Nonviolent Direct Action, Conflict Transformation, and the Global Justice Movement: the Aubonne Bridge Case

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Abstract

Key Words: **Aubonne, conflict resolution, conflict transformation, democracy, direct action, globalisation, global justice, nonviolence, repression, trauma.**

This dissertation develops strategies for conflict transformation in conflicts between police and practitioners of nonviolent direct action (NVDA) based on a detailed examination of the Aubonne bridge case.

Chapter one will describe the Aubonne bridge incident. Martin Shaw and Gesine Wenzel were suspended from a rope obstructing an access-bridge to the G8 2003 summit in Evian, France. When a Swiss policeman cut the rope they barely escaped death. Regarding it within its larger context, I offer an account of the Aubonne incident and provide a definition of violence, conflict, conflict transformation, and NVDA.

Chapter two examines responses to the Aubonne incident. After a report on how the police handled the Aubonne action on June 1st 2003, political and judicial reactions will be discussed. I report on the court case against activists Lehmann, Shaw, and Wenzel, who were put on trial on June 28th 2004 for obstructing traffic and endangering life. In Geneva, on June 26-27 2004, global justice activists responded to the Aubonne incident with an anti-repression gathering. A discussion of repression will conclude chapter two.

Chapter three considers the second focus of the activists' anti-repression meeting, namely trauma. The mental trauma that both activists and police experience is often overlooked. Effects of trauma are long-lasting and often lead to other problems. This chapter provides a definition of trauma and explores possibilities for addressing mental health within this context. It shows the limitations of addressing trauma as an individual disorder while the world remains unjust.

Examining whether the Aubonne action was politically effective in challenging global power structures, chapter four addresses strategies for transformation. What lessons can both protesters and police learn from the incident about the conduct of, and responses to, NVDA so as to minimise the risks of injury, trauma and even death? What are the strategies that the police and politicians envisage?

Going beyond specific incidents such as the one on the Aubonne bridge, chapter five asks how unjust global power structures can be challenged effectively. Taking the wider context into account, the potential of nonviolent strategies for transformation is outlined. Activism does not stop with the end of a demonstration. What are the alternatives that the activists create, live, and suggest? What role does NVDA play in democracy?

Chapter six concludes the thesis. After summarising what has been shown it will report on what this research project has achieved so far.

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With gratitude
to those who act, write, and live
to build a just peace.

Acknowledgements

Chapter One: Introduction

1. Introduction

This dissertation examines the Aubonne bridge incident.[1] Martin Shaw and Gesine Wenzel[2] were suspended from a rope obstructing an access-bridge to the G8 2003 summit in Evian, France. When a Swiss policeman cut the rope they barely escaped death.

This first chapter will describe the Aubonne action, and consider what was done and why. It will examine the aims and methods of both the activists and the police. A note on methodology will be followed by a definition of violence, conflict, conflict transformation, and nonviolent direct action (NVDA). I will define the boundaries of this study within the larger context of globalisation, repression, and activism. A conflict map will illustrate the context. The remainder of the dissertation will focus on three main points, namely responses to the Aubonne conflict, trauma and sustainability, and strategies for transformation.

2. An Account of the Aubonne Incident

To protest against the G8-summit, a group of 17 nonviolent direct activists for global justice blocked a motorway bridge, in order to hinder delegates arriving at the summit. The blockade was visible from a long distance, and was set up on the motorway a short distance after the exit to the village of Aubonne in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. Martin Shaw, 40, from Britain and Gesine Wenzel, in her twenties and from Germany, are experienced climbers and activists who live in Barcelona, where they develop and teach economically and politically sustainable methods for living. They were suspended from the two ends of a rope, which was stretched across the motorway connecting Lausanne and Geneva (see map and sketches, *figures 1-3*). Michael Deiss, a Swiss policeman, cut the rope without prior warning. Shaw fell 20 meters into the stony bed of the shallow Aubonne river. The activists caught Wenzel's end of the rope, and later police officers helped prevent her from falling. Shaw, Wenzel, and other activists who participated in the Aubonne action are left with severe mental trauma. Amazingly, Shaw survived the fall, though with serious injuries – two broken vertebrae, a broken pelvis, and multiple fractures in one ankle.

The policeman who cut the rope was from the Swiss German speaking part of Switzerland and said he did not understand either what the people on the bridge said to him or the writing on the banners held by the activists (Schweizer Fernsehen DRS

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[1] This study builds on research conducted for an essay in the Certificate in Conflict Resolution Skills, Lancaster University (2003): *The Aubonne Bridge Incident: A Case of Conflict between Civil Police Forces and Non-Violent Global Justice Activists*.

[2] I interviewed both Shaw and Wenzel in November 2003 in Barcelona, February 2004 in Bradford, and June 2004 in Geneva and Nyon, Switzerland. Material from those interviews will inform this study. Face-to-face interviews will be marked as 'interviews.' 'Personal communication' will refer to correspondence with the activists, police, lawyers, and politicians by letters and email. The police's responses to my requests for interviews have thus far been negative. The study is committed to being as impartial as possible, endeavouring to understand all aspects of the conflict and to reproduce the findings truthfully. I much regret any imbalance of information that may originate in the activists having so far responded more positively than the police to my enquiries.

2003). Other police officers did know about the climbers. The two banners read in French "Stop here or you will kill two people" and "Do not shoot," the latter a reference to Carlo Giuliani who was shot dead by Italian police while protesting against the 2001 G8-summit in Genoa. The activists on the bridge spoke German, English, French, and Italian. The commanding police officer was from the French-speaking part of Switzerland. Figures one, two, and three were drawn by the author in May 2004, in order to help illustrate the Aubonne incident.

Figure 1. The map shows the geographical location of the G8-summit and the Aubonne action.
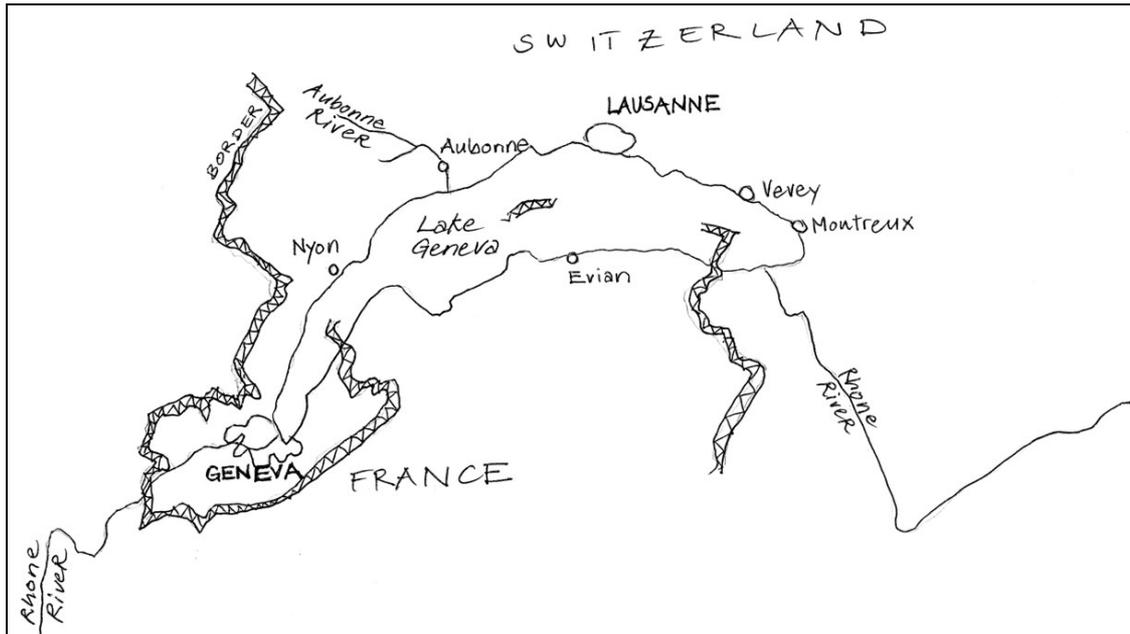
figure 1

Figure 2. The sketch depicts a more detailed view of the location of the Aubonne bridge.
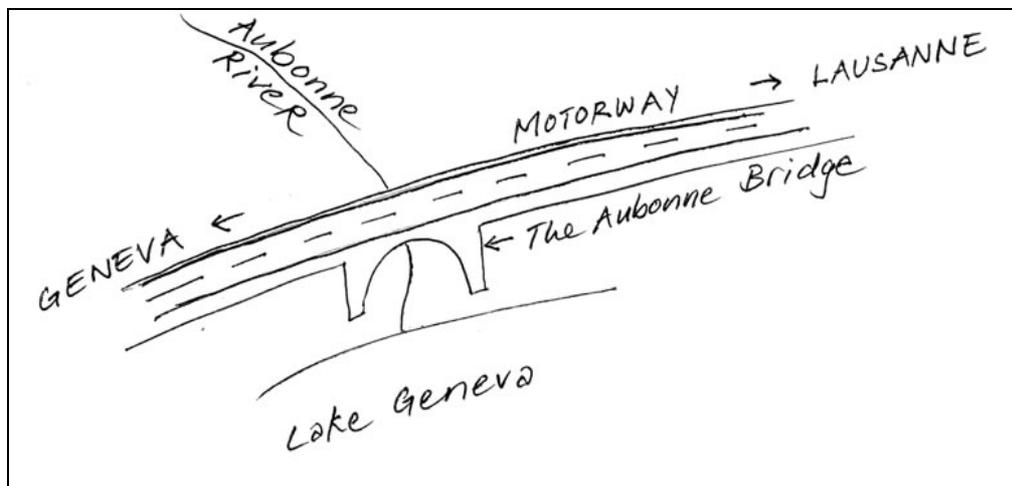
figure 2

Figure 3. The sketch illustrates the way the Aubonne action was carried out.
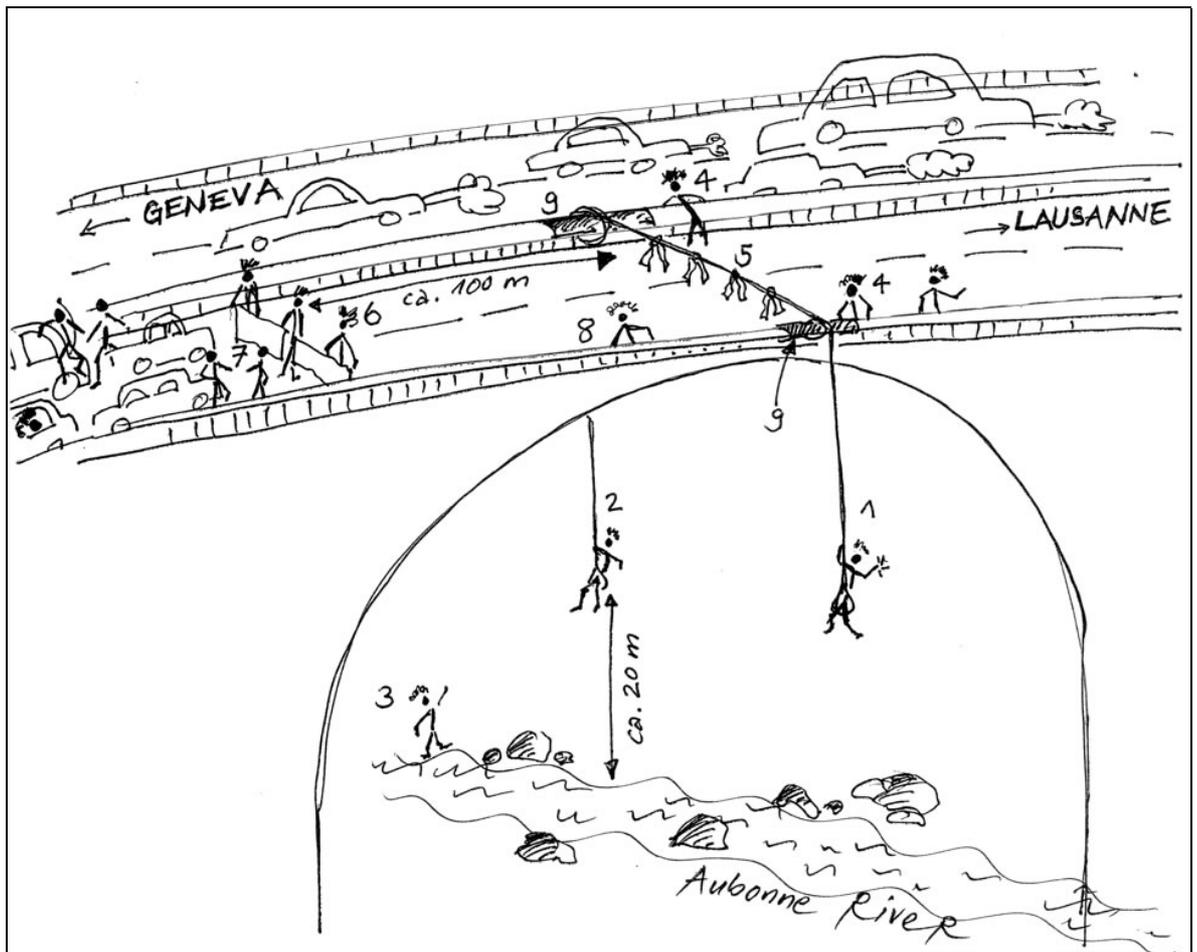
figure 3

Legend:

1, 2 Climbers Wenzel and Shaw
3 Support person on the ground
4 Rope assistants on the bridge
5 Rope with brightly coloured strips of cloth
6 Activists blocking road by holding banners
7 Activists talking with motorists
8 First-aid person
9 Anti-friction pads

3. Methodology

Methodologically this case study takes a discourse analytical approach. The study is guided by theory and also informed by an examination of primary data describing the Aubonne case. Primary data was collected in interviews and the observations made during an activists' gathering and the court case.

Discourse analysis reveals that facts are socially constructed. When reporting an event, the different perspectives of parties to a conflict must be considered. Foucault argues that "[i]n appearance, or rather, according to the mask it bears, historical consciousness is neutral, devoid of passion and committed solely to truth" (in Sheridan 1980: 119). He maintains elsewhere that by claiming to know the objective truth we silence other less powerful voices (in Bracken 2002: 214). The way events and facts are reported influences our knowledge of and behaviour towards them. While this may seem obvious, making it visible by applying discourse analysis raises awareness of, and challenges, assumptions that underlie and support objective facts.

The assumptions people hold influence the way they interpret an experience and thus impact on opinions, decisions, and actions. Assumptions are shaped by social background, education, and life experience. Reports about a conflict depend on time, as well as on the author's position and association with it. A particular discourse is a certain way of looking at the world, a system of representation that regulates and constrains which meanings can and cannot be produced. A dominant discourse serves to build a consensus of meaning among those dominating and accepting dominance (Herman and Chomsky in van Dijk 2001: 302). Analysing discourse helps us to understand the ways in which socially constructed meanings serve to sustain domination (Seidel 1985: 44).

My research on the Aubonne incident illustrates that different viewpoints result in different reports and expectations, triggering a variety of understandings and reactions to the conflict. Discourse analysis highlights but does not resolve the need to address the political and social power-imbalance and the roots of injustice. Jabri (1996: 90), in her book *Discourses on Violence*, applies discourse analysis to reveal the social production of violent conflict. She emphasises the state's central role in perpetuating violent conflict, an argument confirmed by the Aubonne case. The state's potential for preventing violence, however, is equally powerful.

While a thorough consideration of all parties' accounts at all times would exceed the scope of this study, the analysis is still grounded in an awareness of differing perspectives. Those on the bridge experienced the events differently according to whether they were activists or policemen – there were no policewomen present – and according to their background. However, Jabri (1995: 60) convincingly holds that it is not only social structures which define our behaviour and decision-making. Every human being is also an agent in her or his own right. Agency and structure are intertwined; they both contribute to the make-up of an individual.

Assumptions held by one side are usually similar and contrast sharply with assumptions held by the other side. However, apart from the separation between police and activists, the heterogeneity of each group must be emphasised. In addition to their individual ways of obeying or disregarding orders, members of a group have differing histories, experiences, and interests. These differences "produce" a variety of understandings and responses to a given conflict.

On hearing of the Aubonne incident, people tend to respond in one of two ways. Either they ask – "Was the policeman crazy? Why did he try to kill Shaw and

Wenzel?" Or, alternatively, they ask – "Were the activists suicidal? Didn't they realise they could get killed? They got what they asked for." In taking a discourse analytical approach, this study raises more subtle questions than these. Transcending anger and frustration, it highlights the shared humanity of both activists and police, and casts light on the kind of mindset which holds many people captive to anger and unwarranted assumptions. By allowing new questions, the circle that perpetuates violent responses to conflicts like the one on the Aubonne bridge might be broken.

4. Definitions

The terms "violence," "conflict," and "conflict transformation" will be briefly introduced as used in this study. NVDA will be defined in slightly more detail.

Violence
Violence means harming, or threatening to harm, humans or other beings, whether the harm is physical or psychological in nature, whether conducted by an individual, by a group or as a result of institutional structures (see for example Bondurant 1958: 9; Galtung 1990).

Wehr understands violence to be personal and institutional in its origins[3] and describes nonviolence as an approach which seeks to remove violence through NVDA campaigns (e.g. Peace Brigades International, Ploughshares) (Wehr 1995: 87-88).

Conflict
Conflict arises from a heterogeneity of interests and is widely accepted as inevitable. It can be experienced positively when handled creatively as an agent of change (see for example Miall, Ramsbotham, and Woodhouse 1999: 5).

Conflict Transformation
I choose to focus on conflict transformation, rather than conflict resolution. Even though the two fields are similar, the term "resolution" risks promising something that may not be deliverable, or even desirable. While not always seeking to end conflict, conflict transformation aims at altering a given conflict in order to find nonviolent ways of communication and to create solutions. Conflict transformation, like conflict resolution, attempts to involve and satisfy all conflicting parties in the search for transformation. Methods include mediation, research, workshops, or other forms of reflection, action, and communication.

This study does not try to resolve the Aubonne conflict or even suggest that it can or should be resolved. The aim is to analyse it and suggest measures to minimise the occurrence of violence, in order to avoid death or serious injury – including the experiencing of serious trauma by either party. Problem-solving workshops, for example, are therefore unhelpful in tackling the Aubonne conflict. One salient reason is the immense power imbalance. However, assumptions about power distribution may need rethinking, as the next section shows.

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[3] Wehr's sources of violence bring to mind Galtung's direct, structural, and cultural violence (Galtung: 1990). In the field of Peace Studies Johan Galtung describes direct, structural and cultural violence as the "violence triangle," where each of the three or any combination can cause and entail the others. Direct violence means the harm or threat of harm that is actually conducted. Structural violence describes institutional or structural oppression and exploitation leading to harm. Cultural violence is the name for traditions and customs legitimising the latter two.

Nonviolent Direct Action
An examination of the Aubonne conflict reveals the great power imbalance between the police and protesters, as well as between the G8 and the world's poor. One way people choose to respond to this imbalance is through NVDA.

Sharp (1973) describes NVDA as an active struggle aimed at altering power relations between groups. Being the proactive denial of human assistance to an oppressor, and the refusal to be governed by an unjust ruler, it requires discipline, practice, skill, and courage (Bond 1994: 59).

Figure 4: Fahim Hakim's cartoon illustrates Sharp's theory of power (in Fisher et al. 2000: 40).
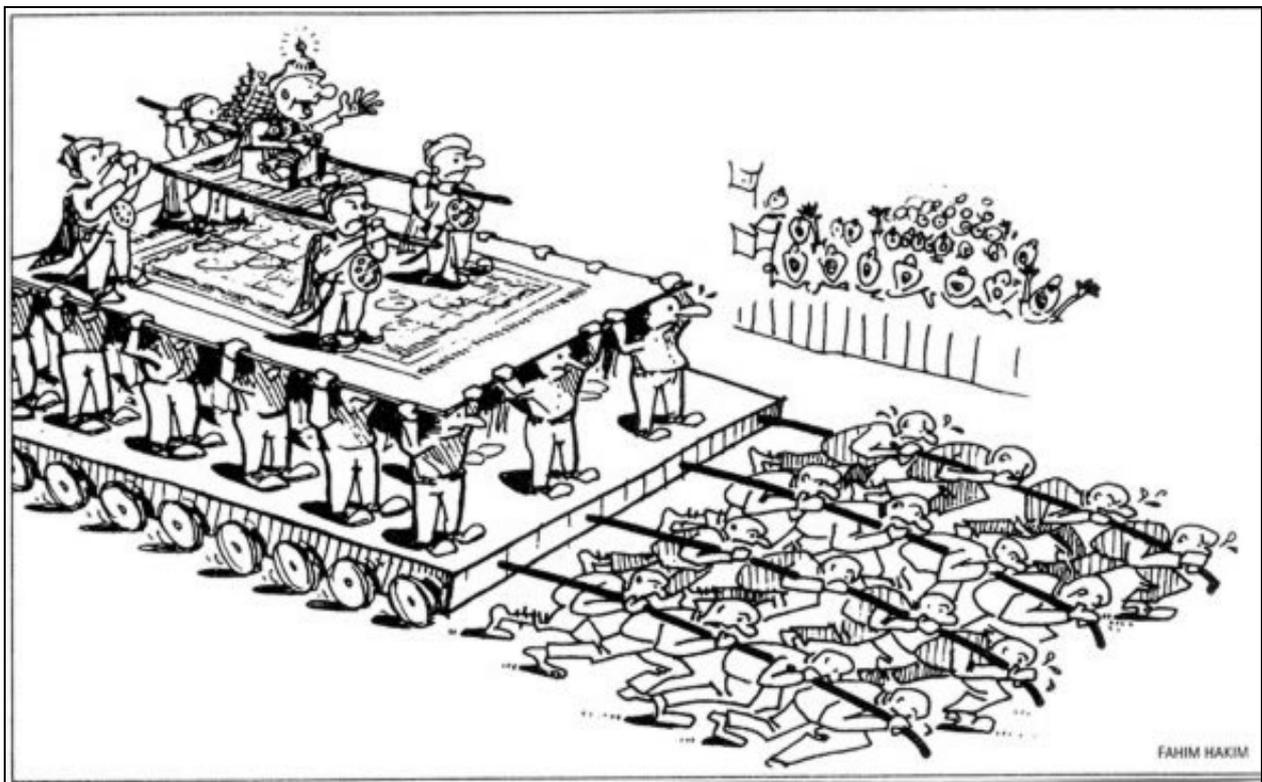
figure 4

Sharp maintains that NVDA is widely applicable, as these two quotes demonstrate:[4]

> Political power, therefore, is always dependent for its strength and existence upon a replenishment of its sources by the cooperation of a multitude of institutions and people – cooperation that may or may not continue. Political power is therefore always potentially fragile and is always dependent on the society over which it is applied.
>
> Contrary to popular opinion, even totalitarian dictatorships are dependent on the support of the population and the societies they rule, as the political scientist Karl W. Deutsch noted in 1953. (Sharp 2003: 12 & 13)

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[4] Note that Kate McGuiness (2002) challenges Sharp's NVDA theory, arguing that the theory is, for example, useless for challenging male power and violence against women.

Satyagraha (soul-force, truth-force) is nonviolence as practiced by Gandhi, and aims at persuading the opponent to change. This means that the activist attempts to convince the opponent, but she is also open to learning from that opponent. Satyagraha applied to political action starts as negotiation and arbitration. Gandhi strongly supported change by conversion. If, however, the required change is not achieved, satyagraha continues with one or more of the following, potentially coercive techniques: agitation, issuing of an ultimatum, economic boycott and strike, non-cooperation, civil disobedience, and creation of a parallel government (Bondurant 1958: 40-41). Sharp defines three kinds of techniques (2003: 34-35). First, acts of omission (e.g. a strike), where "participants refuse to perform acts they usually perform." Second, acts of commission, with the participants acting other than in their usual and expected way. And third, a combination of omission and commission. The Aubonne action falls under Sharp's third category.

NVDA also aims at raising awareness among parties other than those directly concerned, for example the UN and the wider public (Rigby 1996: 265-6). Where the conflict is between two states or clearly defined communities, nonviolent action may also reach out to potential sympathisers in the opponent's camp.

NVDA can be used in by individuals and by movements. The strategy of organising affinity groups is commonly used in NVDA. Wenzel describes affinity groups as follows:

> NVDA normally works in affinity groups of around 12 people working together. The duration of cooperation varies from groups that form on the spot and prepare themselves to work together for just one specific action to long-term groups who do a series of actions together. The roles of the members differ depending on the circumstances. If an action is big and public like the one on the Aubonne Bridge, the following roles are essential: apart from the climbers there should be at least one spokesperson for each the police, the public, and the press. One person needs to film or take pictures and keep a record of what is happening. Now it turned out to be good to have a doctor or at least people with first aid experience. One person should be outside the action who can be called to do more media work straight away, get more support if necessary, call lawyers etc. Preferably everybody should have experience in all roles. When and if people swap roles, is entirely up to them. (Wenzel, personal communication 2003)

5. The Aubonne Incident within the Larger Context

Globalisation
This section will address globalisation. As Martin Writes, globalisation is largely grounded in the assumption "that the world is just. When someone is poor, this is a potential challenge to the assumption that the world is just. One way to cope is to believe that the poor person is to blame" (2001: 54). Amory Starr, in her book *Naming the Enemy*, provides a list of definitions and attributes of globalisation (2000: 5), including the omnipresence of a technological web accessible by an elite, capitalism, the hegemony of the mass media, a rigid "new world order," and global governance. The term "globalisation" is, however, controversial. Other definitions or attributes could point to a different kind of globalisation, such as the struggle for a global culture or the aim to provide the best goods to the maximum number of people.

Starr (2000: 151) writes, that globalisation is wider than capitalism; it reintroduces colonialism in a different guise, using new strategies. She outlines three such strategies, namely imposition, advertisement, and exploitation. First, by imposing free market policies, globalisation breaks down obstacles to the free movement of goods and the accumulation of capital, while at the same time hindering the movement

of people by increasingly restrictive refugee laws. Second, by advertising "Western" products and lifestyle as the most advanced, it eclipses and undermines local customs and values. Third, multinational corporations exploit the natural resources of developing countries and peoples for their own benefit, exploiting underpaid labour, dumping garbage in under-protected areas, and making profits from local wars. International corporations respond to opposition against globalisation by adaptation. They localise and "green wash" their marketing, by emphasising local customs and values, and highlighting environmentally sensible parts of their production chains.

The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trades (GATT), which aims at alleviating all trade restrictions in order to guarantee unhindered competition, is one main tool for globalisation. GATT came into existence at the Bretton Woods conference in 1944 at the same time as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, the two institutions which remain its principal backers. Both institutions lend money to impoverished countries, provided that these countries agree to enforce structural adjustment. Structural adjustment can include a freezing of minimum wages, privatisation of welfare and other services, repression of labour organisations, and the devaluation of currency. As one shocking example of the effect of structural adjustment, Starr cites a United Nations Development Programme report, which states that due to cuts in health care seven million children die of preventable diseases each year (2000: 15).

Naomi Klein (2001a), in her book *No Logo*, names some of the large corporations profiting from this kind of globalisation. She identifies multinationals as "the root cause of political injustices around the globe. Sometimes the companies commit these violations in collusion with governments, sometimes they commit them despite a government's best efforts" (Klein 2001a: 338). Klein provides a stunning example of price injustice in the clothing industry, citing Eisner, who in 1997 found that one Wal-Mart Pocahontas T-shirt cost US $ 10.97, which equals almost five days' wages for a worker sewing hundreds of such shirts daily (in Klein 2001a: 353). In May 1998, Nike CEO Phil Knight "acknowledged that his shoes have become synonymous with slave wages, forced overtime and arbitrary abuse" (Klein 2001a: 375).

The international human rights organisation Amnesty International warns that states are violating human rights and using force to protect corporate interests (Klein 2001a: 339). In Nigeria for example, the Ogoni people defended their land and livelihood against Shell's oil exploitation, which had devastating effects on humans and their environment in the Niger Delta. Shell, Royal Dutch, and the Nigerian government collaborated in repressing the protesters. The Ogoni poet and environmental leader Ken Saro-Wiwa was one of nine people executed in 1995 by the Nigerian government in the course of this conflict (Klein 2001a: 381). Other, less well-known people have also subsequently been executed. Klein (2001a: 341) claims that centuries of political democratisation are shattered in no time by corporate interests. This case demonstrates that the arena of influence exceeds that of national governments, and so pressuring national governments does not adequately respond to the complexity of the issue. This leads to disillusion about traditional political routes like voting. Some groups thus turn to more direct action, such as NVDA.

As Martin writes, "[t]he increasing power of multinational corporations and the increasing pervasiveness of the capitalist system around the world is commonly called 'globalisation.' Properly speaking this should be called capitalist globalisation, since there can be other types of globalisation, such as of science and nonviolence"

(2001: 161).[5] Approaches to globalisation from below, anti- or alternative globalisation, will be considered in the following section and in chapter five.

Protesting against the G8-Summit
The G8 consists of the political leaders of eight countries: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Global justice activists organise demonstrations and actions to protest against the annual G8-summit. True calls global nonviolence in peoples' resistance movements "globalisation from below." He writes that, although important figures may appear with time, such movements often begin without leaders (True 1997: 9). Global justice activists claim to represent the disenfranchised and the environment, which they argue the G8 does not care for enough. Shaw states:

> I think it necessary and effective for us privileged westerners to get out of the 'comfort zone'. […] The racist classist people of the G8 and other such institutions of global governance live in a 5 star bubble, apparently isolated from the environmental and social effects of their decisions. They find it all too easy to ignore the poor and disenfranchised but find it much harder to dismiss demonstrations and actions in their own countries by people apparently similar to them. The same people who should apparently feel happy about the excessive consumption they have more or less forced upon us. (Shaw, personal communication, 10.10.2003)

Two issues arise. First, keeping in mind that the world's disenfranchised are not a homogenous group, would any of them feel represented by the Aubonne activists? And second, did the action consider what I will call "Skinner's second victim?" Skinner (1958: 6), who denies the legitimacy of NVDA to oppose the nuclear arms race, points out that the activist who exposes herself to injury risks creating two victims. While the protester sustains physical injury, the person inflicting it may suffer even more. For Skinner, activists have no right to cause such harm. It is incumbent on protesters to make every effort to ensure the police or other protagonists are aware of the nature of the demonstration and the consequences for demonstrators, and by extension for the police themselves, of acting recklessly. High risk actions, since they could have serious consequences for both parties, should only be undertaken over issues of the utmost gravity, like weapons of mass destruction, or wars of aggression. For the Aubonne activists, the policies of the G8 *are* an issue of the utmost gravity.

Shaw claims that the police action on the Aubonne bridge, including their failure to pevent the cutting of the rope, is not an isolated incident but part of a wider pattern of repression aimed at intimidating those who practice civil disobedience (Shaw 2003a).

Bulyman points out that under the laws designed to fight terrorism, activists are at risk of being categorised as terrorists, and he concludes that some of the measures taken are a serious assault on peoples' rights and democratic standards (Bulyman 2002: 3, 9). Chapters two and four will address repression and the responses to it.

Police Aims
The police of canton Vaud[6] claim that their aim was to make provisions for nonviolent activists to express their views in safety, and guarantee the official guests a good visit

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[5] Note that Martin's suggestions presuppose that science is operates independently of capitalism, which is often not the case.

(Police Canton Vaud 2003a). Jean-Christophe Sauterel, spokesperson for the police of canton Vaud, outlines the police's general tasks as follows: to insure the safety and security of the summit participants, to grant the delegates free movement, to grant free democratic expression, to minimise the impact on the public, and to assure law and order (personal communication, Police Canton Vaud, 7.1.2004).

Did the Swiss government achieve its objectives? The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) − headquarters of the Swiss operations related to the G8 − claims that it succeeded in its overall objectives, and redirects any questions regarding the Aubonne bridge incident to the police (Aude Marcovitch, DFA, personal communication, 15.10.2003). The police draw a generally positive conclusion whilst expressing regret at the injuries to Shaw. However, some parliamentarians fiercely condemned police methods and so did members of the G8-Soldiers' Committee. The committee was founded by Swiss soldiers who refused to be deployed for the G8-summit, stating that they were not prepared to play "Assistant Sheriff to Mr. Bush" (G8-Soldatenkomitee 2003b).[7] Research on the outcome of and responses to the Aubonne incident will be discussed in chapter two.

Activists' Aims
Shaw reports that the objective of the Aubonne action was to block the preferred route for the delegates to the G8-summit for as long as possible. The action must be seen as part of a process of anti-capitalist resistance (Shaw, personal communication, 10.10.2003). Wenzel emphasises that

> the action was not to abolish capitalism, but rather to oppose global power. We question the G8 and all people who consider themselves the global elite as we consider that their main interest is in money and not in people and planet. This is not only about capitalism, but also about existing power structures. (Wenzel, personal communication 14.5.2004)

"We felt," Wenzel said in court, "it is our responsibility as citizens of this world to hinder the G8 exploiting the planet and killing people. Especially since the G8 ignores millions of people who are demonstrating" (author's notes 28.6.2004).

Questions arise concerning the activists' planning of the Aubonne action. What were their prior reflections? Were they suicidal? "Certainly not," say Wenzel and Shaw (interviews 2003). They expected the police to fulfil their duty in accordance with law and order. Wenzel and Shaw had participated in similar actions, for example in Spain. On the basis of that experience, they expected the police to order the protesters to clear the bridge, to remove them physically when they refused to go, and thereafter to take legal action against them. That someone could cut the rope was never considered as a possibility.

The effectiveness of the Aubonne action will be further considered in chapter four, and some responses to it will be discussed in chapter two.

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[6] Communication with canton Vaud, Dudt, Sauterel, van Singer, and the DFA took place in French, which is also the language of their websites and media reports. Some sources are originally in German and Italian. Translations and paraphrasing into English are my own.
[7] Switzerland has a conscript army. In some cases conscientious objectors can do civil service instead. The *G8-Soldatenkomitee* was a committee of soldiers who refused to serve for the G8, and who provided media information on their reasons for refusal and guidelines for like-minded soldiers.

6. Conflict Mapping

One of the tools recommended for analysing conflicts is Conflict Mapping (Fisher, Abdi, Ludin, Smith, Williams, and Williams 2000: 22-5 and 64). The map in *figure 5* depicts the author's understanding of the conflict at the moment the rope was cut.

Drawing conflict maps illustrates what discourse analysis theorises, namely that there is no one truth. Views and perspectives influence all facts. Events and relations may be perceived differently depending on who is doing the drawing, and the time it is done. Consequently, the maps vary.[8] Diverse maps illustrate the fact that views are socially constructed.

The map in *figure 5* takes into account maps drawn by others to analyse the Aubonne conflict (see appendix, *figures 7-9*), and displays the author's understanding of the overwhelming complexity of issues. While discourse analysis looks at the way people talk about events, it can also serve as a tool to illustrate the context. The conflict map below demonstrates how the Aubonne incident is part of a wider conflict, and how the parties involved relate to each other.

Figure 5. Map of the conflict, drawn by the author 29.5.2004
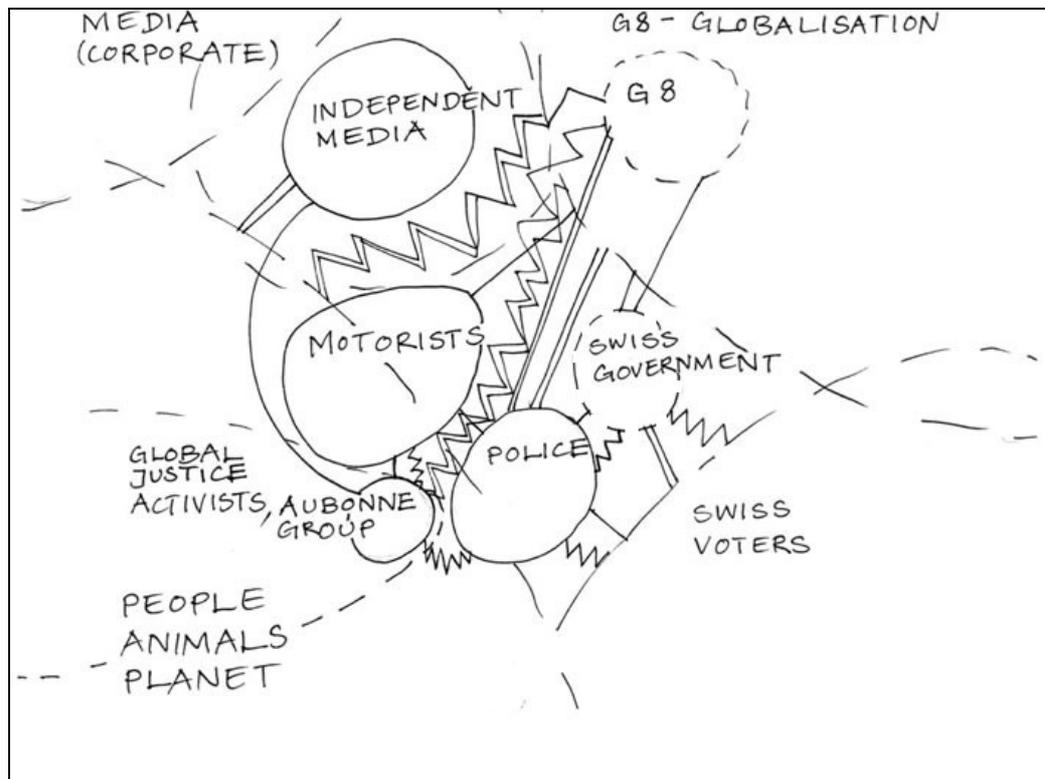
figure 5

Parties present at the scene:
Aubonne Group (activists); motorists; police; independent media; Swiss government, represented by police and a pre-appointed judge.

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[8] Both Shaw and Wenzel each drew their own map of the conflict on the Aubonne bridge (see Appendix, *figures 9 and 10*). They produced very different drawings. Maps drawn by members of the police who were present on the Aubonne Bridge would likely show yet different views. A map drawn by the man who cut the rope, or one by the officer in charge of the intervention, would enrich this study immeasurably. However, the police's response to requests for interviews have thus far been negative.

Parties involved, not present:
Global justice activists; international media; G8, Swiss government and voters; people, animals and planet; movement for G8 globalisation.

In the above conflict map (*figure 5*), a solid-line circle shows each group present on the bridge – the police, the activists, the motorists, and the independent media. The broken-line circles and half-circles identify parties not present on the bridge. The Swiss government is represented by the police and by a pre-appointed judge who arrived on the scene after the rope was cut. Lines joining the groups indicate the quality of their relationship. The stronger and straighter the line, the better the relationship. An alliance is shown with a double line; zigzag lines depict conflict. A circle enclosed within a larger broken-line circle indicates that those present, like the Aubonne group, are part of a larger constituency not present, e.g. other activists of the global justice movement. The G8 are enclosed within a broken-line circle, which is itself enclosed within a larger broken-line circle. This shows that they as a group have a more direct interest in the events on the bridge. The independent media has a larger circle around it, signifying their relative power, facilitated by their reaching large numbers of people via the internet and by people's growing suspicion of the corporate media, who report less critically about the G8.

The Aubonne action was designed to highlight the conflict between two broad and heterogeneous groups. From the point of view of an activist, these two groups might be defined as follows: the activists and their struggle for global justice, on the one hand, and the G8 and their globalisation driven by corporate greed, on the other. The activists blocking the road understood themselves as representing disempowered people and the planet. In 2003, global justice movements merged with the anti-war movement.[9] The global justice movement falls within a larger heterogeneous group of activists' movements, which is depicted by a half-circle representing people, animals, and the planet.

The G8 has not been democratically elected to lay down binding rules for the world's population (Massiah 2003: 2). Through strategies such as imposing structural adjustment as a condition for granting loans or debt relief, the G8 enacts a globalisation from above, which protects corporate interests and keeps the poor poor.

Such a description of the conflict and protagonists would read differently if reported by a member of the G8. He might view the activists as misunderstanding and interfering with the G8's real mission, which is to free the world from poverty. The lines, however, are less clear than one might expect. Abdulaye Wade, 70, president of Senegal, participated in the G8-summit as an invited delegate and said: "If I was not leader of a state, I would be out protesting [against the G8]" (Bédat 2003: 12).

The police have strong ties with the G8, illustrated by a double line on the map. The main aim of the police was to keep the traffic going and to ensure the smooth running of the G8-summit. The Swiss population, whom the police are meant to serve, have people in all categories.

Having provided an overview of the Aubonne incident, as well as an introduction to terms crucial to this study, I will now proceed to examine three main

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[9] "The greater part of the about 2000 people in Lausanne protested peacefully against the Iraq war. Their anger was directed against US president George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair" (spiegeonline.de/politik/ausland/0,1518251179,00.html, 1.6.2003).

emerging aspects in more detail. Responses to the Aubonne conflict are discussed in chapter two; chapter three focuses on trauma and sustainability; and chapters four and five will summarise lessons from Aubonne and outlline alternatives to the existing global political economy.

Chapter Two: Responses to the Aubonne Conflict

1. Introduction

This chapter will examine various responses to the Aubonne conflict. It will first give an account of the police's handling of the action, and then turn to responses following the incident. Reactions from the police, parliament, Swiss soldiers, and Swiss judicial system will all be addressed. A discussion of the activists' responses will centre on their anti-repression meeting on 26/27 June 2004 in Geneva. Section four will expand on the discussion of repression, placing the Aubonne incident within the broader context of conflict between corporate globalisers and global justice activists.

2. Handling the Aubonne Action: Police Control and Repression

This section considers the police's handling of the Aubonne action. The police and parliament prepared for the 2003 G8-summit with appeals for ammunition, weapons, teargas, and police and army personnel. A potential helicopter crash in the security zone was thought through, and so was a potential sniper attack. The people living in the area were advised to barricade their shops and they were required to carry a special ID in order to move in and out of the security zone (Busch 2003: 3). On the Aubonne bridge the police acted without visible coherence, pushing activists aside without listening to them (Indymedia 2003).

During preparations for the G8 the police agreed with the "Permanence Juridique G8" (PJG) for a team of neutral legal observers to be present at all actions, including demonstrations (Police Canton Vaud 2003 and PJG 2003). The PJG also provided a hotline for activists and their kin during the summit. In October 2003 the PJG published their report, criticising the police for excessive violence against activists and the general public. The PJG's list of complaints includes the cutting of Wenzel and Shaw's rope, and the use of stun grenades, one of which severely injured photo-journalist Guy Smallman. One witness suffered racially motivated assault and torture (PJG 2003: 21). Many others, including members of the legal team themselves, reported suffering violence, threats, and assaults by the police (PJG 2003: 32-37). Senior police officer Claude Poget was filmed attacking the media on the Aubonne bridge, and is heard ordering after the rope is cut: "Arrest this shit-mafia!" (Indymedia 2003). The PJG further criticises the lack of control on the bridge in general and lists additional evidence of intimidation and aggression against witnesses, including the violation of the freedom of the press, through the damaging of photographic and video material (PJG 2003: 37). A street medic also reports suffering verbal and physical police abuse and provides an eyewitness account of other police violence against demonstrators and arrestees (Nadir 2003).

Was the goal of the intervention on the Aubonne bridge to establish law and order? Or was it to intimidate and demoralise the demonstrators to discourage them from conducting any similar actions in the future? The methods of the police could have ignited violent conflict. In the Aubonne incident there was no escalation of violence because the protesters did not allow themselves to be provoked and stayed nonviolent.

3.   Reactions to the Aubonne Incident

This section will discuss five reactions to the Aubonne incident. First, it will examine the police's evaluation of their own intervention. Second, parliamentary responses to the conflict will be considered. Third, the reactions of the G8-Soldiers Committee will be summarised. Fourth, I will report on the court proceedings in Nyon on 28.6.2004, where activists Olivier Lehmann, Martin Shaw, and Gesine Wenzel were charged with traffic obstruction and endangering motorists' lives. Fifth, an account will be given of the activists' meeting in Geneva 26/27.6.2004, where repression and trauma were the main topics of discussion.

Police Evaluation
This section reports on the police's own evaluation of their handling of the Aubonne action. Jean-Christophe Sauterel, spokesperson for the police of canton Vaud, claims a positive balance for police conduct during the G8-summit as a whole. With regard specifically to the Aubonne bridge incident, he reports: "As for the Aubonne accident, we can only regret the consequences of the actions conducted by the activists, particularly the injuries of the victim. Concerning eventual responsibilities, it is up to the justice of canton Vaud to determine them. A penal inquiry is underway" (personal communication, Police Canton Vaud, 7.1.2004). Note that Sauterel calls the incident an "accident" while this is still undecided by the court. Also, while the action was conducted by the activists, the injuries were a consequence of the police's action, as the activists' lawyers, Jean-Pierre Garbade and Jean-Michel Dolivo emphasised in court (author's notes 28.6.2004). Sauterel counts only Shaw as a victim. He fails to recognise as victims Deiss, who cut the rope, and climber Wenzel, as well as several other activists who were severely traumatised by the incident. The judge recognised Wenzel as a victim more than a year later (Wenzel, personal communication 12.7.2004).

     The commander of the police of canton Vaud, Eric Lehmann, states that the "delegates at no time suffered any threat or disturbance in their movements whatsoever. [And the] right to democratic expression has been respected," though some merchants suffered damage to property and income-loss due to disruptions by activists (Lehmann 2003). Reasoning that the safety of the population was maintained, emphasising the fact that "there was not a single person injured," Lehmann concludes with satisfaction that canton Vaud can claim an overall positive balance on their mission for the G8. He congratulates those involved for their excellent collaboration, especially the diverse police forces from the different cantons, and declares the cooperation a success (Police Canton Vaud 2003c). Lehmann's statement conflicts with evidence about injuries and trauma resulting from the police interventions during the summit. His statement also conflicts with the alleged reason for Shaw's fall, namely that Deiss, who cut the rope, says he did not understand the language of the area where he was on duty and which was spoken by his senior officer. Whether or not Deiss knew that people were suspended from the rope is still an open question, according to Daniel Bélaz, mayor of the city of Lausanne (Brügger 2003a: 8). However, most of the policemen, including Deiss' senior Poget, commanding the intervention, *did* know that people were suspended from the rope, and failed to take the necessary precautions to avoid serious injuries from happening.

Responses in Parliament
Contrary to the claims of the police, many Members of Parliament (MPs) were far from satisfied with the police's handling of the protests. Christian van Singer, MP for the Green Party, submitted an interpellation to the council of canton Vaud (Conseil d'Etat), asking the government about its tactics in dealing with the G8-protesters in Lausanne (2003: 2-3). He argues that the police failed to intervene against a group of around 50 "real vandals," and instead used the damage they caused to justify the harassment and detention of 400 peaceful protesters later on. Brügger (2004a: 6) supports this claim, reporting that the police did not stop the destruction caused by the vandals but used it as an "excuse" to intervene in the peaceful mass-demonstration, and thereby incite new conflict.

In his statement, van Singer asked the council of canton Vaud: "How was it possible that a police officer put peoples' lives in danger in order to reestablish traffic flow? Did he act under orders?" (Van Singer 2003). MP Jean-Paul Dudt[10] also condemned police violence during the summit in general and on the Aubonne bridge in particular. In his interpellation, he asked the council of canton Vaud whether it valued material property more than the welfare of people. "If not, how can [the council] explain that those who damaged property are imprisoned while the policeman who very nearly killed a man remains at liberty?"[11] Dudt asked whether the council could guarantee that the protesters would receive a fair trial (2003). The council gave an assurance that it places human life well above material goods (Conseil d'Etat 2004). While capable of justifying the incarceration of those charged with property damage, the council feels unable to comment on Deiss' freedom to date, since that matter is still under investigation and falls outside the council's powers.

Responses of Swiss Soldiers
Outside of parliament doubts about the handling of the G8-summit were also articulated. To ensure security, police and army personnel from several Swiss cantons and from neighbouring countries were employed for the duration of the meeting. While the police officially maintain that everything was fine and well organized, the committee of Swiss soldiers who refused to serve for the G8 provides a different perspective. It writes: "If soldiers had come under attack they were ordered to shoot with live ammunition." Expressing their dissent, many soldiers refused to participate. "Officially 25% of soldiers refused to go to the G8-summit. The army claimed that this was not higher than for normal 'repetition courses'. In fact, we informally got information that the army had serious problems [finding] enough people: in some units up to 60% of soldiers refused to serve" (G8-Soldatenkomitee 2003a).

The Response by the Swiss Judicial System: The Court Case on June 28th 2004 Against Activists Lehmann, Shaw, and Wenzel
This section reports on the court proceedings in Nyon, where activists Lehmann, Shaw, and Wenzel were charged with obstructing traffic and endangering life.

Police spokesperson Sauterel had stated that in the intervention on the Aubonne bridge the police had to re-establish the flow of traffic. Since blocking traffic is a serious crime (article 237 of the Swiss legal code), the perpetrators had to be identified and brought before the relevant authorities (personal communication, Police Canton Vaud, 7.1.2004). The trial against three of the activists, Lehmann, Shaw, and

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[10] Jean-Paul Dudt is a member of POP, the Swiss workers' party.
[11] Note that Wenzel only lives thanks to the other activists' quick reaction. Dudt's only mentioning Shaw's near-death is an oversight commonly made in the discourse on the Aubonne incident.

Wenzel, took place in Nyon on June 28th 2004. The three were charged with obstructing traffic and thus endangering motorists' lives. Lawyers Jean-Pierre Garbade and Michel Doliva defended the accused in court. Two international lawyers, Catalan Robert Sabata and Italian Gilberto Pagani, supported them.[12] Also present were the president of the court, Pierre Bruttin, a court secretary, seven witnesses, and members of the press and public, including myself.

The court space allowed for thirty public seats, ten of which were reserved for the press (Brügger 2004c: 6). This left only twenty seats for the public in a public trial. Around 100 supporters of the accused from various countries remained outside under a very hot sun, and under the observation of a dozen armed police officers. Also outside, an exhibition and a street theatre informed the public and press about the trial taking place inside. The public and press who went inside had their identity and bags checked. Mobile phones were confiscated, identity cards were hand-copied, and addresses noted.[13] International lawyer Sabata expressed his concern about such "repressive measures." "They call us terrorists," said Heidi Giuliani, mother of Carlo Giuliani who was shot dead by police while protesting against the G8-summit in Genoa 2002. In addition to the same intrusive measures, Heidi Giuliani said that, at the trials now being held in Genoa against activists and police, the public has even been prohibited from gathering outside the court (author's notes 28.6.2004).

The prosecutor was an independent magistrate representing the state, and neither he nor his lawyer were present at the trial. I asked the main defence-lawyer, Jean-Pierre Garbade, whether, in the absence of the prosecutor, the president of the court in effect represented the state, and whether this still allowed him to judge neutrally. Garbade informed me that the prosecutor could decide not to appear in court. This could have been grounds for the defence to question the impartiality of the court, but they decided against doing so as they were convinced it would not affect the outcome (personal communication, 30.6.2004).

Questions were asked by the president of the court, as well as by Garbade and Doliva. Seven people involved in the Aubonne incident were called as witnesses: two paramedics, two activists, one of whom had been on the bridge during the action; one motorist/journalist; and two policemen, one of whom was Poget, the commander in charge of the police on the bridge. Surprisingly, in canton Vaud, court proceedings are not recorded. However, either party has the right to request for new statements to be typed, which will then be dictated by the president of the court. This practice was made use of no more than five times.

During the trial the president of the court asked how the activists had conducted themselves during the action. The accused answered that some activists wore highly-visible clothing and halted the traffic with hand signals. They later blocked all three lanes with banners. "Once three cars are stopped [one in each lane], the road is blocked," stated Shaw. And the president responded: "Yes, that is correct" (author's notes 28.6.2004). That implied that from then on, the danger to the motorists caused by the roadblock was minimal. Motorists approaching immobile cars are required by law to drive in a manner that allows them to brake and stop safely.

Shaw stressed that the activists risked their own lives, not the lives of the motorists. They took, he claimed, every possible precaution to avoid putting motorists

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[12] Sabata and Pagani represented the international commission of human rights and globalization to observe the legal process.

[13] A number of visitors to the court found such security measures overly-intrusive. Some worried that in releasing their personal details, they risked becoming future targets for police scrutiny and repression. This caused some visitors to not attend the trial, as they had originally planned.

at risk, and to ensure their own safety. These precautions included: anti-friction pads, the presence of a medical doctor who was an experienced climber; delaying the start of the climbing action until the traffic was stopped; staging the action in close proximity to a motorway exit; having separate spokespersons for the police, press, and motorists; and rehearsing the action in advance.[14] The police's arrival, Swiss TV reported, turned the site into a scene of distress and disorder (Schweizer Fernsehen DRS 2004).

Poget, police commander on the bridge, admits that he did not enter into contact with the activists. This breaks the agreed code of conduct, which was ordered by canton Vaud for all police personnel, whatever their origin. It states that police must seek contact with protesters (canton Vaud 2003: 26). The "doctrine of engagement" further rules that the police must facilitate the right to free expression and demonstration. The doctrine asserts that these rights are inherent in a free and democratic society. It specifically emphasises the police's responsibility to respect and value an action's "positive dynamics."

Poget further said that he and his subordinate Deiss did not communicate, since they shared no common language. Poget knew that people were suspended from the rope before Deiss cut it. Garbade asked: "Would Poget's duty not have been to warn his subordinate about this?" Poget could have told Deiss to put his knife away, suggested Garbade. He later demonstrated how a francophone could communicate such a message to a Swiss-German speaker even in the absence of a shared language (author's notes 28.6.2004). Poget claimed that Deiss acted on his own initiative when he cut the rope. This raises questions about an eventual prosecution of the police. The activists and some politicians consider the Aubonne incident as part of a systematic repression, which is spreading worldwide, backed up by an increase in antiterrorist legislation and other measures. However, Poget's testimony suggests that Deiss runs the risk of being singled out, a strategy aimed at demonstrating that the system overall is blameless. While the anti-repression movement works towards challenging police impunity, the scapegoating of a single officer will strengthen it.

This observation, linked with questions about how Deiss is coping with the incident, stimulated yet more efforts by the author to contact him. He is, however, hiding or hidden behind a bureaucratic wall, protected or shut off by his superiors who prohibit any contact with him before the investigation reaches its conclusion.

At 6.30pm, having heard all the testimonies, the president of the court found Lehmann, Shaw, and Wenzel guilty of obstructing traffic and endangering life, and sentenced them to 20 days in prison with a probation period of two years. Shaw's sentence, however, was annulled, and Wenzel's sentence cut in half by application of article *66 bis* of the Swiss penal code. This acknowledged the fact that Shaw had already suffered enough because of his injuries, and that his punishment could be dropped. Wenzel's trauma too was regarded as constituting some punishment. Lehmann's trauma, which he described in court, was not acknowledged, and article *66 bis* was not applied in his case.

The activists did lodge a complaint against the police. "The defendants wanted to show that it was not the accused who endangered the lives of third persons, but rather the police" (Brügger 2004c: 6). It remains uncertain, however, whether a trial will take place once the investigation of the police conduct has been completed.

Lawyer Doliva maintained that this trial tried to silence social and environmental dissent. Many of those traumatised have been intimidated to an extent

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[14] Garbade and Shaw pointed out that authorities in other countries have long ago learnt to deal with climbing-protests (author's notes 28.6.2004).

that makes their political participation and activism impossible. Shaw claims that the police operate the same way as the G8. Intimidation and rule by force is used to silence dissent. This was a predominant concern in the activists' meeting which will be discussed in the following section.

The Activists' Response – The Geneva Meeting of June 2004
On 26/27.6.2004 I attended the anti-repression meeting in Geneva as a participant-observer. On Saturday, 26.6.2004, the activists exchanged their experiences and observations of repression. Sunday's focus was on trauma and will be discussed in chapter three.

Drawing a pessimistic conclusion, the activists foresee a future of repression in Europe: demonstrators facing an increase in extra-judicial punishment; police intentionally responding more and more violently to demonstrators; using weapons and tactics, which used to be prohibited or considered scandalous.

The Groupe Antirépression (GAR) from Lausanne lists forms of repression experienced during the summit: intimidation, resulting in activists giving up political action; the suspension of basic rights; ID control; illegal arrests; attacks on the right to protest; and holding NVDA organisers liable for property damage by third parties (GAR 2004: 33-34). One activist says: "As someone who already struggled against repression in the sixties, I would like to clearly state that we need to keep our right to protest alive" (author's notes 26.6.2004).

PigBrother, a two-man website in Zürich providing information on police violence, estimates that around 10% of police officers inflict violent abuse, and concludes that a general enemy-attitude towards all police is counterproductive. "You can find support from police who believe in respect for life" one member of the PigBrother-team maintains (author's notes 27.6.2004). Their stance, they acknowledge, is criticised and unpopular with many activists. Such conflicts of opinion could spark interesting and fruitful discussions. However, the anti-repression weekend was too crammed with topics, and took place when emotions were running too high for such discussions to develop. One activist argued that political discussions, which could potentially split the movement, should be avoided.

Finding little that is useful in such unwillingness to confront the issue, I agree with PigBrother. Challenging police impunity cannot be achieved by adopting inflexible attitudes. Police officers do close ranks, and may be forced to do so, even when disproportionate and illegal violence has been used. However, a blanket condemnation of the forces of law and order might contribute to the hardening of attitudes on both sides, and may thus be counterproductive when the aim is to challenge police impunity. Individuals like Deiss can become casualties of such a hardening of fronts. An acknowledgement of Skinner's "second victim," Deiss in the Aubonne incident, could perhaps open up new perspectives. A discourse analysis of enemy-construction could help reshuffle the roles of victims and perpetrators, a strategy which chapter six will return to.

Nevertheless, repression threatens to paralyse social movements. Rather than providing security, repression often increases instability, as the following section will explain.

4. Pitfalls of Repression

Gilberto Pagani (2003), Italian lawyer and member of an international legal team (described below), argues that the authorities always justify police violence in the name of security. Pagani claims that police violence really upholds injustice. He argues that the state's intervention in demonstrations aims at escalating conflict, in order to justify a violent state reaction.

In a time when the war against terror dominates policy-making, activists are at risk of being classed as terrorists. Fermon (2003) argues that the term "terrorism" is now defined widely enough to include various social movements. He suggests that an intentional criminalisation of radical social action and political dissent is taking place. In the name of counter-terrorism, democratic rights are being eroded. He describes U.S. politics as based on aggression. This aggression is directed against countries like Iraq, Syria, and Iran as well as against internal opposition. Fermon calls for social movements to strongly oppose the criminalisation of dissent. The accusation, that opposing aggressive foreign policy equals siding with terrorism, is wrong and must be defeated, Fermon argues.

Shaw (2003a) writes that the rights enjoyed today were earned by dissidents of the past who, at the time, suffered violent repression themselves. "Under proposed EU legislation they and their supporters would almost certainly have been classified as 'terrorists.'" He compares today's activists for a just globalisation with Gandhi and Mandela. Treating them as terrorists, Shaw warns, allows for an increase in violent responses to protesters.

> One criterion for the effectiveness of what has been called "the anti-globalisation movement" is the level of repression that it is currently facing. This repression takes two forms. On the one hand, we have "emergency" legislation that aims to criminalise legitimate and democratic dissent. Since September the 11th, at both the national and EU level, there has been an avalanche of increased powers of surveillance, restrictive border controls, punitive measures, databases and ad hoc unaccountable groups targeting protests and protestors as well as other marginal groups in society such as refugees, asylum seekers and resident migrant populations. The transformation of "activist" into "terrorist" in the eyes of the law is a calculated exploitation of the post 9/11 political climate in order to justify some of the biggest erosions of civil liberties we have witnessed in Western "democracies" this century. This official policy is then reflected in the increased willingness to use violent force in the streets in a form of "arbitrary justice" against those who challenge the undemocratic and unaccountable nature of meetings like the G8. (Shaw 2003a)

The law, however, can also be used not just to repress a movement but also to support it. Protesters and their legal supporters can respond to the state's repressive interventions. Legal teams or legal collectives can act as neutral observers during demonstrations and other forms of protest. Maesschalk (2003) lists their roles: provision of information, support, mediation, and judicial defence. Many activists do not know their rights, and Maesschalk stresses the need for collaboration and the exchange of information within the movement to learn about the potential and limits of action through the courts. She lists the ways in which European legal teams can increase their judicial impact. Organisations such as Statewatch monitor the progress of European rights.[15] Collaboration among lawyers can enhance the defence of victims and may lead eventually to charges being laid against the perpetrators of abuses. The coordination and long-term collaboration of legal teams can generate useful legal information and raise international awareness of the issues concerned.

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[15] Statewatch monitors the state and civil liberties in the European Union, http://www.statewatch.org/.

Starr (2000: 114-115) writes that the press and public have an exaggerated idea of the extent of property damage at anti-capitalist demonstrations, damage which is in fact perpetrated by a small minority of protesters. And it is that damage, Starr believes, which then cements the perception of protesters as vandals, and perpetuates a violent response. PigBrother (2004) points out the very high costs of repression. Property damage is usually widely reported. The cost of injured humans, PigBrother argues, is not only emotionally much higher, but also for the taxpayer exceeds the cost of damage to property.

Geneva's labour unions called for the defence of democratic rights in the aftermath of the G8-summit, claiming: "The police seems to mostly attack people who can imagine a different world and who also speak out about it" (Brügger 2003b: 5).[16] Repression is not confined to G8-summits. Switzerland has seen police violence before. Thus Starr summarises a report in the People's Global Action Bulletin: "In other Geneva actions, non-violence was announced and people even marched on their knees to emphasize it, but 'the police responded with incredible violence, kicking and bludgeoning under the TV cameras for more than an hour'. Arrestees were beaten in custody" (Starr 2000: 102).

MacCannell argues that the presence of police weapons means that they are likely to be used. He compares the situation with the playwright's rule: "If there is a gun on the table in the first act it will be fired before the last" (1973: 58). After the violence, MacCannell maintains, even where there is an investigation, the police officers involved are usually reinstated. However, he warns, when officials' chains are broken and welded back together, every weld shows, and "they may not get their version of the definition of the social order back with their offices" (66). With this, MacCannell brings us back to discourse analysis, reminding us that the protagonists' versions of the truth may differ, and so may the explanation the media produces.

Jabri writes that "while agents may rationalise their conduct and be able to articulate discursively the reasons for their choice of violence in time of conflict, they are not necessarily aware of the implications of their conduct in the reproduction of social systems and war as a social continuity" (1996: 91). Structures of domination enable a consolidation and reproduction of authoritarian power. They control information as well as the institutional and discursive continuities which "bind" society (Jabri 1996: 31). Becoming aware of repression and taking measures to uphold the right to free expression not only concerns radical activists, but also democracy itself and thus all citizens.

5. Conclusion

This chapter has examined the police's handling of the Aubonne incident, and discussed a range of reactions to the case. The President of the Nyon court on June 28th 2004 sentenced the three activists to twenty days in prison for obstructing traffic and endangering life. The police personnel responsible for the intervention are still on duty. The police action is still under investigation, and cannot be satisfactorily dealt with in this study. Perhaps a court will eventually do so.

This chapter shows that repression threatens to paralyse social movements and thus also concerns citizens who have never even demonstrated. Repression is applied

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[16] Elise Boulding (2000) writes that in order to transform, humans need to imagine what they want instead. It is not enough to fight what is unwanted. Imagining the future plays a crucial role during all stages of conflict transformation and peacebuilding.

not only against vandals. It has consequences for people who would never throw a stone. In responses to the protests against the G8 2003, as well as in other instances, repression increasingly fails to distinguish between 'vandals' and nonviolent activists, and even between activists and ordinary citizens. "State repression," says Guy Smallman, "makes no distinction" (author's notes 26.6.2004).

Enemy-imagery is cultivated on many sides. Some activists find it hard not to consider all police as enemies after witnessing police provocateurs[17], violence, and intimidation. Police personnel, on the other hand, feel under threat themselves, both from the protesters and from within their own hierarchy. The construction and maintenance of enemies is often easier than dealing with emotions and long-held assumptions about the other side. This seems to be true for both the activists and the police. Addressing emotions and assumptions, however, is crucial for the sustainability of the movement and of democracy, as the following chapter will argue.

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[17] Police provocateurs are policemen disguised as vandals. They try to agitate a crowd and ignite violent conflict. As reported by legal observers, one such example during the 2003 G8-summit was the raiding of the social centre *L'Usine* in Geneva (PJG 2003: 15, 53-55). The crowd identified the provocateurs, recognised their intentions, and refused to be provoked by them. The police of canton Geneva nevertheless moved in and raided the centre (Egli 2003). The Conseil d'Etat of canton Vaud denies ever using such tactics (Conseil d'Etat 2004).

Chapter Three: Trauma and Sustainability

1. Introduction: Trauma and Activism

Sharp writes that, in sustaining NVDA, "[a]ttention will also be needed to such additional factors as psychological elements and morale, […and] maintenance of the initiative" (2003: 23). In addition to physical injuries, newspapers and activists reported shock, trauma, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) following the Aubonne incident (Aubonne Bridge Campaign 2003; Millar & Langley 2003: 7; Shaw & Wenzel interviews 2003, 2004). The reports focused on the trauma suffered by activists. The three activists tried on June 28th, other members of the Aubonne group, as well as other activists feel that the trauma they experienced as a result of police violence cost them a year of their lives, a year of not being able to work, concentrate, or socialise.[18] The police are themselves also potential victims of trauma resulting from violent encounters.

  The psychological trauma that activists and police experience is frequently overlooked. The effects of trauma and repression can be long-lasting and often lead to other problems. This chapter will explore possibilities for addressing mental health within this context and argue that a strategy of treating trauma individually without taking into account the political context yields only limited success (Bracken, Giller, and Summerfield 1995: 1074).

  Section two will define trauma and address the controversy surrounding PTSD. In the context of social activism, discourse on PTSD includes two contrasting phenomena. On the one hand, it provides a language and thus a way to articulate the suffering resulting from violent responses to NVDA. On the other hand, an orthodox psychiatric diagnosis of trauma risks individualising and psychologising such suffering. This may lead to the normalisation and thus legitimisation of the social roots of violence. Labeling sufferers with the term "disorder" obscures contextual and social issues.

  Framing trauma as PTSD influences the way trauma is treated, and the way activists in particular are supported and their movement sustained. Section three will consider approaches to healing trauma, first by outlining individualistic treatments favoured by Western psychiatry. Second, based on findings from the meeting on June 27th in Geneva, where activists and experts discussed trauma, the section will examine more social and contextual approaches to dealing with trauma.

2. What is Trauma?

While Shaw sustained physical injury, his climbing partner and counterweight, Wenzel, witnessed his fall and expected her own. When she, secured with an additional rope, had finally abseiled down, she had witnessed events and felt emotions that will stay with her for a long time, if not for the rest of her life. The activists on the bridge had trouble grasping the fact that someone had cut the rope which held their

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[18] Psychologist and trauma-expert Brigitte Studer points out that the notion of losing a year of one's life might manifest a certain expectation of entitlement for a "normal" life, free from illness, separation, death, or accidents: "Is this not a very occidental, capitalist view? Should we not, rather, learn to also integrate and make sense of negative experiences in life?" (personal communication, 8.8.2004). The author agrees that negative experiences can and must be integrated. However, such integration should not include the passive acceptance of trauma resulting from police violence.

friends. Activists as well as police on the bridge thought that Shaw was dead. Although – fortunately and amazingly – he survived, the experience remained traumatic for many of those involved.

With no evaluation or debriefing, the Aubonne action left members of the affinity group feeling guilty, unsupported, and traumatised. People from the intentional community Can Masdeu (see chapter four) came to Switzerland to support Wenzel and other activists, who held press conferences, and Shaw, who lay in the hospital. Local activists and other citizens also offered much invaluable and touching support. The trauma made it difficult, especially for Wenzel, to accept the care offered. For the first month following the Aubonne incident, hard work raising public awareness and supporting Shaw "helped" her keep memories of the experience away. But this would not last. Wenzel later suffered a breakdown and had to seek expert help.

Definitions: Trauma and PTSD

According to *DSM* IV[19], a traumatic event is the exposure to, or witnessing of, the threat of death or physical harm, and a response involving fear, helplessness, or horror (*DSM* cited by Bracken 2002: 48). The definition occurs in the context of a description of PTSD. While PTSD has been challenged (see subsequent section), the passage quoted provides a reasonable definition of trauma itself. PTSD is a particular diagnosis. As Bracken writes: "According to the recent versions of the American Psychiatric Association's *DSM* a diagnosis of PTSD can be made if the patient exhibits a certain combination of symptoms" (2002: 47).

The *DSM* defines PTSD according to three sets of symptoms: re-experiencing or intrusion, such as nightmares and painful flashbacks; avoidance, constrictions, and emotional numbing, like feeling detached, or avoiding places or thoughts connected to the traumatic event; and increased irritability and agitation, like insomnia, hyper vigilance, and poor concentration (Bracken citing *DSM* 2002: 47; Foa *et al.* 1999: 1).

Challenges to the Concept of PTSD

A radical school of psychiatrists, spearheaded by Bracken, Giller, and Summerfield, questions the validity, or at least the universal applicability, of the notion of PTSD and its positivist philosophical underpinnings, while still acknowledging that the experiencing or witnessing of horrific events can cause severe subsequent distress to those involved. Bracken points out that an increasing number of aspects of life are being labeled as mental illness. He quotes Kutchins and Kirk, who maintain that the *DSM* tells people how they "should think about manifestations of sadness and anxiety," thereby affecting people's attitude and actions, as well as institutions (Bracken 2002: 221).

The anthropologist Allan Young argues that PTSD was not discovered, but created by psychiatry. It fulfilled, at the time of its creation, the need to explain the suffering of people traumatised by war (referred to by Bracken 2002: 67 and 205). However, Bracken, while accepting this view insists:

> This is not to say that the suffering that the PTSD concept attempts to capture is in any way fictional or unreal. It is not to say that in the past people did not suffer in the wake of life-

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[19] The American Psychiatric Association (APA) publishes the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM). The description of trauma used here is from its fourth edition (therefore DSM *IV*) published in 1994.

threatening, terrifying or deeply distressing events. It *is* to assert that the symptoms defined by the *DSM*, and the way in which they are grouped, constitute one particular way of approaching and understanding the sequelae of such events. (2002: 67)

The PTSD diagnosis arises out of positivist medicine and politics, which frames all human problems in a technical idiom. In contrast to this approach, Bracken and fellow radical psychiatrists insist on the importance of cultural, historical and social contexts in understanding not only how individuals respond to traumatic events, but the strategies they and their societies adopt in coping with the symptoms.

Psychiatrists have diagnosed Wenzel and other activists with PTSD. Even if PTSD reflects a social construct rather than a genuine phenomenon, the suffering behind the label is still real and sometimes includes symptoms described under PTSD. I agree with the challenge to PTSD set out by Bracken and others, and with their insistence on the importance of taking the wider context into account in understanding and dealing with trauma. The controversy (individual versus social/contextual) will remain in the foreground throughout the rest of this chapter, especially in the following section on strategies for healing trauma.

3. Treating Trauma

Traditional Approaches
Most responses to trauma centre on the concept of PTSD. Traditional treatments of PTSD usually comprise a talking therapy. This can include re-exposure to the event or to the emotions experienced during the event, reducing and transforming the emotional response to it. A review of an individual's previously held convictions and living-patterns informs the development of coping strategies (Foa *et al.* 1999: 3). Talking therapies aim at altering those patterns, in order to help the individual live "normally" again. This approach, put somewhat crudely, offers a technique for re-adjusting an individual's mind to fit with its social environment.

Challenges to Individualistic Treatments
But, one might ask, what is normal? In being labelled a "disorder," as in post-traumatic stress disorder, trauma is framed as an individual mental illness. But trauma, although understood and treated as a curable response to violence, is in fact a normal reaction to such violence. In the anti-repression meeting, the aim was not to achieve normality. The aim was, rather, to find one's way back to oneself after a traumatic experience. Frankl writes that an "abnormal reaction to an abnormal situation is normal behaviour" (1964: 18). "Abnormal" reactions to brutality are often "normal" and necessary. They must be accepted as part of the process, rather than labelled as a disorder.[20] As Fromm writes:

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[20] The experience of German psychiatrist and holocaust survivor Frankl (1964: 103-104) illustrates the importance of context as opposed to focusing entirely on the individual. A diplomat approached Frankl for psychoanalysis because he was struggling with his work. Working for and disagreeing with U.S. foreign policy, he had sought treatment previously. His former psychotherapist encouraged the diplomat to reconcile his troubled relationship with his father. The U.S. government, according to the therapist, was "nothing but" images of his father. After a few interviews with Frankl the diplomat changed his job and resumed a happy life, no longer in need of psychoanalysis. Transcending the realm of the mind, Frankl assisted the man in finding concrete meaning and making the required change in his life. One caveat is in order to avoid potential misunderstanding. The story is introduced to illustrate the importance of context and is not meant to suggest that activists should give up their political activities and take up a conformist life-style.

> Many psychiatrists and psychologists refuse to admit that society, as a whole, might no longer be all that healthy. They claim that the problem of mental health only concerns the number of 'un-assimilated' individuals, rather than a non-assimilation of culture itself. (in Boller 2004: 12)[21]

Bracken and other radical psychiatrists challenge the talking therapy as the way forward in many cultural and historical contexts. Bracken writes,

> therapy can have the effect of increasing the isolation of suffering individuals by encouraging a narrow focus on their own memories, thoughts and beliefs. Such people need, more than anything else, to feel part of a community again, to feel close to other people, to feel at home in the world. Western psychotherapy can have the opposite effect. To my mind, we face at present the following questions. If the meaningfulness of the world is not given by the structures, schemas or programmes of individual minds but by the practical engagement of human beings with their social and cultural environment, should we look to individual talking as the solution when problems of meaning arise? (2002: 211)

Without denying that in particular cultural contexts people may be helped by talking through their individual problems, the radical psychiatrists emphasise the importance of the wider practical engagement of people with their social and cultural environment. The challengers of conventional Western therapy call for social and contextual healing, which is what the following section will address.

The Geneva Meeting

The activists' gathering in Geneva in June 2003 (see previous chapter) discussed not only repression but also trauma. Saturday was taken up with an in-depth exchange on repression, while Sunday focussed on trauma. The weekend provided space to learn about trauma, discuss problems experienced, and develop strategies. Four workshops ran simultaneously, where activists were grouped with psychologists with trauma expertise. People learned to recognise trauma and to acknowledge symptoms like insomnia and hyper vigilance, depression, and increased drug-use (see also trauma definition above).

Approximately 100 global justice activists and supporters of the movement participated. The weekend was organised as much as possible on a consensus-basis, much like the intentional community described below. In the invitation to the meeting, Shaw wrote:

> This weekend aims to provide space to discuss the political and organisational answers to repression and to learn about what it does to people emotionally and where to go from there. How do we respond as a movement to repression? How do we respond as individual human beings to repression? (Shaw 20.6.2004, personal communication).

Activists shared their feelings of fear, anger, and powerlessness. One participant recounted how a group of German police threatened to beat him and his friends up. Facing a gathering crowd, the police backed down from their threat, but still searched him. With a black permanent marker found in his pocket, one policeman wrote "asshole" on the man's forehead. A street medic recounted how she managed to cope with people in distress and pain during the G8-protests. But some days later she was suddenly hit by weakness. When pushing a wheel-chair up a ramp, which would usually have posed no difficulties for her, she re-experienced breathlessness. It was the same symptom that she had experienced when running from tear-gas in Lausanne.

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[21] Boller cites Erich Fromm (1955), *Wege aus einer kranken Gesellschaft*.

Another woman stressed that trauma can be cumulative when powerlessness and horror are experienced continuously or repeatedly. Reflecting on the trauma suffered as a result of police violence, another participant of the meeting said: "I find it hard to live for justice in a capitalist country" (author's notes 27.6.2004). He had reacted with isolation and excessive drug-use.

Recommended strategies for dealing with trauma, gathered during the weekend, included the following: talking in a safe space about one's experiences, recounting the event several times, active listening, being patient with those suffering trauma, seeking expert help from politically sympathetic therapists[22], agreeing on pre- and post-action meetings to exchange facts and feelings on an action, and remembering that "the revolution starts within." Meetings within affinity groups and the movement should complement personal reflections. Planned in advance and held before and after an action, such meetings would provide a space for people to recount their experiences of and feelings about the action. Up to now, the idea of holding such meetings has been discussed but the meetings themselves have rarely taken place. Generally, people find it easier to discuss actions than feelings.[23] In arguing for the importance of such meetings, and envisaging ways to facilitate them, I will address three further aspects of the issue: education about trauma, relational support, and police trauma.

First, education about trauma liberates activists from the worry that they are going crazy, or that they are "not tough enough." In April 2004 Shaw and Wenzel toured Europe to share insights learned from the Aubonne action and to raise awareness about trauma. Together with activists, academics, and other people they exchanged experiences and discussed strategies for sustaining social activism for global justice. Increased understanding of trauma already provokes a change in attitude. Within a consumerist society, the move from competitiveness to introspective awareness[24] shifts the emphasis away from bigger and more daring actions towards reflection on the effectiveness and sustainability of the movement (see also subsequent chapters).

Second, supportive relationships seem to constitute much what holds the movement together. When asked about sustainability, Wenzel wrote:

> As for how to keep hope and good faith, I wonder sometimes as well […]. Martin was an incredible optimist and still is. I find it quite hard at the moment and am wondering how much sense it still makes to fight and where we should get our hope from if our surroundings are just getting worse all the time... It's not [true], say my friends; you forget the good stuff that is happening. But you wonder if it is not all too small compared to capitalist patriarchic fuck over? I guess we don't have the choice but fight – I don't like the word – [we have no] choice [but] to change things, to live differently, to attract other people, to be sand in their machines, to live like we want to live, be courageous and wonderful. And I feel my hope coming back and Can Masdeu [see chapter five] is everyday proof that it's worth it. And maybe it's not bad enough yet. In the end we are all middleclass kids, dreaming of a better world, but always having enough to eat, schooling, a medic, etc. We are not doing everything we can – we are

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[22] While orthodox treatment of trauma often focuses on the individual, group therapy would be more effective, says psychologist Langström. And she adds: "If the therapist does not share the same values, *it is* a second traumatisation" (personal communication, 6.8.2004).

[23] Langström sees this is as a gender-related problem. "More activists are men, and men still have more importance in the groups and tend to talk more about facts than feelings" (personal communication, 6.8.2004).

[24] Awareness does not provide answers, much less recipes. This, Foucault (1961: 7) insists, is what is needed: to question and seek without expecting a conclusion. I argue, in this way, for a "listening openness."

not angry enough and it does not touch our own skin (oooops...).[25] But we are trying...[I] find it a quite difficult topic, especially the question of hope. But I guess love, friendship, solidarity is a good support...(Wenzel, personal communication, 1.9.2003)

Wenzel notes the challenge of living an alternative lifestyle in a hostile environment. Martin (2001: 185) expresses the challenge clearly: "One of the greatest challenges for activists is to live in a society fully aware of its shortcomings, while keeping alive the vision of a radical alternative and maintaining enthusiasm for actions that may only seem to move the slightest distance towards that alternative." As Wenzel emphasises, social relations are crucial in maintaining enthusiasm and hope. Her perspective on relationships is not unique. Lindis Percy does not see activism against nuclear weapons as an individual fight. She says that she had been introduced into the movement gently. "Others too, at particular moments had held her hand and given her confidence, and she hoped she too had been able to do this for other people – for instance at Menwith" (Randle 2002b: 176).[26] Wenzel and Percy both show that sustainability in activism depends on social relationships, not on "fighting it alone." Those who accompany each other in actions support and sustain the movement and its members. Giving a testimony about police violence, Guy Smallman too confirms that social relations are crucial for sustaining activism. He said that support-emails restored his faith in human nature. "They reminded me that the movement is growing, not dead, as they said after 9/11. We are positive" (author's notes 26.6.2004).

Third, there is the issue of trauma suffered by police. Justifying the use of riot gear, the Conseil D'Etat (2004: 14) answered Dudt's scepticism as follows: "It has to be emphasised that very good protection [such as riot gear] reduces the emotional stress related to the risk of getting injured and contributes to self-control." The Conseil d'Etat reported that, during the 2003 G8-summit, seven police officers suffered minor injuries, and two required psychological support (2003: 15).[27] A consideration of the perspective of the police would widen the activists' perspective, and counteract a hardening of fronts by deconstructing enemy-imagery. Personal accounts from police officers who served at the G8 would greatly enhance this study, but have been hindered by the police's reluctance to communicate. In court, defence-lawyer Garbade expressed regret that the police have concerned themselves solely with the trauma

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[25] Wenzel calls the activists middle-class kids, whose skins are not really touched by the injustices they struggle against. She adds "oooops…" because, in the Aubonne incident, their "skins" *were* touched.
[26] Menwith Hill, near Harrogate, hosts a U.S. National Security Agency base on British soil. The base gathers military, economic, and diplomatic intelligence, also by tapping into private data. Menwith Hill station "would be crucial in any nuclear conflict" (Percy 2002: 164).
[27] The Police of Lausanne and of canton Vaud (2001) distribute a brochure on coping with trauma to police personnel. The brochure says that feelings of stress are normal after experiencing, witnessing, or intervening in "critical incidents," such as accidents, rape, fire with victims etc. It informs police officers and their kin that emotions should be given due attention, and that an affected person needs time to heal. They advise police officers to talk about their experiences and relax. Morel-Chevalier and Poletti (2003: 27-30) write specifically on psychological support for police in canton Vaud during the G8-summit 2003. They provide information about defusing and debriefing interventions for police who experienced distressing situations and emotions while serving for the G8. Such sources illustrate that the issue of trauma is being addressed on the police side too. The literature shows that activists and police are affected in comparable ways by violent conflict. This supports the suggestion that instead of cementing enemy-thinking, the parties could find strategies to transform conflict by reflecting on common ground. On both the activists' and the police side questions arise about individualist approaches to coping with and thereby normalising violence, instead of challenging the perpetuation of it. Berclaz (2003: 24) highlights that by pathologising the victim the context is banalised. He writes that the suffering caused by atrocities not only belongs to the immediate victims, but also should be the community's concern. Berclaz recommends a comprehensive approach, which includes legal and humanitarian support or transformation depending on the situation.

Deiss suffered (author's notes 28.6.2004). This, at least, suggests that trauma is an issue on the police side, in addition to being a topic raised in court.

4. Conclusion

The reaction to the stress of experiencing, witnessing, or – perhaps unintentionally – causing injury varies considerably, but it can be severe and in some cases long-lasting. This chapter defined trauma and PTSD along the lines of the *DSM* and then pointed to the challenge radical psychiatrists put to the notion of PTSD. Approaches to trauma-healing were considered, outlining both individual and contextual/social treatments, the latter being the focus of the activists' meeting in Geneva. To be sustainable, activism must take into account emotion in its plans and evaluations. Introduced as a self-critical analysis aimed at learning from mistakes, the activists' work on trauma was a courageous and progressive step. A transformation developing a positive handling of trauma not just in gatherings, but also in actions, will take time.

The issue of trauma needs to be addressed on both the police's and the activists' sides, in mutual respect for one's own and the others' humanity. A critic might suggest that trauma in this context would be avoided by abandoning NVDA. Rather than avoiding conflict and activism, this study suggests nonviolent strategies for conducting them. The question of how NVDA can be conducted to reduce the likelihood of violence on the part of the police will be addressed in the following chapter, which considers the lessons of the Aubonne incident.

Chapter Four: Strategies for Transformation

1. Introduction

Chapters four and five address strategies for conflict transformation. While chapter five will examine the wider context and potential for transformation, this chapter focuses on lessons learnt specifically from the Aubonne action. I will list strategies for promoting positive change through developing nonviolent ways for activists and police to communicate and manage the conflict with between them.

The chapter divides into two sections. First, it considers whether the Aubonne action was an effective piece of communication and resistance. Second, it examines how it might have been improved, how the risks could have been reduced by careful forethought on the part of the protesters and better training for the police. Drawing from chapter three, section two will also consider how best to handle trauma to obviate the demoralisation of the protesters and the hardening of police attitudes.

2. How Effective was the Aubonne Blockade as an Act of Resistance and Communication?

The aim of the Aubonne action was to hinder or delay delegates from arriving at the G8-summit and to raise awareness for a perceived injustice, which the G8 represents and upholds. The immediate objective, blocking the access for the G8 delegates, was achieved insofar that the delegates could not travel via that route while the blockade was in place (Shaw, personal communication, 10.10.2003). The further aim, namely education, is what I will now examine. How well did the action communicate and raise awareness?

Communication
In examining the action's effectiveness, communication deserves special attention. I will briefly address communication at five levels: first, communication among the activists; second, between activists and police; third, among the police; fourth, with the motorists; and fifth, with the G8 and wider public.

First, communication within an affinity group is vital to make sure everyone is fully informed and as far as possible prepared for anything that might happen during the action. A lack of strategic planning for NVDA, Sharp (2003: 19) warns, can lead to a deflation of energy among activists, unutilised potential, submission to the opponents' agenda, growing weakness within the movement, and the likely failure to reach an envisaged goal. The preparations for the activists' gathering on repression and trauma in June 2004 confirm Francis' (2002: 44) argument that dialogue should be accorded high priority in nonviolence. The activists aimed at decisions by consensus. While slowing down the work process, such in-depth conversation tries to include the contributions and secure the cooperation of all those involved.

Communication among activists is crucial to ensure coherence, develop a sound strategy, and achieve the success in an action. Martin and Varney list three ways (2003: 220) in which communication can empower people. First, assumptions about perceived powerlessness can shift when people talk about having the "power" to make a difference. Note that this is applied discourse analysis. When discourse about "having the power to change" replaces the common assertion "The situation is terrible, but there is nothing we can do about it," a focus on powerlessness can give

way to energy for positive change. The group with official power manipulates texts (Jabri 1996: 96) and decides who gets to narrate and how.[28] Awareness of such processes, and the construction of alternative discourses and information channels (i.e. Indymedia) can redress the power imbalance. Even though talk alone neither demonstrates power nor the righteousness of a cause, discourse plays a crucial role in the ideological formation and reproduction of both inequality and equality, as well as in the building of resistance to domination. Second, by inner dialogue, communication empowers the individual. And third, communication raises awareness and educates. Such was the objective of the Aubonne action, which was designed to raise awareness about injustice. The remainder of this section examines how well it succeeded in that goal.

Our discussion of communication now turns to the second level: communication between activists and police. "Globalisation critic Martin Shaw fell twenty meters […], because the police did not listen," writes Brügger (2004c: 6). Communication with the police could have been more effective, especially in a context where it was likely that police officers speaking different languages would be involved, and that they would be under pressure. Although the activists did take precautions and had designated spokespeople, the linguistic problem weighs heavy in retrospect.

> The activists made sure to take all precautions to clearly explain their actions (banners, French translators). The policeman who cut the rope is a Swiss-speaker from Schaffhausen, and understands little French. "This drama is connected to a misunderstanding based on a linguistic problem," states the examining magistrate, Jean-Marie Ruede, who is charge of the inquiry. (Walther 2003)

Judge Jean-Marie Ruede highlights the fact that the Aubonne incident failed to foster dialogue. But the misunderstandings exceeded linguistic problems. As soon as the police arrived on the bridge, the activists, and their spokesperson particularly, tried to establish a dialogue. However, video footage shows that they failed to connect with the police (Indymedia 2003). The police did not listen, and an activist started yelling "there are people!" as Deiss approached the rope with his knife. One of the policemen repeated "isch mir scheissegal!" (I give a shit!). The activists were yelled at and "brutally pulled to the side" (Pellouchoud 2003). The senior officer, Poget, was filmed hitting the camera and saying "arrêtez-moi cette mafia de merde" (arrest this shit-mafia). He admitted in court that he did not enter into dialogue with the activists. As mentioned above, this breaches the agreed code of conduct, which was ordered by canton Vaud for all police personnel (canton Vaud 2003: 26). Poget is accused, instead, by the activists' spokesperson of pulling her by her hair and throwing her to the ground (author's notes 28.6.2004).

On the third level, communication within the police force appears to have been inadequate. The video footage shows that lack of communication was partly responsible for the decision to cut the rope, a decision which nearly killed two people. Poget's testimony in court (chapter two) reveals the vast communicational shortcomings within the police force. To recall just one simple example: Poget and his subordinate and driver, Deiss, did not communicate, for lack of a common language (author's notes 28.6.2004). This could be a humorous anecdote about the

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[28] Note that this is again applied discourse analysis. Said's *Permission to Narrate* (1995) describes this process very clearly as it takes place in the Palestinian struggle against Zionist entity.

Röstigraben[29] if the actors did not carry weapons, and handle their duty to protect law, life, and order irresponsibly. The police claim that Deiss cut the rope on his own initiative. If this is true, it points to further lack of communication within the police force and a serious lapse in their system of control and discipline.

On the fourth level, the communication with the motorists could have been enhanced with effective slogans and multilingual leaflets. If people suffer inconvenience, as the motorists on the Aubonne bridge did, the action may engender alienation rather than solidarity and education. Many motorists' immediate reaction on the Aubonne bridge was negative. Given convincing explanations by the protesters of the reasons for their action, a few motorists came to accept that the blockade was justified. A wider audience not directly inconvenienced might be more open to persuasion if there is a convincing logic to the action, and the issue at stake is sufficiently serious. This will be our next concern.

On the fifth level, activism can be considered *as* communication. NVDA can be a form of communication, write Martin and Varney (2003). Different from rational dialogue, often speaking through actions rather than words, it has a high potential to transform a system (228-9). NVDA "is designed to foster dialogue" (Martin & Varney 2003: 219). How well did the Aubonne action communicate to the G8 and the wider public? The latter is in part dependent on the media coverage and underlines the importance of good communication with press, radio and television people. The activists had a separate spokesperson for both the police and the media. The presence of Indymedia, and the fact that the action was recorded on video, helped not only for later press work, but also provided legal proofs. Parliamentarians were shown the video footage. The press and public gathered for the trial in Nyon, and the case was more widely reported thanks to extensive media work. Swiss TV covered the action three times: immediately after the action, one month later on the occasion of Shaw's release from the hospital, and from the court in June 2004 (Schweizer Fernsehen DRS 2003, 2004). In addition, Wenzel and Shaw's speaking-tour to raise awareness about trauma in Spring 2004, when they addressed other activists' groups and the public in several European cities, raised public awareness and generated an exchange among activists (for Swiss dates see Woz 2004: 24).

I conclude this section on communication with the benefit of hindsight. The Aubonne action, in order to educate people more effectively about injustice, would have needed to be more visible. In order to be safe, an action must communicate its purposes and its risks also to those who refuse to listen. If, however, the activists failed to communicate to Deiss that people were suspended from the bridge, then that raises serious questions concerning the police's own cooperation and communication. The action, as the video shows, included numerous safety measures (Indymedia 2003, see *figure 3*). As Garbade argued in court, by themselves, the activists did not risk falling (author's notes 28.6.2004). Police conduct and verbal abuse as recorded on video and reported by witnesses raises worrying questions about police disorder and their willingness to impose extra-judicial punishment.

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[29] Röstigraben – the rösti-trench – ("Rösti" is a Swiss traditional dish of fried grated potatoes), is a name for the imaginary border between the French and the Swiss-German speaking parts of Switzerland and often also coincides with a line between political tendencies. Students in Switzerland are obliged to learn at least one other official language of the country. For the French speakers this is usually German, and vice versa. The reluctance or pleasure of speaking the language of "the other" is a much-discussed topic. While forming part of Swiss culture and identity, which citizens are proud of, the issue sometimes sparks conflict.

Ends and Means
In addition to verbal communication, the compatibility of ends and means is equally crucial to an action's success. The means applied in an action communicate the transformation and future sought by the activists. Gandhi's form of NVDA, satyagraha, started with the aim to convert the opponent. Further stages of satyagraha, as well as Sharp's theory of how NVDA operates, range from persuasion to coercion (in Martin & Varney 2003: 219). Which category fits the Aubonne action? Did it convert or persuade people? Would the action have communicated its goals more successfully if the two climbers had been visible from afar, if billboards had informed every motorist of what was happening, and if leaflets in several languages had explained the reason for the action? Would so many requisites have made a surprise action impossible? Martin and Varney prioritise the struggle for meaning and representation. Neglecting it leads to misunderstanding, especially in a time saturated with constructed images (2003: 229). Had the protesters failed to make it absolutely clear to the police that there were two people suspended from either end of the rope, this was indeed a serious failure of communication. Presumably, however, all those directly involved – police, the media, observers, motorists – did know or quickly discovered that this was a protest against the G8-summit and an act of resistance to globalisation. The spectacular and high-risk nature of the protest – and the serious injury sustained by Shaw – meant the action was widely reported.

3. Lessons from the Aubonne Incident

The section asks what lessons both protesters and police can learn from the Aubonne incident about the conduct of, and responses to, NVDA so as to minimise the risk of injury, trauma and even death? First, the officially envisaged strategies will be complemented with suggestions regarding the police's conduct. Second, I will summarise the reflections of the activists and the strategies they developed, particularly for how best to handle trauma to obviate the demoralisation of protesters and the hardening of police attitudes.

Police
As chapter two has shown, one political response to dissent can be repression, fuelled by security-demands and the fear of losing control and profits. Political and police strategies for confronting NVDA in the future include doubts on the part of the authorities about the appropriateness of repression in providing security.

Police commander Lehmann is part of a working team which reflected on the G8 2003 summit. While claiming that the democratic right to nonviolent expression was upheld during the summit, the group still concluded that some reforms were necessary. They call for the elaboration of a code of conduct and clear procedures for police (DFA 2003b). Expressing regret at the lack of sufficient education and instruction, they plan to analyse and change the forces' inter-operability and flexibility. Anticipating future summits and protests, the team proposes the creation of a special post for security during exceptional events. They suggest that a person acting as a delegate of the Federal Council fill the post.

Given the statements made by diverse parties, and drawing from research on possible strategies, I argue for the inclusion or expansion of training in conflict transformation in police education. Such training would need to include awareness raising and reflection on identities in order to address notions such as the

dehumanisation of a perceived enemy and ways of coping with aggression. The examination of conflict transformation as a part of police education would be a step towards assuring more security and order in encounters between police and activists, and could thus help societal transformation towards locally rooted global justice.

Curle's discussion of identity and awareness could inform such educational guidelines. Curle differentiates between belonging-identity and awareness-identity, recalling Fromm's "To have or to be?" For Curle awareness is "essentially self-awareness and hence insight into the conditions of others" (Curle, 1972: 9). Diana Francis (2002), in her book *People, Peace and Power*, emphasises the importance of cultivating respect, humility, and awareness in order to enable a transformation towards a culture of peace.

Through repeated actions, good communication, and the maintenance of nonviolent discipline, activists can assist the police in developing a greater understanding of people committing principled, nonviolent civil disobedience, and in agreeing on a code of conduct in dealing with them. This brings us to the lessons the activists might draw from the Aubonne action.

Activists
Reflecting on the Aubonne action, the activists stress the importance of high visibility. Banners could have been bigger and more resistant to tearing. The climbers below the bridge had no impact on motorists or police who could not see them. To enhance communication, the banners, briefings and leaflets should have been in different languages to make sure they succeeded in communicating the essential information. When asked whether the action would not have been safer with an additional rope, securing them each to the railing, Shaw and Wenzel responded that a safety rope would have rendered the action useless. They would not have posed an obstacle if it had been easy to remove them. This illustrates the dilemma. The risk of injury or death was an integral part of the action. Without risk, an action is less dramatic. With heightened risk, activists must be prepared for the worst-case scenario in which people are injured or killed. Less high-risk actions, which may or may not involve civil disobedience, can also be effective. Lawyer Garbade maintains that, on their own, the activists did not risk falling (author's notes 28.6.2004). To prevent their own marginalisation, the activists feel that they must improve their contact with sympathetic parliamentarians and lawyers.

At the Geneva trauma workshops experts and activists agreed that awareness about trauma is central. Meetings held before and after actions could provide space to report facts and reflect on emotions. Such meetings might be equally helpful on the police side, helping to deconstruct enemy-imagery.

4. Conclusion

This dissertation examines conflict transformation techniques in relation to NVDA. The Aubonne action was itself an attempt to tackle the basic conflict – between the G8 as promoters of top-down capitalist globalisation and their opponents – in an alternative, nonviolent way. NVDA by its very nature involves confrontation. This confrontation is, at least from the protesters' viewpoint, necessary and potentially creative. The task here is not to resolve the conflict between the police and protesters – that is an unavoidable consequence of using NVDA – but to try to ensure that it does not lead to death or serious injury – including the traumatisation of either party.

This chapter has considered problems related to the conduct of and response to, the Aubonne action. Examining whether repression is effective in maintaining security, alternative strategies envisaged by police and politicians were listed. Drawing on conflict transformation literature, as well as interviews and press releases by activists and police, I set out further suggestions for nonviolent strategies. Special attention was paid to communication and to activist tactics.

On the Aubonne bridge it was too late to think about culture and identities, but there is time to prepare during police education and when planning an action. In schools, universities, and in public debate there is time to prepare. Education to foster self-awareness and self-respect can evolve into respect and awareness for others. Communication can counter the dehumanisation of a perceived or constructed enemy. The balance-team of canton Vaud calls for a new post for security, for new guidelines, and for better education of police forces for future events. I conclude that the police's ability to fulfill their task in accordance with law and human rights, even when they are overwhelmed, is vital for everyone.

Chapter Five: Developing Alternatives

1. Introduction

The central conflict underlying the Aubonne incident is between corporate power, including specific institutions like the G8, IMF and World Bank, which promote globalisation from above, and those who suffer from the results of that globalisation. This chapter paints with broad brush strokes some possible alternatives to the existing form of globalisation and the role that NVDA might play in bringing them about.

The next section traces the contours of some alternatives to the existing global political economy. Section three places NVDA among the strategies for achieving such alternatives and questions whether it can make a significant contribution to a transformation of the conflict between corporate interests and their opponents? A discussion on the legitimacy of NVDA within democracy will conclude this chapter.

2. Alternatives to the Existing Political Economy

Having discussed the political effectiveness of the Aubonne action in challenging global power structures the question poses itself: How *can* nonviolence challenge elite global power?

Protest against violence does not eliminate violence. Sustainable development can only succeed if consumerist lifestyles are addressed (Starr 2000: 119). Economist Bernard Lietar argues that "we can produce more than enough food for everybody," but fear and greed are continuously created to fuel capitalism. Discourse analysis reveals this process by highlighting how conflict-reports construct exclusionism and enemies. "The direct consequence is that [people think] we have to fight each other in order to survive" (Lietar in Starr 2000: 130).

This section will examine some alternatives. An introduction of the intentional community[30] of Can Masdeu, a living alternative to mainstream consumerism, will be followed by a discussion of other alternatives to the existing global power structures.

Intentional Community Can Masdeu
First, this section will briefly outline the historical context of such projects as the Can Masdeu community. Intentional communities predate the development of agriculture. Early hunter-gatherers for example banded together, depending on cooperation for their livelihood. Later, Christians, Quakers, and, in the sixties' counter-culture, Hippies joined together, "simplifying their lives and sharing all that they owned" (Kozeny 1995). The Diggers, a historical example of communal living, illustrate communal life as a manifestation of counter-culture and resistance. As common folk in 1649 England, the Diggers dwelled communally on crown land and rebelled against the aristocracy (Kozeny, Metcalf, and Oved 2000).

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[30] The term "intentional community" describes community projects formerly known as "communes." "An 'intentional community' is a group of people who have chosen to live together with a common purpose, working cooperatively to create a lifestyle that reflects their shared core values. The people may live together on a piece of rural land, in a suburban home, or in an urban neighbourhood, and they may share a single residence or live in a cluster of dwellings." Intentional communities differ, each group is unique. Communities can be "communes, student cooperatives, land co-ops, cohousing groups, monasteries and ashrams, and farming collectives" (Kozeny: 1995). Their most common form of governance is democratic, with decisions made by some form of consensus or voting.

Primary values can include relying on sustainable energy, home schooling, permaculture, sexual and racial equality, self-sufficiency, humanist psychology, creativity, spirituality, and the pursuit of global peace. Today participation in intentional communities is growing, mostly in the form of co-housing and eco-villages.

Can Masdeu, where Wenzel and Shaw live, is an intentional community project on the outskirts of Barcelona, which "maintains a unique position between creation and opposition" (ak 2003).[31] For eco-anarchists and anarcho-pacifists, NVDA frequently "goes hand in hand with a constructive effort to live an alternative life-style and build alternative communities based on the principle of direct democracy" (Randle 2002c: 2). Shaw is persuaded that one's choice of a way of life is very important: "It's so much more than just about taking action in the political process, it's about the food we eat, the place we go on holiday, the way we transport and communicate amongst ourselves, and the entertainment we have. It's about taking control of your life" (in Just Us 2001: 6-7).

Empty for over 53 years, the former hospital at Can Masdeu now houses the international community, engaged in the local and global social movement. The community offers free courses and events, educating people about sustainable environments and societies. It also provides a living example of an alternative lifestyle. The community aims at being as self-sufficient as possible, using composting toilets, a pedal-power washing machine, recycling objects, and rebuilding bicycles, the main means of transport. Entertaining friendly and cooperative relationships with the surrounding neighbourhood, the Can Masdeu community, together with the local population, weeded and replanted the terrace gardens, and restored the ancient water system.

The intentional community in Can Masdeu is an example of the kind of initiatives that are being undertaken in different countries to construct a viable grassroots alternative to the existing social and political order.

Other Alternatives
"Anti-globalisation," merely expressing opposition, has given way to the more positive term "global justice movement." Also more positive is the French name for the global justice movement, "altermondialism." "Altermondialism" already linguistically contains the notion of an alternative world, or the altering of the world. The global justice movement is heterogeneous, and does not have prefabricated solutions. "What is certain, though, is that it does not want power. It wants democracy. This is something fundamentally different," says sociologist and Attac-member[32] Jean Rossiaud (in Brügger 2004b: 7). One common argument made is that there is no one right way for transformation. And while "altermondialists" do live and suggest alternatives, the questioning does not necessarily have to encompass solutions.

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[31] This thoroughly researched article on Can Masdeu appears on an open "website of mobilized investigation, a project to connect people making social investigations with an activist perspective" http://manifestor.org/mi/en/2003/01/13.shtml. The author, "ak," chose to stay anonymous. I visited Can Masdeu in early November 2003 to interview Wenzel and Shaw. For more information on the community see http://www.canmasdeu.net/.
[32] "Attac," the "Association pour une Taxation des Transactions financiers pour l'Aide au Citoyens" (Association for a Taxation of Financial Transactions to Help Citizens), was launched by the French monthly newspaper *Le Monde Diplomatique* in 2003.
http://www.schweiz.attac.org/article.php3?id_article=157, accessed 10.6.2004.

> Under the present circumstances the question 'what is to be done?' invites a degree of arrogance that is all too visible in the behaviour of the dominant political forces of our time. It is an arrogance inconsistent with the kind of empirical evidence we have before us. This evidence requires a willingness to face up to the uncertainties of the age, not with the demand for instant solutions, but with more modest openness to the potentials inherent in what is already going on. (Walker in George 1994: 33)

Starr (2000: 36ff) examines three strands of responses to capitalist globalisation. Her first strand, "contestation and reform," describes movements such as anti-corporatism, the fight against structural adjustment, or the struggle for human rights. Second, she lists "globalisation from below" and includes environmentalism and socialism. Starr calls a third response to globalisation "delinking, relocalization, sovereignty," which embraces anarchism, sustainable development, super-participatory democracy, and small business. The following section will define globalisation from below and list some examples.

Globalisation From Below

True (1997: 9) describes global nonviolence as globalisation from below. Global nonviolence "is an array of social forces and a civil society in-the-making, animated by war resistance, ecofeminism, conflict transformation, as among Greenham Common Women in England[33] and Greenpeace throughout the Pacific." The growing movements resist direct and structural violence and reflect an increased understanding of nonviolent strategies. Starr (2000: 79, 83) maintains that if the conditions of the underpaid worker are to change, living conditions in the profiting part of the world will have to change too. The globalisation promoted by the G8 weakens states and their ability to ensure quality of life (Falk 1999: 181). Falk describes globalisation from below as "an array of transnational social forces animated by environmental concerns, human rights, hostility to patriarchy, and a vision of human community based on the unity of diverse cultures seeking an end to poverty, oppression, humiliation, and collective violence" (in Starr 2000: 83).

Foucault's concept of micro-power points to the transformational potential of local communities. By resisting cultures of violence, localities transform themselves; and they can be connected to global changes in power relations (in Fetherston 2000: 14). Peace constituents can generate transformation even in an asymmetrical conflict. Jabri summarises their impact, listing constraints on leadership, the "establishment of new patterns of interaction and communication," the modification of conflict representation, and the "transformation of discourses on violence and exclusion" (Jabri 1995: 66-67). Francis holds that living an alternative lifestyle, building bridges between people, improving social institutions, and managing respectful relationships *is* peace (2002: 46, 249).

"Cultures of resistance not only inspire techniques of struggle but also serve as spiritual bulwarks against and oases of escape from dehumanising forces" (Scott in Starr 2000: 36). Martin (2001: 179, 185-6) lists "indirect actions" and "voluntary simplicity" as strategies for positive change. He suggests limiting car-use and the demand for housing space, prioritising time with friends over earning money, and donating and sharing rather than purchasing. Three further examples of globalisation

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[33] Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp was protesting 1981-2000 against cruise missiles being held at the American airbase in Greenham Common, near Newbury in Berkshire, UK. (http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/514492.stm, 29 November 1999, accessed 25.11.2003).

from below will now be described: the Local Exchange Trading System (LETS), Critical Mass, and the Social Forum movement.[34]

Tariq Shabeer (2002: 234ff) describes LETS, also known as barter communities, as an alternative small-scale economy. With participants exchanging skills or services without using money, LETS transcends money-dominated consumerism. Practising a new relationship with money, goods, and services, participants create a viable alternative to corporate capitalism. LETS currency is not physical, and is only earned by exchanging services. Examples of services exchanged include plumbing, legal advice, ironing, gardening, and baby-sitting. To get a job done in LETS, participants phone someone in the directory and negotiate a 'price.' Keeping currency in the local community, LETS is sustainable and connects people from all walks of life (Forest of Dean 2004). While Shabeer mainly deals with the LETS system in Bradford, UK, he explains that LETS began in Canada and spread from there to the US and other countries (Shabeer 2002: 240).

As further examples of "altermondialism," Starr (2000: 67-68) lists Critical Mass, Reclaim the Streets, and resistance against advertising as at once incorporating resistance and creating alternatives. Critical masses are group or mass bike-rides, which are anarchically organised and celebrate cycling as sustainable transport. Like Reclaim the Streets parties, Critical Mass aims at reclaiming the streets for non-motorists and opening them to a wider range of public activities.

The Social Forum movement involves tens of thousands of people committed to building an alternative social and political system. This year's World Social Forum in Mumbai provided information about exploitative globalisation and was at the same time a celebration of social potential (Wuhrer 2004: 9). Meetings allow for networking and information exchange. Topics such as agriculture, environmentalism, indigenous rights, resistance to militarism, taxes on financial transactions, and exploitation of human and other resources are discussed in seminars, talks, and workshops. The Social Forum movement provides both a forum and fertile soil for globalisation from below.

3. Role of NVDA in Establishing Alternatives

Having described a few examples of viable alternatives to corporate globalisation, let us now turn to the role of NVDA in establishing alternatives. Can NVDA make a significant contribution to the transformation of the conflict between corporate interests and their opponents, including shifting the balance of power between the two? Where does NVDA fit among the strategies for achieving alternatives?

Martin (2001: 7) answers, "Nonviolent Action is the most promising method for moving beyond capitalism to a more humane social and economical system." Jabri

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[34] Another well-known example is the Chiapas movement in Mexico, which declared resistance against capitalism, poverty, privatisation, and humiliation in January 2004, one day after the announcement of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Due to structural adjustment and the exploitation of its wealth, Chiapas, a southern state of Mexico, suffers great poverty. The Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) of Chiapas is named after Emiliano Zapata, a 20th-century peasant revolutionary, and provides another way to think about power, resistance and globalisation. The Chiapas movement demands political and economic democracy, indigenous rights, and land reforms, and demonstrates the dedicated struggle of the oppressed and exploited. They have set up autonomous areas in the remote Chiapas hillsides, but are under close control of the Mexican army. Note that while the other examples listed in the text are committed to nonviolence, the Chiapas Movement is not.

(1995: 62) argues for individual agency, and thus for each person's potential for generating positive transformation:

> [A]gents can always make a difference in that they may reproduce structures of domination or contribute to their transformation through the display and enactment of counter-strategies and counter-discourses, through non-conformity, through the assertion of difference, and through voicing counter-hegemonic affiliations. Conflict may be seen as that instance of resistance against the constraints or limitations on the realm of possibilities for individuals and collectives.

The revolution, Shaw holds, is at once the goal and the process. Reflecting on the Aubonne action's coherence, he emphasises the importance of the means being consistent with the ends (Shaw, personal communication, 10.10.2003). This means that the envisaged goals and the way to get there must be compatible. As noted earlier, eyewitnesses accounts and the video footage of the Aubonne bridge demonstration confirm that the activists' ends and means were consistent, and that they remained nonviolent even when the police intervened violently with verbal abuse and unnecessary physical coercion (Indymedia 2003).

Sharp writes that having control over a particular location is not a goal, but an "intermediate *link*, a means of gaining greater superiority" (1972: 492). Consistent with Sharp's theory, Shaw reports that

> The blockade was both symbolic and functional. […] Actions like this can also broaden people's personal boundaries. When they see "normal people doing extraordinary things" it hopefully makes them see that many of their own limitations are self-imposed. (personal communication 10.10.2003)

NVDA has a role to play in highlighting people's ability to act. It has the potential to give individuals the confidence to rise above self-imposed limitations and suggests that conflicts can be waged and ultimately resolved nonviolently.

Effectiveness of NVDA
Randle (2002c: 22) holds that in a democratic context NVDA works not by straightforward coercion, but rather by exerting political, moral and sometimes economic leverage on the elected government to change its policy.

Concluding from the examples outlined above, NVDA can be an effective way of establishing and demonstrating alternatives. It communicates at more than the rational level, though rational discourse should always accompany it. NVDA poses dilemmas for the authorities who cannot ignore it but may loose sympathy and political support if they respond too repressively. Sharp writes that by acting nonviolently, protesters "are more difficult to deal with than if they had used violence" (1973: 789). In the Aubonne case, as well as in the peaceful demonstration in Lausanne, the police, however, dealt with the activists as if they had been violent. Rather than demonstrating the ineffectiveness of NVDA, this points to a growing repression. If the repression is severe, the demonstrators may gain public sympathy while the authorities lose it. Such a loss would undermine the authorities' political base in society. If, in response, the global justice movement turned violent, repression might gain public legitimacy. By remaining nonviolent, the movement can widen public support and continue to demonstrate that nonviolent transformation is possible. Long-lasting positive change, I argue in agreement with Shaw and Wenzel (interviews 2003), Sharp (e.g. 1959: 6, 1973: 817), and others (Curle 1999, Gandhi 2000, Randle 2002c: 16, etc.) is best achieved when means are consistent with goals.

NVDA and Democracy

Democracy, one might argue, is the best way to establish nonviolent politics. Does NVDA threaten democracy? This section discusses objections to NVDA in a democratic context and provides a response to such objections.

NVDA faces the criticism of being undemocratic, by sidelining or coercing parliamentary politics. Critics might argue that a democratically elected government must not be coerced by a minority, which bypasses electoral politics. This section will consider counterarguments to this important challenge, and define when NVDA is democratically justified.

Randle writes: "A democratically elected government, like any other government, has an obligation to respect the fundamental rights of its citizens – and some would add to respect the environment and other creatures who share the planet with us" (2002c: 23). If governments fail in their obligation, by plundering resources or waging wars of aggression, proponents of NVDA regard it not just as legitimate, but even as a duty to resist.

Among the advocates of conscientious disobedience was Tolstoy, who believed that compliance with war is murder, lived accordingly, and encouraged people to refuse to fight (Barash 2000: 176-7). Thoreau too held that it is not enough to vote.[35] People have a duty to act, because voting means leaving decision-making to the majority (Thoreau 1966: 228-9). Gandhi, who was influenced by both Tolstoy and Thoreau (Bondurant 1958: 106), held similarly that men and women have the power and sometimes the duty to pit themselves against the state (Bondurant 1958: 164-5). He wrote: "When law fosters untruth it becomes a duty to disobey it" (Gandhi in Bondurant 1958: 166).

Many historic examples illustrate that NVDA can build democracy, and that repression risks dismantling it, as chapter two has also shown. In *Direct Action and Liberal Democracy*, Carter writes, "[t]he real conflict is not between justice and order in the abstract, but between those who believe it is possible and necessary to seek greater justice, and greater dignity for those denied it, by means similar to the turbulence that secured constitutional democracy, and those who fear this attempt will forfeit what has been gained" (1973: 117). One historic example is the American Civil Rights Movement. The end to bus segregation in the U.S. was brought about by a combination of NVDA and action in the courts. Initiated by Mrs Rosa Parks in 1955, the Montgomery bus boycott sparked the Civil Rights Movement. Randle holds that the movement "helped remove, partially at least, a glaring contradiction in US society, a contradiction which would either be resolved or in time would undermine the whole democratic framework" (2002c: 8). He recalls Carter who writes that such demonstrations can be seen as an *assertion* of democratic rights.

Another historic example is Norway's resistance to the Nazi regime in the 1930s. Randle reports how NVDA was effective against Nazi occupation: "Quisling [the Nazis' puppet Norwegian Prime Minister] did not change his mind about introducing Nazi indoctrination in the schools of Norway; the non-cooperation of the entire teaching profession made it impossible for him to carry out the plan" (Randle 2002a: 79). Such NVDA is not condemned in retrospect. On the contrary, those who obeyed Nazi laws are condemned today, and many people believe that they would have never followed those laws.

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[35] Henry David Thoreau was a 19 century American writer and philosopher. During the Mexican American War he refused to pay taxes in protest against the war and was imprisoned as a result (Thoreau 1966: 228-9).

To conclude the discussion on the democratic legitimacy of NVDA, two questions concerning the Aubonne case will be addressed in turn. First, was the Aubonne action truly *nonviolent*? And second, was the action justified?

Violence, as defined in the introduction to this study, includes harming or threatening to harm humans. Given the safety precautions they took to minimise any risk to motorists (see *figure 3* and chapter two), most activists argue that the action was nonviolent towards others. By obstructing traffic and endangering their own lives, however, it was coercive in that it forced motorists and police to take notice of them and their cause.[36] While agreeing that the action had coercive elements, this study considers it a nonviolent action. The previous chapter suggested that inconveniencing motorists on the Aubonne bridge might have caused alienation. Yet, one could argue, without inconvenience there is no influence. Rudolph Rocker holds that, rather than originating in parliament, political rights are "forced upon parliament from without" (in Carter 1973: 28). Another possible charge of violence could point to the trauma of policeman Deiss, "Skinner's second victim." However, given the safety measures taken by the activists, their responsibility for the police's incoherent intervention and for Deiss' trauma is very limited.

Among the criteria for evaluating the merits of NVDA, Randle (2002c: 14-17) states that an action must address a just, serious, and urgent cause, which is unlikely to change by other means. This brings us to the second question: Were the Aubonne activists justified in obstructing traffic on the motorway in order to hinder delegates reaching G8 summit? In court, Shaw and Wenzel argued that the Aubonne group sees it as their duty to protest against the exploitative and life-threatening policies of the G8 (author's notes 28.6.2004). As this dissertation shows, the action also forced a debate of the issues and a discussion of how the authorities should respond to such forms of NVDA. During the trial against the activists Gilberto Pagani told the press that protesting against the G8 is not a right, but a duty; it is not only legal, but necessary (author's notes 28.6.2004).

NVDA forces public debate and raises awareness. The core values that it relies on and aims to improve are democratic. Many of today's democratic rights came into being or have been protected thanks to activists who struggled for them both within and outside parliamentary politics.

4. Conclusion

Taking the wider context into account, this chapter has outlined the potential of nonviolent strategies for transformation. In regard to the creation of alternatives, I examined the political effectiveness of NVDA and other methods in challenging elite

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[36] About the claim concerning nonviolence, Wenzel writes: "I don't claim to be nonviolent, but I try to be aware of my own violence and I dream of a world without perpetrators and victims. The Aubonne bridge action was violent [in so far] as we disabled the drivers to make their own decisions about going or leaving. They were blocked. We tried to reduce the inconvenience for them and one can argue that they spend half their lives in traffic jams anyway, but still we stepped into their freedom. I am aware of that and I accept this form of violence in our action as we could not avoid it and the degree was acceptable to me. The police could have redirected the traffic within 10 minutes" (personal communication 18.8.2004).

global power structures and concluded that legitimate and well-prepared NVDA can demonstrate and support the development of just alternatives and democracy.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

This conclusion will summarise what has been shown and point to research that could grow from this study and develop it further. The final section will reflect on the present research and its transformative potential.

Summary

After describing the Aubonne incident and a definition of crucial terms, responses to the Aubonne action were examined. June 2004 saw both the trial against Lehmann, Shaw, and Wenzel for traffic-obstruction, and an activists' gathering reflecting on repression and trauma. Chapter three considered trauma and sustainability, providing a definition of trauma, outlining treatments, and examining how dealing with activists' trauma can help sustain social activism. Chapter four discussed transformation-strategies for ensuring nonviolent encounters between police and activists, drawing lessons from the Aubonne incident. Chapter five addressed the wider context, examining how global power structures can be resisted and transformed. It illustrated possible strategies with examples ranging from intentional communities to transnational movements.

Further Research

Olivier Fillieule, professor of Social Sciences at the University of Lausanne (in Fabre 2003: 27), says that in conflicts like the Aubonne incident the victim is typically blamed. The activists were sentenced, and the policeman who cut the rope is being singled out. These actions ignore the responsibility of Deiss' senior officer. The testimonies provided in court strengthen the expectation that if the police do accept any responsibility, it will be placed on Deiss' shoulders. He is singled out by the police, while the activists point to a wider phenomenon of growing repression. Whether there will be a trial against the police, and whether police impunity and repression will gain due focus, cannot be answered in this study. Being the account of a single case (Aubonne), which is in turn part of a growing pattern, this study could be expanded through an examination of any eventual court case against the police. Alternatively, if that trial does not take place, further research might consider whether this too supports repression, upholding the police's impunity, and elevating the protection of the G8 above the moral doubts and dissent of the general population, which the G8 claims to represent.

Reflections

Conducting research for this study, I have moved between frustration on the one hand and hope on the other. Frustration about the seemingly impossible task of analysing a conflict in which the power imbalance is so great, and hope nurtured by correspondence and personal encounters with people who continue searching for a way to establish just peace. Applying active listening, letting the interviewees lead, not telling them what the research would like to find, has proven both an intense challenge and a rewarding education.

In Barcelona, November 2003, Wenzel talked about self-reflection and the sustainability of social movements. The lack of self-reflection among activists was, it seemed, one of the movement's greatest weaknesses. Three months later, in February 2004, while we walked together on the Yorkshire moors, Wenzel lamented the lack of workshops on trauma, and complained that activists prefer planning actions to listening to what is happening inside the movement, or even inside oneself. June 2004

then saw a meeting focusing on trauma and strategies for sustaining the movement in the face of repression. While introduced as self-reflection, the gathering could not change attitudes immediately. The movement for global justice cannot lift itself away from the society which gave birth to it. Competition, enemy-thinking, and the preference for action over reflection cannot be easily shaken off. But the constructive atmosphere of a gathering held to give first-aid to the global justice movement did show that many steps had been taken since Wenzel and I first talked in Barcelona. Self-reflection has a surprising and positive potential. If it had been possible to include information about the lessons the police drew from the experience, and their reflections on it, this would have benefited the research immeasurably.

While police and activists confronted each other on the Aubonne bridge, as they do in other struggles for global justice, both share much common ground and have many interests in common. They want to feed their families and live in peace. Police and activists are all part of the grassroots level in Lederach's pyramid of society, comprising the constituency with the most members and the least visibility and power (1997).

In terms of numbers, the constituents of the grassroots level do have power. The conflicts between the constituents at the broad base help to maintain the power at the narrow tip of the pyramid, and so also exploitative globalisation. Nonviolent and supportive alliances within the broad base can effect a shift in the unequal balance of power, as graphically illustrated by Hakim's cartoon in chapter one (*figure 4*).

Figure 6. Based on Lederach's pyramid, the diagram illustrates power relations in the Aubonne case (adapted from Fisher et al. 2000: 34, drawn by the author 29.5.2004).

LEVEL I
TOP LEVEL ELITE
G 8
GOVERN-MENTS
HIGH VISIBILITY
MUCH MONEY
INTERNATIONALLY KNOWN
ISOLATED FROM OTHER LEVELS

LEVEL II
MIDDLE LEVEL
COMMUNITY LEADERS
NATIONAL POLITICIANS
CONTACTS WITH I & III
INFLUENCE, RESPECT

LEVEL III
GRASS-ROOTS
POLICE
ACTIVISTS
THE PEOPLE
ANTI-WAR-MOVEMENT
LARGEST NUMBER
LOCALLY KNOWN
INTER-HUMAN CONTACTS
FOUNDATION / BASE FOR LEVELS II & III

figure 6

This work remains, unfortunately, incomplete in that it lacks any direct contributions from the police. The hospitality shared with the activists showed that the

same could happen with other parties. Both Deiss and Poget's accounts of the Aubonne case, for example, would contribute to a more complex and balanced understanding and representation of the conflict. Their reflections on what happened, and an account of the emotions they felt, would be equally important to those of the activists. Both Fritz Brigger, commander of the police of canton Schaffhausen, as well as Sauterel, spokesperson for the police of canton Vaud, maintain that no interviews will be allowed as long as the investigation continues. While Sauterel responded with official statements to some of my queries, Brigger "counted on [my] understanding" that no questions would be answered (personal communication Brigger 1.7.2004, and Sauterel 27.2.2004).

A common reaction when people first hear about police violence is to say that the protesters were probably themselves somehow responsible. Such reactions often include the argument that the protesters probably behaved in an uncivilized manner, and had they done the "right thing" they would have been safe. In such cases, the "right thing" comes very close to being silent, to not articulating dissent.

Actions must be prepared with utmost care, must be soundly based on consensus decisions, and must communicate successfully to police officers who are reluctant to listen. However, as argued in chapter four, nothing justifies the extra-judicial punishment meted out on the Aubonne bridge, and the police did not do enough to prevent serious injury to the activists. This resulted in long-lasting or even permanent injury to Shaw, Wenzel, and other activists, and was equally damaging to social stability and order in Switzerland. The police's failure to maintain discipline under stress reveals shortcomings in their training, especially concerning conflict management. I argue that an improvement in the latter would benefit future interventions, the general population and police equally. Even *if* the Aubonne action had been badly planned and conducted, and even *if* it had endangered motorists, extra-judicial punishment is illegal and counterproductive in maintaining law and order.

The apparent absence of objective truth brings difficulties. But the notion that disagreement between those supporting and those opposing corporate globalisation should be sorted out by fistfight would seem ridiculous, if it did not actually cost lives. The idea that methods dominated by raw violence bring us closer to security and development is absurd. But perhaps security and development are not the aim. Is the aim to scare the adherents of global justice into a culture of obedience? The resort to repression, as discussed in chapter two, suggests that it is. However, strategies for developing alternatives, as discussed in chapters three through five, also suggest that a different world is possible, and that humanity can overcome the rule of violence.

I argue that repression is not a sustainable way of building a safe and secure society. On the contrary, repression can escalate a conflict and cause more violence. McCarthy for example warns that state repression can undermine a movement's ability to remain nonviolent (1997: 475). A turn to violence would not benefit the global justice movement. One of the movement's strengths is exactly its overall commitment to nonviolence. Positive transformation, I conclude, is more effectively achieved through nonviolent means.

The Aubonne action was dedicated to nonviolent struggle for global justice. I have attempted to outline strategies for conducting nonviolent conflict with the police. Repression concerns not only NVDA, but also threatens free expression in the wider population. When analysing global conflict, I include the fish, the trees, and the planet as stakeholders in the conflict. Those (f)actors, exploited as resources by some, and considered part of the community by others, figure in theories and actions for conflict transformation. This is part of what motivated this project. The Aubonne action did

not (and never promised to) install global justice. After researching the activists' motivations, the police's assessment of the event, and alternatives to exploitative globalisation, I conclude that nonviolent conflict transformation is necessary for the realisation of global justice. As pointed out above, there is no one right way for transformation. The survival of the planet depends on both individually sustainable lifestyles as well as on positive political transformation. As a complementary method, NVDA can highlight the need for change, and, ideally, can demonstrate alternatives. The Aubonne action was far from ideal. But it has proved a fruitful learning experience, at least for some of those involved. Wenzel, after having been pronounced guilty, addressed friends and press outside the court in Nyon, and said: "Thank you all for your amazing support. I think we have turned something very negative into something positive. And I think that this is the way forward."

Appendix

Figures 7 and 8. Shaw and Wenzel's maps of the conflict demonstrate the differing perspectives. Both drew the maps in November 2003 in Barcelona.
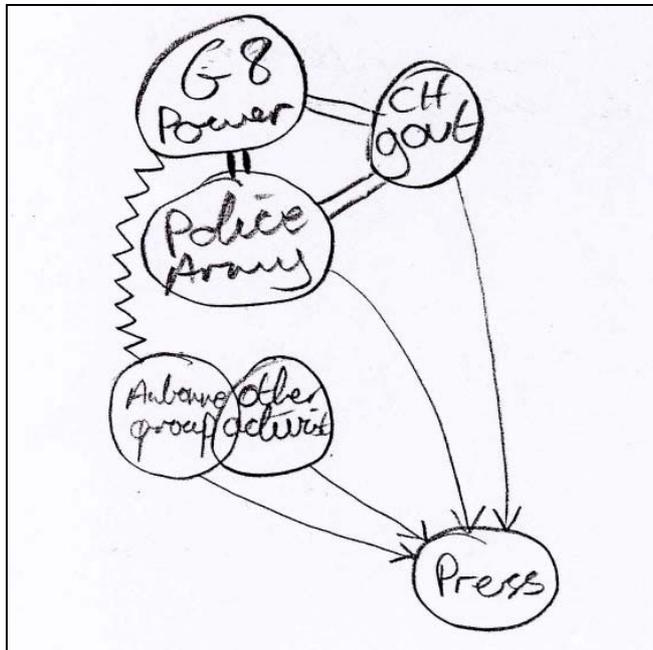
Shaw's conflict map.   *figure 7*
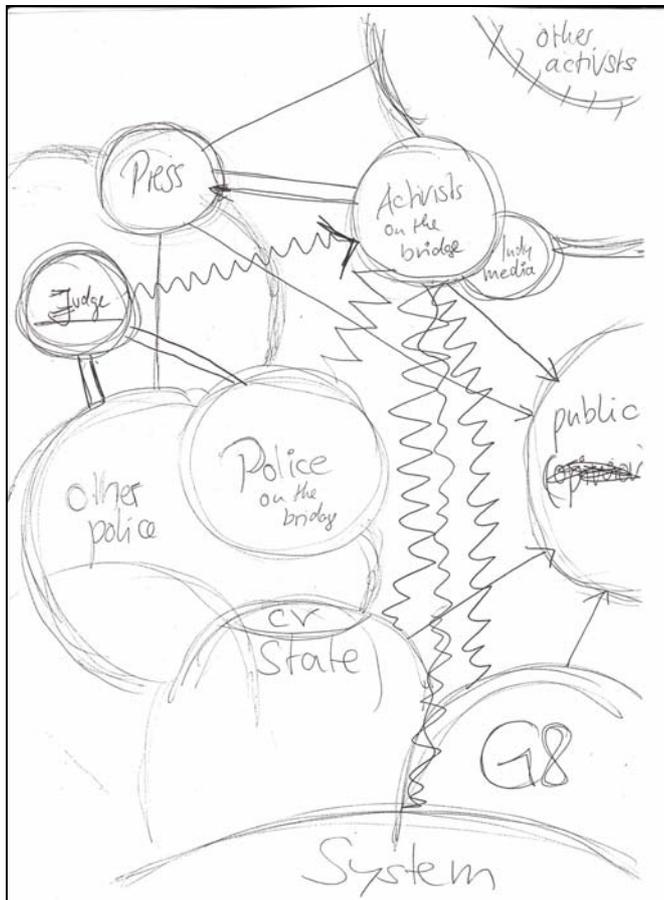
Wenzel's conflict map.   *figure 8*

Figure 9. A conflict map drawn by participants of a course in Conflict Resolution
Skills at Lancaster University, September 2003. It adds a fourth perspective to the
author's and the activists' maps.
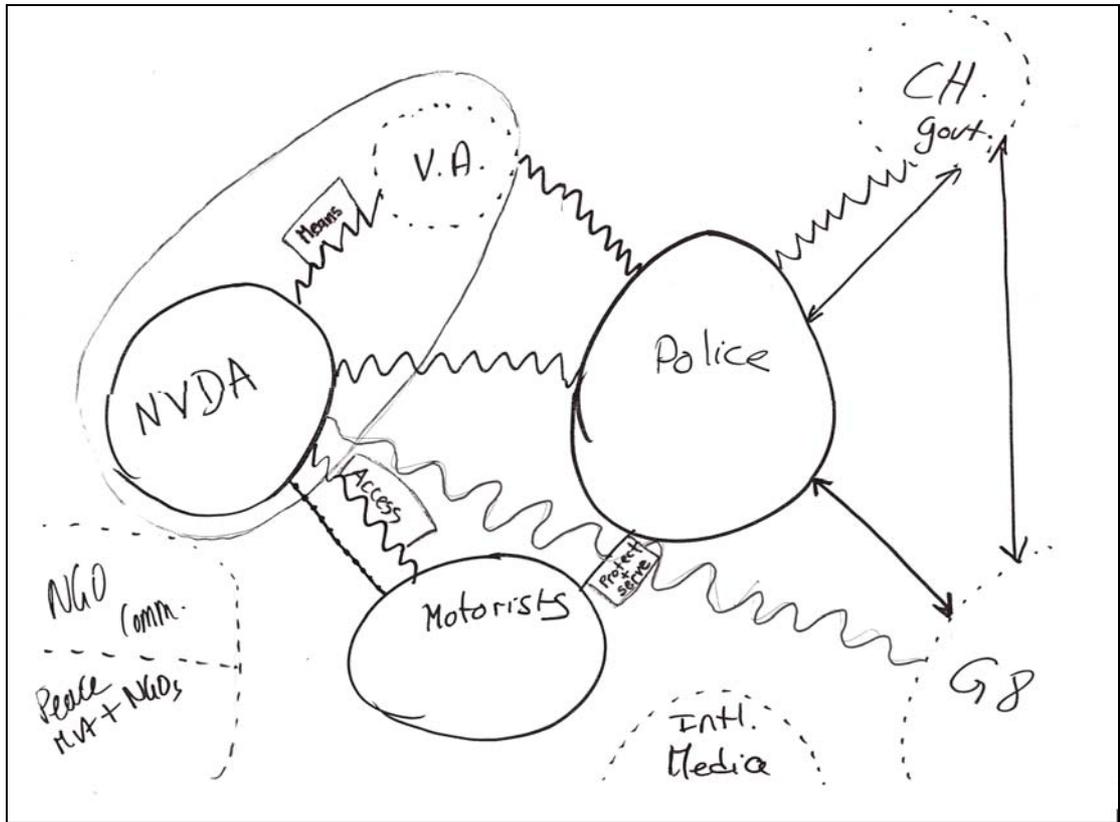
figure 9

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