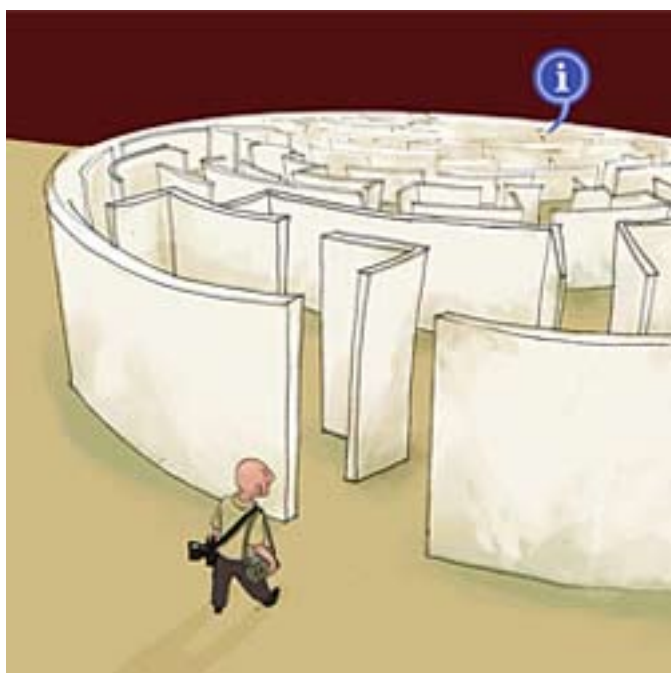




United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

INFORMATION: A GAME OF HIDE AND SEEK



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Investigation often resembles navigating through a labyrinth.

But it is precisely because they detain real power that journalists have many enemies, some of whom don't hesitate having them killed to silence them. Although international laws obligate States to punish these crimes, justice is often powerless. Yet when a journalist is killed we are all victims, explains Toby Mendel, Director of "ARTICLE 19", an International Human Rights Organization that protects freedom of expression throughout the world.

To illustrate the tragedy of these murders, our Lebanese colleague Bassam Mansour portrays his famous compatriot Gébran Tuéni, assassinated in

Journalists can help change the world. As proof, Mexican reporter Lydia Cacho Ribeiro (45) whose courage impressed the members of the jury of the 2008 UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize. In an exclusive interview granted to our colleague Lucia Iglesias on the day the Prize was announced, the laureate explains how she has contributed to the evolution of legislation with respect to child pornography in her country and the abolition of legal detention of journalists following accusations for slander and libel.

Decembre 2005. For 17 years this Director of the "An-Nahar" newspaper published a supplement devoted to the young generation he saw as a "daily mirror of an entire generation no-one has paid an attentive ear to, either in the past or in the present." His silence weighs down on their future.

The American journalist Susan Moeller also addresses the young. She believes that the fight for the diversity of expressions starts with the education of students. Teaching them how to account for events and problems of the present is not enough. Director of the International Center for Media & the Public

► Agenda, she explains that the young also have to be made aware of the importance of a free and objective press.

But how can a free and objective press be guaranteed, if journalists themselves don't have access to the information that interests them and often have to rely on rumours to write their articles? «With the exception of South Africa, Angola and Uganda, Africa has been lagging behind in the global movement towards the adoption of Freedom of Information Laws which should guarantee journalists the access to information held by public authorities,» explains Togolese journalist Gabriel Baglo, Director of the Africa Bureau of the International Federation of Journalists












Paul Taylor adds: ““For a long time they refused to give us the lists [that] show that particularly in the United Kingdom, the royal family and the big aristocrats are among the main beneficiaries of European agricultural subsidies.” Who is “they”? The European Commission claims it's the Member States.



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It took journalists – otherwise flooded with information - ten years of campaigning to access certain files considered sensitive by Brussels' European Institutions, explains this journalist at Reuters. Access to information for all, but first of all for those whose job it is to make it public – this is what the journalists and experts, who have contributed to this issue devoted to World Press Freedom Day celebrated on 3 May in Maputo, are asking for.

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► Besides the award of the World Press Freedom Prize to Lydia Cacho Ribeiro, UNESCO has organized on this occasion an international conference entitled “Freedom of Expression, Access to Information and the Empowerment of People” in the capital of Mozambique.

Towards the end of the month, UNESCO will also celebrate World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development. To mark this day, the *Courier* is publishing an article entitled “Koyo, a place for dialogue between two cultures.” For almost eight years, a French poet and six Malian painters have created, in a small village, works that belong neither to Western nor to Dogon culture, neither to poetry

nor to painting....They open a new space for dialogue and creation.

Finally, the *Courier* tells the sad and funny adventure of a rebel genius, the Croatian Marin Držić, considered one of the major playwrights of the Renaissance. He was born 500 years ago, in Dubrovnik, a jewel on the Dalmatian coast, now on the World Heritage List. He died in May 1567, in Venice, without having succeeded in convincing Cosme de Medici to overturn the Senate of his birth place, “this 20-headed monster tyrannizing the people.”

Jasmina Šopova

.....

Lydia Cacho Ribeiro: “International visibility is a shield for threatened journalists.”

“I believe the role of journalism is to be a lantern, allowing society to exercise its right to know and understand; I believe human rights are non-negotiable. As long as I live, I will continue to write and writing will keep me alive.”

This forceful declaration of faith is made by Lydia Cacho Ribeiro (45), Mexican freelance journalist and head of a centre that helps abused women in Cancun.

Laureate of the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize, she answers questions put by Lucia Iglesias (UNESCO).

Through your books and hundreds of articles, you have denounced pedophilia, trafficking of minors, corruption, organized crime, gender discrimination and violence against women. You’ve done it despite death threats and attempts to murder you. You’ve fought legal battles. Where do you find the strength to act?



© José Gallardo / Random House Mondadori

Lydia Cacho Ribeiro, 2008 UNESCO–Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize.

My work as a journalist and my activism as a citizen are intertwined. I have been sensitive to the cause of defending human rights since I was a small child. My mother, who was French and moved to Mexico

▶ when she was very young, had always practiced social activism. It was an integral part of her life and she brought up her children in that spirit. I grew up in a family where defending human rights was the natural responsibility of citizens, and neither an effort nor a sacrifice.

For many years I hosted a show for a community radio station in Quinatana Roo state, where we were always bringing up the issue of violence against women. Sometimes women came unexpectedly to the studio. Some had been slashed with machetes; others told us their husbands threatened to kill them. They asked us for help but I didn't know what to do for them. So then we decided to start a support group and finally we were able to open a maximum security shelter for women and children who were the victims of violence, as well as a counseling and aid centre.

How does the centre operate?

The Cancun centre for aid to women and their children (CIAM) is a non-profit organization that subsists on donations. I run it, but I make my living from journalism. The staff, though, is on salary. They are professionals in the defense of victims. The CIAM

has been recognized as one of the best aid centres in Mexico. It's a progressive organization. We've protected wives of drug dealers, politicians, masons, farmers....in other words, we take in any woman knocking on our door who is involved in a violent relationship.

Do you think things are in the process of changing? Is all this work worth the effort?

Of course it's worth it. Many things are evolving, people are in prison because of the book I wrote [Los demonios del Edén, Published by Grijalbo Mondadori, 2005], many victims spoke out and received help in different parts of the country. Society reacted vigorously, and for me it's a great honour. More than prizes we might win, it proves our work as journalists is fulfilling its purpose and being useful.

In addition, after my detention and because of the media reaction and the intervention of important social and political actors, journalism was decriminalized. I was thrown in jail precisely because journalists could legally be held after being accused of defamation and libel. All that disappeared following my court case. Now, such matters are tried in civil

The itinerary of a heroine

A few dates

- 1963 Lydia Cacho Ribeiro is born in Mexico.
- 2002 She is awarded the Journalism Prize for Journalism of the State of Quintana Roo.
- 2003 Publication of *Las Provincias del Alma* (Demac Publishers), where she describes the discrimination against women with HIV.
- 2005 Publication of *Los Demonios del Edén* (The Demons of Eden - Grijalbo Mondadori Publishers), indicting the paedophile mafia in Mexico.
- 2006 Publication of *Esta Boca es mía y tuya también* (This Mouth is Yours and Mine too - Planeta Publishers). The same year, she is awarded the Francisco Ojeda Award for journalistic courage for her investigation on the violent death of hundreds of young women in Ciudad Juárez, Northern Mexico, the Don Sergio Méndez Arceo Prize for the protection of human rights, the Yo Dona Prize rewarding humanitarian work (Spain) and the Coatlicue-Mujeres en el Arte Prize.
- 2007 Publication of *Memorias de una Infamia* (Memoirs of an infamy - Giraldo Mondadori Publishers). She obtains the Amnesty International Ginetta Sagan Award for Women and Children's Rights. She receives distinctions from non governmental organizations Human Rights Watch and Oxfam. The Cable News Network (CNN) gives her the title of CNN Hero
- 2008 She receives the third Casa Amèrica Catalunya Prize for Freedom of Expression (Spain), the Unión de Periodistas de Valencia Prize (Spain) and UNESCO's World Press Freedom Prize.



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Lydia Cacho at the Journalists' Club in Mexico, her home town.

▶ courts, as they are in all other more advanced countries.

Furthermore legislation concerning child pornography has developed considerably; above all, the subject has been covered in the media. Sexual abuse of children was a taboo subject in Mexico. Since my court case, forums on the issue have multiplied and specialized organizations have sprung up.

Do you fear for your life? Have you ever been afraid during your career?

Of course I was afraid when I was kidnapped in late 2005. I was held somewhere between Cancun and central Mexico and tortured for 20 hours. But as time goes by, you learn to master your fear and it becomes a tool for making certain decisions and building certain strategies.

I have to say too that after receiving about 20 death threats over the telephone, you learn to keep living without really taking it into account, because it would be insane. I'd have to leave not only my country but maybe also my profession, and I'm not ready to do that.

Do you have special security to protect you when you go out?

For about three years I had four federal agents as an escort and I went everywhere in an armoured van. But in March 2007, this federal van was the target of a bombing attack, and the police still haven't

investigated the matter. So it seems having federal agents in charge of your security isn't really a guarantee. A few months ago I decided to give up this escort and to simply take the usual precautions that reporters have to take when exercising their profession, wherever they are.

But can you work normally under these circumstances?

That's exactly where there's a trap in the security measures offered to journalists. Since I investigate organized crime and human rights, it's very difficult to get certain informants to speak to me, given that we are constantly guarded.

Last year, when I'd begun writing my book on the traffic of women in the world, I felt that my range of action was limited because I wasn't free to talk to my informants. To be guarded when you're a journalist is really like being in prison, as if you were a criminal under the supervision of police, not knowing whether they're watching over you or watching you.

How do you feel about receiving the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize?

First I'm very honoured to be awarded such recognition, when after all I'm simply doing a job I love and consider essential in a country like mine. Psychologically it's very important for me to feel supported today, after being imprisoned and tortured because of my work; and after these events revealed the extent of institutional corruption that victimizes journalists in Mexico. We must remember that after Iraq, Mexico is one of the most dangerous countries in the world for journalists.

And I also feel this kind of recognition gives us in a way a certain protection, because international visibility is a kind of shield.

What topic are you working on right now?

As I said, I'm finishing a book about the international networks involved in the trafficking of women and girls. It's a map of the world showing not only who is behind these organizations and how the networks buying and selling human beings operate, but also the relationships maintained by highly-placed political leaders locally and internationally to protect

► the networks involved in the trade.

What is the situation right now in Mexico regarding freedom of the press and information?

It's evident journalism has become in recent years a crucial element for change in Mexico, as the democratic process inevitably goes hand in hand with more truthful information. The single party that ruled the country for 70 years controlled the media, both economically and editorially. With the change in government, when President Vicente Fox was elected for the preceding six-year term (2000-2006), we saw a degree of new openness in the media, which we Mexican journalists are in the process of learning how to handle.

It is crucial to have journalists in Mexico in 2008 to describe the real situation in this country of 104 million inhabitants, 30 million of whom are in the grip of extreme poverty. It's a country where the rich are richer than Europeans and the poor poorer than Africans. We journalists have to understand these disparities and the risk we run by uncovering the fundamental characteristics of national problems.

“...as indigenous women, we have our space in the radio. And this space... I know that the mainstream radio would never give it to us because we are women and as indigenous people we are discriminated against. In this case, in our radio, we have space to express ourselves and to say what we feel, what we think... about our traditional clothing, about our language...”
Angelica Cubur from Radio Ixchel (Guatemala). *



© V. Henderson, 2007

Angelica Cubur, of Radio Ixchel (Guatemala).

On May 3, UNESCO celebrates World Press Freedom Day, underlining the issue of access to information. What can be done so that people can have access to plural and independent information?

Electronic media play a crucial role. Media monopoly, much criticized by the interna-

tional community, is one of the major problems today in Mexico. That's why keeping community radio stations going is vital. Unfortunately we're in a phase of repression regarding these radio stations. A few days ago in the state of Oaxaca, two young women who managed a community radio broadcasting news in one of Mexico's traditional languages were murdered. Here in the state of Quintana Roo where I've been living and working for 22 years, we speak Maya, but news are very rarely broadcast in this language. I think we need more community radio and that we have to invest in electronic media, which are more easily accessible to the Mexican people, even if the most important issue is to improve content.

* Lydia Cacho Ribeiro's concern for the future of community radio speaks to an issue of critical importance, first and foremost for practitioners, but also for policy leaders and scholars. A 2008 World Bank report calls community radio vital to development; yet laws governing spectrum regulation often disadvantage not-for-profit community broadcasters. The issue has been the focus of a two-year study funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The study — Sound as a Dollar?: The Propertization of Spectrum Resources and Implications for Non-Profit Community Radio in Guatemala — was undertaken by Victoria Henderson (Queen's University) and is due for release in Fall 2008.

Shoot a journalist and society is wounded

Justice is done in less than 15% of the approximately 500 cases involving murders of journalists for their work in the last 15 years. States have the obligation to combat the impunity in relation to these crimes, for each time a journalist is attacked, democracy is a victim.

Let us recall the case of *Orgür Gündem v. Turkey* in March 2000 that was brought before the European Court of Human Rights. The case involved *Orgür Gündem*, an Istanbul-based daily, which had been harassed and attacked so persistently that it eventually had to close.

Seven staff members, including journalists, were actually killed and the paper suffered numerous attacks – arson, bombs and even armed attacks – against newsagents, shops selling its paper and its offices. Several petitions by the newspapers to the authorities calling for assistance were met, for the most part, with no response. Finally some minor protective measures were put in place. At the same time, the authorities launched an official investigation of the newspaper, as well as several criminal prosecutions.

The Court held that Turkey had breached the newspaper's right to freedom of expression by failing to protect it against these attacks. It reiterated the obligation on Turkey to put in place 'positive measures of protection'. The Court also dismissed Turkey's claim that it was relieved of this obligation because the newspaper supported terrorist groups. The State might prosecute the newspaper for any illegal material it had disseminated, but it could not simply ignore the repeated attacks on it.

Censorship by killing

Stories of attacks on journalists are, unfortunately, all too common. According to the International Fed-



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Nikita White reads her essay during the launch of IYPE on 12 February 2008 at UNESCO.

eration of Journalists, 177 media professionals were killed in 2007. The Iraq war, in particular, has led to unprecedented numbers of journalists being killed or suffering physical attacks.

Of course, a journalist could be murdered by their spouse, die in an unfortunate car accident or be the victim of a random shooting. In many cases, however, the fact that they are a journalist is not just a random circumstance but structurally linked to the case in one of two ways. First, journalists may, by virtue of their profession, find themselves in dangerous situations, for example because they are reporting on war, social unrest or disasters. Even more serious, however, are cases where journalists are targeted because of what they write.

The media has variously been described as the fourth estate, the watchdog of the social interest and a key underpinning of democracy. In these roles, journalists often create enemies, many of them people who wield significant power in society, some of whom lack scruples or have even been involved in criminal activity. In some cases, these people go to the extreme length of threatening the journalists who have exposed them, or even of perpetrating crimes of violence, including murder, against them.

Such attacks are heinous crimes which affect not only their target but journalists as a group. A single

- ▶ instance of serious retaliation sends a signal to all journalists involved in exposing abuses that they are at risk. The aim of those perpetrating these atrocities is to silence all those who would report on the matter, whether it be crime, official incompetence, corruption or some other social evil. This problem has been referred to as ‘censorship by killing’.

To ‘seek and receive’ information is a right

Most crimes against journalists have a particularly chilling effect and are, therefore, crimes against society as a whole. We all rely on the media as a primary source of information, whether about events abroad, problems in our own society or anything outside of our direct sphere of experience. We need this information for a variety of fundamental democratic functions: to exercise our right to vote, to ensure the proper custody of public resources, and to bring those responsible for wrongdoing to justice. To the extent that attacks on journalists limit the ability of the media to provide us with this information, they threaten democracy. As such, they are crimes against us all, not just against journalists.

International human rights law recognises this aspect of the right to freedom of expression.



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Justice is done in less than 15% of cases involving murders of journalists for their work in the last 15 years.



© New York Times

The Lebanese journalist May Chidiac, in her wheelchair, after the 2005 September attack on her life.

Although we normally think of this right as protecting the right to speak, the right to impart information and ideas, it has a dual nature. It also protects the right of the listener, and this is reflected in the fact that international guarantees refer not only to the right to impart but also to ‘seek and receive’ information and ideas.

In addition, international law goes beyond prohibiting States from interfering with free speech and places a positive obligation on States to ensure respect for the exercise of freedom of expression. International courts have held that States are under a positive obligation to make a special effort to prevent attacks on journalists, to investigate such attacks and to bring those responsible to justice. Where the State is directly involved, for example in attacks perpetrated by State officials, there is also an obligation to compensate the victims.

Unfortunately, the evidence suggests that many States are failing in their responsibility to combat impunity in cases involving attacks on journalists. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, justice is done in less than 15% of the approximately 500 journalists murdered in the last 15 years.

*Toby Mendel, Senior Director for Law, author of
ARTICLE 19*

Gebran Tueni: the man who was like thunder

“As a journalist, I aim to write the truth. And as a Congressman, I aim to speak the truth”, said Lebanese-born Gebran Tueni in an interview with the Courier’s Bassam Mansour in July 2005. Here he paints a portrait of this fellow countryman, who shared a passion for electronic games and with his involvement in highly dangerous political affairs, which cost him his life in December 2005.

Gebran Tueni, Lebanese journalist and director of the Beirut daily, An-Nahar, was assassinated on 12 December 2005. Condemning this crime, UNESCO’s Director-General, Koïchiro Matsuura, said at the time, “The global press community has lost one of its great defenders. Mr Tueni’s death is a terrible loss not only for his family, friends and colleagues, but for the cause of freedom of expression and press freedom in the Middle East”.

“I’m less afraid for myself than for those I love.” That is how Gebran Tueni responded to Marlene Khalife, when she asked him to react to the death threats he had received over his political stand and opinions, whether in his own newspaper or other public and political platforms. These were among his last words that morning, shortly before his car was blown up in the eastern suburb of Mekalis, as he drove from his home in Beit Meri (Mount Lebanon) to his newspaper’s offices in Beirut’s Martyrs’ Square. His paper published the interview the next day.

The explosion that shook the Lebanese capital was so violent that only the remains of his body and those of Nicolas El Falouti and Andre Mourad were left, scattered in nearby gardens. This crime brought a sudden end to a life that had been filled with thunder, energy and hope for a better future. Gebran Tueni was 48. Throughout his life he had to face endless personal tragedies – notably the early deaths of his sister Nayla and brother Makram – as well as the national tragedy of a war that struck the entire country. The Lebanese war broke out on 13 April 1975,



© An-Nahar, Beirut

Gebran Tueni in the An-Nahar press room.

destroying everything as it went, especially the young generation that became caught up in it.

These trials seemed to become a part of Gebran’s character, and never shook his dream of a country built on principles of freedom, diversity and equality, with freedom of expression as its cornerstone.

Listening to a multitude of voices

Gebran Tueni founded what was then the weekly newspaper Arabic and International An-Nahar, in Paris in 1977, with other journalists of his generation. It stood out for the diversity of the opinions it published, even if they were sometimes contradictory. For Gebran Tueni, freedom of expression was not a matter of defending an idea, but of adopting a point of view, while allowing others to have different views on the same subject.

In the political arena, Gebran Tueni joined with men and women who were known for their courage, and who would not hesitate to overstep the mark: ▶

Note intime

Born on 15 September 1957, Gebran Tueni was the son of Ghassan Tueni, doyen of the Lebanese press, and the great Lebanese poet Nadia Tueni. His paternal grandfather, Gebran Tueni, founded the newspaper An-Nahar in 1933. His maternal grandfather, Mohamed Ali Hamade, was a diplomat and writer. The grandson loved to say that he was half Muslim, half Christian, in a country where one's religion was sometimes more important than one's nationality. He was just seven years old when he lost his elder sister, Nayla, to whom he felt very close. His parents hid the truth from him. They told him that Nayla had gone away on a journey... This tragedy always hung over the family, breaking Nadia's heart, who dedicated a collection of poems to her daughter, entitled "Lebanon: 20 Poems for a Love", published in 1979. When Gebran's eldest daughter was born, he didn't hesitate to give her the name of his lost sister. Even so, the suffering did not cease, and was added to by Nadia's long illness.

"We never felt weak or afraid in her presence," said Gebran, adding, in an interview with Marlene Khalif, that "she faced her illness with great courage, dignity and openness. Until the end, her smile radiated through the house ...". In 1983, Nadia Tueni departed this world, leaving behind two sons, Gebran and his younger brother Makram, who also departed before his time in a car accident in Paris. It was 1987; he was 21 years old.

B.M.



© An-Nahar, Beirut

Demonstration after Samir Kassir's assassination.

▶ whether it was President Bechir Gemayel, General Michel Aoun (a friendship that forced his exile to Paris from 1990 to 1993), or Prime Minister Rafic Hariri. After Hariri was assassinated on 14 February 2005, Gebran Tueni was called upon to play an important part in the so-called "Cedar Revolution" or "Independence Revolution", that led him to office as congressman for Beirut in the Lebanese parliament. But he never allowed his political career to interfere with his work as director of the daily, An-Nahar. He always felt his function as a politician to be complementary to his work as a journalist.

When I went to visit the headquarters of his newspaper in July 2005, along with colleagues from UNESCO, I raised the possibility of a conflict of inter-

est between these two activities. "Not in the least", he replied. "There is no conflict at all ... As a journalist, I aim to write the truth. And as a congressman, I aim to speak the truth." It was a genuine answer, filled with the innocence and candour that were so characteristic of this man. Faced with a world torn between good and evil, love and hate, beauty and ugliness, he enjoyed imagining it free of political dealings and machinations. And, above all, he refused to bow down before those with power, or to give up in the face of Realpolitik.

With the same youthful ardour that refuses to follow the crowd, despite the passage of time, when he returned from exile in 1993 he created a weekly youth supplement to An-Nahar. In its editorial he announced that it would be "an independent platform for free-thinking young writers", and that it was time that they "expressed themselves openly – even with the distractions of youth – on whatever preoccupies them!" He also declared that the supplement was intended to be the "mirror of daily life for a whole generation that

no-one has listened to, either in the past or the present".

In 1990, Gebran Tueni became an active member of the World Association of Newspapers (WAN) and advisor on Middle-Eastern affairs to WAN's president. He was also a member of WAN's Fund for Press Freedom Development, created in 1994. After his assassination, the Fund launched the annual International Gebran Tueni Award for press freedom, awarded for



© An-Nahar, Beirut

Gebran Tueni checking the newspaper's printing.

► the first time in 2006. On this occasion WAN's president, Timothy Balding, told Roula Beydoun in an interview published on 13 December 2006 in An-Nahar, that "we felt the need to keep the spirit of Gebran Tueni alive, especially given the energetic part he played in all of our activities, by promoting press freedom for over 20 years".

No-one dies before their time

Gebran played while he worked. This man, who was involved in the most dangerous affairs, knew how to keep his youthful spirit alive and looked at the world with dazzled and joyful eyes, triumphing over a mountain of sufferings. He loved electronic games and car racing. He also enjoyed reading horoscopes. He was a Virgo. "No-one dies before their time," he said in 2005. In June that year, his fellow journalist and colleague at An-Nahar Samir Kassir died in a car bomb attack near his home as he set off for work. Shortly after, in September, a similar explosion hit journalist May Chidiac, laureate of the 2006 UNESCO/Guillermo Cano Prize for Press Freedom. By a miracle

she survived, although she lost a leg and an arm. The entire country was plunged into fear, as bombs exploded everywhere.

On the evening of 11 December 2005, Gebran Tueni returned to Beirut, brushing aside advice that he should remain abroad. The day after he came back, his car exploded. His father, Ghassan Tueni, who had now lost his third child, said that the final blow was that he could not even kiss his son's cheek before he was buried.

This was the journey of Gebran Tueni, who resembled one of those men that his mother, the great Lebanese poet Nadia Tueni, described in these words:

"In our mountains men can be found,
who are just like thunder,
And know the world is apple-round..."

by Bassam Mansour, UNESCO



© An-Nahar, Beirut

Gebran Tueni welcoming students in the newspaper's offices.

Freedom of expression: a right to be taught

Paradox: Media have never been more vital for the nurturing of civil society but freedom of expression is now in retreat. No society can be free, open and fair without a diversity of voices. To remedy this situation, students of journalism must first be taught to develop a critical mind.

The world is poised to watch the 2008 Olympics, beginning with the opening ceremony in Beijing on 8 August. Eighty-thousand people will be in attendance at the National Stadium and an estimated four billion more are expected to be viewing via live television and internet feeds.

Already for several months, controversies are swirling in the media about the games—from the route that the Olympic torch is taking around the world to the decision to move the swimming and gymnastic events so that they can be seen live during primetime in the United States. Protests over the outbreak of violence in Tibet and China's human rights record threaten to disrupt the games.

The Olympic sporting events as well as the Olympic controversies will all be covered by the world's media. How will the public make sense of it all? How



© Maurice Albrecht

“Teaching them to notice what isn't being said and isn't being shown”



© David Wise

“Press freedom is not just essential in times of political crisis.”

will people from all over the planet understand the issues and evaluate the players?

What is a journalism professor's job?

Last summer 50 students and a dozen faculty from 14 universities on five continents came together in Salzburg, Austria, to address just those kinds of questions. One of the faculty members for this global initiative came from China. At the start of the three-week session he expressed serious concern. No matter how good the training at his university, his journalism students were not being hired, privately-owned media outlets didn't want to pay for reporters and editors when they could get unpaid interns to do the work. And besides which, the faculty member said, most of those media were tabloid-type outlets in which solid news—not to mention accuracy and balance—were hardly valued. Gossip and celebrity coverage dominated Chinese print and online outlets. What was he to do as a journalism professor?

The three weeks of the Salzburg Academy on Media & Global Change, during which the participants created a curriculum to teach media literacy to students around the world, transformed that Chinese professor's opinion about his job. His work was not just to teach journalism students how to report on

▶ the events and issues around them, but to instruct all the students in the university about the importance of a free and fair media. Without an audience educated to understand how essential access to information is to the exercise of citizenship, there will be no pressure for quality journalism.

Media have never been more vital for the nurturing of civil society but freedom of expression is now in retreat. So much attention has gone into managing the new technologies, considering the viability of existing business models, coping with the dramatic demographic shifts in audiences and condemning the seemingly insatiable demand for scandal-mongering media that there has been little space for expressing other concerns.

But press freedom organizations have recorded the global losses—the violations of free speech, the targeting of journalists, the repression of both bricks-and-mortar as well as virtual media outlets, the marginalization of minority voices. Finally, recently, the depredations on free expression and a free press have become impossible to ignore.

A matter of life and death

Last year according to the Paris-based World Association of Newspapers, 95 media employees were killed—44 in Iraq alone, 8 in Somalia, 6 in Sri Lanka and 5 in Pakistan. Other 110 media workers died in 2006—among them such leading voices as Russian investigative reporter Anna Politkovskaya. In Pakistan this past November when President Pervez Musharraf suspended Pakistan's constitution, several TV stations were shut down, foreign cable newscasts stopped and controls over the content of news

reports imposed. Punishments against journalists ranged from heavy fines and suspension of broadcast licenses to sentences of up to three years in prison. And even in the West, France has been struggling to deal with the children and grandchildren of North African immigrants who have been marginalized in

many ways, including their access to media—unless they are rioting—and further demonized through stereotypical depictions that reinforce a negative image that is out of step with reality.

It shouldn't take threats and riots to put freedom of expression centre stage. Press freedom is not just essential in times of political crisis. Free media that allow a diversity of voices to be heard and all ideas to be discussed play a central role in both the sustaining and monitoring of good government, as well as in the fostering of economic development and the encouraging of corporate transparency and account-

ability. Freedom of expression is a life and death matter and a bread and butter issue. To live the good life, as well as to live a safe one, the public needs to understand how fundamental the right to freedom of expression is.

How can that case be made? Through the schools, through courses and case studies and assignments that give students not just the tools to criticize media for their tabloid news habits or their pandering to a youthful demographic, but that show students that without a diversity of voices, without a media that can represent all opinions, there can be no free and open and fair society. Without the ability to hear all voices, without the protection for all voices, only the powerful voices will be heard. Teaching all students to evaluate what they read and hear



© E. Boy

“Media have never been more vital for the nurturing of civil society.”

▶ and see and teaching them to notice what isn't being said and isn't being shown is critical to their eventual exercise of their rights as citizens and their access to opportunity.

Come 8 August, when the Olympic Games begin, most of those watching will take for granted their ability to see the athletes from around world compete in the events. Wouldn't it be great if the

diversity at the Games were reflected in the diversity of expressions in the media? Wouldn't it be great if all those watching at least just understood that this should not only be a right but is a necessity?

Susan Moeller,
Director of the International Center for Media
and the Public Agenda (United States)

Access to information...



© Christopher Herwig

A street newspaper in the making, Monrovia (Liberia).

In 1995, the Senegalese press group Sud Communication media group was prosecuted by La Compagnie Sucrière du Sénégal (CSS) and condemned by the court to a fine of 500 000 000 FCFA (763 000 Euros) for publishing information on customs fraud by the company. The court did not consider if the information was true or not; the issue was rather: how did the information leak, who leaked it, and how did the journalist get the document?

Although it dates back several years, this case serves as an example. In most African countries if you publish documents or information contained in documents from the public administration, you run the risk to be sued by the government and the civil servant who released the document gets into deep

journalists come first

Over the last two decades the legal framework of the media in Africa has evolved; the independent and community media have expanded. Nevertheless, various factors have been employed by most African governments to hinder freedom of expression and of the press: Freedom of Information remains a great challenge at continental level.

trouble. In this case the judge does not even consider the veracity of the document or the information

Access to public information remains a challenge for working journalists and most journalists in Africa often rely on rumours to write their articles.

The right to investigate and to report freely without any form of hindrance lies at the core of quality journalism. Just as the right of Communities to access public information ensures better housing, health, education and development budgets; combats corruption and alleviates poverty; and enables democratic participation. Good governance is centred on the principles of accountability and transparency. This, however, cannot be achieved anywhere, if infor-

- ▶ mation that is so very vital to the public interest continues to be hoarded by governments.

Tactics to breach laws

Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights guarantees freedom of expression as a fundamental human right besides the "Right to Life" - that is the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas. In Africa all the countries have signed and ratified the African Charter, thus taken the commitment to uphold the principles of the Charter. In addition, the majority of the governments have reflected this fundamental principle in their national constitutions.

In response to the numerous calls and complaints by media organisations in the continent about the "inadequacies" of the Charter, the African Commission on Human and Peoples'

Rights adopted in 2002 the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa, which recognises that "freedom of expression is an inalienable human right and an indispensable component of democracy".

However, the Declaration like the Charter is not binding on the member states and has not brought in the desired results for the eradication of all obnoxious media legislations in the continent. Media organizations in the continent are therefore, currently advocating for the adoption of a Protocol to the African Charter on Freedom of

Expression in Africa, which should be binding to all the states.

Despite this development many African governments have legislated very draconian measures in order to intimidate the press. Such arbitrary measures include the charging of exorbitant license fees for media houses, registration of journalists, obnoxious libel and defamation laws, the levy of heavy importation taxes on media related materials and equipment, arbitrary arrests, attacks and jailing of journalists.

A new coalition

Last year, a few weeks before he relinquished power, President Olusegun Obasanjo refused to approve the FOI bill voted by parliament on 21 February, after eight years of administrative steps. The bill is currently before the new administration of President Umaru Yaradua.

With the exception of South Africa, Angola and Uganda, Africa has been lagging behind in the global movement towards the adoption of Freedom of Information Laws which should guarantee journalists the access to information held by public authorities. Coalitions in Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, and Zambia have been fighting for about a decade for the Freedom of Information bill to be adopted but to no avail.

This is why in September 2006, media and civil society organisations from Africa met in Lagos to discuss ways to promote the right of access to information held by public authorities and, in



© UNESCO

Media diversity is a sine qua non condition of democracy.

- ▶ particular, to share experiences in advocacy and strategies for advancing the adoption of laws that fully protect this right. The meeting set up a coalition and established the Africa Freedom of Information Centre based in Lagos (Nigeria).

The centre should serve as a clearing house and enable civil society to participate in governance and transform itself into a true constituency.

*Gabriel Baglo,
Togolese journalist, director of the Africa Bureau of
the International Federation of Journalists*

© Pal Skeggs

**Demonstration, in May 2006, in front of the
Journalists' Union in Cairo (Egypt)**



Stop “fast food information”

It took European institutions in Brussels ten years of campaigning to start making certain dossiers available to the public. Journalists are demanding access to European Commission projects before they are adopted, to allow advance public debate.

What are the problems with access to information in Europe?

On one hand, the journalists covering European institutions are swamped with information and they have to sort it, because some is of dubious value. On the other hand, they come up against obstacles trying to obtain the information they think is important.

For example, there is ongoing litigation between the European Commission and the International Press Association, representing journalists working in Brussels. The Association is demanding access to certain dossiers regarding competition, maintaining that documents the Commission submits to the European Court of Justice to back up its decisions about company mergers and acquisitions should be made public. The Commission claims these documents contain confidential or commercially sensitive data and refuses to make them public. The Court at the first level

decided in favour of the Commission, with a few exceptions. Now the judgment is being appealed. ▶



© European Commission

Europe is not united with respect to norms on access to information.

▶ Another example – for a long time they refused to give us the lists of beneficiaries for the common agricultural policy subsidies. These show that particularly in the United Kingdom, the royal family and the big aristocrats are among the main beneficiaries of European agricultural subsidies – something the press always finds amusing.

Who is “they”?

That’s exactly the issue. The Commission claims it’s the Member States. But in any case, we are moving towards generalized release of such information. It took ten years of campaigning to get results.

Another controversy is centered on the role of the Commission’s industrial advisers. The difficulty lay in finding out which adviser was appointed in order to check whether there might be conflict of interest, if the adviser to a commissioner might not be the owner of a business that had a commercial interest in the legislation – which was inevitably sometimes the case. There too, the Commission put up obstacles at the beginning and finally agreed to publish the lists. It’s now underway.

Personally, I don’t feel they’re hiding everything from us. There are journalists who have taken that stance.

To what extent should a legal text that is still a draft be made public?

As an agency representative, I don’t have an opinion. As a journalist, I would like to have maximum information. I think it’s legitimate that there should be public debate beforehand. Industry, the NGOs and other actors in different fields – climate change, bio-fuels, regulation of financial markets or transport – all have offices or employ lobbyists to try and influence the process in advance, before the Commission’s proposals are published.

I don’t hide the fact that I sometimes get draft legislation not from my Commission sources but from an NGO or industrial lobby.



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Confidential.

But I understand it’s not the Commission’s role to release projects before they’re adopted.

Does that mean access to information is not self evident in Europe?

There are extraordinarily diverse traditions in Europe, the Europe of the 27 but also that of the 15. The Nordic countries, for instance, are much more open than those in the south, like France and Italy,

where information is often withheld, or the United Kingdom, where a spokesman will give you the public side of his country’s position in a negotiation, but not the real content of the negotiation or the position of other countries.

In Brussels, if a journalist wants to know what’s going on at the Council of ministers, he’ll go see the representatives of the Nordic countries where thanks to a tradition of the right to information you can get an overall view.

The lack of a consistent practice within the 15 or the 27 does not facilitate the work of the European Union when it wants to impose norms on candidate countries. What is it going to tell the Turks, for instance – you have to behave like Danes or you have to behave like Italians?

In Europe, to my knowledge, the question of access to information does not come under European law, except as far as institutions are concerned.

What are the greatest threats to the press in the West?

The deterioration of press quality. The laziness of journalists, readers or television viewers who want everything reduced to sound bites. What the French economist and politician Jacques Delors calls “fast food information”. During my 30-year career, I’ve witnessed the people-ization of the written press – the space for international and even national news on important issues has been cut to accommodate ▶

► the “lifestyle” section, sports, people, and the thing I hate, and not because I’m a snob, local news.

The loss of independence is another real threat. A free press needs to have financial means that are independent of governments and independent of the big economic interests. Yet the number of readers buying quality press is shrinking. Yesterday (17 April 2008), the New York Times announced a loss. In France, Le Monde recently announced a loss and job cuts. Advertising and ad revenues are shifting to the internet, away from the classic print media.

As a result there are agencies surviving thanks to major public subsidies, for instance, with the consequent threat to their independence.

In any case, the media always run this risk, not just from governments, but also from company owners. That’s why there are constant attempts to create instruments, like conscience clauses, designed to protect the independence of editors and journalists, with laws that vary in different countries.



© Flickr

«People-ization» of the written press: but famous Chinese actress Maggie Cheung has other plans.

Yet we mustn’t forget there are many countries in the world where the press has so many other crushing problems they would be only too happy to have problems like these.

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Focus

Koyo, a place for dialogue between two cultures

On a piece of cloth spread out on the floor, a poet is painting the letters of his poem in French. He translates it orally into Toro Tegu for the six Dogon villagers of Koyo, in northern Mali, who work with him. Immediately they trace their graphic characters on the same cloth. The poet and the painters are responding each in his own way to the spirit of the place. The work produced here belongs neither to the French nor the Dogon culture – it opens a new space of dialogue and creation.

It will soon be eight years since Yves Bergeret from France and Hamidou Guindo, Alguima Guindo, Belco Guindo, Yacouba Tamboura, Dembo Guindo and Hama Alabouri Guindo from Mali started working together every year.

A unique experiment in dialogue between two cultures and two art forms is turning space into speech, a place into a poem. But it led to the creation of a school and a museum of a new and different kind.

▶ In the summer of 2000, I arrived alone in the village of Koyo, on the top of a mountain in northern Mali, 1000 kilometres from Bamako. You can only get there on foot, and some climbing is required. About 500 inhabitants. Houses of earth and stone among orange rocks – materially, very poor. Yet here the mountain – simple, epic and so beautiful – speaks. As a poet, I read space, which is the Other's speech, and I answer. I therefore wrote about this village, perceiving that one lives there only by listening to the spirit of this mineral environment set on the edge of the desert.

I came back often. I learned the village was Dogon, without writing; it is the most active of the easternmost Dogon ethnic groups' and the only one remaining on top of a mountain. In the plain, Peul and Tuareg nomads are dominant. Up above, in Koyo, I gradually got to know six farmers who painted, on the inner walls of their houses: Hamidou Guindo, Alguima Guindo, Belco Guindo,



© UNESCO/Yves Bergeret

Creating a blue triptych in the Painters House, July 2007.

Yacouba Tamboura, Dembo Guindo and Hama Alabouri Guindo.

When I met them, they had on their walls large checkerboards in ocre, black and white, adorned with a few graphic characters – strange, deep gestures expressing their mineral setting. They cultivate this environment almost bare-handed, in meticulous fashion, in little terraces next to basins of water between the rocks on the summit's plateau.

Accepted by the village, I suggested to these painters during

my third stay that together we should create poem-paintings about the place, on cloth at least the size of sheets or floor coverings; I had already practiced this approach of creation as dialogue in Haiti with carpenter-painters and in Senegal with painters of pirogues.

Creation as dialogue

We took one step at a time. Gradually I learned the village language, Toro Tegu. Little by little the traditional chief, the elders and the painters showed me around their mountain, even the remote and secret places. They taught me certain rites to approach these places.

They imparted some myths and the powers of certain ancestors. Yes, after my 20th working visit, I can say the place where they live is the place of intelligence, of initiatory knowledge and of a vigilant kind of ethics. The space is words in action. The place is a poem. Certain women elders in the village, during an occasional night ceremony, sing and dance the reminders and the reactivation of the founding words for the entire community. ▶



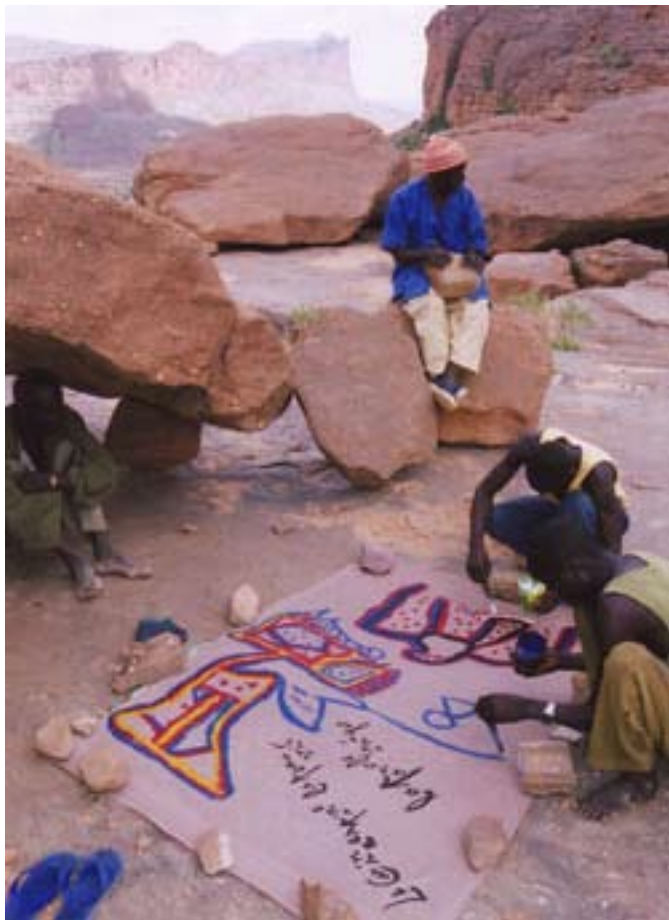
© UNESCO/Yves Bergeret

The painters and the poet are mounting an exhibit in the open air, Koyo.

► We now proceed as follows. The painters are 30 to 50 years old, I am somewhat their elder. As traditional chief, Alabouri Guindo, who is the same age as I am, always comes with us. First we walk on the mountain for a long time, to encounter the visible and the invisible. Then the painters derive the theme we will work on together from our day of walking. On the cloth spread on the ground outside, I paint the letters of the poem I compose. With the participation of the village chief, I translate the poem. Immediately the painters paint their graphic figures on the same cloth. Then, as they put it, they “read me what they have written” and ask me to note it.

This is our dialogue of creation: a poet who reads space and animistic farmers inventing graphic designs to express the same thing, in tandem.

In the work, each one’s thought has its place. Each writes according to his graphic method. The work is a third entity, never exclusively in their world or mine. Powerfully modern. Together we pay intense



© UNESCO/Yves Bergeret

The poet and the painters responding their own way to the spirit of the place.

attention to the human and sacred beauty of the place. And, what amounts almost to the same thing on this mountain, we also pay intense attention to the ethics of speaking and listening. We create a work that makes visible and transmits oral heritage, which is thereby strongly reactivated, and produces active poetic speech.

In the same process we also create our poem-paintings on stones that we raise and leave where they are, to guard the village, the ancestors and the spirits.

A welcoming village keeping its distance

Renting the works on cloth (and a few on paper) to galleries (like the Museo nazionale Pignorini in Rome, for one) funds their production and the development project defined by the village. In 2000 the village was struggling to survive on top of the mountain; desertification and poverty drove people to descend and no doubt adapt to the plain. But our dialogue of creation simultaneously reactivated heritage and made it possible to install water reservoirs, a health worker, a school for 50 children in a single class, etc.

In 2006, we built a “Painters’ House” at a short distance from the village, because visitors and tourists are starting to show up. The uninhabited house fruitfully and vigilantly channels curiosities.

The pride of the whole village, the house’s interior walls bear the vast and complex designs of the painters, my companions in creation, and express in a very dynamic modern medium the deep thought and beauty of the place. These are enlivened by the encounter between oral heritage and the poet who writes; all of these paintings talk about the fecundity and permanence of speech.

In 2007, very actively involved in creation and transmission, the painters and I founded five more “Painters’ Houses” on the plain at the foot of the mountain. The village welcomes visitors, but keeps its distance.

*Yves Bergeret, French poet
With this article, the UNESCO Courier joins in the
celebration of World Day for Cultural Diversity for
Dialogue and Development (21 May)*

Marin Držić, ingenuous genius

Considered one of the most important Renaissance playwrights, Marin Držić from Croatia (1508-1567) saw the Mediterranean as a theatre, where the laughing mask of comedy can quickly turn into a cynical and terrifying grimace.

Scorned by his contemporaries, admired by his compatriots today, he proved to be one of the most remarkable authors of his region and his time, unjustly unknown on the international scene. In honour of the 500th anniversary of his birth, a date UNESCO commemorates, the Courier presents an abbreviated version of the rebellious dramatist's sad and peculiar life.

Marin Držić wrote for only ten years and left behind ten plays, all in the Croatian language. Only a few letters and official documents have come down to us from the period before 1549, year his first play "Tirena" was published. He was past 40 when he began to write.



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Scene from «Dundo Maroje,» Marin Držić's most famous play.



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Marin Držić medal.

Like many talented and penniless writers, Držić did his best to please the public. His writing style was light, never pompous, and respectful of the rules of the literary genres he chose.

Everything he penned was new, original, modern – clearly to excess, because his countrymen failed to understand him and he was mocked. He must be the only writer ever to have maintained such an ambivalent relationship with Dubrovnik, which was one of the era's most flourishing Mediterranean coast city-states, though it never became more than marginally influential. The "Slav Athens" surrounded by powerful neighbours like Turkey and Italy nonetheless managed to keep its independence for centuries, thanks to the skilful if not always virtuous diplomacy of its government.

As the years went by, his frivolous farces grew more complex, highlighting the tragic dimension of his characters. The naïve old man, for instance, victim in the early plays of all sorts of intrigue, ►



© UNESCO/Ariane Bailey

« Pred dvorom », one of Dubrovnik's squares where the yearly theatre festival takes place.

- ▶ becomes a victim of his own illusions, not to say the author's alter ego.

Unpopular celebrity

By criticizing the society he lived in, he hoped to improve it, to rouse spirits, to shine a light on certain political dysfunctions. But the petty bourgeoisie is unforgiving when it feels threatened. Constantly criticized and even accused of plagiarism, Držić refused to be intimidated. His vitriolic rebuttals, however, only made him all the more unpopular.

Since the mid-19th century, Marin Držić is a classic in Croatia. He is considered a writer brimming with talent but also with human weaknesses, a man oppressed by the daily tedium of the small society he sprang from, incapable of finding his place within it, constantly fleeing it and coming back, a victim of his own genius but also of others' jealousy, and incapable of keeping his mouth shut.

In Yugoslavia in Tito's time, he was hoisted to the summit of the cultural and historical pantheon,

embodying the sort of figurehead that could help forge a Yugoslav cultural identity. Not a single year of the famous Dubrovnik theatre festival goes by without one of his plays being staged in front of an elite audience – the same audience he aimed for when he was alive, except larger.

The grand illusion

Born into a family of tradesmen who had lost their aristocratic titles due to the treachery of a distant ancestor, Držić trained to be a priest. But at age 30, he was still living with his parents at their expense, until they went completely bankrupt. This financial ruin is said to have drastically altered, for the rest of his life, his outlook on high society, which he both craved and condemned.

The Dubrovnik senate then paid for him to study church law in Italy. He lived the good life in Sienna, keeping company with the nobility and briefly taking up the position of rector at the university. Returning to Dubrovnik, he entered the service of an Austrian adventurer count, traveling with him to Vienna and Istanbul before returning home to start writing plays – “Dundo Maroje” being the most famous. He also acted on stage, did menial work for the municipal government and squandered his small inheritance.

In 1562, three years after his last play “Hecuba”, tired and disappointed, he left Dubrovnik and his debts behind and moved to Venice. Fortunately, he knew how to play the organ, which allowed him to survive, but his resentment ran deep.

He traveled to Florence, writing four letters to Cosmo di Medici urging him to overthrow the Dubrovnik senate, “this 20-headed monster tyrannizing the people” and to establish a just government. The letters are of great literary quality, but politically absurd. “We have nothing to fear,” he tells the Florentine duke, forgetting that Dubrovnik's continuing stability was what interested the period's great powers, not whether its government was just.

Did Cosmo ever read the letters? No one knows. Držić waited in vain for his answer and finally returned to Venice where he died.

Ines Sabalić, journalist (Croatia)

Next month

Tribute to Claude Lévi-Strauss

Claude Lévi-Strauss is celebrating his hundredth anniversary this year. As a tribute to his life and work, the UNESCO Courier will devote its next issue to the famous anthropologist.

A selection of articles he wrote for our magazine since the beginning of the 1950s, unpublished documents, as well as his photos and sketches since the 1930s will be made available.

You will be able to listen to his lecture on "Race and Culture" at UNESCO in 1971, a recording made public for the first time. The Courier will also present the video of his speech on the occasion of the celebration of our Organization's 60th anniversary in 2005.



© UNESCO/Michel Ravassard

Claude Lévi-Strauss at UNESCO, in 2005.

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Partners

Press freedom and freedom of information, are the founding principles for good governance, development and peace. On World Press Freedom Day, UNESCO pays tribute to the courage and professionalism of the many journalists killed and wounded while carrying out their professional activities.



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"The Spiritual Globe", by Robert Rauschenberg.

Several of UNESCO's Partners:

Established in 1987, Article 19 fights for all hostages of censorship, defends dissenting voices that have been muzzled, and campaigns against laws and practices that silence.

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Article 19 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."

IFEX (<http://www.ifex.org/en>)

Meeting point of vital importance for the journalists and the media organizations, the International



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- ▶ Freedom of Expression and Exchange Network groups 81 member organisations in 55 countries and more than 17,000 subscribers.

Since its creation, the IFEX network has not only enhanced the worldwide collection, production and

distribution of information on all issues related to press freedom but also increased exchanges between developing countries. IFEX issues 2000 alerts per year, a weekly newsletter in five languages, and coordinates joint campaigns.

WAN (http://www.wan-press.org/article.php3?id_article=390)

Founded in 1948, the World Association of Newspapers groups 77 national newspaper associations, individual newspaper executives in 102 nations, 12 news agencies, and 11 regional press organisations. It is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation.

In all, the Association represents more than 18,000 publications on the five continents. It has formal consultative status to represent the newspaper industry at UNESCO, the United Nations and the Council of Europe.



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