

UNESCO
the Courier

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Through
Dogon eyes

INTERVIEW

Quino, on
the funny side
of freedom

PLANET

The wildlife
trade: poacher
or gamekeeper?

ETHICS

Embargo against
Iraq: crime and
punishment

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Youth's
sonic
forces



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Youth's sonic forces

One was born in the fire of New York's ghettos, the other on the thudding dancefloors of the city's underground clubs. If there are two genres that define a generation's coming of age, hip-hop and electronic dance music would fit the bill. From Algeria to New Zealand, youth have seized upon their rhythm and beat to express anger and aspiration, while spawning new creative projects. But as cultures of resistance and rebellion go global, do they lose their spirit to become the standard-bearers of consumption?

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THROUGH DOGON EYES

► Text by Antonin Potovski

Long seen only through the lens of tourists, the Dogons have now started to photograph themselves. Seven young villagers record their own people's gentle daily lives



© Dogons/A. Potovski/MU, Paris

In the Dogon villages at the foot of the Bandiagara cliff, or perched on the cliff-top overlooking the great plain that stretches to the Burkina Faso border, young people can always be found busily writing letters to tourists who have visited them. They fill small exercise books with captioned drawings of the villages' tourist trademarks: the masked dance, the funerals, the water bearers, the togouna

► Antonin Potovski has been working as a photographer in Mali since 1996 and is preparing a book entitled *Les cahiers dogons* ("The Dogon Notebooks"). A forthcoming book prepared with Bernard Faucon, *La Plus Belle Route du Monde* ("The World's Most Beautiful Road"), is soon to be published by POL. The following photographs are a selection from an exhibition taking place this fall at the French record store Fnac.

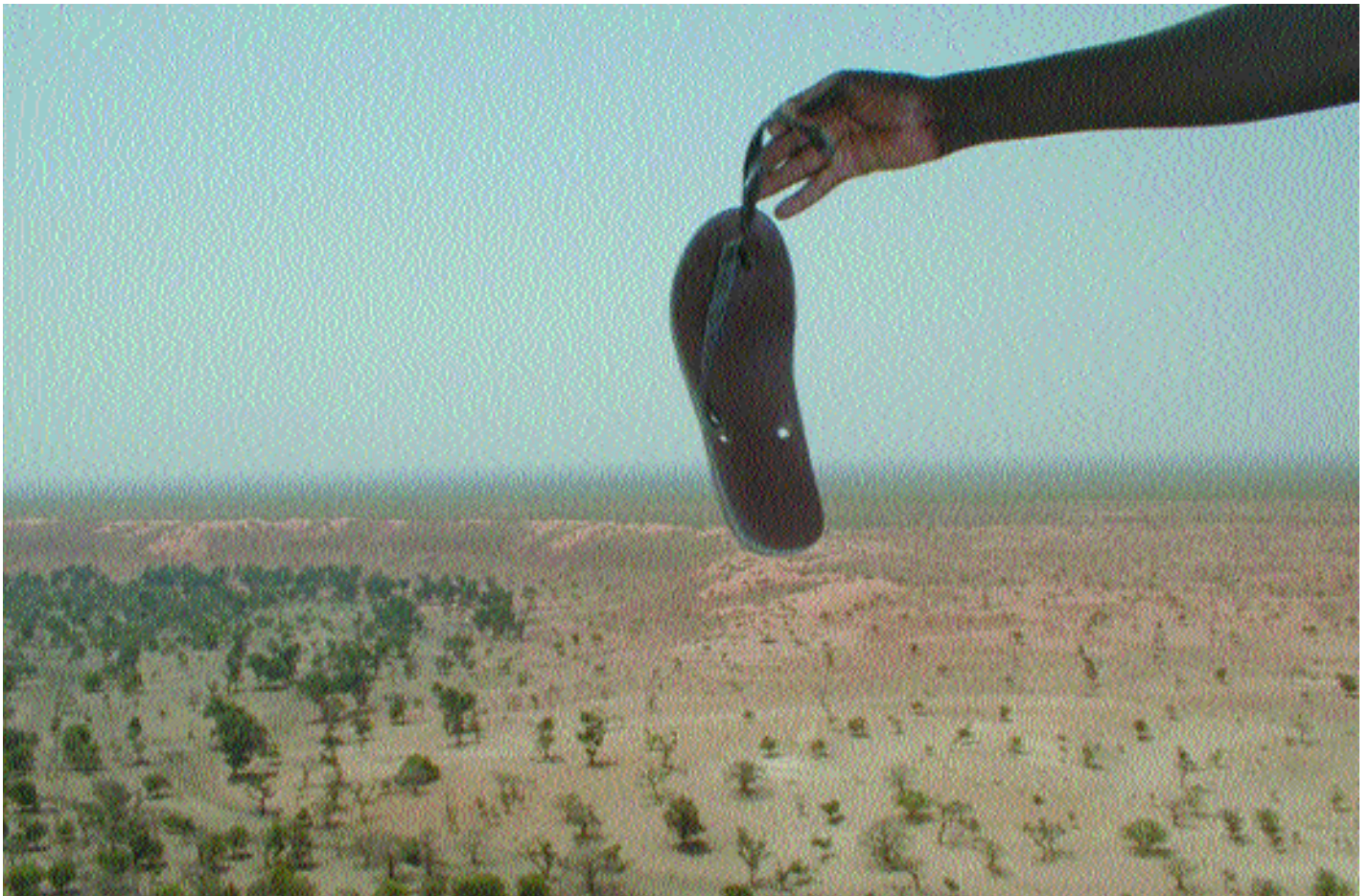
(the hut where villagers discuss their problems) and the separate storage caves for men and women.

For three weeks in May 1999, a week in September the same year and another one in May 2000, I handed over my digital camera to two girls aged 13 and 15 and five boys between 15 and 29 so they could extend their efforts at describing this wise and gentle world to photography.

Dogon teenagers rarely mess around. From a very early age, they are exposed to the hard work crucial for survival in a semi-arid environment. Since the villagers' well-being depends on them and their involvement in a host of daily chores, the classic problems encountered by urban teenagers are not felt here. If their pictures seem mature, poised and perfectly

framed—almost "professional" in appearance—the reason lies in the thoughtfulness and care they bring as much to the camera as to their daily tasks.

The boys took the camera with them on walks through the villages, or onto the great sand dune where in the evening they practice wrestling for the festivities that follow work in the fields, at the end of the rainy season. They also ventured up steep pathways in the cliff, piercing through openings in the rock, climbing up ladders made of tree trunks notched with steps and dangling over the void to reach the storage caves and grottoes of the ancient Tellem people (see box), where today the Dogons bury their dead. These are sacred places which strangers are not allowed to visit, but where Dogon children frolic hap- ►



A pair of thongs rarely survives the young Dogons' long walks through the villages or along the great sand dune.

► pily, playing with human skulls and bones, and dressing up for fun in dance costumes stored in the centuries-old caverns.

The girls did not venture as far afield. They visited their female friends and went for walks with them, taking photos of their village and their school, where wader birds and Dogon dancers are painted on the classroom walls. They also photographed a sandstorm that whipped up one evening behind the high millet stems protecting their storage caves before putting the camera away moments later to protect it from dust. Many of their photos were taken in courtyards, which are much more the domain of the village women than its men-folk. Aside from the unhurried time spent by the girls in the courtyards, taking shots of their friends talking, teasing and cracking jokes with one another, there is little difference between the pictures taken by male or female hands.

Until now, photographic depictions of Dogon life have concentrated on cultural and social aspects, such as festivities, building styles, crafts and religious activities. But when the Dogons themselves take the pictures, they barely pay any attention to these features. The special characteristics of their culture are not the subject;

instead, they serve as a backdrop to much more personal aspects of their lives. They take photos of their games, the encounters that pepper their daily lives, the long hours of enforced inactivity stretched out on straw mats or on the scorching rocks until the terrific heat gives way to nightfall. Or their sorties to gather wild fruit, brought down from the treetops by throwing sticks, or hunting small animals

These young villagers had no notion of photography aside from the tourists' legacy.

with home-made catapults. Every evening I went through the photos, surrounded by a dozen people peering into the camera's tiny viewer, and decided which shots to keep and which to discard to make room on our diskettes for the next day's shots. Out of 2,000 pictures taken, I kept 70. The Dogons were more interested in seeing the photos they had taken than in the selection process. Above all, they enjoyed wandering in search of ideas and

being in charge of the camera for a whole day.

These young villagers had no notion of photography aside from the tourists' legacy: a few magazines cut out to decorate the earthen walls of their bedrooms, some travel books about tribal peoples in which they feature, and the sight of foreigners aiming their lenses at the villages and its inhabitants. An image they never saw, unless the tourists in question posted a few photos back to them as a memento of their visit. Given that I was not around when the pictures were taken, the only advice I gave to the young photographers was what I said as the photos were being sorted out. The ones we didn't keep because of a silly look on someone's face, a bad angle or the wrong light proved very useful in explaining how a better picture could have been shot.

Over the course of these miniature advice sessions, the seven photographers started to pay more attention to angles, framing and light, as in one picture showing an assortment of items taken from one photographer's room and arranged on a yellow earthen step. The Dogons have never seen nor heard of still-life, so they invented it to depict the colour of objects ►



Scaling the cliffs where the Tellems once made their homes, hidden perilously high above the plains.

At play in the trees: the Dogons snap their everyday lives.



© Dogons/A. Potowski/M. Paris

► and adobe, and to show the delightful sunlight that streams into a room. And wandering in flip-flops along barely discernible paths through the rocks, or in the maze of passageways where houses stand among huge rocks fallen from the cliff, or in the quiet of grottoes and courtyards, they also invented the first photographic record of the Dogons by the people themselves. ■



Gathering wild fruit, a favourite pastime for young Dogons.



“THE ONES WE FOUND”

Around 700,000 people live in Dogon country, a vast region 50,000 sq. km in size that stretches from the Burkina Faso border in the east to the area of Sévaré in the west. The land extends over the entire length of the 150 km Bandiagara cliff, which rises at times to 300 metres in height.

The Dogon people hail originally from the Manding mountains on the border between Mali and Equatorial Guinea. As animists, the Dogons refused to convert to Islam and were forced into exile in the 18th century, moving up the Niger delta until they reached the protection of the plateau and the Bandiagara cliff. There, they made contact with a people who lived in the cliff-face and bequeathed their cultural legacy to the newcomers before disappearing in mysterious circumstances. They were the Tellems; or, as the Dogons call them, “the ones we found.”

Nowadays, cultural tourism has developed along the great cliff. Encouraged by the Malian government, this new activity has helped impoverished villages take concerted action against the spread of the desert and work to improve health and education, while simultaneously imperilling one of humanity’s most extraordinary cultures.

Hunting for prey with home-made catapults.



A ritual disguise for the rainy season festivities.





Inside the cliff grottoes, young explorers find ancient dance costumes from the times of the Tellem.

Stifling days made hotter by desert wind can make life unbearable. For most, it is an imposed time of rest.



© Dogons/A. Potowski/M. Paris



Photography was approached with the same care and dignity as any other daily task.

Young girls gently tease each other in the village courtyards.





Villagers gather around the baobab trees to savour the day.

A new school building, decorated with paintings of Dogon dancers, was inaugurated with a party for which the whole village chipped in.



© Dogons/A. Potowski/M. Paris



A sandstorm darkens the sky.

To capture colour and light, the Dogons invented still-life anew. Objects sit on an earthen step.



© Dogons/A. Potowski/NU, Paris

DEMOCRACY IN THE LIGHT OF DICTATORSHIP

► Alain Touraine

General Pinochet has frequently insisted that his actions can only be judged in Chile since they were carried out on a national scale. The existence of “Operation Condor,” however, proves his claims are misguided. The dictators of Chile, Uruguay, Brazil, Paraguay and Bolivia—along with security forces in Argentina even before that country’s coup in 1976—embarked on a programme of co-operation aimed at killing their opponents or making them disappear. They decided to make Asuncion the headquarters of the programme, or rather their plans for eradication. Hence the interest in papers from the period found in Paraguay.

The documents that can be consulted in Asuncion are mainly police archives covering Paraguay alone. Besides, as is already known, the discovery of these files dates back to October 1992, when they were made available for viewing (albeit with some difficulty) through the Supreme Court.

It is quite possible to argue from a strictly technical point of view that UNESCO should attach great importance to these archives. But the enormous interest stirred by these files and their details of disappearances and murders has given the “archives of terror” a wider symbolic importance. This was clearly shown by the press coverage in many countries devoted to the joint mission organized by UNESCO and a group of French specialists.¹

We are faced with a find that has aroused the deepest emotions. That is why we think it vital that UNESCO officially show its interest in these files echoing the terrible events that destroyed democracy in the southern cone of America. I am convinced that, in the eyes of UNESCO, the symbolic importance of these archives as perceived by public opinion must rate as the chief consideration—and one that goes far beyond the simple contents of the files.

There is good reason to believe that other archives exist in various Paraguayan ministries and above all in the records of the armed forces or their intelligence services. Documents are probably to be found in other countries. The presidents of the nations involved should follow the example of Brazilian President F. H. Cardoso, who has opened his country’s military archives for viewing.

On a wider front, the time has come throughout Latin America for memory to be regained. Many people have held, in good faith or not, that the conflicts of the past had to be forgotten so a new future could be built. As a result, the past was set up in opposition to the future. This is a mistake. A country or an individual that fails to face up to the past is unable, in general, to face up to the future. Democracy cannot be built if the motives and workings of dictatorships are not understood. ■

► Professor at the Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS), Paris

1. This mission visited Asuncion in May 2000 following a request from the Paraguayan authorities for help in putting these files on the Memory of the World Register, one element of a programme aimed at safeguarding and promoting the documentary heritage of humanity to ensure records are preserved and available for consultation.

THE WILDLIFE TRADE: POACHER OR GAMEKEEPER?

► Rolf Hogan

The decision to strictly limit or outrightly ban trading in endangered species regularly puts governments and conservationists before a critical dilemma

South Africa recently announced that it is ready to part with 1,500 elephants which, it says, are destroying trees that other species depend on for their survival in the country's famous Kruger National Park. If there are no takers the animals will be culled and their tusks added to South Africa's bulging ivory stockpile.

The South African offer highlights a critical dilemma facing all those concerned with wildlife conservation: is it possible to protect endangered species like elephants and rhinoceros effectively if trade in wildlife products, even on a one-off basis, is allowed? South Africa is one of many African countries which argue that a limited trade in wildlife product stockpiles should be allowed so that the proceeds can

“The key to using wildlife sustainably is good management but in many countries the resources or expertise are simply not available.”

be used to pay for conservation. Governments and conservation groups that are hostile to this approach claim that any kind of sale will stimulate the illegal market, encourage more poaching and ultimately push species such as elephants and rhino closer to extinction.

The debate on this controversial issue reaches a crescendo every two or three years at the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). The convention has 151 member states which vote at the conference on proposals to limit or place an outright ban on international trade

in species considered to be at risk (see box, p. 14). At the CITES conference held in Nairobi, Kenya, in April this year, calls to lift the ban on trade in products such as ivory, turtle shells and whales provoked fierce debate.

While countries like Kenya and India opposed lifting the ban on the ivory trade, Japan and Norway wanted the ban on whaling lifted because, they said, the stocks of some whales on the endangered list are healthy enough to withstand commercial harvesting. After long deliberations, the CITES parties agreed to maintain the existing trade ban on ivory products, turtle shells and whale meat for the next three years.

Conservationists no longer oppose the idea of wildlife being exploited per se. If properly managed, they say, wildlife can provide food for impoverished rural populations and wildlife-based tourism can be an important source of income.

However, the sustainable use of wildlife means striking a delicate balance. “We only support using wildlife where it is beneficial to both the local community and to the ecosystem,” says Gordon Sheppard of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

“It is oversimplistic to ban trade,” says Jon Hutton, director of Africa Resources Trust (ART), an NGO involved in community conservation schemes in southern Africa. “We need to assess the trade-offs and come to a rational decision. We have to weigh up the profits from trade that can be reinvested in wildlife conservation, through funding government law enforcement or indirectly through providing an income for local communities, against the possible costs, such as an increased risk of poaching.

“In much of Africa, wildlife represents a net cost. It can kill people and damage crops and is therefore eradicated, either deliberately or gradually by exclusion. More and more land is being converted to agriculture, even if it is marginal for livestock, because rural people often have no alternative. ART is involved

in schemes which return wildlife ownership to farmers. They then have a choice between cattle and crops or wildlife, and in many cases, they choose the second. Wildlife can be sold three times: to tourists, to sport hunters, and finally as ivory and hides. The sale of wildlife products often brings in the most revenue. The sale of ivory and hides for example represents 80 per cent of the value of an elephant. Tourism can bring in revenue, but most of the profits are made by international tour operators and not by local communities. Sport hunting on the other hand can bring in enormous revenue for the local community and it can be carried out in areas that may not be suited to tourism.”

While the “non-consumptive use” of species for tourism is accepted by most wildlife organizations, some are against “consumptive use”—the killing of animals for food or profit. Animal welfare organizations believe that it is almost impossible to exploit animals without severely affecting their populations. “In principle, it is a nice idea,” says Sarah Tyack of the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), “but there are too many examples of where it has failed.”

Rhino revenue

In practice, experts say managing sustainable use of a species can be very difficult because wildlife needs and animal behaviour patterns have to be carefully balanced with human needs. Some species such as the hawksbill turtle (see page 16), can easily be overexploited, and uncontrolled tourism can severely affect some species. In Kenya's famed Masai Mara reserve, for example, scientists found that the hunting success of lions was reduced by a heavy inflow of tourists. Large groups of tourist vans tend to gather around the cats and frighten off their prey. “The key to using wildlife sustainably is good management but in many countries the resources or expertise are simply not available,” says Sheppard.

South Africa provides a good example of the sustainable use of an endangered species.

► Freelance writer on conservation issues

The African white rhinoceros is one of the most endangered animals on earth but South Africa, as home to 80 per cent of the estimated 8,500 animals remaining in the wild, has plenty. Well protected from poaching, South Africa's rhino population is growing. "Numbers could double in a decade," says the World Conservation Union's (IUCN) Rhino Specialist Group, "but only if there is sufficient new land for surplus animals."

The South African government argues that if it were allowed to export rhino horn, currently banned under the CITES, the revenue generated would

The interest in rhino has also helped fund national parks. When protected from poaching, rhino populations can increase to a level where they are too numerous to survive in limited park areas. To keep populations within ecological limits, live rhino are sold to private rhino sanctuaries. In KwaZulu-Natal, sales of live rhino, which can fetch up to \$30,000 per head, generated a turnover of \$1.57 million in 1998, and last year's rhino sales provided about 10 per cent of the KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Service's operating budget. "In a time of declining government spending on

rhino population was dwindling in the early 1990s due to illegal poaching, the Save the Rhino Trust, a UN-sponsored group, started a project which encouraged local populations to benefit from rhino through ecotourism. The project has been successful in generating revenue for the local community, and former poachers have even been recruited as rhino trackers for tourists.

"We worked with the communities and they saw that the rhino were worth more to them alive than dead," says Simon Pope, who worked on the project. "The people worked hard to save their rhino but were



Hides and other wildlife products on sale at a market in Laos.

© Annelies van der Brink/Lineair, Arnhem

help to pay for rhino conservation. What is more, profits from rhino horn would act as an incentive for private landholders and communities to maintain wild areas for rhino conservation.

South Africa charges a trophy fee for rhino hunting, which generated \$24 million between 1968 and 1996, when the country's white rhino population quadrupled. Revenue from hunting finances the high cost of protecting rhinos from poachers, which can be as much as \$1,000 per km² per year.

conservation," says Martin Brooks, head of Scientific Services with KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Service, "wildlife sales have been a vital source of revenue for conservation."

However, other African states, which do not have sufficient funds or staff to tackle poaching, argue that any legal trade in rhino horn will stimulate the illegal market and lead to heavy poaching.

For example, people living in Damaraland in northwest Namibia are against lifting the ban on trade in rhinos. When the region's

very worried about international trade in rhino horn being allowed. They believed that it would encourage poachers to come and take away their livelihood." Unprotected by park rangers, rhinos on communal lands would be especially vulnerable to increased poaching.

Japan, which strongly opposed boosting trade restrictions at the recent CITES conference, argued that complete protection of endangered species would be detrimental to national economies and communities dependent on wild species for their liveli- ▶

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES (CITES)

Set up in 1975 following growing international concern about species at risk of extinction because of international trade, CITES places degrees of restriction on trade depending on the perceived risk to a species. Those in imminent danger of extinction are listed on Appendix I, which bars all international trade. Less endangered species are placed on Appendix II, which allows controlled trade subject to permits, and on Appendix III, which restricts trade on a regional level.

► hoods. During the conference, Japan and Norway aggressively lobbied for removal of the Minke and Grey whales from the endangered species list.

It is estimated that there are more than a million Minke whales. Japan and Norway argue that the population is healthy enough to allow a sustainable harvest. However, many conservationists insist that the other great whale species have not yet recovered from centuries of commercial slaughter and that a limited trade in Minke whale meat could not be regulated well enough to prevent the illegal hunting and sale of meat from these protected species.

Changing consumer habits

What hard evidence exists to show that limited trade in wildlife products might stimulate consumer demand and lead to increased poaching? In 1997, the CITES conference sanctioned the one-off sale of ivory stockpiles from Africa to Japan as an experiment. About 60 tonnes of ivory were sold. Two years later African governments, including Kenya, and a number of international conservation organizations quoting independent studies, argued that poaching and the movement of illegal ivory stocks had increased as a result of this one-off sale.

There are nevertheless questions about whether trends in poaching and the illegal market can be inferred from studies which, due to paucity of funds, are often weak in their methodology and focus on limited areas. "Independent studies from non-governmental organizations can be unreliable," says Sabri Zain of TRAFFIC, an international organization set up by the IUCN and

WWF to monitor international trade in wildlife. To help to fill this gap, the European Union has promised to donate four million Euros (\$4 million) to monitor elephant poaching and the illegal trade in ivory.

Another key problem is that of enforcing international trade bans and keeping tabs on regulated sales. "Tiger poaching for bones for traditional Chinese medicine, as well as for skins, remains a grave threat," says Peter Jackson, chair of the IUCN's Cat Specialist Group. "Unfortunately effective measures to control or reduce illegal trade are seldom enforced in most range countries, despite resolutions by the CITES Conference of the Parties."

Advocates of trade argue that tighter controls simply incite smugglers to become more sophisticated and drive illegal trade further underground. Furthermore, some wildlife derivatives are almost impossible to detect. Raw ivory might be difficult to conceal but tiger bone can be powdered and rolled into cigarettes or boiled down into gelatine.

Meanwhile, conservationists have been active in curtailing demand for some wildlife products. Education programmes in China have encouraged consumers to reject tiger bone remedies and an international campaign is currently underway to highlight the plight of the Tibetan antelope, which is in danger of being hunted to extinction for its fine fur, used to make highly sought after shahtoosh shawls.

Conservationists have also co-operated with Chinese medicinal practitioners to find alternatives to tiger bone and rhino horn, which are used in traditional medicines.

Mole rat bone is now being promoted in China as an alternative to tiger bone and there is some evidence of a reduction in the use of tiger-based medicines. Less than five per cent of Asian consumers surveyed in Hong Kong, Japan and the United States said that they had actually used medicine containing tiger parts.

Declining resources for conservation

Trade bans should probably be given more time to see if they can be made more effective through international pressure on governments and educating consumers. "A trade ban can only be as effective as the national measures taken to stop illegal hunting and trade, and the efforts made to enlist the involvement of governments and consumers," says Steven Broad, director of TRAFFIC.

But some argue that trade or no trade, time is running out for wildlife. "The biggest single threat to wildlife is the destruction of habitat," says Simon Rietbergen of IUCN. The figures are alarming: we have already removed or seriously degraded 80 per cent of the planet's forest cover and 50 per cent of the world's wetlands. "Lack of resources and declining government budgets for conservation are leaving many parks without adequate protection," says Rietbergen. No matter how effective a trade ban, it cannot slow down the current rate of habitat loss or pay for wildlife protection. Trade which has the potential to save more wild areas and pay for their protection may ultimately be the preferred option. ■

Protective measure: sawing off a rhino's horn in Namibia.



© Eric Miller/Lineair, Arnhem

KENYA'S ELEPHANTS: NO HALF MEASURES

► Joan Simba

Even when strictly controlled, the ivory trade encourages elephant poaching and drives away tourists. Kenya's position on the trade prevailed at the most recent CITES meeting

Kenyan conservationists still shudder at the thought of the 1980s, when hardly a day went by without park rangers discovering carcasses of elephants felled with increasingly sophisticated weapons, their ivory tusks crudely hacked off. Short of funds and staff, Kenyan rangers could neither adequately patrol their reserves nor match the poachers' firepower.

So it is hardly surprising that conservationists and the Kenyan government breathed a sigh of relief in 1989 when parties to the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) voted to ban all international trade in ivory products. Had it not been for this decision, the country's elephant population would be close to extinct today. From an estimated 140,000 elephants in 1972, the population in Kenya's parks fell to a mere 19,000 in 1989.

Porous borders

The ban, along with world-wide campaigns against trade in elephant products, reduced the demand for ivory and, consequently, its price. Poaching declined in Kenya and in other countries with elephant herds. At the same time, the Kenya Wildlife Services (KWS) beefed up its anti-poaching units in the country's 26 national parks and 32 game reserves. As a result, the elephant population gradually increased and today Kenya has about 27,000 elephants.

This recovery nonetheless suffered a setback in 1997, when CITES parties voted to partially lift the ban on ivory trade to enable Zimbabwe, Namibia and Botswana to conduct a one-off sale of 60



In Kenya, ivory tusks go up in smoke as wildlife guards watch on.

© Betty Press/Panos Pictures, London

tonnes from their stockpiles. The operation brought in three million dollars, which the countries concerned claimed to have channelled into conservation efforts. But conservationists affirm that even this strictly controlled trading fuelled demand for ivory and led to renewed elephant poaching. According to Kenyan officials, 67 elephants were killed last year for ivory, up from an average of about 15 in the previous years—a figure they claim is directly linked to the limited trade allowed in 1997. "Poaching continues because there is still a demand and borders within Africa are porous, thus making it easy for ivory to be transported across the continent," says Francis Mukungu, a senior KWS official.

Kenya's vehement opposition to any lifting of the ivory trade ban during the April 2000 CITES conference can be understood in this light. Nor can tourism be overlooked: officials are concerned that a return to the poaching levels of the 1980s will cut into the country's number one foreign exchange earner. Once again, Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe, along with South Africa, urged a lifting of the ban to sell off legally accumulated ivory stockpiles. Kenya argued that such a move would send out a message saying there is no harm in buying ivory products, thus encouraging poachers.

As a compromise, CITES signatories agreed to continue with a total ban on international trade in elephant ivory for the next three years while allowing a limited trade in non-ivory elephant products such as hides, live animals and leather products.

Sharing tourist revenue

While the Kenyan government is determined to save its elephants from poachers, public opinion within the country is divided on the issue. Rural communities living close to game reserves complain that elephant herds often invade their farms and destroy crops, sometimes causing casualties. In contrast to South African reserves, elephants are not fenced off and freely roam over hundreds of acres. Rural populations also claim that tourism revenues generated by entries to the game reserves are never invested in their poverty-ridden areas. In their minds, efforts to save these animals at all costs are a case of misplaced priorities in a country where the majority live below the poverty line. Conservationists assert that in the long run, Kenya's success in saving its elephant population will lie in involving the local communities around the reserves in tourism and conservation efforts, and making sure that they benefit economically from these initiatives. ■

► Nairobi-based journalist

CUBA DEFENDS THE TURTLESHELL TRADE

► Gerardo Tena

The protection of animal species is not necessarily incompatible with responsible commercial exploitation, says Cuba

Every year, thousands of hawksbill turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) are caught and killed despite the existence of the 1975 convention (CITES, see box p. 14) banning the sale of their shells, which are the source of a hard, compact, translucent substance much in demand for making combs, jewellery and eye-glass frames. The trade ban has contributed to hurting Caribbean fishing communities that for centuries have lived off the turtles and their protein-rich meat and eggs.

Cuba is no exception. Between 1960 and 1990, some 150,000 hawksbills (about 5,000 a year) were caught along Cuba's coastline, which accounts for a third of the species' nesting places in the Caribbean.

Ten years ago, Cuba introduced fishing regulations that allowed co-operatives in only two villages, one on the Isla de la Juventud (off the south coast) and one in the eastern province of Camagüey, to catch a maximum of 500 hawksbills a year but banned hunting them during the mating season or catching specimens with shells less than 66 centimetres across. The turtle meat is then distributed to authorised fishing co-operatives and to Cuban hospitals. Catching hawksbills is banned in the rest of the country and punishable by a fine of 5,000 pesos (\$250) in a society where people earn only about \$10 a month. Also, says José Alberto Alvarez, an expert at the Environmental Inspection Centre (CICA), "if fishermen poachers are found with their boat, the boat is confiscated. This is the harshest penalty under our fishing law."

Cuba signed the CITES but, like Japan, its main client, opted out of the clause dealing with hawksbills. This allowed both countries to continue trade in the shells. In 1993, however, Japan signed the hawksbill clause and ceased to be a buyer. Since then, Cuba has stockpiled 6.9 tonnes of hawksbill

shells in a warehouse in the fishing village of Cojimar, near Havana.

CICA says the hawksbill turtle is not in danger of extinction along Cuba's coastline, and that regulated hunting helps local fishing communities. But the trade ban means Cuba's stock of shells is steadily growing. At the CITES conference held in Nairobi in April 2000, Cuba sought permission to sell its current \$5 million stockpile to Japan and then to sell the shells of up to 500 hawksbills a year. The proposal narrowly failed to win the necessary two-thirds majority.

A regional programme

CICA's director Silvia Alvarez says "the votes in favour were significant because they were based on technical evidence, while those against were based on emotion, because the turtle, like dolphins, whales and elephants, are creatures people adore.

"A catch of 500 a year isn't very large at all because surveys show that there are about 15,000 nesting female hawksbill turtles in Cuban waters," she says. "We're defending the principle of a regulated trade in them, with the proceeds going to the communities that catch them and to pay for more research into the species."

She accepts that the rest of the world's refusal to back the Cuban position arises from fear that the sale of the shells in Japan would encourage a black market in them, but adds that Cuba "takes quite the opposite view. There is a black market in the shells precisely because selling them is totally forbidden."

Cuban scientists say that in the area between Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands—countries that contain only one per cent of the total hawksbill habitat—about 2,000 turtles are caught illegally every year. "We should have a regional programme for controlled fishing," says Ms Alvarez.

A Caribbean-wide group was set up in 1997 to look into the state of the species. Its members include Cuba, Antigua-Barbuda, St Lucia, St Kitts-Nevis, St Vincent, Trinidad and Tobago and Suriname. Venezuela, Colombia and the Dominican Republic have expressed interest in joining.

Meanwhile, Cuba continues with its programme of catching an annual maximum of 500 turtles. "We've got two more years until the next CITES meeting to show that what we're doing is a good thing," says Ms Alvarez, who thinks "the main obstacle is the notion that the only way to protect natural resources is not to use them." ■

The hawksbill turtle: a source of protein and revenue in the Caribbean.



© Yves Larceau/Jacana, Paris

► Havana-based journalist

BRITAIN: SEX EDUCATION UNDER FIRE

► Jon Slater

The government's blueprint to improve knowledge of sexual and reproductive health matters and reduce teenage pregnancy has sparked a virulent debate

With 65 conceptions per thousand women aged between 15 and 19 in 1998, England and Wales has the highest teenage pregnancy rate in Western Europe.¹ This rate rose by four per cent in the space of one year.

But while everyone agrees on the need for action, there is a wide spectrum of opinion on how to deal with the problem. At the heart of the debate is whether information or innocence is the best way of protecting Britain's children from the problems associated with teenage sex.

In the blue corner are the family values campaigners, led by churches, the Conservative Party and the high-circulation *Daily Mail* newspaper. While in the red corner are those who believe that the only way to tackle issues such as teenage pregnancy and sexual health is to provide accurate non-judgmental information. The latter includes most children's charities, the liberal wing of the Labour Party and the department of health. "The more information young people have, the less likelihood there is that teenage girls will become pregnant," says Anna Coote, director of the King's Fund, a health think-tank. "It doesn't look like what we are doing at the moment is working, particularly in secondary schools."

Poverty and social exclusion

Caught in the crossfire between these two camps are Labour ministers wary of offending the right-wing press and keen to hold together their "one-nation" coalition which swept them to power in 1997 after 18 years in the wilderness. But much as it may like to, the government cannot stay above the fray. Cutting the number of teenage pregnancies is vital if it is to meet its targets of reducing child poverty and social exclusion.

The government has pledged to halve teenage pregnancy rates by 2010 and is expecting to reduce by 2,000 the number of

girls who become pregnant this year. In June 1999, the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU), a government body which reports directly to Prime Minister Tony Blair, produced a blueprint for tackling Britain's alarmingly high number of teenage pregnancies. Its conclusions were stark. "Too many teenagers are being pressured into having sex rather than really choosing to, are not using contraception, and are, as a result, ending up pregnant or with a sexually transmitted infection."

According to Jill Francis of the National Children's Bureau, "There are four main reasons why girls in Britain become pregnant. We don't give children enough information; we give them mixed messages about sex and relationships; social deprivation means girls are more likely to become pregnant; and girls whose mothers were teenage mums are more likely to do the same." Both teenage mothers and fathers come predominantly from lower social classes. According to the Children's Bureau, "teenage mothers are less academically able than their childless contemporaries and more likely to leave school at the earliest opportunity with few or no qualifications."

One national study suggests that a quarter of teenage mothers were themselves born to teenagers. The brutal fact is that teenage parenthood helps to ensure that those at the bottom of the social pile stay there. Policies such as the New Deal for Lone Parents (which gives young mothers information, training and other help to find work), improved parenting advice and increased availability of childcare are all designed to help young parents escape this trap. But they are costly. Ministers would prefer prevention to cure.

1. The Office for National Statistics also reports that 37.8 per cent of these conceptions led to an abortion. For comparison's sake, it should be noted that the conception rate in North America stands at 83.6 per 1,000 women aged between 15 and 19, and at 101.7 in the Russian Federation, according to data from the Alan Guttmacher Institute (www.agi-usa.org).

ACROSS THE CHANNEL

Last November, the French government announced that school nurses would be authorised to hand out the morning-after pill to teenagers "in situations of distress or extreme urgency." The morning-after pill, available in France over-the-counter since June 1999, can be taken up to 72 hours after sex has taken place to prevent a pregnancy. There are an estimated 10,000 unwanted teenage pregnancies in France each year, of which over half end with an abortion. Announcing the measure, deputy education minister Ségolène Royal insisted that teenagers given this emergency pill would then be put in touch with a family planning centre for advice on a "responsible form of contraception." The measure, welcomed by unions of school nurses, has unleashed a legal battle involving Catholic and anti-abortion groups. Although sex education has been part of school curricula since 1973, it has been given greater importance since September 1999. Schools are expected to provide 30 to 40 hours of sex education to students in grades eight and nine. Meanwhile, the government launched a much-welcomed information campaign on contraception in January 2000, with TV and radio spots and the distribution of five million leaflets on contraception to high-school students. It was the first contraception campaign in 20 years, apart from an AIDS prevention campaign in 1992 that focused on condom use. ■

So far however, they are running into stiff opposition. One of the SEU's central recommendations was to extend sex education in primary schools. But it did not take long for Education Secretary David Blunkett to backtrack, saying that he did not want children under ten to have their "age of innocence" taken away from them. While in principle primary school students learn about how a baby is conceived and born, the SEU report observed that thousands of ten- and



© Paula Solloway/Format, London

Teenage mothers receive guidance and support at a specialised centre in Leeds, in northern England.

► eleven-year-olds receive no information about periods, despite the fact that one in ten girls starts menstruating before finishing primary school.

Nor can secondary schools rest on their laurels. "We're not good at talking to young people about sex. Lack of sex education is an important contributory factor in individuals getting pregnant," says Francis. Sex education is compulsory in secondary school, but parents have the right to withdraw their children from lessons. The curriculum chiefly focuses on the reproductive system and how the foetus develops in the uterus, along with the physical and emotional changes that take place during adolescence. Anything beyond this is discretionary, including contraception, safe sex and access to local advice and treatment services.

Several studies into unplanned teenage pregnancies point to a lack of information

about contraceptive use and embarrassment about discussing contraception with a partner. In February 2000, the University of Brighton conducted a survey of nearly 700 pupils between 14 and 15 that revealed a deep-seated anger about sex education in their schools. Girls felt that classes focused on the mechanics of sex and contraception rather than on emotions. Boys claimed they were denied access to information judged too explicit. The majority were "furious" because they felt legislation, such as that which requires teachers to inform pupils' parents if asked about contraception, has stopped them from gaining access to information. Schools are expected to inform parents when a pupil tells a teacher they are having sex or asks about contraception in all but the "most exceptional circumstances".

The topic of sex education is all the more sensitive at the moment as it has

been clubbed together with another row, which has centred on the government's proposed repeal of Section 28 of the 1988 Local Government Act, which bans the promotion of homosexuality by local authorities. Passed under the Thatcher government, this clause is judged discriminatory by the present Labour majority. Although not directly related to the government's drive to reduce teenage pregnancies, it has sparked heated debate. The House of Lords (the upper house of parliament) has repeatedly rejected the government's push to repeal the clause. To break the deadlock, the government, in consultation with church leaders, has come up with new guidelines on sex education in schools that would become statutory—obliging all teachers to adopt them—if they are passed. They would notably oblige teachers to teach about the importance of marriage and stable relationships.

Morning-after trials

Many teachers in Britain feel that they are already being asked to single-handedly tackle society's ills and are reluctant to accept responsibility for reducing the rate of teenage pregnancies as well. "Teenage pregnancy is a major social issue which education alone cannot solve," said a spokeswoman for the Association of Teachers and Lecturers. "This is a cross-departmental issue, we need more joined-up thinking." The ATL is concerned that the new statutory guidelines would undermine teachers' ability to conduct sex education well. "If there are legal constraints, teachers will not have the confidence to teach it well."

Coote agrees that more is needed than just improving sex education. "There are a number of factors at work. People don't feel the services on offer are properly accessible to them. Professionals often don't speak their language, either literally or metaphorically." Meanwhile, as debate over the guidelines lingers on, the department of health has approved trials in some parts of the country making the morning-after pill available from pharmacies—including to schoolgirls as young as 14. Doctors usually prescribe this pill. The initiative has sparked a media backlash and it is by no means certain that it will be extended nation-wide. But the government holds firm to its line. As the SEU report states, "preaching is rarely effective. Whether the government likes it or not, young people decide what they're going to do about sex and contraception. Keeping them in the dark or preaching at them makes it less likely they'll make the right decision." ■

THE DUTCH MODEL

► Guus Valk

With the highest use of contraception among young people worldwide, the Netherlands has attracted international attention

How would you react if your boyfriend refused to use a condom? How do your friends feel about condoms? Write down what you think they will answer and ask them if you were right.

This open talk is how some teachers in the Netherlands approach sexuality with students between 12 and 15 years old. Subsidised by the Dutch government, the “*Lang leve de liefde*” (“Long Live Love”) package was developed in the late 1980s, when AIDS became recognised as a threatening health problem. “AIDS was an impetus for sex education in schools,” says Jo Reinders of Soa-bestrijding, the Dutch foundation for STD (sexually transmitted diseases) control, which developed the package in consultation with churches, health officials and family planning organizations. “It forced teachers to become more explicit and to discuss norms and values using a participatory approach.”

Decision-making skills

With the lowest teenage pregnancy rate in Europe (8.4 per 1,000 girls between 15 and 19), any initiative in the Netherlands deserves attention. “There is no country that has invested so much in research into family planning..., media attention and improvement of service delivery than the Netherlands,” wrote experts from the Netherlands Institute of Social and Sexual Research (NISSO) in a specialised journal. Although the country has no mandatory national curriculum, nearly all secondary schools provide sex education as part of biology classes and over half the country’s primary schools address sexuality and contraception. According to H. Roling, a professor of education at the University of Amsterdam, “the Dutch government has always accepted the fact that education was better than denial,” and the subject has been tackled in schools since the 1970s.

Since 1993, the government, without stipulating the contents of classes, has stressed that schools should aim to give students the skills to take their own decisions

regarding health, and in particular sexuality. Textbooks were revised and according to Reinders, now take a more “comprehensive approach to sexuality. The curriculum focuses on biological aspects of reproduction as well as on values, attitudes, communication and negotiation skills.” Some schools simply use these textbooks, others complement them with the foundation’s pack, which includes a video, a teacher’s manual and a student magazine. “The education system is very much built not only around transmitting knowledge but giving the skills to apply that knowledge in everyday life,” says Reinders. “Decision-making skills are very important.”

But sex education in schools is not enough to explain the Dutch record. The Rutgers Foundation, a family planning association that has launched several large-scale public information campaigns in the past decades, sees a constellation of other factors. The media has been at the forefront of an open dialogue: between 1993 and 1997, a prime-time talk show featured a leading Dutch pop star discussing sexuality. Confidentiality, guaranteed anonymity and a non-judgmental approach are hallmarks of the health care system. Last but not least, “parents in the Netherlands take a very pragmatic approach. They know their children are going to have sex, and they are ready to prepare them and to speak with them about their responsibility. This is the key word,” says Mischa Heeger of the Rutgers Foundation. Contraceptives are widely used. According to a NISSO study, 85 per cent of sexually active young people use a contraceptive, and the pill is freely available. The average age of a youth’s first sexual intercourse is 17.7 years.

Even with this record, the Foundation for STD control recognises that it is

still difficult for many teachers to talk with students about sexuality, despite training provided over the years, notably by the Rutgers Foundation. Family planning organizations are also concerned about the higher rates of teenage pregnancy among Turkish and Moroccan girls, and are developing programmes specially geared towards them.

But the country’s record has attracted attention from abroad. The Rutgers Foundation provides training to doctors and social workers as well as assistance to education ministries in developing curricula, notably in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. To some critics who argue that “talking about sex gives children the wrong idea,” Jos Poelman of the Foundation for STD control has one answer. “Face the facts. We have the lowest number of teenage mothers [in Europe], and Dutch students do not start having sex at a younger age than their foreign counterparts.”



www.rutgers.nl



Early on, Dutch children learn about sexuality and contraception at school. Here, students in Almera, in northern Holland

► Journalist based in the Netherlands, with additional reporting by the *UNESCO Courier*

INVOLVE THE YOUNG!

For Dr Pramilla Senanayake, assistant director-general of the International Planned Parenthood Federation¹, young people hold the keys to improving the record on reproductive health

Pregnancy related problems are a leading cause of death among adolescents. Are most of these unwanted pregnancies?

You have to distinguish between pregnancies within and outside marriage. In countries like Bangladesh, Nepal and some parts of Africa, the number of girls married by 15 or 16 is exceedingly high—up to 70 or 80 per cent. In those situations, pregnancy within marriage may be wanted but we know that it is hazardous, in terms of its consequences on health, education and economic opportunity. Outside of marriage, the vast majority of pregnancies are unwanted. The “sugar-daddy” phenomenon is common, while a more recent trend is the false belief by some men that by sleeping with a virgin, they will not get AIDS.

Does pregnancy generally mean an end to education?

Yes, or else girls often end up having botched-up backstreet abortions because they are afraid of being expelled. You could argue that schools should be encouraged to keep pregnant students but in reality, this doesn't really work. These women have special needs. In countries as far afield as Jamaica and Tanzania, we have set up special schools for pregnant mothers allowing them to complete their education. Once the child is born, they often continue into vocational education as long as childcare facilities exist.

What impact did the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development have?

The United Nations Population Fund took a leadership role by spearheading the need to look at adolescents as a group whose sexuality had to be recognised and whose needs had to be met in terms of education, information and services. This has to be done in a holistic way. The conference made the world aware that this was not a problem that you could just sweep under the carpet. But at a country level, progress in taking care of teenagers' needs has been

¹ IPPF (www.ippf.org) links family planning associations in 150 countries. It is the largest voluntary organization in the world concerned with family planning and sexual and reproductive health.

slow. NGOs are setting the example in most cases, notably with peer education projects that are giving promising results.

To what extent has sex education improved, particularly in developing countries?

In some countries including my own (Sri Lanka) sex education exists, but in reality teachers are not trained to handle these issues. Sex education is not just about having sex, it's about relationships and making choices. Girls need empowerment to say “no” to a relationship and this is difficult for them. This kind of sex education is still rare in schools and often starts too late. Primary school is the important starting point. But you also have to look at what is happening outside the school, because very often girls drop out at the secondary level, and there are some 125 million children who never go to school at all. The potential of distance learning, media and other communication forms has to be more broadly harnessed.

What do we know about the impact of sex education programmes?

Study after study has pointed out that sex education delays childbearing and does not lead to promiscuity or to early sexual experimentation. It is usually the reverse: if you are forearmed with that knowledge, you are more cautious. In every walk of life, we train young people to cope, we give them skills and knowledge, but when it

comes to sex education, there seems to be a myth that the less you tell them the better off they are. It makes no sense. It is control of power by an older generation.

How can access to contraception be improved, notably in Africa?

There is a crying need for information on contraception. Information has to be made available through a variety of sources: in clinics, in pharmacies, through peer groups, the media, etc. Services have to be made more youth-friendly and accessible to all young people regardless of their marital status. Young people themselves should play an active role in defining how health services should be run. The press can play a pivotal role: we are running a particularly successful operation with the BBC World Service known as *Sexwise*. It is a 12-part series on sex education, family life education, contraception and parenting. In South Asia, where it was first launched in eight languages, we received some 75,000 queries from listeners. After being extended in 1999 to Europe and Eurasia, the series will go global in July 2000 and is expected to reach over 60 million listeners in Africa, the Arab world, Latin America, South East Asia and China by the end of the year.

In 1999, the U.S. introduced a rule that aims to defund organizations outside the U.S. which provide any abortion-related information and assistance to women in need. Are you concerned about this?

This rule is hurting women. It is depriving funds for NGOs like ours. This means we are unable to provide reproductive health services, including contraception and family planning to women who are in need. This results in more unwanted pregnancies because services are not available and women who could have gone to have services ended up having botched-up abortions. It is very shortsighted. ■

Interview by Cynthia Guttman,
UNESCO Courier journalist



www.unfpa.org

The site of the UN Population Fund includes news, features and *The State of World Population 1999*. Six billion: a time for choices.

BASIC FACTS

- There are more than 1.5 billion young people between the ages of 10 and 24; 85% of them live in developing countries.
- About one in ten of all births worldwide are to adolescent women
- Below 18, a pregnant adolescent is two to five times more likely to die than a woman 18-25
- The majority of first births in sub-Saharan Africa are to adolescent women
- Low birth weight is more common in babies born to adolescents than in adult women

Source: World Health Organization

Focus

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Youth's
forces

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1 Setting
the stage

From the nose-ringed neo-hippie in Belgium to the dreadlocked, baggy-jeaned breakdancer in Tokyo, one element unites the disparate bands of youth: music. A style guide, social companion and spiritual force, music offers directions in the quest for autonomy and a medium to express the highs and lows of the journey.

This dossier will trace two genres carving the deepest inroads in the globalisation of popular music: hip-hop (p. 23-25) and electronic dance music (p.28-30). While there is no denying the commercial muscle of recording giants in pushing these genres worldwide (p.26-27), young people aren't just swallowing these "goods" but fashioning sub-cultures in adapting the music as their own. From a political platform for indigenous rights in New Zealand (p. 32-33) to a foundry for moulding a sense of identity among black youth in Colombia (p. 38-39), hip-hop thrives on the transformative powers of its bricoleurs. In South Africa, the genre has been hard-wired to amplify the messages of the post-apartheid generation (p. 36-37) while Algerian rappers no longer see hip-hop as just a wishing-well for a better economic life, but a stepping stone to political debate.

However, these positive chords of independent thinking and multiculturalism ring hollow when the rebellious gestures surrounding the music mask a capitulation to hyper-consumerism and the refusal or inability to fight racism (p. 31-32). In the UK for example, the rage for Asian sounds and fashion appears to be ►

Youth culture may well degenerate into simply another way for capitalists to sell back to people a picture of the life that has been stolen from them. Yet it would be foolish to dismiss youth culture simply because it has not yet produced an organised political movement.

George Lipsitz, U.S. professor and author of *Microphone Fiends, Youth Music and Culture* (Routledge, 1994)

- ▶ little more than an example of niche marketing (p. 47). Yet in India, the same eclectic mixes of traditional music are leading the sons and daughters of an anglicised elite to discover their roots via their expatriate relations.

Herein lies the key to deciphering globalised music and youth cultures: identify the particular politics shaping each local scene (p. 40-41). The Australian bush, for example, seems to offer ideal conditions for realising the “futurist” dream of techno’s punk-like resistance (p. 42-43), yet the impact of tourist dollars may spoil the scene. In Belgrade, electronic music is a rallying call for isolated bands of youth rebels, holed up in the cracks and abandoned spaces of the regime (p. 43-44).

The very sound of a revolution provokes reaction. And music is no exception, as parents and police panic over the now traditional mantra of “sex, drugs & rock ‘n’ roll”. Instead of sounding the alarm, we chose to defuse it by considering the alternatives. As thousands of Western neo-hippies descend upon Goa for trance music parties, parents and state focus exclusively on the spectre of cultural imperialism without recognising ways in which their communities benefit from the scene (p.51-52). By reading between the lines of media sensationalism and stereotyping, the violence associated with hip-hop can be cast in a different light (p.53-54). Finally, young Internet pirates, branded as criminals by the recording industry, are in fact showing the way to new forms of international solidarity (p.55-56). ■

Dossier concept and co-ordination by Amy Otchet, *UNESCO Courier* journalist

One in a series of FSUK (Future sound of the United Kingdom) albums, a compilation of modern break beat music produced by the Ministry of Sound. Creative direction, artwork and graphic design by Tom and Joel Lardner.



© Art illustration by Joell Lardner@creativeunion.co.uk; Tom Lardner, Amp associates

Born in fire: a hip-hop odyssey

► Jeff Chang

From the Bronx to Los Angeles and beyond, a rough guide to the voice of a generation

During the summer of 1975, the South Bronx was burning. New York City officials admitted that they couldn't battle all the fires, let alone investigate their origins. Chaos reigned. One long hot day in June, 40 fires were set in a three-hour period.

These were not the fires of purifying rage that ignited Watts in 1965, Newark in 1967, or St. Louis and a half dozen other U.S. cities after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. These were the fires of abandonment.

As hip-hop journalist S.H. Fernando notes, the Bronx had been a borough of promise for African American, Puerto Rican, Irish, Italian and Jewish families after World War II. But as industry moved north to the suburbs during the sixties, housing values collapsed and whites fled, leaving a population overwhelmingly poor and of colour.

So slumlords were employing young thugs to systematically burn the devalued buildings to chase out the poor tenants and collect millions in insurance. Hip-hop, it could be said, was born in fire.

As rapper Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five's "The Message" would describe it, the New York ghettos that fuelled hip-hop's re-creative project were spaces of state neglect and fading liberal dreams. "Got a bum education," the narrator rhymed, "double-digit inflation, can't take a train to work there's a strike at the station." But these would also be spaces of spiritual and creative renewal.

In an earlier era, say the 1920s and 30s when jazz legends like Charles Mingus grew up, a youth might find an extended web of peers, mentors, patrons, bands and venues through which he or she might master an instrument and find a vocation. But by the late 1970s, such music education was a luxury for most families.

Jamaican connection

The result? Play, as African American author Robin D.G. Kelley has put it, became an alternate form of work for a new generation. Adapting the Jamaican tradition of outdoor dance parties to the grid and grit of New York, young black and Puerto Rican entrepreneurs illegally plugged their stereo systems into street light power supplies, and started the party.

With vinyl grooves as sheet music, and a rig of two turntables, a mixer and an amplifier as instruments, Black Art began reinventing itself in 1974

and 1975. That's when a Jamaican immigrant disc jockey named Kool Herc started gaining a reputation in the Bronx for filling the smoky air with "the breaks"—that portion of the song, often as short as two seconds, where the singer dropped out and let the band immerse itself in the groove.

Punching back and forth between two copies of the same record's breaks, then ratcheting up the excitement by shifting to ever more intense breaks, DJs like Herc and Afrika Bambaataa were creating a new aesthetic, which simultaneously satiated and teased the audience.

Escaping the chaos on the streets

On the one hand, a loop (of beats) became a metaphor for freedom: through movement, dancers stretched within the space sculpted by the break. A new canon of songs—drawn from funk, disco, rock, jazz, Afrobeat and reggae—launched new, athletic forms of dancing, which would become known as breakdancing or b-boying. Rather than being passive spectators, the audience engaged in a real dialogue with the disc jockey.

The New York DJs began employing MCs—masters of ceremony—to affirm the crowd's response to proven breaks, win them over to new breaks, divert them during bad records and generally keep spirits high. In time, the MCs became attractions in their own right. Rocking memorized poems ("writtens") or improvising them on the spot ("freestyles"), the MC became Everyman, the representative of the audience onstage. They reacted to the MC's flow, laughed at his cleverness, cheered his braggadocio, thrilled at his tall-tale spinning, felt his bluesy pain, riding the riddims with words (or "rapping").

The Black Arts poets, the Black Panther messiahs and other revolutionary firebrands sharpened their words into spears to attack. This new generation of rappers let the words flow generously, in search of a moment that might serve as a shield of protection, or a transcendent escape from the chaos on the streets.

Popular culture in America is one space where the trope (expression) of working-class creativity is still firmly lodged. American markets are good at providing poor audiences of colour easy access to goods such as music, video and clothing. In the last three decades, a whole class of middlemen entrepreneurs have made fortunes by charting the rapidly shifting terrain of black and brown ghetto chic. ►

► Senior editor/director of the website <360hiphop.com> which features music, lifestyle, hip-hop culture and politics.

► By the late 70s, black and Jewish record label owners in Harlem noted the popularity of hip-hop and rushed to record leading crews. Basically, these owners were geographically and personally close to the music. When a novelty record by the Sugar Hill Gang, “Rapper’s Delight” became a surprise international smash, major labels began sniffing around uptown for the next hit. In 1980, Kurtis Blow released rap’s first full-length album on a major label. The stage was set for the ascendance of hip-hop culture into the most powerful international youth culture of the late twentieth century.

Until the late 80s, the undisputed centre of this culture was New York. The visual signifiers were provided by the vibrant graffiti movement, whose young renegade artists braved electrified razor-wire fences and armed Metropolitan Transit Authority

sampling technology, rap producers were turning their new toys into unrelentingly dense, reflexive grooves. Then, as the anti-apartheid movement crested in the U.S., groups like Boogie Down Productions and Public Enemy extended rap’s social realism into broader discussions of political action.

But the lofty views of revolutionary nationalism and hardrock spiritualism veered back to the streets in 1989. A group of barely twenty-somethings, who not so ironically called themselves Niggas With Attitude, released what would become an anthem for a generation, *Gangsta Gangsta*. Within six weeks of its release, the album went “gold”, selling over 500,000 copies. Hip-hop shot itself into the heart of world culture.

The album, *Straight Outta Compton*, decentered hip-hop from New York to Los Angeles. By the mid-

We want ‘poems that kill.’
Assassin poems,
Poems that shoot guns.
Poems that wrestle
cops into alleys
And take their
weapons.

Amiri Baraka, U.S. poet (1934-)



© Christophe Ling/Camma, Paris



© Bernstein/Spooner/Camma, Paris



© Bernstein/Spooner/Camma, Paris

Hip-hop’s foundry, the Bronx, fired a worldwide culture straddling the lines between rebellion and capitulation to hyper-consumerism.

guards to apply bright spraypaint hieroglyphics onto the city’s subways. Every time a train pulled into a station, hip-hop was in respectable society’s face, like a middle-finger.

Remember the backdrop to the 1980s: the Reagan administration was launching an attack on the “welfare state”, wiping out subsidies for the poor, allowing housing agencies to become dens of corruption while closing down entire categories of government programmes. Hip-hoppers were on the counter-offensive. As the Furious Five warned: “Don’t push me ‘cause I’m close to the edge. I’m trying not to lose my head. It’s like a jungle sometimes, it makes me wonder how I keep from going under.”

On the technological front, hip-hoppers racked up one breakthrough after another. While most rock musicians of the mid-80s were perplexed by new

dle of the Reagan administration, Compton was one of a growing number of inner-city nexuses where deindustrialization, devolution, the cocaine trade, gang structures and rivalries, arms profiteering and police brutality combined to destabilize poor communities. Chaos was settling in for a long stay and gangsta rap would be the soundtrack. By conflating myth and place, the narratives could take root in every ‘hood (neighbourhood). From Portland to Paris, every ‘hood could be Compton; everyone had a story to tell, a cop to fight, a rebellion to launch.

Ironically, gangsta tales populated with drunken, high, rowdy, irresponsible, criminal, murderous “niggas”—its practitioners likened it to journalism and called it “reality rap”—seemed to be just what suburbia wanted. As student populations diversified, youth

were increasingly uninterested in whitewashed cultural hand-me-downs. The 1988 advent of the MTV show, "Yo MTV Raps", made African American, Chicano, and Latino urban style instantly accessible across the world. With its claims to street authenticity, its teen rebellion, its extension of urban stereotype and its individualist "get mine" credo, gangsta rap fit hand-in-glove with a generation weaned on racism and Reaganism. These were not the old Negro spirituals of the civil rights era. They were raw, violent, undisciplined, offensive, "niggafied" rhymes, often homophobic, misogynistic.

Gangsta rap drew new lines in the culture wars. As the music crossed over to whiter, more affluent communities, gangsta rap inflamed cultural conservatives like Bob Dole and neoliberals like C. Delores Tucker into demanding new corporate



© Bemstein/Spooner/Gamma, Paris

and state repression. Gangsta rap was even showing up in presidential debates.

Progressives often speculate that gangsta rap was foisted on a young public by reactionary record labels. But to a great extent, the rise of these pop-cultural trends was completely unplanned. Well into the 1990s, major recording labels had no idea what kind of hip-hop would sell. Unlike rock music, which had long before matured into a stable and culturally stale economy, hip-hop was like a wild child whose every gesture and motion was a complete surprise.

In the wake of the Los Angeles riots after the brutal police beating of motorist Rodney King in 1991, gangsta rap and hip-hop marched toward their greatest commercial success. Dr. Dre's album *The Chronic* topically moved gangsta rap away from

ghetto commentary to druggy hedonism, and, with its polished chrome sound, onto mainstream radio playlists. As cast by MTV and the expanding hip-hop press, artists such as the late Tupac Shakur, the son of a Black Panther revolutionary, made rebellion less a battle in the culture wars, and ever more a mere marker of youth style.

The shrinking music industry also transformed the hip-hop scene. Between the early to mid-90s, several of the independent record label owners who had been instrumental in launching the music sold their companies to major labels, which also began consolidating and reducing the size of their rosters. As a result, grassroots acts no longer went from the streets to the top of the charts. Management firms guaranteed polished stars and funded the farm teams that would take those stars' places in turn. The new hip-hop sound, crisply digitized and radio-ready, became mainstream pop.

With the massive major label distribution juggernauts behind them, it became routine for the biggest hip-hop acts to debut with gold (half-million) or more sales. A half-dozen magazines were launched to take advantage of the new wealth of advertising dollars. Hollywood's big money came calling, making multimedia stars of rappers LL Cool J and Ice Cube. Commercial tie-ins with products such as Sprite or the Gap clothing proliferated for second-level artists. Producer Russell Simmons began calling the hip-hop generation "the biggest brand-building generation the world has ever seen". The audience had matured into a marketable demographic.

Rebellion or capitulation?

As U.S. author Don DeLillo has written, "Capital burns off the nuance in a culture." To be sure, hip-hop has transformed popular culture across the world. In Kenya, youngsters wear Adidas baseball caps, Nike shoes and stage rowdy rap concerts that look like versions of Bambaataa's romps in the Bronx of yore. It's unclear whether such performances reflect a hybrid youth rebellion or capitulation to global capitalism.

Yet somewhere within the culture lies the key to understanding an entire generation. This culture forged in fire still keeps its hand near the match. Rap rewards those who "represent" its audiences' realities. If this often appears as caving in to baser impulses, hip-hop's defense is that it speaks to young people as they are and where they are.

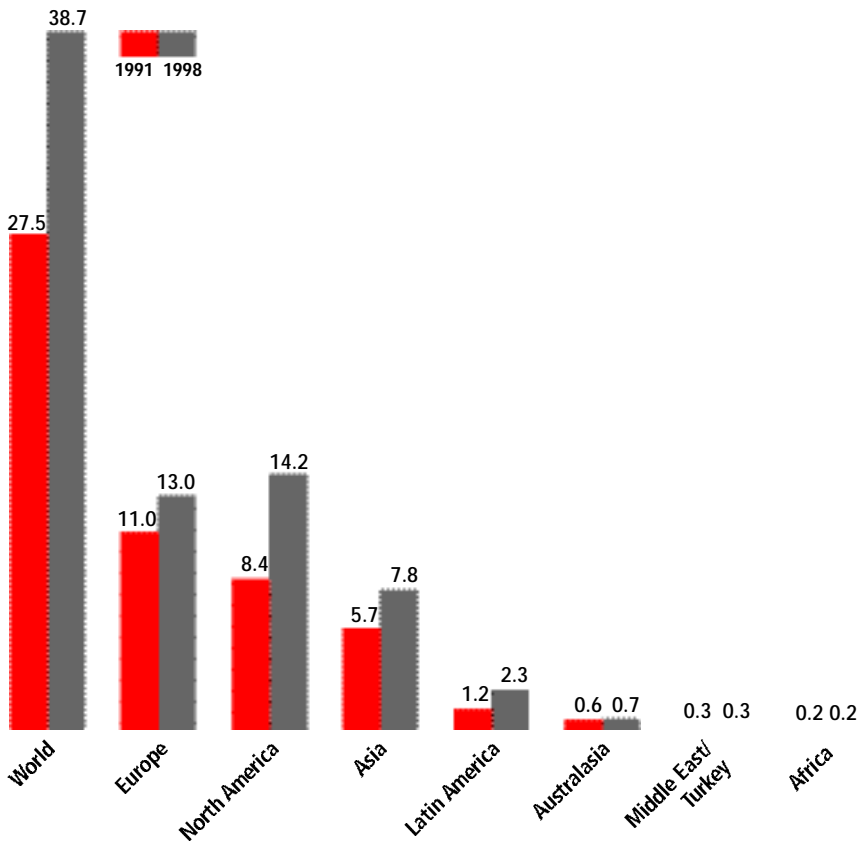
And yet a growing movement believes that the culture is liberating. In cities across the world, youths use hip-hop to organise the struggles against racism, police brutality, and the prison-industrial complex. For them, the culture and the politics are inseparable—they are all part of a cohesive worldview. Therein finally lies the story: hip-hop, born of the destructive fires of the 1960s and 70s, has rekindled creative flames of hope in a new generation. The cleansing fires are still to come. ■

Perhaps all music, even the newest, is not so much something discovered as something that re-emerges from where it lay buried in the memory, inaudible as a melody cut in a disc of flesh.

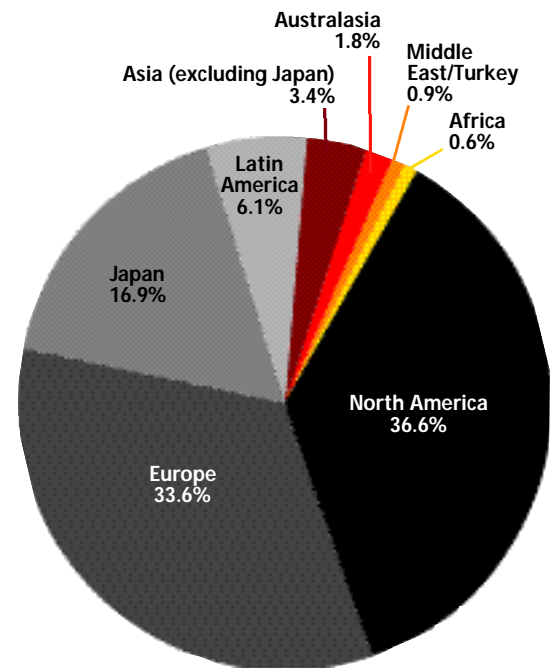
Jean Genet, French dramatist and author (1910-1986)

Recording heavyweights

Total music sales (in U.S. \$ billions)

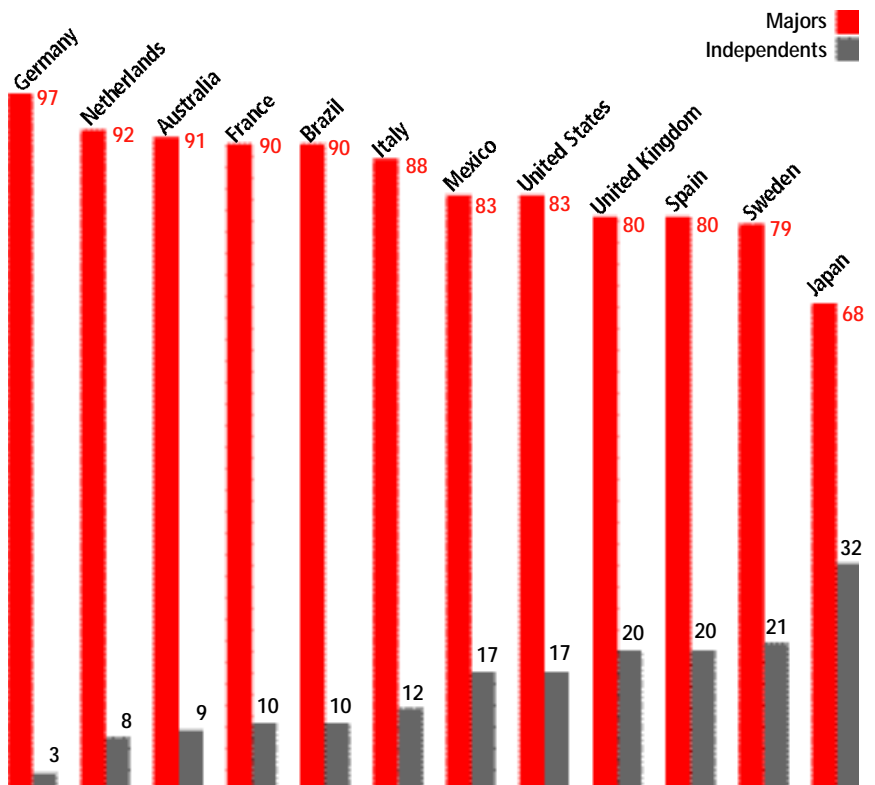


Total music sales in 1998

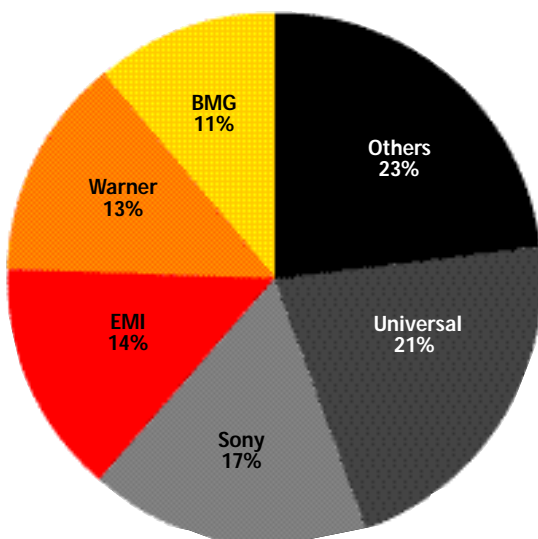


Source : International Federation of the Phonographic Industry

Market shares of the major and independent labels in selected countries, 1998 (%)



World market shares of the five major labels, 1998



Source : Music Business International World Report 2000

Audio milestones

1865 English physicist James Maxwell (1831-1879) discovers the existence of electromagnetic waves.

1876 Scottish-born physicist Alexander Graham Bell (1847-1922) invents the microphone in the U.S.

1877 Thomas Edison (1847-1931) invents a recording device and the phonograph.

1888 Emile Berliner (1851-1929) of Germany develops the first vinyl record in the U.S.

1928 Maurice Martenot of France invents the first electronic keyboard based on an earlier device designed by Leon Termen of Russia.

1931 The "Frying Pan", the first commercially successful electric guitar, is developed in the U.S. by George Beauchamp and Adolph Rickenbacker.

1934 The German company BASF develops magnetic recording tape.

1935 The German company AEG manufactures the first tape recorder.

1945 Sound recording dramatically improves with the post-war conversion of research facilities for peaceful purposes.

1956 Stereo LPs (record albums) become commercially available.

1965 Pre-recorded music cassettes are released. Philips first introduced the cassette two years earlier and encouraged other companies to license its use.

1969 American Robert Moog develops the "Mini-Moog", a small,affordable synthesizer with a distinctive sound that can be used for "live" performances and studio recordings.

1975 Computer memory is added to studio equipment for more complicated recordings.

1979 A key year in recording history when Philips introduces the digital format for recording music on the compact disc (CD). Sony (Japan) introduces what will be known as the Walkman. The New England Digital Synclavier becomes the first commercial model of the so-called "workstation", a computerized synthesizer capable of sequencing,sampling,playing and scoring music.

1980 Roland releases the first drum machines which can be "played" or programmed to produce original rhythms instead of preset patterns.

1986 By standardizing the musical instrument digital interface (MIDI), the industry opens the floodgates to more creative and independent recordings. Digital releases the first consumer-level software to record and edit sounds on a (Macintosh) computer.

1987 The first digital audio tape (DAT) is marketed in Japan, notably improving sound reproduction and storage.

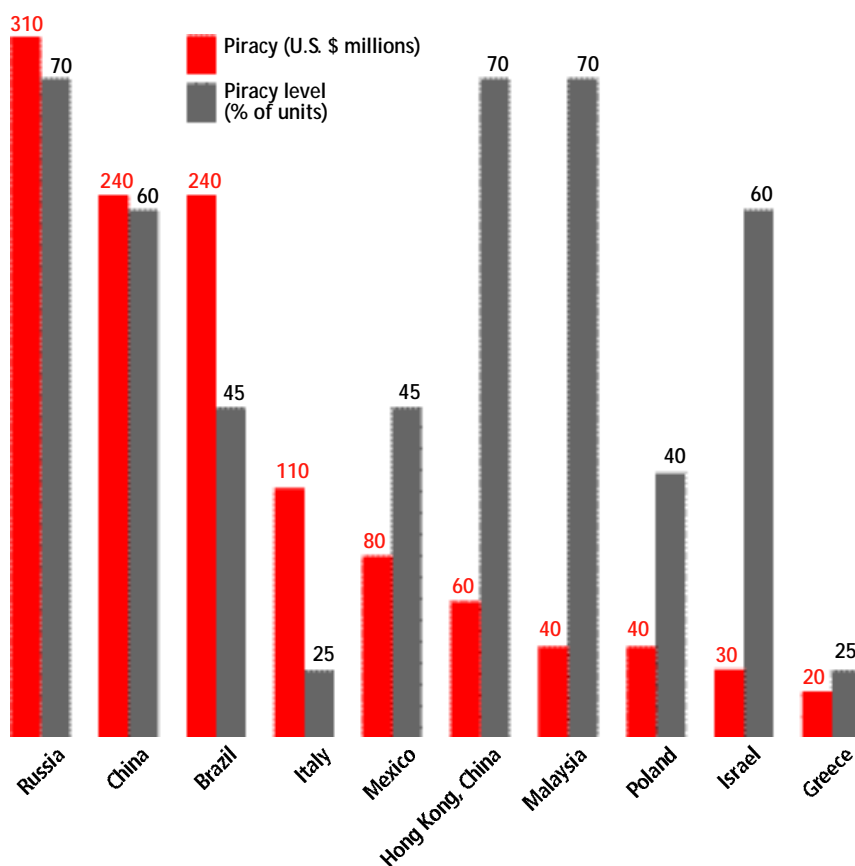
1988 For the first time, CD sales in the U.S. surpass vinyl (records), which begin disappearing from stores.

1996 The first DVD (digital versatile disc),which is basically a faster CD capable of holding video and audio computer data,is commercialized.

1998 Music piracy on the Internet, using the MP3 format, is strong enough to rattle the recording industry.

Source : International Federation of the Phonographic Industry

Countries with the highest CD piracy figures, 1998



Source : International Federation of the Phonographic Industry



© Henry Chalfant/AP/Boomerang, Paris

Music cassettes and piracy in selected African countries (1998)

Country	Number of music cassettes sold (millions)	Retail value (U.S. \$ millions)	Piracy level (%)
Ghana	7.4	25	10-25
Kenya	0.4	2	over 50
South Africa	7.3	196	10-25
Zimbabwe	1.5	9	25-50

Source : International Federation of the Phonographic Industry

The body and soul of club culture

► Hillegonda C. Rietveld

Electronic dance music is constantly spawning new strands of music like techno and acid house. Behind the thudding beats, communities of DJs and dancers try to stay one step ahead of entertainment multinationals—and the law

United on the dance floor, revellers of different ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations and ages dance wall-to-wall, sweating, smiling and enjoying the DJ's clever acoustic tricks. The combination of loud, rhythmic music and visual distortion heightens the collective spirit as the sound enters the crowd—machine rhythms, pounding drums, overlaid with a gospel spirituality of peace, love and unity. Welcome to Body and Soul in New York City, where the dream of dancefloor Utopia lives on and (in the words of one dance music diva) “everybody's free (to feel good)”.

At Body and Soul, DJs like Joe Claussel still embody the determination to mix and match—both styles of music and their audience—to remain aloof from the machinations of the global entertainment giants, to find more in “club culture” than getting high or getting paid. And it takes determination, for over the past decade or so, “dance” or “club culture”—based on electronic music and its derivatives—has become an international, multi-million dollar market despite the efforts of DJs like Claussel to promote the dream of cultural diversity, artistic independence and universal spirituality. For many of its devotees, this club culture represents an escape from the regimentation of modern life and even a return to a pre-industrial pagan shamanistic utopia.

But before delving into this global phenomenon, a little history and vocabulary is called for. To begin with, let's deflate the generic use of the term “techno” to describe anything with a thudding electronic beat. Techno is actually one strand of an ever-expanding genre generally called “electronic dance music”. A veritable cannibal, this genre spawns a constant stream of variants as the technological wizards, DJs, re-configure any kind of music or sound—from a train whistle to the chant of a Tibetan lama—within the thud-thudding of a four-beats-to-a-bar rhythm. Two of the major sub-genres are techno and house.

The club culture surrounding the music is in

some ways a reconfiguration of the disco era of the mid-to-late 70s. All of us probably remember that period as one of poor taste and excess, symbolised in the mainstream by John Travolta's white suit in the American movie, *Saturday Night Fever*. But before North America's white, suburban middle classes adopted the commodified BeeGee's *Stayin' Alive* version of disco, the music was considered an offshoot of funk and soul music. Commercial in aspiration, yes, but, at its best, fun and funky. Disco, under the pressures of the “disco sucks” campaign (orchestrated by disaffected rock fans) and the global over-exposure of *Saturday Night Fever*, waned in popularity as the three great anti-commercial genres of popular music emerged: reggae in Jamaica, punk in the UK, hip-hop in New York City. However, the disco principle of playing a smooth mix of long single records to keep people “dancing all night long” lives on in the endless stream of electronic dance music.

House music, in particular, is often held up as a kind of banner of cultural diversity owing to its origins in black and Latino discos, where it first found its audience (see p.45). One could point to the 1980s, when African American producers/DJs, like Frankie Knuckles, Marshall Jefferson or DJ Pierre, began refining the all-night dancefloor workouts at underground gay and mixed clubs in New York and Chicago, like the legendary Warehouse from which house music derives its name. Or there is DJ Larry

Levan, whose residence at New York's Paradise Garage not only defined a distinct sub-genre of its own (“garage” is slower and more gospel oriented than “house”) but set the tone for today's raves¹—no alcohol, heavy drug use, a mixed, “up for it crowd” and loud, pulsating music for 15-hour stretches without a break.

For many of its devotees, this club culture represents an escape from the regimentation of modern life and even a return to a pre-industrial pagan shamanistic utopia.

► Lecturer in Media Studies at South Bank University, London, and author of “*This Is Our House: House Music, Cultural Spaces and Technologies*” (Ashgate, 1998)

1. In the 1970s, Afro-Caribbeans and Afro-Americans colloquially used the word “rave” to mean “party” or “have fun”. In 1987/88, UK youth began calling large, often unlicensed parties “raves”. DJs play through the night at these events which can attract thousands of paying participants.

At the same time, in the post-industrialising concrete jungle of Detroit (Michigan), techno, a cooler, more futuristic form of house—intensely layered rhythms, often pierced by machine noises and reconfigured over diva-vocals—emerged from a cross-Atlantic dialogue between young, radical African American producers like Kevin Saunderson and Derrick May and electronic Euro-pop, notably by Kraftwerk, a German experimental group of the 1970s.

By the mid-80s, a series of influential independent record labels had appeared and the various strains of North American house, garage and techno were exported to Europe, triggering the rise of local variants and scenes. Which kinds of music were adopted where is a story in itself. Briefly, warmer, more gospel-oriented

holiday club in the sun by taking over disused warehouses or railway arches where an older mid-20s crowd had an ecstatically good time.

The parties thundered on for about a year before parents and police panicked over their “amoral” and illicit dimensions. The media had a field day sensationalising the raves’ dangerous reputations, which, of course, heightened their attraction for thrill-seeking teenagers. As the chill of the British winter set in, acid house parties went further underground to escape police interference but by summer 1989, they re-surfaced outside metropolitan areas, in leisure centres, rural warehouses, even fields. The scene mushroomed: one event, Sunrise, reputedly attracted 10,000 participants.



Europe's biggest party, the Berlin Love Parade.

An ecstasy is a thing that will not go into words; it feels like music.

Mark Twain, U.S. novelist (1835-1910)

house music found a ready audience in Italy. Northern Europe, Holland, Belgium and Germany proved fertile ground for cold, hard techno, which those countries’ own electronic traditions had a hand in creating. However, the UK took the lead in adopting and adapting the new U.S. sounds. Each variant found a British audience: soul- and gospel-tinged house was adopted by “soul” fans, while techno drew devotees from rock and even punk.

In 1987 a group of British DJs and pleasure-seekers, enjoying the traditional British sun’n’fun holiday on the Spanish island of Ibiza (a legendary spot on the hippie trail, with a casual attitude to drugs) discovered a potent mix. They found that the empathy-generating drug MDMA (*aka* ecstasy, “E”) proved the perfect accompaniment to a night in the clubs dancing to the new, wobbly, futuristic sound of “acid house” (a variant of American house). On returning to rainy England, these DJs tried to “recapture” the Ibiza feeling by starting their own clubs and holding unlicensed “acid house parties”, the prototype of the “rave”. They began re-creating the feel of a

Within about five years of “the birth of the rave”, the UK government passed a series of prohibitive laws to crack down on the events. The Criminal Justice Act of 1994, for example, provided the police with sweeping powers to squelch any event featuring amplified repetitive beats. But the repression had contrasting effects. First, by driving the events further underground, it actually spurred their politicisation with the so-called DiY (Do it Yourself) aesthetic: organise events out of a commitment to independence and explicitly anti-consumerist political action. DiY ravers were no longer just organising dance events but musical protests around environmental and social justice issues. Groups like the legendary Spiral Tribe also began spreading the “gospel” of punk-like resistance across the European continent by helping to kick off “Teknivals” (techno-festivals) in France and Germany. Similar groups had a hand in developing the major European Technival circuit, which now includes one of the world’s biggest parties: Berlin’s Love Parade, which attracted an estimated 1.5 million revellers from across Europe in 1999.

► At the same time, legislation also led crowds to return to licensed nightclubs. The late 1990s gave rise to “super clubs”, with rationalised administration and marketing strategies. Clubs such as the Ministry of Sound in London and Cream in Liverpool are hugely profitable businesses, flying in the latest “star DJs” to play in a tightly controlled and regulated atmosphere. Others, like Home and Gatecrasher, are exporting their branded goods (like t-shirts and records) overseas. Home even opened a club in Sydney (Australia).

Yet despite this commercial explosion, the dream of club culture’s democratising power lives on, particularly in how the music is produced and consumed. The entertainment industry has conventionally followed a “rock” model, which relies on bands signing long-term recording contracts with record labels (production and distribution companies) so they can afford to record an album of songs in an expensive, commercial studio. The label then sends the band out to promote the album by playing live concerts in large venues.

Copyright chaos

Dance music has shaken up this model. Instead of hiring and promoting an entire band of musicians, the club and recording industries have the much easier and affordable task of signing and managing individual DJs who “play” the ever more affordable digital equipment produced by companies such as Roland of Japan and Sequential Circuits of the U.S. With drum boxes and synthesizers, technological wizards mimic musical instruments. By “sampling” (a form of digital copying), they can digitally record and manipulate any sound, thereby throwing copyright law (and its principles of originality) into a disarray from which it has yet to recover.

Creative individuals without musical training and only rudimentary electronic know-how can now produce dance music on their personal computers with programmes like Cubase. Using digital equipment, a “track” (not a “song”) can be composed, produced and mixed entirely by the DJ/producer.

Although digital production is the standard in house music, vinyl (records), as opposed to digital forms like CD, still predominate in clubs. DJs seem to prefer the immediate tactile advantages

offered by the old “needle-on-the-record” that allows special forms of manipulation (“scratching” records while rewinding and fast-forwarding by hand to taunt and titillate the audience). Turntables also seem to produce a warmer sound than CD players. However, many local scenes, such as those in Portugal or Belgrade (see p.43), lack vinyl pressing plants and must rely on imported vinyl from New York or London.

Many artists would like to remain independent and set up their own labels, sometimes even distributing their products from the DJ booth of a club or delivering by car to specialist record shops. However, if that recording does become a hit, the artist will soon need substantial investment to supply demand. Therefore artists are forced to do deals with either independent or “major” distribution groups or to sell the track outright to a record company. In this way, even independently produced music is incorporated into the global music market.

While digital technology may have opened up new possibilities for independent production, obviously not everyone has equal access. For the vast majority of the world’s population this technology is economically out of reach and overwhelmingly concentrated in the U.S, Western Europe and Japan. Even in the West, the majority of producers and DJs are male in keeping with social codes. Even when female DJs do achieve a degree of “respect” from club crowds, they are marketed as sexual icons in music magazines rather than technically competent producers. When I mention my experience in an electronic dance music group (as a programmer and keyboard player), the first question I often hear is: “Were you a singer?”

In the global loops of music production and distribution, dance or club cultures are taking root from Sao Paulo to Tel Aviv across a wide political and cultural spectrum. Yet the spread has done little to shift uneven power distribution; Western global cities continue to dominate along with the five major record companies which control distribution and abide by the stubborn distinctions of gender and class. We cannot help but ask, “Is everybody equally welcome at this global party?” We must question the diva quoted earlier: Is everybody really “free to feel good”? ■



- Beverly May (from Toronto, Canada), <http://www.futurejazz.org>
- Mad Mike (Detroit producer featured on a French website), <http://www.multimania.com/fighters/madmike.htm>
- Raya: Atmospheric Engineering, <http://raya.org.uk>
- House Machine (from Milan, Italy), <http://www.housemachine.com>

The discovery of the DNA code, for example, focuses on how you can create different species of beings by starting from the very smallest particles and their components. (...) In music, we do exactly the same.

Karlheinz Stockhausen, German experimental electronic composer and musician (1928-)

Could it be the “home studio” of one of the world’s best-paid DJs, Fatboy Slim?



© Simon Thornton/Red Design/artist: Fatboy Slim/Skint

2 Local scenes



© Swersey/Liaison/Gamma, Paris

Direct from the U.S. prison-industrial complex in New Jersey, Lifers Group find a captive audience.

Black is back

► Jeffrey O.G. Ogbar and Vijay Prashad

Hip-hop's art of rebellion can trigger a battle against racism or raise the white flag to hyper-consumerism

From Bogota to Beijing, hip-hop's apostles are spreading "the word", striking chords of rage and rebellion in privileged and poor kids alike, in rich countries and poor. The world, it seems, is in love with black America. But this is a treacherous affair. Back in the homeland, a war is being waged against this very same group. One of the frontlines is the prison-industrial complex—an expanding fortress, with the U.S. rate of incarceration (682 per 100,000) six to ten times higher than that of most industrialised nations. Of the two million prisoners, 49 per cent are black and 17 per cent are Latino even though they respectively represent 13 and 11 per cent of the population. Almost one in three black men between the ages of 20 and 29 are caught in the web of correctional control (incarceration, probation or parole). These men lose their right to vote, lose their place as citizens, both in the eyes of the State and in white society.

Outside of the penitentiaries, unemployment is a prison of its own. At seven per cent, the rate may seem low, but look closer and you find that this does not recognise the "disposable" part-time workers, generally composed of ethnic minorities and women. About eight per cent of African Americans are officially unemployed, but the real bombshell is reserved for black youth: almost 32 per cent cannot find a job.

Hip-hop is the "CNN of Black America", raps Chuck D of Public Enemy. Read this line with a metaphorical eye to catch a crucial but not complete reflection of the world's Janus-like attraction to rap's art of rebellion. On the one hand, CNN offers constant news coverage world-wide. In

symbolic terms, we find rappers cast as reporters on the frontline, offering live updates through their music of the trials, tribulations and peculiarities of neighbourhoods and cities, from Lagos to Frankfurt. On the other hand, global media networks, like CNN, just scratch the surface and cater to mainstream political "tastes" by offering easily digestible nuggets of infotainment. Illustrating this negative side, we find a few posers of Tokyo rappers and fans, for example, literally burning their skin in tanning salons. This is an extreme example reflecting the international mantra: "Be black for a day, wigger for an afternoon!" [Wigger refers to white people who copy black fashions.]

Contradictory impulses

Much like jazz and rock 'n' roll in the past, hip-hop has made working class U.S. youth in general and African Americans in particular a cultural hearth for the international market. Its iconic power takes many forms, depending upon the particular political goals and constraints of its practitioners. For some, hip-hop is used to attack poverty, oppression and government corruption. Other fans and musicians take aim at cultural orthodoxy by glorifying gang violence, hyper-materialism and explicit misogyny. Often these contradictory elements take shape simultaneously.

In the heart of advanced industrial countries, hip-hop serves as a liberation anthem for those oppressed by racism and poverty. In the disadvantaged suburbs of Paris, the lilting sounds of Senegalese MC Solaar radiate beside North African-inspired rai rap, while ►

► Jeffrey Ogbar teaches history at the University of Connecticut and is a W.E.B. Du Bois research fellow at Harvard University specialising in the Black Power Movement.

► Vijay Prashad is a professor at Trinity College (Connecticut) and a board member of the Center for Third World Organizing. He is also the author of *Karma of Brown Folk* (Minnesota, 2000) and *Untouchable Freedom* (Oxford, 2000).

► NTM (Nique Ta Mère – “screw your mother”) besiege the fascism of Jean-Marie Le Pen’s Front National party. Across the Channel, British Asian rappers Fun^Da^Mental enshrine the right to self-defence against racist attacks, while German hip-hoppers incite respect for their Turkish origins.

Yet at the same time, hip-hop is also just one of many commercial products or props used for youth rebellion against the established orders of parents. The music, dress and attitude are used to visibly divide one generation from another. In Thailand, male teens speed through the streets in swanky cars, pumped on the raw energy and anger of U.S. rap without the slightest connection to the underlying politics. In Kathmandu, teens use rap’s breakbeats to break with tradition, perhaps temporarily, in forging a “modern” identity.

As U.S. rapper L.L. Cool J rhymed, “there’s no category, for this story. It will rock in any territory.” Cuba offers an “academic’s delight” in contradictions. Since 1996, the government has helped to sponsor an annual National Hip-Hop Conference showcasing local and international stars, mostly from Latin America. According to the U.S. hip-hop magazine *The Source*, Fidel Castro “sees rap music as the existing revolutionary voice of Cuba’s future.” Yet hip-hop also challenges the socialist vision when fans at concerts proudly wear images of the U.S. dollar bill on their hats and shirts and scream “it’s all about the Benjamins” (referring to the image of Benjamin Franklin printed on \$100-bills).

Ironically, as post-Cold War hyper-materialism endangers the destiny of young people everywhere, the contradictory message of hip-hop begins to make sense. A decisive feature of the music/culture’s ethic is: to “want mine”, meaning a share of society’s wealth. This desire operates at both the individualist and collective levels. Do you want “it” (luxury, security, etc.) for yourself, or do you want a fair share for your community or society? The urge is so complex that it’s difficult, if not impossible, to find one without the other.

Take the case of South Africa, whose townships only recently produced some of the most disciplined and inspirational fighters for social justice. Now in “mixed-race” areas around Cape Town, gangs take their cue from gangsta rap, calling themselves “the Americans” and “throwing up the W”, a hand signal from West Coast gangsta rappers of the U.S. The South African example shows us that hip-hop’s art of rebellion does not only lead to anti-racist and anti-capitalist rebellion, but it often falls victim to the pitfalls of systemic oppression against which it attempts to rebel.

Hip-hop alone cannot rise up to the task of political transformation—this is pop culture not a manifesto. However, by looking at the particular political situations and aspirations of its musicians, we can trace its rise as an iconic power and its demise when the assimilationist powers of the capitalist economy flatten out the music’s richness to render it a message of personal gain. ■

Smoking with
the truth that the
righteous say
Choking on
the games that the
foolish try to play
We gotta roll with the
blows from below
And give them
a show
Teach the truth
to the young
So they’ll never step
back
Against the Flow
“Against the Flow”, by rappers
Upper Hutt Posse of New
Zealand

A Maori warrior claims new territory

► Kerry Buchanan

Dean Hapeta launched New Zealand’s political hip-hop scene by linking the force of Maori culture with the struggle of black nationalism to fuel consciousness and controversy

“Nigger!” The biker’s insult blindsided the eight-year-old boy, shattering his vision of both Maori and *pakeha* (white) society in Aotearoa, the original name of New Zealand. The verbal attack sharpened the boy’s awareness of his society’s colour lines. Afterwards, he couldn’t stand the sight of his fellow Maori cast as the peaceful but subordinate native. Nor could he look up to indigenous gangs in his working-class neighbourhood of Upper Hutt, outside the capital Wellington. Turning to white society, he felt oppression. So the boy began to look inward, to imagine a “new breed”—proud of his Maori past and committed to a radical break with the legacy of colonial domination.

Today, at the age of 34, Hapeta will refer to him-

self as “one bad nigger” in reference to his hardcore politics as a rapper. Here lies Hapeta’s strength and, for some, his weakness: the ability to weave Maori culture, language and political demands—from land and fishing rights to economic equality—within the style and context of black American hip-hop. Indeed Hapeta and his group Upper Hutt Posse (UHP) have influenced a generation of hip-hop bands and fans across the country. Before these “warriors” stormed the stage, Maori music was generally marginalised like an exotic trinket of the past used in the “ritual” of entertaining tourists. By rapping in their language and incorporating the sounds, values and history of their people, Hapeta and like-minded artists shatter stereotypes of what it means to be Maori.

► Freelance political writer and hip-hop correspondent for *Real Groove* magazine

Hapeta's political consciousness did not flow from the "cultural awakening" of the 1970s when the Maori middle-class rediscovered its roots. He followed the learning curve of the streets, his *whakapapa* ("the place where one belongs"). Tuned into the liberation music of Bob Marley, Jamaica's legendary reggae musician, the songs of resistance rang true in his disadvantaged neighbourhood, where police confrontations were a rite of passage. By valourising the history of former slaves and colonised peoples, the music enabled Hapeta to discover "black outernationality" or the collective struggles of the oppressed.

The impact of Malcom X

In fact, Hapeta's group UHP began in 1985 by playing reggae inspired by the political message of Marley, considered a veritable saint. But then a new set of prophets landed in Aotearoa: U.S. rappers like Afrika Bambaataa and Grandmaster Flash. Breakdancing and rapping with crews in the street, Hapeta began mixing a homegrown message with two major ingredients: experience and inspiration. Landing a job at the Justice Department, he scoured the country to hear Maori land grievances. The second element flowed from overseas via *The Autobiography of Malcom X*.

"The book knocked me out," he says. "It was great inspiration ... that pride in the self and the ability to do something about it." The life of the black nationalist—a cultural hero for his radical defence of racial pride in the 1950s and 60s—led Hapeta to see himself as a leader with hip-hop as a movement against racism and a political platform for Maori interests. Ironically, Hapeta was soon approached by the son

overseas. But with time Hapeta struck an equilibrium. For example, he recalls that "meeting Farrakhan was like going to the mountain-top." There was also the thrill of performing in Detroit and New York and even being interviewed inside Harlem's Apollo Theatre, where nearly all the great African American musicians have played. Black audiences were apparently amazed by the fluency and force with which Upper Hutt drew links between Malcom X and Maori leaders like Hone Heke. Praise in the homeland of hip-hop helped to legitimize Hapeta's own sense of authenticity.

But back in Aotearoa, the fiery brand of Maori nationalism has fuelled consciousness and controversy. In particular, his no-compromise stance on land rights rattles more conciliatory activists and, at times, Polynesian groups originally from the Pacific Islands of Samoa, Nuie and Tonga. For example, at a 1990 concert, Polynesian fans told Hapeta "to go home" after he announced that Aotearoa was the land of the Maori. The same year, Hapeta successfully sued for defamation the newspaper *Auckland Star* over claims that Upper Hutt Posse had barred two *pakeha* youths from a concert. Ironically, the political talks peppering Hapeta's shows are generally well accepted by *pakeha* audiences.

Inner peace

Today, Hapeta is working as a solo artist under the name Te Kupu (the word) instead of the former D Word. Two versions of his latest album *Ko Te Matakahi Kupu* (or The Words that Penetrate) were released in January: one entirely in Maori and the other in English. These changes reflect Hapeta's personal evolution. Before the evils of society appeared to dominate his work. Now, Hapeta seems to have found an inner peace in his reliance on his culture. Within the Maori community, he is respected as a political leader for his dedication to *Tē Rao* (Maori language) and culture. But the warrior is still alive, staking claims in new territory: mainstream society. "Promote it [*Tē Rao*], push it into the mainstream. Use its concepts of caring, social concern as a way of changing attitudes," says Hapeta, who is pushing for more than just space for his albums in record shops and on radio stations. His words are intended to penetrate mainstream society.

Hapeta's horizons widen as he travels internationally to check out the local political platforms of other "conscious rappers" in the UK, for example. "I'm learning from all struggles, getting out of my skin and [coming] back to share, as an ambassador for the Maori people." In many ways, this mission reflects the advice of the great Maori leader, Sir Apirana Ngata. In 1897, he wrote of the need to harmonize one's conflicting ideas while daring "to wander in moments of the greatest exaltation and wildest imaginings." ■



- For more information on Te Kupu: <http://homepages.paradise.net.nz/matakahi/>



Te Kupu: words intended to penetrate mainstream society.

of Elijah Muhammad, the man who banished Malcom X¹ from the Nation of Islam, an influential and controversial black militant group. Touring Aotearoa, Rasul Muhammad invited Hapeta and his posse to perform in Detroit and meet the Nation's leader, Minister Louis Farrakhan, whose antisemitic remarks and inflammatory views on racial separation have sparked heated debate.

In many ways, the trip reflects Hapeta's ongoing dialogue between Maori culture and African American influences. At first, the balance was tipped

1. Malcom X was fatally shot on February 21, 1965 while addressing his followers in New York City. Three members of the Nation of Islam were convicted of the crime.

Algerian rappers sing the blues

► Bouziane Daoudi

Taking aim at the war, corruption and economic crisis, Algerian rappers have turned the kingdom of rai into the Arab world's most vibrant hip-hop scene

“They’re down there on Loubet / They’ve all got big houses / They’ve got the cheek to tell us / ‘We live in a ghetto’ / He smokes foot-long joints / He’s pretty addicted / He looks like a gangster / But he’s just scared / Of getting thrown in the slammer.”

The four members of the group Perfect G’s hammer the lines with “attitude”. Bordering on involuntary self-parody, this send-up takes aim at the strew of other rappers who hang out in the same neighbourhood of Oran as they do. None would look out of place in the tough suburb of a French city or a lower-class district of New York, with their pricey track-suits emblazoned with the logos of big sportswear firms, the name of their group (Ol’ Dirty Shame, Killa Dox, Lord Squad, Black Eyes, The Commission) and their stage names (Oddman, N.Fect, MC Ghosto, Flyman, Machine Gun, Vex, Jigy, Baby, and so on).

The rappers of Oran, Algeria’s second largest city, are to be found in a downtown area that has been the haunt of “cool” people for several decades. They sit on the benches along the Avenue Larbi-Tébessi (formerly Avenue Loubet) or on the steps of shuttered shops in Mohamed-Khémisti (once Alsace-Lorraine) Street, because they can’t gather in the local cafés and tea-houses. It is in this 200-metre radius area that they gather to shoot the breeze in the late afternoon, or whenever they take time off from their studies, their casual jobs or just from doing nothing.

This western Algerian city is the birthplace of rai, and of one of its leading stars, Khaled. But Oran’s rappers and disc-jockeys aren’t too keen about each other. “There’s just copycats left in rai these days,” says H Rime, of the group MCLP. “Rai’s just for having a laugh,” says Vex of the group Da Tox (Theory of Existence). Jealousy, almost hatred, is in the air.

The rappers see the many rai singers as the main obstacle to their hitting the big time with their provocative rants delivered at the speed of light to music that doesn’t lose face to foreign rap:

“In the battle, Algeria’s there / With Oran guys rapping / They’ll get revenge / They’ll settle their scores / Their heads are hot / As boiling water.”

Electronic rai has been going for 20 years now

and its pioneers, all from very poor families, are pushing on 40. Hip-hop became the rage about a decade ago, led by middle-class performers. Today, it has spread around the country (neighbouring Morocco has only a small hip-hop scene), turning Algeria into the rap leader of Arab nations and probably of the entire Muslim world despite a meagre musical output (each album only sells about 10,000 copies) considering the dizzying number of groups.

Oran had about 40 hip-hop groups in 1990. Today there are more than 60. Algiers had 60 last year and now has about 100. The capital has given birth to a wave that has spared no city in the country. Groups recite their rhyming verses in a weird frenzied language, switching from one tongue to another, then to a third and a fourth. In a single sentence, French, English and the two forms of Arabic, literary and spoken, are jumbled together. They invent a flexible, ironic, language with bold descriptive power: “Tight-fitting hijeb [the Islamic headscarf]/See-through hijeb/Swimsuit hijeb/Flashy hijeb/Multi-coloured hijeb/Crumpled hijeb/Frisky hijeb bought on the Champs-Élysées/OK hijeb/Malaysian hijeb/Removable hijeb/Air-conditioned hijeb.”

Every TV image finds its way into their lyrics: wars, the ozone layer, famine, fashion models, films, contraceptives, soap operas, ads, hooligans. Everything is evoked, compared and twisted to fit the rhyme. Then comes the

real problem of finding a proper recording studio.

Two famous groups in Algiers, MBS (Microphone Breaks the Silence) and Intik (“cool” in Algerian slang) have already brought out their first CD in France, *Algerap* on one of the big labels. *Währap* (an abbreviation of Wahran, which is Oran in Arabic, plus the word rap), a compilation by several Oran groups, came out in June 2000. The theme of the album is summed up by MCLP’s refrain: “We’re microphone fiends / We’re telling you what we see / Whatever’s going on / Some people steal / Others suffer.”

From a musical standpoint, the compilation is well above the first Algerian rap albums that hit France. Nonetheless, from the outset, Algerian rap was well received in France. Rappers met with sympathy for evoking the massacres and social ills afflict-

“Manipulation,
aggression,
disappointment /
That’s what my lot is
today / My only crime is to
hope and to dream.”

► Music reporter for the French daily newspaper *Libération*



A display of bravado during a youth festival in Algiers, home to some 100 rap groups.

© Benito/Camma/Paris

ing their country. But the genre is still struggling to establish itself: audiences in France are more drawn to immigrant Algerian rappers such as Freeman and Imhotep, of the Marseilles group IAM, Rimka of Collectif 113, and non-Algerians like Joey Starr, of the duo NTM, who worked on the albums of MBS and Intik.

Last year, Algerian rappers only produced a dozen recordings on mediocre cassettes, but today hip-hop products are springing up all over, reflecting young people's formidable need to speak out. Algiers is home to a constellation of rap groups including the Hamma Boys, Cause Toujours, K-Libre, Les Messagères, City 16, De-Men and Tout Passe. The flourishing resembles the explosive growth of the written press during the democratisation that followed the riots of October 1988.

Since those days however, disillusionment has taken hold, as the Algiers group Intik raps: "Manipulation, aggression, disappointment / That's what my lot is today / My only crime is to hope and to dream."

In Annaba, a town in eastern Algeria, Lotfi and Waheb, of Double Kanon, who are considered the best rappers of the day, openly denounce the country's ills: "They come and they come armed / Devils or people / They come down from the Jewish cemetery / Today it's a crackdown / There ain't no football match / They come from the parade ground / Carrying the flag like in the Lebanon war / Up there people are fleeing / The land's become black."

The war between the security forces and Islamic fundamentalists ("terros" or terrorists in rap language) is the focus of such hip-hop, along with

attacks on corruption, opportunists, the "trabendo" (black market), hatred, injustice and the blues.

"Zero morale", the name of a song by the long-standing Oran group Vixit, sums it all up: "The Escobars / The Al Capones we have right here / We have the mafia / What is left? / Engineers, doctors, diplomats / Think about begging cigarettes / Jobless people just hang around / The market economy / We are condemned / Like animals in a zoo."

SOS

But a new trend is emerging. In its early days, rap was the privy of well-off middle class youths who wrote their rhymes and worked out their tempos in the comfort of fancy villas. Now it is becoming more democratic and inspiring young people from underprivileged backgrounds. In short, Algerian rap has taken off across the social spectrum.

The rappers of MIA (Made in Algeria) rehearse inside an empty container in their high-rise suburb of Ain-el-Turk, while those belonging to the group Cottages, from the small town of Boufarik, sell vegetables and cigarettes on the street. It's common knowledge that Réda, of the group Intik, had to sell his shoes in the Algiers flea market to pay for the last recording hour of his group's first cassette. But everyone believes in just trying to get by, as products of local education without a future, of satellite dishes spewing unreality and of inescapable poverty.

In early May 2000, about 30 groups gathered in the city of Mostaganem for a hotly-contested rap competition. The first prize went to a group from Algiers. Its name was SOS. ■

The Impossible attracts me, because everything possible has been done and the world didn't change.

Sun Ra, U.S. free jazz musician (1914-1993)

Mama Africa meets the kwaito generation

► Maria McCloy

South Africa's legendary Miriam Makeba raps with a young upstart



© Carl Collison, South Africa

Thandiswa radiates before Miriam Makeba.

Miriam Makeba is a living legend, whose music inspired millions in the struggle against apartheid. Forced into exile for 30 years, Makeba performed for the likes of the Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie, JFK, Fidel Castro and the Pope. Yet on this sunny South African morning, "Mama Africa" opens her door in Johannesburg to a jittery journalist and a young upstart, Thandiswa, the lead singer of the kwaito group Bongo Maffin. Kwaito is a local brew of hip-hop, house and reggae music. Bongo Maffin's fame dates back to their 1997 hit version of Makeba's classic song, "*Pata-Pata*".

"She's young enough to be my granddaughter! What are we going to discuss?" cries the 68-year-old great-grandmother Makeba. But as soon as Thandiswa walks in, they embrace.

How did you feel when you first heard Bongo Maffin's version of "*Pata-Pata*" in 1997?

Miriam: I was very pleased because when I came back home [from exile], some people said, "Ah, they're the oldies!" And here are these very young people, singing my songs. It also made me happy to see youth still so attached to African music, especially considering the influence of what they hear on the radio. Honestly, when you listen to these stations, you don't know if you're in Africa or California. Not just because of the musical content...

Thandiswa: Also from the tone and attitude of the DJs.

Thandiswa, how would you describe kwaito?

Thandiswa: It's about the energy of the time, post-independence youth expressing their freedom and excitement about everything being so brand new. Listen to the music and you'll find it's dance-oriented but there is also a very positive vibe in its energy and message.

Miriam: It's South Africa's counterpart to rap. Kwaito has its own way of spreading a positive message. In our society, we have always passed messages

A recipe for kwaito

Let's begin with the basic ingredients: South African disco music, hip-hop, rhythm & blues, reggae and a mega-dose of American and British house music. Mix it all up, add loads of local spice and attitude and you've got kwaito. Mostly, but not always, the lyrics are chanted or rapped—not sung—over a slowed-down bass heavy, electronically programmed beat.

As pioneering DJs like Oscar "Warona" Mdlongwa, explain, in the late 80s, "we started remixing international house tracks to give them a local feeling. We added a bit of piano, slowing the tempo down and putting in percussion and African melodies".

"Lyrically we were inspired by people like Brenda Fassie and Chicco Twala," says another founding father, Arthur Mafokate. Brenda and Chicco were the rising stars of the older "Bubblegum" disco music. "They were representing us and talking about what was happening in the ghettos, and they spoke in a mixture of English, Zulu, Sesotho and Iscamtho (slang)."

Kwaito is steeped in the ghetto, often reeking with a roughneck attitude. But don't be fooled into thinking that these stars are cheap imitations of U.S. gangsta rappers. These musicians are far too street-wise to glorify violence in crime-ridden South Africa. Nor is there a need to inflame race relations after the victory over apartheid. For today's youth, the struggle lies in securing a better economic life.

In fact, kwaito producers were the first in the country to launch their own black-owned record labels. The major companies are now trying to cut in on the scene with their own kwaito rosters but most of the big names are sitting tight with the original labels. The genre is a major money-spinner, with leading groups like Bongo Maffin, TKZee and Boom Shaka releasing albums that clock over 50,000 in sales. If there's a sound that represents young South Africa right now, it's kwaito. ■

► Based in Johannesburg, editor of the Black Rage Internet magazine on South African urban culture: <http://www.rage.co.za>



and expressed ourselves through song. This is why the former government was so scared of musicians...

Thandiswa, do you feel that young people have a negative attitude towards the old-school musicians?

Thandiswa: It's not about negative attitudes, but we didn't grow up in the same situation of struggle against apartheid. The only time I remember being stuck in a situation of revolution was in 1985/86 [a state of emergency was declared as massive student riots erupted]. A lot of young people know all about the struggle but they weren't directly involved.

With the new freedom in 1994 [the first free elections], we started "eating" everything given to us, including stuff from America... Many in the "kwaito generation" began living in town, disconnected from their grandmothers, parents and cousins.

Miriam: It's as if kids today don't realise just how little time has passed since Mandela was in prison. Around the time of the second national elections in 1999, I heard some young people saying, 'I'm not going to vote because Mandela didn't do this and that and he promised he would.' I had a serious talk with them: 'What did you say? You're living in towns and attending multiracial schools. There was a time when your parents and grandparents were being taught under a tree and that is something you cannot forget.'

Miriam: I'd like to ask you a question, Thandiswa. I'm on a committee to try to find ways of improving HIV/AIDS education. How can we get the message of prevention to sink into the minds of this generation?

Thandiswa: I don't know, Mama. People know about the disease, people know people who are dying because of it, but the message isn't clicking. People are having sex at such a young age. The highest infection rate is among women between the ages of 15 and 25. At 15, girls can't make rational decisions about using a condom, or not going with a lot of boys...

This is why many of the Aids campaigns are

using kwaito to push the message through to the young kids. [Thandiswa and a number of other kwaito stars are spokespeople for an anti-Aids campaign called, "Love Life".]

Miriam: And the boys are not so nice. They force their way... When I go on tour, I'm bombarded with questions like, "What about all the rapes in South Africa?" You feel embarrassed, hurt and, as a woman, you could kill someone...

Thandiswa, Miriam's music is known all over the world. Are you aiming to do the same with Bongo Maffin?

Thandiswa: Yah definitely! We would like to become an international band.

Miriam: I hope it happens because one day the Mama Makebas will be gone. During a UK music festival in April, another major kwaito group, TKZee, was singing outside while I was playing indoors. It's nice to see the different generations together... It shows we're not standing still. ■

Rebel without a pause?

► Jeroen de Kloet

'Bad boy' Cui Jian, China's first long-haired rock icon, has pulled off another musical coup by becoming the first artist to adapt hip-hop to the mainland. His hoarse voice has long signified anger, confusion and pain, especially during the 1989 student revolt when his hit single, "Nothing to my Name", became a veritable anthem. Despite the government's attempts to silence his voice by routinely banning his concerts, Cui Jian carries on with the rapper's staccato precision.

Cui Jian fired the first hip-hop salvo with the single "Get Over That Day", which appeared on a compilation album entitled *Born on the First of July* featuring rock bands from Hong Kong, Taiwan and Mainland China reflecting on the handover of Hong Kong to Chinese rule in 1997. While other groups celebrated "Chineseness", Cui Jian questioned the wisdom of the state and its people: "If love suddenly blossoms between my sister [Hong Kong] and me [Chinese youth], how are you [the mother] going to deal with it?" Clearly put, what if mainland youth falls for Hong Kong's capitalist culture and rejects the political status quo?

Musicians, record companies, journalists and academics often construct rap as the counter-cultural sound of the 1990s. Of course, this aura of rebellion neatly hides the sexism and materialism so often displayed in the music. But in the case of Cui Jian, rap works. His most recent album, an eclectic mix of rap and rock that has sold over 400,000 copies (not including pirated versions), questions the nationalism and materialist *Zeitgeist* of post-1989 China.

To interpret Cui Jian as a political rebel fits in a little too neatly with the West's prevalent view of China as an overtly politicized space. The desire to see dominant ideologies subverted indirectly celebrates liberal Western society. However, perhaps Cui Jian has become more of a rebel against the people than for the people. As China's new generation starts feasting on the fruits of economic reforms, Cui Jian confides: "This is a time when people don't believe in anything. The new generation just wants to have fun, to be cool, to have good [sex] and to have money..." Will Cui Jian be upstaged in the "New China", where people care more about economics than politics? No matter, the rebel raps on:

We are so focused on making money that everything will be forgotten (...)

Ha! If you ask me what the next generation will be like;

*I'll give you a straight answer: why should I care?**

* "Idioms" from the album, *The Power of the Powerless*, 1998

► Ph.D. student at the Amsterdam School of Social Science Research

The road that I follow
Leads me on my way
Got my eyes
on tomorrow
And my feet
on today.

Miriam Makeba,
South African singer (1932-)

The rap cartel and other tales from Colombia

► Timothy Pratt

In Cali, hip-hop represents a search for identity among those who have no voice

No sooner did I suggest a spot for taking photos of the 15 rappers and breakdancers we went to meet in Aguablanca (Colombia) than trouble began. In the cab ride to the interview, I passed a neighbourhood barbershop with a poster of slain U.S. rapper Tupac Shakur in the window and some funny haircuts painted on the glass—and thought of suggesting it as a backdrop.

But on broaching the idea, a guy called “Maligno” got in my face and said, “I ain’t down with [agreeing to] the bit about the barbers. Some people be sayin’ that the barbers be down with hip-hop ‘cause they be doin’ the razor cuts [popular among male rappers], but that ain’t necessarily so.” The complaints continued, once we reached the shop, as four of the rappers pointed to the name, “New American Power”. Lalo, the photographer, and I quickly suggested looking for another site.

Walking down a side street, I began explaining that readers in other parts of the world would like to see where they live. “Yeah, you wanna see how poor we are, right?” announced Puto, a young man with his hair braided in the dreadlocks of a Rastafarian. “Here you go,” he said pointing to a shack at the end of a dirt road. “I bet you wanna take a picture of us in front of that shack, right?”

This went on for an hour. At the end, Lalo, a well-traveled Colombian photographer, was sweating, and not because of the heat. “These kids are tough to work with,” he said with understatement.

Demanding precision

And I began to realise what hip-hop in Colombia is all about—a search for identity among those who have no other voice. These kids wanted Lalo’s photos to show exactly who they were, down to the last detail. They speak the “language of the world’s ghettos”, as 23-year-old rapper and producer Carlos Andrés Pacheco explained later—but in their own urban, South American, Colombian version. This can mean including Cali’s particular salsa cadence in a tune or even rapping about the narcotics trade wreaking havoc in Colombian society.

In what were once wetlands on the southern edge of Cali (the country’s second city), Aguablanca is one of Latin America’s largest “invasions”—areas on the outskirts of cities where people seek refuge from rural violence and poverty. About 400,000 people of colour from the Pacific coast have settled here over the last few decades, often finding more violence and poverty

in an urban form. Since 1994, the Aguablanca Cultural Network has been trying to help, for example, by supporting about 25 of the area’s dozens of rap and breakdance groups.

This support includes practical help like giving the groups a gathering place—a big help in light of the fact that many of these kids live in single-floor houses with up to eight siblings crammed into a few rooms, while few institutions open their doors to bands of teenagers with dreadlocks and baggy jeans. One of the networks’ leaders is Robinson Ruiz, who also belongs to BS, a rap trio with a video—a status symbol of sorts in Colombia’s rap scene, barely a decade old.

“Throwing consciousness out there”

Ruiz has called a meeting to discuss upcoming events, including the first anniversary of a weekly radio show dedicated partially to rap called “The Zone”. Cali, with four radio stations now programming rap, leads the nation; Bogotá, the capital, has two.

The 15 rappers and breakers dwelled on the same issue raised by the photos: identity. They talked about whom to thank at the ceremony and why—meaning who is really part of the scene and who isn’t. They also talked about money, questioning whether some groups are paying for airplay on the radio.

A few days later, rapper Carlos Andrés Pacheco highlights another aspect of the local hip-hop culture. Until recently, Carlos Andrés belonged to the Bogotá group, *Gotas de Rap*, or Drops of Rap—one of the few to have two produced CDs and to have performed in Europe on three tours.

Pacheco told the story of the Colombia Rap Cartel, a “trade group” that he founded with members of five other groups around the country three years ago to help up-and-coming rappers get instruments, studio time, and so on. He spoke of “problems” with this effort, including “different ways of thinking” among members. “Many of the groups think that when they make a demo tape and play a few concerts, they’re going to get rich quick,” said Pacheco. “They think they’re going to ride in a Cadillac. They aren’t conscious of what rap is really about.”

For Pacheco, hip-hop is aimed at “throwing consciousness out there” to the public, including rapping about the complex relations between Washington and Bogotá as reflected in the war against drugs. “The way I see it,” said the rapper, “we sell cocaine, just like the United States sells arms—

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© Luis Fernando Pino/Cat Fotografía, Colombia

Aguablanca's rap community may speak the "language of the world's ghettos" but they want no borrowed images and labels.

which also kill people. Both are part of the economy, and it's pretty hard for people in the countryside here to survive on anything else." Through his lyrics, he tries to highlight positive options for kids in Colombia's cities who "always have that door open to gangs, drugs, prison..." Finally, he admitted that it isn't easy to raise such topics in a violent country like Colombia. "You have to be careful about how you get the message across and make it almost subliminal," he warned.

For most of the rappers and breakers, there are two kinds of messages worth communicating: protests or proposals. Maria Eugenia Barquero, whose five-girl group, *Impacto Latino*, is one of a growing number in Colombia's hip-hop scene. "We're telling other kids to take up culture, instead of violence and drugs. To feel proud to be Colombian. This is our proposal," she said before explaining that some groups focus on protesting against the state, the rich, or the United States. As for the gangsta image put across by many U.S. rappers, she and most others view it as a commercial development of little interest.

Curious about her sense of identity as a person of colour and how this might relate to her "proposals", I asked which black Colombians she admired. "My father," she said, "for all he's done to raise us." When pressed for more names, she asked "Do they have to be black?" As for "people in general," she mentioned U.S. female rappers TLC and Salt n' Peppa.

As for being a young female rapper in a country where most beer ads are adorned by buxom blondes in bikinis, Barquero said, "you feel that the other groups and the public are all saying, 'can she do it?' And then we show that we can."

The braided 18-year-old Barquero sees herself as a potential ambassador of sorts. In about five years, she hopes to take her hip-hop message of non-violence around this country mired in civil war. But she

hasn't figured out how to overcome a major barrier—money.

While discussing hip-hop's meagre financial rewards, Luis Felipe Jaramillo of Discos Fuentes recounted two experiences he had recording rap groups in 1998. The company didn't agree with the groups' lyrics "attacking the United States and the Spanish conquistadors." So, they released the records under another name: Factory Records.

Political demands vs. commercial dividends

"We did the project basically to help the groups," said Jaramillo. Only 1,000 copies were printed, but "very few of them sold." So Discos Fuentes is not embarking on any major rap adventures for now, aside from one group, *Latinos en la casa*, or Latinos in the House—who rap about subjects like Juan Pablo Montoya, the young Colombian driver who recently won the U.S. car race, Indianapolis 500. About 1,500 copies of the album will be produced. Even *Gotas de Rap* has never pressed more than 5,000 compact discs.

Orlando Cajamarca, a director who brought theatre to 150,000 of Aguablanca's kids over the last 14 years, questions rap's future in Colombia for cultural reasons rather than money. He sees rap as part of globalisation, tracing it to cable TV's arrival in Colombia over the last decade, explaining that "even the poorest slums here have television." He wonders if rap isn't just a passing fad and says leaders are lacking in the Colombian hip-hop community.

Patricia Ariza, producer of the group *Gotas de Rap*, disagrees. Hip-hop is a "valuable cultural alternative for marginal sectors of this society," said Ariza, before expressing faith in its financial future. "The business world always takes a long time to recognise the underground world, but eventually it does." ■

They treat me as a
traitor when I speak of
silence's defeat
Silence is of gold, but
I've chosen the beat
A wave, a cyclone,
where's the weather
gonna blow?
Whoever sows
the wind reaps
the tempo

MC Solaar, French rapper
(1969-)

Mapping the meanings of dance music

► Caspar Melville

By adapting global music trends, are young people dancing on the graves of their cultures or building new hybrid identities?

In the black townships around Johannesburg, South Africa, a new music culture is taking hold among youth. In the small clubs and storefront shebeens of these impoverished dormitory towns, young people are eschewing the government-sanctioned “authentic” music of Afro-jazz bands in favour of recorded sound. Just as Jamaican sound system operators back in the 1950s or South Bronx hip-hop DJs in the mid-1970s discovered, two turntables, a mixer and a microphone (made in Japan), a supply of vinyl records (pressed in Europe or the U.S.) and a competent DJ are all that is required to get the party rockin’ until dawn.

Local eruptions of globalised “club culture” frustrate simplistic notions of authenticity (shouldn’t Africans listen to African music?) or attempts to wrest a definitive meaning from youth culture (linked so often to music). The township kids have punctured and deflated the over-simplified analysis often surrounding Afro-diasporic music. In many cases, paths are traced from African origin—the music’s “authentic roots”—through to its re-articulation (“whitening”) or commodification (“sell out”) by greedy corporations based in the modern Western metropolis. That argument falls apart in places like the townships, where youth adopt music with Afro-diasporic roots (house music was born in the black-latino urban gay clubs of the U.S.) but routed through the cities of northern Europe. For these young people, it represents a highly valued link to the West—much as their heavily logoed jeans and baseball caps function as status symbols. But is their rejection of Afro-jazz for Euro-house a subtle form of reverse appropriation (whereby kids have adopted the music as their own) or merely bad faith (a rejection of their culture)? Music scenes like these are far too sophisticated to fit into the cramped confines of binary (either/or) analysis.

Instead of delivering easy answers, these music scenes raise critical questions: is globalisation a sign of the world’s unification or cultural imperialism? Is this embryonic youth culture just another example of one-way globalisation—vinyl singles being exported from the First World to the Third along with Coca-



Cola, designer jeans and other markers of conspicuous consumption, in the endless cycle of seduction and exploitation? Or is this the story of creative adaptation—youth as cultural bricoleur, mixing and matching symbols of prestige to create their own, autonomous subculture? Township DJs play house records at around 90 beats per minute (bpm), far slower than the 130 bpm pace preferred by the European audience. The reduced speed turns the propulsive, hectic “banging” into a glutinous and out-of-focus funk-dub, more in keeping with the drinking culture of South Africa than the drug-induced speed of European scenes. With a flick of a pitch control, black youth resignify and re-claim a Europeanised form of “black” (Afro-American) music.

Replacing rock

Are these young South Africans building new hybrid identities or dancing at the funeral of their own cultural traditions? As Jeff Chang notes in his assessment of hip-hop (see p.23), it is never clear whether youth music cultures “reflect a hybrid youth rebellion or capitulation to global capitalism.”

Therein lies the great promise, as well as the central dilemma, for academic analyses of youth-music cultures, particularly “dance” or electronic music (house music and its derivatives), which has arguably replaced rock as the most globally significant popular form. Whether it is Detroit techno in Birmingham, trance in Goa (see p.51) or funk in Rio de Janeiro, there is no single theory to explain the meaning of dance music scenes. We simply cannot resolve the youth rebellion/commercial co-optation couplet once and for all.

► Visting lecturer in Media and Communications at Goldsmiths College (London), freelance music journalist and, when time permits, a club and radio DJ specialising in jazz-dance and funk.



Concentrating on the local beat in South Africa and beyond.

© Mark Hakanson/Panos Pictures, London

life of its own, continually splitting and reforming, spreading and folding back on itself. Short-lived sub-genres are constantly spreading: neuro-funk, acid jazz, tech-step, happy hardcore, trip-hop, “nosebleed” and the list goes on

As electronic music spreads—through traditional circulation loops like import record networks, via radio airwaves, and through the Internet—it fuses with other musical forms and local styles like flamenco, dancehall reggae and Middle Eastern pop. It revitalizes itself through this profane contact, and new genres emerge which feedback to the centres of production. The twin forces of youthful disrespect for orthodoxy and the ever-present threat of co-optation by the content-hungry global entertainment complex virtually guarantees change.

The politics of the dancefloor

But is this global mixing and matching evidence of the increased hybridisation of aesthetic forms, or of the cannibalistic appetites of First World capital? Are genres like Asian dance music—pioneered in Britain by Asian Dub Foundation (see p.47)—signs that the West is finally coming to terms with its post-colonial responsibilities, or another *déjà vu* phase of Said’s Orientalism (fetishism for the exotic)?

The challenge for the analyst is to disentangle these processes. To ensure that this incredible amount of creative (and frequently under-rewarded) cultural labour is given its due, while simultaneously ensuring that “celebrations” of youthful creativity and hedonism are not merely laying the groundwork and supplying the justification for the dealers and profiteers—whether they are peddling Ecstasy drug tablets, clothing brands or fizzy drinks. Corporate capital needs no more cheerleaders.

Dance music continues to grow and mutate, to focus anxieties associated with youth—namely drug use and hedonism—to acquire associations with local politics, to offer opportunities for fun, work, creativity and corporate exploitation. Like any cultural form, dance music is always related to a socio-political context. It may embody global aspirations but it always has a local manifestation: dancing takes place somewhere, with particular kinds of people present, in a particular socio-historical moment. The music has no meaning outside of these concrete, but difficult to discern, relations; and even then its meanings are never complete or resolved. As Yale professor Paul Gilroy reminds us, “communicative gestures”, like dance, “are not expressive of an essence that exists outside the acts that perform them.”

Academics, journalists and others interested in what youth are up to have the task of tracking these dancing bodies and mapping these “social movements”. As in all cultural production, the dialectic between resistance and exploitation plays out across its surfaces, refusing to resolve itself into a transcendent either/or, always in the process of becoming. ■

Music is your own experience, your thoughts, your wisdom. If you don’t live it, it won’t come out of your horn.

Charlie Parker, U.S. jazzman (1920-1955)

Caribbean social theorist Stuart Hall reminds us (taking as a given the unequal distribution of wealth in a world “structured in dominance”) that the basic principle of popular culture is contradiction, and that there can be no guarantee that the “meanings” encoded into cultural products (TV ads or records) will be those “decoded” by the audience. Nothing can be taken for granted in the terrain of popular culture, especially that associated with socially marginal groups.

The “meaning” of scenes organised around exactly the same music can be markedly different in different circumstances. The politics of buying your way into the “dancefloor community” at one of the globally branded and meticulously policed “super-clubs” is significantly different than that of illegal raves in Northern Ireland or Sarajevo where “dancefloor communitarianism” takes on a more convincing tone in the light of fierce religious or ethnic antagonisms that may be overcome, however briefly, on the dancefloor.

The rebellious genre of today can become tomorrow’s mainstream music and the day after tomorrow’s darling of nostalgia (see the strange revival of old rock ‘n’roll). Counter-culture can become over-the-counter culture.

Did I say “can become...”? I meant “will become”. For this is one of the only reliable features of popular music: it will change. According to some technologically minded theorists, digitally produced dance music is like an alien virus with a

Growing pains in Byron Bay

► Sebastian Chan

Environmental and techno groups unite in the Australian bush to mix alternative politics and artistic expression. Yet tourism may spoil the scene

Two and a half hour's drive through Australia's dense bush north of Sydney, coloured lights pulse on the crest of a hill as the low rumble of bass creeps across the immense forest. At the height of summer, the bush surrounding Byron Bay is alive with underground techno events. A far cry from the regimented and often alienating world of clubs that electronic music in Sydney and other major cities have become captive to, these events offer an escape

alliances with local environmental groups to highlight issues such as indigenous land rights, the loss of public space to private interests, and nuclear disarmament. Electronic music was integrated into everything from community festivals to party-aligned protest events such as "Reclaim The Streets" in Sydney: multiple sound systems were wheeled out at major road intersections, drawing thousands of spontaneous revellers to highlight the



© Erda Murray, Australia

"Doof," the sound of muffled bass, gives its name to Australia's home-grown bush raves.

from city life and a dose of social politics. The open space seemingly provides the freedom needed for a creative mix of artistic and political action. But the flow of foreign tourists may arrest the scene's development.

To some extent, tourism is at the origin of the local techno scene. Building on the history of gay dance parties which thrived in Sydney from the early 1980s, British tourists began bringing new music and ideas in 1989 on the back of the UK rave explosion. They organised underground events using the same tactics to evade police at home: low-key advertising and venues announced by phone number on the night. They also began setting up import record stores and became leading DJs. But by 1991-2, locals had taken over. Every weekend, four or more events could each draw several thousand people.

Meanwhile, The Vibe Tribe—a loose group of former punks, squatters and community activists—began holding free parties in Sydney's public spaces to blend grassroots community activism with the energy and futurism of rave culture. They also began setting up fundraisers for various progressive community organizations while forging

environmental effects of the automobile industry.

But by 1995, repressive regulations and police raids forced the raves off the streets and into the controlled confines of clubs. The Vibe Tribe disbanded and some leading members like Kol Diamond went to Byron Bay, where environmental alliances had been forged by other collectives like Electric Tipi. "Over the last twenty years or so Byron has become very much the nerve centre of 'alternative lifestyling', in this country," explains Diamond. "The various feral subcultures and capitalist Greenies mix freely with New Age gurus. They sit lazily in Bohemian cafes discussing the politics of making money and genetically modified soya beans whilst surfing the days away... The local council is Green [party], the local newspaper is heavily anti-development and critical of large corporate businesses, and it seems like the whole town and surrounding areas have in common a desire to keep the Big Mac out of town and keep low-density, low-impact development as the main strategy, largely because Byron Bay is totally dependent on tourism."

Diamond helped to cultivate the cultural landscape by setting up recording studios and a local record label, Organarchy. The small raves of the 1990s are

► Journalist, academic and organizer of electronic music events with the Sub Bass Snarl sound system. For more information: <http://www.snarl.org>

now regular events, with the largest pitched overseas through the Internet, while drawing hundreds from Sydney and Melbourne. "The parties are very popular, very loud and thus very controversial," says Diamond.

Chris Gibson, a lecturer in geography at the University of New South Wales and avid raver, spent six months in Byron Bay to map the music scene's internal politics and its position in a network of global music exchange. "There is an ongoing debate in Byron about whether to tap into the backpacker market or remain locally focused," says Gibson. "The issue here is whether local political imperatives are necessarily compatible with a less politically-specific global trance music mentality associated with backpacker tourism."

Take the case of local DJs fundraising for a forest blockade. Are backpackers really interested in the forest or just attracted by the "alternative" nature of the event? Will local events become overshadowed by larger, purely musical ones with the drawback of DJs from the global trance scene?

Diamond is less concerned. "Maybe this was the risk four years ago when a very tight crew of [international] trance DJs and promoters hit this area very suddenly and in a rather calculated move," he says. "They were looking for a new foothold with which to exploit their corporate agendas. Byron quickly became very fashionable to visit but it was always very expensive to live in compared to Thailand and India, so only those who actually did desire a more alternative eco-friendly way stayed."

The debate over tourism is now spilling beyond the music community to fuel a conflict with local authorities. Tensions erupted over plans for a techno Millennium Eve. According to Diamond, "three techno parties were threatening to attract more people and more attention than the town's official celebrations."

Tourist dollars

To begin with, the local council does *not* make any money from the free-spirited bush parties. Second, these bring-your-own-booze events tend to draw large crowds away from bars and venues in town. The rave crackdown in Sydney (1995) was largely due to pressure from the alcohol industry. So it was not a total surprise to find "police harassment at the parties all throughout the night," as Diamond describes, "from set-up to dawn leading to the confiscation of equipment and charges being laid." For Diamond, the crackdown represented the council's decision "to put the tourist dollar before the artistic desires of the local community."

With the party season quieting down over the colder months, Byron crews are waiting to see how the political climate develops. Meanwhile, Organarchy is working to release more music from Byron locals to reinforce artistic and political independence. "All struggle is local," says Diamond, "global-anything [music industry, tourism, etc.] reeks straight away of something to be consumed in large doses...". ■

Music is our witness, and our ally. The beat is the confession which recognises, changes and conquers time. Then, history becomes a garment we can wear and share, and not a cloak in which to hide; and time becomes a friend.

James Baldwin, U.S. writer (1924-1987)

Belgrade's free electrons

► Dragan Ambrozic

Young Serbs create a parallel universe with music, building on anarchist dreams of a free culture

"Tune in and drop out!" The old slogan rings globally as teenagers, twenty-somethings and adolescent-thirties plug into music to disconnect from the worries of their worlds. But in Belgrade, bands of young techno fans are "dropping out" of society with a vehemence which reflects more than mere defiance of authority. In the Serbian context of rampant nationalism and corruption, their apoliticism reflects a hardcore political statement as they create a parallel universe whose members flow like free electrons through the circuits of clubs, underground parties and pirate music networks.

Outside of the Balkans, the act of "dropping out" usually means ignoring social pressures and parental pleas to "plan for the future" by studying or working hard to achieve social status and financial success. In Belgrade, youth are not just rejecting parental expectations but the probable future

of the majority: deprivation. Only the elite stand a chance of economic escape in this country where five per cent of the population owns 80 per cent of the national wealth. In the last ten years, an estimated 250,000 teenagers and young adults have left the country, mostly heading West to countries like Germany, Austria and the Netherlands.

"We won't be fooled again!"

Only a surrealist could plan for the future in a federation that no longer exists. One minute you're high on the spirit of invading the streets with a united opposition and the next moment the movement implodes under the searing haze of police tear gas. "We won't be fooled again!" cry the techno tribes, who have learned to mistrust virtually everyone over thirty on either side of the political divide. No tolerance for the petty bickering of ►

► Journalist with the independent radio station B2-92 and concert promoter

► opposition “leaders” and no respect for the establishment—neither of which offer a clue on how to heal the wounds of growing poverty and criminalisation of the state.

This is not a resurrection of the generic youth rebellion: “No future!” By creating a parallel universe via music, these techno tribes seem to be building on the Temporary Autonomous Zone (TAZ)¹ of philosopher Hakim Bey, the anarchist guru based in New York. Imagine “pirate utopias” or “mini-societies living consciously outside of the law and determined to keep it up,” writes Bey, “even if only for a short but merry life.” For Bey, a head-on collision with the state amounts to “futile martyrdom”. Instead of wasting time in the dogma-eats-dogma world of revolution (wherein one ideology is replaced by another), consider the joys of uprising. “The TAZ is like an uprising which does not engage directly with the State, a guerrilla operation which liberates an area (of land, of time, of imagination) and then dissolves itself to re-form elsewhere/elsewhen, *before* the State can crush it.”

Veritable temples for the alienated

Belgrade offers the ideal terrain for the TAZ. The omnipresent State is riddled with cracks for the tribes to disappear in. In fact, the techno scene literally developed underground: in the basement of the State university’s Faculty of Arts in 1992 (the apex of the former Yugoslavia’s bloody dismemberment). The basement club Adademija staged a music coup, replacing the old revolutionary avant-garde of rock ‘n’ roll bands with the gadget wizardry of techno disc jockeys. Tribes or bands of teenagers and twenty-somethings formed around a common goal: to escape war-torn reality for the futurism of techno. The underground events were like temples for the alienated: by pulsating to a collective vibe, adherents silently swore allegiance to the positive yet ephemeral life on the dancefloor.

Slowly they built a parallel universe by almost borrowing a page from Bey’s book: turn the negative into positive. Reject politics not by apathy but by creating alternative networks. Reject the capitalist notion of work, not by laziness, but through the black economy. And so the techno tribes re-claimed space in clubs and abandoned warehouses. Without cash for equipment, they stealthily borrowed, bartered for and recycled old turntables and speakers. Without access to a record or CD factory, they smuggled pirate recordings from Bulgaria.

It’s as if they followed Bey’s words to the letter, and yet most have probably never even heard of the anarchist. Ask them about their motivation to find vague talk of “positive change” and club culture as “the only sane way of surviving” and fighting the system. The lack of eloquence can be forgiven, for



Instead of following the leaders, techno tribes in Belgrade march to their own beat in 1996.

© Zamur Art/Camma, Paris

these are doers, leaving philosophy for thinkers like Bey. They don’t bother with what “was” or “will be”—instead they raid the status quo. For example, in 1996/7, the opposition held three months of demonstrations after the government tried to annul their victory in local elections. Instead of following the leaders, the techno tribes staged their own carnivalesque events.

During the NATO bombing campaign against Belgrade, hundreds of revellers met for techno parties, organised by two 20-year olds, Marko Nastic and Dejan Milicevic, known as the Teenage Techno Punks. The uprising floated with the sense of utopia which, as Bey writes, “envisions an *intentional* of everyday life, or as the Surrealists might have said, life’s penetration by the Marvelous.”

Attacking the State’s nostalgia for the past

“Strike at the structures of control!” exhorts Bey. And so the techno tribes file past the police and take aim at the real source of government control: ideas. Devoted to the futurism associated with music, they attack the State’s nostalgia for past “glory”, while trampling on the notion that money can pave the way to a better future as the State’s printing machines churn out the bills of hyperinflation. By “dropping out”, the tribes won’t topple the government or change their society. But that was never their goal. As the underground leaders, Teenage Techno Punks, explain, “It’s not easy to be a drop-out, but, then again, it’s not easy to stay put under the circumstances. This was the only way we knew to bring about positive change.” ■

We never ask ourselves
Too many questions
Too much truth in
introspection
Maintain the
regimentation
And avoid self-
degradation
We act out all the
stereotypes
Try to use them as
decoy
And we become
shining examples
Of the system we set
out to destroy.

“Famous and Dandy (Like Amos ‘n’ Andy)”, from the U.S. group The Disposable Heroes of HipHoprisy



www.v2.nl/FreeZone/ZoneText/Diversions/Broadsheets/TAZcontents.html

1. *The Temporary Autonomous Zone*, Autonomedia, Anti-copyright, 1985, 1991.

The club DJ: a brief history of a cultural icon

► Kai Fikentscher

The rise of the disc jockey from record-spinner to music producer begins in the historical world capital of disco, New York City

Disc jockeys have been spinning records for decades. But when in the 30-year history of electronic dance music did they rise to become highly influential cultural icons? Not only have club DJs become gatekeepers within local music industries; some are now cast as highly paid musical ambassadors, traveling around the globe to spread the latest musical trends.

Is this because club DJs know best how to cast a spell on a dancefloor, how to “work” a record in a way that makes it seem at once familiar and excitingly new, how to bring a crowd to a peak not just once during an evening, but several times? Or is it simply because DJs are finally being paid handsomely and enjoying the celebrity status that comes with money and media exposure?

The answer probably is “all of the above” or “somewhere in the middle.” The place to go looking for the roots of DJ culture are the urban centres long known as hotbeds of musical creativity. Places like New York City. Even a brief history of club deejaying must begin here, in the pre-disco era of the late 1960s and early 1970s, at the crossroads of African American expressive culture and collectively realized gay sensibilities which together form the core of contemporary social dance culture.

Dance music culture, whether associated with disco, club, or house music, has its roots in the Big Apple. New York became the disco capital of the world by the mid-1970s, thanks to a vibrant underground dance culture with local African American and Latino gay men at the helm. The city’s legendary discotheques, such as Sanctuary, The Loft, Better Days, Paradise Garage, among others, emerged from the fusion of three distinct types of social dance environments prevalent in the 1960s, which featured recorded music with or without a DJ. The first precursor was based on the French discotheque, exemplified in Manhattan by exclusive establishments such as Le Club, and later Arthur and Cheetah. Their design and clientele reflected the post-war idea of a disco as an exclusive watering hole for a jet-set clientele.

This elitest conception changed, however, in the late 1960s and early 70s as the discotheque

absorbed the social changes transforming American society at large. Most importantly, young urbanites—particularly ethnic minorities, women and gays—who had been (or felt) pushed to the margins of American society, became increasingly vocal. These groups included anti-establishment pre-Woodstock hippies, struggling poets, musicians, actors, and other artists, as well as a mix of working-class Caucasians, African Americans and Latinos. Though they did mingle to some extent, they tended to frequent separate dance establishments, based mainly on their sexual orientation.

Heterosexual crowds gathered at clubs like Electric Circus or Zodiac, where DJs played an eclectic repertoire of rock, rhythm & blues (R&B) and early forms of what is now marketed as world music. In contrast, young gay men and women socialised at neighbourhood clubs or bars, either legal or unlicensed, generally in ethnically homogeneous areas like Harlem, the Hispanic barrios of Harlem or the Upper West Side. While the music pumped from either a juke box or a DJ set, older men (sometimes in drag) often acted as initiators and at times protectors of younger gays into “the Life” (a socially and sexually active, yet often

secret, life). Some of these local gay bars were regularly raided by police, a practice which ended with the legendary Stonewall Riots of Greenwich Village on June 28, 1969. There, for the first time, gays fought police harassment collectively and successfully, to the extent that after Stonewall, many lesbians and gays began to see social dancing not simply as a pastime but also as a powerful means of building a sense of communal identity.

While the first gay disco in New York State was probably in Cherry Grove on Fire Island, the first urban venue that made disco notorious, forbidden, and attractive all at once was the Sanctuary on Manhattan’s West 43rd Street, which in 1970 became the model for later underground gay discos. The Sanctuary also gave birth to the first club DJ as pop star. Dancers and groupies alike flocked to see and hear DJ Francis (Grasso), who had mastered a new instrument, consisting of two turntables and a mixer, and a new stage: the DJ booth with its controls of ►

Many lesbians and gays began to see social dancing not simply as a pastime but also as a powerful means of building a sense of communal identity.

► Ethnomusicologist, music producer, author of “YOU BETTER WORK!” *Underground Dance Music in New York City* (Wesleyan University Press, 2000)

▶ sound and light to fire non-stop, wall-to-wall dancing on the adjacent floor.

By 1973, national magazines such as *Billboard* and *Rolling Stone* and NYC radio stations began featuring “disco” hits and programmes. Fans who couldn’t hear enough of the music on the radio and in clubs began buying records in numbers that forced recording companies to pay attention to music they’d been ignoring. Like their forebears on radio in the 1950s, club DJs became influential enough to “break” or introduce new records to the public. This rising status enabled them to have direct input into the records themselves. For example, New York DJ David Todd introduced R&B producer Van McCoy to a Latin dance called the Hustle, leading to the production of an eponymous record which became a big hit for McCoy while Todd went on to develop the disco department at a major company, RCA Records.

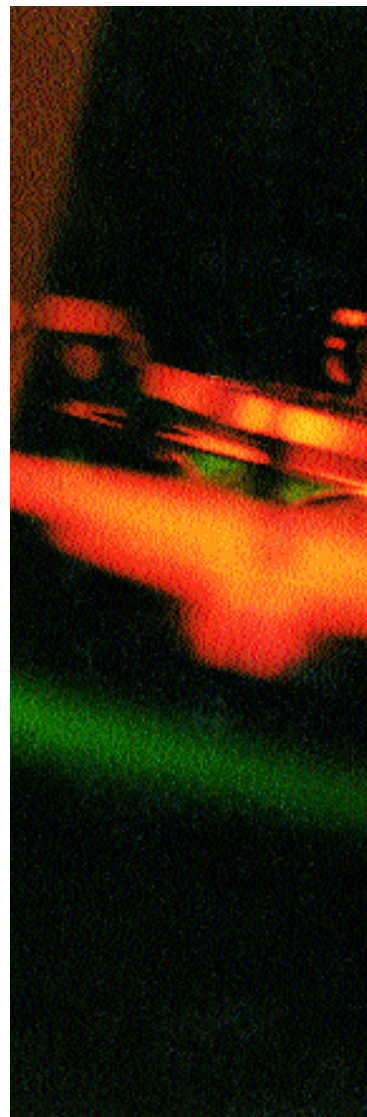
Fighting off “the death of vinyl”

Between 1975 and 1985, the lines between studio producers, engineers, songwriters and DJs became increasingly fuzzy. Instead of just spinning records at clubs, DJs ventured into the recording studios, bringing the same workplace concepts and techniques of mixing music, creating new sounds and re-mixing songs. As remixers, they used the technological tools in ways their designers never dreamed of. For example, a simple synthesizer/sequencer, the Roland TB-303, marketed in 1983 for rock musicians looking to emulate a bass guitar, became the staple of the acid house sound. DJs didn’t just use the little box but “played” its pitch, accent, resonance

and frequency controls, similar to the way they “played” records. By adding sequencers and drum machines, they not only increased and diversified their own club repertoires, but produced new tracks and versions to be sold to the public. In the process, disco became house music.

As this transfer of technologies and aesthetics between the recording studio and the DJ booth increased, so did dance music’s profitability. Since the rise of tapes and compact discs, DJs have been the main economic force in fighting off the “death of vinyl” (records). The main institutions of the dance music industry—the independent label, the record pool (companies distributing promotional records to DJs who in return issue feedback sheets), the underground club, the specialty retail store—tend to be staffed by DJs who base their activities on an ever-expanding concept of their art and skills as musicians and performers. The increase in status from record-spinner to remixer and record producer has transformed the club DJ from cult figure to cultural icon. Dance music is now a global phenomenon, traveling with a set of DJs who have spun their own version of the worldwide web: the “Internet of dance music” is made up of axes linking local dance cultures.

For New York DJs, the first major axis ran through other U.S. cities with vibrant or emerging local dance cultures. From New York, Danny Tenaglia moved to Miami where he spent his formative years as a DJ before returning to Manhattan where he is now one of the most in-demand remixers (creating new versions of old tracks by other artists). Another New York DJ, Frankie Knuckles, moved to Chicago, following an invitation to become the resident DJ at the Warehouse, a gay black club. Noteworthy is that both



DJ democracy: made in Japan

▶ Kenji Gamon

In the past decade, computer-operated musical devices have been replacing the human musician, while hard-drives and portable digital recording gear are making tape-based recordings obsolete. These increasingly affordable digital tools are reaching a new breed of musicians who previously had little or no chance of breaking into the mainstream music industry. With Japanese companies like Akai, Roland and Yamaha churning out the latest in DJ gadgetry, there is no better place to witness the revolutionary changes in digital music than Tokyo.

The “Made in Japan” label, which was hitherto seen only engraved on the back of these electronic instruments, is now proving to be a marketable cultural export product as well. In fact, Japan is enjoying a sort of pop-culture renaissance as DJs like Ken Ishii, Tsuyoshi, Fumiya Tanaka and DJ

▶ Freelance music journalist based in Tokyo

Krush find success in the European and American music markets.

Ken Ishii, 30, is the most famous of these rising stars. About ten years ago, Ishii sent a demo tape to the Belgian techno label R&S, which immediately signed him on with a contract, not only shining an international spotlight on the young maestro but also enabling him to gain recognition in his own country for the first time. However, Ishii’s now blossoming career (currently fuelled by the powerful marketing muscle of Sony Records in Japan) represents only one side of the cyberpunk artist-turned-Cinderella story.

In the quiet urban sprawl of Tokyo’s Komaba district, Kisei Irie, 28, and Takashi Saito, 24, are trying to follow in the footsteps of their rising techno gods. In Irie’s one-bedroom apartment, the duo are cranking out a fervent mix of techno grooves under the name A/F+BAD KARMA. These two bedroom DJs cashed in years’ worth of savings (about \$2,000) to press 300 vinyl copies of their four new tracks at a Czech record plant.

But producing the music is only one step in the struggle. Distribution is a veritable battle as the growing number of “bedroom DJs” compete

to get local record stores to purchase and display their vinyl creations. “Sure Japan has profitable stars like Ishii, but that doesn’t mean the industry, record stores or clubs are trying to cultivate new talent,” says Irie. “Guys like us have to start at the bottom.”

Meanwhile, the skyrocketing number of DJs has yet to trigger an explosion in creativity. “Everybody sounds the same,” says Zatiochi Nakano, 35, a studio engineer and digital instrument expert. “But that’s the case everywhere because kids want to create ‘cool’ sounds to please as wide an audience as possible.” For Nakano, the new digital instruments are revolutionary because they allow the musically untrained to create their own material. However, the personal pleasures of creativity should not be confused with talent. As Nakano concludes, “Good music requires good creators and that’s as old as the hills” ■



© Jean Christian Bourcart/Rapho, Paris

Tenaglia and Knuckles continuously traveled back and forth to New York, bringing back new sounds while stocking up on local records. They also have since returned to the Big Apple to live and work as DJs and remixer.

New tradewinds

The second axis leads across the Atlantic, from Chicago through New York to London. Around 1986/7, after the initial buzz surrounding house music in Chicago, it became clear that the major recording companies and media institutions were reluctant to market this music, associated with gay African Americans, on a mainstream level. House artists turned to Europe, chiefly London but also cities such as Amsterdam, Berlin, Manchester, Milan, Zurich, and Tel Aviv. The rest is the history of what became rave culture, a European youth dance phenomenon which is still going strong.

A third axis leads to Japan where, since the late 1980s, New York club DJs have had the opportunity to play guest-spots to audiences who are as much removed geographically and culturally from African American and gay sensibilities as are their European counterparts. Still, local dance cultures formed and continue to expand in Tokyo and other major Japanese cities. At the turn of the millennium, the tradewinds of the DJ are reaching new destinations, like Sao Paulo, Mexico City and African capitals like Dar Es Salaam. There, a new generation is enriching a tradition which so far has no textbook or manual, nor has it received comprehensive documentation. Rather, it is carried forth orally, by DJs who learned from those who came before them. Keep on! ■

Asian Underground

The contradictions of Europe's rage for ethnic exoticism take centre stage in an interview with Pandit G of Asian Dub Foundation, a UK band serving up a searing mix of jungle rhythms, rap and 'traditional' sounds steeped in social justice

The global music industry makes a fortune by mixing various strands of music, often traditional, with genres like hip-hop or techno. Is this a replay of classic capitalist exploitation—extract raw materials, package and sell them back to the “natives”?

People have always mixed music from elsewhere and turned it into their own style. For example, bhangra [now very fashionably sampled] is really an indigenous form of Punjabi folk music created in Britain (see p.49). The early migrants from the Asian subcontinent largely came to Britain to work in cotton and textile mills after the war, particularly in the mid-to-late 50s. Many came from Punjab, which straddles the border with Pakistan. So a generation coming right up to the late 60s was listening to Punjabi folk music but mixing it with the dominant music form of the time, rock. That meant using electric

guitars, drum kits as well as traditional instruments. What used to be a big musical troupe could be replaced with technology and just three or four members.

But on the opposite pole, you always find people out to exploit ethnicity or exoticism. In Britain, why do musicians like Kula Shaker [a neo-hippie rock band] need to go to India to find inspiration or symbolism? Why couldn't they have gone to places like Southall [an Asian neighbourhood] on their doorstep in London?

What do you think of “Asian Kool”—or the current rage for Indian-inspired music and fashion?

We could be talking about Asian Kool, Caribbean Kool or African American Kool. The people pushing this kind of thing have recognised that there is no strong white Western notion of cool ►



© Jaktar Semplay/Rapho, Paris

Inspiration on the doorstep in London's East End.

This context of struggle and being a warrior and being a struggler has been forced on me by oppression. Otherwise I would be a sculptor, or a gardener, carpenter—you know, I would be free to be so much more...

"Committed to Life",
Asian Dub Foundation

► amongst youth. Largely black identity is mixed up with being anti-establishment. Exoticism makes this idea sell a bit but it'll only be forgotten in a few years' time.

In the UK, you'll see people in the streets wearing their little *bindis* on their foreheads and thinking they've made an anti-racist statement. But they wouldn't talk with Asian people working in a corner shop. By focusing on the exoticism, people can say, "These Indians don't mind being poor because they're spiritual."

What do you think of the "New Asian Underground"—a tag often attached to Asian Dub Foundation (ADF)?

It's an easy sound-bite to market the music. But we have to take a British perspective because of the history of colonialism. White society in the UK largely sees the Asian community as being homogeneous. Yet the handful of musicians that make up this "Asian Underground" can be Muslim, Hindu, Christian, Sikh or Buddhist and [originally] come from a geographic area three times bigger than the UK.

"We ain't ethnic, exotic or eclectic. The only 'e' we use is electric," rhymes a line from an ADF song. Do you ever feel the burden of representing an ethnic community?

We only represent ourselves. There is a line precisely on that from our album, *Rafi's Revenge*: "Culture is always on the move. There is no fixed

point." We can also hold this up to white society, which imagines an ideal time when there was some pure British society—which never was. Just like there was never a pure Indian society.

We won't accept any pigeonholes. The tag that gets used most to describe us is: political band. We get journalists saying, "Once you get through the politics, the album isn't bad." We believe that everything is political. Five Asians gettin' on stage, playin' guitar and sampler, is political.

You've said that ADF has never been directly censored because of its strong anti-racist political platform*, but how can the mainstream media and music industry indirectly stifle a group's message?

A backlash is slowly set up. First the media presents radical music as something new. Even though what's new is that the political platform is reaching a wider audience. But by reaching more people, you upset the status quo, which doesn't sell advertising copy. So what does the press do? They set you up as celebrities, isolate you and then try to crush you.

It wouldn't be direct censorship from the record company—you'd just find that your record isn't available in the shops. You don't get any tour support. There's many ways of stopping a band from reaching a broad audience. ■

Interview by Amy Otchet,
UNESCO Courier journalist

*Among its many anti-racist activities, ADF has spearheaded the international campaign to free British citizen Satpal Ram, who many believe has been unjustly imprisoned for defending himself against a racially motivated attack by six men in Birmingham in 1986. For more information: www.asiandubfoundation.com

Grannie doesn't skip a bhangra beat

► Sudhanva Deshpande

A lighthearted look at how elite youth "dig" their roots through expatriate relations

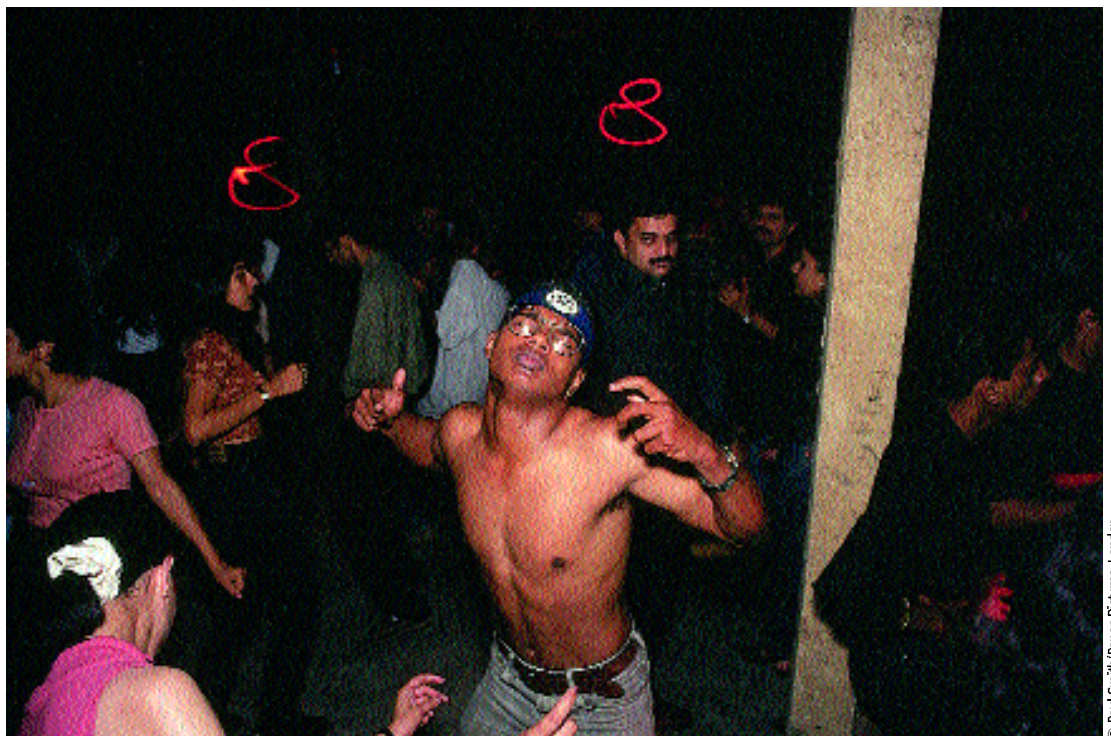
The hi-fi is playing Bruce Springsteen, who is belting out his "Born in the USA" number. Someone has turned the bass way up, so that the room seems like a giant pulsing heart. Couples are dancing, swaying. "It's *paaaartieeee* time!" screeches a slightly inebriated young woman to no one in particular. And no one in particular pays any attention. I am in the midst of students who are celebrating. Maybe the end of term. Or is it someone's birthday? Who cares—it's *paaaartieeee* time.

The scene is a fairly well-to-do neighbourhood in south Delhi, the time approaching midnight, and the party is picking up. So far only English numbers have been played—Madonna, Michael Jackson, even Pink Floyd, and a host of other stuff I neither recognise nor am keen to. Then, someone decides it's time to party in earnest. The music stops. A fresh cassette is inserted and when the first strains of the new number are heard, the room explodes in a collective roar. It's Daler Mehndi, the dancing Sikh, the undisputed king of bhangra pop. Finally, the adrenalin is flowing and there's not a soul who's not on the dance floor. For a few hours, it's a long list of Indipop singers, mostly bhangra.

This is new. Through the 1980s, and even in the early 90s, it was infra-dig [beneath your dignity] to admit in public that one listened to even Hindi stuff, let alone Punjabi. Gurdas Mann, the original bhangra star of the 80s, who is currently enjoying a minor revival, was only heard by Punjabi kids at the working-class Khalsa College, bored shopkeepers and truck drivers. If you went to the elite St. Stephens College, you played the likes of Michael Jackson.

No more. The 13-to-23 generation, which the music companies spend millions on wooing, has turned patriotic. "I am proud of this music," declares an avid bhangra fan, "it makes me feel so *Indian*." This world-weary, been-there-done-that 23-year-old of today was 13 when the Indian state embarked upon the drive to liberalise the economy. In the decade since, five governments, basically accounting for the full range of Indian political opinion, have ruled. With the exception of the relatively weak left component, they have all displayed an amazing level of unanimity on globalisation. Big business, backed by large sections of the liberal intelligentsia, has pushed the liberalisation agenda ►

Adrenalin flowing at a warehouse party in Bombay.



► Stage actor, director and member of the New Delhi-based Jana Natya Manch, best known for its radical street theatre

© Paul Smiddy/Panos Pictures, London

► relentlessly ahead. As a result, the landscape of urban India has been transformed beyond belief. Large tracts of rural India also show signs of change, especially in the agriculture-rich Punjab.

Ravaged by the partition of India in 1947, Punjab saw the greatest mass migration in history. Millions of Hindus and Sikhs crossed over to the Indian side, and millions of Muslims to Pakistan. For a generation or more, the Punjabis have worked industriously, and many have moved up the economic ladder, thanks to the green revolution. In addition to a massive migration notably to the UK after partition, a huge number of young Punjabis are continuing to migrate to the Commonwealth and other distant lands. Some of the money being earned abroad is repatriated back to India. Cities are full of fast cars, hi-fi home entertainment systems, McDonald's and ubiquitous satellite antennae in rich as well as poor neighbourhoods. Even villages now have ATMs (cash distributors), and everyone seems to be wearing Nike shoes, Ray-Ban sunglasses or Benetton shirts—there are more fakes going around than the genuine stuff, but who cares? All of this has also been accompanied by heightened polarisation between the rich and the poor *within* the country, but, again, who cares? Its *paaaartieeee* time.

So there you have it, the paradox of bhangra: its emergence as an *Indian* form in precisely the decade when its listeners have become more integrated into the world market and its patterns of consumption. Talk to the 13-to-23 high-consuming set and the refrain heard most is: "It's *our* music." The pride that accompanies stories of Indian musical success in Whitemansland, UK—Apache Indian, Bally Sagoo, etc.—is real. "We are no longer only consumers of other people's cultures—now we produce the music that the world wants to listen to." But wasn't the bhangra boom born in the West, and hasn't it too been imported to India? "Yes, but it's *Indian*, don't you understand? It's *our* guys there who are making the music."

But why bhangra, I ask. "Bhangra's got the beat. It's very danceable," I am informed. Isn't all folk music, I ask. "I guess." Silence. "Remember dandiya?" asks an older listener, referring to the form of folk music and dance from the western Indian state of Gujarat which was all the rage in the 80s. "That was danceable." So why has it been deposed by bhangra, I ask him. "Simple," he says. "Earlier, the Gujjus [Gujaratis] were the single largest expat[riate] population. Now, the Punjus [Punjabis] have taken over. And so has their music." Yeah, that *is* simple. *Too* simple, maybe? But why don't we hear gidda? It's from Punjab and as danceable as bhangra. "Simple," I am told again. "Gidda is women's song. How can men sing or dance to it?" But isn't bhangra too masculine? It's sung by men. "Yeah," he says. "That's the point. Bhangra is *men's* song. So everybody can dance to it." Yeah, simple again, I guess.

Created by the hardy Punjabi peasant to celebrate harvests, marriages and other joyous occasions, bhangra was exported by his expatriate grandson to the West.

A Punjabi friend passionate about his music provides a different explanation. "It's all a question of identification," he says. "Bhangra has become associated in the popular mind with the culture of Punjab. This has happened because of Hindi films, which have used bhangra more than any other Punjabi folk form. People now think that bhangra is all there is to Punjabi music. Much of what we hear today is nowhere near bhangra, but it all gets called that because of the use of the *dhol* [a percussion instrument slung on the shoulder and played on both sides with sticks]. Anything on the *dhol* and with some *balle balle* [a generic cry expressing happiness] or *kudiye* [Punjabi for girl] is just assumed to be bhangra." So what is it? "Most of it is kitsch. You know, just taken from here and there and mixed together. Whatever works, works. Then we get to hear a million variations of that. Till something else clicks." In the meanwhile, of course, music companies have made millions.

Would you believe it, then—much of what we think is bhangra is not bhangra at all! "Who cares?", says an 18-year old. "It's Indian, and we *understand* it. Not like the English songs where you understand only one line." Really? What about the king of bhangra-pop, Daler Mehndi, I ask. How many people know what he sings in between *his* one-line refrains? "That's because people don't listen carefully," she says. "Some of his songs are beautiful. They are really *philosophical*." Philosophical?

"*Yeeees*. You know, there's one where he talks about love being like spinning yarn on a wheel..." She quotes the Punjabi lines. Yes, I admit, the lines are beautiful. But the language is far from simple to understand. "Yeah. It's *traditional*. My grandmother explained it to me," confides my young friend. Now that's interesting. And what did grannie think about it? "Oh, she is just amused. She could never have imagined that such songs could be played in discos and parties." Isn't she offended? "Not really. She says we live in times when the dollar rules. They will sell their mothers if they can make some money." But is she happy with the fact? "I dunno. I guess she's not too worked up about it, since I get to learn some Punjabi that way. I've never been in Punjab. . ."

So bhangra has come full circle. Created by the hardy Punjabi peasant to celebrate harvests, marriages and other joyous occasions, it was exported by his expatriate grandson to the west. There it was remixed with techno, rap and reggae of black neighbourhoods, and with Hindi film music as well. Reinvented thus, it gets exported back to India by large music corporations who make enormous profits in the process. And here in India, it helps rich kids of an increasingly anglicized elite rediscover their own rural heritage. In completing this loop, of course, bhangra loses all links with the material life of the peasants who created it. But who cares? It's *paaaartieeee* time. ■

There's nothing remarkable about it. All one has to do is to hit the right keys at the right time and the instrument plays itself.

Johann Sebastian Bach, German composer (1685-1750)

Defusing the alarm

Fear and loathing in Goa

► Arun Saldanha

'Sex drugs and rock 'n' roll' is the traditional source of moral panic for parents and police. But in Goa, parents fear that their youth will be corrupted by cultural imperialism



Two worlds collide at a flea market in Anjuna.

In a letter addressed to the then prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi, the Goan activist group Citizens Concerned About Tourism (CCAT) wrote in 1990:

"Over the last ten years, hippies and similar backpack tourists have virtually taken over (...) They live here without visas or passports ... They lie around nude on our beaches and practice and propagate free love and free sex. Drugs are an integral part of their relaxed way of life. They are parasites who thrive by sucking the life-blood of our nation—OUR YOUTH."

While doing fieldwork for my Ph.D. on tourism problems in Goa, a former Portuguese colony in southern India, I've encountered many such emotional reactions to the white traveler/hippie culture

existing uneasily in traditional coastal villages. These reactions lead back to a general Goan patriotism, "tested" by the perceived cultural threat of tourism, especially in the northern village of Anjuna. In the early 1990s, hippie tourism gave way to one of the world's most famous rave scenes with Goa trance music, which not only attracts hordes of travelling ravers and package tourists from the UK, Israel, Germany, France, Japan and other countries, but many local youths as well.

Panic about young people succumbing to supposedly "foreign" pleasures: does this sound familiar? Youth culture is, by definition, deviant. It subverts the meanings adults give to decency and health, responsibility and tastefulness, night and day. It's not very surprising that adult disapproval results in hysterical media reports and often in restrictions or police action aimed at subverting the subversions.

A turning point in the 1980s

Though sociologists have studied how generational aspects of moral panic are connected with class, gender, ethnic and sexual dimensions, there hasn't been much attention on the *intercultural* issue. In Goa, moral panic becomes a North-South issue, one of insidious "cultural imperialism". Some local youth—boys, not girls who generally stay at home in India—are thought to prefer Western music, drugs and sexual habits to "traditional VALUES like honesty, hard work, discipline, good moral behaviour and patriotism" (CCAT). For many parents, journalists and activists, white foreigners are forcing their culture in a colonial way upon the helpless kids of Goa.

The reality is more complex. In the 1970s, the hippies lay naked and stoned on drugs, listening to their music, while the locals worked for a living. Two radically different worlds co-existed within the same village, but there were never problems to speak of. In the 1980s, the party crowds grew to the thousands, the music became electronic (thus louder), and the drug market better organised.

► Goa trance parties traditionally happen at full moon, Christmas and New Year, on the beaches, in forests and on hills. They are normally free, going on till late morning, keeping the village awake with the throbbing kick drum. Goa trance music is a fast, hypnotic kind of techno, with fluctuating streams of bleeps, squelches and soundscapes vaguely reminiscent of Eastern harmonics. Anjuna's hippie past is reflected in fluorescent paintings and performances to match the music's heavy psychedelic thrust, further enhanced by the use of illegal drugs like LSD, Ecstasy and hashish—this music isn't called *trance* for nothing. The psychotropic atmosphere and imagery is simulated on the Internet and at psy-trance parties around the world, from Slovenia to Sydney, Thailand to Tel Aviv.

Many Goans also take part by selling *chai* (Indian tea), snacks and cigarettes or by driving taxis, renting out rooms, bikes, party spaces and sound equipment. They also sell booze, clothes, drugs, food, cassettes and paraphernalia, from *chillums* (traditional Indian hash pipes) to incense. And because loud music after 10 p.m. is illegal in Goa, cops and corrupt politicians can earn piles of rupees by routinely charging *baksheesh* (bribes) for the parties and fishing for drug possession. In short, Anjuna's party scene is as much of interest to foreign freaks and dealers as it is to Goans.

Yet this economic dimension is ignored by the media and activists. Instead they demonise the scene as one which caters to foreign pleasures while corrupting Goa's government and seducing its youth. This is moral panic, articulated along a postcolonial, intercultural dimension. Moral, because there's always a puritan and patriotic undertone. Panic, because the effects of Goa trance are exaggerated.

Moral panic then gets in the way of admitting that many Goan boys and men genuinely enjoy the parties without the drugs (too expensive) and without sex (contrary to widespread belief in the area, one doesn't copulate at a rave). What's more, growing numbers of much richer youth from Mumbai (formerly Bombay) are discovering the rave Mecca in their own country. Weekends and holidays are spent basking in the festive glory, although they are careful to throw away their hippie clothes before returning to Dad, Mum and their yuppie jobs.

I'm not saying Goans, Indian tourists, Mumbai yups, white package tourists, backpackers and trance-heads all happily dance together in pluralist communion. I'm only saying that the audience is extremely diverse, far more so than in the West. The starkly *ad hoc* manner of organising these parties makes it difficult to call the phenomenon a planned strategy of narcotics mafia, multinational capital, or wacko India-imitators intent on turning the young Indian generation into equally wacko West-imitators. It's true that

tourism, drug trafficking, corruption, and stereotypical imaging of Goa/India all feed on the inequality existing in the world between North and South, white and brown, rich and poor. But deducing that Goa's youth has been sucked into a "foreign" hedonism and materialism is a totally different matter.

Can we conclude that moral panic isn't justified in Goa? Well, moral panic is *never* justified, as it's always based on exaggeration and misinterpretation. What is justifiable, is putting things in perspective and in concrete terms. Many Goans make good money during winter by virtue of the trance parties. Busting the events, as the government and police seem eager to do lately, will hurt these poor locals much sooner than the big hotel owners and drug dealers. The repressive climate reinforces corruption and prevents open debate. And the tourists will only head someplace else.

Likewise, many local young men and Indian lower-class tourists enjoy dancing to the music. Who are intellectuals and parents to argue that this fun is not "real" but induced by foreigners? How do they know that the "friendships" between locals and foreigners are purely utilitarian? Labeling Goa trance as "non-Goan" and "colonialist" denies intercultural dialogue and possible solutions to the problems. Ironically, the middle-class Catholic parent culture forced upon Goan youngsters is more clearly a result

of aggressive colonialism (of Portugal), than the Goa trance subculture they're flirting with. For it is nothing more than flirting: after the tourist season, it's back to Indian village or small-town life again. In the eyes of dancing Goans and foreigners, Goa trance *is Goan*.

Now let's accept that Goa trance is part of Goa. Does that resolve all of the problems? Of course not. Pol-

lution is part of Goa and it's not okay. Many problems in Goa (like pollution and corruption) are connected to rave tourism, but we cannot just blame the tourist industry and foreigners. First, we need to identify the problems. A Goan boy decides to pierce his nose in keeping with trance fashion. Is that a problem? Or should we be more concerned that cops pay to be posted at the coast to collect *baksheesh*? Let's deal with the second first. Let's not judge, like many Goan city-folk do, from wild second-hand stories of the malign lunatics of Anjuna or from inconsistent patriotic denials of intercultural exchange.

I sense the reader frowning. Listen to this European wise-guy spilling big words about other people's problems, calling them naïve and on top of that getting credit for it... same old North/South domination but now on a university level. But consider another possibility. Instead of hiding behind the façade of detached social science, why not try to stimulate debate on how to solve Goa's rave-tourism problems? ■

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is a fast, hypnotic kind
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reminiscent of Eastern
harmonics.

Those who cannot
dance say the music is
no good.

Jamaican proverb



© Lennox McLendon/AP/Boomerang, Paris

The highly controversial Puff Daddy accepts the Rap Artist of the Year award from *Billboard* magazine in 1997, three years before he was implicated in a nightclub shooting in New York.

A convenient scapegoat

► Davey D

Who is to blame for the violence associated with hip-hop? Media sensationalism, money and stereotypical readings of this pop culture's complexity

January 14, 2000, Oakland, California. It was with eager anticipation that more than 12,000 people descended upon the Oakland Coliseum to see rap superstar Juvenile and his Cash Money Click. The musicians were at the top of the charts, while their songs and videos were being played on radio and TV stations across the country. Earlier in the day, they made a jovial appearance at KMEL, the area's leading music radio station. Joking with fans, they promised to give the performance of a lifetime. Little did we know what was in store.

Around 11 o'clock that night, local TV shows were interrupted by frantic reports of mayhem at Oakland Coliseum. Horrific pictures seemingly depicting groups of thuggish young men beating up helpless concert-goers plastered TV screens as more than 100 police officers in riot gear swooped on the Coliseum. The show was halted and the sold-out crowd told to go home, without refunds for their \$50-tickets. A fight had broken out, involving about a dozen men.

The aftermath was swift and damaging. Local club owners pointed to the Coliseum fiasco as an excuse not to host similar events. For example, the

prestigious Gavin Music Convention was scheduled to take place in the Bay Area the following month. Plans were well underway to organise several large hip-hop showcases. They were all unceremoniously cancelled. In fact, the hype surrounding the Coliseum event spread well beyond California. Concert venue owners from across the country called Oakland police officials to gauge whether or not they should host similar concerts. Yet many people saw the Coliseum management as being ill prepared. They were understaffed and therefore slow to let people into the venue (which raises tensions) and, more importantly, slow to respond once the trouble broke out. This criticism was barely considered, however, in the public hearings subsequently organised on a possible moratorium on rap concerts.

The backlash resulting from isolated events

Making matters worse, the incident occurred at a rough time for rap because some of its superstars, including Puff Daddy and Jay-Z, had been involved in extremely violent incidents. Puff made international headlines when he fled a shooting in a New York City ►

► Hip-hop historian, journalist and community activist based in California. For more information: www.daveyd.com

► nightclub. Police later found an unregistered gun inside his car and arrested him in late December last year. The bad news came on the heels of another dramatic arrest: Grammy award winner Jay-Z was accused of stabbing fellow record executive Lance "Un" Rivera for supposedly bootlegging his material.

Incidents like these have made the issue of hip-hop violence a main staple for media commentators. Should we ban the concerts? How concerned should we be about the lyrics and imagery promoted by some of the acts?

Serious discussion requires proper perspective. Yes, there are violent incidents associated with hip-hop, but they do not define the mindset of the culture. Beware of the trap of stereotyping. The alleged illegal actions of superstars like Puff and Jay-Z are an embarrassment, but they do not represent the music and culture.

For example, violent incidents abound at soccer matches around the world but they don't define the sport or a particular community. In many cases law enforcement and civic officials understand that the cost of doing business is a likelihood of violence. Hence fences are built to keep rival fans apart, while special security units patrol the stands. Hip-hop has never been afforded such treatment.

I am not suggesting that we turn concerts into police zones. Yet obviously large gatherings require special precautions. We must also recognise that the media have an interest in hyping mayhem. These stories sell. For example, nobody was killed, let alone trampled, at the concert I described. The violence was confined to a small area and involved less than 20 people out of the more than 12,000 who attended. Not a single arrest was made, despite the presence of about 100 police officers. Nevertheless, TV stations saw fit to interrupt their regular programming to inform the public about the fights. Compare that sort of urgent coverage to the *lack* of attention given to the crowd violence that occurs regularly at Bay Area football games.

The violence surrounding the "Big Game" between Stanford University and rival University of California in 1997 made the Coliseum concert look like a picnic. The entire field, including the goal posts, was destroyed by marauding fans who trampled innocent bystanders. Police officers were even attacked. Yet there were no TV highlights on the evening news. The newspapers wrote rave reviews of the game and barely mentioned the fights. Apparently, no-one would dare tarnish the reputations of two very prestigious universities. The following year, the fans went berserk again, despite the presence of 200 police officers. Once again, no news coverage.

I mention these incidents to highlight a much larger point. Hip-hop is a convenient scapegoat because its communities don't have the political power or money to control the type of media images projected worldwide. This has resulted in unbal-

anced coverage and the maligning of a culture.

Another major issue to consider is the violent imagery often promoted by the rappers themselves. A cottage industry has blossomed over the past ten years as record companies and artists make a killing by selling a "thugged out", misogynistic, gangsta image. There is no denying that some of these artists actually adopt the attitudes their songs and videos project. However, there are other ways of reading these coded lyrics and images. To begin with, some rappers use the violent metaphors as part of a long tradition of toasting or bragging about their musical prowess. As African American author and professor Robin D.G. Kelley points out, by exaggerating and boasting about imaginary criminal acts, rappers engage in "verbal duels over who is the 'baddest'." Kelley also shows how the narratives operate on two levels. Insiders can appreciate the irony of the duels while outsiders—namely white middle-class kids—are enthralled by a literal reading. Judgements aside, gangsta rappers take this audience on a fantasy tour of "the ghetto"—a forbidden zone of cop-killers and whores. The rappers are simply playing up on the appeal of the evil fantasies.

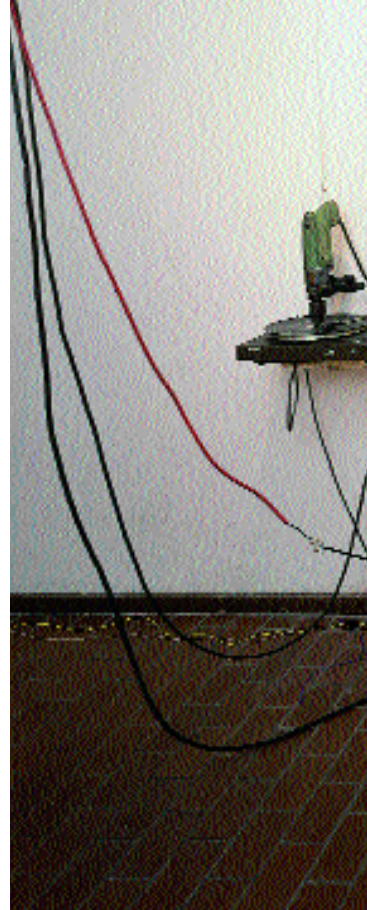
Now you may not approve of this pandering. But remember, the artists are just a small cog in the machine of the multi-billion-dollar (per year) music business. Radio stations, DJs, video outlets, promotion people and record labels must also shoulder the blame. These money-makers aren't just catering to popular demand. They are cultivating the market.

Major radio stations are literally flooded with hundreds of pieces of music every day. Who is more responsible for influencing the public: the radio station with a million listeners or the artist that the station

Who is more responsible for influencing the public: the radio station with a million listeners or the artist that the station chooses to play?

chooses to play? If an artist like Snoop Dog or Dr Dre (both associated with violence) come in for an interview, the journalist is not obliged to focus exclusively on the negative side of their "ghetto upbringings". They could ask about positive projects the artist might be pursuing. Yet it's more profitable to play up the negative stereotypes that people have of rappers and black people in general. One could argue that the artist should challenge the unbalanced questioning. But it's crucial to realise that the problem of violence is bigger than the artist.

The violence associated with hip-hop must be seen in proper perspective. We can condemn the violent acts of certain individuals without maligning a culture. We can read between the lines of masculine joustings via the microphone. We can also recognise the mainstream cultural obsession with violence: just check out the ticket sales to Hollywood's gangster films or TV programmes. In short, we have to recognise the complexity of hip-hop. Rappers offer more than just a mirror of the violence in their own communities—their work reflects that of society as a whole. In short, hip-hop will remain as violent as we allow it to be. It won't change until we do. ■



An installation by the German artist Robert Lippok, using the Cubase music production computer programme. Data is converted into electricity to power drilling machines, which in turn drive the turntables.

Excess for all

► Micz Flor

Young rebels are not only attacking the music industry but also creating new circuits of solidarity via the Internet



© Jürgen Cabbarthy/Calere Weisse Elephan/Robert Lippok, Berlin

who needs money anyway? Pilot FM, a Vienna-based MP3 label, which has grown out of the crossover between independent Internet Service Providers and electronic sound artists, states on its website: "Though we won't charge you for the downloads, we are thankful for donations of any kind such as hardware, software, traveller's cheques, canned tomato soup, instant coffee or any other device, which you think makes life more pleasurable."¹

Sound artists have also learned from the Internet's Open Source development. In a nutshell: the more beta-testers and developers working on a product, the better it is. This has been proven time again with software development, which is far too complicated for a single individual to manage. Turning to the cultural field, artists are rolling over the old notion of copyright. Give away your building blocks (ideas), see what others make of them and this will help your own development. So we find sample banks and archives for storing sound and music files available all over the Internet. An avant-garde hip-hop musician with a taste for squeaks may find the sound of her dreams in an archive. She may in turn transform that squeak and so the bank grows richer... The archives also enable net radios to enlarge their playlists. One of many examples is the Budapest based DJ net.radio station Pararadio², running a tight schedule of DJs and sound artists. Daniel Molnar, one of the spirits behind the project, explains: "We don't even need to rely on produced sample discs, we have on-line sample stores and free archives. (...) If you feel real, join the new folkateers."³

Liberating information

But the subversion goes beyond attacking the music industry to the political sphere. With the emergence of a digital equivalent to the public sphere, issues of civil disobedience and revolutionary spirit have shifted into the electronic networks. Throughout the 1980s hackers took the symbolic role of the militant opposition. "Information wants ►

The Internet has provided a playground for young rebels to hit the music industry where it hurts: stealing their intellectual property. Breaching copyright laws has long been seen as good conduct. Back in the 70s, punk record labels used slogans such as "Home taping is killing the music industry, keep up the good work." However, the threat to established publishing houses has always been limited, as pirating on ordinary tapes made distribution technically complicated. Throughout the 70s and 80s some independent mail ordering systems were set up, creating a network amongst pirate radio stations. But they never hurt anyone.

Today, young, subversive elements have the Internet at their fingertips, and the cultural industries on their knees. The audio format MP3 allows us to compress audio CDs into small files which can be made accessible on the Internet. Just click, download and listen. All you need is a modem, a phone line and a mediocre computer. Surely, having access to exactly the same distribution channels as the multinationals dissolves established power structures. And without any financial pressure, no additional costs other than the phone bill (mostly paid by parents), youthful enthusiasm combined with a complete lack of respect for legislative regulations opens the floodgates for piracy.

Of course, "young people on the Internet" are not all about stealing intellectual property. In fact, the real opportunity lies in becoming part of a global cultural exchange—without depending on the old-fashioned music industry. Instead of producing and selling products, alternative models of work are taking shape. For example, an originally anarcho-communist concept—the gift economy—is alive and well. The philosophy is simple: trade what you have, and

► Based in Berlin and Vienna, Flor is training director at the Center for Advanced Media in Prague. Among his many media development projects, he founded and co-edits the online/tabloid publication *Crash Media*, and set up Berlin's content provider art -bag.net. For more information on his award-winning projects: <http://mi.cz>

1. Pilot FM (2000); <http://pilot.fm>
 2. Pararadio (1997-2000); <http://www.pararadio.hu/>
 3. Daniel Molnar: "Join The New Folkateers" in *Crash Media Issue 1* (1998); <http://www.yourserver.co.uk/crashmedia/utn/2.htm>
 4. For a detailed description of the myth surrounding hackers, see Bruce Sterling: *The Hacker Crackdown*, (1993), Mass Market Paperback.

to be free”, they claimed while pulling confidential files out in the open.⁴

Today the streets of Vienna offer a cogent example of youth seizing the Internet to organise resistance. Since the new right-wing government took power, youth groups like Volkstanz organised via the Internet weekly street parades with live DJs throughout the capital, while toying with the government’s helpless attempts to control them by proudly stating on their website: “All insults are welcome: we are the hedonistic Internet-generation, the dance floor wing of the resistance movement. (...) We want to fight through the medium of political street parties the territorialisation of youth culture.”⁵

Belgrade based Radio B 2-92 (formerly B92) is another example of subversive youth culture via Internet. As they announce on their virtual JukeBox: “By playing music with a subtle but unmistakable political and social message, Radio B92 confronted the aesthetic that had been imposed on the “silent majority”, one that failed to foster liberal attitudes in the country during the disintegration of former Yugoslavia.”⁶ With their on-air frequency under constant threat of closure by the government, Free B92—the website—has become a meeting place, drawing audiences far beyond the borders of former Yugoslavia.

From early on, radio aficionados were quick to seize the cyberworld’s audio formats to link virtual space with the streets. London based irrational.org is no exception. Besides the pirate radio handbook⁷, they also feature the net.radio guide⁸ which has been developed by various producers across Europe. Here the clever youth can find technical details on how to connect on-line broadcasting with low-power FM transmitters.

But building bridges to the street via net radio is just one line of attack. Media collectives across Europe had spent the final years of the last century learning to transgress national borders via new modes of shared broadcasting and artistic creation. The Berlin-based—and recently deceased—collective convex tv. came to the conclusion: “There are a few simple reasons for doing things collectively: technologically and economically speaking the collective is the only space where you can be marginally successful and successfully marginal.”⁹

The aim isn’t to reach a bigger or mass audience but rather to connect pockets of creativity and resistance via new modes of shared broadcasting. In their avant-garde experimentation, technological possibilities and artistic expression are indistinguishable. For example, in 1997 Riga’s net.radio station Ozone¹⁰ set up a mailing list (Xchange¹¹) to develop the concept of “acoustic

space” involving techniques like co-streaming. As Raitis Smits, the station’s director, has explained, “Each broadcaster takes another’s live stream [of sound], re-encodes it and forwards it to the next participant.”¹²

Such transnational projects generate a new mode of communication amongst young practitioners. Not only is there a need to work collectively within their own group, but they must also laterally exchange knowledge, content and theory.

They share an acoustic space, yet they may never meet in “real space.” And so they leave the old artistic concepts of community-based work behind and enter a new digital environment: the collective is dead, long live the collective.

However, this digital network cannot truly serve as a source for democratic participation and free speech without solid grounding in the “access for all” paradigm. Obviously, access to the Internet means more than a phone line, a computer and technical know-how. In terms of cultural production, “access” generates two problem zones. First, it is generally assumed that the Internet allows marginal groups to make their voices heard, yet the question is rarely raised as to who is speaking on behalf of such groups.

Second, the idea of access for all is normally understood as a one-way process, meaning everyone should have access to all information. But by reading this paradigm in reverse, all information should be accessible to all. In the case of youth culture, danger arises as a more homogenised MTV youth style is increasingly made available in standardised formats on-line. So despite the little islands of resistance to “McDonald’s-style” culture nuggets, we might face yet another problem, not unknown in the Western world—cultural assimilation. Is this the price to pay? Substitute access with excess and you’ll hear that same old song of homogenized culture. Re-wind or fast-forward? ■



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Transnational outreach: the websites of Crash Media, an on-line publication from Manchester, UK and of Belgrade’s B2-92 radio.

5. Volkstanz.Net (2000); <http://www.volkstanz.net>

6. FreeB92 JukeBox (2000); <http://www.freeb92.net/music/english/index.html>

7. Irrational Radio: “How to be a Radio Pirate” (2000); <http://www.irrational.org/sic/radio/>. Their mission statement reads: “To promote neighbourhood, political and open-access radio stations, to demystify the art of broadcast electronics”.

8. Net.Radio Guide (1999); http://www.irrational.org/radio/radio_guide/

9. convex tv.: “Making Alias” (1999); <http://www.art-bag.net/convextv/pro/alias.htm>

10. Radio Ozone, Riga; <http://ozone.re-lab.net>

11. Xchange mailinglist; <http://xchange.re-lab.net>

12. Raitis Smits: “X-Open Channel” (1999); <http://xchange.re-lab.net/i/>



© Alain Buuf/Camma, Paris

EMBARGO AGAINST IRAQ: CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

► Sophie Boukhari

Concern is mounting about the suffering of the Iraqi people, and the ethics and legality of the international sanctions weighing on them are being hotly debated



© Peter Dejong/AP/Boomerang, Paris

In a leather workshop in Baghdad.

Should the economic embargo imposed on Iraq a decade ago be numbered among the crimes that have made the 20th century one of the darkest in history? Can the international community, led by the United States and Britain, keep on invoking the United Nations Charter to prolong indefinitely, and with impunity, the sufferings of a people? Why does the media make a fuss about some humanitarian disasters and not about the dozens of Iraqi children who die each day?

William Bourdon, secretary-general of the International Federation of Human Rights Leagues (FIDH), hints at an answer

to the last question: "It would be easier to mobilise public opinion behind this worthy cause if the Iraqi dictatorship was not one of the world's worst," he says.

A recent resolution of the UN Human Rights Commission, on 18 April 2000, "strongly condemns," *inter alia*, "the systematic, widespread and extremely grave violations of human rights" in Iraq, "resulting in an all-pervasive repression and oppression." It also condemns the "summary and arbitrary executions, including political killings," and "widespread, systematic torture."

The subject of the Iraqi embargo may be a trap, just as the Iraqi people are trapped. To talk about it might be to play into the

hands of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's regime. To keep quiet might be tantamount to failure to help a people in distress.

But the wall of silence is starting to crack after reports from UN bodies that the sanctions may have killed more than half a million children under five, and because of the despair of humanitarian organizations and the revolt of UN officials who have resigned from their jobs in Iraq. Even the U.S. State Department's website, long silent about reports of the plight of civilians, has posted remarks by Congressman Tony P. Hall, who returned from Iraq at the end of April 2000.

"I fear that no matter how quickly sanctions are lifted, the future of most of the ►

► UNESCO Courier journalist

people I met in Iraq will be bleak," he writes. "That is because its children are in bad shape, with a quarter of them underweight and one in ten wasting away because of hunger and disease. The leading cause of childhood death, diarrhoea, is 11 times more prevalent in Iraq than elsewhere—while polio has been wiped out throughout the Mideast, it has returned to plague Iraq's people. Schools and water systems—the infrastructure any nation's future depends upon—are decrepit and hospitals lack basic medicine and equipment. Ordinary civilians have exhausted their resources and their health trying to survive on \$2 to \$6 per month. . . . It will take Iraqi people a generation to recover from their present situation."

“Ordinary civilians have exhausted their resources and their health trying to survive on \$2 to \$6 per month.”

The toughest economic blockade in recent times, voted by the UN Security Council in August 1990, four days after Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait, originally aimed to prevent Iraq rearming and to neutralize its regime. Five years later, on 14 April 1995, the so-called “oil for food” resolution gave the Iraqi regime permission to sell a limited amount of the country's oil and to use 53 per cent of the proceeds¹ to buy food, medicine and basic necessities. But the sanctions committee, which has to approve

the purchases, can block some items (ranging from lead pencils to chlorine to vaccines) if it thinks they could be used to make weapons of mass destruction. Meanwhile, a UN special commission, UNSCOM, was sent to Iraq to monitor the disarmament process.

When the commission was disbanded at the end of 1998, all of Iraq's nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programmes had been dismantled or destroyed and the threat from them reduced to “zero, none,” said the American former chief of the UNSCOM inspection team, Scott Ritter, in a recent BBC documentary which attacked those responsible for maintaining the embargo.²

But the UN Security Council set up a new arms control commission in its resolution 1284 of 17 December 1999. “The aim is to check that nothing nuclear has been rebuilt and to see what the situation is concerning chemical and biological weapons,” says the French foreign ministry. “After that we can move towards lifting sanctions if Iraq co-operates.”

France, along with China and Russia, nevertheless abstained in the vote to approve resolution 1284, saying the wording did not describe “in completely good faith” the procedure for suspending the embargo. The Iraqi regime is refusing to co-operate.

So the people of Iraq are still hostages. “What was an acceptable situation in 1991 no longer is,” says Germany's Hans von Sponeck, the latest UN humanitarian coordinator in Iraq to have resigned his post, in March 2000. The embargo, decided upon in full compliance with the UN Charter, is now “a clear violation of human rights,” he says. Even worse, states former French



foreign minister Claude Cheysson, it is a crime against humanity, “as defined by the UN itself”³ (see box).

In the United States some people agree, including former Attorney-General Ramsey Clark and Francis Boyle, professor of international law at the University of Illinois. Von Sponeck's predecessor, Irishman Denis Halliday, who resigned in September 1998, has also joined the opponents of the embargo. “I've been using the term ‘genocide,’ because this is a deliberate policy to destroy the people of Iraq,” he recently stated. Some legal experts are sceptical about or even against using such terminology. “People who talk like that don't know anything about law,” retorts Mario Bettati, who invented the notion of “the right of humanitarian intervention”. “The embargo has certainly affected the Iraqi people badly, but that's not at all a crime against humanity or genocide.”

FIDH secretary-general Bourdon says “one of the key elements of a crime against humanity and of genocide is intent. The embargo wasn't imposed because the United States and Britain wanted children to die. If you think so, you have to prove it.”

But what about today, when the whole world knows Iraqi children are dying because of the sanctions?

“Leaving in place a measure which you know is killing people isn't the same as applying measures deliberately calculated and planned to cause the maximum number of people to die,” he says.

Patrick Baudouin, FIDH's president, is less sure. He says he “hesitates” to call the embargo a crime against humanity. “As a lawyer, I'd say it wasn't. But its open-ended

During a July 1997 demonstration in front of the United Nations in New York calling for an end to sanctions.



© Emile Wemsteker, AP, New York

1. The rest was to go to victims of the war with Kuwait (30 per cent), to the Kurdish lands in northern Iraq not under Baghdad's control (13 per cent) and to fund the operation of the embargo, including the cost of maintaining UN troops.
2. *Killing the Children of Iraq: a price worth paying?*, by John Pilger (March 2000).
3. *In Irak, la faute*, by Alain Gresh, Cerf, Paris, 1999.

TIMELINE

- 2 August 1990: Iraqi forces invade Kuwait.
- 6 August 1990: UN resolution 661 is adopted, imposing economic sanctions on Iraq.
- 16-17 January 1991: U.S.-led coalition forces launch the Operation Desert Storm air attack, with the approval of the Security Council.
- 27 February 1991: Iraqi forces retreat from Kuwait.
- 30 June 1991: The newly-created UN Special Commission (UNSCOM), begins its first inspection.
- 15 August 1991: Iraq rejects resolution 706 authorising it to sell oil to finance the purchase of humanitarian supplies.
- 14 April 1995: An "oil-for-food" agreement between the UN and Iraq is reached.
- 16 December 1998: UNSCOM withdraws from Iraq. The U.S. and UK launch the Operation Desert Fox air campaign, without UN approval. Bombing takes place on a close to daily basis.
- 17 December 1999: The Security Council adopts resolution 1284 replacing UNSCOM by a new monitoring, verification and inspection commission known as UNMOVIC.

DEFINITIONS

- The Statute of the International Criminal Court defines "crimes against humanity" as acts "committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack," including "inhuman acts . . . intentionally causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or to mental or physical health."
- Genocide includes acts "committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group," including "causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group" and "deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part." ■

extension does raise serious questions." All these lawyers agree, however, that the embargo violates basic human rights, starting with the right to life.

There is also a lot of argument about who is responsible for the humanitarian disaster in Iraq. The U.S. State Department, which does not even accept UNICEF and WHO figures, puts the blame on Saddam Hussein. Samuel Berger, of the U.S. National Security Council, said in May 2000 that "by obstructing UN relief, refusing to order nutritional supplements, even selling food and medicine to build palaces, Mr. Saddam has aggravated his

people's suffering and used the spectacle to seek the removal of sanctions."

Von Sponeck spends most of his time rebutting these arguments. "The UN publishes a monthly stock report that shows what has arrived in Iraq, what has been distributed, what is stored away and why. The picture that emerges for food is perfect. (...) Transport is a problem, but people are receiving their food baskets every month and warehouses are empty the day after distribution," he says.

When Washington accuses Baghdad of not distributing about a quarter of the medical supplies, he notes that "WHO recommends that a country should have 25 per cent of its drugs in stock to prepare and be prepared for an epidemic. Iraq said it could not afford this, but keeps 15 per cent in stock. The drugs all undergo quality control tests, which 5.8 per cent of them have failed. Then you have medical components that are unusable because they can only be used in combination with others." Halliday points out that the sanctions committee "would deliberately approve nine [items] but block the tenth, knowing full well that without the tenth item, the other nine were of no use . . . It's a deliberate ploy."

Reforming the UN Charter

Unease over the Iraqi embargo has reopened debate about the use of embargoes as a weapon. Article 41 of the UN Charter says the Security Council can enforce its decisions by applying measures that include "the complete or partial interruption of economic relations and of . . . means of communication."

This trend has increased in recent years. Since 1990, the United Nations has imposed sanctions on Yugoslavia, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Libya, Liberia, Haiti, Angola's Unita rebels and Iraq.

Supporters of sanctions say it is often the only way to punish countries that threaten peace. They cost little at a time when Western public opinion frowns on the huge expense and loss of human life involved in military interventions. The opponents of sanctions stress the serious effects on the civilian population while the targeted regimes become more entrenched and manage to smuggle in supplies regardless.

The Iraqi example confirms their argument. The people have been bled dry. There is abundant proof that the ruling clique is becoming wealthier and that oil is being smuggled out. At the end of January 2000, the British House of Commons issued a report admitting the embargo had failed and expressing the hope that no other country would ever be submitted to such an ordeal.

"Nearly all embargoes penalize civilians and boost the power of the political leaders they aim to bring down," says Bourdon, who nevertheless adds that "one can perhaps say that developments in South Africa were the result of international sanctions against apartheid."

Along with others, he points to the excessive weight of the United States, backed by its British ally, in Security Council decisions. He thinks the UN Charter should be amended and UN decision-making procedures changed. In particular, victims of human rights violations should be represented by a consultative committee attached to the Security Council. "It's unacceptable that the future of a whole people should be in the hands of two states," he says. "We can no longer allow states to pursue cynically their regional or international interests, as is the case in Iraq."

Many analysts, including Halliday and von Sponeck, think the embargo is being prolonged so as to maintain the status quo in the Middle East. According to them, its protagonists are in favour of a weak Iraq, without necessarily getting rid of a regime that prevents the country splitting apart. These analysts say the break-up of Iraq, with a Kurdish government in the north and a Shiite authority in the south, could destabilize a region that provides the bulk of the oil needed by the major world powers

The opponents of sanctions stress the serious effects on the civilian population while the targeted regimes become more entrenched and manage to smuggle in supplies regardless.

and would threaten key U.S. allies such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Israel. Furthermore, says Halliday, maintaining tension in the region has enabled U.S. arms manufacturers to sell about \$100 billion worth of weaponry to Baghdad's enemies.

But with the Western media increasingly outraged at the embargo and three members of the UN Security Council (France, Russia and China) openly against continuing it, von Sponeck sees a glimmer of hope. "I don't think the sanctions will be extended far into 2001," he says, "but think of all the children who'll die in the meantime." ■

EMBARGO GENERATION

► Josette Tagher Roche

Children are the first victims of the international sanctions against Iraq. More and more of them are living on the street in a country that has reverted to under-development



© Jassim Mohamed/AP/Boomerang, Paris

According to UNICEF, 83 per cent of the country's primary schools are in need of repair as a result of the embargo.

Two small children are standing hand in hand on the main street of the southern Iraqi port of Basra. Evening is drawing in and the traders are starting to pull down the metal screens in front of their shops. The smiling youngsters, less than eight years old, are trying to sell to passersby their sole possessions—a couple of red and white striped plastic bags. “We won’t quit the street until we’ve earned some money,” they say, as we are joined by 40-odd other street children who have no wares left to sell.

They all talk at once. They left school, they say, because they failed their studies. They don’t live at home because their parents are “divorced or out of work” and “they have to live on their wits”. As the last shopkeepers switch off their electricity generators, the street darkens. The youngest of the group, a boy hardly six years old, steps forward and says he “wants to go to school”.

How long will it be before the world realises the dramatic effects the international embargo is having on the people of

Iraq and especially on their children? Iraq and the Iraqis have been ruined by two wars¹, but damaged even more by the international sanctions imposed nearly a decade ago after Iraqi ruler Saddam Hussein’s troops invaded Kuwait.

Every month, malnutrition kills more than 4,500 Iraqi children under five, according to estimates of a UNICEF survey released in August 1999. How many more deaths must there be before people realise what is going on? There were hardly any street children a decade ago, when all youngsters went to school. Today their numbers are growing. In Iraq, it is illegal to work or beg under the age of 15, and street kids are punished for committing these offences. When they are arrested, they are usually sent to detention centres where conditions are very harsh. Some then manage to get to El Rahma (“Mercy”), Baghdad’s only reception centre for street children, where conditions are better but carers are few.²

Adopting children is legal, unlike in other Muslim countries, but is not very common, says Jabir Aboud Hamid, who runs the centre. He sees only two ways of getting the children back into society: “Find the boys’ families and arrange marriages for the girls.” The latter risk death if they return home after living in “run-down places” (the street). “But before I start looking for something for them,” says Hamid, “I’ve got to find a new battery for the centre’s car so I can go and buy bread for the children.”

In Iraq today, every sector has urgent needs, says a UNICEF official in Baghdad: “We’re doing the work the government can’t do any longer because of the embargo, like building clinics, houses and schools, repairing drains, water treatment plants, printing presses and chalk factories. It’s an enormous job and we have to work fast to save the children. Most of all, we’ve got to get them back into school so this ‘embargo generation’ isn’t lost to the country.”

Every month, malnutrition kills more than 4,500 Iraqi children under five

Over the past 10 years, the government’s education budget has shrunk by 90 per cent, from \$230 million in 1991 to \$23 million today. As many as 83 per cent of primary schools need to be repaired. Some have been totally destroyed, while others are working at “full capacity”. At DIALA school, on the road between Baghdad and Basra, the pupils take turns learning in four-hour shifts in classrooms with broken benches and desks, bare electrical wiring, ceilings with holes and floors under water.

Despair reigns in the public health department. “They say Iraq makes arms using anti-cancer medicine and chlorine needed for water purification,” exclaims Abdul Amir El Thamer. “Do we have to stand and watch people die? Must children fall ill because the water is undrinkable? And what’s going to happen in the summer heat when illness, death and malnutrition are already so common?” ■

► Editor of *Enfants du monde*, magazine of the French section of UNICEF

1. The war with Iran between 1980 and 1988 and the Gulf War in 1990-1991.

2. Jointly run by the Iraqi government and the French NGO *Enfants du monde*.

TOXINS AND THE TAJ

► T K Rajalakshmi

India's most celebrated monument continues to be threatened by pollution despite various court orders to close down harmful factories in Agra

“Pollution has managed to do what 350 years of wars, invasions and natural disasters have failed to do. It has begun to mar the magnificent walls of the Taj Mahal,” declared U.S. President Bill Clinton during his visit to the 17th-century monument in the city of Agra earlier this year.

Over the past two decades, the fate of the country's foremost tourist attraction has repeatedly come into the spotlight. Time and time again, experts have warned

that environmental pollution is eating away at the monument and discolouring its once translucent white marble. But the prescription—to control pollution by relocating a number of industries around the Taj Trapezium Zone (TTZ), a 10,400 sq. km area around the monument—is pitting conservationists and environmentalists against business interests and unions. Besides the Taj Mahal, the zone includes two other world heritage monuments, the Agra Fort and Fatehpur Sikri. So what should take precedence—the monument or the thousands of workers employed by the factories in the area? The stakes are

such that the case is being fought out in the country's Supreme Court.

The culprits include the Mathura Refinery, iron foundries, glass factories and brick kilns, not to mention the continuous flow of traffic along the highways skirting the city. On repeated occasions, sulphur dioxide emissions from industries in the area have reached levels ten times above the prescribed standard level. Combined with oxygen and moisture, sulphur dioxide settles on the surface of the tomb and corrodes the marble, forming a fungus that experts refer to as “marble cancer”.

► Delhi-based journalist with the Indian bi-weekly *Frontline*

Foundries in the protected zone around Agra are being urged to switch to more eco-friendly technologies.



© DNP, New Delhi



© DNP, New Delhi

Foundry workers burning an effigy of their factory's owner to protest relocation.

▶ Blaming pollution and regulatory negligence for the Taj's decay, Mahesh Chandra Mehta, a prominent environmental lawyer, filed a case before the Supreme Court of India in 1984. He pointed out that the white marble had blackened in places, while inside, the monument was being eaten by fungus, especially in the inner chamber, where the original graves of Emperor Shah Jahan and his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal lie. Mehta pleaded with the court to order the various industries to take anti-pollution measures or to close. He also stressed that pollution was affecting the health of workers and people living in Agra's residential areas.

Switch to gas

It was not until 1996 that the Supreme Court finally ruled that the industries in the area were actively contributing to air pollution and ordered major industrial units to install pollution control devices. "Not even a one per cent chance can be taken when—human life apart—the preservation of a prestigious monument like the Taj is involved," stated the court order. The court ordered 292 coal-based industries to switch to natural gas or else to relocate outside the protected zone by April 30, 1997. Coke, the fuel commonly used in the cupola furnaces in foundries, is known to cause high levels of air pollution. Factories that opted for relocation would be obliged to re-employ workers under favourable terms and to

give them a one-year bonus. And if their plant were to close down, workers would be entitled to six years' worth of wages in compensation.

As a result, the oil refinery and a number of Agra's foundries installed expensive pollution control devices. Sterling Machine Tools (SMT), the biggest factory in Agra, obtained a gas connection from the Gas Authority of India. But according to a senior personnel manager, it takes time for production to reach the same levels as before and for workers to adjust to the new technology. "The gas furnace costs around Rs50 lakhs (\$120,000). While we have the money, small units do not," he said.

MONUMENT TO ETERNAL LOVE

The Taj Mahal was built by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his wife Mumtaz Mahal. Built entirely in white marble, the Taj was constructed over a period of 22 years and was completed in 1647 A.D. It is situated in northern India on the southern bank of the Yamuna river in Agra, about 210 km from the capital, New Delhi. The mausoleum complex is hailed as the finest example of Mughal architecture, a blending of Indian, Persian, and Islamic styles. The Taj was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1983.



Quite a number of factories did nothing about relocating or switching to natural gas. Some claimed that the cost of these operations was prohibitive: according to one industry representative, the basic equipment runs between Rs30 to Rs40 lakhs (\$75,000 and \$100,000), almost a quarter of annual sales for a medium-sized company. Smaller firms say that the cost of applying for a gas connection, which includes a pre-payment, cuts into annual sales. Even if they did close down and sell their land, factory owners claim that this would not cover workers' compensation. Foundry owners also claimed that finding skilled or even semi-skilled replacements for specific tasks in the relocated areas would be difficult.

Delay tactics

In August 1999, the Supreme Court struck again, ordering the closure of 53 iron foundries and 107 other factories in Agra that had not cleaned up their act. The order has become a call to arms for foundry owners, workers, trade union representatives and small-scale industry. However, industry is buying time: it filed a review petition through the Uttar Pradesh State government and obtained a reprieve on the court order's implementation. The matter comes again before the Supreme Court this summer.

In the meantime, Agra's Iron Founders' Association are building up their case. They argue that 3,000 cottage and engineering units depend on the foundries, and that about 300,000 workers are directly or indirectly employed by them. They hold that the technology for using natural gas in their industries is not yet ready. Mehta claims that this is a "delaying tactic": in 1995, industry experts had said that gas could be used as industrial fuel. "If the technology was not available then, they should have stated so at the time." According to Mehta, the required technology has been developed by the National Metallurgical Laboratory and would help turn the hundreds of foundries in Agra into more efficient and less polluting units. While Mehta continues with his legal battle, his crusade against industrial pollution earned him the 1996 Goldman Environmental Prize and the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Public Service in 1997.

Although union leaders are firmly opposed to any relocation or factory closures, the battle has brought other concerns to the fore. According to a leader from the Centre for Indian Trade

Unions, the entire foundry industry is highly exploitative and the working conditions hazardous. The majority of workers are employed on a contract basis despite having worked for long periods in the foundries—which means they would receive no protection if factories were to close. And a lack of information appears to hang over the whole saga: Ram Sharan, a worker in his mid-thirties from Bihar, said that he had vaguely heard about foundries relocating and was quite certain that he would lose his job as a result. Workers at GT Iron Industries, a casting unit slated for closure, said that they had heard about the court order but didn't know where they would go if the unit closed down. They had left their villages in Uttar Pradesh and other provinces many years ago and were living in rented accommodation in



“Marble cancer” caused by sulphur dioxide is yellowing the Taj’s once translucent surface.

© J. Gadzar/Woodfin Camp/Cosmos, Paris

the city. But despite these conditions, workers state that it is better than being jobless.

Industries aside, the Taj Mahal is an economic asset in and of itself: two million tourists visit the Taj every year, making it a major source of revenue and foreign exchange for the region. It keeps

hotels, craftsmen and small businesses thriving. In May this year, the Supreme Court banned cars and parking within 500 metres of the Taj’s boundary walls. It ordered the shifting of about 70 shops from the precincts of the white marble mausoleum. While experts agree that some of these measures have helped to improve air around the Taj, pollution levels have not dropped to safer limits as none of the factories have actually been closed down.

Air pollution, dust, lack of greenery, traffic and the presence of noisy diesel generators around Agra are all harming a prized tourist attraction. To date, politicians have tended to side with industry while the judiciary has backed the cause of the Taj. But in the meantime, the monument to eternal love continues to breathe in the fumes. ■

HISTORIC LIMA GETS A NEW HEART

► Luis Jaime Cisneros

Although not a metropolis every urban planner would dream of, Lima no longer has the dubious title of one of Latin America’s dirtiest and most polluted cities

Nobody who strolled through the centre of Lima in the 1980s could have imagined that some day the Peruvian capital would be called a “garden city”. Air and noise pollution, lack of public services (public toilets, proper lighting), traffic chaos, vandalism and the invasion of the city centre by thousands of street vendors drove out not only tourists and private businesses but local residents who only ventured there to go to work.

In June 1989, a group of urban planners, architects, historians, artists and art critics decided to set up the Lima Foundation, a private, non-political, non-profit organization to save the old city centre. “We all had jobs in the historic centre and could see how it was really going downhill,” says journalist Augusto Elmore.

The Foundation’s first victory was getting the city centre onto UNESCO’s World Heritage List in 1991. This enthused public opinion and spurred the city authorities to

embark on a far-reaching renovation programme in the mid-1990s with the Foundation’s help and support. “Historic city centres are places where culture, tourism and economics can rub shoulders, and their restoration must benefit all social classes and foster a spirit of unity,” says urban sociologist Gladys Chavez.

Those in charge of the programme took this to heart and reckoned that revamping the centre would have a beneficial effect on the rest of the city, which is home to eight million people (a quarter of the country’s population). They focused on renovating 116 blocks covering 123 hectares and including 570 monuments—baroque churches, Renaissance mansions, universities and convents, all of them examples of Spanish urban colonial architecture.

The programme borrowed ideas from earlier plans to restore Havana, Mexico City and Quito—all of whose historic centres are World Heritage sites—and was a joint effort by local authorities, civil society

and the private sector. “The Foundation drafted renovation projects and passed them on to government bodies—the city authorities, the National Cultural Institute and the urban investment fund—for execution,” says Juan Günther, the 63-year-old architect in charge of the Foundation’s projects.

Traffic control

One of the first measures taken was to reorganise street trading. “To get to the Plaza José de San Martín square, in the centre, pedestrians and motorists had to weave their way through thousands of vendors, who either had stalls or laid out their wares and their knick-knacks on the pavement and in the road,” says Elmore. Today, you can get through the streets more easily, because only officially licensed street vendors are allowed into the centre and many of the others have been moved into shopping galleries outside the old city centre.

Another priority was tackling air and noise pollution. “Anyone who works in the ►

► Lima-based freelance journalist

► centre suffers from it every day," says Günther. "It gives me a sore throat and a lot of my colleagues get skin rashes." So the traffic system in the centre was changed to limit the number of buses and taxis, which are now regulated and painted yellow.

Restoration of the main public spaces, such as the Plaza Mayor, began in 1997, along with the renovation of churches, monuments and San Marcos University, founded in 1551 and the oldest in Latin America. "But it was more than just restoration. These places got used for new purposes," says Chavez. He cites the example of the Lima Biennial Art Festival, which holds exhibitions in large aristocratic mansions, as well as schemes to encourage local tourism such as the "Return to the Centre" campaign and the renovation of the Chinese quarter.

Much of the work was carried out with technical and financial assistance from UNESCO and foreign governments, such as Spain, or with the help of Cuba. But the Foundation also lobbied the private sector, and various banks and big firms, such as the

Southern mining company, the Backus and Johnson brewery, Telefonica de Peru and Coca Cola, all of which gave money for the renovation work. An "Adopt a Balcony" campaign to restore 300 colonial balconies in the centre (at a cost of about \$5,000 each) was funded by private firms.

Suggestions for fighting poverty

In the past few years, Lima residents of all classes, especially young people, have begun to return to the centre. "We enjoy coming here now because it's like being in a city within a city," say Jimena and Kike, two students crossing the Plaza Mayor.

Günther says the impression of neglect and alienation people used to feel when they walked through the city centre is a thing of the past, but he fears the changes might not stick. Air and noise pollution have not gone away. "Abancay Avenue, one of the main thoroughfares, is a nightmare, with four times the maximum level of pollution set by the World Health Organization," he says.

But the big problem, he continues, is "social pollution" caused by petty crime in the central area and the spread of poor housing, along with insanitary conditions and high infant mortality. The challenge for the next few years will be to draw this sector of the population back into society and into jobs.

Old mansions classified as historical monuments are occupied by between five and sometimes a dozen families who pay little or no rent. But the centre is not very densely populated because of the large number of official buildings, churches and public spaces. The Foundation has suggested converting disused buildings into apartments and knocking down those in very bad condition to replace them with about 90,000 new apartments.

Moving more people into the old part of the city and improving living conditions there will also improve the quality of businesses and make the centre more attractive for Lima's citizens and for tourists. "The first and most urgent task for Lima," says Günther, "is the economic, commercial and cultural revival of the old city." ■

The "Adopt a Balcony" campaign funded by private firms has led to the restoration of 300 colonial balconies in Lima's historic centre.



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THE SOUTH GOES MOBILE

► Asbel Lopez

Throughout the developing world, mobile phones are dramatically extending access to communications, but if they are to benefit the poorest, bold government policies are still required

Groups of small farmers in remote areas of Côte d'Ivoire share mobile telephones so they can follow hourly fluctuations in coffee and cocoa prices. This means they can choose the moment to sell their crops when world prices are most advantageous to them. A few years ago, they could only have found out about market trends by applying to an office in the capital, Abidjan. Their deal-making was based on information from buyers, and this was not always reliable.

These coffee and cocoa growers are just a few of the economic players in poor countries who are today making shrewd use of the mobile phones, one of the star features of the information society.

"Communication is a universal need, but communications technology can be used in a variety of ways," says UNESCO communications specialist Babacar Fall. "Although a mobile phone may nominally belong to a single person, in some African countries it is regarded as the property of the community, because there is a culture of sharing the tools of communication."

A dearth of fixed lines

Fall cites the case of Senegalese living in Dakar or abroad who have bought their relatives a mobile phone to stay in touch. Sometimes, several families living in places where the dream of getting a fixed phone line is unlikely to come true for at least 20 years share a mobile handset that they charge up from car batteries. Children run to neighbours to tell them that a relative will be calling back in a few minutes from New York or Rome.

Huge billboard ads in Africa have made mobile phones as popular there as Coca-Cola. As one joke goes, "A man loses his mobile phone in a crowd and asks someone to call his number. A few seconds later, the

missing phone rings—in the pocket of the policeman who was helping to look for it."

Mobiles are popular because of the dearth of fixed telephone lines in Africa. In 1998, Europe had 37 lines for every 100 people while Africa only had two. The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has one for every 2,500 people while Mali and Niger have fewer than two per 1,000. In Asia, the average is 7.34 lines for every 100 people, more than double the number in Latin American countries like Cuba (3.21) and Nicaragua (3.13).

Mobile phones have started to fill this communications gap. Although 80 per cent of them are currently found in rich countries, in the 1990s the number of subscribers in poor countries grew faster than anywhere else. Africa had almost

"Although a mobile phone may nominally belong to a single person, in some African countries it is regarded as the property of the community, because there is a culture of sharing the tools of communication."

3.5 million mobile phone subscribers in 1998. More than 70 per cent of them were in South Africa, where growth in this sector exceeded all expectations, according to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). In the same year, 17 per cent of all phone subscribers in Africa had mobiles. The figure for Asia was 30 per cent. In developing countries like the Philippines, Bolivia, Azerbaijan and Estonia, mobiles have caught on much quicker than expected.

"The less infrastructure a country has, the more attractive it is to invest in mobile phones," says Nagib Callaos, who teaches at Simon Bolivar University in Caracas. "There's no need to create a demand; it exists already. In Venezuela, for example, there's no traditional phone infrastructure and mobile phones have spread much more quickly than in the United States."

Forty million people in the world are on waiting lists for a fixed-line telephone, according to the ITU. In Venezuela, where the wait is nearly five years, a lucrative black market has set in, with people paying the equivalent of 10 times the minimum wage to get a line. Now it is possible to sign a contract for a mobile phone and start using it the following day.

This delights some Venezuelans, "who use the time when they're stuck in Caracas' endless traffic jams to catch up on the phone calls they've been meaning to make," says Callaos. Having a mobile phone is also useful from the point of view of safety. "My daughter never goes out at night without her mobile. I can call her every hour or less to see if she's OK," he says.

Exponential growth in war-torn countries

A mobile phone network can be up and running much more quickly than a fixed one. In Romania, the firm Mobifon launched its service in 1996, just four and a half months after being granted a licence to operate. Since there is no need to dig trenches for cables, installation costs less and the investment is recuperated more rapidly. In Venezuela, profits began to roll in only three years after startup.

Mobile phones are also ideal for countries whose infrastructure is inadequate or has been seriously damaged by war. Examples include Lebanon and especially Cambodia, where there are more mobile cellular subscribers than fixed telephones. The ►

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In Kosovo, where the war partially destroyed communication infrastructures, an Albanian woman calls her son in Germany on a cell phone.

► only other country where the situation is comparable is Finland.

The ITU says the percentage of mobile versus fixed lines is proof of the vigour of the mobile phone industry in countries of the South. In Cambodia, mobile phones appeared in 1992. Within a year mobile subscribers exceeded the number of fixed telephones and today, they constitute 72 per cent of all subscribers. The authorities have even questioned the need to expand the fixed network.

Fierce competition between operators

Mobile phones will soon overtake fixed lines in Lebanon (now 45 per cent mobiles) and Paraguay (43 per cent). In the latter, mobile phone firms, mostly private and backed by foreign investment, have benefited from the inefficiency of the state-owned fixed-line operator. (Unlike most of its neighbours, Paraguay did not privatise its telecommunication operator in the 1990s.) Many users choose to take advantage of the rivalry between the four private mobile phone firms rather than remaining dependent on the bureaucratic state company.

“The state has done poorly where fixed lines are concerned,” says the ITU’s Michael Minges. “Its role should be to open up the market and create an open environment for

foreign investment.” But, he says, the state still has an important role as a regulator, “to facilitate competition, to see that prices are fair and to establish interconnections between different systems, including between mobile and fixed lines.”

In the beginning, it was thought that mobile phones in poor countries would only be used by the wealthy, and govern-

In 1998, three years after the first prepaid mobile phone scheme was launched, 40 million people had opted for it—about 13 per cent of the world’s mobile users.

ments granted only one national mobile phone operating licence. But almost half the countries with mobile phones now have issued at least two licences, and the fierce competition between operators has helped to reduce rates. This does not however explain the current growth of a mass

market, which is largely due to prepaid call schemes.

The boom in prepaid cards

The standard way of paying for a mobile phone service is on the basis of a minimum use of, say, two hours a month for a year. Potential customers have to provide proof of a regular income, sign a contract and have a bank account and a permanent address. But because the vast majority of rural people in developing countries do not have any of these, operators are using the prepayment system.

This involves buying cards which provide phone time from five minutes to an hour. Customers can use the credit as they like over a period of weeks, and so keep control over their spending and enjoy a very cheap phone service. Prepaid cards are widely available in local stores.

The potential market is huge. In 1998, three years after the first prepaid mobile phone scheme was launched, 40 million people had opted for it—about 13 per cent of the world’s mobile users. In South Africa, half of all subscribers chose prepayment, and more than half in Mexico. In Senegal in 1999, one operator for the first time offered a prepaid system as the only option. After two months, the firm had won

4,000 customers. This system has tripled and perhaps quadrupled the potential Latin American market for mobile phones, according to a study by the Strategis Group, an international telecommunications consultancy firm.

The prepaid system, which has been called the “perfect marriage” between technology and marketing, has led to an enormous increase in the number of mobile phones, but their contribution to general development is still very limited. In Lubumbashi, in southeastern DRC, for example, the mobile phones that some maize farmers have given their security guards have proven an effective weapon against robbery and increased their yields. Taxis in Kampala, the Ugandan capital, are now more efficient because of them. And during the recent elections in Senegal, FM radio reporters used mobiles to improve their coverage (see box p. 68).

But the cost of these calls is still too high for poor people to benefit from this technology. The mobile phone faces a big challenge if it is to help the poor break out of their isolation and to contribute to “the social and economic development of peoples” that the first African Development Forum called for in Addis Ababa last year.

State initiatives

These are not empty words. The Grameen Bank project in Bangladesh has shown that it is possible to give very poor rural people access to mobile phones (see next article). Nevertheless, “many governments still regard mobile phones as a luxury and won’t accept that they offer the best opportunity of bringing modern communications to the least developed areas,” says Michael Stocks, ex-chairman of the Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) Association.

The role of the state is vital, not just to ensure competition between mobile phone operators but also to encourage ambitious projects. The ITU suggests that, just as they subsidise water and electricity, governments could help the poorest people to have access to mobile phones or distribute free prepaid mobile phone cards on a massive scale. Such steps would give a big boost to a revolution that has so far been the privy of those with money in pocket. ■



World Telecommunication Development Report 1999, International Telecommunication Union, Geneva.

World Communication and Information Report 1999-2000, UNESCO.

“HELLO, I’M CALLING FROM PARULIA...”

► Farid Ahmed

A micro-credit programme set up by Grameen Bank enables rural villagers to acquire cell phones. For many, it means a break with poverty and isolation

Once, it was hard for Fatema Begum and her day-labourer husband to provide three meals a day for their family, who lived in a thatched hut in a remote village called Parulia in Bangladesh’s Narshingdi district. But a mobile phone she bought as a means of earning money for her impoverished family has changed her life. In a couple of years, she managed to acquire a brick-built house with electricity, an electric fan, a black and white television set and several other modern amenities. Mobile phones have not only improved the lives of villagers like Fatema, but also brought remote villages like Parulia out of isolation.

“Since my phone is the only one within three kilometres, many people come here to use it,” Fatema says. She earns about 5,000 takas (US\$100) a month from her mobile phone, after meeting all the costs—four times the average per capita monthly income. Fatema adds, “People in my village who have relatives abroad often give me gifts in addition to payment of their bills because I bring the phone to their houses when there are incoming calls for them.” Mobile phones make up for a lack of services that the State-owned phone company is hard-pressed to provide. According to current statistics, Bangladesh has one phone for every 380 inhabitants, compared with one for every 50 in neighbouring India.

Fatema started her struggle for a better life ten years ago when she joined Grameen

Bank, an internationally acclaimed micro-credit institution, to obtain a small, short-term loan of 2,000 takas (\$40). She started a small business hawking various essentials, including rice, door to door in villages. When Fatema repaid that loan, she was granted another one of 5,000 takas (\$100), which she also promptly paid back. In 1997, Grameen Telecom, a unit of Grameen Trust, one of the world’s largest organizations working for poverty alleviation, introduced village phones for Grameen Bank members. Soon after, Fatema was allowed to purchase a phone at a cost of 19,500 takas (\$390), reimbursing 400 takas (\$8) every week in regular instalments.

Like Fatema, many other poor villagers throughout Bangladesh have opened phone ►

► Journalist based in Dhaka, Bangladesh

shops in their homes to boost their income. ► Grameen Telecom has provided some 1,400 village telephones in rural areas across the country, serving tens of thousands of villagers. According to Mohammed Showkat Ali, a Grameen Telecom officer in Narshingdi, the programme was designed to help poor people in villages, especially women, who make up 94 per cent of Grameen Bank's borrowers, to earn additional income. As a result, the call-rate is cheaper than that of other existing telephone lines.

Apart from talking to relatives, villagers who grow crops or raise poultry or live-stock now have a chance to speak with wholesalers in the capital or other big cities

directly instead of selling their products at a cheaper price through a middleman. Some 100 village phones are in operation in the district of Narshingdi, which is famous for fruits, especially bananas, as well as green vegetables and handmade fabrics. Jamirunnesa, who runs a poultry farm in a farming village, bought a mobile phone on credit. Besides providing a service for her neighbours, the mother of four says, "there are buyers who want to cheat me. But they can't because I've got the phone, which comes in handy to know at what rate the chickens are selling in the markets."

Abdul Awal, a Bangladesh Railway ticket clerk at the train station in Narshingdi, keeps

his village phone with him at work, where many people come to use it. Awal charges six takas (eight cents) per minute for a local call and 100 takas (\$2) per minute for an overseas one. "I make a profit of 100 takas (\$2) every day. Most of the people who come here are farmers and textile weavers and they talk to the wholesalers in Dhaka, the capital, or other cities," he said, adding: "Because of the additional income, I can afford to send my children to school." ■

In Bangladesh, village women use their mobile phones to speak with wholesalers in the city.



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A TOOL FOR TRANSPARENCY

► About Abel

“Without mobile phones, violence would have been rampant in Senegal during the presidential election,” according to observers who monitored the poll in February and March 2000.

This may seem an excessive claim. And yet mobile phones had already won their spurs in the battle over the results of local elections in November 1996. Senegal's interior minister was caught out when he admitted in a low voice near an open mobile phone that there had been fraud. As a result, President Abdou Diouf was forced to annul the election.

In the presidential election in 2000, mobile phones forced the two candidates, President Diouf and Abdoulaye Wade, to accept the results that were announced almost instantaneously by private radio stations.

The two main stations, Wal Fadji FM and Sud FM, had sent reporters to cover polling stations all over the country. Equipped with mobile phones—a new work tool which is largely replacing the tape-recorder—they were able to announce the results as soon as the votes had been counted. The presence of reporters was boosted in key constituencies with a large number of voters or where there was a particularly hard-fought contest.

This organized presence of journalists and the speed with which the results were announced facilitated the peaceful handover of power from Diouf to Wade. No fraud was possible. The outgoing president conceded defeat very quickly for an election in Africa. This defused the tension that had built up before the second round of the election and the much-feared clashes between supporters of the two political leaders were avoided.

And, by the way, the Sud FM reporters had to buy their mobile phones on monthly credit. ■

► Dakar-based journalist

QUINO, ON THE FUNNY SIDE OF FREEDOM

"I don't believe humour can alter anything but sometimes it can be the little grain of sand that acts as a catalyst to change," says Argentine cartoonist Joaquín Salvador Lavado, better known as Quino, who has been hailed as "the greatest Latin American cartoonist of the century." Born in Mendoza in 1932, he never wanted to be anything but a cartoonist and has spent a lifetime at the drawing board. He won an international reputation with his *Mafalda* series (see box), which shows the adult world as seen through the eyes of children. Its main character, an inquisitive girl who is always asking awkward questions and worries about world peace, has featured in ten books, which have been translated into over 20 languages and published in newspapers and magazines in many parts of the world. Burnt out by the pressure of having to come up with new ideas every week, Quino decided to stop drawing *Mafalda* in 1973, and spend more time on other projects that give free rein to the caustic humour that has always been his hallmark. Meticulously executed in black and white and packed with telling details, his drawings focus on power relationships, social inequalities and environmental degradation. In short, on all kinds of issues that, as he readily admits, "have nothing funny about them."

How would you define your brand of humour?

I don't think my cartoons are the sort that make people laugh their heads off. I tend to use a scalpel rather than tickle the ribs. I don't go out of my way to be humorous; it's just something that comes out of me. I'd like to be funnier, but as you get older you become less amusing and more incisive.

Your books have been published to great acclaim in France, Greece, Italy, China and Portugal. Does this mean that humour is universal?

I think so. Local connotations vary of course, above all in political humour. But

a joke can be just as relevant to Franco's Spain as to Fidel's Cuba or the military regimes of Latin America. As for jokes about food, the kind of things we say about meat in Argentina can be transposed to rice in Japan. I've heard it said that a North American actor became so enamoured of a certain form of Japanese humour that he decided to learn Japanese and export it to the United States. When a Japanese joke mentions cherry pie, he talks about pizza instead so that his audience can get the point. But the humour works the same.

You have never managed to make a breakthrough in the English-speaking world. Aren't you interested in that particular market?

First of all, I've never thought in market terms. Things either happened or they didn't. Years ago a book of my cartoons without words, *The World of Quino*, came out in the United States. It was very well received by my North American counterparts, including Schulz¹. Someone even said: "at last a cartoonist who doesn't draw couples reading ▶

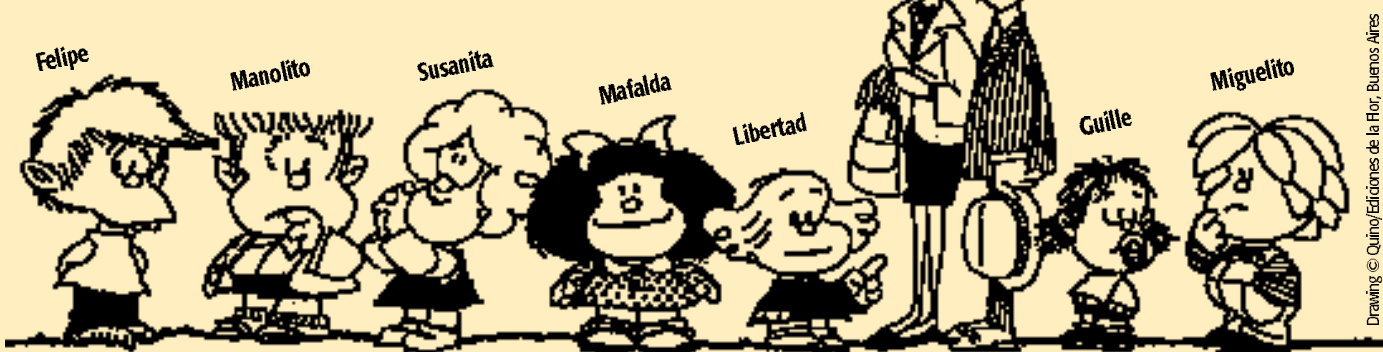
1. Charles M. Schulz (1922-2000). American cartoonist, creator of the *Peanuts* series, whose main hero is Charlie Brown with his dog Snoopy.

MAFALDA AND HER FRIENDS

In 1969, the Italian semiologist Umberto Eco presented *Mafalda* to Europe with these words: "Since our children are soon to become through our choice a multitude of *Mafaldas*, it would be rash not to treat *Mafalda* with the respect a real person deserves." But who is this six-year-old girl whose name has been given to a square, who was on the verge of being named an Illustrious Citizen of Buenos Aires and was chosen as one of the 10 most influential Argentine women of the 20th century? "The important thing is not what I think of

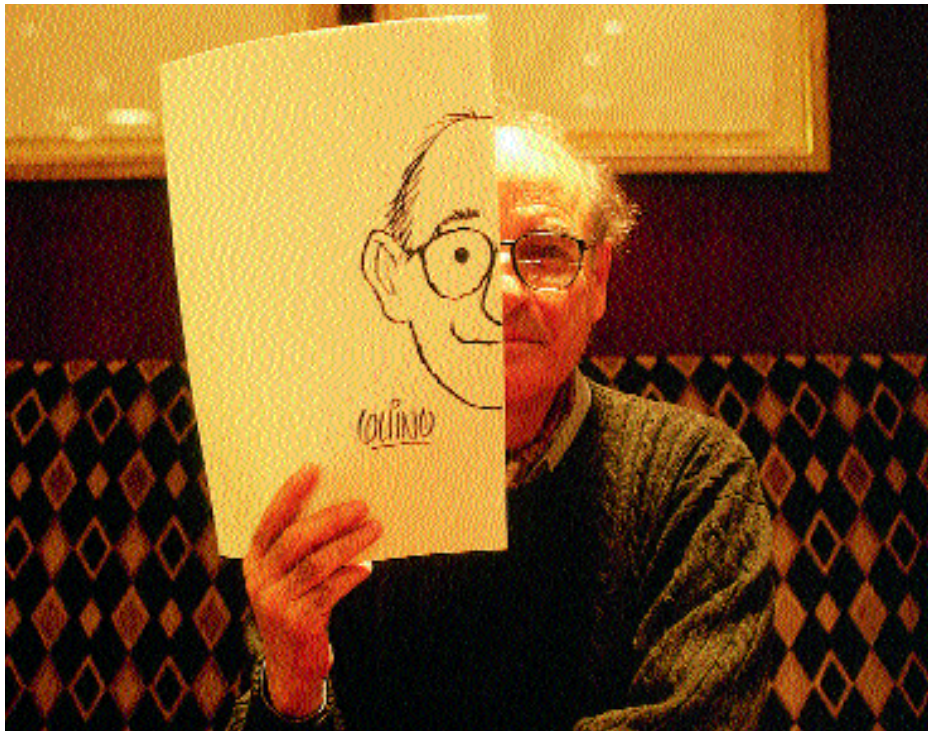
Mafalda, but what *Mafalda* thinks of me," said the writer Julio Cortázar about this irreverent little girl who worships the Beatles, hates soup, and is concerned about the Cold War and the health of Planet Earth. *Mafalda* shares her concerns with her parents, who she never ceases to ply with impertinent questions ("Have you two planned our education or are you just making it up as you go along?"), and with her brother Guille, the personification of childish innocence. The gang is rounded

off by the materialistic Manolito (son of the local shopkeeper who dreams about owning a chain of supermarkets), the timid romantic Felipe (who is always looking for excuses not to go to school), the narcissistic Miguelito, Susanita (who hopes to be a housewife and the mother of a large family), and Libertad, the smallest of them all. "I drew her like that because freedom always seems small," recalls Quino. ■



Drawing © Quino/Ediciones de la Flor, Buenos Aires

© Monica Nogueiras, Barcelona



► the morning paper at the breakfast table.” But the book didn’t sell. I think the English-speaking public is used to a much quicker visual humour than mine. I focus on details, and a reader always has to ask why I included this or that particular feature. If I draw a newspaper, I write things on it that form a sort of code for the readers. A lot of people don’t notice these details. As for Mafalda, the British thought she was “too Latin American.”

Would you say your humour is typically Argentine?

The Mafalda series is, certainly. The environment in which the characters live is the Buenos Aires neighbourhood where I lived myself, and Mafalda’s way of talking is also typically Argentine, even in the editions published in Spain and elsewhere in Latin America. In the rest of my work featuring dialogue I try to use an idiom that is a bit more neutral. As for my other cartoons I wouldn’t know how to answer your question. My parents, my aunts and uncles and my grandparents were all Spanish. I spent my childhood surrounded by immigrants: the butcher was Spanish, and so was the shopkeeper who sold us lentils. The greengrocer was Italian, and my parents’ and my grandparents’ friends were from Andalusia. My first real contact with Argentines was in primary school. When I started there I spoke with such a strong Andalusian accent that my schoolmates couldn’t understand what I said. I found it hard to mix with them.

Sometimes you use captions, sometimes you don’t. Do you think text is a crucial factor in humour?

I would prefer to do without words. But some ideas would be incomprehensible without text. Humour is like cinema in this respect. Chaplin, for instance, never needed words. Neither did Jacques Tati. But Woody Allen, who doesn’t use visual gags, stops being funny the moment he stops talking.

What are your favourite subjects?

I don’t think I have any, though over time I see certain themes crop up again and again. What you find most often in my work is humour about the weak and the powerful, about the relations between power and ordinary people. I grew up in a highly politicized family. The Spanish civil war and the rise of fascism were the dramas that marked my childhood. They gave me a political vision of life, one which I like to express in all my drawings. I think power relationships exist in all situations, whether a person is faced with a government official, who is always the powerful one, or a waiter or a doctor. I’m fascinated by relationships based on dependence. Other subjects I deal with include life and death, with death as the powerful figure and the living as the weak. I worry about losing my freedom in old age—I’m terrified by the idea of having to depend on other people for the most basic things. So I draw cartoons of 84-year-olds who want a glass of wine against their grandchildren’s wishes.

Are there any taboo subjects?

When I started, I made jokes about prisoners. Prisoners and the shipwrecked are the staples of world humour. But when people were imprisoned on political

grounds in Argentina, I stopped handling the subject, and I still couldn’t deal with it today. I think it’s counterproductive to tackle issues as tragic as prisons and torture through humour, and though I’ve been criticized for it, I couldn’t bring myself to join in Amnesty International’s campaigns. I don’t like tragedies such as earthquakes and natural catastrophes either, though I think this has more to do with a personal phobia that is not shared, for example, by Brazilian cartoonists. Some years ago a Uruguayan plane carrying a rugby team crashed in the Andes. Those who ultimately survived had to eat the flesh of those who had died. A Brazilian humorous magazine devoted an entire issue to this episode, which wasn’t in the least funny. But they managed to make it funny, terribly dark but funny. And not so long ago I saw an issue of a French weekly, *Le Canard Enchaîné* I think it was, which featured a drawing about rape in prison, a subject I would be incapable of tackling.



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Your most recent book, *Cuanta Bondad*, is full of drawings that poke fun at modern technology: the fax, the computer, the mobile phone. Do you really dislike these things?

I hate mobile phones, and the stupid way they are used gets on my nerves. I can understand that a doctor, an electrician or a plumber might need a mobile phone. Not long ago in Asturias a man saved himself from being mauled by wolves because he called for help on his mobile. But I can’t stand being in a doctor’s waiting room listening to people call to say that the doctor’s late with his appointments or to ask if they need to stop by the grocer’s. I think the Internet is very useful in some circumstances. In the field of medicine, for example, it’s wonderful that a small-town doctor can consult a leading authority in the United States or Switzerland. But it’s another thing entirely to get hooked to the Internet and look for a partner or spouse by computer search. I

know an old woman, an Italian psychologist, who communicates with Tibetan monks via the Internet though I'm sure she never bothers to say hello to her neighbours. A lot of communication means people isolate themselves from the people around them.

Football also features in some of your pieces.

Do you like the game?

I don't know as much about football as I would like, but it interests me above all from a social viewpoint. It's the only sport that leads its spectators into crime. I've seen violence between ice hockey teams, including the death of a player who was hit in his sternum and left for dead. But in football it's the public itself that hits out, attacks and kills. An American author who studied the phenomenon of hooliganism in England came to the conclusion that what makes football frustrating is spending 90 minutes waiting for a goal to be scored. In basketball, or even in hockey, the scoreline is changing continually, but in football 30 or 40 minutes can go by without a goal. As a result frustration builds up among the spectators and it has to express itself somehow. I'm more interested in football from that angle than as a sport, though I admit there are players whom it's a pleasure to watch. When Johann Cruyff was on the field, it was like watching Rudolf Nureyev on a stage.

God often appears in your cartoons. Why is that?

I don't believe in God, but I read the Bible a lot because it's a fantastic source of ideas. And if God doesn't exist, he's a very good subject. He's a figure about whom it's impossible to be indifferent: everyone either loves him or hates him. And he keeps on popping up in my cartoons because in a way he's a character you can identify with. When you draw you create things with a pencil, and you can construct on paper all the different worlds that come to your mind. He may not exist, but as Borges said, it's enough to have a word that designates something for that thing to come to life. Furthermore, religion is like sex or drugs: it always sparks reactions and letters from readers, and I love that.

What is your worst professional memory?

What has most annoyed me, without a shadow of a doubt, has been the use of my cartoons for purposes poles apart from those that inspired me to draw them. I get particularly angry when my cartoons are used in right-wing political campaigns. Once I was sent from Spain a sticker showing Guille, Mafalda's brother, carrying a pro-Franco flag. That was a terrible blow, since I was born in a family that had lost the Spanish civil war, and films about that period still make me cry. My comic strips were also used in a political

campaign by an Argentine military officer who had been chief of police in Buenos Aires province. I wonder if those people have read my work and totally misunderstood it, or whether they understood it all too well and wanted to twist its meaning. These are things that I simply can't figure out. I gather that Mafalda has been used in Venezuela in an election campaign, but I'm not going to hire a lawyer in Caracas because if I did things would drag on for ever.

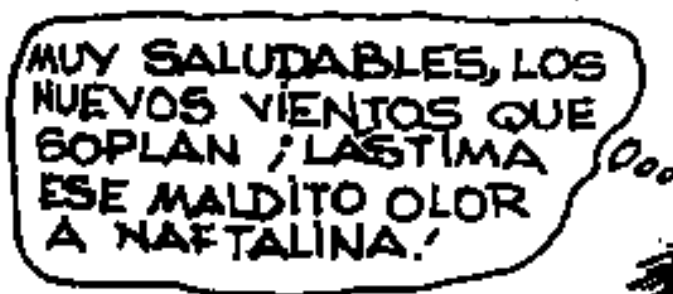
Have you always been totally free to draw as you please?

It seems paradoxical, but under the rule of Argentine military governments—which is the same as saying almost all of them, since I've only known four democratically elected presidents since I was born—there has never been any official censorship bureau. In con-

my friends had disappeared, and when I went to deliver a cartoon to a magazine that published my work, I would find that a bomb had just gone off there or that the building had been machine-gunned the night before. With work like mine, which can be done on a hotel table in any place you like, it would have been stupid to stay. Between 1976 and 1979 I lived in Italy. Then I started to go back to see how things were, and today I live for eight months of the year in Buenos Aires and the rest of the time in Milan, which is my European base. I also spend a lot of time in Spain and France.

Outside Argentina, have you had to make any concessions to ensure your books get published?

A few, yes, but usually for anecdotal not to say comic reasons. Some 15 years ago I found out by chance that Mafalda was very well known in China. A little Chinese girl



[These fresh winds blowing are so healthy. Too bad they're filled with this dreadful smell of naphthalene.]



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trast to Brazil, where there was a body to which all cartoonists had to submit their drawings before they could be published, in Argentina it was the editors who tried to talk you round. The problem was that you never knew what or who the problem was, so you started to censor your own work. When I arrived in Buenos Aires with a file full of cartoons I realized straightaway that neither the Church nor the military could be targets, that sex was a subject you had to handle with kid gloves, and there was no question of talking about homosexuality. Since I was young and wanted to be published, I buckled down to the approved subjects. But even today, when anything goes, I still find it very hard to get out of the habit of self-censorship.

You lived in exile during the military dictatorship². Were you forced to leave the country?

I left when the situation was really bad. A lot of

told me this when she asked me to autograph an album at a Buenos Aires book fair. Until then I had no idea that my books had been published in China, so I was very intrigued. Through a friend I managed to find out that the pirated editions had been produced in Taiwan, and that the editor, like all good pirates, was English. My agent managed to get these pirate editions withdrawn, and regular editions have recently started to be published in mainland China. I was there a few months ago, and I asked how they had translated all the strips in which Mafalda talks about the yellow peril. When I wrote those strips we had just found out that China had the atomic bomb, a revelation that caused grave concern in the West. They told me that everything about China had been cut, since they thought that I didn't know enough about China to give an opinion—a wonderful piece of reasoning, I thought. I also found out that Susanita, Mafalda's friend who dreams about having a big family, is regarded as a ▶

2. 1976-1983

¡SÍ A LA DEMOCRACIA!
 ¡SÍ A LA JUSTICIA!
 ¡SÍ A LA LIBERTAD!



¡SÍ A LA VIDA!

QUINO
 17/4/87

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► virtual subversive due to China's family planning policy.

Mafalda is anything but politically correct. Has this ever caused you any problems?

I still recall a case involving Cuba, a country I've visited seven or eight times and where I have good friends. There's a Cuban edition of Mafalda and an animated film series based on the strip cartoon was made there. But whenever I go to Cuba, someone asks me to explain the strip in which Mafalda is sitting in front of a plate of soup—the dish she hates more than anything—and wonders why Fidel Castro doesn't sing the praises of soup so that it can be banned in Argentina. It's certainly true that back then anything to do with Cuba was suspect in Argentina. But what Mafalda actually says is: "Why doesn't 'that idiot' Fidel Castro. . . ?" The Spanish newspaper *El País* has censored some of my drawings on the grounds that they are too "grim", to which I reply that I may be grim, but I'm never as grim as real life.

Your Mafalda series has been compared to Schulz's Peanuts.

Naturally. I started the Mafalda strip after being commissioned to advertise a brand of domestic appliances for which I was specifically asked to do something of the same kind. I bought all the books by Schulz that I could find in Buenos Aires, studied them and then tried to do something similar but adapted to our situation. The campaign never got off the ground because the magazine that was going to publish the cartoons realized it was closet advertising. So I put my drawings away until a year later, in 1964, when I rescued them for the magazine *Primera Plana*.

Why do you think Mafalda is still being published and read almost 30 years after you stopped producing it?

I suppose it's because part of the message is still relevant. The human race still has a lot of issues to address. The world of which Mafalda was so critical, the world

that existed in 1973 when I stopped producing the strip has not disappeared; perhaps it's even got worse. Though it flatters me to know that Mafalda is still being read, it's also sad to think that the social injustice she denounced remains in place.

Why did you stop drawing Mafalda, against your readers' wishes?

Humour and art in general wear themselves out. I admired Schulz a lot, and I loved *Peanuts*. I read the strips with great enthusiasm for 10 or 15 years. But I would have liked to have seen that special brand of humour reflected in other things. I feel the same about the Colombian painter Fernando Botero: I just don't think he should keep on painting fat figures all his life. As for myself, after ten years of Mafalda, I started to suffer each time I drew a new instalment, and I found it extremely hard not to repeat myself. When I started drawing, I learnt that if you conceal from someone the last drawing in a strip and that person still knows how it's going to end, then your story isn't up to scratch. Even though the books continue to sell very well and people ask me for more, I think that I made the right decision when I stopped doing Mafalda, and I don't miss her at all.

AN ABRIDGED BIBLIOGRAPHY

None of Quino's books have been published in English. But for Spanish speakers or those simply content to enjoy the drawings, here is a selective bibliography:

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All published by Ediciones La Flor in Argentina and by Lumen in Spain. For more information: <http://www.quino.com.ar>

► It's as if someone with lung cancer did nothing to prevent it, still less to cure it. Since so many people are worried about the destruction of the Amazon, why doesn't the United Nations, say, buy it and protect it? But no. Humans are like that. They keep on smoking in spite of lung cancer. As I see it, hope lies in cultivating a certain historical optimism. I strongly agree with the Portuguese Nobel literature laureate José Saramago, who has always maintained that socialism and the left will one day regain their lost prestige. I think he's right. I always compare politics to aviation. Over the centuries many people died while trying to fly. But before they could fly in hang gliders or ultralight aircraft, they first had to invent the internal combustion engine, which is extremely heavy. If Leonardo da Vinci had known of the lightweight materials that we have today, people could have been flying since the fifteenth century. It's a bit like visiting the Christian catacombs in Rome. What men! Three centuries in hiding! What political group today could stand three centuries without being infiltrated? And 2000 years later, they are still around, though it's true that they've become the exact opposite of what they claimed to be.

Do you always draw in black and white?

Yes, with a few exceptions. The French edition of Mafalda is in colour because the publisher thinks that if it's not in colour, it won't sell in France. I agreed but I'm not very happy about it. Mafalda as I see it is in black and white, and in general I prefer comics in black and white except when colour really adds something. Of course when you see Akira Kurosawa's films, you realize that colour does add something. I use it very spar-



Drawing © Quino/Ediciones de la Flor, Buenos Aires

ingly, only when there's blood or when it's justified. I once did a drawing in which you see a child left alone at home paint a line running all through the house, from the staircase to the hall to the bedrooms. When his par-

ents come home, he greets them by saying, "I bet you don't know the colour of freedom."

What colour was it?

Green. ■

Interview by Lucía Iglesias Kuntz,
UNESCO Courier journalist

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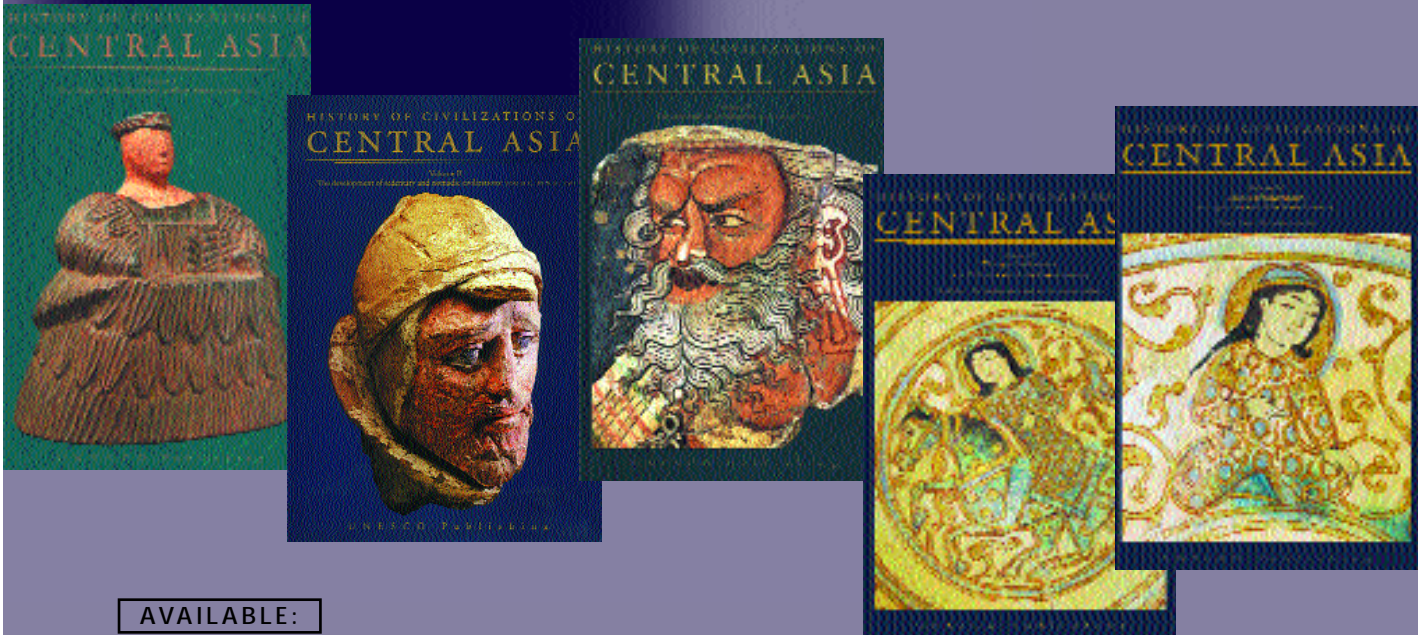
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