UNESCO
the Courier

April 1999

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No farewell to arms

Leila Shahid: the resolve of a Palestinian envoy

The spell of sport

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Marketing in Quinua, near Ayacucho.

Ayacucho: an uneasy calm

Photos by
Alejandro Balaguer

Festive traditions are reviving in the Peruvian highlands where the Shining Path guerrillas once held sway. But 20 years of civil war have left lasting wounds

Francisco Díez-Canseco Távara*

Ayacucho, capital of the Peruvian department of the same name, still lives on edge nearly 20 years after the Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) guerrillas first went into action there. Relief over the guerrillas' defeat is matched by the tension of an "armed peace" maintained by the continued presence of underground elements of this terrorist organization in nearby districts and provinces.

Also known as Huamanga, the name given to the city by the Spaniards when they founded it on 29 January 1539, Ayacucho sits 2,752 metres up in a lush valley in the western cordillera of the Andes. Its 100,000 inhabitants share a double heritage, speaking the Quechua language and living in accordance with Indian traditions, irrespective of social class. The local elite has managed to preserve this tradition of cultural duality, avoiding the social discrimination which has marred it elsewhere in Peru.

Ayacucho is the cradle of the Wari culture which produced a remarkable pre-

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*President of the Peruvian Peace Council

▶ Inca empire and displays its mixed heritage with a rich musical tradition blending the sounds of Andean *huayno* dance music with a distinct romantic element of Spanish origin. At no time is the city more vibrant than during Holy Week, when Christian and Indian religious devotion reaches its apogee in Ayacucho's 37 churches, (officially there are 33, to match the age of Christ at his death).

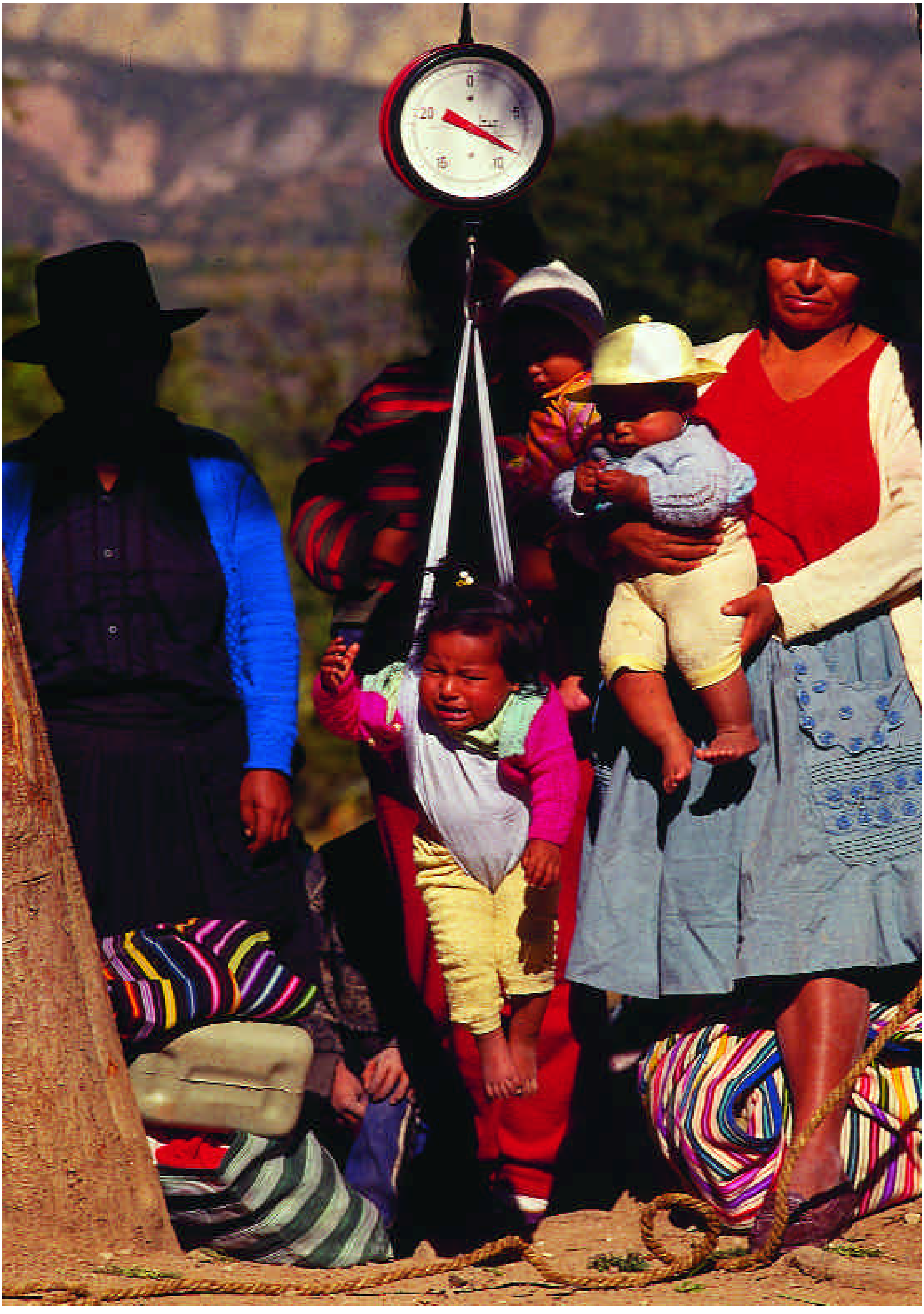
The festival was cancelled for several years for fear of bombs and ambushes and because the curfew ruled out after-dark processions, but it bounced back in 1993, after the capture of the Shining Path's leader, Carlos Abimaël Guzmán, on September 12, 1992.

Major historical landmarks are dotted around the city, and include the Pampa de Quinua, site of the Battle of Ayacucho which clinched Latin America's independence from Spain. The battlefield is now shaking off its military associations to stress cultural activities, including the *Encuentro de Teatro*, which hosts theatre groups from all over the world. ▶

Above, arid hilltops around Ayacucho, almost 3,000 metres above sea level.

Opposite page, high-altitude health care. Women gather to have their children weighed.

Children at school in the village of Huanta.

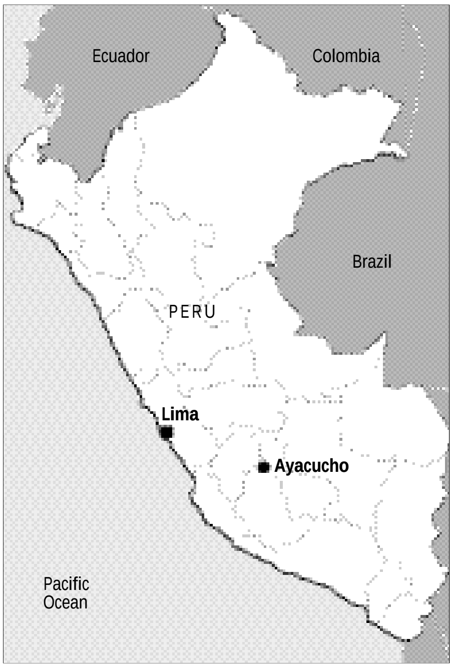


Photos © Alejandro Balaguer, Biosfera/Rapho, Paris

Above, the festival of crosses at Luricocha. A hundred crosses, some over 5 metres high, are blessed in the village church.

▶ But the restored festive spirit and the return to an almost normal daily life cannot hide the wounds left by years of terror and violence. New social problems have cropped up as some of the city's youth have joined the dozen of gangs which attack, rob and kill. They're mostly made up of young men who have had close brushes with the guerrillas, to whom in many cases they have lost a family member.

There is also the problem of the destitute refugees from guerrilla violence who have invaded the city, where they now prefer to stay rather than risk returning to the uncertainty of their rural homes. The department of Ayacucho was by far the



Above, on All Souls Day dancers in Ayacucho pay tribute to the dead.

Photos © Alejandro Balaguer, Biosfera/Rapho, Paris

Ayacucho's theatre festival, held in the last week of May, hosts 400 performers from all over the world.The event was created in 1978.

worst hit by the Shining Path's terror. More than 10,000 of its inhabitants were killed, 3,000 more disappeared and 170,000 were forced from their homes—in all, a third of the total population.

The cradle of many cultures and a city of contrasts, with colonial churches, narrow old streets, sunlit mornings, cloudy afternoons and nights of revelry and *huayno* dancing, Ayacucho is gradually recovering.But it needs time to rebuild a social fabric rooted in solidarity, a traditional feature of Andean communities.

Although the years of curfew—when nobody ventured out after eight at night and shops and restaurants tightly bolted ▶

© Alejandro Balaguer, Biosfera/Rapho, Paris

their doors—are a thing of the past, there is still a state of emergency in Huamanga province and in four of the 11 other provinces which make up the department. This means some constitutional rights are suspended and the army has free rein to search public buildings and private houses.

Strolling through the quiet streets of Ayacucho under a cloudless sky, you would think nothing could prevent the return of peace. But until the inhabitants can once again exercise their basic rights and steps are taken to reduce poverty and marginalization, there will be no true and lasting peace. ■

A Holy Week procession in Ayacucho. Latin America's oldest church stands in the city.

The cost of the "**dirty war**"

Carlos Abimaël Guzman was a philosophy professor at the University of Ayacucho when he founded the Shining Path breakaway faction of the Peruvian communist party and launched his "enduring people's war". He began it in May 1980 with a symbolic act—a commando burned ballot boxes in Chuschi, a remote village in the area, two days before elections were to be held.

The country had just emerged from 12 years of army rule, poverty was spiralling out of control and anarchy reigned. At first the well-organized guerrillas were welcomed by the population, especially as they handed out plots of land. But things started going wrong when the rebels began executing "traitor" peasants and leaders of community groups and installed a ruthless and bloody tyranny based on fuzzy futurist reasoning.

The guerrillas and their "enemies", the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement, a rebel group founded in 1983 and destroyed by its 1996 seizure of hostages at the Japanese embassy in Lima,were both defeated in the "dirty war".

But the toll was enormous—more than 26,000 dead, 4,000 missing and 50,000 children orphaned. The government has put its cost at more than $25 billion—the equivalent of Peru's foreign debt, on which interest charges alone absorb a third of the foreign exchange earned by exports of fish,copper, zinc and silver.

President Alberto Fujimori, elected in 1990 and re-elected five years later, began an extensive structural adjustment and privatization programme. He also curbed civil liberties after what the rest of the world calls his 1992 "civilian coup d'etat", when he dissolved parliament, suspended constitutional rights and sacked more than 500 magistrates.

Hyperinflation was beaten—falling from 2,700 per cent in 1989 to just 7 per cent last year—and economic growth set a Latin American record in 1994 with a figure of 13 per cent.Growth slowed last year to two per cent, mainly because of torrential rains set off by the El Niño weather phenomenon and the effects of the Asian economic crisis. According to the World Bank, 54 per cent of Peru's 25 million people live below the poverty line and underemployment affects half the active population.

■

EDITORIAL

Peace **without** victory

UNESCO/Ines Forbes

Federico Mayor

We live in a world where the gap between rich and poor keeps on growing. On the sports field, or failing that, in streets, courtyards, or fields, such differences disappear like magic.

UNESCO's approach to sport is summed up in its 1978 International Charter of Physical Education and Sport. These activities, the Charter says, "should seek to promote closer communion between peoples and between individuals,together with disinterested emulation,solidarity and fraternity, mutual respect and understanding, and full respect for the integrity and dignity of human beings."

The promotion of ethical values—especially to combat marginalization and violence—is central to this approach. It stresses the necessity for sport to be open to everyone, starting with young people who are all too often sidelined because they are physically or mentally disabled, because they live in problem areas or just because they are female.

UNESCO's focus is on promoting sport for all. It believes that in a society in which people need to be equipped for lifelong learning, sport can make a vital contribution to education. For education involves much more than spoon-feeding information. Its ultimate purpose is to stimulate people's capacity to think,create and interact with others and to use this capacity in order to be self-reliant, while also helping others to improve their well-being and quality of life.Sport is an incomparable way of achieving these aims.

We live in a world where the gap between rich and poor keeps on growing. On the sports field, or failing that, in streets, courtyards, or fields, such differences disappear like magic. People compete against each other, but they also get together in teams, using weapons that are for once entirely peaceful: speed,strength,skill, endurance and intelligence—qualities that have nothing to do with social status.

We live in a violent world.In cities, where two-thirds of humanity will soon be living, even young children go out onto the sports field bursting with the aggression they have accumulated in their daily lives. And here too, a kind of miracle takes place and the aggression is transformed.Its negative and destructive charge is transmuted into a positive desire to beat one's opponent—not to achieve victory at all costs and by any means, but fairly, in a contest governed by rules that both sides observe.In these conditions sport becomes a school where people can give vent to their aggressive instincts and at the same time learn tolerance and respect for others. Those who practice sport become aware of forces which, if they are not curbed,might blindly take over their lives.

We live in a world of worsening national, ethnic and religious antagonisms. The capacity of sport to unite people—almost to weld them together—is obvious these days. It culminates in the Olympic Games and the soccer World Cup, which have given the world so many ennobling images of comradeship. Our pleasure is all the greater because it is shared on an unprecedented scale. No other modern social event makes people feel so strongly that they belong to a global village.

But unfortunately there is more to sport than this. Sport is not monolithic: it takes many forms, and is riven by differences and disagreements. When sport hits the headlines it does not always glorify the heroes who have won our admiration by their performances on the field.Behind the scenes, but increasingly in the spotlight,is a world of wheeling and dealing, drug-taking, and athletes who are subject to premature specialization and intolerable stress. Barbaric chauvinism takes over when public opinion and the enthusiasm of supporters are fired up to fever pitch.

In poor countries, four out five young people still have no access to adequate sports facilities and training. The stakes are so high in big sporting events that only the results count: the purpose of sport goes by the board. The designation of winners and losers is more important than bringing together athletes to compete under a set of rules. This is a far cry from the "happiness" evoked by the French poet Paul Verlaine—the happiness of "peace without victory". ■

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Sombre legacy:oil-polluted marshes in Ogoniland, Nigeria.

Indigenous on big

Sophie Boukhari*

Transnational companies which mine and harvest raw materials on the rich lands of indigenous peoples no longer 'have it all their own way'

"It's hard to explain what's happened to us. All we have left is our name: Amungme. The mountains, the rivers, the forests—everything—belongs to Freeport and the government now. We have nothing left."

These words of an old man in Irian Jaya (Indonesian-ruled West Papua), reported by members of Survival International, a non-governmental organization, sum up the loss and injustice felt by millions of indigenous peoples around the world. For more than 30 years, according to many NGOs, the United Nations, European Members of Parliament and U.S. Senators, these "original" inhabitants of our planet have watched their land being polluted, their holy places destroyed and their families wasting away or dying in the name of a "development" they are the last to benefit from.

In Indonesia, the U.S. firm Freeport-McMoRan, in association with the British company Rio Tinto and local authorities including ex-President Suharto, according to Survival, has rights to an area as big as Belgium in the world's largest gold reserve, which is also very rich in copper. Mining has polluted the rivers, destroyed one of the world's best-preserved virgin forests and desecrated religious sites. Many NGOs have denounced the army for using violence against people protesting this damage.

In Colombia, 5,000 Uwa Amerindians are resisting the use of their sacred lands by Occidental Petroleum. After threatening mass suicide, they have attracted so many supporters that Shell has said it will pull out of its partnership with Occidental in the area.

With Shell, it's a case of once bitten, twice shy. In Nigeria, the company is facing stiff opposition from the Ogoni and Ijaw people, who are demanding that it should leave unless they obtain rights to the rich oil deposits on their lands. In conjunction with the government, Shell began drilling in Ogoniland in 1958 and has since extracted an estimated $30 billion worth of oil.

In 1995, a World Council of Churches fact-finding mission reported that the local people had no electricity, telephones or basic health facilities and that the environment was seriously damaged. The Ogonis say Shell had close links to the army, which crushed any protests. The crisis came to a head in November 1995, when nine Ogoni leaders, including the writer Ken Saro-Wiwa, were executed by hanging.

Activism has paid dividends

Many cases could be cited in which the activities of transnational companies working hand in glove with local authorities bring destruction, corruption, division and death to the lands of indigenous peoples. This unacceptable situation has bolstered the determination of the world's indigenous

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*UNESCO Courier journalist

peoples take business

people, who number around 300 million worldwide. During the 1980s, they began to organize themselves and in 1982 a special UN working group helped strengthen their networks and brought them to international attention.

Their position was summed up in the 1992 Declaration of Kari-Oca, in Brazil, whose preamble states that “We, the Indigenous Peoples, maintain our inherent rights to self-determination and to our lands and territories.” Their aim is to win decision-making power over company projects, the right to oppose them and, if they approve them, the right to share the profits. Their well-publicized battle has been highlighted by many human rights and pro-environment organizations, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Mine-Watch, Survival International and Friends of the Earth.

A foreign company can no longer start operations on indigenous lands without a mass of websites reporting on its every movement. The public in rich countries takes other action as well, often occupying a company’s headquarters and boycotting its products.

Such widespread activism has brought results. Indigenous people have long been considered by their states as obstacles to development, as groups which have to be at best assimilated and at worst eliminated. They are now recognized in several countries, including Denmark, the United States, Canada and Australia, as full citizens with rights to their lands. In the Philippines, they are negotiating to monitor mining projects. In Latin America, several countries have amended their national constitutions to give them some protection.

In the hope of further progress, they are waiting with great anticipation for the UN declaration on their rights which is due to be adopted before the end of the United Nations Decade for Indigenous Peoples (1995-2004).

They can boast of some small victories over the transnationals. They have forced several big firms, such as Mobil Oil in Peru, to drop projects. They have managed to get others to negotiate and to help restore the environment. They have also called for compensation for past injustices. But only rarely do they win a real share of profits, as some Inuits or North American Indians have managed to do.

Windfalls that revive ethnic tensions

“The transnationals can’t have it all their own way any more,” says Julian Burger, of the UN High Commission for Human Rights. The companies are losing an enormous amount of money because of sabotage and local resistance (Shell was forced to suspend operations in the Niger Delta in 1993) and perhaps even more by discrediting themselves in the eyes of consumers in rich countries.

On its website, Shell-Nigeria admits its “responsibility” to indigenous peoples. It says it spent $32 million in Nigeria in 1997, mainly to build schools and hospitals, and pledges that “until the end of the century, at least a fifth of its budget” will go to restoring the environment. In the same year, Freeport invested one per cent of its profits in Indonesia in development projects in Irian Jaya.

After adding environmental preservation to their codes of conduct and investing in “cleaner” infrastructures, more and more transnational firms are saying they will push human rights issues. But on the spot, things are very tough, they point out. They are up against local tribal and military leaders more interested in making money for themselves than helping the local community.

‘Many existing codes of conduct aren’t worth the paper they’re written on because they aren’t implemented’

Freeport says the first big payments it doled out in Indonesia to set up a development fund were stolen by a local government official. The sharing out of this windfall has revived old ethnic tensions and was a factor in setting off tribal warfare. And sometimes the anger of local people whose lives have been ravaged over several decades is too strong to be placated by a foreign company’s change of policy.

When attacked by human rights campaigners who accuse them of not opposing repression, and even taking part in it, the transnationals take refuge behind the principle of national sovereignty, saying only governments have the right to make decisions about their people. It is also very hard for them to refuse deals on grounds of principle or give up a large part of their profits in a competitive world where shareholders want maximum profits.

Ineffectual monitoring systems

As a result, many people wants to see a body of laws and international rules to regulate the operations of transnational firms. But attempts to do this have so far failed or had little effect. The UN centre set up in 1974 to draft a list of rights and responsibilities of transnationals was disbanded in 1993 and guidelines on the subject worked out by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) are not mandatory.

The most recent attempt in this direction was a European parliament resolution in January this year calling for monitoring of the operations of European transnationals, notably by holding well-advertised public hearings starting this June, where NGOs, trade unions and firms will be able to voice their grievances.

“Many existing codes of conduct aren’t worth the paper they’re written on because they aren’t implemented,” says Euro-MP Richard Howitt, who drafted the resolution. “We want European companies to be monitored to see how far they comply with international law in the field of environment, human rights and labour rights, in particular as far as indigenous peoples are concerned. Many indigenous groups face extinction and tragically European companies have been part of the threat to these communities.” ■

© AFP/Neal Panton, Paris

In Quito, Indian women demonstrate outside the headquarters of the Tripetrol company.

The oil **flows**, and the forest **bleeds**

Carlos Viteri Gualinga*

A group of Ecuadorian Indians are suing the oil company Texaco for 'ecocide' in the U.S. courts

One and a half billion dollars—that's how much compensation 75 Cofan, Secoya and Quechua Indians living in Ecuador's Amazon region want from Texaco. They accuse the U.S. oil giant of perpetrating "ecocide" during 26 years of operations in Ecuador and maintain that the damage is continuing because the firm is using old equipment.

The Indians have not sued in the courts of their own country but before a court in New York. Between 1964 and 1990, a consortium of a Texaco subsidiary and the Ecuadorian state oil company Petroecuador drilled 339 wells,including 232 which are still producing in the eastern part of the country and have been operated exclusively by Petroecuador since 1992.

The Indians quote studies done by environmental organizations such as the U.S. National Resources Defense Council and the Center for Economic and Social Rights, both based in New York, and on research by scientists from the Harvard School of Public Health. The Indians say Texaco has polluted about a million hectares of land and that some 30,000 people have contracted skin and intestinal diseases, had mysterious miscarriages and in some cases developed cancer.

Texaco is also accused of having released more than 75 million cubic metres of toxic liquid waste into rivers and marshlands, accidentally spilled more than 60,000 cubic metres of oil and left uncovered more than 600 dumps containing toxic material. In addition,it is said to have caused considerable deforestation along with soil erosion and reduced biodiversity.

Texaco has admitted that "oil spills sometimes do occur", but it cites investigations by two firms,Agra Earth and Environmental and Fugro McClelland, which say the Texaco subsidiary "acted responsibly" without causing "a lasting or significant impact" on the environment. Texaco adds that between 1995 and last year, under an agreement with the Ecuadorian authorities, it carried out a $40 million "remedial" programme.

'U.S. courts should not govern the activities of a sovereign foreign nation, just as foreign courts should not govern the activities of the U.S.'

The subsidiary, it says, "consistently complied with the laws of Ecuador and international petroleum industry environmental standards" and that all its operations "took place under the control and supervision of Ecuador's government". It adds that the matter should go before an Ecuadorian court because "U.S. courts should not govern the activities of a sovereign foreign nation, just as foreign courts should not govern the activities of the U.S."

These are the issues U.S.District Judge Jed Rakoff is due to decide in April 1999 at the end of a tortuous legal battle which has lasted more than five years. If he decides the case can be heard in the United States, it will set a very important precedent, opening the way for other non-U.S. citizens to sue U.S. firms in the United States itself.

The four governments Ecuador has had over the past six years have opposed such moves. For reasons of national sovereignty, they have said, the matter should be dealt with in Ecuador. But if that happened, unlike in the U.S. where "class actions" (joint suits) are allowed,every one of the 30,000 people affected would have to sue individually. On top of that, says their lawyer, Cristobal Bonifaz, the plaintiffs do not believe they will get justice in Ecuador because Ecuadorian judges lack experience of such cases and most of all because oil interests are too powerful there.

Thirteen million hectares—almost half the country—have been leased for exploration, mainly to international oil companies. Oil provides half of all Ecuador's exports and 40 per cent of its national income. It is considered the key to the country's progress, enabling some to argue that ecological damage is a price that has to be paid.

But this is nonsense. Ecuador's foreign debt has risen from $217 million before the oil boom to nearly $15 billion today, and 70 per cent of Ecuadorians live below the poverty line. And oddly enough, the oilfields are in the poorest parts of the country, where working conditions are tough and the pay bad.

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* Ecuadorian anthropologist

The oil companies are notorious for persuading local authorities to turn a blind eye to environmental damage and even for buying up polluted farmland so as to avoid demands for compensation or rehabilitation. The North American firm ARCO, which says it negotiates with the Indians, even got official permission to build security fences around its installations, along with private paramilitary guards, at a cost of nearly $2 million a month.

To end these three decades of harmful practices, the laws concerning oil operations should be thoroughly overhauled,and this is bound to involve co-operation between the state and civil society. Signs that things might be changing include talks between the government and indigenous peoples about oil and about setting up two protected areas in the Amazon region.

Meanwhile, graffiti on the walls of several towns proclaim that “the oil flows and the forest bleeds.” ■

The Kakadu controversy

Dennis Schulz*

Indigenous peoples and environmental groups have often been at loggerheads. But in Australia, one group of Aborigines has teamed up with environmentalists in a dispute over a uranium mine.

In 1996 the Australian government gave permission for the mining company Energy Resources of Australia (ERA) to begin work at the Jabiluka mining site, with uranium reserves estimated to be worth more than $8 billion.

The decision touched off a national and international controversy over Jabiluka, which lies in the middle of the Kakadu National Park, listed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

In a report last December, UNESCO called on the Australian government to put a stop to the mining project, saying Jabiluka threatened the environment of Kakadu and the cultural heritage of the Aborigines. A UNESCO committee will decide this July whether to put Kakadu—habitat for hundreds of species of wildlife and Australia’s oldest sites of human occupation dating as far back as 60,000 years ago—on its list of World Heritage Sites in Danger.

The Australian government says the UNESCO report contains errors of fact,law, science and logic. ERA says the report’s recommendations do not make “environmental,social or legal sense.”

Lobbying and demonstrations by a coalition of 3,500 environmentalists and the Mirrar Aborigines, the traditional owners of the site, was a contributing factor in prompting UNESCO to investigate the impact of mining on them and their environment.

Kakadu Aborigines remain split on the mining issue. There are only 28 Mirrar among the 500 Aborigines at Kakadu. Many Aborigines hope for Jabiluka’s commencement on economic grounds.

At present the Jabiluka project is continuing. ■

A protest breakfast at the Jabiluka site.

MIRRAR PEOPLE
THEIR HOMELAND

© Dennis Schulz, Australia

Eccentric **Pluto** is still a planet

It’s official:Pluto is a planet,and a major one at that, says the International Astronomical Union (IAU). However, Johannes Andersen, Secretary-General of the IAU, says he’s willing to bet that had Pluto been discovered today instead of in 1930,it might not have been classified as the ninth planet in the solar system.

As planets go, Pluto is rather unusual. To begin with, it is made of ice while the other eight “major planets” are either rocky or gaseous. Size is another strike against Pluto, which is even smaller than our moon. Finally, Pluto’s orbit is eccentric, making it the only planet to cross the path of another (that of Neptune).

Many scientists consider Pluto the leader of a new pack of bodies called trans-Neptunian objects (TNOs). But astronomers are still trying to decide how to classify the 100 TNOs discovered since 1992. Should they form a separate category or slip it in with the 10,000 “minor planets,” i.e. asteroids?

To resolve the issue of Pluto’s classification, the IAU asked astronomers around the world to cast their votes via email. News of the balloting caused a such a public outcry in favour of maintaining the status quo that the ballot was quickly cancelled.

Critics in the scientific community insisted that the proposed changes would do nothing more than confuse the general public. The emotional response came “largely because knowing all planets is something you learn in elementary school,” says Mike A’Hearn, an astronomer at the University of Maryland. People tend “to think of this as the way the universe is,” he adds.

It may take years before we get a really close-up view of Pluto. The U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) plans to launch the Pluto-Kuiper Express, an unmanned space probe in 2004. It will take another six years for the spacecraft to reach the planet. Meanwhile, says Andersen, astronomers will keep a careful eye on TNOs and their unofficial leader:Planet Pluto. ■

Pretending for

Simulation games are gaining popularity as educational tools in fields ranging from humanitarian action to business management and accident prevention

The policeman checks Sonia's passport and then directs her to the prison door with the barrel of his gun. She doesn't move. "Get in there quick," he shouts, pointing the weapon at her face. Surprised, she enters the cell where other detainees are crammed together in the semi-darkness. Outside, shouts, sirens, and explosions can be heard. After a while, the policeman comes back: "You want your passport? Then get down on your knees and pick it up." She hesitates a few seconds before obeying. "If you come back here, you know what's waiting for you? A bullet."

Sonia is starting to understand why a foreigner might want to seek asylum. She is not a refugee herself, but an 18-year-old French student who has come to the Parc de la Villette in Paris to visit an exhibition entitled "A different kind of journey—the paths of exile". She is taking part in a simulation exercise for which she has assumed the identity of Sybel, a 21-year-old Turkish girl whose photo appears at the entrance to the exhibition, along with photos of 11 other refugees of different nationalities, among them Luis, Leila, Vesna, Kana, Pavel, and Tarik. The stories of how they came to be exiles are acted out in detail by 27 professional actors who play the roles of officials, customs and police officers in a room as big as a gymnasium where airport customs offices and police headquarters have been reconstituted. There are even a minefield and a clandestine workshop.

In the three months after it opened in November 1998, the exhibition at La Villette attracted over 10,000 visitors. Its educational interest lies not so much in the words the actors use as in their behaviour as they make visitors experience the humiliations and contempt with which refugees are often treated. "I felt a profound sense of injustice," Sonia explained. "It takes a great deal of courage to do what Sybel did. I didn't know how much a person might have to go through simply to live like everyone else."

Empathy, the imaginative power to enter into the feelings of others and to identify with them, is a mechanism that is widely used nowadays to create an awareness among young people and adults in developed countries of the situation faced by refugees who seek asylum there. But this is just one of many applications of simulation games, which are, for example, used to familiarize children with the pollution hazards in Mexico City or Australian firemen with procedures for controlling forest fires. Today, universities and companies all over the world are using these games because they have proved to be a low-cost and effective method of preparing people for the world of work.

Role-playing in simulation games provides flashes of insight which improve the quality of our perception of others and of given situations. It changes the way we look at others. "I now think of the refugee problem in terms of individuals and not of figures," said Mark Madoga on leaving La Villette. "When I see a refugee on the TV news, I see above all a human being."

'I now think of the refugee problem in terms of individuals and not of figures. When I see a refugee on the TV news, I see above all a human being'

When bombs rain down

A similar result is obtained by "Passages", a simulation game created in 1995 by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), working with two psychologists and a game specialist. Like the La Villette exhibition, it seeks to make a broad audience aware of the situation confronting refugees, but it consists simply of a 30-page handbook and is much less costly and simpler to put into effect because only four leaders are needed for 50 participants. In four years, over 5,000 persons in Switzerland, Sweden, the Netherlands, Tunisia, Austria and Chile have taken part in the game—mostly scouts in the 12-to-18 age group, as well as students, teachers and NGO members.

One of the most intense experiences of "Passages" is when participants listen blindfold to a simulated bombing attack. There is complete pandemonium, and in the general panic, families split up. Parents and children start to call out for one another. Claire, a 34-year-old volunteer with an NGO based

Employees of a French automobile factory learn new skills via games.

© Antoine La Rocca, Paris

real

Asbel López*

© S. Daillot/UNHCR, Geneva

In Tunisia,over 700 people from 18 Arab countries and France took part in UNHCR's "Passages"game in 1996.

in Geneva, admits that even after several years' work with asylum seekers, she still did not understand why refugees were so insistent on keeping their families together—so much so that this was liable to become their only concern. "And then I too experienced the terrible sense of families being separated during the bombardment," she said. "For me the only thing that counted from then on in the game was family unity."

Role playing in action

Many companies now use simulation games to train their staff—from manual workers and technicians to executives—in such areas as marketing, production management and human resources. In France, a consultancy, Proconseil, decided to tap the rapid expansion of this market by creating a subsidiary dedicated solely to the development of adult training games: CIPE (International Centre for Educational Pedagogics). In the last ten years,the company has designed 25 games in 10 languages and trained more than 10,000 persons. Its thousand or so customers in 18 countries include the French companies Aérospatiale and Yves Saint Laurent, as well as the universities of the Sorbonne in France and Nuova Magini in Italy, a university technological institute in Spain and Harris Semiconductors in the United States.

The use of simulation games began to spread after the Second World War, notably to teach business management. The most popular of the early games, "Top Management Decision Simulation", was designed in 1956 by the American Management Association. In the 1970s, many courses giving an introduction to economics were developed, including the "Island Game" invented by psycho-sociologist Claude Zerbib, and Prof. Jean-Marie Albertini's "The Company in Action", a role game in which each participant plays in turn an official, an entrepreneur and a head of family.

In the field of air accident prevention, simulation exercises have become highly sophisticated. John Rolfe,an expert in this field, not only uses conventional high-tech flight simulators, but also includes such situations as hijacking and the sudden illness of a pilot. In co-operation with the Royal Air Force and British commercial airlines, Rolfe reconstructed the circumstances in which accidents occurred and created emergency situations which crews must learn to handle by following established procedures without being led astray by snap judgments.

The development of information technology and the Internet has encouraged the creation of simulation games designed among other things to develop commercial and electoral strategies,define the most convenient transport timetables and make population and climatic forecasts based on different scenarios.

Danny Saunders, who publishes *The International Simulation and Gaming Yearbook* which first appeared in London in 1991, says the number of simulation games has doubled in recent years. The United States, the United Kingdom and Finland are ▶

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* UNESCO Courier journalist

among the most active countries. In English-speaking business schools, simulation games are coming to be used as an assessment technique. "At the end of the course," Danny Saunders says, "a group of students are asked to propose at least two creative ways of leading a company out of a crisis situation based on an authentic case."

In Spain, the use of training games has also grown in recent years, according to José Luis Menes Soler, Training Director at the Zaragoza International Business School (CESTE) whose curriculum has offered courses including corporate simulation games for the past six years. According to Menes Soler, "it is a revelation for students to see how the consequences of their decisions in a particular area such as marketing or finance can affect a company's overall results, because all the areas of the business are inter-related." It might have cost their companies a great deal of time and money had recent graduates been obliged to learn these consequences in a real work situation.

Training South African entrepreneurs

Among the steps taken to correct the inequalities created during the apartheid era in South Africa, an Equality Act today requires companies to offer positions of responsibility to blacks, marginalized for so long that they often lack adequate experience. To remedy this shortcoming many South African companies use training games such as "Team Business", created by Business Education Design. The participants are divided into five groups, each of which is responsible for creating a company to manufacture and sell cardboard boxes. The players must find raw material suppliers, negotiate loans with banks, buy the necessary equipment and design their products.

'Observing the corporate process through simulation helps us to detect faults in our production system because it provides us with a model showing how things should really function'

According to Esmo Ndzimande, an executive with South Africa's ESKOM power company, this game is a valuable introduction to the general principles of management and prepares employees to react to rapid change. "What's more," he says, "observing the corporate process through simulation helps us to detect faults in our production system because it provides us with a model showing how things should really function."

According to a study by South Africa's National Productivity Institute (NPI), managers in some 50 companies in South Africa which have adopted this kind of training programme reported "improved teamwork and willingness to share tasks, as well as increased productivity, improved understanding and appreciation of the role of management, a reduction in conflict in the work situation, innovative ideas and efforts to implement cost savings."

Suitcases that didn't suit

Miriam Garza, an industrial engineer who teaches organization and production management courses at the University of San Luis Potosi in Mexico, uses CIPE's "Kit Cash" game to explain how companies function.

Her students are divided into three groups. They are asked to set up companies which are contending for the suitcase market. Each team starts out with the same amount of cash, and has to manage its budget, plan manufacturing, accounts and cash flow. As the game progresses, various difficulties arise, such as production delays caused by breakdowns and sudden changes in customer tastes.

One of the students, Gilberto Cruz, remembers that his team's first excursion into the market was disastrous. "Our suitcases were far more expensive than those made by the competition," he says. "We realized that we had not invested enough in machinery."

Forced to cut their production costs in order to compete, the young people had to reappraise the ideas they had studied in the classroom because they had not learned how to apply them in practice. "Until we realized that the market was not interested in our suitcases," Cruz adds, "we didn't understand the importance of good planning and sound market research. Seeing the other teams make a profit while we were crippled with debts was far more effective than any amount of classroom theory."

Training games are increasingly used. But how effective are they? Their advocates believe they are a marvellous way of capturing participants' attention. They illustrate complex processes in a simple manner and are a useful tool for making the public aware of all kinds of problems. But objective assessment methods are essential: in what sense and in which situations is simulation better than other teaching methods and why? According to Danny Saunders "that is the great challenge of the learning game". ■

UNESCO's **virtual** university

"John is teaching people how to operate a screw-making machine." Soon, the familiar image this sentence conjures of someone demonstrating a huge machine in front of a group of students will require a visual update. John will be sitting alone in front of his computer screen, his students will be scattered all over the world and the machine will, physically, not exist. Welcome to the age of online, three-dimensional training.

John will be able to teach his class from any place he likes because he and his students will be linked up through the Internet (see the UNESCO Courier, October 1998). There won't be any more need for an actual machine, which will be replaced by a "virtual" one—that is, a picture which includes the illusion of "depth"—the third dimension—and displays the machine from various angles. The advantages for students are obvious. They'll have the benefit of three-dimensional viewing and be linked in a network.

Such is the goal of UNESCO's "Virtual University" project. It involves "employing three-dimensional images until now used in computer game programmes, so as to create virtual environments in which people can learn," says Philippe Quéau, head of UNESCO's Information and Informatics Division.

The first step is to bring together two different worlds—official French educational institutions such as the University Institute for Teacher Training (IUFM), the National Centre for Distance Learning (CNED), and a private firm (Cryo) which creates virtual images and will contribute its three-dimensional simulation technology.

After bridging this gap, UNESCO hopes to find partners interested in helping to introduce the project to poor countries. The programme would sponsor the setting up of virtual educational communities and improve distance learning in science and technology. But for now, says Quéau, "the main thing is to obtain more funding to continue developing educational programmes using computers." ■

© Simon Bruty/Allsport/Vandystport, Paris

The **spell** of sport

Nifty footwork. A Zambian child's home-made football.

A harsh wind is blowing through big-time sport these days, highlighting corruption and drug scandals, enormous salaries, stock exchange raids on top teams and the exploitation of child workers who stitch balls or sports shoes.

Yet nothing checks the soaring popularity of sport. Millions of players and competitors strive for stardom and millions of fans cheer their heroes on. Egged on by the media, by politicians and by the makers of sports equipment, more and more people are falling under the spell of great sporting events which have become quasi-religious rituals.

Our survey looks at the ways in which these passions are fired and at the joys and successes they can bring. But it also examines the downside of a situation in which the myths attached to sport are manipulated by powerful forces.

Sport leads neither to perdition nor paradise. It should not be seen as the latest example of the opium of the people or as a pretext for violence. Nor is it a miracle solution which can neutralize dangerous tensions, promote greater freedom and improve human relations.

Most likely it is a mixture of all these factors. Certainly, as French sports historian Bernard Jeu has put it, it is an important way for societies "to confront themselves."

1. What’s in a game?

René Lefort and Jean Harvey *

Does sport create harmony or foment division? Or both at once?

Basketballer Michael Jordan’s announcement on January 13 that he was retiring made headlines all around the world. He was up there with Pelé, they said. The American superstar’s skill has dazzled everyone who has watched him dashing around a basketball court; as he leaps to dunk the ball in the net he seems to be momentarily suspended in the air. They call him “Air Jordan.”

But Jordan, the Chicago Bulls star whose income as a player last season was estimated at $30 million, is also at the head of a business empire. His impact on the U.S. economy is reckoned by *Fortune* magazine at $10 billion. His link with the sporting goods firm Nike is believed to have generated about $5.2 billion in sales of shoes and clothing.

Idol of the world’s youth he may be, but people argue about the role in society that he has—or hasn’t—played. The basketball shoes carrying his name have been stitched by child workers in sweatshops, say U.S. trade unions. He has never spoken up for Black causes, say leaders of the Black American community. Has he not set up thousands of young people for a big fall because he is such a symbol of social advancement and success? Try as they might to emulate him, their chances of succeeding are close to nil.

In fact, has he not been a huge publicity machine which has strengthened social inequalities in the U.S. and other countries and helped big transnational companies to conquer a world market?

In August 1998, notes Siavosh Ghazi in his article on page 20 of this issue, 40 Iranian women footballers were given permission to train in a stadium in Teheran for the first time in 20 years. In a sense, they are the heirs of the pioneers, led by Frenchwoman Alice Millat, who founded the International Women’s Sports Federation and then, in 1922, launched the first women’s Olympic games. Women athletes are still in a minority in the Olympics, after making their debut in tennis and golf. Only a little more than a third of the competitors at the last summer Olympics were women. Even today women are still battling for complete equality and fair treatment in sport.

People with physical disabilities have removed one barrier that discriminated against them in sport. More and more disabled athletes, using special facilities, are today playing the same sports as the non-disabled. They have their own sports meetings, and since 1960 they have had their own Olympic games. However, the presence of the disabled in mainstream clubs is still rare and the example of the Norwegian swimmer described on page 22 is an exception.

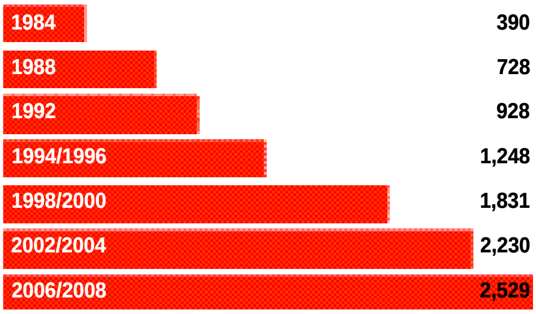
So is sport an instrument manipulated by the powerful? Or is it a lifeline for those who are marginalized and excluded by society? Can it be an

> *“It’s just a job. Grass grows, birds fly, waves pound the sand. I beat people up.”*
>
> **Muhammad Ali, U.S. boxer**

Children in a Nicaragua shantytown go for the ball.

© Julio Etchart/Panos Pictures, London

Olympic Games broadcasting fees (millions of dollars)



Note: Since 1994, there has been a two-year gap between the winter and summer Olympics. For the 2002/2004 and 2006/2008 games, fees are still being negotiated.
Source: International Olympic Committee

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* Respectively UNESCO Courier journalist and professor at the School of Human Kinetics, University of Ottawa, Canada

outlet for social discontent? The examples cited above provide no straightforward answer to these questions. In some cases sport serves the establishment; in others it can be a seedbed for social activism. At one and the same time it plays a host of contradictory social roles at local, national and international level.

Sport does not speak with a single voice. It is not monolithic. It holds different meanings for different social groups, partly depending on what they want to get out of it. For the well-heeled, sport can be a way of advertising their social status. Playing at exclusive golf, tennis or cricket clubs can be an opportunity to display membership of a privileged group. Amateur sport was controlled for a long time by such people.

At the other end of the spectrum, sport practised with the most rudimentary facilities can be a great form of self-expression for disadvantaged young people the world over, and may—in exceptional cases—offer them a way out of poverty and deprivation. Here the myth of sport as a ticket to upward mobility can be seen in its quintessential form. The profiles of a young Korean tennis prodigy (page 23) and a footballer from Côte d'Ivoire who finds himself out on the street after once being hailed as the Pelé of his neighbourhood (page 24) illustrate the force and fragility of this myth.

The kaleidoscope of sport also includes the big-time spectacular events which have become first and foremost a commodity whose economic importance and presence in the media are growing non-stop (see boxes below). And finally there's sport as it is enjoyed by so many people around the world—a pastime that helps to keep them fit and brings them together in a convivial setting. But here too the competition can be intense, and the atmosphere may turn sour. It's among amateur sportsmen and sportswomen that drug-abuse is rife and where on-the-field clashes can be the most violent.

Sport is something more than a mirror of the societies in which it is played. It is not a carbon copy of their inequalities and problems. It is a world in its own right, with its own life and its own contradictions. Through the medium of sport, countless volunteers, for example, organize activities and events that make a positive contribution to their communities (see article on Midnight Basketball in the U.S. on page 25). Through sport, a strong feeling of comradeship develops among athletes at all levels. In short, major social issues influence sport, just as sport can play a big part in helping to solve them.

In a world in which all gifted young athletes were talent-spotted and given equal opportunities to develop their skills, sporting encounters really would take place on a level playing field. But we do not live in an ideal world. The great myth surrounding sport is that it abolishes social divisions, or at least that its symbolic force gives it a greater capacity to do so than any other social activity. But the fact remains that the essence of sport is competition, and competition means making comparisons, setting up hierarchies and separating winners from losers. ■

© Rhodri Jones/Panos Pictures, London

A young couple play football on the banks of Lake Titicaca (Bolivia), the world's highest lake.

··· The economics of sport (estimates)

- ***Overall annual turnover: over $400 billion**
- ***U.S. annual turnover: nearly $200 billion**
- ***Soccer annual turnover: over $200 billion**
- **Annual growth: between 6% and 10%**
- **Share of GDP in rich countries: between 1% and 1.5%**
- **Share of world trade: 2.5%**
- **Sponsorship worldwide: nearly $7 billion**
- **Stock exchange value of the English football club Manchester United: more than $1 billion**
- **Ferrari's annual budget: nearly $150 million**
- **Michael Jordan's earnings in 1997: nearly $80 million**

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* These totals include equipment, construction of facilities, broadcasting fees, sponsorship and players' and competitors' earnings.

Source: L'Économie du sport, by Jean-François Bourg, to be published in the Encyclopedia Universalis.

Iranian women put on their running shoes

Siavosh Ghazi*

Sportswomen are slowly making headway in Iran even if men aren't allowed to watch them perform and vice versa

The day—22 August 1998—is engraved in Iranian history as a victory for women. Forty of them took part in an amateur football training session at Teheran's Hejab Stadium. Since the start of the country's Islamic Revolution in February 1979, women had been forbidden to play football. "Schoolgirls, students and older women were there that day simply because they loved football," Mahnaz Amir Shaghaghi, who coached the training session, says with a hint of pride.

Female enthusiasm for football really took off in November 1997 during the qualifying matches for the 1998 World Cup. When the Iranian team unexpectedly scored a narrow victory over the Australians, who were playing at home and were in tip-top form, the whole country exploded with joy, from the capital to the smallest villages. Millions of men and women poured into the streets.

A welcome for the returning heroes was set for a week later at the Azadi Stadium, south of Teheran. The authorities made it clear on radio and television that women would not be allowed into the stadium, but to no avail. Five thousand women forced their way in past astonished police, an event unseen since women were banned in 1992 from attending all-male sporting events and vice versa.

> **'Women had been allowed to play basketball, but not football. But whether you touch the ball with hand or foot, it's the same'**

The same delirium seized the country when the Iranians beat the U.S. team 2-1 in the French city of Lyons during the World Cup on June 21. It led to many appeals for women to be officially allowed to play football. The popular young Iranian actress Shifteh Farahani said she "preferred playing football to watching films." Faezeh Hashemi, a member of parliament (and daughter of former Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani), who has done much to promote women's sport, finally persuaded the authorities to give in, to the delight of female football fans. "Women had been allowed to play basketball, but not football," says Shaghaghi. "But whether you touch the ball with hand or foot, it's the same."

Before the Revolution, all sports were open to women but they only featured at national and international level in four of them—volleyball, basketball, athletics and swimming. Sportswomen recall how they were never encouraged. "Before

Ladies join Lord's

Last September, when London's all-male Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) voted to admit women to full membership some rejoiced that a bastion of male privilege had decided to join the 20th century just before the next one began.

"I am delighted and excited by the decision," said club president Colin Ingleby-Mackenzie. "Women are a very fine species." Not everyone was so rapturous, however. "This means the end of life as we know it," one middle-aged member was heard to say.

Cricket, an 11-a-side game with bat and ball that was invented in England over 200 years ago, has been played for years by women, as well as men, at national and international level. So why should there be so much fuss about one club's insistence on keeping its maverick sexist status? The answer is that MCC wrote the rules of cricket, ran the game until 1969, and still has a powerful if largely symbolic voice as guardian of the sport's heritage.

MCC's ground, Lord's, is for example the headquarters of international cricket's governing body, the International Cricket Council, which groups 9 countries or areas qualified to play top-level international test matches, as well as a list of 42 associate and affiliate members ranging from Argentina to Zimbabwe.

Last September's poll, in which nearly 80 per cent of MCC's 17,500 members (average age 57) took part, was the club's third vote on women's membership. On the first occasion in 1991, the pro-women lobby got a drubbing. Second time round, in February 1998, they won 56 per cent of votes. In September the two-thirds majority required to change the club's membership rules was just achieved.

Some observers wondered whether the result was prompted by a sense of survival rather than a real change of heart. MCC was worried that it might fall foul of possible UK legislation requiring private clubs with any kind of public role to admit both sexes. An MCC application for National Lottery funding had been turned down partly because of the sexist admissions policy. Perhaps some "yes" voters thought that since there was an 18-year waiting list for membership they would not have to live with the consequences anyway.

In March it was announced that ten honorary women members had joined the club. By virtue of a specially drawn up dress code, they will be allowed to rub shoulders with men in the club pavilion—but only as long as their shoulders are covered. There is even talk of selling MCC silk nighties in the club shop. "Women are going to be looked after in every conceivable capacity when they become members," Ingleby-Mackenzie was reported as saying. ■

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* Journalist in Teheran, Iran

© Sygma, Paris

The 2nd Islamic Women's Games, held in Teheran in December 1997.

1979, you had to choose between sport and the veil," says Hashemi.

From the start of the Revolution, the government tried to curb women's sports. "The hardliners had a reactionary reading of religion," says a journalist. "It all boils down to the way you interpret the scriptures." But even the moderates were against women wearing sports gear in front of men. This was only allowed amongst other women.

These days there are women active in 25 sports, including skiing, volleyball, basketball, shooting, rowing, karate, judo and gymnastics. The strict segregation of men and women has had some positive effects. "Many women have been trained in recent years as referees and coaches—about 16,000 of them, in all sports," says Shaghaghi. Iran now has 56 international-level women trainers for volleyball and six for fencing, for example. And in recent months, women have been taking part in motor-racing. "Theoretical and practical courses began three months ago and have been a great success," says a reporter on the daily newspaper *Zan* (which means "woman" in Persian).

"The separation of the sexes has encouraged many traditional Iranian families to allow their daughters to play sports, which they hadn't up till then," says Jilla Amiri, who played football during the time of the Shah. Sport is also more open to young women from the middle or lower classes.

But equipment and facilities are very meagre. "Most sports centres are reserved for men," says Amiri. "We don't have a tenth of the facilities they have. Radio and television never report on women's sports, not even championship matches. Pictures of such events cannot be shown and this is a serious block to the development of women's sport."

The women's daily *Zan* is an exception. It reports on women's sports and encourages its readers to play up to professional level. The paper is run in fact by Faezeh Hashemi, who managed to get a cycle path built in a park south of the capital where boys and girls could ride their bikes together.

'The separation of the sexes has encouraged many traditional Iranian families to allow their daughters to play sports, which they hadn't up till then'

Even more significantly, she has pushed the idea of an Islamic Women's Games, of which two have since been held in Iran. In 1993, 11 countries took part, with a total of 345 women in eight sports, including shooting, table tennis, handball and basketball. In 1997, nearly 1,000 women from 21 countries came to Teheran to compete in 13 sports, including tennis, chess, gymnastics, karate, swimming and equestrianism. Countries involved included Syria, Bangladesh, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Indonesia and Kuwait. The events were shown on television, but were filmed from a distance. Even these broadcasts were cancelled after objections from conservatives.

Such occasions give Iranian women a chance to compete against foreign teams, even if they themselves are not so skilled. For higher profile international events, the ban on showing themselves in sports gear, especially shorts, in front of men remains a sizeable obstacle. But a woman was in the national shooting team at the last Olympic Games and an Iranian woman skier won a bronze medal at the Asian Games at the end of last year. These are two sports that may well attract growing numbers of Iranian women in times ahead. ■

"It's impossible to have close friends in tennis, because sooner or later you'll be playing against them."

Arantxa Sánchez Vicario,
former top seed
woman tennis player.

Training for **life**

Ole Kristian Bjellaanes*

Disabled Norwegian student Stig Morten Sandvik has won medals as a swimmer. But sport has above all helped him achieve confidence and self-respect

"It's thanks to sport that I'm so independent in life. Sport has meant everything to me," says Stig Morten Sandvik, a 28-year-old Norwegian political science student who trains for 12 hours every week to become a better swimmer.

Stig Morten, who lives at Bodoe, in Nordland county, was born with Arthrogryposis multiplex congenita (AMC), a disease which affects the muscles. This makes him dependent on a wheelchair, although he can also move around using crutches.

He was six when his mother first took him to the swimming pool. He took to the water and soon came to feel that swimming would play a big part in his life. The gold medals he has won in World Championships and the bronze medals he took in the Paralympics in 1992 and 1996 prove just how important it became.

But for Stig Morten, as for many other disabled persons, sport has far more to do with managing his life than with winning prizes. "My sporting activity made me a normal Norwegian boy. I was able to do something as well as all my friends," he says. It also made him very independent in his daily life. When he was 16 and about to graduate from high school, he chose to live alone. Now he is moving in with his girlfriend.

Bringing the barriers down

He is sufficiently independent to be able to clean his apartment by himself. He cooks and goes shopping on his own. "The only thing I can't do is change light bulbs," he says.

In Norway most disabled people have their own houses or apartments, and look after themselves, sometimes with support from personal care assistants. Very few of them live in special institutions. Stig Morten feels totally integrated, and few people even comment that he has a girlfriend without a handicap. He is also convinced that his sport gives him a self-respect and self-confidence that disabled people who don't practice such an activity may lack.

Some 22,000 physically and mentally handicapped people are members of Norway's association for disabled athletes. In 1996 the Norwegian sports movement decided to make an effort to integrate sport for disabled people and sport for "normal" people. This is in line with developments in the rest of a society where disabled people are provided with facilities such as transport and personal assistance to help their social integration.

Around $700,000 are being invested every year in programmes to bring disabled and non-disabled athletes together in the same clubs. Stig Morten is himself now a member of an ordinary sports club. Sports clubs are also receiving money to improve access for disabled people to arenas which were originally built only for the non-disabled.

In some sports such as shooting, disabled and non-disabled athletes can perform on equal terms if suitable arrangements are made. In many cases, according to the association for handicapped athletes, it is only social barriers that keep handicapped and non-handicapped apart.

"This is going to change, and it is very important that it should. But I think it may take 10 or 15 years before all the barriers come down," Stig Morten says.

© Scan Pix, Oslo

Stig Morten Sandvik.

Another thing that helps to bring barriers down and develop greater tolerance, Stig Morten thinks, is the fact that he trains in the pool with non-disabled children and adults.

Stig Morten Sandvik has achieved success in the swimming pool, and hopes to continue as a top-level swimmer for a few more years. But he feels that his greatest achievement—one that can not be valued in gold, silver or bronze—has already been won: self-confidence and the belief that he can do things that people who don't have to use a wheelchair take for granted. ■

"If we don't do something quickly, the United States won't be winning any more medals for sprinting. Let's stop subsidizing our opponents,"
i.e. by letting foreigners profit from the American training system.

Carl Lewis,
holder of 9 Olympic
Gold Medals.

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*Journalist in Oslo, Norway

Going for **glory**

Glenn Manarin with additional reporting by Myung-soo Kim Taejon*

A promising 12-year-old Korean tennis-player who seems to be relishing the pressure as he quests for athletic perfection and international acclaim

Dong-whee Choi in action.

© Glenn Manarin, Korea

Under the mid-morning sun at Chungnam National University in Taejon, South Korea, 12-year-old Dong-whee Choi is hitting baseline forehands weighted with topspin and punchy two-handed backhands to a player twice his age from the university team. With the snow-capped mountains of Kyerong-san in the distance, Choi is hard at training, filling the days of winter vacation on sand courts.

Like many other children his age, Choi has dreams of athletic wonder. But unlike the vast majority, he is on the path to realizing his dreams, along with those of his family, coach and, perhaps one day, those of his country.

Choi is going to Bradenton, Florida, accompanied by his coach and his 10-year-old sister Ha-yang, thanks to a five-year scholarship from the internationally renowned Nick Bollettieri's Tennis Academy. At Bollettieri's, which boasts alumni including many of Choi's heroes—such as tennis greats Pete Sampras and André Agassi—Choi will find the competition and training facilities he needs to meet his soaring aspirations. He will also face unprecedented pressure at what is often described as a "boot camp" where nothing less than winning is accepted—an approach which he seems to relish.

Six hours a day on the court

"My first goal is to win the U.S. Open and I want to be at least one of the top-five ranked players in the world," says the winsome youth, his demureness momentarily dissipated by his fervour for the sport. "I've never considered how long it's going to take to happen. I never think about my age."

Children like Choi, so strangely determined, evoke admiration but also a nagging concern that they have been pressured to succeed by aggressive parents. Some might also question the wisdom of letting such a young child invest so much towards such a distant goal. Yet as Choi's experience highlights, it could be even more difficult for a parent to tell a child: "Give up your dreams of glory."

Choi was first introduced to tennis at the age of three when his father, In-chul Choi, a lieutenant-colonel in the South Korean military and a keen tennis player, bought him a toy racket. At six, he graduated to a real racket, playing regularly with his father. While his parents say they initially intended for Choi to enjoy the sport recreationally, they later sought to develop the boy's apparent potential by hiring 45-year-old Choong-sup Song as coach in 1994. "He wasn't so great at first," says Song. "But he was so hard-working and he has such a strong will for someone his age. He, his parents and myself all have the same goal now."

That goal has made Choi's life anything but ordinary. In Korea's Confucian-influenced society, where academic endeavour and success is a veritable litmus test of social worth, most youngsters spend hours a day studying in private educational institutes, supplementing their regular studies. Yet Choi spends the bulk of his time on the court—about six hours a day, seven days a week. "Sometimes I find it difficult," he says, "especially when I can't hit the ball well, but aside from that that I just enjoy it and have fun."

National heroes

Choi's work ethic earned him an invitation to the 1998 Orange Bowl, an international tournament in Miami, Florida. He took first prize from a field of 128 of the world's top 12-year-olds. While in Florida, he also aced Bollettieri's tennis school evaluation test for the scholarship before signing a contract with IMG (International Management Group), which manages the careers of many of the world's top athletes.

When the news in Florida reached Korea, the young player and his family were deluged by interview requests from the media. The reaction to Choi's early success, which would go largely unnoticed in many other countries, comes as little surprise in Korea, where athletes who excel on the international stage are a source of intense admiration and pride. Los Angeles Dodger pitching ace Chan-ho Park and golfer Se-ri Pak, the 1998 Ladies' Professional Gold Association (LPGA) Rookie of the Year, are nothing less than national heroes in Korea—exemplars of excellence, particularly in these morale-hungry times of economic crisis.

While the future looks rosy for Choi, what of the chances of him breaking his wrist or caving in to the mounting psychological pressure? What then? These questions aren't recognized by Choi and his parents. Instead, they voice their trust in Choi's coach, Song, who refuses to consider anything except positive outcomes.

"I'm doing what I really want to do," says Choi. "My coach says it's better if I can play well, but that I shouldn't have pressure on me, and my parents just tell me to do my best. . . . Since I was a little kid, I've never had any other dreams except being a tennis player and now I am so happy." ■

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* Journalists in Taejon, South Korea

A star that never rose

K. K. Man Jusu*

Sporting stardom beckons to talented young athletes all over the world, but only very few reach the top. Jean-Jacques Diodan’s story is one of many

© Ron Gilling/Lineair, Arnhem

Heading for stardom?

> *“By 2005 no African national soccer teams will be left. European clubs are importing younger and younger African players, and taking away their nationality by picking them for European national teams.”*
>
> **A coach with Milan AC football club.**

“They used to tell me sport was just for hooligans. They deceived me.” Who did? “Everyone.” Jean-Jacques Diodan, from Côte d’Ivoire, is bitter. Any little thing reopens the wound, like the TV programme a few months ago which showed the opening of a school for street children sponsored by his compatriot Basile Boli. Boli was the defence pillar of Olympique Marseilles, a team which, in its glory days, gave France its first-ever European Champions Cup. His was a real success story.

He and Jean-Jacques started out in exactly the same way. A few years apart, they played in the local teams that were all the rage in Abidjan in the 1970s and 1980s. Boli was a great hulk, while Jean-Jacques was a slight figure who became a magician when he had the ball at his feet.

Jean-Jacques became the darling of Abidjan’s poor suburb of Treichville, with his cunning dribbles, fierce volleys and brilliant opportunism. All the neighbourhood associations begged him to join their teams. To entice him, they offered him sweets or cakes, a few hundred CFA francs, an *aboki* (coffee with cream) or a *garba* (a dish of fried fish and manioc flour).

The talent scouts of the big Abidjan clubs were also sniffing around for future champions. That was how Boli was discovered, along with others like Gadji Celi and Youssouf Fofana, the future star of Monaco. These lads were not obsessed with turning professional. They played because they liked to, because they loved being cheered by the Sunday crowds and sometimes being carried aloft as heroes.

But it became so enjoyable in the end that they sacrificed everything for it, starting with their schoolwork. Jean-Jacques, a bright youth who had entered secondary school when he was 11, started playing truant and skipping classes, beginning with maths and English. His report card summed it all up—playing hookey, bad marks and lack of concentration.

His father, a customs officer so proud of his son that he nicknamed him “the Pelé of Treichville”, was dumbstruck. He and the rest of the family knew that only the best school leaving certificate, not a football pitch, would ensure the boy’s future.

‘If you want to become a Pelé, then go and be one’

There were rows, punishments and beatings, but to no avail. Jean-Jacques didn’t make a clear choice and so ended up losing on both counts. Sport is like a jealous woman who refuses to share her man. If Jean-Jacques refused to devote himself day and night to football, then he wouldn’t become a star and wouldn’t go off to Europe to earn millions. If he returned to school, he would just limp along.

In the end, to everyone’s surprise, he got his leaving certificate but his marks were too poor for him to continue in public high school. The alternative was private schooling. But his angry father refused to pay for that. “If you want to become a Pelé, then go and be one,” he said sarcastically.

Eventually, a sympathetic elder sister who was a journalist agreed to come up with the money. So Jean-Jacques continued his studies, managed to pass his baccalaureate and even went on to earn a degree in sociology.

But this meant nothing in a labour market overloaded with graduates. Jobless, he lived off his family. His wife, with whom he had a baby, left him because he wasn’t earning any money. He dreamed of emigrating to the United States—that he would be chosen from thousands of others as an eligible immigrant and then, in an immigration lottery, win the right to actually go there. He turned once more to his sister, to pay for him to learn a trade.

The fame of the Pelé of Treichville never went beyond his neighbourhood, though he is convinced he had the talent to go further. He didn’t manage either to get a literature doctorate which, he is equally sure, would have opened the door to a fine career.

Meanwhile Basile Boli is a millionaire and, at 30, Jean-Jacques Diodan is unemployed. ■

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* Journalist in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire

Basketball at midnight

Gary A. Sailes*

Midnight Basketball is giving thousands of young males in poor neighbourhoods of U.S. cities an opportunity to play the game and keep out of trouble

> *"Sport can fire the highest and the lowest passions. It can develop disinterestedness and a sense of honour as well as love of profit. It can be chivalrous or corrupt, manly or bestial. Nobility of feeling, the cult of disinterest and honour, the spirit of chivalry, manliness and peace are the prime needs of modern democracies."*
>
> **Pierre de Coubertin (1863-1937), French educator, first president of the International Olympic Committee**

Anthony Carter, a 22-year-old African-American, is a star player in the University of Hawaii Basketball team. He has already had lucrative offers from prestigious clubs in the National Basketball Association (NBA) league.

Not long ago, Carter was one of many poor young males looking for opportunities in Atlanta's Jonesboro south suburb, known for its high crime rate. His life took a different turn after he joined the local "Midnight Basketball" (MBL) league where he spent three years. As a result, he is now in university and looking ahead to a bright future in the NBA league. MBL, which organizes basketball played between 10:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m, has changed the lives of many young males like Carter who live in the poor neighbourhoods of Atlanta and might otherwise have drifted into crime. (See box.)

The only difference between Midnight Basketball and normal basketball is that it is played at hours when young inner city males are most vulnerable to the drug culture, crime and other negative activity. In a nutshell, MBL takes the players off the street at night and places them in a playground area under organized and structured conditions. Emmanuel Hunt, Jr, President of Atlanta MBL, quoting police records, says that the programme has helped to bring down the crime rate in the inner city, which fell by 40 per cent in the last five years.

Chapters in fifty cities

The first Midnight Basketball League was started in 1986 in Glenarden, Maryland, and since then the idea has spread to major cities like Los Angeles, Atlanta, Miami, Cleveland and Detroit. Like NBA, MBL has its own organized structure. Today, it has 50 chapters nationwide and about 10,000 youngsters play in MBL games across the country. The Commissioner's office is located in Chicago and there are regional offices which organize tournaments between local teams and between cities. Last year, according to National Association of MBL officials, about 200,000 spectators watched the matches per night nationwide and the television viewership crossed the 3.5 million mark.

MBL players, selected normally on open tryouts in each city, are in the 17-25 age group and on average spend three to four years in the programme. They are distributed among different teams which play in a local league. Most participants in the MBL are African-Americans, members of the group that outnumbers other ethnic groups in the poor neighbourhoods of many U.S. cities. "Participation in the league is open to all young males. We do not discriminate on racial or ethnic grounds in selecting the players," says Tony Adams, an official at the Fountain City MBL of Columbus, Georgia.

What makes an MBL match different from a normal basketball game? Before each event, the players have to attend a one-hour workshop which focuses on topics like job interview skills, financial management, AIDS/HIV awareness, drug and alcohol abuse prevention, conflict resolution and

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A programme to combat crime

The Sentencing Project, a U.S. Criminology Think Tank, reported in 1998 that the leading cause of death among African-American male youth between the ages of 17 and 25 is homicide and that one in six African-American males will be arrested before they reach the age of 19. It is estimated that one in 22 African-American males will be killed by a violent crime before reaching the age of 44. Moreover, as many as 42 per cent of incarcerated men in the United States are black males. It is estimated that by the year 2000, approximately 50 per cent of black males between the ages of 17 and 30 will be either incarcerated or under penal supervision. Law enforcement officials and criminologists have established that the increased drug use, drug trafficking and disenchantment with the American educational and employment opportunity structure has led to the increased arrests among college age African-American males.

In an effort to address rising crime and related problems among youths in Glenarden, Maryland, the town manager, G. Van Standifer, established the Midnight Basketball League in 1986. His aim was to provide an alternative to youngsters who wander around their neighbourhood during the night and end up committing crimes. With the support of businesses, law enforcement officials, and political and community leaders, the first Midnight Basketball League programme was organized in the same year. The MBL says that programme was successful in reducing the incidence of reported crimes by almost 60 per cent in Glenarden. Standifer later created the format for other communities to develop MBL leagues in their area. Today, MBL chapters have been developed in over 50 cities in the U.S. and in Puerto Rico. Each chapter is a non-profit, community-based organization that adheres to formal training, rules and regulations based on the original successful programme. ■

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*Associate professor of Sport Sociology at Indiana University and author of African-Americans in Sport: Contemporary themes entrepreneurship. Anyone who does not attend these classes is not allowed on the basketball court. “Instructors encourage the participants to take up jobs and sometimes the local association helps them to find one,” says Hunt.

There are eight to ten teams in each chapter with 10-12 players in each team, and each team plays on an average three to four games per week during a summer season. MBL players can stay in the league till they reach 25 years of age and some of those who retire come back to the system as instructors, coaches and volunteers.

“The stress is on discipline, punctuality and behaviour. Members are not allowed to enter the court if they come late for the class and if they misbehave during a game they are immediately sent out,” says Mark Gallagher, assistant sports supervisor at the Recreation and Arts Center in Waterloo, Iowa.

Respecting the rules

MBL players are not paid for their participation. The only incentive comes in the form of balls, shoes and T-shirts, making the event a totally non-commercial activity. Local government, nongovernmental organizations and private companies sponsor these events.

What makes these youngsters follow strict rules and regulations inside the basketball court when they have difficulty in following the rules of the society? In his book *The Violent Social World of Black Men*, sociologist William Oliver argues that black males often break rules as a form of resistance to discrimination and disrespect in a white-dominated society. They channel themselves into the areas where they perceive opportunities exist, and sport, especially basketball, is one of them.[1]

For African-American youth basketball has become a subculture in its own right. Talented high school players are recruited by top colleges and are offered scholarships to study and also to play in the college team. The best college players then go on to play professional basketball in the NBA or in overseas leagues.

For these youngsters in poor neighbourhoods, MBL not only provides an opportunity to play the game but also contributes to their self-identity and self-assertion. Following the rules of the game enables them to gain respect from their peers, popularity and a reputation as fierce competitors. A player in an MBL league can lose his reputation in his locality if he is kicked out of the programme on disciplinary grounds. The message of MBL is simple. If you want an opportunity to play the game, you have to respect the rules. ■

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[1] According to 1998 U.S. Census Bureau figures 34 million blacks live in the United States, representing 12 per cent of the population. However, according to sport sociologist Richard Lapchik at the Center for the Study of Sport in Society at Northeastern University in Boston, they comprise 85 per cent of the National Basketball Association (NBA) teams, 67 per cent of National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) division I basketball teams and are represented in 95 per cent of all college basketball teams.

Black sprinters are dominating the sport in the UK but troubling questions belie what some see as a triumph against racism

Hidden hurdles of

* Amy Otchet

Monkey-hoots and banana peels fire down on the black British footballer who commits the sin of missing a goal. Reprehensibly racist behaviour, say the pundits, but these are the isolated occurrences of a few rotten apples. A look past these extremists supposedly reveals an arena in UK society—the world of sport—where everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed. Barriers of colour and class cannot possibly be found on the track, it is argued, where the stopwatch is the ultimate judge. According to UK Athletics, the government body promoting track and field sports, 24 per cent of top athletes, meaning those who receive grants on the basis of performance, are of African or Caribbean origin, even though they compose just two per cent of the UK population. Indeed, blacks represent 48 per cent of these top athletes who are focusing on their training and not simultaneously pursuing academics.

As Robin Phillips of UK Athletics says, this high representation would generally be seen as a sign of social progress. Yet the rosy picture darkens with the question: why are so many blacks running? Perhaps because they don’t have the same chances of succeeding in other areas, says Ben Carrington, a sociologist at the University of Brighton, widely respected in British academic circles for his research on racism in sport and who is now editing a book on the subject. This is not to suggest that blacks are genetically gifted for sport—a proposition Carrington vehemently rejects

> *“Whatever games are played with us, we must play no games with ourselves.”*
>
> **Ralph Waldo Emerson, U.S. poet**

© Eric Feferberg/AFP, Paris

colour

Above, Britain's Julian Golding on his way to victory in the semi-final of the 200 metres, during the European athletics championships in Budapest (Hungary) in 1998.

as being both racist and scientifically unfounded. Instead he points to the ways in which stereotypes seep into the lives of young blacks and reinforce the socio-economic reasons leading them to pursue athletics.

At the age of 24, Julian Golding is one of Britain's hopefuls, becoming the Commonwealth 200-metre champion last year. From an early age on, Golding knew he was fast but didn't dream of becoming a champion. He was raised to focus on education, not sport, as "the way out" of the working class life of his parents, Jamaican immigrants who arrived in the 1960s.

Missing idols

So Golding studied hard at school, filling his free time with tennis, track and trampoline activities. But at 16, his school director took him aside for a chat. "Why not pursue running as a career? You've got talent." The same encouragement came from his physical education (PE) teacher. There was no mention of his academic opportunities.

Golding began weighing his options. "I was a better tennis player than a sprinter," he says, "but there was no-one to look up to. No black tennis idols. So I thought about trying to be the first" until his first visit to the local tennis club. "The courts were packed but there wasn't one black person. I didn't feel comfortable. I started asking about the subscription and coaching fees," says Golding, calculating the expense for his parents who had five kids to support. "I thought, 'No way!' And walked out."

He started training at a local track, focusing on black idols, like Linford Christie, the 1992 Olympic 100-metre champion. "You've got to have a vision of success. Linford made it and he's from the same neck of the woods in west London as me."

Golding's experience is typical, says Carrington. Money, status and glamour "pull" kids into sport. However, black kids, in particular, also experience the "push" of PE teachers, who may have good intentions but inadvertently reinforce stereotypes. "The (PE) teachers think that certain types of kids, namely black kids, are going to be better off in an athletics career," says Carrington, "because they're never going to make it in the world of finance or medicine."

Carrington points to a full body of research in this area. One of the most recent surveys, conducted by Sid Hayes and John Sugden of the University of Brighton, involved about 35 PE teachers in an ethnically mixed region of the Midlands. Over 80 per cent of the teachers reported the "feeling that black pupils tend to be advantaged in sport", which most identified as athletics. Almost 75 per cent attributed their black students' sport success to "physiological reasons".

Science and stereotypes

Golding is not shocked by the teachers' response. On the contrary, he has learned to accept as truth the same stereotypes of "black brawn". As a teenager, Golding was falsely "taught that it is a 'scientific fact' that black people in general are able to move their muscles faster than white people" because they have special muscle fibres. "Statistics seem to prove it," he says. "When was the last time we saw a white sprinter compete in the finals of an Olympic game? Back in 1980—almost 20 years ago."

Yet Golding is not fully convinced by this "muscle theory" and welcomes Carrington's assertion that it bears no scientific grounding. When asked of any other biological explanations for black athletic success, Golding quietly mentions the "Black Body, a term that I hate" which refers to the stereotype of the black muscular muscular torso of men like Linford Christie. The emotional edge to his voice suggests that Golding is torn by a personal quandary. He has been taught that blacks are gifted in athletics—a stereotype reinforced by media images of black muscular men. Yet he also knows that "black brawn" is loaded with racist overtones suggesting "white intelligence".

So it is with visible relief that Golding listens as Carrington debunks these erroneous "biological explanations." The sociologist traces their roots to the Eugenics movement of the 1920s and 30s, which originated in North America and later spread throughout Europe. The aim was to produce a genetically superior population, which is linked to the notion of a hierarchy of separate races in which blacks were placed on the bottom, says Carrington. To reinforce this ranking, anthropologists tried to define the model white and black male by measuring and comparing their various body parts—earlobes, noses, limb lengths and so on. "These studies were inherently racist and had very little scientific validation behind them," says Carrington.

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* UNESCO Courier journalist

The Eugenics movement disappeared after the Holocaust in World War II. However, Carrington finds some of the same "biological arguments" and ideological conceptions emerging today with genetic research. There is, for example, a misconception in some sectors of the public that scientists will prove racial differences. "Today we know that there are about 100,000 genes in the human body and yet less than ten of them are related to skin colour," says Carrington. "Obviously there are variations between groups," but these differences are linked to geography. In short, as groups migrated around the world, people adapted to their physical surroundings and passed those changes on to their descendants.

A gene for playing darts or snooker

Still the idea persists that scientists will one day discover a gene which makes blacks run fast. "Then there must be a gene among white working-class British males for throwing darts or playing snooker," jokes Carrington. "It's comic. No one would ever suggest that Canadians are somehow genetically inclined to playing ice hockey... Yet whenever you have black success, there is a genetic argument."

These arguments often serve to deny or reduce the dedication and intelligence of successful black athletes, says Carrington, particularly in the media. He does not suggest that sport commentators are inherently racist. But Carrington does see a tendency to treat black and white athletes differently. Commentators often focus on the black athlete's natural ability, he says, while white athletes are also praised for their intelligent strategies and dedication.

Golding points to a related dimension: the impact on young white athletes. "If I was a 16-year-old white student, I wouldn't dream of going into athletics," he says. With the media zooming in on black powerhouses like Linford Christie, "I'd think that I didn't have a hope to win."

"With blacks dominating the sport," Golding senses a public "yearning for a new Roger Black", the English (white) 400-metre runner who won a silver medal at the 1996 Olympics. This desire is not manifested in any overt forms of racism, says Golding, but rather through "hidden agendas."

The "yearning for the Great White Hope" cannot be proven. But for Carrington, it is important to note the impact of the perception that it exists. He refers to a scenario which, he says, is taken very seriously by many black athletes. Imagine the following: four athletes—three black and one white—compete for three places on a team. The first two clock very fast times and take their places. The other two are close, but the white athlete is slightly slower. Who makes the team?

"You have to be above and beyond everyone else, so that there isn't any argument not to pick you," says Carrington. "But that kind of skews the picture of black athletic success. People don't see the average black athletes because they don't make the teams. This in turn leads people to say, 'See, there must be something special about them.'" ■

© P. Robert/Tempsport/Sygma, Paris

2. The agony

Philippe Liotard*

The build-up for an international sporting event can create a tremendous sense of national unity. But there's always a danger of such powerful emotions turning sour

A sudden roar surged from the throats of the thousands of spectators packed in the stadium and from hundreds of millions more all around the globe. French soccer star Emmanuel Petit had just sent the ball into the back of the Brazilian net a few minutes before the end of the 1998 World Cup final.

As the great roar erupted, so did the bodies from which it came. Arms were stretched triumphantly aloft and then reached out exultantly to embrace other bodies. In the midst of the din, people hugged each other—on the pitch, in the stands, before giant screens set up in Paris, Saint Étienne and thousands of other French towns and villages, and in front of TV sets in bars, cafés and homes.

The rejoicing went on late into the night, as crowds all over the country took part in the biggest eruption of popular joy in France since the Liberation at the end of the Second World War.

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*Sports Faculty
University of Montpellier, France

and the **ecstasy**

Dismay in Copacabana,in Rio de Janeiro, after Brazil's defeat by France in the final of the soccer World Cup, 1998.

As the goal was scored, other equally violent cries were uttered. But they were shorter and ended in sobs. Cries of pain, rage, frustration and humiliation, they soon gave way to silence.Amazement and disbelief were written on grim, tortured faces.

The shouting, the tears and the body language were triggered by a whirlwind of emotions. On one side, the ecstasy of the French; on the other the grief of the Brazilians, whose team had been beaten 3-0. The final was watched around the world by two billion passionate fans of all ages and every imaginable social,cultural,ethnic, national,political,ideological and religious affiliation. All the symbolic might of sport was on display—the ability to transcend divisive issues and generate intense, spontaneous and widely-shared emotion. How is it possible that a mere football match can create such high drama?

Passion of this kind no longer surprises anyone. Yet huge international sports gatherings are only recent events. The first modern Olympic Games were held in 1896 and the first football World Cup in 1930.At the end of the 19th century, sport was a pastime reserved for the upper classes of rich countries, but between 1920 and 1940 the situation changed drastically. Sport was given more and more press and radio coverage, became very popular and was skilfully exploited by the authorities for political purposes.

Fascist Italy and then Nazi Germany were the first to make use of it. Exploited by the Nazis for propaganda purposes, the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin marked the start of the modern era of sport as a spectacle.The Berlin games are still studied as an example of the way in which crowds can be lured and fascinated by spectacular events.They launched the tradition of grandiose and finely orchestrated sporting events which bring prestige to the organizing country.

The success
of the Atlanta
Olympics (1996)
*"will have an
enormous, positive
impact on what
Americans all over
this country will
believe we can do.
And goodness knows
we need it."*

President Bill Clinton

Hyping up the supporters

But dictatorships have not been the only regimes to use sport to promote nationalism.Since the end of the Second World War, sporting events have helped countries win international prominence and build up national identity. Every new state creates its own national sports teams. During the annual sporting calendar,patriotic feelings are regularly called on to support a team or a champion. Political and economic interests and the media can use the powerful symbol of sport to rally citizens,customers and spectators around a sense of national belonging.

Sporting events help people that they belong to a community. To take part, you join one of the groups of spectators behind each of the two competing teams, and share the emotions of your fellow supporters. During the match, your sense of identity is mobilized on behalf of your national, village or neighbourhood team, whichever the case may be.This passionate feeling of togetherness and partisan commitment is the core of spectator sports.

These big events bring together (tele)viewers who sometimes have only one thing in common—the desire to see a clash between two sides which will produce a single winner. Such is the hierarchical nature of sport. Getting together to see a sporting event always brings with it the hope that *we* will beat *them*. The sense of community is based on rivalry and opposition to others. The main thing is that everyone is united against the other side.

An us-against-them attitude is built up in all the talk and media hype that precede the event and attribute meanings to it. This build-up is the crucial element in the process of bringing people together. It's also the most unconscious one.

The us-against-them attitude is built up in all the talk and media hype that precede the event and attribute meanings to it.This build-up is the crucial element in the process of bringing people together. It's also the most unconscious one. The meaning of the event is defined by what is said *before* it takes place.A feeling of solidarity mounts as the big day approaches.

The World Cup in France was built up in this way over two years. Oft-repeated slogans convinced people that this was "a chance for France", without explaining why. Exhortations to back the national team found their way into all kinds of fields—in

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politics, sport, the media, advertising and even literature. The foundations of victory were laid as a sense of national awareness was created, gradually uniting in support of this particular cause French people who were in other respects divided. "Spontaneous" outbursts of collective joy were prepared months before the competition began. The endless hype created the event just as much as the event had created the hype.

We are the champions!

The scenes of popular jubilation showed how people identified themselves with the winners. By defeating Brazil, the French players beat the team considered the best in the world. By a mysterious alchemy, all the French and their supporters also became "the best". "We are the champions . . . of the world," they chanted. They had proved themselves better than the best, i.e. the losers, who were only mentioned during the long night of celebration in terms of the humiliation inflicted on them. Again and again people raised one, two and then three fingers as they savoured the 3-0 score. The delight of one side was a counterpoint to the other's grief. "We" were triumphant and all-powerful. "They" no longer existed, except as a foil.

By pulling off such an historic feat, the French football team were able to rally behind them an all-inclusive France of "Blacks, Whites and Beurs"[1]. But this was a transient phenomenon which faded as the excitement died away. Other sporting events would bring people together in the same way. What's more, this kind of seemingly inoffensive jubilation actually harbours tensions which become more acute when competition in sport provides a pretext for them. Sporting events can spark violence which homes in on the "enemy" of a threatened or humiliated "us". "They" become the focus of collective hatred because of their commitment to the opposing side.

The competition involved in sport generates and channels passions on the basis of winners and losers. For their own supporters, the players are the personification of all kinds of talents and qualities, including virility. The opposing team and their supporters are characterized as practitioners of all kinds of vices and taunted as "the weaker sex".

So the result of a sporting encounter goes hand in hand with a fantasy of male domination, and spectator sport symbolizes the endless struggle between groups of human beings, rather than their alleged fraternal instincts. It doesn't take much for jubilation to degenerate into violence where "anything goes". ■

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[1] Beurs: second generation North African immigrants.

© Jayanta Shaw/Reuters/MaxPPP, Paris

Batting for the

How far has political acrimony between India and Pakistan spilled over onto the cricket field?

Ramachandra Guha*

The British novelist Alan Sillitoe once wrote that "sport is a means of keeping the national spirit alive during a time of so-called peace. It prepares the national spirit for the eventuality of war".

Some have argued otherwise, maintaining that sport can be invaluable in bridging gaps of international understanding. Certainly there can be little doubt that sport tends to bring together athletes of otherwise hostile nations or communities. During the Cold War, ice hockey players of the Soviet Union and the United States had a sincere affection for each other, despite their fierce rivalry on the rink. But does sport also bring together the communities to which the sportsmen belong or does it rather reinforce longstanding hostilities and rivalries?

Whenever there is a cricket match* between India and Pakistan, for example, the fans on both sides find it difficult to separate national pride from an aesthetic appreciation of the game. For these two postcolonial cousins have fought three wars in the fifty years since they became free and neighbouring nations. At the present time they fight a shadow war over Kashmir, a territory claimed by both. How far, if at all, do these deep political hostilities spill over into the cricket field?

Cricket, a game of British origin, has a passionate following in both countries. With the possible exception of the cinema, cricket reaches out to more people than any other form of entertainment in the subcontinent. Every match played by the national team is followed by hundreds of millions of fans, and the players themselves have iconic status.

Over the past half-century, India and Pakistan

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* Indian sociologist, historian and columnist based in Bangalore (India). Author of several books on social history and on cricket.

February 1995:Indian police order spectators out of Calcutta's Eden Gardens ground after disruptions during a match between India and Pakistan.

nation

> *"Serious sport has nothing to do with fair play. It is bound up with hatred,jealousy, boastfulness, disregard of all rules and sadistic pleasure in witnessing violence: in other words it is war minus the shooting."*
>
> **George Orwell**

have played each other at cricket much less frequently than they have other countries. Between 1961 and 1978 they did not play any matches at all. Between 1978 and 1989 there were regular exchanges of cricket teams, with India and Pakistan each touring the other country three times. Since 1989 they have chosen to play against one another only on "neutral"territory—the Gulf emirate of Sharjah, Australia,even Canada. Finally, early this year a tour of India was planned by the Pakistan cricket team.

The visit was bitterly opposed by the extremist right-wing politician Bal Thackeray, whose Shiv Sena party rules the city of Mumbai, generally considered the home of Indian cricket. Thackeray claimed it would be "unpatriotic" to allow Pakistan to play cricket on Indian soil while that country was sponsoring "terrorism" in Kashmir. The Shiv Sena dug up the pitch at Delhi, where a Test match was to be played, and issued threats that they would physically attack the Pakistani cricketers if they came.

Despite this opposition, the tour went ahead. Test matches were played at Chennai in southern India and in Delhi, with tight security and massive crowds in attendance, and without any incident. Pakistan won in Chennai and India in Delhi. Then,however, the two teams moved on to Calcutta to play the first match of an Asian Test Championship (in which the third participating team is Sri Lanka). In a closely-fought contest, Pakistan won, but only after a controversial decision by the umpire had ruled against the brilliant Indian cricketer, Sachin Tendulkar. This led to an outpouring of protest from the crowd, the throwing of bottles onto the field and the suspension of play. The last stages of the match were played before an empty stadium.

Great expectations

On the field and off it, the cricketers of Pakistan and India are brought together by a shared language (Hindustani) and a shared regional culture. When they play for a World XI, the Indian and Pakistani cricketers room together. Among the fans, too, the genuine cricket lover appreciates fine bowling or batsmanship by the other side. Whenever Pakistan play England,or any other third country, Indian cricket lovers tend to support Pakistan. Thus when India were knocked out early in the 1992 World Cup, and Pakistan went on to win, most Indians felt "at least the Cup came to Asia".

All the same, there is little doubt that when the two countries play against each other, sport is made to carry the baggage of patriotism. Proficiency at sport,especially cricket, is made to stand in for failure in other spheres. India and Pakistan are both poor countries, but victory on the sporting field can, in the minds of the insecure patriot, make up for that. In the light of present trends, India and Pakistan have little hope of joining the league of the world's prosperous nations. But they might again be world champions in cricket, as India was in 1983 and Pakistan was in 1992. At the individual level too, each country has produced some of the world's finest cricketers.

In both India and Pakistan, the cricketers themselves are made to bear the brunt of an intensified nationalism. When India won against Pakistan in the quarter finals of the 1996 World Cup, the defeated team went back home in fear. The home of their captain, Wasim Akram, was attacked by angry fans. Questions were asked in the Pakistani Parliament alleging that the loss was deliberate,that the players had been bribed to lose. The cricketers had of course tried their best, but on the day the other team played better.

These feelings are replicated amongst émigré communities too. For more than a decade now the Gulf emirate of Sharjah has hosted a cricket tournament in which both India and Pakistan participate. For the last three years the two countries have also annually played a series of five matches in Toronto. It has been well documented that patriotic feelings are often exaggerated among diasporic communities, who yearn for their homeland as they do not completely assimilate in their country of residence. Certainly the cricket fans in Sharjah and Toronto bear ample testimony to this.

Sequel of Partition

What are the roots of this nationalism? Hindu and Islamic chauvinists on either side, as well as some Western commentators, tend to represent the conflict in religious terms. I would stress that its roots are primarily territorial rather than religious. Although Pakistan is an Islamic state, India also has a substantial Muslim population. Indeed, some of India's finest cricketers have been Muslims, including the present captain of the national team, Mohammed Azharuddin. The genesis of conflict, on the cricket field or elsewhere, must be explained otherwise.

On the Pakistan side, it is the fact that India is seen as the huge and sometimes overbearing Big Brother of the region, a country that throws its weight around. On the Indian side, it is the memory that Pakistan originated in a movement for secession, that in the original vision of Indian nationalism both lands were to be part of one nation. Independence in August 1947 also meant Partition. Through cricket, therefore, the smaller nation of Pakistan can hope to challenge the political weight of India. Indian nationalists, for their part, have never completely reconciled themselves to the existence of Pakistan as a separate political entity. They thus tend to see in cricketing victory an affirmation of the illegitimacy of the demand for breaking up India.

So should there be further cricketing contacts between India and Pakistan? Is cricket a means of taming national tensions, or is it rather a way of stoking the fires of aggressive nationalism? One cannot, alas,answer this question unambiguously either way. For sport unites but it also divides, and in this case cricket is made to carry the burden of national expectation. Inevitably, this becomes more intense when Pakistan and India play one another. A section of the fans cannot forget the political animosities, and take a mere game far more seriously than they should. ■

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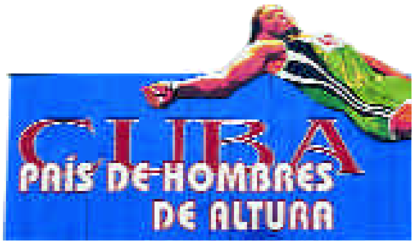
* Cricket is a game played by two teams of 11 players on a field with a wicket at either end of a 22-yard pitch. The object is for one team to score runs by hitting a ball while the other tries to dismiss them by bowling, catching or running them out. *Editor*

A Cuban **mix** of muscle and ideology

Marcos Bustillo*



© Sarah Caron/Gamma, Paris

Sport, a mainstay of Cuba's socialist Government, seeks to affirm 'patriotic values and national identity'

* Journalist in Havana,Cuba

> *"Do you know what my favourite part of the game is? The opportunity to play."*
>
> **American footballer Mike Singletary**

"We owe 38 years of sporting achievement to the unconditional backing Cuban sport has received from the revolutionary Government and especially from our commander-in-chief Fidel Castro," says Humberto Rodríguez, President of the National Institute for Sport, Physical Education and Recreation of Cuba (INDER), founded in 1961. The results speak for themselves. With only 11 million inhabitants and despite severe economic crisis, Cuba came fifth in the Olympic medal rankings at Barcelona in 1992, and eighth at Atlanta in 1996. At the Pan-American level, it ranks second, after the United States.

"Mass involvement in sport and highly efficient structures have made it possible for big stars to emerge," says Norge Marrero, national commissioner for rowing. Cuba has 31,700 physical education instructors, one for every 458 inhabitants, compared with one teacher for every 42 persons, and one doctor for every 170. For 1999, the budget for sport is 125 million Cuban pesos (the same figure in U.S. dollars at the official rate, although the semi-official rate is 20 to the dollar), which is equivalent to the budget for culture and science. "Sport is part of the people's culture," Marrero adds, "because people have learned that sport means quality of life and health."

Higher, stronger, faster . . . and more revolutionary. Outside the sports arena, a Cuban athlete may be treated as a prince or a villain, depending on an imaginary borderline traced by his own loyalty to the state. The boxer Teófilo Stevenson, Olympic champion in 1972, 1976 and 1980, was admitted to the "revolutionary hall of fame" because he rejected lucrative professional contracts abroad. A different fate has awaited other eminent sportsmen and women, mostly baseball players, who, having opted for the temptations of professional status and for exile, have had their names struck off the official roster. Desertions are a thorn in the revolution's side.

Working out: sport is part of young Cubans' daily routine.

© François Lochon/Gamma, Paris

But according to Rodríguez, Cuban sport "cannot ignore a century marked by globalization and neo-liberalism". The champion of amateurism, it has been forced willy-nilly to wade into a sea of professionalism and excessive commercialization. After the collapse of its main partner and backer, the Soviet Union, Cuba has begun a process of cautious transformation, opening the door to certain aspects of the market economy. As a consequence of the hard years of crisis (1989-1993), when gross domestic product (GDP) fell precipitously by some 37 per cent, most of the island's 11,000 sports facilities suffered serious deterioration and even the nutritional system in its training centres was affected. In order to find a way out, Cuba has devised a complex system that enables it to obtain economic resources through Cubadeportes, an enterprise set up in 1991 under the authority of INDER.

Drumming up funds

The chief function of Cubadeportes is to seek funding for Cuban sport. At present its main source of income, the amount of which is not publicly disclosed, is provided by some 600 trainers who are spread over four continents. It has also introduced a new scheme whereby leading Cuban sports figures are prepared to take up temporary contracts in volleyball clubs in Italy, basketball clubs in Argentina and handball clubs in France and Hungary.

First-class athletes are considered privileged compared with the run of the population. They can win prizes in dollars or in kind (cars and apartments) in exchange for a contribution to the state for its support in terms of training, board and lodging. There are no official figures for the income of sportsmen and women, but it is reckoned that a member of a national team is paid about 500 Cuban pesos a month ($25 at the semi-official rate), while the average monthly wage of a Cuban worker is about $11.

Judging by the results achieved in international competitions, Cuban muscle serves the ideals of the revolution. Sport is a jewel that is proudly shown to the outside world and acts as an incentive within the country. In the words of Rodríguez, its challenge is "to enhance the role of the individual, by providing a better grasp of patriotic values and of national identity". ■

New players, same game

Lincoln Allison*

The USSR used its mighty, gold medal-winning sports machine to help build patriotism. Now, the new republics of the former Soviet empire are trying the same trick. So far, to no avail

The former Soviet Union today is a land of overgrown pitches, broken goal posts and bent basketball hoops. The widespread decrepitude is a dismal reminder that Soviet sport was an artificial construction shaped to state purposes.

Abandoning Soviet disdain for "bourgeois" sport, in the 1940s Stalin invested massively in a programme to develop athletic excellence. The overt reason, as with the space programme, was to demonstrate the capacities of the Soviet system to the rest of the world. In fact, the more important effect was probably in the "near abroad" of the fourteen non-Russian Soviet republics, where the regime encouraged people to be patriotic towards both their particular national culture and towards the much larger "Soviet Motherland".

In short, gold medals were used to bring cohesion to a disparate empire marked by ethnic and inter-regional tensions.

Premier Olympic power

The policy worked. Soviet sporting success in the Olympic Games was massive: the USSR headed the medals table in the summer games on seven out of eight occasions between 1952 and 1980. It is true that this success did not extend much beyond the Olympics: when it came to sports that existed professionally in the West the USSR either underperformed (as in soccer) or failed to develop at all (as in golf). But the Olympics were able to sell themselves as the world's premier sporting event and the Soviet Union was able to sell itself as the world's premier Olympic power.

When the political edifice collapsed so did its sports system.

Now the new republics are once again flirting with the idea of investing in sport as a means of building a national identity. People in the Republic of Georgia, for example, have often been shocked to discover that Westerners know almost nothing about them. In their own minds their nation has been a cradle of European and Christian civilization, the place where wine, cultivated wheat and alphabetic writing all originated. That most people in the West associate "Georgia" with Atlanta rather than Tbilisi is deeply depressing to Georgians.

Eduard Shevardnadze, President of the Republic of Georgia, once remarked that a single football match could highlight the existence of the Georgian nation as nothing else could.

In this context, the qualifying competition for the 1998 World Cup, in which Georgia was in the same group as England and Italy, was an important opportunity to put the country on the mental map of many people in the West. Visiting Tbilisi for the game, I was impressed by the sense that Georgians had few aspirations to win or qualify, but were desperate to put on a good show.

© Ross Kinnaird/Allsport/Vandystadt, Paris

Young Georgian footballers training outside the national stadium.

But it seems the decline of sports in the former Soviet Union will be virtually impossible to reverse, and sports will not prove to be a tool for political purposes in the new republics. The reason is that identification with national teams cuts no ice in a context of economic collapse and ethnic hatred.

When interviewing people recently in the Republic of Georgia, I found that there was no grassroots sporting culture capable of keeping things going. Furthermore, the voluntary principle which sustains sport at grassroots level in the West was a concept that people did not even understand.

The exceptions will be in highly commercial sports where there are still good coaches and large sums of money to be made in the new global labour market for successful players: football and tennis are, perhaps, the prime examples. There is, by local standards, enormous money to be made from the sale of local players to the West and by competing in European competitions.

For now, in Georgia at least, it seems that the only real hope is that outsiders will come to the rescue. "We will have great athletes and coaches again," I was repeatedly told in my Georgian travels, "when the capitalists come and invest money in our sports facilities and training programmes." ■

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* Director, the Warwick Centre for the Study of Sport, UK

All together!

Sergio Leite Lopes*

Being in a football stadium means you can sing, shout, jeer, swear and leap around—working off feelings you repress elsewhere. Even better, you're in a crowd

It's a modern phenomenon, which only developed at the end of the 1930s, when football, hitherto the reserve of a select group, became a mass sport. The game spread and grew in the 1960s and 1970s and its fans got younger. The average football supporter today is aged between 15 and 25. And for some time now, it hasn't just been a specifically British phenomenon. Fanatical devotion to a team, and sometimes to a sporting hero, has steadily taken hold on all five continents. Supporters' mania is now universal, with pretty much the same motives and forms everywhere, but it still springs from local roots.

Different styles of football derive from distinctive body movements established in different cultures. The names given to supporters vary from place to place and sum up the way they behave. The word "supporter", used by the English and then the French, conveys the idea of force and backing behind a team. The Brazilian *torcedor* screws up his face in worry as a match proceeds. The Italian *tifosi* suffers from *tifo*, an illness marked by fever and twitchiness.

Initiation into this brotherhood can come very early, from the moment a father, an uncle, a brother or a godfather gives a newborn child the jersey of a favourite team. It can also happen later on, while a child is growing up. With neighbours and schoolmates, he plays football in the street or with a team, listens to or watches match reports, discusses the game with friends and finally goes to the stadium himself.

'Such a society will not provide the appropriate satisfying compensation for the humdrum tensions generated by normal daily life'

Once there, he—and more and more she—and an older relative will go and join the group of supporters who back the same team as they do. The rival fans face each other in the stands behind one of the goalmouths. The energy they generate, through new collective emotions and forms of expression, produces new identities of class, neighbourhood, region, religion and country.

Until not so long ago, the layout of the stadiums helped all this along. Spectators packed into big open areas on the edge of the pitch, and terraces without numbered seats. Modern stadiums have become more comfortable, and security measures tend to put a damper on collective emotions. But although violence still persists, it is orchestrated, as the fans sing, chant slogans and shout witticisms or insults at the other side's players and the referee. A spot of creative stage management and choreography turns it into a sort of carnival.

The spectacle of the match enables the supporters to experience a moment when a society becomes aware of itself, when a coherent group expresses its identity through non-religious rituals.

The fans are drawn to stadiums because both the match and the spectacle that goes with it have therapeutic and cathartic functions, which are vital in modern urban industrial society, where people are obliged to exercise great self-discipline and always hide their feelings. A sporting event provides an outlet because it teaches a person to develop a controlled expression of emotions which have to be curbed in other circumstances.

"A society which doesn't give its members, especially young people, sufficient opportunity to enjoy the excitement of a contest which can, but not necessarily, involve physical strength and bodily skills, is in danger of making their lives overly dull," wrote the German sociologist Norbert Elias. "Such a society will not provide the appropriate satisfying compensation for the humdrum tensions generated by normal daily life." ■

© S. Compoint/Tempsport/Sygma, Paris

A Brazilian soccer fan in France to support his team, beaten in the 1998 World Cup final.

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* Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Till **death** do us part

Eduardo Arias *

© Orban/Tempsport/Sygma, Paris

World Cup 1998: Colombian supporters cheer on their team against Romania.

The trials and tribulations of a Colombian soccer fan

In 1994 the President of Brazil ordered three days of national mourning after the death of racing driver Ayrton Senna.

The best account of what it means to be a football fan has been written by English writer Nick Hornby, who describes in his book *Fever Pitch* his relationship with Arsenal, the long-established London football club that plays in England's Premier League. It's like being married. But not like today's marriages, which don't last as long as courtship. No, this is a strict, spartan, Victorian, till-death-do-us-part kind of marriage. "A holy marriage," says the Dominican singer Juan Luis Guerra in his song "Like a bee in the honeycomb".

It's also a marriage in which there's no place for infidelity. In Colombia, a fan of Bogotá's Santa Fe team is never going to have a two-week affair with Millonarios, the city's other big team. At the outside he might have a furtive and fleeting platonic relationship with teams from other cities, such as Deportivo Cali, Unión Magdalena or Júnior de Barranquilla. But such innocent betrayals end abruptly on the day when these teams play Santa Fe.

The fan behaves like an exemplary husband. He is tender and true. He accepts his team's defects just as a husband accepts that his wife is not as slim as she was the day he fell in love with her, or that she snores, has dark circles under her eyes, or pulls a long face for 18 hours of the day. There may be short-lived outbursts of fury when the team plays badly. (Santa Fe have gone twenty years without winning a title.) Except for his angry comments on players who are slow on the turn or incapable of defending the team's colours. The fan always ends up in the stadium, always accompanies his team through thick and thin and always cheers them on with the refrain: "Olé oléolá/I love you more and more each day."

'Olé oléolá/I love you more and more each day'

Spine-tingling sensations

And just as the husband pays all the household bills without flinching even though he may think they're outrageously high, the fan squanders his wealth on the team. And how! In the past he just had to pay for tickets. Not any more. Now he also has to put his hand in his pocket to buy his team's T-shirt (its design and manufacturer change every six months or so but he has to have the latest one), its scarf, banner, the official record of the supporters'songs.

And what does he get in return? A lot of intangibles that only the true fan can really appreciate. A sense of tribal belonging that's like no other experience in the world, whether it's an electoral victory, a rock concert with a 100,000-strong audience or a military victory. That tingling in the spine whenever your team scores a goal or wins a match against its time-honoured enemy gives way to an indescribable sensation that can last for days, if not years. In 1992 Santa Fe beat Millonarios 7 : 3. Even today it's an unforgettable memory for the supporters of the reds and they rub it in whenever they meet fans of the blues.

It's a reason for clinging on to life: I can't imagine dying without knowing which team is going to win this year's championship or how many goals we're going to beat Millonarios by the next time we play them. It doesn't matter whether you've chosen the right team (Atletico de Bilbao or Real Sociedad, Boca Juniors or River Plate, Inter or AC Milan, Arsenal or Tottenham Hotspur), your football team is neither more nor less than the love of your life. ■

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* Journalist and supporter of Deportivo Independiente Santa Fe Football Club, Bogotá, Colombia

May the **betting** man win...

Robert Horn and Thaskina Khaikaew*

Thai boxing fans are hooked on gambling as much as the niceties of their favourite sport

For the past 20 years, Sialek Chanarak, a 53-year-old shop-owner, has spent nearly every Friday night at Bangkok's Lumpini Stadium, one of Thailand's two top arenas for Muay Thai, or Thai kickboxing. "I don't like boxing," Sialek insists as he leafs through a wad of baht, Thailand's currency. "I come to gamble. If there was no gambling here, I would never come." Sialek is not alone. Of the 10,000 people who jam into the ramshackle stadium, nearly all are betting on the battles in the ring. "Only the tourists don't bet," Sialek says, pointing to the ringside seats occupied by Japanese and European visitors. Many of the foreign women are cringing as the boxers pummel each other, digging knees into their opponents groins and launching rapid-fire kicks cracking against skin and bone.

Muay Thai is Thailand's national sport. A martial competition developed from the hand-to-hand combat techniques of ancient Siamese soldiers, it seems similar at first to international boxing. Fighters wear gloves for three-minute rounds held in boxing rings. After that, the similarities end. Kicking, kneeing and elbowing your opponent are all legal, as is pushing and throwing him to the canvas. Then there is the music: a three-piece band comprised of drums, cymbals and the java pipe plays frenetic, ancient Thai battle music to urge the fighters on.

A fatal attraction

Muay Thai has been deemed so integral a part of Thai character that the National Culture Commission oversees its promotion. The Ministry of Education runs a Muay Thai Institute to teach the intricacies of the sport. And the army runs Lumpini Stadium and the World Muay Thai Council, the sport's governing body. But Muay Thai pales in popularity beside another national pastime: gambling. Simply put, Thais love to bet. Police have estimated that billions of baht are wagered by Thais each week on English Premier League Football alone. Underground casinos operate with impunity in Bangkok. And the country's most famous Buddhist monk attracts thousands of devotees who believe that if he whacks them on the head with a rolled up newspaper, they might win the national lottery.

Still, millions of Thai boys and young men have a passion for Muay Thai. Like boxing anywhere, it provides a flickering hope they can fight their way out of poverty. A major match at Lumpini can earn 100,000 baht, or about $2,500, with boxers fighting on average once a month. A purse that size is a fortune to the young farmers and factory hands dreaming of kicking their way out of hardscrabble fields or the squalor of Bangkok's slums. But it's nothing compared to the money changing hands in the stands at Lumpini and other stadiums.

"I've won as much as 800,000 baht (over $20,000) on one fight. But I also once lost a million ($27,000)," says Chatri Kanchanamanoon, the 50-year-old owner of a gold shop. But Chatri's losses are relatively mild compared to that of his best friend. "He bet a huge sum of money and he got too excited," says Chatri. "He was cheering his fighter and suddenly fell on the floor. He had a heart attack and died."

Most bets these days, however, aren't as heart-stoppingly large since the country's economy crashed in July 1997. And the gambling fatalities are not all from natural causes. Chatri says that some gamblers who couldn't pay their debts have been killed.

As the fighters knee and elbow each other, screaming fans stand atop wooden benches or surge against the green chain link fences that separate the different ticket sections. It's in between rounds, though, that the action really heats up. While the boxers catch their breath, the gamblers wave their arms and wiggle their fingers in an intricate system of signals that lets the bookies know how much they want to bet on which fighter at what odds.

There is a slim minority of fans like Paisan Phakdeesunthorn, who abstain from betting. "I like Muay Thai," says the 32-year-old civil servant, adding that he used to fight as a teenager. "I don't have money to waste," he says, on the "bad habit" of betting. Paisan cheers on the boxers, but like so many other fans, he doesn't have a favourite fighter. Paisan seems too wrapped up in the sport to focus solely on the career of a single boxer. Gamblers like Sialek agree. "You can't have a favourite. . . . That would only interfere," he says. "You have to bet with your head, not your heart." ■

> *"There are people who think that wrestling is an ignoble sport. Wrestling is not sport, it is a spectacle, and it is no more ignoble to attend a wrestled performance of suffering than a performance of the sorrows of Arnolphe or Andromaque."*
>
> **Roland Barthes, French literary critic and semiologist**

For Thai boys, learning the basics of Muay Thai is part of growing up.

© Walter Schmitz/Bilderberg/Studio X, Paris

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* Journalists in Bangkok, Thailand

No farewell to arms

Vincenç Fisas*

The great powers might have cut down on military expenditure, but low- and middle-income countries have boosted their spending. In Asian countries alone, arms purchases have doubled in four years.

© Le Tourneur d'Ison/Gamma, Paris

Tanks ready for the scrapyard at Rockensussra,Germany.

Judging purely by the figures, the "disarmament race" which began after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 appears to have yielded some tangible results. Political détente between the major powers led not only to the conclusion of agreements for the withdrawal and destruction of weapons, but also to a reduction of military expenditure in many countries.

However, careful scrutiny of the figures reveals a more complex and paradoxical picture. It shows that a decade after the "disarmament" process began there are conflicting trends, some of which provide few grounds for optimism. The reduction effort has not been the same everywhere.What is more alarming, many countries and entire regions have begun to rearm.

World military expenditure has fallen by about one-third since 1988. In 1997 it was running at $740 billion (equivalent to roughly $2 billion a day, or 2.6 per cent of global GDP, compared with $3 billion a day at the end of the 1980s).

Contrasting trends

The first point to note, however, is that this reduction is due basically to cuts made in Europe and in the United States. And while Europe heads the list with a drop of over 50 per cent in the last decade (see table), this spectacular decrease is chiefly due to the reduction which began in Russia in 1992. In Western Europe, the reduction in military spending has been far more modest, around 14 per cent.

The second point is that while the high-income countries have reduced the size of their military systems and the corresponding expenditure, the low- and middle-income countries have increased military spending by 19 per cent and 12 per cent respectively. Notable examples in the low-income group include South Asian countries, China and some African countries, and in the middle-income group such Mediterranean countries as Algeria, Lebanon,Syria and Turkey. Growing military budgets not only eat into spending on human development, but also heighten the risk that arms will be used to deal with political crises.

Asia is the continent where the growth in military expenditure has been strongest. India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Taiwan,Thailand and South Korea have all increased their budgets significantly in recent years, although as a rule by a ▶

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*Holder of the UNESCO Chair of Peace and Human Rights at the Autonomous University of Barcelona,Spain lesser percentage than the rise in their GDP. A substantial part of the increase has gone into buying new weapons—expenditure on arms purchases doubled between 1994 and 1997. This trend may be expected to slow down in the next few years, however, for two reasons—the financial crisis that has affected many of the region's economies and pressure from the International Monetary Fund for these countries to reduce government expenditure, including military spending.

Latin America has not escaped the temptation to rearm. Military expenditure in South America rose by 14 per cent over the last decade, notably in Brazil, Chile and Paraguay. In the last few years purchasing of new weapons, some extremely expensive, has also increased. Central America, which for decades was one of the regions worst ravaged by armed conflicts, constitutes an exception. In the last decade, it has actually reduced its military expenditure by almost 40 per cent following the conclusion of peace agreements.

In the Middle East, a traditionally lucrative market for arms exporters, military spending has also followed an upward trend, especially in Iran, Saudi Arabia and Syria. In Africa, on the other hand, only Algeria and Uganda have increased their military budgets, and sub-Saharan Africa as a whole has reduced military expenditure by no less than 46 per cent. But the civil wars and cruel massacres that have occurred throughout the decade prove once again that the brutality of conflicts and the numbers of victims they claim are not necessarily linked to the acquisition of sophisticated, costly weaponry. The proliferation of light weapons, easily acquired and inexpensive (500 million units worldwide) is not sufficiently reflected in the statistics of military expenditure. It is enough to point out that 200,000 assault rifles can be had at discount prices for the cost of a single fighter plane.

World military expenditures

(Billions of dollars, constant 1995 prices)

	1988	1997	% variation
Africa	**12.6**	**8.8**	**-30**
North	**2.2**	**3.2**	**+45**
Sub-Saharan	**10.4**	**5.6**	**-46**
Americas	**410.0**	**290.0**	**-29**
North	**390.0**	**268.0**	**-31**
Central	**0.8**	**0.5**	**-39**
South	**19.2**	**21.9**	**+14**
Asia	**95.0**	**120.0**	**+26**
East	**83.8**	**106.0**	**+27**
South	**11.2**	**13.6**	**+22**
Europe	**500.0**	**234.0**	**-53**
Middle East	**39.6**	**43.3**	**+9**
Oceania	**8.9**	**8.8**	**-1**
Total	**1066.0**	**704.0**	**-34**

Source: SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute), SIPRI Yearbook 1998, p. 192

Smaller armies, new equipment

Variations in military expenditure can be explained by two major parameters: the size of armies and the type and quantity of armaments they acquire. Among the major powers a third factor comes into play, namely the cost of research and development in the military sector.

According to the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), the numbers of military personnel in the world's armies fell by some six million between 1988 and 1995 (to 22.8 million in 1995), a drop of 20 per cent. This helps to explain the aggregate reduction in military expenditure. There are major differences between regions, however. The developed countries cut their armed forces by more than 35 per cent, the developing countries by only 10 per cent on average. The percentage reductions in numbers in Central America (60 per cent), Eastern Europe (44 per cent), North America (25 per cent) and Western Europe (17 per cent) bear a clear relation to cuts in military budgets. This is not the

An international **code** of conduct

There seems little doubt that the countries producing and selling arms have not resisted the temptation to offset the fall in demand for military equipment from the industrialized countries with exports to the Third World, which is nowadays the scene of most conflicts. In 1997, imports of conventional weapons by developing countries came to almost $19 billion. And between 1993 and 1997 the five permanent member states of the United Nations Security Council together accounted for more than 80 per cent of arms transfers, according to SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute).

In 1997, in an effort to reverse this trend, a Committee of Nobel Peace Prize Winners, on the initiative of Oscar Arias, former President of Costa Rica and winner of the 1987 Nobel Peace Prize, drafted an International Code of Conduct on Arms Transfers, which it will submit to the United Nations General Assembly in the hope that it will be adopted as a binding international treaty. "Our children urgently need schools and health centres, not machine guns and fighter planes," the Committee declared. In fact, the figure for arms imports by developing countries in 1997 was three times more than the extra investment needed to provide basic education for all those countries' children, and one and half times more than what it would have cost to provide the whole population with basic health services and adequate food. Considering that more than half the countries spend more on defence than on health, Article 10 of the International Code stipulates that "Arms transfers may be conducted only if the recipient state's expenditures on health and education combined exceed its military expenditures".

The states usually justify high military spending on the ground of its deterrent effect, and hence as a means of guaranteeing the security of their citizens. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), however, the probability in developing countries of dying from social neglect is 33 times greater than that of being killed in a war resulting from external aggression.

The International Code stipulates that any country that wishes to acquire armaments must meet certain requirements, including the promotion of democracy, the protection of human rights and the transparency of military expenditure. According to the Committee, international arms transfers "foster political instability and human rights violations, prolong violent conflicts, and weaken diplomatic efforts to resolve differences peacefully".

Similar codes of conduct either already exist or have been proposed within the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the European Union, the United States and South Africa. These mechanisms urgently need to be applied at international level, considering that conventional weapons, and light weapons in particular, continue to cause 90 per cent of the casualties in today's armed conflicts. ■

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Dismantling a nuclear weapon at Amarillo, Texas (USA).

case, however, in regions such as the Middle East, which have offset decreased numbers with the modernization of their armies and purchases of equipment. Numbers of military personnel increased slightly in Latin America and South Asia.

Since 1990, military expenditure on defence equipment has fallen by a quarter. In the countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), expenditure on equipment fell by one-third between 1988 and 1997, when it amounted to $95 billion. These figures stand in contrast to the sales of the hundred leading arms-producing companies which, according to SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute) data, reached the substantial figure of $156 billion in 1996. Thirty-nine of the companies, half of them American, clocked up annual military sales in excess of one billion dollars.

SIPRI estimates research and development expenditure at $58 billion in 1995, of which $48 billion were accounted for by NATO countries ($37 billion by the United States alone). Since 1989, this type of expenditure has fallen in most countries. Three noteworthy exceptions are Japan, India and South Korea, all three of which have increased their overall military spending, in absolute terms, in the last decade.

Expenditure on research, which chiefly concerns the nuclear powers, accounts for 14 per cent of total military spending in the United States, 11 per cent in France, 9.5 per cent in the United Kingdom, 5 per cent in Russia and around 4 per cent in China. It accounts for 10 per cent of Sweden's military expenditure and more than 5 per cent of that of India, Germany and South Africa.All these countries,plus Spain and Japan, account for more than 90 per cent of world expenditure on armaments research.

What happened to the peace dividend?

When the process of reducing military expenditure began, the idea was for disarmament to serve development and for a "peace dividend" to be created with the savings that would accrue. What was the outcome of that commendable initiative? According to a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report, the total "peace dividend" worldwide exceeded $900 billion by the mid-1990s, but "Most of the savings appear to have been committed to budget deficit reductions and non-development expenditures".

The figures presented above also indicate that the "peace dividend" is far from being a universal phenomenon. Unfortunately it is the countries most in need of resources for their development that spend most on military activities, often more than they spend on health or education (see box).

It is significant that the latest indicator used by the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) to measure the disarmament effort of a list of 157 countries shows up negative for 69 of them. This gives a clear idea of the enormous effort that is still required. ■

Sources: *SIPRI Yearbook 1998*; *World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers 1996* (ACDA, United States, 1997); *Conversion Survey 1998* (BICC, 1998)

A **legal** weapon against firearms

The growing number of lawsuits being brought by Americans seeking damages from commercial firms has become an effective way to promote causes on which members of Congress may be reluctant to legislate, because they are often dependent on these companies for election campaign funds.

A New York federal court jury recently set a precedent by ordering gun manufacturers to pay $4 million to someone accidentally wounded in a 1995 shooting incident. The decision, on 11 February 1999,marked the first time that Colt, Beretta and other arms makers were deemed guilty of "negligence" for having flooded New York shops with "dangerous products". The firms have appealed but many other suits against them are under way, some by city governments.

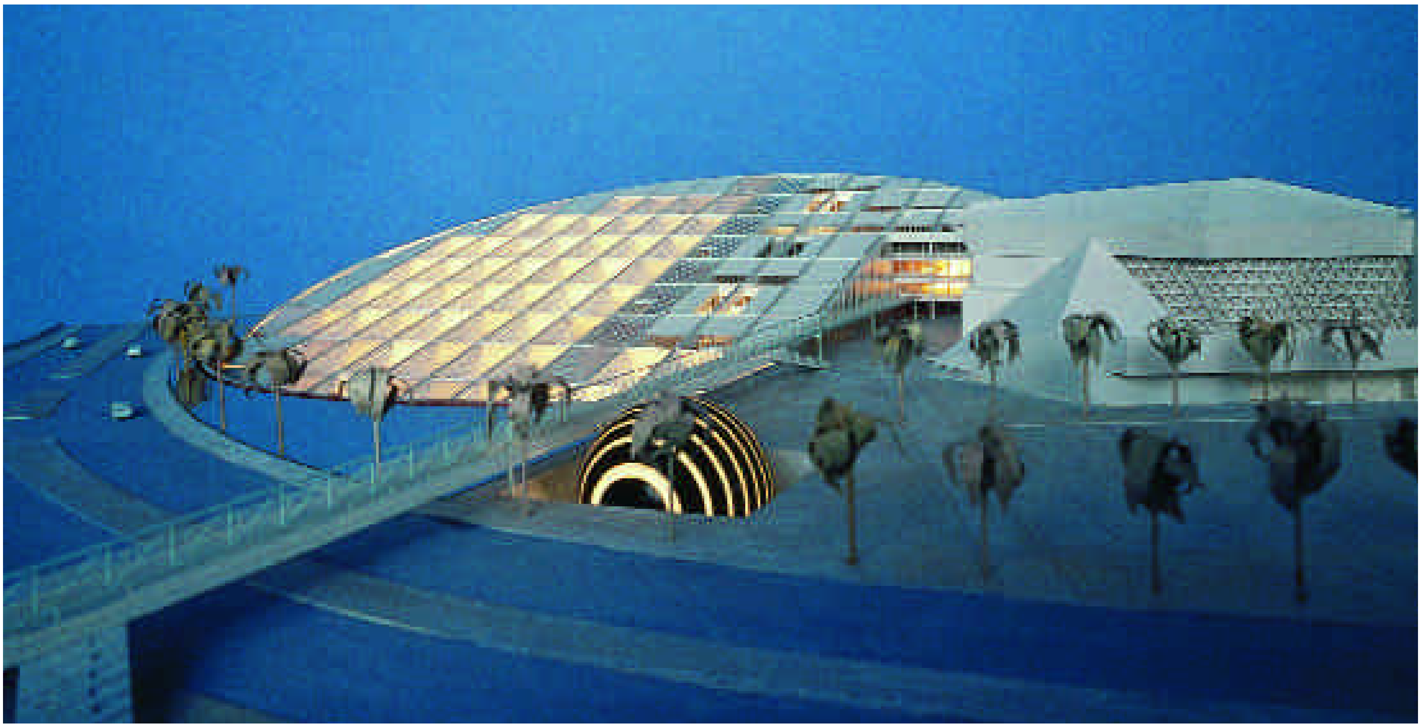
The gun manufacturers, backed by the powerful National Rifle Association, a pressure group of firearm owners that claims three million members, have fiercely opposed all legal efforts to restrict the ownership and sale of guns. Yet crime figures remain spectacularly high in the United States. The number of murders fell from 24,700 in 1991 to 18,200 in 1997, but it is still by far the highest of all the industrial countries.

The only anti-gun law of recent years was passed after an epic congressional battle. It requires anyone buying a gun to wait five working days so the seller can check if the buyer has a criminal record.

Suing for damages has already proved an effective weapon in the U.S Consumer groups have used it successfully as have victims of asbestosis and the harmful effects of tobacco. The method is spreading to other countries. Guatemala, Nicaragua and Panama recently brought civil suits against big U.S. tobacco companies in the hope of getting compensation for the money they have spent to treat people suffering from smoking-related illnesses. ■

Michel
Arseneault*

Alexandria, from


© UNESCO

A project costing over $170 million.

The Library of Alexandria was Antiquity's most prestigious centre of learning. Its rebirth may bring a new beacon of knowledge to the Arab world

In the centre of Alexandria, between the eastern port and the university, a thousand labourers are working night and day on a huge construction site with four big cranes. The cylindrical 11-storey building being built there in the middle of a lake has been designed by a firm of Norwegian architects, Snøhetta, which won an international competition in 1989 that drew 1,400 entries from 77 countries. Its circular shape is meant to conjure up, against the backcloth of the Mediterranean, the image of "a lighthouse of knowledge re-emerging in a perpetual sunrise",in the words of the project's director-general, Prof. Mohsen Zahran.

The building, which should be finished by autumn 1999, will revive the legendary Bibliotheca Alexandrina (BA).Its promoters hope that, with the help of the best modern technology, it will spread the intellectual influence of Alexandria throughout the Arab world and beyond much more effectively than its predecessor did at the time of Caesar and Cleopatra.

The 36,770-square-metre library will seat 2,000 people and have up to eight million books, periodicals, manuscripts, microfilms and CD-ROMs. Its computerized catalogue, which France is helping to build, will be one of the most advanced in the world and available in Arabic, English and French. Its planetarium, its International School of Information Studies and its museums of archaeology, calligraphy and science are expected to attract students, scholars and visitors from all over the world.

Books for a wide public

The idea of reviving the library was born in 1974, when Cambridge-educated Mostafa el-Abbadi, a history professor and author of a study on the "Life and Fate of the Ancient Library of Alexandria" dreamed of resuscitating the "temple of learning" he had spent so many years studying. The president of Alexandria University, Dr Lutfi Dowidar, backed him and together they won the support of the Egyptian government and UNESCO, which funded a feasibility study and an Internet website (www.bibalex.gov.eg).

El-Abbadi is fairly happy with the way things have turned out, though he would prefer the BA to be just a place for scholars. It will open its doors to a far wider public, however. "We don't want books without readers," says the writer Gamal el-Ghatani, editor of *Akhbar al-Adab*, the weekly literary supplement of the big Cairo daily newspaper *Al-Akhbar*. "Unlike my son, I don't know how to use a computer," he confesses. "The Alexandria Library is being built for his generation, not mine, but the public will enjoy it as much as I enjoyed going to the old national library."

At the entrance to the building site stands a slab of Aswan granite bearing an Egyptian hieroglyph, a Chinese ideogram, an Arabic letter and a Greek "e". The message of the granite blocks which make up the outer walls of the building is clear: the library aims to be a crossroads of alphabets, words and languages, like the city where it is located. Archaeological digs at the site—a former university car park where work began in May 1995, seven years after Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and UNESCO Director-General Federico Mayor laid the foundation stone—have shown that it used to be part of the royal neighbourhood. But no one knows exactly where the old library stood or what it looked like.

papyrus to the Internet

The rebirth of the BA has been enthusiastically welcomed abroad. Germany is supplying equipment to move documents and Italy a laboratory to restore manuscripts. Norway will provide furniture and Japan audiovisual equipment. France will donate a copy of the archives of the old Suez Canal Company, Turkey will give 10,000 books and Australia will provide some works of art. About 300,000 books have been collected so far, a third of them donated.

A catapult for development

Former UNESCO Director-General Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow launched a world-wide appeal in 1987 for the library's revival, saying it would transform the cultural scene in the Middle East and the countries of the Maghreb. The UNESCO feasibility study stressed this key role it could play in the Mediterranean area.

This mission will probably be accomplished, reckons project director Prof. Zahran, who is a U.S.-trained Egyptian architect. The BA could become “a catapult for the economic and social development of Egypt,” he says. “A country can have great wealth, but if it has no culture, it soon falls apart.” He predicts that the BA will become “a bridge of understanding and interaction between East and West. Its revival will benefit humanity. But we mustn't think that the child will be a prodigy from the moment of its birth. We'll have to wait several decades before we can see its real influence.”

El-Ghatani also hopes it will be a bridge between Egypt and Europe, a continent he sees as close because it shares the culture and especially the religions of the Mediterranean basin. “The roots of Europe's religions are right here,” he says. The Alexandrian writer Edwar al-Kharrat would like to see Alexandria become “the capital of collective memory and a haven for literary figures and scientists.”

Alexandria
Suez Canal
Cairo
EGYPT

More concretely, the BA will enable Egypt's young people—half the country's population is under 20—to step up the pace of their studies. According to Zahran, Egyptian students sometimes take four years to finish a doctorate—twice as long as students in the West—because research material is hard to come by.

The first beneficiaries of the BA will be the 80,000 or so students at Alexandria University, whose library only has 250,000 works (Egypt's national library has 1.5 million). Scholars from all over the Arab world could come to Alexandria instead of or before going to the United States or Britain. If the BA continues to attract the attention of foreigners in this way, it will play an important role.

Alexandria will become ‘the capital of collective memory and a haven for literary figures and scientists’

By bringing back documents that were scattered through Western countries in the 19th century, the library will enable scholars to compare the manuscripts in Egypt with the copies that are being donated by foreign benefactors. An example is the manuscripts in the Escurial Palace in Spain, which are a crucial part of Arab heritage and copies of which have been made for the new library. The BA could also acquire more recent works which have been taken out of the Arab world. The superb lithographed books published in Fez, in Morocco, in the 1920s can up to now only be consulted at Harvard University, in the U.S.,for example.

Support from international donors

The BA is due to be officially opened at the end of this year by President Mubarak, who will be running for a fourth term of office in October. Will his opponents criticize him for spending so much money on a fancy library when half the country's adult population cannot read or write? Egypt is ►

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* Canadian journalist in Alexandria,Egypt

A **mysterious** disappearance

Alexandria, founded by Alexander the Great, had a lighthouse that was one of the seven wonders of the world. It was also the site, from about the third century BC, of the most famous library of ancient times. Greek thinkers such as Euclid, Ptolemy and Dionysius Thrax, respectively the “inventors” of geometry, map-making and grammar, worked there. There too 72 rabbis translated from Hebrew into Greek the writings that would come to be known, at least by Christians,as the Old Testament.

The library also arranged for passing ships to be hijacked and relieved of any manuscripts they happened to be carrying. Its avowed aim was to own all the books in the world. It kept the originals and gave copies of them back to their owners. The library ended up with between 500,000 and 700,000 manuscripts, mainly rolls of papyrus,that were stored in attics after the most valuable of them had been rolled up in linen or leather. For about 600 years, they were kept in a “museum” (in its original meaning of “temple of the muses”) in the royal neighbourhood which was the home of the seventh, last and most famous of the Cleopatras.

It was long thought that this Cleopatra's first husband,Julius Caesar, whose troops burned down part of Alexandria in about 48 BC, was responsible for the library's demise. But historians today have other theories. The library may have disappeared in the third century AD during fighting between Zenobia,queen of Palmyra,and the forces of Emperor Aurelian. Or perhaps in the fourth century, when Christians destroyed “pagan”writings. Or maybe in the seventh century, when an Arab general occupied the city and ordered documents to be burned to heat up the public baths. ■

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The new library is set to open its doors before the year 2000.

forking out almost two-thirds of the $172 million cost of the building itself. Proceeds from an international funding appeal, to which Arab countries have already generously contributed, will foot the rest of the bill.

Paradoxes of the Arab world

"Of course it's expensive," says El Ghatani, "but a library isn't some kind of festival that ends after three days. It would have cost even more if we'd waited another 30 years to build it." Its worth should be seen in terms of culture, not cash, and this, he believes, draws attention to one of the paradoxes of the Arab world. "The richest culture is in the poorest countries—I'm thinking of Yemen—and the richest states have the least interesting cultural material. The rulers of the rich states have built palaces in Lausanne and Geneva instead of libraries. But the age of the oil dollar is coming to an end. We have to return to more basic values," he says.

Might the BA encourage democracy—a concept that originated in Greece—in Egypt and the rest of the region? "To build a democratic state," says archaeologist Ahmed Ahdel Fattah, director-general of the Greco-Roman museum in Alexandria, "we need the tools of democracy, and knowledge is one of them. Democracy isn't in such bad shape in Egypt, compared with some of its neighbours. This of course doesn't stop us saying that we don't have enough. Thank God I was born in Egypt. I couldn't publish my writings in a lot of other Arab countries. ■

The world's great libraries

Libraries are usually compared on the basis of how many printed volumes they contain. But this can be deceptive because countries have their own definitions of what a volume is. Moscow's state library, for example, counts as a "volume" any publication longer than two pages, including magazines—which produces a total of 30 million "volumes", the same number as in the St Petersburg library. On the other hand, in France a "volume" must contain more than 50 pages and may not be a periodical.

The U.S. Library of Congress, founded in Washington in 1800, is considered the biggest in the world, with 29 million volumes. China's national library in Beijing claims 16 million. These two are followed by a group of five, with stocks estimated at between 10 and 13 million volumes each. Among them are Harvard University Library, in the U.S., the New York Public Library, and the library in Frankfurt, Germany, which opened in 1994.

The British Library in London has nearly 12 million volumes. This is about the same number as the French State Library, which opened in Paris in 1996, includes the contents of the old Bibliothèque Nationale (National Library), and is also known as the "Très Grande Bibliothèque" (the "Very Big Library").

The library in Alexandria, Egypt, eventually scheduled to contain eight million works, will then rank after France's state library and be in the same group as the libraries in Berlin, Berkeley (California) and the Romanian Academy in Bucharest. ■

African films in search of an audience

What can be done to ensure that African-made films are seen by Africans? Attempts to tackle this problem were made at workshops organized at this year's Panafrican Film and Television Festival (Fespaco) held in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) from 27 February to 6 March.

A solution is needed urgently, for Africa is rapidly becoming a dustbin for cheap American movies, kung fu films, Hindu melodramas and Latin American soap operas. About 90 per cent of the films shown at the festival will never be seen in Africa because "there's no real distribution network, just importers," according to Dominique Wallon, who has written a report on the problem for the European Union.

Almost all the market in French-speaking Africa is controlled by African American Films (AFRAM), which is a subsidiary of MPEAAM, a powerful Hollywood bridgehead. To get cinema-owners to take its films, AFRAM gives away copies in exchange for 30-40 per cent of box-office takings. In contrast, African films have to be rented at set prices. So it's Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger who swagger across African cinema screens. Small impoverished neighbourhood cinemas often show just pirated videos.

But there are pockets of resistance. Cameroonian producer Bassek Ba Kobhio has been running a scheme for the past four years called Écrans Noirs, which distributes African films in Cameroon, Gabon, Congo-Brazzaville, the Central African Republic and soon Chad, using the region's network of French cultural centres.

But cinema managers say the distribution of African films will have to be subsidized because they rarely draw big crowds. Nour-Eddine Saïl, of Canal Plus Horizons, a French company, says the big television networks should be legally obliged to fund African film-making. Wallon thinks governments should build cinemas and allow the private sector to run them. It remains to be seen if African governments will take up these suggestions. ■

Latin America's endangered frequencies

Rafael Roncagliolo*

A champion of community radio stations warns of threats to their existence in Latin America

© Sean Sprague/Panos Pictures, London

An announcer in the studio of a Dar es-Salaam (Tanzania) Catholic radio station.

Alongside state-run radio and large-scale private broadcasting networks there is another world of community radio stations, owned, run and editorially controlled by the public they serve. These "alternative" radio stations may not have a range beyond the slum, village or island from which they broadcast. Many of them are shoestring operations staffed by local volunteers.

Unlike commercial radio, which makes money from advertising, community radio stations are not profit-oriented—though sometimes they accept a little advertising in order to survive. They are there to serve the local population. Because of their contribution to a culture of peace and the growth of democracy, they are making headway on every continent.

With the development of democratic movements and the emergence of new private and public pressure groups, community radio has taken root all over the world, though on different scales and with differing effects. This is largely due to new and better technical equipment, cheaper FM transmitters and the gradual disappearance of public broadcasting monopolies.

When recognized by the government and protected by law—as in the United States, Australia and Canada, for example—they coexist uncontentiously with commercial stations. A number of European countries have followed the example of France, where the law was changed in 1982 to legalize "pirate" or "free" radio stations.

In Africa and Asia, the growth of local radio has been spectacular. The most striking case is South Africa where, according to the Media Institute of South Africa (MISA), community broadcasting has great potential. On these continents community radio is helping to roll back illiteracy, promote education and provide information about health, the environment, farming, democracy and hot issues like landmines. But in one part of the world, Latin America, it is under attack.

Fewer voices

Community radio stations involved in educational broadcasting or speaking out for trade unions, universities or indigenous peoples have been operating in Latin America for more than half a century. "They've been used to announce all kinds of things, from prices down at the local market to someone's horse that has gone astray," says José Ignacio López Vigil,the Latin American and Caribbean representative of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC). "They've also taught thousands of people to read and thousands more how to figure out where their employers have cheated them of their wages. They've helped to make sure that children were vaccinated and they've encouraged ordinary people to speak up."

There are probably more than 2,000 community radio stations broadcasting in Latin America; 400 of them are affiliated to AMARC, twice as many as three years ▶

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*Peruvian sociologist, journalist and university teacher. Former president of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC).

ago. But while their number keeps on growing, the stations are having problems obtaining legal recognition.

Until recently, Latin America's local radio stations coexisted with commercial stations without too much trouble. But the concentration of the media over the past few years has tended to push non-profit radio and smaller stations in general out of the picture. This has inevitably led to fewer voices being heard on the air.

Most of Latin America's community radio stations are waiting to be assigned a fixed frequency or else official permission to broadcast. However they are not defined by their legal status but by their goals. Whether registered as public or private companies (linked to universities, regions or towns), their defining feature is that they are non-profit organizations without any political axe to grind.

Strong programmes, weak transmitters

The fact that they are linked to the local community does not necessarily mean they are small or ill equipped. In fact existing stations are trying to upgrade their technical resources, and new ones, such as *Radio Trinidad FM* in Paraguay, try to start up with the best possible facilities. Many stations have weak transmitters but make up for it by having computers in the newsroom. Some even broadcast via the Internet.

Nor does their community spirit mean that they put out boring programmes with poor-quality sound. The kind of interminable discussions and across-the-block denunciations that characterized community radio in its early days has given way to more open-minded and witty programmes which cover all aspects of life.

In Europe a distinction has always been made between profit-oriented commercial radio and public-service broadcasting designed to play a socio-cultural role. In Latin America, however, this distinction has been blurred because state-owned radio and television stations have been largely used as political tools and have had little or no social or cultural value.

> **Most of Latin America's community radio stations are waiting to be assigned a fixed frequency or official permission to broadcast**

In El Salvador, a recent telecommunications law gave clear advantage to profitable private firms and established regulations which favour big capital, to the extent that even the country's second biggest television station, which is private, was in danger of closing down. In Uruguay, radio operating licences have to be approved by the defence ministry, and broadcasters without a licence risk a prison sentence. In Chile, the power of a transmitter is limited to one watt. In Brazil and Argentina, new legislation is looming which would concentrate radio ownership even further and thus narrow the public's choice.

A live broadcast from Bolivia's Radio Esperanza.

In Peru, one of the few countries in Latin America where community radio stations can operate without too many legal problems, a new law passed in March 1998 banned non-profit stations from accepting even the very small amount of advertising which could ensure their survival. Since they receive no state subsidy or support, they are doomed to close, and this means that several sources of criticism of the present government will fall silent.

Closing doors

Their staff have appealed in vain to the national ombudsman (*Defensor del Pueblo*), and press freedom officials of the Organization of American States have approached the government without success. If the law is applied, dozens of stations may have to shut down.

One of them is *Radio Cutivalú*, which has about 400,000 listeners in the north of the country and is the region's main medium-wave station. The station, which is named after a pre-Inca Indian leader, won a United Nations prize last year for its "successful efforts to fight poverty".

Alternative radio

Community, free, pirate, local, indigenous, educational, insurrectional—these are just some of the labels used to describe "alternative" radio stations. A recently-published book* has identified about 20 types all over the world, operating alongside "established" stations.

Most of them belong to either the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) or the International Association of Broadcasting (AIR). AMARC, founded in August 1983 during the UN-sponsored World Communications Year, defends, co-ordinates and promotes radio stations around the world that are community-owned or broadcast socially-oriented programmes. With headquarters in Montreal, it has more than 2,000 members on five continents.

AIR, which started in Mexico in 1946 as the Inter-American Association of Broadcasting, is based in Montevideo (Uruguay) and switched to its present name in 1985. It defends broadcasting which conforms to international technical and legal standards and is a longstanding critic of community radio stations on the grounds that some of them cause interference problems through not having an official frequency. But AIR also defends free expression of ideas and encourages co-operation between radio stations and organizations, both national and international and publicly and privately-owned. ■

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* *Las Otras Radios*, by Alfredo Bouissa, Eduardo Curuchet and Oscar Orcajo (Editorial Nordan-Comunidad, Uruguay, 1998).

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- **AMARC: http://www.amarc.org**
  Phone:(514) 9820351
- **AIR: http://www.distrinet.com.uy/air—iab/**
  Phone:(59) 824088121

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It is also the only station attached to *Propuesta Regional*, a "development forum" whose participants include professional, university and religious associations independent of the government. It played a key role in helping the population survive the rains and flooding brought by the El Niño weather phenomenon.

Listeners say their favourite programmes are the station's competitions to encourage writing inspired by local tales and legends, which have attracted more than 1,300 amateur writers from towns all over northern Peru. Equally popular are regional song festivals sponsored by Panasonic and other firms, which give dozens of self-taught authors and composers a hearing they would never have enjoyed on commercial stations.

Cutivalú is not the only Peruvian radio station whose future hangs in the balance. The same goes for *Radio Marañón*, which broadcasts from Jaén, in the Amazon region.At the other end of the country, in Puno, near the Bolivian border, *Radio Onda Azul* is in danger of losing its network of rural correspondents because it can no longer afford to pay them.

All these laws violate constitutional rights and go against current international guarantees of freedom of expression. Community radio stations, which are by definition poor, have taken all kinds of legal steps to defend themselves. In Argentina and Paraguay, they have managed to survive because they have won their case. In Ecuador, they successfully challenged a law before the country's constitutional court. Ombudsmen in El Salvador and Peru have made strong statements defending the stations' rights.

Fair shares on the air

What is at stake in Latin America is very clear. Will the airwaves, which are part of overall human heritage, be monopolized by commercial firms, or will be they also be available, as they are everywhere else in the world, to communities, educational groups and non-profit organizations, in other words to the full spectrum of civil society exercising its right to free expression?

What lies ahead for community radio stations? They defend the right to free speech, help to create the diversity of opinion which is an essential feature of democracy, and encourage local development,a culture of peace, the protection of the environment and other civic causes which cannot be measured in terms of financial gain.

The history of the right to speak on the air began at the beginning of the century. Its defenders around the world have had to wage many struggles and make many sacrifices. Today it is more important than ever to ensure there is room for everyone on the airwaves. ■

Brain waves to help the **disabled**

Totally-paralysed people may soon be able to write on computer screens by using electrical signals from their brain.

Two research teams, one in the United States, the other in Germany, have come up with a device which,with the help of two small electrodes attached to the top of the skull, "reads" the waves given off by the brain.Three people with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, a degenerative motor neurone disease, used the method to write a short sentence over half an hour.

"These patients couldn't communicate at all," says Edward Taub of the University of Alabama in an article in the January 1999 issue of New Scientist magazine. He and Niels Birbaumer, of the University of Tübingen,record electrical signals coming from the cortex of the brain. The patients, by developing their ability to give positive or negative signals, control the upward or downward movement of a cursor which chooses from among 32 letters and punctuation marks on the screen.

The two teams are writing a computer programme which could speed things up by anticipating words from the first few letters, depending on the context of the sentence and the frequency with which words are used in the language.

Several other researchers around the world are trying to harness the potential of brain signals to relieve the ordeal of paralysed people. Last year an Australian team managed to get patients to operate a switch from signals registered on a brain scan.A team in Atlanta,in the U.S.,implanted electrodes in the brains of two people, enabling them to write messages on a computer screen.But a dangerous brain operation is needed. The team is hoping one day to come up with a device that can use brain signals to stimulate muscles and restore partial use of some limbs. ■

Leila Shahid

The **resolve** of a Palestinian envoy

© Alain Buu/Gamma, Paris

Since her high-school days she has embraced the Palestinian cause. Now, as the Palestinian Authority's representative in France, Leila Shahid is continuing the fight for the creation of a Palestinian state, for women's rights and peaceful coexistence at the heart of Mediterranean civilization

As Palestine's representative in France and a spokesperson for the Palestinian Authority, you're often in the media spotlight. But you only have a very brief entry in the latest edition of Who's Who in the Arab World . . .

Perhaps it's better that way. I'm not an ambassador in the usual sense because Palestine isn't a state yet. As representative of a people who for the past half-century have been trying to win recognition, I have to fight a battle on two fronts. One—more behind-the-scenes—is to maintain close ties with France and the European Union so as to defend the political rights of the Palestinian people. The other is public, and involves correcting a number of widely-accepted "facts" through the media. The Palestinian question is perhaps the most consistently and massively distorted international political issue.

Not so long ago it was said that the Palestinian people didn't exist. Palestine was considered a country without inhabitants—a desert—for a people without a land, the Jews. Its name was removed from maps and history books the day Israel was created.

It's been an existential battle. For decades, Israelis thought they would cease to exist if they recognized the Palestinian people. And Europeans thought that recognizing the Palestinians would be tantamount to betraying the Israelis, a people towards whom they had strong guilt feelings because of the Holocaust. So we've had to fight to set things straight and show that recognition could happen on an equal basis. Most Israelis today, especially the new generation of historians, agree that Palestine wasn't a desert in 1948.

The other main historical distortion has been the dismissal of the Palestinian people as a bunch of armed fighters and terrorists. The *intifada*, which lasted from 1987 to 1993, did a lot to show there was a society there, just like any other, with all its components, including women and children. But there's still prejudice. Palestinians are still targets of stereotypes regarding Arabs and Muslims in general. They spring from everyday racism and the legacy of colonial times.

You're a "foreign" Palestinian—one from the outside. How did your family come to leave Palestine and what was it like to live in exile?

My mother's family has always been very involved in the Palestinian national movement born at the turn of the century after the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the beginning of the British Mandate in Palestine which was supposed to pave the way for independence. From then on, Palestinians began to demand the right to found a state. But it very soon became clear that, unlike Syria and Lebanon, Palestine would not succeed in that goal, because it had to make way for the Jewish national home which the British had promised to the Zionists.

When the Palestinian national movement saw that political and diplomatic means were not enough to reverse what was happening, it resorted to arms. The first big Palestinian uprising against the British, the first *intifada*, was in 1936. My grandfather and great uncle took part in it. In 1939, my grandfather was arrested and sent off to a military camp in the Seychelles. Like all the leaders of the movement, he was detained until 1945, during which time women and children were deported to areas under the French mandate. So my mother, who came from Jerusalem, found herself in Lebanon. It was there that she met my father, who had come as a student from Acre, in Palestine. They got married and my two sisters and I grew up outside Palestine, like two-thirds of all Palestinians.

Where does your political awareness stem from?

My family. I was very affected by the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, which broke out the day I was due to take my high school graduation exam, on June 5. The exam was cancelled. We were sure that we'd win the war, but when we realized after six days that Israel had beaten all the Arab armies—of Syria, Egypt and Jordan—we were shattered. June 1967 was a very deep shock for Arab intellectuals. We thought that the international community would be sympathetic to the injustice and exile Palestinians were forced to endure. We thought that it would support us. But it applauded the Israeli victory instead.

I decided to get involved in political activism and I began learning how to handle weapons. It was a symbolic way of restoring a sense of dignity. But I soon realized I wasn't cut out for the military and opted for political and social work in the Palestinian refugee camps. In my first year of university, I took part in activities to prepare for the *intifada*. In 1969, the refugees rose up to win the right to organize politically and manage their own affairs. From then on, the various groups which made up the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) took part in running the camps, which were administered by the United Nations via UNWRA (the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East). This was a very intense period for me. I felt like I had returned to Palestine and rediscovered my history and culture. After that, I went off to study anthropology in France, where I met my husband, who is Moroccan, and we went to live in his country. In 1989, President Arafat asked me to represent the PLO in Ireland. From there I was sent to the Netherlands and finally to France.

Has being a woman ever been a handicap for you?

I come from a family of three girls, so I never had to defend myself against a boy who might have wanted to get the upper hand. My father, who was a professor of medicine, believed strongly in the equality of the sexes, and both my parents always backed me in whatever I wanted to do. My husband has the same attitude.

How has the Arab-Israeli conflict affected Palestinian women?

Many women found themselves in foreign countries, away from their traditional village surroundings, side by side with men who were traumatized and jobless. These men were so humiliated by the loss of their lands that they had no strength to react. So the women had to take charge of things and organize day-to-day life with very few means. If they hadn't been uprooted like this, it would have taken decades to break with tradition. Also, UNWRA, which was in charge of education and health in the refugee camps, inside and outside Palestine, set up a system of compulsory education for all, both boys and girls. This partly explains why Palestinians have one of the highest literacy rates in the Arab world. But Palestinian women have always been aware that their role in the resistance would not be enough to guarantee them equal rights with men. So they have tried to organize themselves, not just as militant nationalists but also as women.

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To do what?

There are a number of women's organizations. Many are working on a code to define the status of women and a constitutional guarantee of equality. There is a good starting point since the 1988 declaration underlines that the Palestinian state will have a parliamentary system which guarantees equal rights for men and women. But it's hard to put into practice, because we can't cut ourselves off completely from the rest of the region, where individual rights are based on Islamic law, the *sharia*. There's a debate between lay people and religious officials in society and in parliamentary bodies. Beyond the judicial field, women's groups have programmes which encourage women to take paid jobs. Others are doing research. Bir ▶

Life spills over on to an abandoned railway line in a Gaza refugee camp.

© J.C. Tordai/Panos Pictures, London

Zeit University has the region's only centre for women's studies.

Yet there are very few women in the Palestinian Authority. Isn't there a risk of finding the Algerian syndrome in which women are sent back to the kitchen as soon as the struggle is over?

The fight isn't over, either against the occupation or for women's rights. And the two are linked. For women, everything depends on the balance of power in the society. The future of the progressive, secularist tendency led by President Arafat depends on the peace process. If that collapses, the fundamentalist position will get stronger and automatically harm the position of women.

Are schools co-ed in Palestine?

There are two kinds of schools—the UNWRA ones in the camps and those in the autonomous areas run by the Palestinian Authority since 1994. Both are co-educational, except for a few in the Gaza Strip which are private schools serving the more conservative elements of society.

What laws govern the status of Palestinian women today?

It depends where they live. Many legal systems coexist in Palestine—Ottoman, English, Egyptian (in the Gaza Strip), Jordanian (the West Bank) and Israeli (civil and military, in East Jerusalem). It's a unique situation—so many legal systems applying to so few people. We're trying to come up with a body of laws that will be truly Palestinian.

You emphasize that a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is crucial for the whole Mediterranean region. Why?

After the creation of the state of Israel, the conflict spread to Egypt, which was the first country to sign a peace treaty, to southern Lebanon, which has been occupied for 20 years, the Golan Heights (Syria), occupied for 30 years, and to Jordan, which recently signed a peace treaty. A resolution of the conflict will show whether the peoples of the Mediterranean can live together in mutual respect. If Palestinians and Israelis can manage to do this, their example can encourage others—Berbers and Arabs, Turks and Kurds, for example. Palestine isn't like other countries. It's the heart of Mediterranean civilization, the only place which brings together

An **eclectic** education

Education is considered a major priority for Palestinians, an observation difficult to quantify given the scope of the diaspora. However, the political upheaval surrounding the intifada has taken a toll on education in the territories: literacy rates have declined, while the dearth of trained professionals in science and technology hampers the economic development.

The Palestinian Ministry of Education, officially set up in 1994, has the major task of consolidating the eclectic system of public and private schools inherited after 27 years of occupation. In the West Bank, for example, schoolchildren follow nine years of courses based on Jordanian curricula, while in Gaza, they take ten years of classes following the Egyptian model. This system dates back to 1948 when UNRWA (the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) began setting up schools in the refugee camps to reflect the curricula of the host nations. Today, the challenge lies in integrating these different schools as well as the public schools set up by the ministry and a small percentage of private schools established by Muslim and Christian organizations. Overall, the gender ratio in enrolment at the primary level is equal, although girls tend to have higher drop-out rates as they move on to secondary levels and higher education. All of the territories' eight universities and over half of the some 20 community colleges are private.

The ministry is working closely with UNESCO, a long-standing educational partner, to integrate the various schools and find the funding to enlarge the system as Palestinian families return from the diaspora. A major priority also lies in developing a standard curriculum and in particular courses in Palestinian history—a forbidden subject throughout 27 years of occupation. ■

A brief **chronology**

November 1917: The Balfour Declaration in which the British Foreign Secretary promises support for the creation of a Jewish national home in Palestine.

May 14,1948: Declaration of the state of Israel.

1948-1949: War in Palestine, prompting a massive exodus of Palestinians and ending with a victory for Israel and armistices signed with Arab neighbours. Jordan annexes the West Bank, while Egypt rules the Gaza Strip.

May 29, 1964: Creation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

June 5,1967: Six-Day War in which Israel defeats the combined forces of Egypt, Syria and Jordan and occupies the Sinai, Golan Heights, West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem.

February 1-4, 1969: Yasser Arafat becomes president of the PLO Executive Committee.

September 1970: Jordan expels the PLO which moves its headquarters to Lebanon. Within a few months, a low level war of attrition takes place along the southern Lebanese border between PLO and Israeli forces.

October 6, 1973: Start of the October War, also known as the Yom Kippur War, in which Egyptian and Syrian forces attack Israel to try to recover occupied territories.

September 17, 1978: Camp David Accords signed by Egypt and Israel lead to Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai and a peace treaty.

June 6, 1982: Israel invades Lebanon to defeat PLO and Syrian forces. Hundreds of Palestinians are later massacred at the Sabra and Chatila refugee camps. Arafat then moves PLO headquarters to Tunis.

December 1987: Intifada (uprising) begins in Israeli-occupied territories.

November 12-15, 1988: PLO declares the creation of a democratic state while denouncing terrorism and recognizes the state of Israel in December.

September 13, 1993: Signature in Washington of Israeli-Palestinian accords secretly negotiated in Oslo and sealed by the famous handshake between Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat.

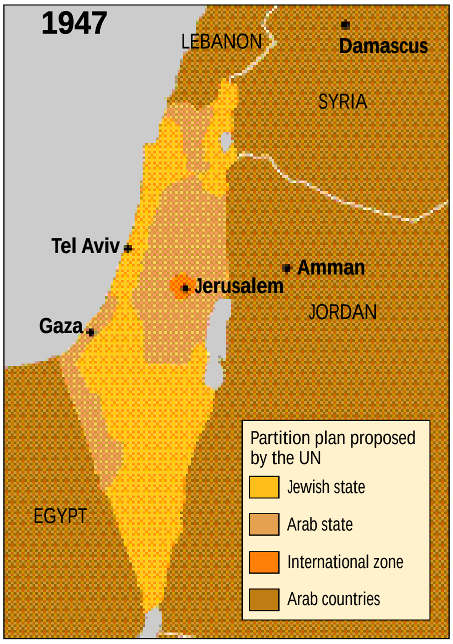
July 1, 1994: Arafat returns to Gaza to establish the Palestinian Authority.

November 4, 1995: Rabin assassinated by an Israeli extremist.

May 29, 1996: Benjamin Netanyahu elected prime minister of Israel.

October 23, 1998: Wye Plantation Accords between Israel and PLO mark an attempt to reinvigorate the peace process.

May 4,1999: End of the five-year interim period included under the terms of the Oslo Accords.



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An early start: Palestinian children at play school in Rafah,Gaza.

the three major monotheistic religions and their cultures. Their peaceful coexistence would have an impact beyond the region—everywhere that different cultures are trying to reject and exclude one another.

The Arab world currently seems to consist of groups trying to dominate one another.

The Arab world hasn't always been like this. It's a very recent phenomenon. Don't forget that in Andalusia, Europeans and Arabs lived together in extremely fruitful harmony until the time of the Inquisition, when Christians excluded Jews and Muslims from society. The lack of tolerance we see in the Arab-Muslim world today is part of a contemporary political crisis which began with the founding of nation-states. It isn't an inherent part of Arab culture. It's to do with the failure of political systems which have managed to defeat colonialism but haven't found the path to democracy or given people a chance to aspire in political, economic and cultural terms. So they've failed, which is why people set such importance on their own identity or seek an alternative political ideology in religion.

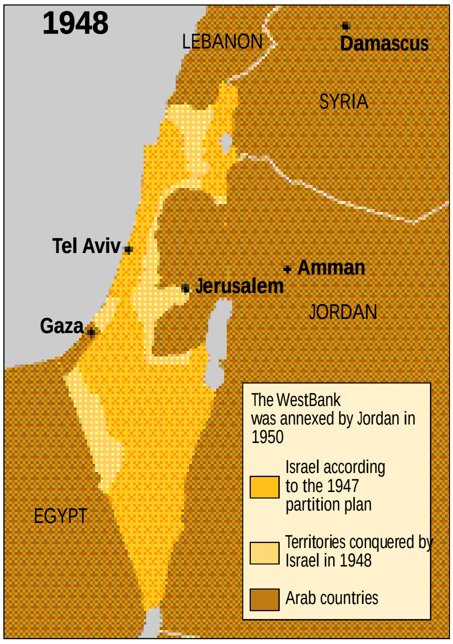
The interim period for the application of the Oslo Accords ends on May 4. What's the outcome of this process?

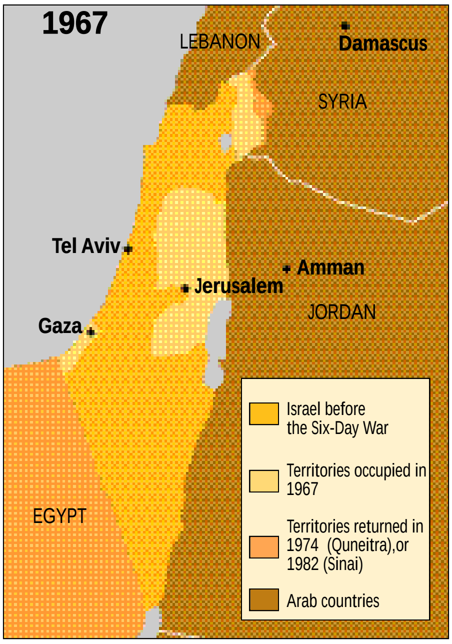
It's disappointing. The peace process has been at a standstill ever since Mr Netanyahu came to power three years ago. So we're far behind the agreed timetable. The Israeli army should have withdrawn from all the occupied territories. But so far we only control three per cent of the West Bank and 60 per cent of the Gaza Strip. We should have been able to hold both parliamentary and local elections, but the latter haven't been possible. We should have completed most of the toughest negotiations over the status of Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, borders and water, but we haven't even started yet. So does that mean nothing has been achieved? No, some gains are irreversible. The most important is the mutual recognition between Israeli and Palestinian governments and societies. It is now accepted that the Palestinian people exist and have national rights. The second gain has been the right of return to the homeland—the *el-owda* of the Palestinian national movement which developed in exile—has been recognized. It was marked by the return of President Arafat to build a state.

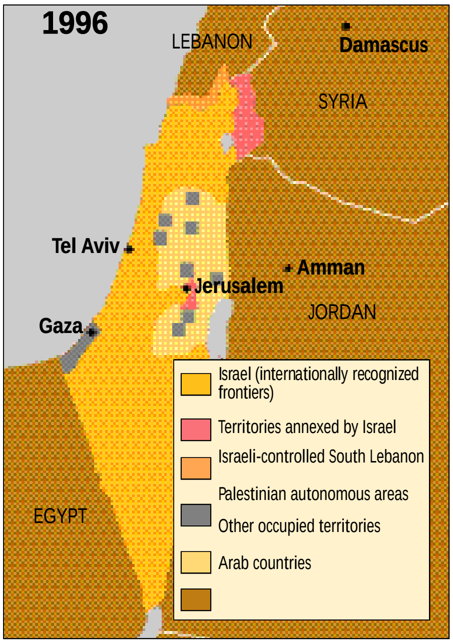
What has been done to create new infrastructures?

Roads, industries and farms in the territories recovered by the Palestinian Authority were mostly destroyed during the 30 years of the occupation. So far, not much progress has been made here, mainly because the territories have been sealed off by the Israeli army. The economy can't take off if the circulation of goods and people is blocked. ►

'Don't forget that in Andalusia, Europeans and Arabs lived together in extremely fruitful harmony until the time of the Inquisition, when Christians excluded Jews and Muslims from society. The lack of tolerance we see in the Arab-Muslim world today is part of a contemporary political crisis which began with the founding of nation-states'


1948
LEBANON
Damascus
SYRIA
Tel Aviv
Amman
Jerusalem
JORDAN
Gaza
EGYPT
The WestBank was annexed by Jordan in 1950
Israel according to the 1947 partition plan
Territories conquered by Israel in 1948
Arab countries


1967
LEBANON
Damascus
SYRIA
Tel Aviv
Amman
Jerusalem
JORDAN
Gaza
EGYPT
Israel before the Six-Day War
Territories occupied in 1967
Territories returned in 1974 (Quneitra),or 1982 (Sinai)
Arab countries


1996
LEBANON
Damascus
SYRIA
Tel Aviv
Amman
Jerusalem
JORDAN
Gaza
EGYPT
Israel (internationally recognized frontiers)
Territories annexed by Israel
Israeli-controlled South Lebanon
Palestinian autonomous areas
Other occupied territories
Arab countries

© Liz Gilbert/Sygma, Paris

Women on their way to the polls in the 1996 legislative elections.

This obstacle is smaller in social matters. Great progress has been made in education with the help of the European Union and UNESCO. Palestinians invest a tremendous amount in educating their children. I don't know of any other people, except perhaps the Jews, who have compensated so much for the loss of territory by acquiring knowledge. But there's still a lot to be done, especially creating a modern curriculum tailored to Palestinians and not copied from courses in Egypt, Jordan or Israel.

Has the international community kept its promises?

Yes, absolutely. Donor countries can be commended for guaranteeing the education and health of a people wracked by economic crisis. Over 60 per cent of the working population in the Gaza Strip is unemployed, and over 47 per cent in the West Bank. But this aid won't have any really positive effect unless the private sector seriously invests,and for that we need stability and normalized political conditions.

There's been a lot of talk in the press about irregularities and corruption inside the Palestinian Authority. What has been done to tackle this?

It's the kind of problem that threatens all societies, including the most advanced ones in Europe. So imagine the difficulty in Palestine, where there aren't laws or a legal system in place yet. There won't be transparency or genuine pluralism until there's a state of law, and we don't have a state yet.

How is the Palestinian Authority preparing for the May 4 deadline?

The Israeli government has decided to hold elections on May 17 to effectively cancel the May 4 deadline set in the Oslo Accords. After May 4 there will be a legal no-man's-land. The big question is who will fill the void? We can't live forever on a temporary basis. Are we going to let the Israeli government take away our rights? Can the Palestinians decide unilaterally to set up a state in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem? Will the international community shoulder its responsibilities after having recognized Palestinians' right to self-determination? All these questions will arise on May 4.

Will you live in Palestine one day?

As one of the four million refugees living outside Palestine, my status isn't yet defined. It will be part of the final negotiations. My greatest dream is to live in Palestine.

Where?

In Jerusalem,I hope. ■

Interview by
Sophie Boukhari and **Amy Otchet**

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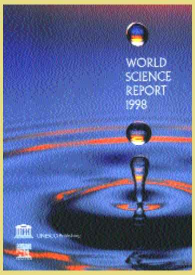

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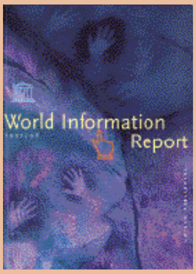

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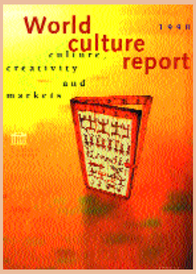

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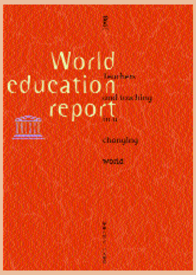

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