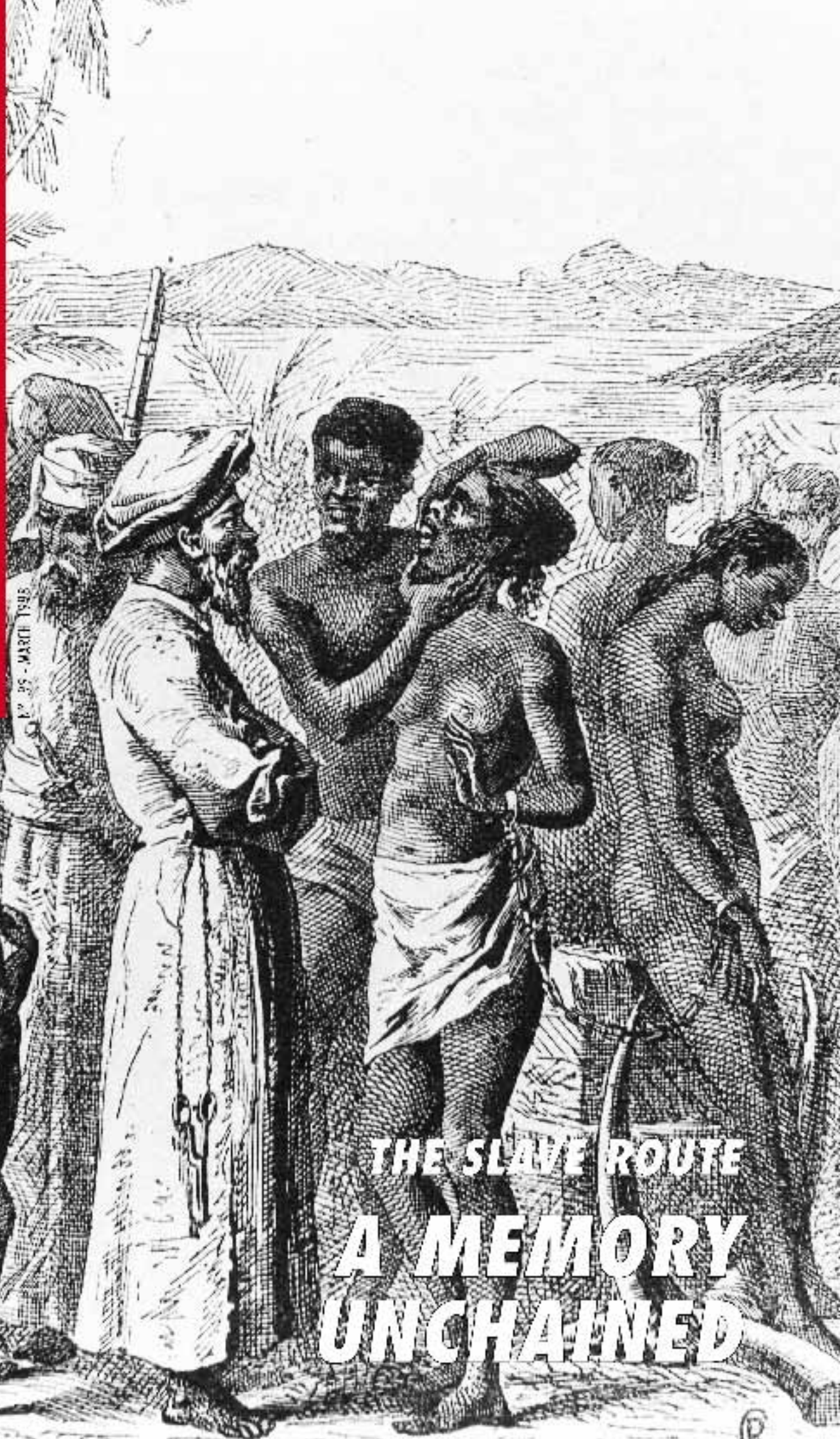


UNESCO

SOURCES



THE SLAVE ROUTE
A MEMORY
UNCHAINED

FORGOTTEN IMMIGRANTS

Hammadi Ben Ammar
Teacher
Tunis

✉✉✉ I found your issue on "Making the Most of Globalization" (No. 97) very interesting. I nevertheless have one question concerning your map of "People on the Move". Why is there no mention of immigration to Australia, particularly the flow of people coming from Viet Nam? I found this rather strange, especially in light of the fact that your dossier includes an article specifically on Asian immigration to Australia.



Although Australia is considered a migrant receiving country, it takes in only 85,000 people each year, of whom only 3.6% are Vietnamese. Ed.

IN DEMAND

Yolanda Ortiz Garcés
Provincial Centre for Scientific and Technological Information
Las Tunas (Cuba)

✉✉✉ The range of information presented in your magazine is precious. We always make sure that it is available to our readers and the demand is great given the quality and timeliness of the themes covered.

WHO'S RESPONSIBLE?

Annie Webster
Journalist
Auckland (New Zealand)

✉✉✉ In your article "The plunder of Afghanistan" (No.97, January 1998), you quote Pierre Lafrance, the former French ambassador to Pakistan

saying that "objects stolen from the Kabul museum have no market value. Under national and international law they can be seized immediately. Informed collectors wouldn't risk handling them."

I can't help but think that if there were no buyers (usually "informed" Europeans and Americans) willing to pay fabulous prices for such objects, they wouldn't be stolen in the first place. On the other end of the scale, if governments in target countries like Afghanistan, Cambodia and throughout Africa seriously undertook to improve their peoples' lot (and pay their customs and police officials properly) maybe they would be less inclined to sell out their heritage.

It's all very well to crack down on impoverished locals raiding archaeological digs to feed and clothe themselves and their families, but are they really the guilty ones?

ARCHIVES IN DANGER

James M. Wambua
Documentalist
Kenya University Basic Education Resource Centre
Nairobi (Kenya)

✉✉✉ We enjoy reading issues of *Sources*, which has very informative and educative contents.

In particular, I concentrated very keenly on your issue on World Heritage in Danger (No. 95). You focused mainly on national parks. Now what about turning to national archives? I think they are also very important. We should lament over the state in which they are kept and preserved. And yet they tell of a country's heritage and posterity. Please consider giving them the space they truly merit in one of your upcoming issues.



We will certainly keep your suggestion in mind. In the meanwhile, you may want to read the article "A Selective Memory" in issue No. 95 which focuses on UNESCO's Memory of the World project in highlighting the needs and problems linked with setting up a world archival registry to better preserve this heritage. Ed.

THE CHASE

Ann Bix
Businesswoman
Moosejaw (Canada)

✉✉✉ Bravo for the issue "What on earth are we doing to the oceans" (No. 96). The ocean is indeed our "life support system" - it's a message you cannot hammer home enough.

And here at home in Canada, we have certainly been hammered by our disastrous lack of fishing regulation, a global problem highlighted in your article, "Too Many Boats in the Ocean". Ironically, very few boats are found cruising our eastern coast with a strict moratorium protecting the few fish we still have. In fact, we've even taken to chasing foreign-owned boats (which shall remain unidentified for reasons of diplomacy) entering murky legal waters by skirting in and out of our exclusive economic zones.

This kind of activity has been the cause of some very serious international incidents involving our navy and raise some very important legal, ethical and environmental issues which your articles failed to address.

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WE, THE PEOPLE...

While Kofi Annan celebrated, Romeo Dallaire wept...

The success of the UN secretary-general's last chance mission to Baghdad was hailed around the world. "We rejoice to see the force of reason prevail over the reason of force," applauded Federico Mayor, the director-general of UNESCO.

The success for the UN system is manifold: it has imposed its decisions and pulled the war machine back from the brink, preventing renewed bloodshed and even greater pain for a people who have already suffered too much.

At the same time, Major General Roméo Dallaire, the commander of the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) in 1994 when the first genocide since the second world war saw the slaughter of between 500,000 and a million people, was giving evidence before the UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (Arusha, Tanzania). Dallaire, of Canada, asked - and answered - the one question of any importance in his eyes: "Would a determined, well-equipped and mandated force have been able to prevent the massacre of innocent civilians? My answer is: absolutely ..."

"It is too easy to accuse the United Nations of refusing to intervene ..." he continued, "but the United Nations is all of us! We all bear part of the responsibility of having stood by for four months and watched the Rwandan genocide unfold!" And he wept.

The United Nations Charter opens: "We the peoples of the United Nations". It is in their name that the UN ultimately acts ... and succeeds or fails. Certainly, "the people's" responsibility in those successes and failures is lessened by the often noticable gap between their will and the way it is presented by the governments that speak for them at the UN. But as certainly, their responsibility is entire when that will is not manifested at all: when indifference reigns on world issues or is shown towards the only mechanism for the resolution of conflicts of this scale.

René LEFORT

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Lest we forget.



Selling culture.



Plant therapy.

Cover : © COLLECTION
VIOLLET/A Slave market in
Nigeria

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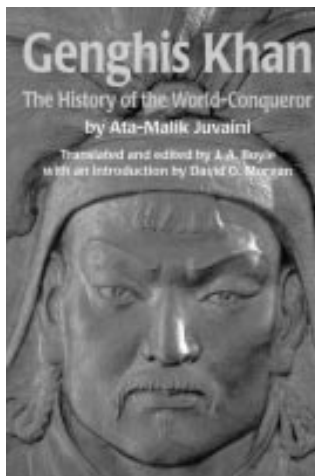


BOOKS

**GENGHIS KHAN
THE HISTORY OF THE
WORLD-CONQUEROR**

"...the plain had become a tossing sea of countless hosts and splendid troops, while the air was full of clamour and uproar from the neighing of armoured horses and the roaring of mail-clad lions."

A masterpiece of Persian prose, this chronicle is also a principle historical source of the Mongol Empire. The narrator, Ata-Malik Juvaini, born in about 1226, recounts the rise of Genghis



Khan and more particularly the reigns of his three successors. Drawing not only from the recollections of his father and grandfather, Juvaini's epic work is infused with the personal insight of someone who worked for the Mongol governors of Northern Persia.

Indeed, the text's force lies not in the details of the principal actors and events but in the contradictions of a man working for his conquerors. The translator, J.A. Boyle points out: "How is one to reconcile these seeming contradictions - on the one hand, the candid recital of Mongol atrocities, the lament for the extinction of learning, the thinly veiled criticism of the conquerors and the open admiration of their vanquished opponents; and on the other hand, the praise of Mongol institutions and rulers and the justification of the invasion as an act of divine grace?"

• **Genghis Khan - The History of the World-Conqueror**, by Ata-Malik Juvaini, translated and edited by J.A. Boyle with a new introduction and bibliography by David O. Morgan, Manchester University Press/UNESCO 1997, 725 pp., 255 FF.

STUDY ABROAD 1998-1999

This book is a veritable gold mine, with more than 2,900 entries concerning post-secondary education and training in all academic and professional fields in 120 countries and territories. Information on scholarships, financial assistance, university-level and short-term courses, extramural and continuing education programmes, facilities for the handicapped, student employment possibilities and more. All of which makes it an essential guide.

• **Study Abroad UNESCO/International Bureau of Education 1997**, 1067 pp., 120 FF.

COMPACT DISCS
**YEMEN - SONGS FROM
HADRAMAWT**

This collection presents the musical jewels of Hadramawt - the fertile valley of frankincense serving for centuries as a cultural centre for Yemen and the Arab world. Recorded between 1985 and 1995, the disc presents the chants of professional and amateur male singers of *dân* - relatively simple melodies sung alone or accompanied by hand-clapping, lyres, and lutes.

While austere, the music is still warm - conveying the spirit of the valley with a careful selection of melodies corresponding



to wedding festivities, long journeys driving camels, and ritual poetry sessions.

• **Yemen - Songs from Hadramawt. Music and Musicians of the World**, UNESCO/Auvidis, 120 FF.

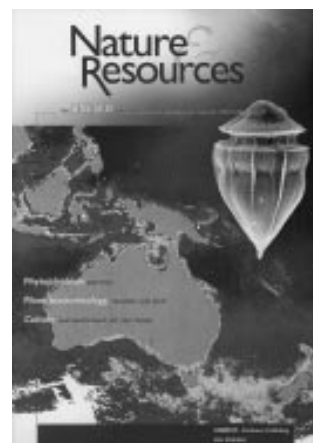
PERIODICALS
THE UNESCO COURIER

"Who can fail to wonder about the mystery of the hereafter?" ask the editorialists of the March issue which focuses on a "necessary illusion" for some and a "supreme reality" for others. According to African tradition, the aftermath is not a metaphysical notion but rather is seen as "a cosmic principle which both encompasses and transcends individual births and deaths enfolding us all together in time and space". While Indian society is essentially based on a cycle of births and rebirths, in China, a certain pragmatism intertwines death, the gods and life. With Marxist "faith" the afterlife is seen as an instrument of power used by the dominant classes.

The last article, "Living to tell the tale", reveals the striking similarities of the near-death experiences undergone by millions of people revived from "clinical death". Irrespective of their religious and cultural backgrounds, they are often convinced that they have seen a light beyond which assuaged their fear of death.

NATURE & RESOURCES

To alter a vegetable or not, that is the central question of the latest issue (Vol. 3, No. 2). "The extent to which a change is judged to be a substantive harm depends on human values, whether nature should be 'intransient' or modified," explains author Darryl Macer. While pointing to the various benefits of plant biotechnology, he explores the many ethical questions - from intellectual property laws to public attitudes, health effects and environmental safety and regulation. "Windows into the pastures of the sea" open with an article on



phytoplankton before a closing look at The Right to Hope initiative seeking to mobilize the creative spirit for environmental preservation.

COPYRIGHT BULLETIN

"Copyright is, in a way, symbolic of the relations between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' in publishing. All the cards are in the hands of the publishers from the industrialized countries. They control the international copyright treaties, which were, after all, established by them and with their interests in mind..."

Philip Atbach opens the debate in the latest issue of the bulletin (No. 4, Vol. 31) which looks at the impact of digital technology on neighbouring rights under the Rome Convention before presenting UNESCO's latest activities in the field - namely the recommendations concerning the status of the artist made during a world congress in Paris last June.

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RODNEY OSIAGO: SAYING MORE THAN JUST 'NO!'

In Nairobi, six cents buys an ordinary Marlboro cigarette or a joint rolled with local marijuana which may help to explain why half of the capital's high school and university students take, or have tried, drugs. In fact, young people represent 25% to 35% of the country's drug users.

"Drugs are not part of the tradition in Kenya. It's a recent phenomena," says Rodney Osiago, 19. Two years ago, the communications student created the Drug Chase Foundation with about 30 young people, all interested in writing, singing, shooting films, etc. Pooling together their limited pocket-money earned from odd jobs, they produced a newspaper, a pop song and video, all of which attracted attention not just locally but internationally.



(Photo UNESCO/Nine Levinthal).

Rodney came to UNESCO in early February to meet with about 30 people his age from 25 countries, all trying to prevent and reduce the demand for drugs. Through an initiative by the NGO *Environnement Sans Frontières*, they launched *The Youth Charter for a 21st Century Free of Drugs* as part of an international campaign supported by UNESCO and the

United Nations International Drug Control Programme.

But how did a clean-cut guy like Rodney get into the battle against drugs?

"I used to write for the school magazine. After that, a few friends and I wanted to start a cultural project which would be beneficial for young people. We realized that in Kenya, when people do talk about youth, they talk a lot about teenage pregnancy or AIDS. They don't talk about drugs. Maybe because they aren't seen as a danger, or they don't see the consequences. But it is a very common problem at the high schools and colleges."

Rodney and his friends began by publishing a small journal - eight photocopied pages. They then branched into cinematography, shooting a video of a play written and performed by foundation members, which portrays a male teenager's descent into drugs and delinquency. The drama was complemented by on-the-scene reports produced on different school campuses.

"It took us two years to make the film! We could only film when we had the money. Some of the school directors refused to give us the authorization to shoot because they were worried about damaging their schools' reputations."

They also took to the airwaves by producing a music hit, "Drugs No Love": in Kenya, as elsewhere, it is more likely for a teenager to listen to the radio than the instructions of their elders.

Nadia KHOURI-DAGHER

JOSE CARLOS GARCIA GOMEZ: THE SEA, THE SEA

When he was seven, he bought his first diving mask and while his friends splashed about and built sandcastles, he spent hours gazing at fish, seaweed and shells.



(Photo © all rights reserved).

which a score of people have worked for more than four years, involves a system of using plants and living things as "ecological sentinels," which disappear or proliferate according as to how the ecosystem changes.

"When a forest burns, you can see it," says Garcia Gomez. "But with the ocean, you can't see what's happening, so it's harder to assess ecological damage and how to prevent it."

More than 1,700 animal and vegetable species have been found in the bay, including 30 hitherto unknown to scientists, such as the *Reinera Mucosa* sponge, which produces a chemical which appears to fight cancer.

But the research also revealed the disappearance of many species, including some seaweeds which grew in abundance 30 years ago.

"In the 200 years since the Industrial Revolution," says Garcia Gomez, "human beings have done more damage to the environment than at any time previously. Thousands of biological species are vanishing every year. The human species is out of control."

Garcia Gomez has also made a name as an underwater photographer and some of his 10,000 or so pictures shot in the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, the Pacific and even the Antarctic have won prizes too. His equipment is definitely more state-of-the-art than the little goggles he wore when he was seven, but his passion is just the same.

N.K.-D.

and Liliana SAMPEDRO

• The Nigerian journalist **CHRISTINA ANYANWU** will receive the 1998 UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize. The publisher and editor in chief of *The Sunday Magazine* (Lagos) was

arrested after publishing an article about an attempted coup against the Nigerian government on March 1, 1995. She was condemned to 15 years imprisonment by a military tribunal in a closed trial. She

suffers from high blood pressure, typhoid and malaria in "extremely harsh prison conditions in a country where the independent press and freedom of information have almost disappeared," said the president of

the jury which met at UNESCO on February 16. The prize, worth \$25,000, was named after a Colombian journalist, assassinated in the course of his work. It will be awarded on May 3, World Press Freedom Day.



*«THE CULTURAL DYNAMISM THAT MARKS THE AMERICAS AND THE
CARIBBEAN TODAY... COULD PROVE THE CRUCIBLE FOR WHAT HAS
TO BE A MAJOR GOAL FOR THE THIRD MILLENNIUM:
CULTURAL PLURALISM» (Photo © Luz Maria Martínez Montiel).*

THE SLAVE ROUTE

A MEMORY UNCHAINED

The transatlantic slave trade, which fuelled the world economy during the 18th century, saw the greatest deportation in history (see below & pp.12-13). This must be said out loud, and we must continue examining the evidence of it. This terrible human tragedy, spread out over several centuries, and "legitimized" by racist arguments (p.9), has been pushed back into the depths of our collective memory - as is patently clear, for example, in the treatment it receives in school textbooks (p.8). Yet, the slave trade left a heavy legacy. It shook the African continent's evolution to its foundations, weakening all development there since (p.10). It also produced a cultural dynamism in the Americas and the Caribbean, the value and potential for creativity of which was long denied (p.11). Recognizing and assuming this legacy is very much a subject of current and often bitter debate (p.14). It's also a preliminary condition for a more serene and cooperative relationship between the three continents concerned (p.15), UNESCO's ultimate heading for the Slave Route (p.16).

UNESCO's "Slave Route" project is inspired by French historian Jean-Michel Deveau's comment that the transatlantic slave trade was "*the greatest tragedy in human history because of its extent and the time it lasted.*" A tragedy which wrenched tens of millions of Africans from their villages to be transported to the Americas and the West Indies.

Slavery is a universal phenomenon. The Ancient Greeks made it into a fine art. But the transatlantic trade was special in three ways - its duration (about 400 years), its racial nature (the black African as its main symbol) and its legal organization (the special laws which were drawn up).

This is why the slave trade is so firmly repressed in history and in the subconscious of those involved. The UNESCO project wants to go beyond the legitimate feelings this human commerce arouses and sponsor rigorous scientific research into the root causes, methods and consequences of the trade.

The slave trade is barely present in humanity's collective memory and history books, even African histories. This silence has "*fed the fertile womb which gave birth to the vile beast,*" in the words of German playwright Bertold Brecht. The fight for human rights is a fight for remembrance, for any tragedy hidden away can appear again in different forms.

The project is also an opportunity to rethink Africa, whose major problems of under-development and ethnic conflicts cannot be explained without reference to the unprecedented savagery of the trade.

It is also a chance for Africa to display once more its incredible cultural vitality. African slaves stood up to the violence of the slave trade armed with the living force of their culture, their gods, their legends, values, traditions and rhythms - all of these buried in their souls, beyond the reach of the slave owner, who was only interested in their bodies.

WREAKING HAVOC

But slave trafficking would not have lasted as long as it did without an ideology of moral justifications and legal structures. The ideology was the intellectual argument of racial superiority - the cultural denigration of black people and of Africa which rationalized the sale of human beings as merchandise. The slave trade has now disappeared, but the racism that underpinned it is still wreaking havoc. The judicial structures grew out of the notorious "*Codes noirs,*" (Black Codes) which have been removed from historical and legal memory, but which urgently need to be recalled.

The slave trade was also the biggest forced movement of people in history and

was thus a meeting - or a throwing together of cultures. This intermingling of Africans, Americans Indians and Europeans has produced the cultural dynamism that marks the Americas and the Caribbean today. It could also prove to be the crucible for what has to be a major goal for the third millennium: cultural pluralism, or the ability and the potential of different people, religions and cultures to live side by side.

In modern city suburbs, the vibrant artistic expressions rooted in slave trade interaction in the Americas and the Caribbean, such as rap music, raise the question of cultural pluralism in western societies. UNESCO wants to highlight this pluralism through "The Slave Route" project, which aims to consider the process of identity resulting from this interaction, from the chemistry between the essence of a people and what they receive from the outside, even if through violence.

So UNESCO is promoting a kind of collective catharsis to move things from tragedy to life. To show Europe, Africa, the Americas and the Caribbean travelling the same road together towards a common future - facing a tragedy as one and consciously fertilizing the result in the spirit of a culture of peace.

Doudou DIÈNE
Director, Intercultural Projects

MAINTAINING THE IGNORANCE

Shame, guilt, racism and incognizance: for all these reasons textbooks in Europe, America and Africa deal lightly, and inaccurately with the slave trade.

In France and elsewhere in Europe, the slave trade is considered a marginal subject of study. It is hardly written into school curricula even though it was the motor of the world economy during the 18th century," says French university professor Jean-Michel Deveau, who recently started examining the need for new teaching tools on the slave trade. "What's more, the trade is referred to in a completely ignorant manner. Textbooks are stuffed with stereotypes such as 'the blacks were bought with trinkets'. It's very racist: it insinuates the Africans were complete idiots who sold themselves for worthless objects. Most of all, it's false. The slaves were exchanged according to a highly delineated protocol, for textiles - which represented 70% of slave ships' cargo - iron bars, fire arms, utensils such as metal basins and, in some sectors, for alcohol. Merchandise without value such as glass jewellery and parasols was effectively part of the deal but it served as a kind of bonus. These texts also refer to great African states as 'little kingdoms'.

France is not alone. "In the United Kingdom, the trade is referred to essentially in the context of abolition," adds Deveau. "They may have decreed it first... but they do not say how many expeditions they led, nor that they were the biggest slave traders on the planet."

A WILLINGNESS TO DISGUISE

The under-representation of the slave trade in Portuguese textbooks may appear "less shocking" in the sense that it reflects "a step forward" explains Isabel Castro Henriques, from Lisbon University. "We've caught up with the European norms and that's already something. After having been totally avoided, the slave trade issue appeared about 15 years ago when school-books were revised to get rid of colonial ideology. However, the trade occupies less space than events of Portuguese expansion judged to be more noble, like the great discoveries."

"This gap has its roots in the general ambience surrounding the problem," explains Deveau. "There's a willingness to disguise, there's western guilt. We were slave-holders, torturers and we don't want to admit it. We have to start by breaking

this silence and schools will follow. The trade also goes back to Africa, which is weighed down by racist parameters that we are far from being rid of. Another element: school textbooks follow research. We are very few in Europe to study the trade. In large French ports, university staffs don't want to touch it because it would alienate the local bourgeoisie."

On the American side, if slavery is treated in schools, the trade and its African context remain shadowy areas. It is an



ONE OF THE RARE COMIC STRIPS ON THE SLAVE TRADE, PRODUCED WITH THE NORWEGIAN NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO.

observation as valid for the United States as for Brazil. "Slavery is taught everywhere, with more or less insistence, as a part of American history," explains Joseph Harris from Howard University in Washington. "It's difficult to generalize because the programmes differ according to whether the school is private, religious, public... In most of the black schools, slavery is getting stronger treatment, while in the south, certain teachers rush over it." For Harris, the theme is still "under-represented" because it has been developed out of context: "when you teach a lesson about the settlement of the Europeans in the United States, you speak of their background. It should be the same with the Africans. And yet in the vast majority of schools, we start with slavery as if it signalled the beginning of black history."

In Brazil, researcher Joel Rufino dos Santos stresses that "when teachers want some information on the history of Africa,

they refer to French textbooks. The trade is hardly mentioned. We only speak of slavery, and always in an ideological manner; either blacks were reified - presented as the pawns in a new international division of labour - or children are told that Brazilian slavery was 'soft', less cruel than that of the United States."

Paradoxically, the place occupied by the trade in African education is hardly larger. "It is certainly not with lightness of heart that we speak of these capture wars and the slave traders who brought men, women and children to the coast," recognizes the Guinean historian Djibril Tamsir Niane. The same goes for Senegal, according to historian Mbaye Gueye, "you get the impression that people refuse to speak about it. However Africans must accept to study their history. Because when you carry a past without acknowledging it, everything you take on in the future is cast in doubt."

NO ACCESS

The question is compounded in Africa by "editorial problems and limited means," continues Deveau. "The countries are so poor they can't pay for either authors or books. As a result, textbooks are very old, apart from exceptions like in Benin, which made an effort to revise and produce one or two extracurricular works on the slave trade. Moreover, these countries don't have the means to pay researchers nor to send them to Europe where most of the archives are found. Information provided orally and gathered on tape hasn't yet been used because the priority was to collect it before it disappeared."

"Secondary school teachers, who should benefit from university research, do not have access to it," adds Mbaye Gueye. Very few theses have been published in the various states since their independence, imported books are exorbitantly expensive and libraries don't work."

However "tongues are starting to untie in Africa to speak about this ignominious commerce, and the archives in Europe are opening," concludes Niane. "We are emerging from an era of shame."

Sophie BOUKHARI

RACISM, PHILOSOPHY AND ECONOMICS

Racist ideology was used to legitimize the slave trade, allowing it to flourish and endure. Did the Enlightenment contribute to this or help defeat it ?

Did racism against blacks begin with the slave trade? Did the Enlightenment, the broad rationalist current of thought developed up in 18th century Europe, endorse racial exploitation or did it give birth to the movement to abolish slavery?

"The buying and selling of slaves were ancient customs in Europe," says French philosopher Louis Sala-Molins. "Since the time of Aristotle, there had been the notion in the West of two kinds of people, the free and the unfree. Trading in slaves flourished in medieval Europe, mainly supplying the Muslim rim of the Mediterranean. The word 'slave' came from 'slavus' because Europeans went looking for slaves on the Balkan frontiers of Christendom, among the Slav peoples. But with the transatlantic slave trade, things switched from this relatively local scale and took on an 'industrial' dimension.

"Racism against blacks existed well before the slave trade. There was the curse on Canaan and the descendance from black Africa of he who was condemned by Noah. In the Bible, blacks were doomed to be slaves."

When, for example, the Portuguese began navigating the African coasts, the pope authorized them to take Africans as slaves. In this way, the purchase of people and racism became intertwined in the West.

THEY ARE PEOPLE!

With the Enlightenment of the 18th century came the first attempts at anthropological classification, which relegated blacks to the lowest grade of the human species. But there was also the great movement which led to the French Declaration of Human Rights and the Citizen, which was mostly based on the defence of those peoples oppressed by Europe.

"The rationalist movement developed as a break with religious thought," says Sala-Molins. "The Church debated the matter at length and concluded that Indians and blacks were human beings and had souls. But the dominant language used then was scientific: it was in this period that the first anthropological categories appeared.

"The work of Georges Buffon (the French naturalist, philosopher and writer,

1707-1788), had considerable impact because it was the yardstick of the time. There had always been classification, but Buffon made it 'scientific'. Categories were created because the stories of returning travellers showed there were stages in 'becoming a human being'. This included the idea that the white race was the most perfect and that blacks were right at the bottom, close to the apes."



THE NEGRO - BETWEEN APOLLO AND AN ORANGOUTANG... EXTRACT FROM L'HISTOIRE NATURELLE DU GENRE HUMAIN, BY J.J.VIREY, END OF THE XVIII CENTURY (Photo © Bibliothèque centrale M.N.H.N., Paris).

It was even thought at the time that blacks had sex with apes, a notion which surfaced again recently with the AIDS epidemic.

"The concept of human rights grew out of the spectacle of the conquest of the Americas," says French historian Florence Gauthier. "The Enlightenment was inspired by knowledge from the 16th century on unprecedented crimes against Indians and blacks and the idea of defending the rights of these people and of humanity as a whole.

"The Enlightenment was also a revolt against European domination of the world. This is why blacks latched on to it: they

knew it concerned them. They rose up with copies in hand of the Declaration of Human Rights and the Citizen."

But as so often, events were caused more by economic change than by a movement of ideas. The slave revolts were partly inspired by the ideals of the Enlightenment but in practice were made possible by changes in colonial society.

"In the 18th century, a class of mulattos grew up on the plantations," says Gauthier. "Some were freed men with rights of inheritance and property. These were the 'free coloureds'. They took charge of plantations and competed with the poorer colonists, who had a hard time in the towns.

"This gave rise to a whole range of prohibitions concerning professions, dress and other aspects of life, which foreshadowed the discrimination which has endured into the 20th century. The whites waged war on the free coloureds, seizing their land and killing them off. When the slaves saw their two masters fighting each other, they knew their chance for rebellion had come".

ANOTHER COLONIAL SYSTEM

The abolitionist movements were likewise less the result of generosity than of the economic interests of the colonial powers.

"Abolition was strongest in England. Why was that? Were they more enlightened?" asks Sala-Molins. "Not at all. The English went to India and saw that what was produced on the American plantations could just as well be produced there".

"Europe simply chose another colonial system," confirms Gauthier. Instead of displacing people, they simply set up their production systems locally.

Finally, notes Sala-Molins, "if you compare what the Spaniards said about the Indians in the 16th century, what the Europeans said about the blacks in the 18th and what the French said about North Africans in the 19th or even the 20th, it's as if they'd copied each other. The non-whites are supposedly all the same: lazy, drunk and good-for-nothing.

"Societies notoriously develop ideologies which distrust, keep at a distance and reject those they need the most for their material success.

N.K-D.

CHAIN REACTIONS

The slave trade depopulated Africa, aggravated ethnic conflict and sparked retreat to a subsistence economy - but is it the root of all the continent's problems?

In the 17th century, the population of Black Africa was comparable to that of China," according to the Senegalese historian Mbaye Gueye. "Today, it's half as many." But the argument about depopulation through slavery persists, even if historians agree on the number of people deported: "between 11 and 15 million in the 18th and 19th centuries," according to the French historian Jean-Michel Deveau. "Before that, we don't know, but the major, industrial part of the slave trade began in the 18th century."

And for every slave who made it to the New World, several others died on the way. Gueye estimates maybe eight to 10, Deveau between three and five. And yet more slaves died on African soil than at sea. "The death rate on the ships was 15-18%," says Deveau, "but many were killed during attacks on their villages or while they were being marched to the coast. In some places, women about to be captured, killed their own children."

HORRIFIC

"Then," says Gueye, "there were the diseases brought by the Europeans, like TB, syphilis and smallpox, and the famines caused by the destruction of crops, as well as alcoholism." In addition, the slaves taken were the strong of childbearing age.

In the end, whole regions were depopulated, such as the 200 km strip north of the Gulf of Guinea. "But in some depleted areas, people made up for it by a soaring birth rate" says Deveau. "After the slave trade ended, the rate stayed high and even caused overpopulation. More careful studies are needed to work out the true depopulation. But the dispute is a bit pointless. However many slaves there were, it was still horrific."

Indeed oral tradition recounts what Djibril Tamsir Niane of Guinea calls the "very poorly documented tragedy" which unfolded in the continent. It depicts a world in the throes of great movement, with "carriers, middlemen and brokers milling about the ports and filling the roads. The stories talk only of war, famine and fear. In the Sudan-Sahel region at the end of the 19th century, every village had been laid waste at least two or three times or else moved

or surrounded with walls. This fear which is part of African psychology must be understood. People only went around in groups. Fields got smaller with people scared to be too far away and alone. This is the origin of the retreat to a subsistence economy."

For Gueye, "this was when ethnicity, which is still at the root of many wars and conflicts in Africa, took hold." He thinks that by sowing discord among the kingdoms and local chiefs, either by giving them arms or bribing them, the Europeans ruined the political system that was developing. "Before the Europeans arrived, the Songhai and Monomotapa empires and those in Mali, Oyo, Benin and Congo were political centres developing into viable multi-ethnic states. There was enough land for everyone and the ruler's authority was generally accepted. Slavery existed but had the role of integrating delinquents, people without family and victims of disasters."

Niane adds that "from the 16th century and for the next 400 years, the kings fought each other, because to get European goods and weapons, you had to supply slaves. A vicious circle developed. In West Africa, some groups split into sub-ethnicities, dialects proliferated and the caste system grew stronger. A person's only recourse was to take refuge in the family or another such closed group."

The British historian Robert Law agrees that "in some areas conflicts between

groups began with the slave trade. Even today, people know who the raiders were and who were their victims (see box). But the many ethnic conflicts had nothing to do with the slave trade. The Hausas massacred the Ibos in Nigeria in 1966, but they had not come into contact with each other before the 20th century."

The Portuguese historian Isabel Castro Henriques thinks too that it is "hard to say that the slave trade caused the complete disintegration of Africa's societies and economy, if only because you can't generalize about the continent as a whole. Clearly, the balance of power was altered, bringing about the fall of the coastal kingdoms, but powerful new political groups built on the slave trade, rose in their place.

"However, some structures like the Lunda empire, in present-day Angola, survived and until the end of the 19th century, the Portuguese did not dare venture into the interior."

"In some areas," says Law, "the slave trade gave rise to strong states like Dahomey and an unprecedented militarization of society." All this has left its mark, he says. "But poverty in Africa has much more to do with the collapse of raw material prices than with the slave trade. Unless you admit that the slave trade put Africa in a weak position, forcing them to submit to the colonial system."

S.B.

"WE LIVE WITH IT EVERYDAY"

"The legacy of slavery is real in every African country where slavery was practised." Historian Akosua Perbi know what she is talking about. Not only has she written a thesis on indigenous slavery, but she lives in a country where it continues to poison relations. "As long as there is no problem", she says "then we consider ourselves to be 'one people' and the identity of former slaves remains a family secret. But the moment something goes wrong with a land claim for example, you have to show who is really who. You can read 40 pages into a land claim to suddenly find that the holder's great grandmother was bought and therefore never really owned the land."

Perbi points to her own family experience. "A few years ago, my uncle was asked to be a chief in my hometown in Ashanti country. Each of the four royal houses takes turn to appoint a chief. My uncle was selected by our family but the other three protested. For four years, there was no peace. They even set his car on fire. He took his case all the way up to the National House of Chiefs. 'No!', they said. 'Your pedigree is a problem.' In fact, his great great grandmother was bought in a slave market in the 1800s. So my uncle had to step down. We are talking about something that happened almost 200 years ago."

WITH BARE HANDS AND SOCIAL CEMENT

In the New World, the slaves moulded mixed cultures to find the strength to survive, integrate and resist. They continue to be a well-spring of creativity.

Ripped from their ancestral lands, branded by the foreigner with a hot iron, shipped to the other side of the ocean and condemned to live in a concentration camp universe ruled by the law of profit. Where did the slaves get the strength to survive in the New World? It would be too simple to just state that their African culture allowed them to resist.

"I don't think we can say that the African cultures were in themselves an instrument of resistance," says Laënnec Hurbon, a specialist in Haitian voodoo and Caribbean cultures. "Rather, they transformed themselves in order to produce something new." It's an opinion shared by Brazilian Joel Rufino Dos Santos. "Culture is essentially dynamic. From this point of view, the concept of cultural resistance is deceptive. In Brazil, the complex whole of African cultures was more the founding element of an original process of civilization than a factor of resistance. During the entire slavery period to abolition in 1888, there was a permanent, complex and marvellous interaction between different cultures."

SURPRISE AND SUFFERING

"In the mind of the African who doesn't know where he's going, many things occur during the voyage," continues Hurbon. "He emits a cry of astonishment, surprise and suffering, to quote the Martinique writer Edouard Glissant, translating the fact that already, at this stage, a new culture is germinating. Arriving with bare hands, without the symbols or the material support of their cultural systems, the slaves were obliged to create."

As soon as they were offloaded, they were dispersed in such a way as to forget their origins. "Ethnic groups were systematically mixed by the masters." Thus began new, intercultural relations between Africans. Then came the meeting with the Indians. "There was for example, the learning of their ecological system." And thirdly: the forced contact with European cultures and Christianity. "This enormous intermixing and creative work began to take root from the 17th century. It is then that Afro-American and Caribbean cultures were truly born. These new cultural and religious systems, capable of combining

multiple elements without highlighting their contradictions, provided the slaves with a kind of social cement that gave them the strength to confront the institution of slavery."

"Religions played an essential role as a factor of survival, integration and resistance," adds Benin's Elisée Soumonni. "A pact with the ancestors gave the force to confront suffering. Religion provided the means to explain events, to find a place in the world and energy to live," confirms Dos Santos. "Voodoo was a place of restructuring for the different ethnic groups on the ground," adds Hurbon. "It integrated different elements of Christianity and of the Indian world. It was a cultural



INTEGRATING A MYRIAD OF RELIGIONS AND CULTURES VIA VOODOO
(Photo © GAMMA-Liaison/G. Smith).

creation during which the slaves learnt to express their suffering, their oppression, their uprooting from Africa. It gave them the possibility to symbolize this rupture and to initiate a new history, and swing from passivity to the offensive. It was during a voodoo ceremony that the slaves of Saint-Domingue vowed to keep the launch date of the 1791 insurrection a secret."

For Hurbon, the Afro-American cultures hold a particular place in humanity's common cultural heritage, because they were born in the fight for freedom. "The slaves expressed their human dignity via the cultures they created."

These cultures also owe this place to their rich growth and development since. "It's why a project like the Slave Route should not confine itself to historical aspects, but examine the cultural developments that resulted from the trade. They are often thought of as well known but that is not the case," adds Soumonni. This ignorance, stresses Hurbon, has been voluntarily orchestrated by modern states, which, continuing in the tradition of the slave-trading nations, have scorned cultural developments in order to minimize the contribution of black communities. But this is beginning to change. As proof, Soumonni points to a tremendous revival in African studies at American universities.

rites rhythms and myths

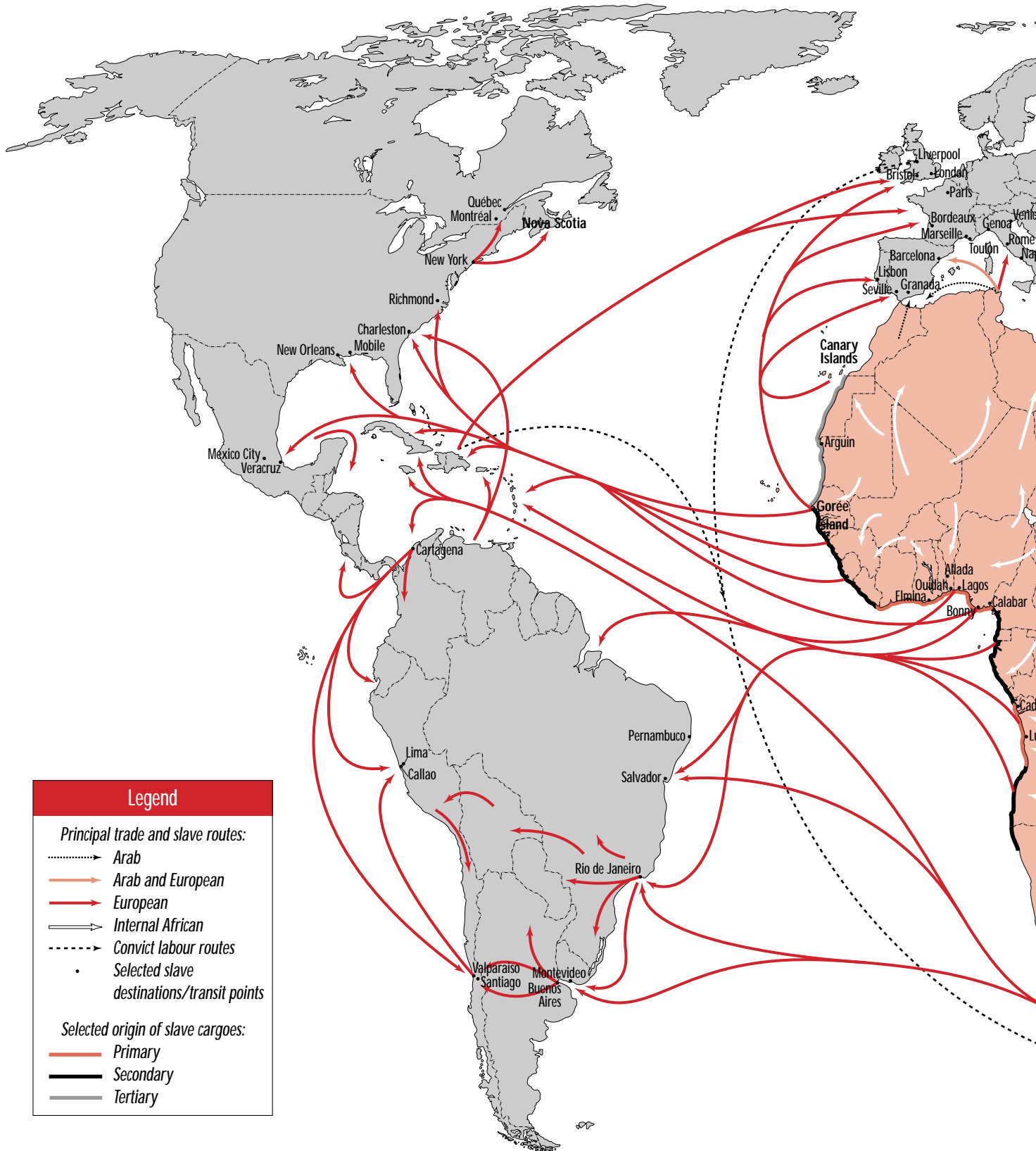
"We are discovering that the mixed systems were important and they still are to the extent that African cultures are rehabilitated and better known," continues Hurbon. "Greater cultural pluralism is expressed today in the Caribbean. In Latin America, the Catholic and Protestant churches are less hegemonous and admit new religious movements of Afro-American style." In particular, we are starting to recognize that these cultures were the matrix of innumerable artistic creations, inspired by their rites, rhythms and myths. Martinique novelist Patrick Chamoiseau put it this way recently in the French weekly *Le Nouvel Observateur*: "Music, culinary art, dance, literature, visual arts - an 'archipeligan' way of thinking that goes beyond existing systems."

"For decades," deplors Hurbon, "we have only wanted to see an archaism, a primitivism incompatible with modernity. But the more that these systems can be practised in a free manner and tolerated, the greater the chance that they will evolve. The individual can acquire a critical vision that demands modernity through education, the political process and the progressive democratization of societies. But in no case should a unique cultural model be adopted. Humanity's wealth, after all, lies in the possibility that 100 flowers, on the contrary, may bloom."

S.B.

THE SLAVE ROUTES

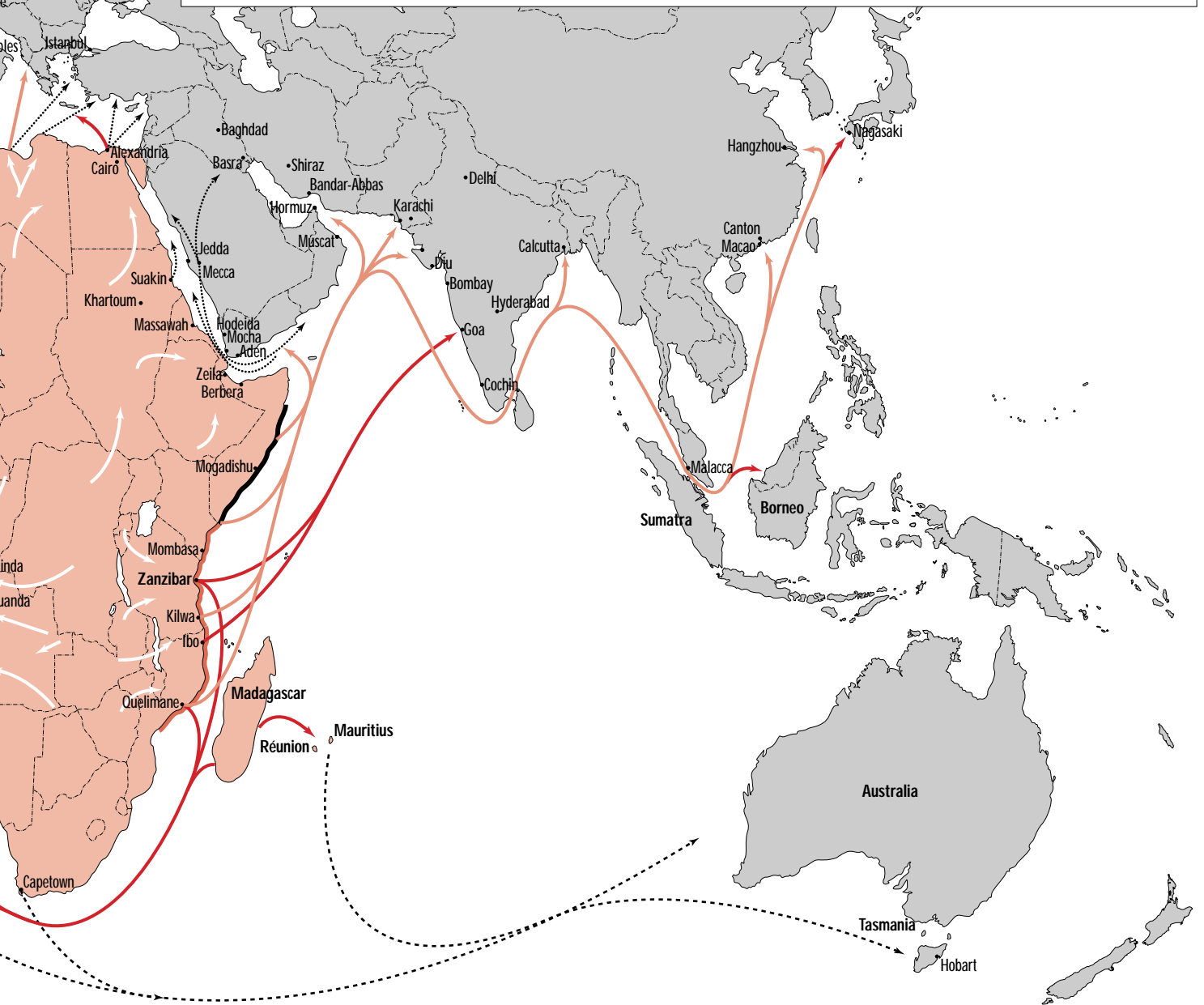
This map shows the extent of the deportation of enslaved African populations up until 1873, when the final treaty abolishing the East African trade came into force.



In 1873, the final treaty abolishing the slave trade on Africa's east coast was signed by England and the Sultan of Zanzibar. This map shows the main sea routes taken by Arab, European and American traders. The debarkation and settlement zones are indicated as well as the ports transited by African crews, locations of slaves taken on home leave to England and France by slave-holders and military officers, and points in England and Canada where slaves were taken following the American War for Independence in 1783.

The overland routes in Africa led to the embarkation ports on the coast. Those slaves who came from the north of the continent via the Sahara Desert were normally shipped to Arab or Muslim areas across the Mediterranean Sea; those from the northeast to Asia via the Red Sea; those from the East African coast, to Asia and the Americas; those from the West African coast, to Europe and the Americas via the Atlantic Ocean.

A small number of Africans were also among the convicts sent to Australia from England, the West Indies, Mauritius and South Africa during the 19th century.



THE DIFFICULTIES OF SAYING SORRY

A proposal to make a formal apology to black Americans whose ancestors suffered under slavery proves too hot to handle.

Forty acres and a mule. That was the package promised to freed slaves after the Civil War in the United States. But like so many promises, it largely went unkept - but not forgotten.

In June 1997, Congressman Tony Hall of Ohio proposed a simple resolution: "*the Congress apologizes to African Americans whose ancestors suffered as slaves under the Constitution and laws of the United States until 1865*" (when slavery was formally abolished throughout the union). Hall's reasoning was clear: "*when a brother wrongs a brother, he apologizes. That is the foundation for beginning again. That is the price for restoring lost trust... It has been 135 years since slavery ended. Since that time, Congress has taken proud strides forward, including civil rights laws. But they are not enough...*"

However, as many were quick to point out, it's easy to say 'I'm sorry'. Who needs another empty gesture? But "*if it was so meaningless,*" asked Hall, "*why has the resolution erupted into a firestorm of controversy throughout the nation?*"

DIVIDED OPINIONS

Indeed, the resolution sparked a charged debate over collective and individual guilt. On one side, Americans harked back to their immigrant ancestors whom, they said, bore no connection to the slave owners or legislators responsible for legitimizing the trade.

The opposite side saw the black community continuing to suffer from the legacy of slavery with glaring inequalities in income, education, employment and housing. They reminded that collective apologies were nothing new in the United States. Just one month before, the president apologized for the Tuskegee experiment in which government doctors used about 600 black men as guinea pigs in the 1930s and 40s by not treating them for syphilis in order to study the disease.

According to a Gallup poll, two out of three whites objected to a formal apology, while two out of three blacks supported it. But the issue was not so simple.

"*The Congressional Black Caucus does not have an official position - and we should not have one,*" said Congresswoman Maxine Waters of California. "*We*

should carry on as proud African-Americans demanding justice and equality ... To apologize or not to apologize - it is for white America to answer."

Many civil rights groups like the National Urban League and the United Church of Christ (UCC), were concerned that the controversy surrounding the apology would overshadow the real issues. "*It's a little difficult to take seriously all the talk about apology from a nation which is quickly retreating from the closest thing we have had to restitution - affirmative action,*" wrote Bernice Powell Jackson of the UCC Commission for Racial Justice (*The Civil Rights Journal*, July 14, 1997).



IN SAN FRANCISCO A MARCH AGAINST PROPOSITIONS TO END AFFIRMATIVE ACTION (Photo © GAMMA LIAISON/Darcy Padilla).

Affirmative action refers to legislative measures ensuring that minority groups are appropriately represented in universities, government and business. Although under fierce attack in state legislatures and a republican-controlled Congress, it is still considered a cornerstone for reducing inequalities by many civil rights groups representing the black community. For these groups, if the Congress really wanted to atone for the sins of slavery, it could begin by taking the steps needed to reduce those inequalities. After all, when the government apologized for the forced internment of Japanese Americans during the Second World War, the victims were awarded \$20,000 each.

"*Reparations are probably politically problematic,*" wrote Jackson of the UCC. "*But if Congress is serious about apology, then restitution might take the form of*

college scholarships, job training programmes, prison intervention and alternative programmes."

But the talk of reparations transformed the apology issue into a defence lawyer's worst nightmare - a Pandora's box of indemnities. How do you convert suffering of such a massive yet diffuse scale into dollars and cents?

President Clinton originally expressed interest in the apology, but later steered clear of the issue. "*Slavery has left deep scars on our nation,*" he said. "*Together we will continue to address these issues, but at this time, I do not believe that an apology or a discussion of reparations is*

the best way to move the country forward on this issue." Instead, Mr Clinton focused on his new Race Initiative with a commission set up to find ways of offering "*real opportunities to Americans who work hard, but who continue to face barriers of discrimination based on race. We want to highlight successful examples of Americans coming together across racial lines to overcome the divisive legacies of our past.*"

In the meanwhile, the proposed apology sits in a judiciary committee, awaiting a hearing which is unlikely to take place. According to a spokesperson at Congressman Hall's office, the resolution will probably be reintroduced next year. And what is another 12 months to apologize for the sufferings of several generations.

Amy OTCHET

ALL IN THE SAME BOAT

A chapter of Norway's history has resurfaced with the discovery of the wreck of a slave ship off its coast.



Were Scandinavia's slave traders just twisted hippies? A silly question, of course. Yet the words "peace" and "love" were the only two found in the wreck of the *Fredensborg*, one of the ships chartered by the Royal Danish West Indies and Guinea Company. They appear on a seal around an image of a dove with an olive branch in its beak. Almost a message to future generations.

The students in Norway belonging to UNESCO's Associated Schools Project (4,250 schools in 137 countries) have received the message loud and clear. "They decided to make the seal the logo of the Norwegian contribution to the Slave Route project they are involved in," says Mari Hareide, secretary-general of the Norwegian National Commission for UNESCO, who is coordinating the project, which was started after the discovery of the *Fredensborg*.

A TRICONTINENTAL TRADER

This ship is the reason for Norway's interest in the Slave Route. It sailed from the kingdom of Denmark (which then included Norway) to the Gold Coast and the Virgin Islands in the Caribbean (sold to the United States in 1917 for \$25 million). It left with European goods, used to buy slaves in Africa who were then brought to the island plantations and exchanged for colonial products. To return to Copenhagen, it had to first go up to Norway to benefit from the winds. But in 1768, it sank in a storm off the coast of Norway with a cargo of sugar, rum, elephant tusks and two slaves.

Three divers identified the wreck in September 1974 and brought up the tusks. "It is one of the best documents on slave ships ever found. We have all the records in Denmark. So we know exactly who was on board, how many trips were made and more." The divers were so impressed that they did further research, which last year resulted in an exhibition and two books, one of them in cartoon form. Norway has also earmarked three million dollars over five years (1997-2001) for the Slave Route project, which is exceptional for a country which only played a small part in the trade compared to other European nations.

"We organized two seminars on the slave trade and invited teachers, students and university people from Ghana and St Croix, the biggest of the Virgin Islands to come and stay with Norwegian families," says Hareide. "The first part of the project involves using the Associated Schools to spread more information about the slave trade in the classroom and encourage children to talk about it and come to terms with it. It is also a way of learning about other societies. A school in St Croix is corresponding by email with one in Norway to write a little newspaper together. It's like a catharsis. Until very recently, we never dared to see what the slave trade really was. We also want to make young people look at modern forms of slavery."

Adults have a lot to learn too from these exchanges. "A Ghanaian teacher who was here last April is still in touch with her Norwegian colleagues." She wants to take advantage of the International Year of the Ocean to study sea routes at the time of the slave trade and their effects on human settlement. Contacts between university

Ghana. I went for the first time in January. It was refreshing. Actually, I was touched. I've been teaching African history for the past 17 years and for the first time I got to experience the thing that I had read about. In the Akan language, a slave is called 'donko'. When I said this in St Croix, an elderly lady sang a song to me in English with the word in it. She was fascinated when she learned what donko meant. Another teacher, from the island of St John, told me that where he came from, cola nuts were called 'bisaa'. Another Akan word. And the food! I ate a chicken soup that tasted just like it does at home."

Through Norway, Africa is discovering America. Such cultural exchanges will increase in the course of the Norwegian project, which includes the holding of tri-continental festivals. Another way is by restoring cultural monuments. Some Ghanaian coastal forts, which still have Danish names, may be restored and become places of remembrance. "We must accept the past instead of trying to forget it," says Perbi.

THE
FREDENSBORG -
A VERY
CONCRETE
REMEMBRANCE
(Photo ©
Leif Svalesen,
Norway).



teachers are also fruitful. "At one of the two seminars I was invited to," says Ghanaian historian Akosua Perbi, "I told the real story of the slave trade in Ghana. The Norwegians are going to use some of that information for their teaching materials. I was also able to correct a few mistakes in their cartoon book."

Perbi also made new friends. "In Norway, I met George Tyson, a colleague from the Virgin Islands, who invited me to present my work on internal slavery in

In St Croix, attitudes are changing. After repressing their history, the islanders are now keen to discover it and are doing genealogical research. "To be the descendent of a slave has never been something to be proud of. But to have survived the crossing, to have freed oneself and to have begun a new life is something honourable. We have to build this sense of pride. That is what many of us are working on now."

S.B.

A THREE-PRONGED APPROACH

Historical truth, remembrance and intercultural dialogue form the basis of the Slave Route project, which also aims to contribute to building a culture of peace.

To highlight the original causes and the practices of the transatlantic slave trade, the project's 43-member international scientific committee has recommended giving priority to studying documentary sources and preparing classroom material.

The question of sources was dealt with at three meetings of the committee - in Alcalá de Henares (Spain) on "*The Iberian records of the slave trade*" (October 1995), in Conakry (Guinea) on "*Oral tradition and the slave trade*" (March 1997) and in Copenhagen (Denmark) on "*European records of the slave trade*" (February 1996).

SILENCE

With money from the Norwegian aid agency NORAD, UNESCO's education sector, and especially the coordination unit of the Associated Schools Project, has drawn up a detailed plan to mobilize the network's 4,250 schools in 137 countries and prepare teaching material. UNESCO is supporting work already done in this respect, especially by the French town of La Rochelle.

The importance of preserving the memory of the slave trade can be illustrated by the remark of Nobel Prizewinner Elie Wiesel that "*the executioner kills twice, the second time by silence.*" It is this silence - historical, scientific and moral - on the tragedy of the slave trade which is perhaps the biggest challenge of the Slave Route project.

The hope is that, by being studied, the topic will acquire a universal quality and feature in the history books of every country, alongside all the other major tragedies of human history. UNESCO

therefore attaches great importance to the visibility of the project and it has already been widely reported on in the press and the audiovisual media.

The project has accordingly led to the launching, with the World Tourism Organization, of a joint cultural tourism programme on the Slave Route to help the



ABOUT TO BE SOLD, A SLAVE IS LEFT
IN A NET IN BRAZZAVILLE
(THE REPUBLIC OF CONGO) (Photo ©
Musée de l'Homme/R.P. Leray).

countries involved to identify, restore and promote all the places, buildings and physical symbols of the transatlantic slave trade. The implementation of this programme is being carried out in close cooperation with African culture and tourism ministries and with the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

To encourage remembrance, UNESCO is also setting up, notably with the backing of NORAD, a number of slavery museums in countries which have asked for them, including Haiti (the initiator of the Slave Route project), Cuba and Angola.

The project's contribution to a culture of peace is its investigation and publicizing of the tragedy of the slave trade and of the interactions it produced in the Americas and the Caribbean. This approach is reflected very well in the title a group of intellectuals in the French port city of Nantes gave to a recent exhibition on the slave trade. They called it "*The Chains of Memory*". The chain, or metal ring, symbolizes the iron which keeps the slave a prisoner but also the deep and complex link the slave trade forged between Africa, Europe, the Americas and the Caribbean.

This is why one of the key aspects of the project is the highlighting of the extraordinary process of "multi-culturalization" which the slave trade generated in the Americas and the Caribbean.

DIASPORA

Several big events and meetings have already taken place: in Port-au-Prince (Haiti) on the slave uprising of August 22, 1791, in the colony of St Domingue; in Pointe-à-Pitre (Guadeloupe) on the theme of "*between histories and memories on both sides of the slave route*"; and in Santiago (Cuba) on cultural interaction, national identity and society.

Conferences on the African diaspora, where proceedings will be published, are planned for Brazil, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic.

Doudou DIÈNE

TO FIND OUT MORE ...

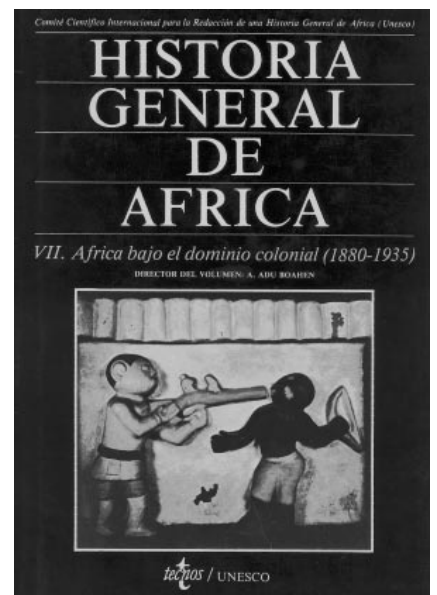
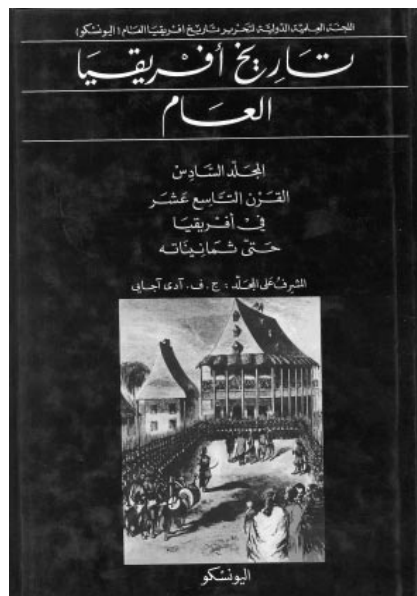
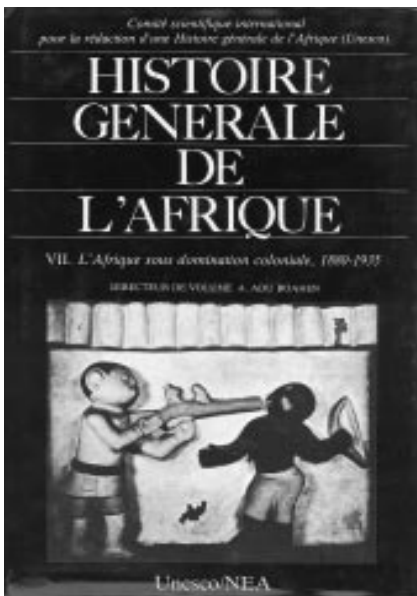
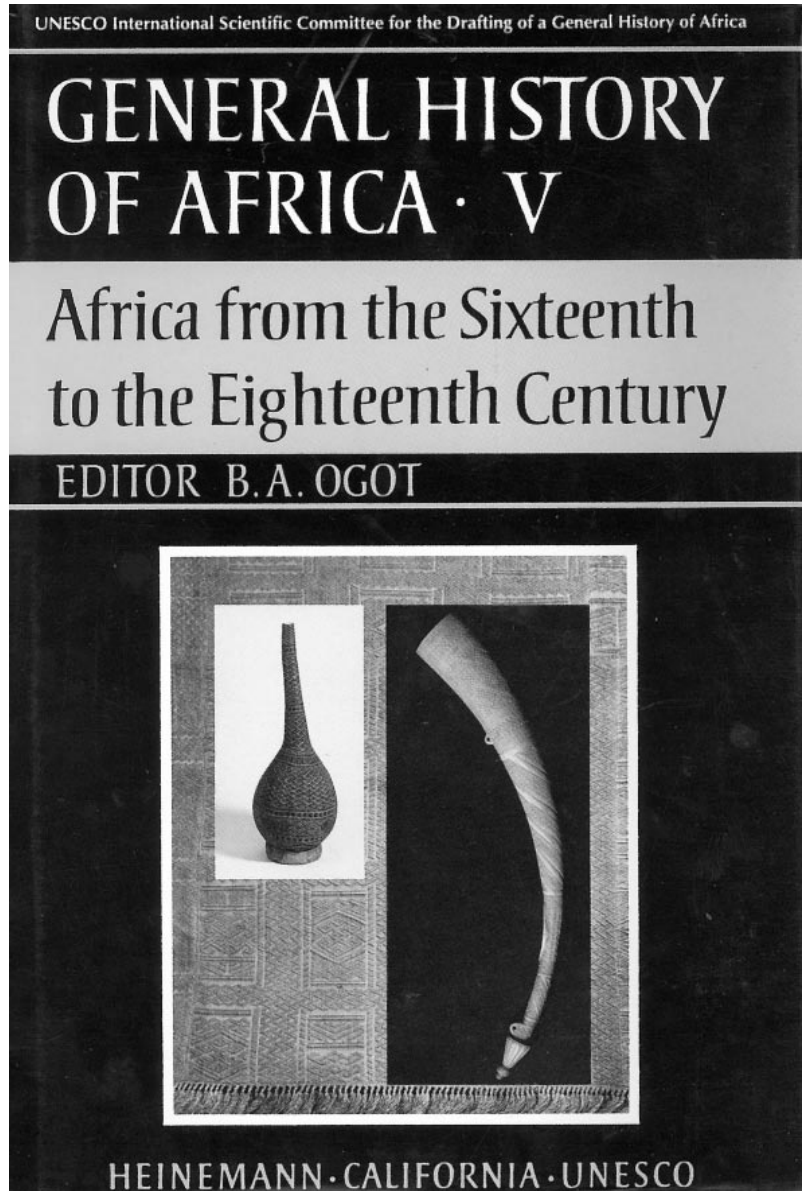
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GENERAL HISTORY OF THE CARIBBEAN: Slave societies are the focus of vol. III (1997) analyzing demographics, social structures, forms of repression and resistance as well as the creolization and pluralism of the 18th and 19th centuries.

THE UNESCO COURIER: "*Slavery - A crime without punishment*", October 1994.

DIOGENE: n°. 179 Vol. 46/2-1998, is on the routes and traces of the slaves.

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THE POWER OF CULTURE

● Ten **YOUNG VOLUNTEERS** from the Basque Country (Spain) will join technical assistance and humanitarian projects in Latin America and Asia under an agreement signed by UNESCO and the Autonomous Government of the Basque Country on February 24.

"The people of the Basque Country are few but solidary, and we place at the service of the world, through UNESCO, the best trained youth of our history," said Juan José Ibarretxe, the president of the Basque Government, which is financing the volunteers' participation.

● Some **1,000 PEACE PACKS** are on their way to the Associated Schools Network operating in 147 countries. The colourful back-packs include: posters on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, tolerance, booklets on the UN and UNESCO, and kids' views on "What is a Good Teacher?". There is also a video on the seven Culture of Peace Festivals held for kids around the world and fun materials like a mask and pencil puppets.



(Photo UNESCO/M. Claude).

The packs are part of an experimental project - the organizers hope to extend with supplementary sponsorship.

UNESCO SOURCES

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● **Culture provides us with society's building blocks, and government policies need to take this into account.**

● In India, an estimated ten million people - mostly women - work in craft industries. Japan boasts more than half a million professional artists, and "cultural industries" such as book publication and audiovisual production, account for an estimated 2% of the country's GNP.

● In 1996, French families spent 182.5 billion francs in the cultural sector, which employs more than 412,000 people (not including teachers employed by the ministry of culture or those employed in local cultural services). Between 1950 and 1990, the number of Americans employed in "artistic occupations" increased by 400%. And a recent study in the British city of Manchester showed that every job created in the culture sector there generates another 2.8 in the service sector.

● Worldwide, an estimated 100 million people live outside their country of origin, many of them settling in countries whose cultural identities are radically different from their homelands. In Los Angeles, for example, some 180 languages are spoken, and more than a third of Australia's population originates from non-English speaking cultural backgrounds.

● Despite what might be seen as a "new cosmopolitanism" some 40% of the 40 current "major armed conflicts" listed in *Ploughshares Armed Conflicts Report 1997*, are described as "state formation wars" in which "ethnicity, communal identity and religion" play a prominent part.

A LOW PRIORITY

● These figures provide an indication of the central role culture plays in our lives. The report of the UN/UNESCO World Commission on Culture and Development (*Our Creative Diversity*) argues that it is one of the main keys to successful development - human and economic - touching, if not shaping, virtually every aspect of our lives. Yet, for most of the world's governments it is still a low priority. Where cultural policy does exist, it is usually focused on the arts and conservation. The Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development, to be held in Stockholm (Sweden) from March 30 to April 2, has set itself the goal of changing this.

● A follow up to the Commission on Culture and Development, the conference will bring together delegates from around the world to look at how governments can better fulfil their roles in this domain. The aim is an ambitious one in a globalizing, increasingly multicultural world, where the state and national identities are under challenge, and small government is seen as the way to go.

HANDMADE

● In the United States for example, "many would say the very idea of cultural policy is not appropriate ... that it runs counter to the fundamental individualism that identifies the American way of life," says Alberta Arthurs, the former director of arts and humanities at the Rockefeller Foundation. "Cultural policy (in the U.S) is handmade. It arises from local interests, new arrivals and old beliefs...it is made out of a diversity of organizations across the country." Much of the support for arts and cultural institutions in the United States, for example, comes from the non-profit sector, while questions concerning such equally cultural issues as the recognition and use of the languages of large migrant communities in schools and even on streets signs, are often decided by municipal authorities.

● France is at the other end of the scale. It has a minister of culture at the head of a strong ministry, whose objectives are the promotion of "creation, conservation, training, the democratization of culture and cultural development," explains Jacques Renard, the former head of cabinet for the minister of culture. "The ministry provides the articulation between the arts and the public." Up until recently, culture in France was considered a sector apart. Its "reintegration" with the economy still fuels debate. "Culture cannot be submitted to the laws of the market place" argues Renard. "A balance must be struck between the economic imperatives of the free market and the artistic autonomy required for creation and dissemination of culture." This thinking also applies to the promotion and recognition of France's regional identities, but less so to its immigrants, who are more or less encouraged to become as "French" as possible.

While France is still overcoming its reservations about mixing culture and economics, Thailand's cultural policy, for years, has been directed solely at improving GNP, with culture viewed as a commodity to be measured in dollars and cents. "Up until the crash of the financial markets and the ensuing recession, cultural policy was based on materialistic development, such as the number of tourists visiting the country," says Chakrabort

convincing of culture's importance, starting with President Nelson Mandela who believes that "culture should be the language that heals and transforms the nation."

"Under the apartheid regime the state used culture as a means to keep people apart, and policy was solely aimed at promoting the cultural values of the white population," explains Dr Amareswar Galla, a former advisor to the Arts and Culture Task Group in South Africa, and director of the

CULTURE CONTRIBUTING TO DEVELOPMENT (Photo © HOA-QUI/ E. Valentin).



Chitrabongs, the deputy secretary-general of Thailand's National Culture Commission, which comes under the umbrella of the education ministry. "This very limited vision led to a false and unnatural representation of Thailand's culture. The crash, by bringing an end to a certain number of illusions, provided an opportunity for culture workers to be heard. There has been a lot of political and academic pressure brought to bear on the powers that be, to make them understand the importance of culture in terms of social development. The goal now is to integrate cultural policy into every aspect of national development, from education to security.

"We have launched our own decade for national cultural development, based on UNESCO's decade of the same name (1987-1997), and although our budget is modest, it is increasing by about 20% annually. We are also working on an index of gross national happiness - to counter the focus on production and economic success - that takes people's welfare into account, and moving away from the idea that low incomes mean under-development."

South Africa is also changing the direction of its cultural policy. Few there need

Australian Centre for Cultural Diversity Research and Development at the University of Canberra. "On the other hand, the South African freedom movement, used art as one of the most powerful tools of resistance. Immediately after the elections the South African government initiated a process unprecedented anywhere else in the world, of comprehensively reviewing cultural policy."

South Africa's government "clearly sees that cultural policy is its responsibility", says Galla, "the national policy providing for the development of regional approaches." However, much remains to be done at the local level he says, to "genuinely ground culture in community development."

This will also be one of the messages from the Stockholm conference. To be effective and to fully bear its fruit, cultural policy cannot be left to the narrow confines of market forces, or valued only by culture's contribution to a country's GNP. It cannot be dictated by powerful minorities and it is not the preserve of a social elite. It is the business of everyone.

S.W.

▼ "SOUTH-EAST EUROPE: A CROSS-ROAD OF CULTURES" was the theme of a conference organized at UNESCO, February 9 to 10, by the permanent delegations of the region's nine countries: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Turkey. Some 30 historians and sociologists analyzed links between the peoples of the Balkans during discussions on the "Roads of Faith, Roads of Trade", "European thought" and "Perceptions of the Other". The aim was to help heal wounds caused by the region's violent conflicts.

● Mystery and danger enshroud the VALLEY OF JARS, an archaeological site dating back to 300 BC with megalithic funerary jars weighing as much as a tonne in northern Laos. Archaeological excavations ended there in the 1930s as conflict erupted. Three million tonnes of bombs pummeled the area and today the site is littered with undetonated B-52 bombs and land-mines of various origins. During a visit to Laos on February 2, the Director-General appealed for the valley's restoration and excavation, and contributed \$50,000 as seed funding.

● Attention artists less than 35 years old seeking to train abroad in visual arts, music, dance, creative writing, theatre arts, textile design or media art! A booklet from the International Fund for the Promotion of Culture (IFPC) presents 58 BURSARIES for 1998-1999 in 31 countries. Information is provided on the nature of the host institution and the bursary, details concerning eligibility and applications.

➔ Available through the IFPC

A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

● Four hundred hours of film shot during UNESCO's three international scientific **SILK ROADS** expeditions have gone into the making of a documentary produced by UNESCO, ARTE - a Franco-German television station - and NDR, a German broadcasting organization. "Sur la piste des caravanes" ('On the Trail of the Caravans') was televised by ARTE on February 19, exploring the legendary route linking the Chinese city of Xian and Constantinople on Europe's doorstep.



(Photo © J.F. Baumard).

A version for international distribution is in preparation.

▼ The action film hero *Terminator* "seems to represent the characteristics which children think are necessary to cope with difficult situations," according to *The UNESCO Global Study on MEDIA VIOLENCE*, a preview of which was presented by the Director-General on February 19.

Five thousand 12-year-olds in 23 countries took part in the survey which will be released at the end of the year. It notes that an average hour of television programming contains five to ten episodes of violence, most of them presented as either thrilling and/or rewarding. With 91% of the children surveyed having access to a television set at home, they spend at least 50% longer sitting in front of the box than doing any other out-of-school activity, including homework.

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● Wild plants contribute more to our well-being than realized, and the price paid for ignoring them will be costly.

● The new edition of the World Conservation Union's *Red Data Book* of threatened plants, due out in April, lists more than 33,500 species. "This means that more than 13% of the world's estimated quarter of a million plant species are in danger," says Sir Ghillean Prance, the director of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew (U.K) and chairman of DIVERSITAS, an international programme of biodiversity science research, launched with UNESCO's support in 1991.

● Deforestation, urbanization, uncontrolled collection and neglect are among the main causes for the situation, which, if allowed to continue could cost us dearly. How many of these plants, for example, hold genetic secrets that could help feed the world's growing population? How many contain material that could be developed as medicines to treat the many diseases afflicting humanity?

● "The problem is that we don't know," says DIVERSITAS' Vernon Heywood, who chaired a meeting on the conservation of wild plants held at UNESCO headquarters from February 11-13. An educated guess though would be that the potential of wild plants to contribute to people's health and well-being is enormous.

● FOOD AND MEDICINE

● For a start, traditional societies everywhere rely heavily on wild plants for substitute food crops in times of shortages, building, weaving and craft materials as well as animal fodder and fuels. In Africa 70 to 80% of the population relies on traditional medicines, and medicinal plants play a major role in a healthcare system, where "modern" doctors are few and access to "modern" medicines extremely limited.

● Then, the staples that feed us are limited to about 40 crops worldwide, which are grown from high-yielding species or cultivars that have been developed for industrial-age intensive agriculture. As they have been perfected, these new cultivars have become more and more genetically uniform, thus increasingly vulnerable to epidemics of pests and diseases. The dangers of such uniformity have long been apparent. In the late 1840s in Ireland, for example, one million people starved to death when disease wiped out the 1845 potato

crop - then highly uniform because it was descended from a small number of plants.

● In 1943 in India, brown spot disease destroyed the rice crop and started the "great Bengal famine", while wheat stem rust took most of the hard wheat crop in the United States in 1953 and 1954.

● RESISTANCE

● Wild species help overcome these menaces. The brown planthopper sucks the sap out of rice plants and transmits a viral disease called grassy stunt. It struck the rice fields of South and Southeast Asia with a vengeance in the 1960s and 1970s: in Indonesia alone three million tons of rice - enough to feed nine million people for a year - were lost between 1974 and 1977. The solution to the contagion menacing the world's number one food was found in *one* wild species related to rice, collected in a waterlogged field in the state of Uttar Pradesh in India, which contained a gene resistant to the virus. That gene is found today in every high-yielding variety of rice grown in tropical Asia.

● Many basic fruits and vegetables owe their high nutritional content and flavour to their wild relatives. The modern tomato, owes its high vitamin count to a gene introduced from a rare wild species in Peru with fruit the size of small cherries. From wild pineapples in Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil, comes increased acidity, high sugar content and a fuller flavour. And wild relatives of strawberries from Canada, California and Chile have provided the genes to dramatically boost commercial yields.

● "There are also many potentially new crops that could be developed from wild plants," says Sir Ghillean. "New products for instance, are being developed from quinoa and amaranth in the Amazon." Not to mention the medical possibilities, which pharmaceutical companies twigged to some time ago. They have been scouring sites around the world in search of plants that may lead to the development of new treatments, in some cases contributing to their extinction.

● *Prunus africana* for example is a tree which grows in montane forests throughout central, north-eastern and eastern Africa and Madagascar. Its bark contains

active compounds to treat prostate hyper-trophy. As a result, a commercial market has developed leading to extensive debarking and destruction of trees in the wild. *Prunus africana* is now considered by CITES (the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species) as a species that, if not endangered, requires close observation and controlled harvesting.

Similarly, reports South African ethnobotanist Tony Cunningham in *African medicinal plants* (UNESCO 1993), "the

alone - even the diets of the poorest are not just made up of staples..."

The advent of the Convention on Biological Diversity - one of the conventions that came out of the Rio Earth Summit of 1992 - has at least helped to identify the problem, "but no-one is very clear on just what the next steps should be," says Heywood.

The February meeting, organized by DIVERSITAS, UNESCO, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute



A TRADITIONAL MEDICAL PRACTITIONER AT WORK IN LESOTHO (Photo © Béatrice Petit).

American National Cancer Institute collected 27.2 tons of plant material from *Maytenus buchananii*, a shrub from the Shimba Hills conservation area in Kenya for screening purposes as a potential treatment for pancreatic cancer. When additional material was required four years after the first harvest, regeneration was so poor that collectors struggled to obtain the additional material."

"But the problem of how to conserve these species has been relegated to the back-burner by many organizations," says Vernon Heywood. "This is in large part due to our lack of knowledge about these plants and their uses." Of the 90,000 species in the Central and South American tropics, only 2% have been screened for their pharmacological potential. "We need a more complete picture of which plants are being used and to what extent, how important they are and what the threats to them really are."

With the priority of most governments and international organizations being placed on nutrition, research tends to focus on the main food crops. But, reminds Heywood, "people do not live by bread

(IPGRI), brought together participants from the world's leading organizations concerned with the conservation and sustainable use of wild plants and forests. They agreed that first and foremost "the message has to be spread" - from governments to the scientific and local communities. And they urged greater collaboration between existing organizations to coordinate their work, share data and even form a lobby group to keep the issue high up on the world's political agenda.

"We must clearly show the cost of conservation as against the cost of non-conservation," says Pierre Lasserre, the secretary of UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Programme (MAB). "One figure to keep in mind: the total value of ecosystem services has been estimated at an average \$33 trillion per annum - nearly double the gross global product. This includes the direct value of a great number of wild species through their use by people throughout the world or their importance in raising agricultural and forest production. Can we afford to continue neglecting them?"

Sue WILLIAMS

• ● Ministers and directors of sport and youth programmes in Central America and Panama met in San Salvador on February 5 and 6 for a round-table on "YOUTH, SPORT AND DAILY PEACE". In particular, they approved some 100 project proposals requiring about \$10.5m in funding. They aim to use sport as an educational means to prevent delinquency, violence and marginalization, instead of relying solely on repressive responses to these social problems. Governmental institutions will seek the required financing with UNESCO's assistance from development banks, foundations, international sport federations, private businesses and through bilateral cooperation agreements between countries.

▼ From rebuilding education systems in the aftermath of the Second World War to introducing today's newest technologies, UNESCO has been working for half century to transform "our perception of education, from an individual right to a social and economic imperative".



A richly illustrated book, entitled 50 YEARS FOR EDUCATION, explores the "ever changing challenge that education poses to all societies" before turning to the myriad of UNESCO activities in response to this challenge. The accompanying CD-ROMs bring to life the activities, events, and people that have shaped the Organization's work.

AN UNUSUAL NURSERY SCHOOL

● Conceived in the field and designed to go back there, *Language planning in a plurilingual educational context* is a practical guide to help introduce **LANGUAGE REFORM** in primary schools and teacher-training colleges, particularly in Africa. The methodologies and strategies for bi- or even tri-lingual situations are grounded in practical experience. From strategies to make officials and communities recognize the need for reform to setting up the structures to design, produce and distribute teaching materials, this guide is flexible enough to ease reform problems in any plurilingual environment

✦ LINGUAPAX
Unit of the Education Sector

● **An "alternative" kindergarten in Bamako combines traditional structures and modern teaching methods.**

● Mali's capital, Bamako, has only three state-run nursery schools and a few private day-care centres.

● To fill the gap, Oumou Diakité, a former teacher and a child psychiatrist, in March last year set up the Den Ladamu So centre,

● Diakité's school offers a modern version of traditional child-minding practices. She gave her volunteers a week's training in the basics of teaching, hygiene and nutrition and they review the situation together every five weeks.

● A LOT MORE
● FUN THAN
● TAGGING ALONG
● WITH MUM
● (Photo ©
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● which in the Bambara language means "house of education for the child". The school is a pioneer example of an inexpensive educational unit which UNESCO hopes will catch on elsewhere in Africa.

● "I live in a bustling part of the city and I see little kids spending the whole day with their mothers, at the market or in the streets," says Diakité. So in a corner of the playground at the local school, Diakité built a "nursery area," with a sandbox, some mats, a room to keep games and toys in and a traditional oven to cook lunch.

● She recruited 15 volunteers from the neighbourhood women's association she ran. They range in age from 22 to 55 and most of them cannot read or write. They take turns, in daily teams of three, so that each could continue working at other jobs. The children's parents charged 100 CFA francs (\$0.16) a day and the volunteers get a token daily wage of about \$0.80. The whole operation costs no more than \$250 a month for around 20 children.

● "Children in Africa were traditionally looked after by the elderly women of the village while their mothers worked in the fields," says Bernard Combes of UNESCO's French-speaking Africa Network for Early Childhood Education, which organized a meeting in Bamako (Feb. 2-9) to sell the idea of such alternative structures to governments.

● "We offer stimulating activities which will inspire them to do things. We also take into account Malian cultural values," she says.

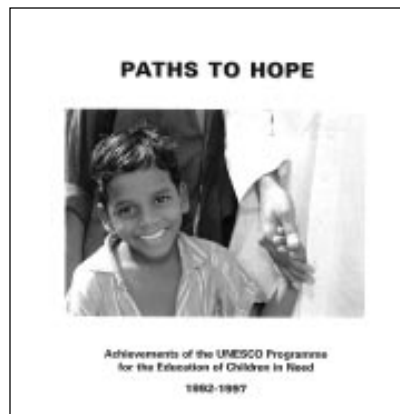
● This includes speaking in Bambara, making toys and games and teaching traditional songs and stories. This cultural bias also fits in with economic necessity. The return to roots coincides with modern ideas about training and awakening a child's mind by developing independence and creativity.

● Lack of money has long obliged Mali, like other African countries, to give priority to primary education. As a result, only 3% of children are in nursery schools, compared with 70% in developed countries. Today, awareness of the link between a nursery education and later success at school and the increasing number of women working outside the home are forcing African countries to rethink their policies.

● The Malian education ministry will back the setting up of the next centre, due before the end of this year, and wants to see more such alternative schools. "In other countries," notes Combes, "it is sometimes hard to sell the idea of resorting to illiterate grandmothers to look after children." The Den Ladamu So centre is showing how it can be done.

● N. K-D.

▼ More than \$11m with 91 projects in 32 countries - it's an exceptional track-record for a five-year-old UNESCO Programme for the Education of CHILDREN IN NEED, highlighted in the



brochure, *Paths to Hope*. Public awareness and fund-raising campaigns have provided the financial means for rapid and concrete intervention in the lives of children with handicaps, victims of war and natural catastrophes or left to survive on the streets.

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RALLYING THE FLOCKS

Top-level dialogue between world's three monotheistic religions must these days involve ordinary believers.

The principle is now well-established: *"The ethical values common to our three monotheistic religions - justice, comprehension, compassion, humility and forgiveness, solidarity and sharing, dialogue and non-violence ... must draw people together rather than divide and contribute to the moral solidarity of humanity rather than the clash between civilizations."*

This belief has been reiterated so many times that its restatement at the one-day meeting on the "Dialogue between the Three Monotheistic Religions: Towards a Culture of Peace", in Rabat on February 16, was not news. Even when it was emphasized by a score of eminent religious figures such as Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, head of the Vatican's Justice and Peace Commission, Israel's Chief Rabbi Eliahu Bakshi-Doron and Sheikh Fawzi Fadel Azzafzaf, the secretary-general of Cairo's Al-Azhar University.

HARD REALITIES

But beyond the theory is reality. The chief rabbi asked what *"peace education"* could mean for the children of Jerusalem, when they have to wear gas masks. The city's latin patriarch, Msgr Michel Sabbah, replied sharply that in *"a city at war, how can we talk of peace to Palestinian children? How can we talk about peace to Iraqi children when an international embargo is starving them to death?"*

The former chief rabbi of France, René-Samuel Sirat, reminded delegates that *"it is at these most difficult moments that we, as spiritual guides and teachers, must reiterate messages of peace and non-violence."*

The aim of the Rabat conference, a UNESCO initiative fully supported by Morocco's King Hassan II, was to move on from just words and plan steps which, said Cardinal Etchegaray, would help *"bring the message down to the flocks,"* to the ordinary worshippers of the three religions.

Open any newspaper any day and the gap between the words coming from those at the top and the very different life at the bottom is clear.

Two paths were chosen to begin putting into effect the results of the dialogue. UNESCO and the Moroccan government

PEACE AND RELIGION

The seminar was a follow-up to the Barcelona 'Declaration on the Role of Religion in the Promotion of a Culture of Peace' (December 1994). It was this declaration that inspired UNESCO's efforts to link interreligious dialogue and the idea of a culture of peace, which has become the basis of the Organization's action.

Other expert meetings took place in Rabat in June 1995 in the context of the UNESCO project "Roads of Faith", and in June 1997 in Malta under the title of "Promoting Interreligious Dialogue".

The most recent UNESCO General Conference (last November and December) invited the Director-General to *"envisage ... activities concerning the contribution of religion to the establishment of a culture of peace and the promotion of interreligious dialogue."*

were not asked to set up any big structure. One of the approaches agreed upon was to create a *"reflection and action"* group in Morocco itself, with representatives of the three religions choosing from among the proposals made by all sides those which deserved special support and seeing they got it. There would also be a UNESCO-sponsored university chair in Morocco, which would be concerned less with teaching than action-oriented research.

This research would concern mainly young people, through production of a basic guide to the monotheistic religions, since untruths and silences still sometimes mar even the best of this kind of educational material. It would also involve the media, which is often accused of resorting to stereotypes, though little or no effort is made to get accurate information to journalists. Also the history of the religions, especially areas and causes of conflict between them. As the German Lutheran Bishop Heinz Joachim Held noted, the dialogue will only move forward if each religion *"re-reads its own history."*

R.L.

• ●
• *"The EDICT OF NANTES is more relevant than ever,"* declared Director-General Federico Mayor at a ceremony at Headquarters on February 18 commemorating the 400th anniversary of the act through which Henry IV, the king of France, put an end to the wars ravaging the realm by giving religious freedom to French Protestants. However, added Pasteur Jean Tartier, the president of the Protestant Federation of France and organizer of the ceremony, *"the obligation to remember does not consist of dwelling on the past, but on moving on and bringing the past up to date."*

▼
• *"CREATIVITY AND DECOLONIZATION"* was at the heart of debates at a symposium organized at UNESCO, February 7-8. About 30 historians, authors and psychoanalysts focused on the *"irreparable wounds"* left by slavery and colonization and the forms they continue to take. The meeting was held in homage to the French author and psychoanalyst Octave Mannoni (1899-1989) whose works promoted awareness of the ills of colonialism.

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Part of the Associated Schools' **BALTIC SEA PROJECT**, a consultation gathering representatives from the nine countries concerned is scheduled from April 16 to 20 in Sonderborg (Denmark). In Shanghai (China), a workshop on integrated **COASTAL MANAGEMENT** and the sustainability of coastal cities in the Asia-Pacific is scheduled for April 20 to 22 through the International Oceanographic Commission. In Durban (South Africa), the seventh conference of **MINISTERS OF EDUCATION OF AFRICAN MEMBER STATES** will be held from April 20 to 24. On the same dates, the consultative committee on health and **CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT** will hold its annual meeting at Headquarters to coordinate the actions of international and non-governmental organizations. With **EDUCATIONAL REFORM** a key issue for the five Central Asian nations and Mongolia, some 20 governmental experts will focus on budgetary issues in Samarkand (Uzbekistan), April 21 to 24. The **UNESCO/Francoise Gallimard Prize** will be awarded on April 23, **World BOOK AND COPYRIGHT Day**. About 150 teenagers will meet with scientists on April 23 and 24 at Headquarters to discuss the theme, "**FUTURE SCIENTISTS: Men and Women**". In light of the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, about 30 UNESCO chairholders on **HUMAN RIGHTS**, democracy, peace and tolerance will meet in Stadtschlaining (Austria) from April 23 to 26. The 154th session of the **EXECUTIVE BOARD** will take place at Headquarters from April 27 to May 7 to review the follow-up on the General Conference's resolutions. On **World PRESS FREEDOM Day**, May 3, the **UNESCO/Guillermo Cano Prize** will be awarded at Headquarters. In Vienna (Austria), about 30 experts will study proposed revisions to the 1954 **HAGUE CONVENTION for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict** from May 11 to 13.

(Dates and places are subject to change).

Celebrating our **100th ISSUE**, UNESCO Sources will proudly present a radically new format. Three mini-dossiers will explore: ways of conserving marine environments, higher education in the Arab States and the changing status of teachers - the central theme of the new World Education Report.