



made in KOSOVA

...past, present, future

Periodical newsletter
dedicated to learning from the past in Kosovo
Number 1 | Year 1 | September 09



otro mundo es possible!

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This is a standard page of the newsletter. Its aim is to give basic contact information, as well as to continue informing about forumZFD-s activities.

This newsletter aims to inform about the process of dealing with and learning from the past in Kosovo. It aims to cover ongoing initiatives sourcing from the society: important events, new ideas, and in addition experiences from other areas in the region and the world as well as stories of people's experiences. At the same time we are inviting all of you to contribute with what can ease the difficult process.

Forum Civil Peace Service (*forumZFD*), founded in 1996, is an association of various German peace movement and non-profit organisations aimed at creating and strengthening civilian conflict transformation by non-violent means. *forumZFD* is strengthening peacebuilding through the civil society in Western Balkans, Palestine & Israel, in the Philippines, and in Germany, in cooperation with member organisations from the German peace movement. Moreover, *forumZFD* is training its personnel in its Academy for Conflict Transformation and is advocating for the Civil Peace Service concept in Germany and Europe.

forumZFD Updates

Civil Peace Service has become ten years old! This anniversary is used by all the participating agencies to organise conferences, public events and other anniversary activities. The main goal is to inform more people in Germany about the Civil Peace Service and about conflict transformation in general.

More: www.zivilerfriedensdienst.org

for any possible enquiry, input and cooperation, please contact us through:
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*To give peace a hand means to have more dreams
Then the reality is able to destroy¹.*

¹ Adapted from Hans Kruppa

Dear Reader,

Each individual, group and society is heavily influenced by its past – we are the children of our past - BUT parallel to it, each individual, group and society has the opportunity (and the obligation!) to shape its future in a way that it fits them best – we are the parents of our future² - by creating conditions for one's growth and development, by learning from its past, by taking care that mistakes are not repeated and good choices become one's practice.

The end of the first decade of the XXIst century, finds Kosovo independent, for the first time in history, with promising capacities and opportunities for the prosperity of its citizens, in the envisioned European perspective. But this moment in time it is also facing the painful consequences of the violent war of 90s in the last century. More than 13000 people were killed in the period 1998 – 2000. Around 1900 people are still held missing, and their families are still lacking the basic human dignity of finding the bodies of their beloved ones. The numbers of ex-prisoners, victims of abuse and other forms of human degradation are much bigger. Each member of this society, in one way or another, has been a victim of the violent past.

Furthermore, we are carrying with us the pain of a much longer history - this society did not have the opportunity to constructively face its past, heal its wounds, draw lessons from it, and firmly shape its future in a way that it prevents further destruction and ensures prosperity. Today, the hope is that this opportunity is in our hands. Thus, it is in the interest of various individuals and groups to engage in these initiatives and work on finding ways on how to respond to the consequences of the violent past.

This newsletter is a modest contribution in promoting these initiatives, and bringing people together so that they can learn from each other, and explore ways for their further development for the benefit of Kosovar society.

This is the first issue of this newsletter, and in each issue you will have the opportunity to learn about the latest developments related to Dealing with the Past in Kosovo, read the personal stories of people affected during the war, and see how other societies dealt with the consequences of their violent past. We will also bring you the positive responses of individuals and groups that do not give up their belief for a more positive future. We will be happy to give space to each one of you for sharing your thoughts on the topics which will be discussed in the coming issues.

Forum Civil Peace Service is honoured that, through this newsletter, it has been given the opportunity to be at the service of the various undertakings in this respect, and will give its best to support this painful, but crucially important and promising process.

We welcome cooperation with you!

forumZFD Kosovo staff

Tuesday, September 15, 2009
Prishtina, Kosovo

² Herbert Spencer

The News and Update section of this newsletter will bring the latest information occurring in-between two issues on existing and upcoming initiatives in Kosovo while looking at the consequences of the violent past. Being this the first issue, we will provide you with some general information on existing initiatives and their current state in regard to Dealing with the Past in Kosovo.

“Dealing with the past” initiatives in Kosovo

Overview by *forumZFD*, work in progress, 21.8.2009

This is a first attempt to give an overview about “dealing with the past” (dwp) initiatives in Kosovo. Due to the complex topic and structure of actors it is far from being exhaustive. All actors involved could gain from more knowledge about existing processes on dealing with the past. *forumZFD* is welcoming any corrections and additions: *forumZFD*, Xhemajli Berisha 5/9 – VELANIA, 10000 Prishtina, Kosovo; Phone/fax: +381 (0)38 518 992; email: kosovo@forumzfd.de; web: www.forumZFD.de.

1 Situation in Kosovo

As any other society, Kosovo is dealing with its past, consciously and unconsciously, in more and in less constructive ways. Although Kosovo declared its independence, international actors are still strongly involved in shaping its future. Kosovo society’s “passiveness” in the political process leads to Kosovo being pushed into problematic processes by external actors. “We try to fit, not to create.” This political situation has its roots in the history of Kosovo. For a long time people were distant from the state and felt the need to protect and defend their own group by their own means. Group identities are very strong and lead to nationalistic expressions in everyday life and a lack of understanding for people, values and interests that are not a priority for the own group. The dominance of the group identity is a challenge for starting constructive processes of “dealing with the past”: Individual interests (e.g. of families of missing persons to find out what happened to their relatives) have to step back. And there is little interest in other groups’ experiences. Kosovo’s “dependant independence” is creating conditions for the fear that “it is not over yet” – especially concerning the North of Kosovo and the Serbian enclaves. In spite of this “frozen conflict” there are many actors who have started constructive initiatives to deal with the past and affected groups which press for truth and justice. But most of these actors and initiatives are dispersed and lack political strength, especially initiatives which are critical towards mainstream perceptions of the violent past.

So far, mainly NGOs have been dealing with the past in a conscious and explicit way. But this endeavour will only be fruitful if especially affected groups, media, arts, politicians and the education sector become much more involved in dwp. Only then it will be possible to reach larger parts of the society. As the violent recent past in Kosovo is strongly related to the political developments in the region dealing with the past in Kosovo needs to be part of a regional approach. Constructive dealing with the past can show ways towards a more responsible and more peaceful society in Kosovo.

2 Crucial issues

Although many individual victims have not been rehabilitated the focus of “dealing with the past” has been on individual suffering. Very little has been done yet concerning *social wounds* which the violent past has caused to Kosovo society as a whole. These include the mythification and glorification of victories and defeats, the lacking political participation – elected politicians are not being held accountable – as well as it is some kind of a taboo to question ostensibly joined patriotic values and beliefs.

The establishment of the facts about *war crimes* and to end *impunity* is one of the crucial issues concerning “dealing with the past”. The most prominent initiative in this respect is Kosovo’s involvement in the coalition for establishing a governmental regional commission to establish the facts about the war crimes (CORECOM, see www.korekom.org). During 2009, several consultations are being held and it is planned to collect one million signatures in the whole region. There are several concerned actors who share the idea of such a commission but have not joined the coalition due to controversies concerning the process. Some organisations are individually producing documentations about war casualties and war crimes in Kosovo.

Although everybody who lived in Kosovo in 1998 and 1999 was somehow affected by the war and the preceding violence, there are some *especially affected groups*. Today, more than 1.900 persons are still missing in Kosovo. The family members of missing persons feel marginalised and are deeply disappointed by the governments in Kosovo and Serbia but also by some international actors. Other affected groups are the family members of war victims, war invalids and former political prisoners. Although these groups have formed associations they are lacking the political strength to get through with their legitimate concerns concerning clarification, justice, acknowledgement and reparations.

One decade after the war there are still many people denying war crimes or even the possibility that members of one’s own side may have committed war crimes. On the other hand a huge majority supports resolving the issue of missing persons regardless of their background. These and other *attitudes* and opinions are being researched by different actors.

History has been misused to justify violence and war crimes. Although there are huge differences between Albanian and Serbian versions of the history of Kosovo it has been a *shared history* which can by no means be reduced to a centuries-old struggle between Albanians and Serbs. Not only formal history education but also initiatives in the fields of archaeology and cultural heritage work on this issue.

As historiography has focused on governments, political and military leaders and wars the personal experiences and opinions of many people have often been neglected. Oral history initiatives record, preserve and interpret personal experiences and opinions of people. They are not only published as books but also as video tapes and in the internet.

Although a large part of the society was heavily affected by oppression and violence, only the remembrance (and honouring) of “Kosovo Liberation Army” (KLA) fighters is visible in public, the most important war memorial being for the KLA commander Adem Jashari in Prekaz. For civilian casualties, missing persons and other victims, memorials are missing. Initiatives concerning the culture of remembrance also include the question how memorials can enable communication.

Due to the oppression in the 1990s and the war as well as the continuing insecurity being felt by many people the mental health situation in Kosovo is alarming. Several state and non-governmental institutions are working in this field but their capacities are insufficient.

3 Actors in Kosovo

Especially affected groups

The most important actors though are those who were especially affected by the violent past, even if they do not call their work “dealing with the past”. These include the associations of family members of missing persons (and their coordination council), of former political prisoners, of war invalids, and of family members of war victims. The family associations of missing persons are most active in public. They protest towards the government and the assembly, they use the days of missing persons for public activities, they put forward a proposal for a memorial. Parts of their internal work is collecting information about the missing and convincing families to give blood samples for DNA testing.

Below you will find a list of organisations and documents related to dealing with the past. However the list does not tend to be definitive, furthermore it is thought to be an ongoing activity within the newsletter and we welcome any initiatives in this field that have not been mentioned here.

Nongovernmental organisations

Several nongovernmental organisations are working explicitly on dwp: The Centre for Civil Society Development (CCSD) is involved in CORECOM, Community Building Mitrovica (CBM) is part of CORECOM and has a "story telling" project. The Council for the Defence of Human Rights and Freedoms (CDHRF) is producing a documentation of war casualties. The Humanitarian Law Center (HLC) is part of CORECOM and is producing a documentation of war casualties. INTEGRA has a "story telling" project, did some research on attitudes and is involved in CORECOM. The Kosova Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims (KRCT) gives psycho-social support to people who still suffer from the violent past. Partners Kosova and Syri i Vizionit part of CORECOM. The Youth Initiative for Human Rights (YIHR) is part of CORECOM and does some other memory work.

Initiatives in arts, culture and media

The Center for Children's Theatre Development did "forum theatre" with family associations of missing persons (together with OMPF). Cultural Heritage without Borders (CHwB) is working on shared history. The Kosovo Institute of Journalism and Communication (KIJAC) organised conferences on transitional justice. Multimedia Center had a "story telling" project about the 60s-70s (in cooperation with the University of Prishtina) and is working on preserving memories. Some individual journalists take up dwp issues in newspapers, radio and TV. But in general media are limiting themselves to covering NGO initiatives, for example concerning truth or fact finding commissions.

Formal education

The newly established Kosovo branch of EUROCLIO tries to improve history teaching in schools. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology is reviewing history curricula and books and the University of Prishtina did some oral history work in the Department of Sociology (in cooperation with Multimedia Center).

State actors

Beyond the education system there are several state actors involved in or responsible for some of the crucial issues mentioned above. The Committee on Human Rights, Gender Equality, Missing Persons and Petitions of the Assembly and the Governmental Commission on Missing Persons are responsible for missing persons. But they are not considered to be effective by others. The Office on Missing Persons and Forensics (OMPF) is responsible for determining the fate of missing persons, it also has a memory project. Mental health institutions are responsible to give psycho-social support to people who are still suffering from the violent past.

International Organisations

The International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP) is supporting family associations of missing persons and their structures. UNDP did a study on attitudes and opinions concerning transitional justice.

4 Documents and Publications

Amnesty International 2009: Burying the past: 10 years of impunity for enforced disappearances and abductions in Kosovo.

Council for the Defence of Human Rights and Freedoms: Overview about war victim (Forthcoming).

CORECOM 2008: Civil Society Consultation on truth-seeking and truth-telling mechanisms about war crimes and other serious human rights violations committed in the former Yugoslavia.

CORECOM 2008: Initiative for Establishing a Regional Commission for Fact-finding About War Crimes [RECOM].

HLC 2007: Transitional justice in post-Yugoslav countries: report for 2007.

HLC 2007: Trials for ethnically motivated crimes and war crimes in Kosovo : report for 2007.

HLC: Kosovo memory book (Forthcoming).

INTEGRA 2008: Truth telling project: "Attitudes towards inter-ethnic relations and truth telling in Kosovo". (Including roundtable "truth telling in Kosovo; which way now?" recommendations and lessons learned.

KIPRED 2009: Transitional Justice in Kosovo (Discussion paper).

KRCT 2006: Long-term Sequels of War, Social Functioning and Mental Health in Kosovo.

Lopes Cardozo et al. 2000: Mental health, social functioning, and attitudes of Kosovar Albanians following the war in Kosovo. JAMA. 2000;284(5):569-577.

OMPF 2006: Hear what we are saying: the families speak.

OMPF/CCTD 2006: Voices: an interactive theatre initiative addressing the issue of the missing in Kosovo.

UNDP 2007: Public perceptions on transitional justice: report on transitional justice opinion polling survey conducted in April-May 2007 in Kosovo.

This section will "tell" individual stories of Kosovars, their personal experiences of the violent past. The section uses the archives of our various cooperating partners that have worked on collecting these stories. Their preservation, namely the remembrance of these painful individual histories has been made possible by an enormous effort and determination of our partners to make these stories public. Each story is published ONLY with the permission of the story's main actor/s. The first stories, including the one published in this issue, will be drawn from the Book "People and Memories Talk", published by The Committee for Civic Initiative in Nis. Stories presented in this Newsletter are exactly the same as published in the original. Each of the stories can be found in the above mentioned book. If a specific story holds any interests for you, you may contact us for further information.

A personal story from the Book "People and Memories Talk"

This book has been published with the financial support from IKV Pax Christi Netherlands. The attitudes expressed in here are the attitudes of persons, whose memories have been registered and can not in anyway be understood as official attitudes of IKV Pax Christi, and neither as the attitudes of the Council for Citizen Initiative and of the partners in the Project.

"People and Memories Talk" is a Project of the Committee for Civic Initiative, which has been realized together with the NGO URBANIN from Novi Pazar, NGO CBM from Mitrovica, NGO INTEGRA from Prishtina and NGO LUNA from Rudog during the years 2008 and 2009, in Bosna and Hercegovina, Kosovo and Serbia.

Memory from: Bahrije Gërxhaliu

I am Bahrije Gërxhaliu, I come from the village Studime e Ulët (Vushtrri)

Miss Gërxhaliu, what were the living conditions of your family during the 90 -ties? How did your household strive with food, medical treatment?

During the 90-ties my family was living in normal conditions, the medical treatment was on an acceptable level, though we did not have anyone in the family with an illness. We were a household living in relatively good conditions.

Were you working at that time?

No, at that time I was not employed personally, but my husband, brother in law and my sister in law were all employed.

What were they working?

My husband was working in the socially owned enterprise *Ramiz Sadiku*, he was a graduated engineer; my brother in law was working in the market though he had a University Degree accomplished with the highest success but because of the conditions at that time, he could not get employed. My sister in law was working in the education sector, in the elementary school "Ali Kelmendi" (Vushtrri).

Did you have any children in your household going to school at that time?

Yes, in that period of time our family had 9 children, but only two of them were going to school. Others were too young.

How was the education organised at that time?

They were attending the school in our village. Our soon had completed the first four years in that school and after that, during the nineties, he moved to the elementary school "Ali Kelmendi" in town; whereas our daughter continued to attend her lessons at the school in our village. Conditions of that time are very well known, the teachers were working without any regular payment. Among them was my sister in law. The citizens on their own initiative were supporting the school by providing firewood and other commodities for the sole purpose of continuing the education of their own children.

Did you travel at that time?

No, I did not have the chance, but my brother in law had travelled.

As you were not working, probably you were involved with raising children and the house work. If there was any free time left for you, how did you spend it?

All right, the time was not sufficient, for my sister in law was working and I had to take care of my children. Having nine children in the same household and taking care of them takes a lot of time, thus this makes it a great commitment, and all of my time was spent with the children and the housework activities.

Did you take part in armed conflicts?

No.

Were you in a camp?

No.

Did you leave the area you were living in at that time?

Yes.

Can you describe how it happened?

On the 24-th of April of the year 1999, respectively when the NATO bombing had started we were expelled from our own houses, from there we went to the town and stayed there for ten days, and then we were displaced from there again and went back to our houses and stayed there for three weeks. There were houses burning, and there was shelling going on but not in our district. We were displaced again in the month of April, we tried to go to the town but they did not let us, it was impossible, for the police forces, and the army and all other Serbian forces chased us upwards through the river in our village. Going upwards through the river, we noticed the river had gone deep up to our necks.

The two of our youngest children were not with me, for my brother in law had already left with them, thinking that we were going down to the town. The two children separated from me were very young, one of them was three years old and the other one two years and four months old. On the other side I, together with the three other children, as all other inhabitants of the village walked upwards through the river. I can not describe how many people had been displaced, we were going upwards through the river and the water was neck-deep. My elder children did not cry because of the river, but they were afraid from the shelling for there was at all times shooting coming from the Serbian military forces which were placed in the "Mëhalla e Rashicave", the Serbs positioned...

Is this district in your village?

Yes, it is in our village.

But where is the river?

The river is beside the Gërxfhalu district, and it passes through the village Studime e Epërme. We travelled through the river for three full kilometers and were afraid to go out, we could neither head upwards nor down the hill, we had to walk alone through the river. It was painful every moment, for I did not know where my smaller children (she sighs) were. We arrived there, respectively when we got to the upper part there were KLA soldiers, there I felt protected. I left there three of my older children and moved on to look for my smaller children. I left the older children together with my mother in law, while I went back to search for the other children. While I was going downwards, I was asking people I knew about my brother in law, for my husband was not there, he had gone upwards to send something to KLA and thus we could not meet....

□ Who is your husband, what's his name?

Imer Gërxfhaliu, he was up, he went to send something to the KLA soldiers and we did not meet, while he was up, so he did not know where we were. In the river, he was going downwards while we were going upwards (she moves her hands in one direction and then in the other direction) and we did not meet. He had gone home, but he did not find us, for we had gone upwards. As I was saying I went downwards to meet my children and I met my brother in law with two of my daughters in his hands, holding them like two bags, for he did not want to let them get wet in the water. Afterwards we went back, I took my mother in law and the children and we headed for Studime at my brother's place. There we stayed for three weeks ...

□ In Studime e Epërme?

Yes, in Studime e Epërme. Regarding the food we did not have any hardships for my father's family was wealthy.

The night of the second May we headed upwards, my husband in a tractor with the children, me and my mother in law; whereas my brother in law, Skender Gërxfhaliu, together with his family, the wife and his children left with his car. There were so many people that I did not know who was going where, what were we doing, but we thought the best was to follow the direction the others had already taken. Around ten in the evening the shooting started from up the hill. In fact they had started with the shootings earlier, but we had not heard them, for there were many people walking between the two villages....(she starts crying and continues the story) maybe for me and my children, that place will be the most tragic and painful place for a very long time. When we stopped, Serbian soldiers came and they said to us: - Go, go. When the other group of Serbian soldiers came we could only hear shootings. Then, my husband got close to the tractor's cabin where me and my children were sitting (crying) and she asked me how the children were? I told her that the children were asleep, but I also begged him in the name of god and told him: - Take the son and leave us. But he replied: - I won't take the son, and then left. I was very worried about him, and in a moment I heard some shootings (she continues the story while weeping). My oldest daughter at that time had only 9 years. She started crying and said to me:-Mother, mother, they killed my father. I told her : - No my daughter, father has escaped. But you shouldn't speak for the soldiers might find us her alone. I told her - Your father has left and there's no one to protect us. My brother in law had left earlier with his car, I saw him when he left and we said goodbye to each other. I still thought that my husband had escaped and that I was there alone with my children. Not even ten or fifteen minutes had passed, I can not know exactly, but they came to us and shook the tractor, then they hit me here (she shows with her hands the part of the body where they had hit her, the breast) with an automatic machine gun, I thought my breast was crushed. They were asking for money ...

□ Police?

The police were wearing masks, you could not recognise them, I could only know that they were Serbs (she continues the story interrupted by the question), I told them: - I don't have any money, I only have babies, I said that in Albanian for I did not speak their language. Then they replied: - Babies can do and as my daughter of two years and four months old was sleeping in my lap he took her from me. Only a soulless person can do such a thing. I could only see her from the light coming from the tractor's headlights. She was crying, the other children started to cry, but I told them to stop crying. My daughter was calling me from there - O, mommy mommy ... - The policeman shouted at her - Shut up, don't call your mother, for he knew, he knew our language for he was from this area. Then another one of them came close to me and said: - Give me money or your child is gonna go. I replied to him: - Kill her for I don't have any money. And then, I had a sheet of a book in the pocket of my pullover, I gave it to him, as I had folded it at home before leaving and saved my daughters life. I told him in Albanian - Take them, may they choke you to death, I had lost control, maybe even if he would have killed me at that moment I would not have been afraid. I told him again: - May it choke you to death. The other took the sheet of paper, and he threw the baby in my lap and they left. Surely, he thought there was money in that paper, but there was nothing in it.

It is important that they left. The children were silenced, and in the meantime while I was silencing the smallest one I heard my husband's voice, Imer Gërxhaliu, who was calling me from the lower part of the hill. I left my smallest daughter with my mother in law while the rest of the children were left in the tractor and came down to meet my husband. I asked him: - Have they beaten you? He answered: - They did not beat me, but they have shot and finished me. - Oh no, I cried, and got close to him. - Don't do anything for me, cause there's no hope for me, only (she pauses and sighs) let me see the children once more (she speaks while crying), and continued, may it be hallal to you in this and in the other world.

Then I tried to straighten him, but could not do it, for his body was dead with too much blood lost, I called one of our neighbors and told him: - Can you help me? He told me:

- I can't I was badly beaten just now. Then I gathered all my strength and put him on my shoulder, got him close to the tractor, and once we got there I told him: - Reach for the tractor with your hand. I got him close to the children (she cries and wipes her tears). Those were moments that I can never forget until I die, I have never experienced more difficult moments. He hugged all our children (she breathes heavily, cries) but he stopped for longer when hugging the boy and he told him: - Ah my son, you were like a... (she sighs, cries), his breath stopped, (crying), but, I am leaving you too many worries (crying). Then he continued - I am most worried about my wife, for to me she was a wife and a friend, then he spoke to me - The children will be left on your hands, but I am most worried about you (she continues to tell the story with difficulty, she is all in tears), please say hello to Skenda. His brother Skender, (crying) and continued:- Mother, my last wish is to take care of my wife and children, please take care of them as I have taken care for you. (She cries). Then I told him: - Please don't start leaving last wishes, for if there is anywhere in the world a person that can heal you, we'll find that person. - No, there's no cure for me. I only pray to god and inshallah I will have the luck to die for this nation and this land. Amid this, there came my sister in law, Habibe Gërxhaliu, with her children. We understood from her that my brother in law was killed too, and that she had been looking for us. She heard the voice of my husband, she got close to him and said: - O Imer, how are you my brother in law? He replied: - No, I am gone, please say hello to my brother and pass him my last wish to take care for my family, my wife and children; then he asked her first to swear on his brother's name and asked her: - Where is he? She was very strong, for she did not want to hurt him more than he was and replied to him: - He has escaped, has gone into the woods, he is not here, but now, you will straighten up... He lived for two and a half hours more and somewhere about (23:55), it was clear (she cries) he would not live. Then he turned to me - I would only like to know my wife's name. I replied: Imer, what are you saying, I am holding you, I said - It is me Bahrije.- Oh, he said, I pity my wife more than my children, for they will be left in her hands, I would have liked to have met my brother once more to leave him this message... (she cries and continues telling), my last wish is no one to shed a tear for me. There he died. We all screamed, my sister in law, children, my mother in law whom I considered as a mother (she cries).

My sister in law spoke to him: - O Imer, good luck and regards to Skenda, for he has left before you, but then he spoke once more: - Ah, now I am completely satisfied, then he spoke no more, he had died.

Children were screaming, my mother in law was screaming. I was petrified, got down from the tractor, for I saw three men coming in our direction. The moon was shining. I would never want to see the moon again (she cries and wipes her tears), for it reminds me of those painful nights. As I said, three men were coming in our direction. I stood up and asked them: O brothers, can you please help me to get my killed husband down from the tractor, my children are going crazy. When they came close, I saw that one of them was a neighbour of my mother. I am speaking of Sherif Bunjaku, whose son got married that night and was killed in the very same one. He asked me: -Who are you? I replied: -It's me Bahrije, Imer's wife. - O Bahrije, is that you, it's me Sherif, it was very difficult to recognize him from all that pain, horror, and suffering. He helped me to bring the body down. I got a blanket, layed it down and then we layed the body on it. I started crying with all the strength in me, and then Sherif comforted me - don't Bahrije, you should not do that (she cries while telling). We layed down my husband and left the body there. I asked another of those three men: - Can you please move us from here, close to us was a tractor full of victims, some were still screaming, some had died. I said: - Not to terrify anymore these small children. We had nine children from 11 years to 17 months old.

One of the neighbors moved the tractor up the hill and there we stood for the night. (she cries). Next day it started dawning at four in the morning. I told my sister in law: - Stay here with the children, while I and the mother in law go out to look if there is someone left alive, or find a way to get out of this place. We were left only with two men, the two of our boys, my sister's and mine. I had four daughters and a son, and my sister in law had three daughters and a son. I was thinking what to do. I got out and in the path and saw some people who told me in which direction they were going. In the morning, once more I got close to the body (she starts crying) and out of all that pain and suffering I said: - Ah Imer, do you know where have you left us, and then I left. Close by was the cousin of my husband, Fatmir, 27 years old, he was wounded. I got close to him, but he did not recognize me, for he had tremendous pain from the wounds in his body, I returned back to my sister in law and together we headed upwards to the town.

On the road my mother in law got really exhausted. I saw a man with some horses whom I did not recognize and asked him: -

Mister, can you take this old lady with you, he took the old lady with him, while I, my sister in law and the children continued the road walking. We arrived to the main road. There we were stopped and put into rows of one. There I was terrified, for my son was 11, but he looked as a 17 year old and I was afraid they would take him, what would I need my life for!? But it did not happen like that.

They sent us in an ex-cooperative where there were many people taken from the rows. They were separating men from women, loading them into trucks and no one knew where were they being sent. We stood there until three in the afternoon. My mother in law fainted, and there was a medical team there. But only if they were people of help, didn't they kill earlier? When they came back they told us that they would be sending us in Kqiq, Stanovc in the entrance of village Studime. My legs were not functioning anymore to reach Kqiq, but I had my children with me, those little souls without having eaten or drank. We went back to Studime and stopped at Haki Pllana's home. I will never forget his hospitality, his care to us. I will tell my grandchildren to respect this family, for they respected me in the most needful time. They accomodated me together with the old lady and the five children of mine. We stood there for five weeks. They took care of us with their own things, they took care of us, I can not find exact words to express gratitude for that family. They played every day with our terrified children, only not to let them cry. We left that place too and went close to the town's cemetery, and we stood there for two days. They displaced us from there and through the river Sitnica I went to Fevzi Gërzhaliu's place, the cousin of my husband. The day he came to take us at the place we were staying, I can't describe it, for I was so happy, I don't think I would have been that happy even if my husband was to live again, for we were displaced from the last place and I was completely lost and did not know where to go. It was very difficult. He came and took us with him, then we stood at my husband's first cousin for ten more days. A day after the peace agreement was signed I returned back to Studime. It was a return, a heavy life, and maybe (she cries and wipes her tears) most of the road we travelled through to come back was washed with my tears. Once I entered the house, I was alone, but in the evening my brother came, for he had heard that I had come back. He stayed there with me that night, for I had left my son at his place being afraid for him. I thought he would be safer at the cousin's house, for he was male and whenever I would see him I felt like I had a strong support. I only took daughters with me. That night I stood at home and in the morning I woke up and there has never been a heavier morning for me, inshallah, I nor any other Albanian will ever again come to such a day for, losing the only two men (she cries and wipes her tears) ... As I said I woke up in the morning and got out at the entrance. To tell you the truth I felt a little bit at ease at that moment, for close to our house was a household with 11 members killed, including children. Once I learned about this, I thought I could find some strength, for they were all killed, whereas I had my son (short pause), to continue the next generation of our family. The next morning I heard again some shooting and I thought of going back to my brother's, for I did not know what was going on, but my brother told me: - No, you don't need to be frightened anymore. Later came some KLA soldiers whom I knew and said to me: - Don't be afraid, stay at your house, you don't have to be frightened anymore. I stayed, I did not flee, I stayed at home (pause).

It was a life full of sadness, so much that I can not describe it, but anyway inshallah our family members, killed during the war, were satisfied with us while they were alive, and I hope we will meet in the other world, inshallah God makes it happen and I hope justice is done ...

□ How was the funeral organised?

The funeral, I don't know why we left, but according to my brother's words who had him buried we understood that he was not found there, that maybe there have been abuses with his body. He was sent at a house, but the body was not found anymore, the body of my brother in law was found and he was recognized so he told my brother that his brother in law, meaning my husband was found, but he never accepted this. He told them that it was my husband's brother that was killed, but they had answered him that they did not know about the brother and that they had met me and expressed their condolences to me and have helped me to get him down from the tractor. So they had told him that Imer was killed and that my brother had found him after three days and that he had buried the two brothers together, close to one another. (pause)

I would say that there is no greater loss, may god give that justice speaks up and that those persons that have committed these crimes are brought to the court. Only then our pain will be soothed, for as long as they move freely our pain is the same even now, ten years later, it is as if it has happened yesterday. They are moving freely, while we shed tears everyday, we suffer, feel pain. Educated people have been killed, people with university degrees whose help is needed today by our country, and because of this these people were the target for they knew what they could achieve today. (pause). That's all. (pause)

□ When you got back to your house was it possible to live in it?

Well, look. Our house was not burnt. We lost our men, and compared to this, the problem of the house seemed to us like something insignificant. The pain we were feeling for the men of our household I can not compare it with the house, even if it had been burnt it would not have made any impression on me... I did not want anyone to pose the question of the house to me, for it is a thing that can be re-built but a human life can not be brought back. I have great pain for them, and there is no substitute for this, neither for the house, or any materials, nothing can substitute the pain I have for my husband, for I have been left alone with 5 children. I also feel pain for my brother in law who has left 4 children and a young wife alone. The people they were, maybe even if I drew blood from my eyes it would not have been too much.

□ Thank you.

You are welcome.

**The memory was recorded by: Florije Ademi and Nuriye Sylaj
Vushtrri, 05. January 2009.**

As mentioned in the editorial of this newsletter, we aim to present the experiences of other societies throughout the world in dealing with their own violent past. The idea is that, by understanding other's experiences, we will have the possibility to identify similar wounds and ways they have dealt with them. We want to thank our friends all around the world for sharing their knowledge in this section.

This story was taken from Belfast Telegraph, Thursday, 17 July 2008 (<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/brian-rowan-to-know-all-about-the-dirty-war-can-bring-its-own-risks-13910934.html>) as a placeholder for experiences from abroad:

Brian Rowan: To know all about the dirty war can bring its own risks

The role of informers in Northern Ireland's dirty war remains a story of half-truths. Brian Rowan wonders if the pieces of the jigsaw will ever be completed.

Full disclosure has its repercussions and no community would be left unscathed." That comment, some weeks old now, is about informers and was made in a speech by the Eames/Bradley Consultative Group on Northern Ireland's Past.

It was said for a purpose, something of a warning — a hint at what is hidden inside this particular can of worms.

"The scale of the use of informers throughout the conflict corroded the fabric of our communities and the constant pressure now exerted for information about informers to be revealed only serves to further undermine the well being of communities to a degree that could be poisonous. We all need to reflect on this matter," Denis Bradley said those few weeks ago.

No one expects those informers, loyalist and republican, to be paraded on our peace stage, to be shamed after the 'war'.

That would be 'poisonous'.

Nor are we the first to struggle with this issue.

It was something Graeme Simpson, a man of international experience in peace building and reconciliation work, talked about in Belfast recently. Mr Simpson worked with the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission and now is a director at the International Centre for Transitional Justice in New York.

His message, to an audience brought together by the group Healing Through Remembering, is that dealing with the past and its many issues happens not in a 'moment' but in a 'process'.

The role of informers is one of many questions — this particular question being a matter for the state.

"The one thing that I should say as a precursor is that there are no absolutes and that the fragility of a peace process will determine how much you can do at what moment, and I do think we need to think about these as processes and not moments," Graeme Simpson said.

"So, there is the potential for sequencing," he said, "where you actually take on these things when society is more ready and so you can move forward with some of these processes and delay grappling with some of the others until there is a slightly safer space.

"I don't think it's we do or we don't," he said. The question then: is what to do and when to do it?

The issue of informers is important, not their names, more the positions they held, the knowledge they had and how the information they provided to the Special Branch and the Security Service was used.

Equally important is the information they did not provide, and then there is the question of the orders they themselves gave or knew about in their paramilitary roles.

All of this strays into the ground of national security and takes us inside the dirty war.

We are told it is not in the public interest for such information to be disclosed and yet, if it is not, you are reduced to a half truth or partial truth process.

The exploration of the past is not just about the IRA and the loyalists. There are questions for many others.

The informers became part of a war play.

It is a story not just about what was prevented as a result of information they provided, but also what they didn't tell and what was allowed to happen.

Mark Haddock has moved to stop the media from reporting his new identity when he is released from prison. This is Haddock of the UVF, paid thousands of pounds by the Special Branch and described by a past official of the Police Ombudsman's Office as "a serial killer". Haddock is a tiny piece in a much bigger jigsaw, and the picture, if ever completed, will tell a poisonous story.

The informers, we are told, saved lives. But what was the human cost of protecting them inside their organizations?

Will that question ever be answered?

To do so would disturb the narrative of the past 30-plus years.

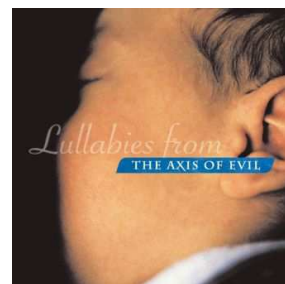
UVF informer Mark Haddock was paid thousands of pounds by Special Branch.

People, probably because of their own human nature, find different ways of dealing with the most severe challenges that life brings in front of them. This section is dedicated to those that, in some alternative ways, find means to have a say, and stand for certain human values. We will be bringing you perspectives, thoughts and reactions of people that fight for that specific value – the value of being a dignified human. What a beautiful way to look at the future... by respecting the past...

In the first issue, we present you a musical album that is taking the noblest human expression – lullabies, beautifully composed to express the human nature of these "axes of evil" ...

Lullabies from the Axis of Evil

On January 29, 2002, U.S. President, George W. Bush had his famous speech, where he used the term "The Axes of Evil". In this speech he pointed the finger toward Iran, Iraq, North Korea and their allies, as "the enemies of USA and the free, democratic world". This made it clear that the "war against terrorism" after September 11, 2001, must identify nations-enemies, not only terroristic cells. The consequences of such approach are for sure, disturbing, and they create frontlines in the minds, but also in the behaviours of the people. Right after this, the Norwegian producer, Erik Hillestad started his music project "Lullabies from the Axis of Evil". By collecting lullabies from Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, Syria, Cuba and North Korea, sang by female singers from these countries, together with singers from England, Sweden, USA, Norway, Uzbekistan, Germany, Scotland, Nicaragua and Denmark, Hillestad gives the message of communicating and fundamental understanding amongst people, through lullabies. The similarities between lullabies in different parts of the world are fascinating, in aesthetics, but also in musicality and lyrics. The differences in language, metaphors or religion cannot cover the fact the lullabies are a common starting point for all of us, from which later on we grow into diversities³.



The songs that can be found in this album are:

01. Masha Vadat, Iran and Sarah Jane Morris, England - Sad Sol. You, My Destiny.
02. Amel Kthyer & Halla Bassam, Iraq, Eva Dahlgren, Sweden - Dilelol. Sleep, my child.
03. Kulsoom Syed Ghulam, Afghanistan, Lila Downs, USA - Lalolalo. Don't you worry, my child.
04. Rim Banna, Palestine, Kari Bremnes, Norway - Ya lel ma atwalak. This never ending night.
05. Mayada Killisly Baghdadi, Syria, Mimi, USA - Luna, Luna. Little doll.
06. Halla Bassam, Iraq, Sevara Nazarkhan, Uzbekistan – Peace Song.
07. Martha Lorenzo, Cuba, Nina Hagen, Germany - Aruru. Lullaby, sweet baby.
08. Sun Ju Lee, North Korea, Eddi Reader, Scotland - Stars are rising.
09. Viva Killisly Xhachati, Syria, Katia Kardenal, Nicaragua - Nami. Angel.
10. Rim Banna, Palestine, Annisette, Denmark - Lalalala gohle laleh.
11. Rim Banna, Palestine, Annisette, Denmark - Nami ya la 'aubi. Sleep my doll.
12. Pari Zanganeh, Iran, the WNC Girls Choristers & Elana Fremerman, USA - Gohlelale. My tulip.
13. Jawahar Shofani, Palestine - Nami. Lament.
14. Fanzya & Razya Khan Ali, Afghanistan, Elana Fremerman, USA - Mazar. Some day, my boy.

Enjoy the tunes!

³ <http://hrmusic.com/artists/axis.html>

People in this region are so fond of telling stories. Stories from their own experience, stories of the experiences of people close to them, stories that are just – stories. Stories that bring that specific message in the light. This section is dedicated to those stories – stories that will stay with us – inspirational stories...

<http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/faculty/dunnweb/rprnts.omelas.pdf>

The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas

by Ursula Le Guin

With a clamour of bells that set the swallows soaring, the Festival of Summer came to the city Omelas, bright-towered by the sea. The rigging of the boats in harbor sparkled with flags. In the streets between houses with red roofs and painted walls, between old moss-grown gardens and under avenues of trees, past great parks and public buildings, processions moved. Some were decorous: old people in long stiff robes of mauve and grey, grave master workmen, quiet, merry women carrying their babies and chatting as they walked. In other streets the music beat faster, a shimmering of gong and tambourine, and the people went dancing, the procession was a dance. Children dodged in and out, their high calls rising like the swallows' crossing flights over the music and the singing. All the processions wound towards the north side of the city, where on the great water-meadow called the Green Fields boys and girls, naked in the bright air, with mud-stained feet and ankles and long, lithe arms, exercised their restive horses before the race. The horses wore no gear at all but a halter without bit. Their manes were braided with streamers of silver, gold, and green. They flared their nostrils and pranced and boasted to one another; they were vastly excited, the horse being the only animal who has adopted our ceremonies as his own. Far off to the north and west the mountains stood up half encircling Omelas on her bay. The air of morning was so clear that the snow still crowning the Eighteen Peaks burned with white-gold fire across the miles of sunlit air, under the dark blue of the sky. There was just enough wind to make the banners that marked the racecourse snap and flutter now and then. In the silence of the broad green meadows one could hear the music winding through the city streets, farther and nearer and ever approaching, a cheerful faint sweetness of the air that from time to time trembled and gathered together and broke out into the great joyous clanging of the bells.

Joyous! How is one to tell about joy? How describe the citizens of Omelas?

They were not simple folk, you see, though they were happy. But we do not say the words of cheer much any more. All smiles have become archaic. Given a description such as this one tends to make certain assumptions. Given a description such as this one tends to look next for the King, mounted on a splendid stallion and surrounded by his noble knights, or perhaps in a golden litter borne by great-muscled slaves. But there was no king. They did not use swords, or keep slaves. They were not barbarians. I do not know the rules and laws of their society, but I suspect that they were singularly few. As they did without monarchy and slavery, so they also got on without the stock exchange, the advertisement, the secret police, and the bomb. Yet I repeat that these were not simple folk, not dulcet shepherds, noble savages, bland utopians. They were not less complex than us. The trouble is that we have a bad habit, encouraged by pedants and sophisticates, of considering happiness as something rather stupid. Only pain is intellectual, only evil interesting. This is the treason of the artist: a refusal to admit the banality of evil and the terrible boredom of pain. If you can't lick 'em, join 'em. If it hurts, repeat it. But to praise despair is to condemn delight, to embrace violence is to lose hold of everything else. We have almost lost hold; we can no longer describe a happy man, nor make any celebration of joy. How can I tell you about the people of Omelas? They were not naive and happy children--though their children were, in fact, happy. They were mature, intelligent, passionate adults whose lives were not wretched. O miracle! But I wish I could describe it better. I wish I could convince you.

Omelas sounds in my words like a city in a fairy tale, long ago and far away, once upon a time.

Perhaps it would be best if you imagined it as your own fancy bids, assuming it will rise to the occasion, for certainly I cannot suit you all. For instance, how about technology? I think that there would be no cars or helicopters in and above the streets; this follows from the fact that the people of Omelas are happy people. Happiness is based on a just discrimination of what is necessary, what is neither necessary nor destructive, and what is destructive. In the middle category, however--that of the unnecessary but undestructive, that of comfort, luxury, exuberance, etc.--they could perfectly well have central heating, subway trains, washing machines, and all kinds of marvelous devices not yet invented here, floating light-sources, fuelless power, a cure for the common cold. Or they could have none of that; it doesn't matter. As you like it. I incline to think that people from towns up and down the coast have been coming in to Omelas during the last days before the Festival on very fast little trains and double-decked trams, and that the train station of Omelas is actually the handsomest building in town, though plainer than the magnificent Farmers' Market. But even granted trains, I fear that Omelas so far strikes some of you as goody-goody. Smiles, bells, parades, horses, bleh. If so, please add an orgy. If an orgy would help, don't hesitate. Let us not, however, have temples from which issue beautiful nude priests and priestesses already half in ecstasy and ready to copulate with any man or woman, lover or stranger, who desires union with the deep godhead of the blood, although that was my first idea. But really it would be better not to have any temples in Omelas--at least, not manned temples. Religion yes, clergy no. Surely the beautiful nudes can just wander about, offering themselves like divine souffles to the hunger of the needy and the rapture of the flesh. Let them join the processions. Let tambourines be struck above the copulations, and the glory of desire be proclaimed upon the gongs, and (a not unimportant point) let the offspring of these delightful rituals be beloved and looked after by all. One thing I know there is none of in Omelas is guilt. But what else should there be? I thought at first there were not drugs, but that is puritanical. For those who like it, the faint insistent sweetness of drooz may perfume the ways of the city, drooz which first brings a great lightness and brilliance to the mind and limbs, and then after some hours a dreamy languor, and wonderful visions at last of the very arcana and inmost secrets of the Universe, as well as exciting the pleasure of sex beyond belief; and it is not habit-forming. For more modest tastes I think there ought to be beer. What else, what else belongs in the joyous city? The sense of victory, surely, the celebration of courage. But as we did without clergy, let us do without soldiers. The joy built upon successful slaughter is not the right kind of joy; it will not do; it is fearful and it is trivial. A boundless and generous contentment, a magnanimous triumph felt not against some outer enemy but in communion with the finest and fairest in the souls of all men everywhere and the splendor of the world's summer: this is what swells the hearts of the people of Omelas, and the victory they celebrate is that of life. I really don't think many of them need to take drooz.

Most of the procession have reached the Green Fields by now. A marvelous smell of cooking goes forth from the red and blue tents of the provisioners. The faces of small children are amiably sticky; in the benign grey beard of a man a couple of crumbs of rich pastry are entangled. The youths and girls have mounted their horses and are beginning to group around the starting line of the course. An old woman, small, fat, and laughing, is passing out flowers from a basket, and tall young men wear her flowers in their shining hair. A child of nine or ten sits at the edge of the crowd, alone, playing on a wooden flute. People pause to listen, and they smile, but they do not speak to him, for he never ceases playing and never sees them, his dark eyes wholly rapt in the sweet, thin magic of the tune.

He finishes, and slowly lowers his hands holding the wooden flute.

As if that little private silence were the signal, all at once a trumpet sounds from the pavilion near the starting line: imperious, melancholy, piercing. The horses rear on their slender legs, and some of them neigh in answer. Sober-faced, the young riders stroke the horses' necks and soothe them, whispering, "Quiet, quiet, there my beauty, my hope...." They begin to form in rank along the starting line. The crowds along the racecourse are like a field of grass and flowers in the wind. The Festival of Summer has begun.

Do you believe? Do you accept the festival, the city, the joy? No? Then let me describe one more thing.

In a basement under one of the beautiful public buildings of Omelas, or perhaps in the cellar of one of its spacious private homes, there is a room. It has one locked door, and no window. A little light seeps in dustily between cracks in the boards, secondhand from a cobwebbed window somewhere across the cellar. In one corner of the little room a couple of mops, with stiff, clotted, foul-smelling heads stand near a rusty bucket. The floor is dirt, a little damp to the touch, as cellar dirt usually is. The room is about three paces long and two wide: a mere broom closet or disused tool room. In the room a child is sitting. It could be a boy or a girl. It looks about six, but actually is nearly ten. It is feeble-minded. Perhaps it was born defective, or perhaps it has become imbecile through fear, malnutrition, and neglect. It picks its nose and occasionally fumbles vaguely with its toes or genitals, as it sits hunched in the corner farthest from the bucket and the two mops. It is afraid of the mops. It finds them horrible. It shuts its eyes, but it knows the mops are still standing there; and the door is locked; and nobody will come. The door is always locked; and nobody ever comes, except that sometimes--the child has no understanding of time or interval--sometimes the door rattles terribly and opens, and a person, or several people, are there. One of them may come in and kick the child to make it stand up. The others never come close, but peer in at it with frightened, disgusted eyes. The food bowl and the water jug are hastily filled, the door is locked, the eyes disappear. The people at the door never say anything, but the child, who has not always lived in the tool room, and can remember sunlight and its mother's voice, sometimes speaks. "I will be good," it says. "Please let me out. I will be good!" They never answer. The child used to scream for help at night, and cry a good deal, but now it only makes a kind of whining, "eh-haa, eh-haa," and it speaks less and less often. It is so thin there are no calves to its legs; its belly protrudes; it lives on a half-bowl of corn meal and grease a day. It is naked. Its buttocks and thighs are a mass of festered sores, as it sits in its own excrement continually.

They all know it is there, all the people of Omelas. Some of them have come to see it, others are content merely to know it is there. They all know that it has to be there. Some of them understand why, and some do not, but they all understand that their happiness, the beauty of their city, the tenderness of their friendships, the health of their children, the wisdom of their scholars, the skill of their makers, even the abundance of their harvest and the kindly weathers of their skies, depend wholly on this child's abominable misery.

This is usually explained to children when they are between eight and twelve, whenever they seem capable of understanding; and most of those who come to see the child are young people, though often enough an adult comes, or comes back, to see the child. No matter how well the matter has been explained to them, these young spectators are always shocked and sickened at the sight. They feel disgust, which they had thought themselves superior to. They feel anger, outrage, impotence, despite all the explanations. They would like to do something for the child. But there is nothing they can do. If the child were brought up into the sunlight out of that vile place, if it were cleaned and fed and comforted, that would be a good thing indeed; but if it were done, in that day and hour all the prosperity and beauty and delight of Omelas would wither and be destroyed. Those are the terms. To exchange all the goodness and grace of every life in Omelas for that single, small improvement: to throw away the happiness of thousands for the chance of the happiness of one: that would be to let guilt within the walls indeed.

The terms are strict and absolute; there may not even be a kind word spoken to the child.

Often the young people go home in tears, or in a tearless rage, when they have seen the child and faced this terrible paradox. They may brood over it for weeks or years. But as time goes on they begin to realize that even if the child could be released, it would not get much good of its freedom: a little vague pleasure of warmth and food, no doubt, but little more. It is too degraded and imbecile to know any real joy. It has been afraid too long ever to be free of fear. Its habits are too uncouth for it to respond to humane treatment. Indeed, after so long it would probably be wretched without walls about it to protect it, and darkness for its eyes, and its own excrement to sit in. Their tears at the bitter injustice dry when they begin to perceive the terrible justice of reality, and to accept it. Yet it is their tears and anger, the trying of their generosity and the acceptance of their helplessness, which are perhaps the true source of the splendor of their lives. There is no vapid, irresponsible happiness. They know that they, like the child, are not free. They know compassion. It is the existence of the child, and their knowledge of its existence, that makes possible the nobility of their architecture, the poignancy of their music, the profundity of their science. It is because of the child that they are so gentle with children. They know that if the wretched one were not there sniveling in the dark, the other one, the flute-player, could make no joyful music as the young riders line up in their beauty for the race in the sunlight of the first morning of summer.

Now do you believe in them? Are they not more credible? But there is one more thing to tell, and this is quite incredible.

At times one of the adolescent girls or boys who go to see the child does not go home to weep or rage, does not, in fact, go home at all. Sometimes also a man or woman much older falls silent for a day or two, and then leaves home. These people go out into the street, and walk down the street alone. They keep walking, and walk straight out of the city of Omelas, through the beautiful gates. They keep walking across the farmlands of Omelas. Each one goes alone, youth or girl, man or woman. Night falls; the traveler must pass down village streets, between the houses with yellow-lit windows, and on out into the darkness of the fields. Each alone, they go west or north, towards the mountains. They go on. They leave Omelas, they walk ahead into the darkness, and they do not come back. The place they go towards is a place even less imaginable to most of us than the city of happiness. I cannot describe it at all. It is possible that it does not exist. But they seem to know where they are going, the ones who walk away from Omelas.

Despite its terrible past, Kosovo did have its shining moments. This is the part meant to bring some positive experiences from the past, something to be proud of and present it to our future generations.

Novo Brdo⁴

The existence of Novo Brdo mine since the medieval period is one of the most attractive potentials for the visitors in this part of Kosovo. The history of its use by the Sas tribe's, Raguzians, Jews, Venetians etc by itself is yet another factor that makes it very attractive for foreign visitors.

Based on many historical sources, the territory of the municipality of Novo Brdo has been populated since the early signs of human kind. Novo Brdo becomes an important centre especially in the medieval period when mining was developing rapidly. According to some records, in the XV century, Novo Brdo had 45,000 inhabitants. The culmination of economic and political development was reached with the development of the Mine of Novobërdë which was very rich in minerals of gold, silver, lead and zinc. According to some records from that period, in 1450 The Mine of Novo Brdo used to produce around 6,000 kgs of silver per year. The wealth of the mine which was the most known mine in the Europe at that time was used by various empires such as the Roman, Byzantine and Turkish Empire. At that time, Novo Brdo had its factory of coins and jewelry made of gold and silver.

These periods of existence of the town have left many archaeological vestiges. For this reason, in 1994, The Institute of Monuments and the Regional Museum of Prishtina, in order to protect the monuments of Novo Brdo have made a topographic determination of the location of the medieval town and archaeological localities around town, where except from the medieval castle other dwellings were included in a territory of around 130 hectares such as; cult buildings, religious buildings, cemeteries, furnace for melting ore etc. In the territory of around 130 ha, and in the vicinity of the castle, no construction or digging is allowed without the permit of the Municipal Assembly.

Registered cultural monuments are:

- Fortress "Kalaja"
- Cathedral
- St. Mary's Church – Sas tribe's Church
- St. John's Church
- Mosque – which is still in use
- Archaeological artefacts
- Mausoleum (Tyrbja) close to the Fortress
- Turkish cemetery in Novobërdë
- Water spring in village Vllasali

Amongst other buildings in Novobërdë municipality of valuable cultural importance are also:

- Orthodox church in Bostane village dating from XVIII century
- Cemetery in Boljevc village
- Gumnishte locality
- Spring (flow) of Monastery in Kllokoq
- Mausoleum (Tyrbja) in Buqe
- "Rrethi i Nikshes" locality

⁴ <http://tourism-novobrdo.com/#>

As we want this newsletter to be the voice of all who want to have a say in this process, we DO invite you to write to us, tell us your thoughts, concerns, fears, hopes...

This section is meant for readers, those who have got something to say...

Deal with the past!

This part of the Newsletter has been foreseen by the Newsletter team to introduce different ideas related to the spectre of Dealing with the Past. As a newsletter related to Dealing with the Past this space offered within should encourage people to express their opinion in the area of their concern.

Though the past in Kosovo is a major issue, yet it does not find the way to be adequately treated in the appropriate manner and thus guide the way for the future. The space offered within the newsletter is meant to be a discussion forum for the people interested to discuss the many topics of the past. It should enhance and hopefully, a matter depending on the readers, lead into a prosperous future and the resolution of many knots of the past issues. However difficult it has been the past of Kosovo is a past to be inspired upon! Thus it should serve not only for dealing with the issues related to the violence for as much as it serves to establish, first of all, the path we have been going through, it also, at the same time, recreates the strength which has lead us to a hopefull present.

As a non governmental initiative, the Newsletter will be presenting all the sides regardless of their stand, for as long as their opinions are constructive to the issue under discussion. Moreover it is our aim to emphasise various perspectives of all the parties related to dealing with the past.

We are grateful in advance for any contribution from your side related to the topic under the loop.

The last page brings updates of upcoming events on dealing with the past in Kosovo, invitations to take part in various activities in this field etc.

- **Presentation of the Initiative on establishing a Fact Finding Regional Commission on War Crimes dhe other violations of Human Rights in the countries of Ex-Yugoslavia, RECOM:**
 - 24 September 2009, Hotel Victory, Prishtina, 10:00hrs, national consultations with young activists of human rights organisations.
Contact: INTEGRA: kushtrim.koliqi@ngo-integra.org
FDH Kosovo: besartavasija@hlc-kosovo.org
 - 22 October 2009, Hotel Palace, Mitrovica, 10:00hrs, local consultations with civil society organisations from Mitrovica, Vushtrri and Skenderaj.
Contact: Youth Step: youth.step@gmail.com
FDH Kosovo: besartavasija@hlc-kosovo.org
 - 20 November 2009, Hotel Victory, Prishtina, 10:00hrs, national consultations with Kosovar Intellectuals.
Contact: ProPeace Platform: propeaceinfo@gmail.com
FDH Kosovo: besartavasija@hlc-kosovo.org
 - 30 November 2009, Hotel Dukagjini, Peja, 10:00hrs, local consultations with family members of war victims and post war associations, from the region of Peja.
Contact: Syri i Vizionit: vizioni@gmail.com
FDH Kosovo: besartavasija@hlc-kosovo.org
- **Public verification meeting with victims' families of HLC's database on the persons killed and missing in the municipalities of Kosovo:**
 - 17 September, 12:00hrs, Municipality Building, Fushë Kosovë.
 - 18 September, 11:00hrs, Municipality Building, Obiliq.
 - 20 September, 11:00hrs, Municipality Building, Skenderaj.
 - 27 September, 11:00hrs, School in Izbica.
Contact: FDH Kosovo: office.ks@hlc-kosovo.org
- Last week of September, Workshop with Family Associations of Missing Persons in Kosovo.
Contact: ICMP Kosovo: ylber.morina@ic-mp.org
- September – December 2009, Promotion of the book "I want To Be Heard", with 10 original stories of war of 1998-1999 in Kosovo.
Contact: INTEGRA: kushtrim.koliqi@ngo-integra.org
- **www.kosovarhistory.com**
Last month Qendra Multimedia launched the web-site presenting the history of the 1960s and 1970s in Kosovo.

This newsletter is compiled by

