, and finding ways to modify the legal and political immunity of governments from international interference on the grounds of sovereign independence. How is the 'international community' to get more skilled at involvement in state-internal conflicts which are close to the potential for massacre, or have already got there, and doing so in ways which are genuinely helpful rather than engaging in forms of intervention, particularly invasions, which carry the highest danger of making everything a great deal worse? This subject now goes under the general rubric of the International Responsibility to Protect – or R2P for short.

The fundamental principles of R2P were first spelt out in the Canadian government sponsored *Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty* of September 2001. This document was overshadowed at the time by the events of 9/11, but the issues it raised are re-emerging now as central to the maintenance of international order. They were reiterated and taken up again by the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change convened by Kofi Annan which reported in December 2004, again in Kofi Annan's own report of March 2005 on UN reform, *In Larger Freedom*, and finally in the outcome document of the September 2005 UN World Summit – the most general and authoritative pronouncement.

Some of the main elements, the 'precautionary principles', of the emerging doctrine are a reworking in modern conditions of just war principles. They spell out, in terms of the legal norms that are already present in the UN Charter, minimum conditions which must be satisfied before any kind of last resort military intervention may be contemplated. [The precautionary principles are reproduced earlier in this Review, as Appendix A of the Civil Society Group of the United Kingdom Statement on Responsibility to Protect.]

In one sense the Summit Declaration represents a landmark, since it is the first time that R2P has been simultaneously and universally endorsed by the UN member states. It is a great achievement but where does it leave us in practical terms?

The precautionary principles are about setting stringent conditions for the collective authorisation of external military intervention against the will of a recalcitrant government to stop or avert a huge loss of life within the territory under its jurisdiction. The particular achievement of the summit document is to link these conditions to an explicit responsibility incumbent on all governments to protect their own populations.

However, a major problem with 'last resort thinking', as with 'worst-case scenario thinking', is that it carries the risk of precipitating us towards actualising the last resort option even in conditions short of the worst, and of numbing the potential for thinking through and practising alternatives.

Yet the primary intent of R2P is avowedly **preventive** – to help bring into being a recognized international norm and practice of protection which allows preventive and ameliorative influence short of coercive measures to be brought to bear in critical situations.

The key question then becomes how to give real credibility to the declaratory intention to develop a form of preventative diplomacy that would mean that in practice the last resort was decreasingly resorted to. Last resort principles are, in my view, a vital part of the mix. But the central point is to keep the threat of coercion in the background in order to develop and maintain space for preventive and remedial intervention which can make itself felt and be increasingly relied on. Above all, that

means developing a culture of consent and a willingness on the part of governments to engage – both those inside and those outside of the area where there is an imminent threat of abuse occurring, or where it is already taking place.

I think that a helpful analogy here is the development of child protection law over the last 50 years or so in moderately democratic countries. The situation used to be, and still is in practice in many places, that cases of domestic violence, against children as well as women, could not be touched by the law because of a legal and social convention that what went on behind the closed doors of the household was essentially a private matter. This compares directly with our inherited international doctrine of the sovereign independence of states. If in domestic practice we are managing to do things at least a little better now, how has this been achieved? The family was also conceived of as a legally inviolable sphere of collective privacy. It was widely feared by some that to breach its hard boundaries was to call into question the primacy of the family as a valued and natural unit of social organisation. Yet what has occurred step by step within family law, by judicial interpretation and the expansion of case law, is the gradual supplanting of the idea of the sovereign inviolability of the family (or the rights of the invariably male head of household within that structure) with the primacy of the rights and interests of the child.

The main thrust of the effort behind this change of understanding and convention has been to maintain and develop the primacy of the family as the key unit of social organisation, by consent and cultural development, from a sphere of forceful relationships to one of care and nurture. So, ultimately, with the local and regional self-organisation of human populations – ideally democratic states. The responsibility of governments to protect their citizens is directly analogous to the responsibility of parents to feed, nurture, protect and develop their children. The primary object of changing the law is not to criminalise more parents, throw them into jail and their children into institutional 'care', but to create and expand the space for the acceptance of help – from friends, social workers, trainers and so on – in cases where the balance within the family has gone seriously adrift and violence and threat rule. This objective rests on a root belief and hope in the human potential and desire – even if sometimes hidden – for doing things better, and in an easier way, however difficult that may be at the outset.

The paradox is that the earlier and less official the intervention – and the more it is understood as fundamentally friendly – the more likely it is to be received without protest or forceful resistance, even if it takes place within a socially maintained expectation of compliance. Ultimately, it is a balancing act. The legal change, if skilfully handled, creates the space for a more relaxed stance on either side and results in a greater willingness on the part of those who are the subject of intervention to accept external interest and good offices. The family gets to stay together; the country avoids invasion.

Clearly if resort to the ultimate sanction – splitting the family, or invading a country – were to become commonplace, this would undermine the whole basis of social and political life. A world of ever more numerous foster care homes or of post-invasion international protectorates is simply unsustainable. My belief is that on balance the more there is a culture and developed practice of allowed good offices, the less likely it is that situations will deteriorate to the point where military intervention is required to prevent massacre. That does not rule out the possibility that a well resourced, fully authorised and shared international military intervention might in some situations save many lives without leading to worse consequences later on. However, the precautionary principles would have to be applied with total and honest rigour.

Internationally, I don't think there is yet any very clear forward strategy for R2P. One outcome of the summit has been the appointment in May of a new UN Advisory Committee on Genocide Prevention. The seven-member Committee will provide guidance and support to the work of the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide. I hope that this institution will develop along the lines of the OSCE work on National Minorities carried out so effectively by Max van der Stoel as High Commissioner in the 1990s – friendly good offices with the coercive potential kept well in the background, but ultimately backed by awareness that non-cooperation could lead to the imposition of sanctions of various kinds.

Our job, and the job of civil society and NGOs, is to help tip the balance towards a general acceptance of the proposition that intervention in some form is legitimate when governments fail in their minimum obligations to protect their citizens, and that the acceptance of advice and good offices is likely to result in a decreasing reliance on the last resort of military intervention.

Pacifism and the responsibility to protect

by Diana Francis, freelance consultant and Chair of CCTS

Consideration of the responsibility to protect (R2P) is active in both CCTS and Quaker circles and so I am writing this short piece in my dual CCTS-Quaker identity, with two overlapping sets of readers in mind. In any case, no two members of either group think identically on this issue and we are all, I suspect, exercised by it. So in the end I write as a concerned human being, with my own particular understandings of the world and of ethics.

As many readers will know, I am a pacifist and a war abolitionist. I shall remain so unless I am convinced that such an approach is not practicable. Ethical principles and judgements, by definition, have to work for good in the world.

The belief that human beings have a responsibility for one another's well being is one that I share. I find the NGO statement of principles on R2P (reproduced earlier in this Review) an excellent one, in that it clearly rules out the kind of violent intervention that has recently been justified by the US, the UK and others, and points to the need for solidarity and principled engagement, if necessary across national boundaries. Almost all the recommendations embodied in this statement are ones that 'all right minded people' (i.e. all our likely readers!) would endorse, as far as they go. But for those who see lethal violence as essentially unacceptable as a means towards any end, the 'last resort' of military violence is bound to be a problem. As Alan Pleydell has said in his excellent article, the statement can be seen as embodying old Just War theory, spelling out the stringent principles for its application in today's context, with recent history in mind, and within the framework of international law. I do not accept Just War theory and I believe that having violence kept visibly in the background is a contradiction in terms.

Because this is the place of discomfort and because recourse to military action is given guarantor status, this question assumes an importance apparently disproportionate to its hopefully minimized role in the scheme of things. In one sense we are, I believe, disproportionately, though by no means inappropriately, exercised by this moral dilemma, when there is a whole world of responsibility to protect that goes unaddressed while we wrestle with the particular issue of outbreaks of gross violence against unprotected groups. This assumes, it seems, far greater importance than protection from starvation, or from thirst, or from death by water-borne infection and other preventable diseases. The hideous clusters or crowds of deaths by direct atrocity do not come near equalling the numbers of those who die in domestic or street violence, or even, I suspect, of those who are killed on the roads. And how do we compare them to endemic human rights violations that take their toll over time? They assume such a central place in our thinking because they are so dramatic and confront us with a moral challenge that we simply fail to see sharply enough in other circumstances. That challenge is real and our horror and our desire to act are entirely proper to our humanity. That case is well made in the NGO statement. We should beware, however, of letting that desire and determination take our attention and effort – and resource allocation – away from those other forms of collective responsibility that are chronically neglected, with disastrous consequences for millions.

I want to link this point with some remarks on the notion of 'prevention'. Preventing large-scale atrocities is clearly better than waiting for them to begin and then trying to intervene. The proposal for a monitoring etc system is a good one, assuming that its function and related judgements could not be usurped by particular powers for their own purposes (quite a large assumption, in fact. These

proposals are radical ones, requiring a high measure of optimism.) But without any monitoring at all I can see that our current world is disfigured by gross structural violence and every ingredient for the fomenting of violence, whether chronic or acute. If we are focussed only on the prevention of violent crises and do not set out to transform global relationships, economic, social, political and environmental, we shall go on failing to protect on the grand scale and continue to face growing numbers of outbreaks of widespread violence in which those who have lived lives of daily misery are finally dispatched with brutality. When I consider Dafur or Northern Uganda or Sierra Leone, I see greed and grievance going hand in hand. I also see that the culture of violence that we wrap in the decent clothes of technology and disguise with words such as 'intervention', 'deterrence', and 'surgical strike', has made gross cruelty possible in other cultures, whether fuelled by greed or by grievance, or (usually) both.

 'Prevention', taken seriously, would include transforming this culture, whatever its manifestation, and taking out the weapons and systems that facilitate and magnify its violent consequences. It would mean ensuring that populations are educated, active members of society (in whatever units it shapes itself) so that they are not at the mercy of tyrants and demagogues. They need the ability to organise their collective power and choice to improve their own lot and stand up for themselves in non-destructive ways.

Peace that is not built from the bottom up, with the involvement of all strata and identity groups, is no peace and will not hold. In Iraq we have seen the disastrous consequences of top-down military intervention that has in fact embodied rather than prevented atrocity and has not respected the lives and needs of 'ordinary people'. But in Kosovo we have an example where the people who were 'protected' by the war were not thereby confirmed in nonviolent principles or democratic processes (which they had notably used before) but rather in that strand of their culture which favoured violence, ethnic nationalism and lawlessness. The (still many) people committed to peacebuilding have had a hard time of it and minority groups still more so.

The prevention of widespread and gross violence, then, will involve the most fundamental changes and correspondingly huge, sustained efforts. It will involve the big powers in radically changing their own policies and demilitarising their own relationships and behaviour. This is, inevitably, a long-term goal. But what (and here I can avoid the crunch point no longer) is to be done in the meantime? Intervention from outside is, surely, going to be needed?

Alan Pleydell, in his article, concludes:

> Our job, and the job of civil society and NGOs, is to help tip the balance towards a general acceptance of the proposition that intervention in some form is legitimate when governments fail in their minimum obligations to protect their citizens, and that the acceptance of advice and good offices is likely to result in a decreasing reliance on the last resort of military intervention.

This brave statement is already radical, in current terms. As I remarked earlier, it presupposes a strong sense of the possibility for change. To have the powers that currently act largely at will, marshalling their own resources to pursue their own interests, putting those resources at the disposal of others and renouncing their own control implies a wonderful transformation. For other powers to trust their involvement and support interventions resourced by them, such a transformation would be necessary. For them, additionally, to share economic power equitably, to pursue global needs in relation to the environment and to take that crisis seriously, to go for radical reductions to their own military establishments and spending to set an example and to fund all this, would be a miracle indeed. So we are all optimists here and there is plenty for non-pacifists to concentrate on. Their task is to 'build down' the violence component in protection and see how far they can get.

That will involve an exploration of the many forms of pressure and incentive that can be exercised, as well as the development of far more nuanced skill and honesty in the conduct of mediation and negotiation. Though I touch on this briefly here, it is a huge area for study and creative thinking by all who accept a responsibility to protect.

For pacifists and non-pacifists alike, the issue of effectiveness is extremely difficult. To be effective, the threat or use of military means relies on violence-power that is credible not only in scale and deadliness but also in the real possibility of its use. This is the dilemma of background visibility. Furthermore, it is not clear that when violence is high the use of third party violence can be effective and kept to a low level. (Remember Oliver Ramsbotham's hourglass, where the tight bit represents the moment of crisis and there is no room for manoeuvre.) Military intervention seems to work mostly where there is already a lull, at least, in the violence, and a strong policing role is what is needed. The continuing level of violence in Iraq demonstrates that, where strong opposition to an intervention remains, even a huge military presence cannot control it.

Where armies have not acted in the face of atrocities, it would seem to have been, at least in part, because they have not known how to do so. The Belgian general who pulled his troops out of Ruanda as the genocide began said as much. Presumably Britain put troops into Sierra Leone when it did in part, at least, because the violence had reached a level when peacekeeping was possible and there was reason to believe that peacebuilding was a possibility at that point. In East Timor, 'peace enforcement' was achieved through a very large military intervention. It is beyond my scope here (and my knowledge) to analyse its ways, means and outcome. I want to acknowledge it and at the same time to point out that such an action after so many years of neglect could hardly be seen to fit in with the principles of the NGO statement.

And military deterrence or action requires superior might, in terms of hardware and/or numbers or skill, to succeed. That seems to suggest it could be used only if malefactors were weaker than the international force in question. This would certainly limit its operation.

Then, as we have seen in Iraq and Afghanistan, those who have apparently been quelled can prove unquellable or be replaced by others. Violence is not easy to quell: it is like an unquenchable fire, ready to break out in any place.

This is at the heart of the case for nonviolence: you can't fight fire with fire. You have to transform the heat and the energy. For those of us who hold the view that every resort to violence perpetuates its dynamics and culture; who believe that the maintenance of armies of any kind is an invitation to others to organise their own violence; who know they would never be prepared to train to kill or to join an army and who therefore cannot honestly require others to do so; who believe that the categorical imperative is indeed categorical, the challenge is to build up the capacity for nonviolent intervention in situations of acute violence.

The trouble for us, and for those we want to persuade of our case, is that, though we now have strong examples of the use of violence by populations to overthrow tyranny, when it comes to third party intervention[1] in situations of acute violence it would seem that we have only the smallest examples to offer. But there are many examples of where military functions could be undertaken by civilian personnel. An excellent book on this issue is *Achieving Security in Sub-Saharan Africa: Cost Effective Alternatives to the Military* edited by Geoff Harris.[2] Geoff Harris's motto is 'there are always alternatives' (acronym TAAA) and his own chapter on 'Civilianising Military Functions' demonstrates how many of the roles we tend to attribute to armies can in fact be undertaken by civilians (as police, observers, monitors etc.). Brian Martin, in another chapter, discusses non-military defence.

... continued overleaf

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[1] It might be that if we looked more seriously at the 'not violent' menu, we would find that non-military physical intervention was not in fact a last resort but an earlier one.

[2] published in 2004 by the Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria.

It seems that in recent years, since the early work of the likes of Brian Martin and Gene Sharp, rather little attention has been paid to the power of nonviolence to address harsh situations. The less challenging (though more immediately relevant) field of conflict resolution/transformation has perhaps displaced it. I believe we must give it new attention.

We may all have to confront the possibility that there could be situations of acute violence where the responsibility to protect people is qualified by the impossibility of doing so, or of doing so in a way that would meet the criterion of proportionality. Pacifists and non-pacifists alike will want to refer to wider and more long-term consequences when they consider that criterion.

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Conciliation Resources, London

Quaker Peace & Social Witness, London

Responding to Conflict, Birmingham

War Resisters International, London

Centre for Peace & Reconciliation Studies, Coventry University

St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace, London

International Alert, London

Peace Direct

Moldovan Initiative Committee of Management, Belfast

Action for Conflict Transformation

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