

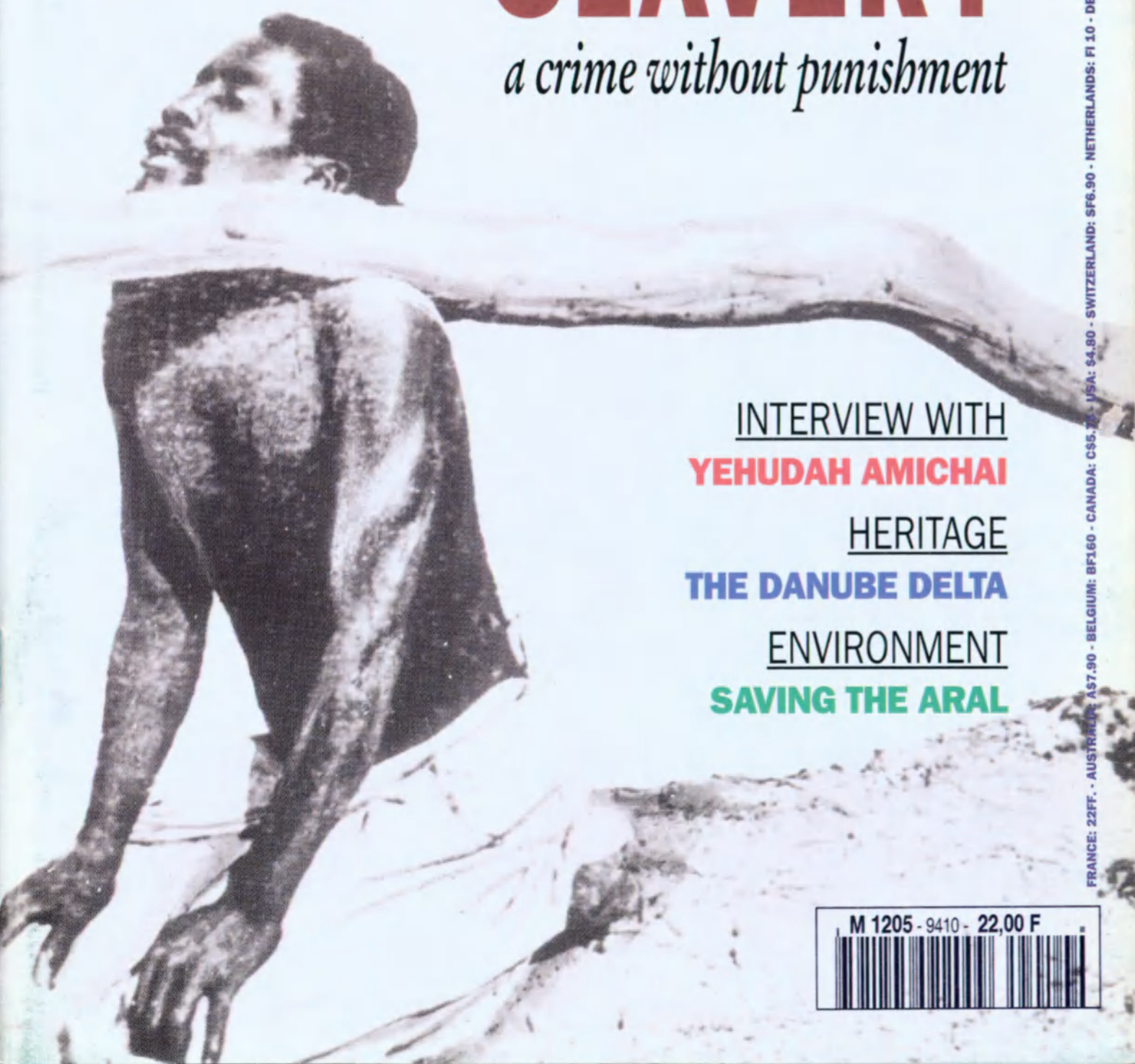
OCTOBER 1994

THE UNESCO COURIER

200 YEARS AFTER IT WAS FIRST ABOLISHED

SLAVERY

a crime without punishment



INTERVIEW WITH
YEHUDAH AMICHAH

HERITAGE
THE DANUBE DELTA

ENVIRONMENT
SAVING THE ARAL

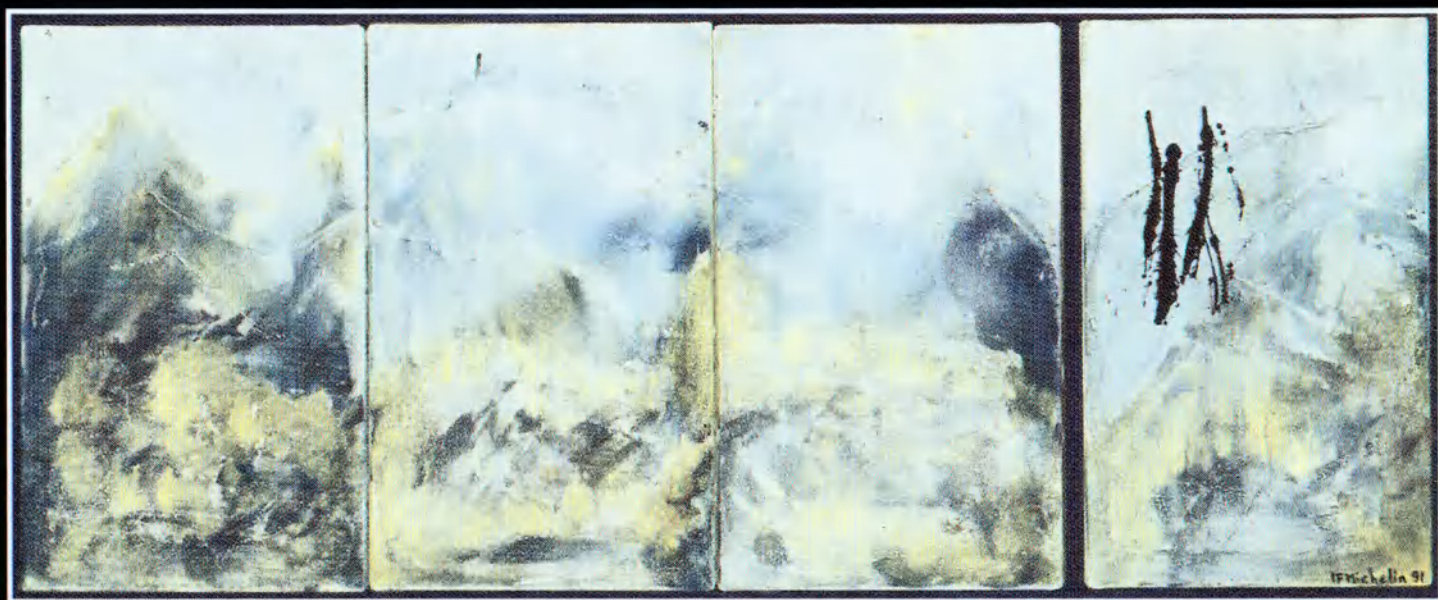
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We invite readers to send us photographs to be considered for publication in this feature. Your photo should show a painting, a sculpture, piece of architecture or any other subject which seems to be an example of cross-fertilization between cultures.

Alternatively, you could send us pictures of two works from different cultural backgrounds in which you see some striking connection or resemblance. Please add a short caption to all photographs.



Untitled

1991, acrylic on canvas
(108 x 44 cm)
by Marie-France Michelin

With its blend of realistic and visionary elements, this painting of the Pyrenees in southwestern France draws on the long familiarity of the artist—a schoolteacher from Brittany—with Oriental art and with Chinese calligraphy in particular. It is, as she says, “a painting where East and West come together”.



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47th YEAR

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M onth by month

Two hundred years ago revolutionary France abolished slavery, but then a few years later, as if frightened by its own audacity, re-established it. This brief spark of humanity would have to be re-ignited many times in Europe and the Americas during the nineteenth century, and revolts, bloody repression and civil wars (including the War of Secession in the United States) would have to be endured before slavery was at last proscribed on a worldwide basis. But this first victory for freedom was far from complete. There arose other forms of contempt for human beings and other forms of exploitation of forced labour: the colonization of most non-European societies, fascist and Nazi repression, and Eastern Europe's descent into totalitarianism.

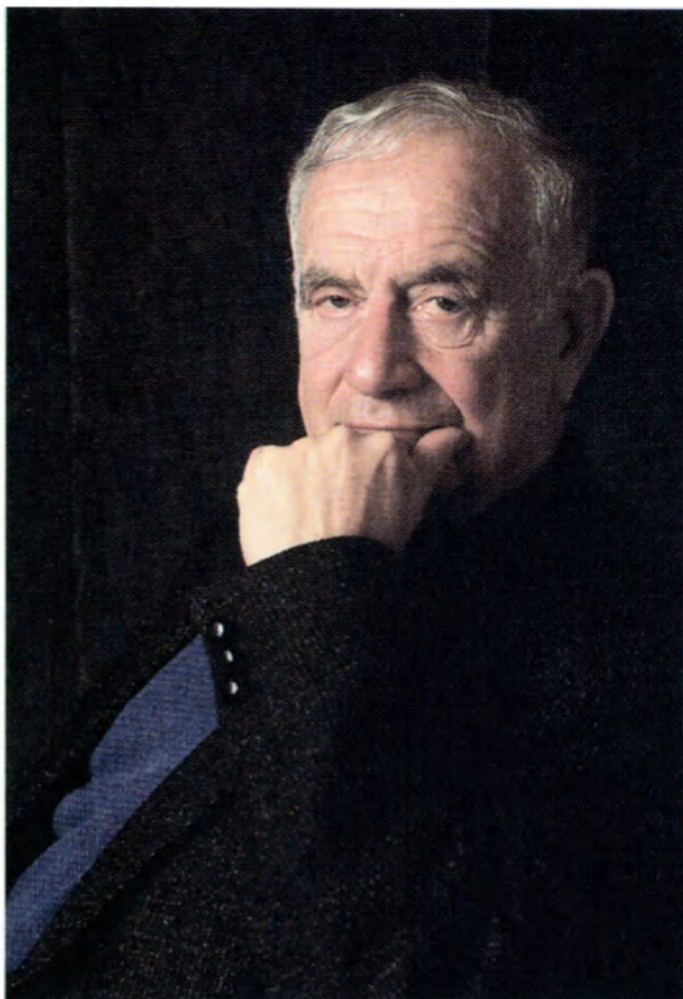
It took another century—marked by revolutions, military expeditions and two world wars—before the colonial system finally ended, institutionalized racism was defeated and the socialist gulag was dissolved.

Does this mean that today at long last respect for human dignity prevails everywhere? Unfortunately, new inequalities are arising as a result of physical constraints and threats, because of terror imposed by individuals or groups, and the exploitation by some of the weakness of others. These inequalities exist where States are unable to prevent them and where medieval customs survive; where the law can be ignored with impunity, and isolation and secrecy permit terrible abuses.

What is this dark side of man that has always led him to despise, subjugate and debase his fellows? Why is it that for thousands of years individuals and in some cases entire peoples have been bought, sold and treated like beasts? And how is it that such a crime against humanity has remained unpunished even since the inception of Human Rights?

There is probably no simple answer to these terrible questions. We know, however, that we must never cease asking them.

BAHGAT ELNADI AND ADEL RIFAAT



YEHUDAH AMICHAJ

talks to
Edgar Reichmann

Yehudah Amichai, one of Israel's most outstanding writers, is mainly known as a poet, although he has also written novels, short stories and radio plays. His poetry, in which Biblical and contemporary allusions are blended, is written in simple colloquial language. In 1982 he was awarded his country's Israel Prize for Literature for his work as a whole. Among his poetry collections published in English are *Selected Poems* (1986), *Great Tranquillity* (1983) and *Love Poems* (1981).

■ *What is the place of poetry in people's lives and can poetry contribute to their happiness?*

—If you write about things that are happening to people you can contribute to happiness. My poetry helped me overcome my first encounter with adult life. Between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five, I was in two wars, the Second World War and the Israeli war of independence. It took me quite some time to overcome that, to realize what it meant to start my adult life with war. I needed my words to achieve peace with myself.

I don't think that you should lie in poetry and say that everything is fine and beautiful. But you can write about things as they are in a positive way. You can sing them and by singing, even the bad things become soothing and can heal you.

I think poetry is a part of the healing of mankind, like all art. Think of Picasso's painting *Guernica*. It is a great outcry

against the cruelty of the Spanish Civil War. Or consider how a poem can be like a lullaby. There's a Yiddish lullaby that goes like this: "Sleep my child, sleep. Father went to the war. The pound is falling, the city's on fire, the enemy's coming, the wolves are howling, but sleep my child, sleep." The mother mentions all the bad things in such a way that even the fire and the enemy become soothing to the child. She doesn't have to lie and talk about angels and butterflies.

■ *Your first collection of poems was "Now and the other days", which the critics saw as a sign of radical change in the Hebrew language and the birth of a new school of Hebrew poetry.*

—Well, I'm reluctant to describe it as a "new school". I started writing and I thought that the generation before me was not capable of expressing my experience. It's like when you go to a restaurant and eat

very good food, and then go home and say, "I really want to make it myself." So I made it myself.

The change was that I wrote about things that were on the edge of being forbidden in poetry. Not totally forbidden, but nearly. Consider Nathan Alterman, a great writer of the generation before me. He wrote war poems but he never used the word "gun". He always spoke about the sword and the arrow.

■ *Would you say that traditional Hebrew poetry had a collective feeling and that you needed to have a more individual approach in your own poetry?*

—There is something in that. The generation before mine wrote about "we" and my generation writes more about "I". Even in a war, when fate brings people together, even in a very just war like the Second World War or the Israeli war of independence, every soldier has questions

about whether it's a good war or a bad war, whether it is against good people or bad people. Every soldier has his individual experience. In a similar vein, you don't write love poems about love in general, you write poems about your own experience in love.

I want to add, though, that I wasn't making a conscious effort to change Hebrew poetry. I just wanted to write my poetry. I say this because there were other poets of my generation who were very conscious, very aware of what they were doing. I think a real artist does what he does because that's the only way he can do it.

■ *Why do we need poetry?*

—I feel that poetry is the oldest form of literary expression. Prayers are poetry and they have not changed. Language and images change but the basic things are human events: love, death, sorrow, despair, hope. Praise of women, praise of man, praise of love. Weeping about them. So in a way, poetry is actually the backbone, the spine of the human language experience, from the Bible on through to many other great poems of the world.

It's the backbone because in a war you're not going to take a book by Tolstoy with you. It's too big to carry. But you can take a few poems, even if they're just in your head. That's why I think poetry will survive. Novelists may have to adapt to the demands of movies or television; they constantly have to change. But poetry remains the same.

I once said that poets are like the infantry, the foot soldiers in an army. They're out there in the war, all by themselves with a few others. Novelists are more like generals who sit in shelters planning huge operations and don't really get involved. Of course, literary academicians are like war historians who write about past wars because that way they have nothing to fear from bullets.

■ *Has Hebrew poetry gone through any important metrical changes? Are you free to use rhythm?*

—There's one style which is very strict, where you have sonnets, couplets, poetry with rhyme and metre. But you also have another style, the style of the Bible and of

prayers, which is freer and has a kind of internal rhythm. I've written in both styles. I've also written some sixty rubaiyat, a style of poetry from the Middle Ages that is widely known through the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam. It's a four-line poem, very strict, with the same rhyme at the end. It's like the sonnet in European languages. I wrote rubaiyat poems under the influence of one of our medieval poets, Judah Halevi. He was one of the great Jewish poets who lived alongside Muslim culture in southern Spain until both cultures were driven out.

■ *Through being translated into twenty languages your work has reached a vast number of people.*

—Yes. That's a kind of compensation. Because if you had an audience around

"I think poetry will survive. Novelists may have to adapt to the demands of the movies or television; they constantly have to change. But poetry remains the same."

you in those times it was only fifty, a hundred, two hundred, four hundred people. Nowadays poetry has another way of getting to people and I think it's very important. It's like when you start a fire with little twigs at the edges. A big wind may blow up later, but there always has to be a fire burning. I was asked, when my poetry was translated, "Do you think that your poetry loses in translation?" I said, "Yes, sure, but we lose things all the time. We lose weight, but that can be a good thing." It's okay if poetry loses a little something in order to survive.

■ *How do you explain that your poetry, which is so deeply rooted in your personal experience and in a particular place and time, can be understood and appreciated by very different people?*

—If you talk about your own life and feelings, then I think this gets through to other people. What's happening now, all over the world, is very interesting. Economically people have been joining forces, but local cultures and languages are again becoming very important. The more a piece of art is local, the truer it is. To my mind, there is no such thing as universal art. I think that is why Esperanto failed to catch on.

■ *You have said that your roots extend into the past and present of your land and your people and that you never became a chauvinistic nationalist. What's the difference between real patriotism and xenophobic nationalism?*

—I think that's one of the main problems of our time. If you love your culture, your landscape, your climate and your history, then that's fine. But if patriotism is based on negating someone else's culture then it's a bad patriotism. Patriotism also means speaking out against your own people if you think they are doing something wrong. That's an even stronger patriotism. Real patriotism has to be critical sometimes.

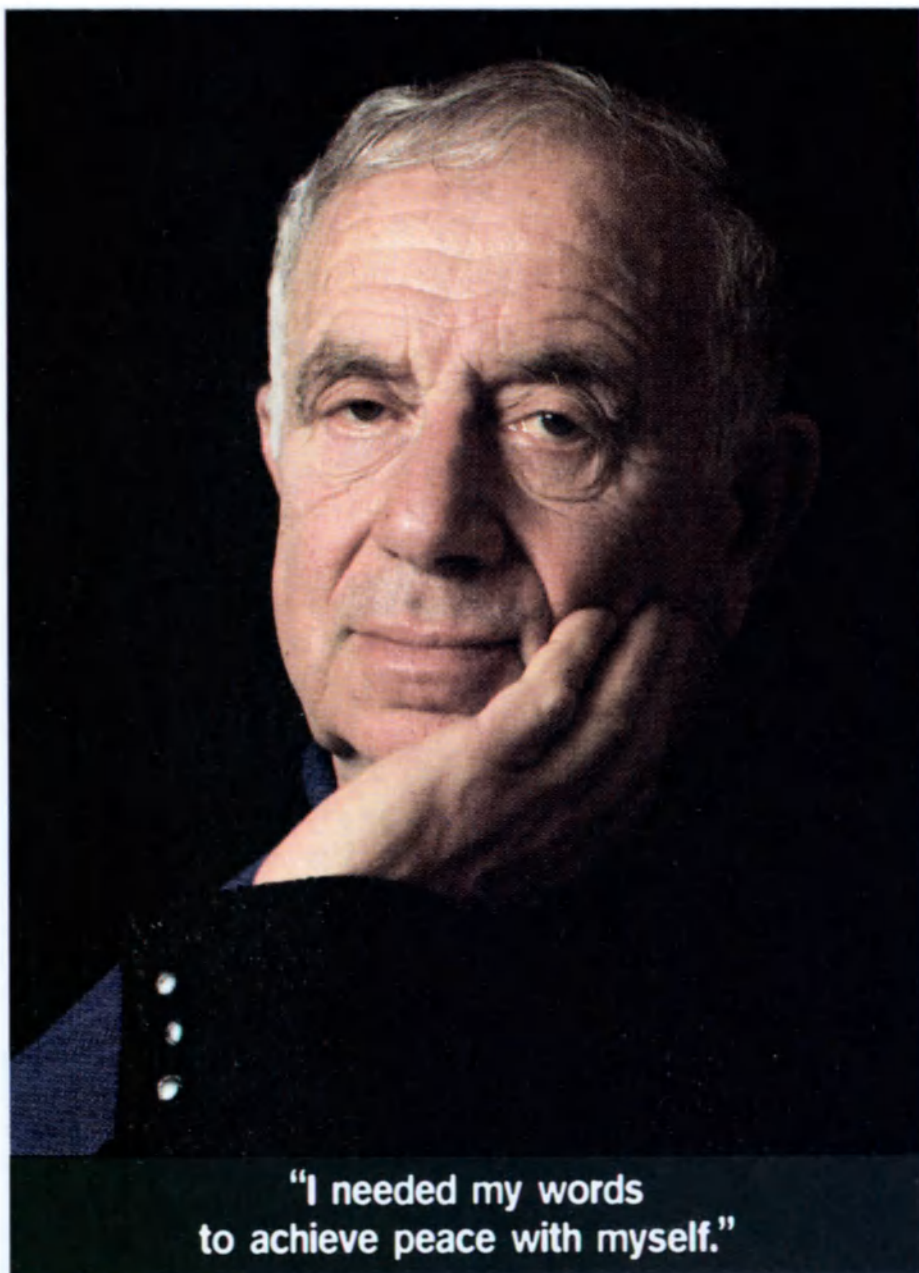
■ *This brings us to the Palestinians. . . .*

—That's important. We don't live in an empty world. Only the feeble-minded think that they're the *only* people in the world. We have to see the others, even if we think they are our adversaries and we think they did a few things wrong. We have to try and get them to understand our patriotism. And we have to understand them and *their* patriotism.

■ *Do you think that you and a Palestinian poet like Mahmoud Darwish could work together and do something to solve problems between Israelis and Palestinians?*

—In a way, yes. We are good friends. We don't see each other very often, but he translated a lot of my poems into Arabic and published them in Syria and Egypt before the Israel-Egyptian peace treaty. I may differ with Mahmoud Darwish on certain points but I regard him as a great poet.

We could do something that in a sense



**"I needed my words
to achieve peace with myself."**

goes much deeper than what is done by politics or journalism. Poetry is much slower, but it's far more profound. The basic thing in Mahmoud's poetry and in my poetry is that it starts from human beings in their own place. And that is where people meet.

■ *Do you think the world is destined for conflict, that it's doomed to explode or collapse?*

—In each generation people think the world is going to collapse; it's one of our basic feelings. My father thought that if the world wasn't religious everything

would fall down. Some people feel that if socialism collapses the world will fall apart. But there are certain things like love that can keep the world alive.

■ *But now even young people are beginning to have doubts about the world.*

—I remember as a fifteen-year-old in Jerusalem in 1939, when the Second World War broke out, that my parents and their friends were fully aware of what was going to happen. It was a big war, a big danger. But I wasn't: when you are young you have a totally different approach. When I

"If you love your culture, your landscape, your climate and your history, then that's fine. But patriotism also means speaking out against your own people if you think they are doing something wrong."

was in my first two wars, I didn't have the feeling that it was the end of the world. On the contrary, I had the feeling that we were fighting for a brave new world.

■ *Do you think, like many others, that the great collective ideas of the past have been shattered?*

—I'm quite sure that the next century will find its own way to define itself positively. After the First World War people thought, because it was the first big war in which millions were killed, that there was no hope for the world. Then we had another war. But even then mankind went on, even after the holocaust. I think it was Theodor Adorno who said that after Auschwitz it was no longer possible to talk about God. But people started talking about God again.

This could be foolish optimism, the optimism of someone saying, "I have survived so many wars that the world can't be too bad." It's a very primitive and naive optimism. But primitive in a sense that isn't necessarily bad. It's also the lust for life, for continuity, for not seeing all the dangers. If you're always on the lookout for danger, you stop living and just wait to die.

The developments in the Israeli-Arab conflict have proved my optimism to be right. Without throwing caution to the winds, there is still hope in our world for even the most severe conflicts to be solved. ■

EDGAR REICHMANN is a writer and literary critic.

Under the whiplash

by Oruno D. Lara

Slavery existed in very early times, but it was in the Greek city-state that the slave became what Aristotle called “a piece of property which is animate”



Top, a Roman slave.

Lithograph by an unknown artist.

Above, “Mandarin of Turan, in Cochinchina, with his slave pipe-bearer”. Illustration from a French edition (1804) of “Journal of the Embassy to China” by Earl Macartney, the first British envoy to Peking (Beijing).

Right, black slaves in Brazil washing for precious stones under the threat of the supervisors’ lash. Watercolour by Carlos Julião (circa 1775).

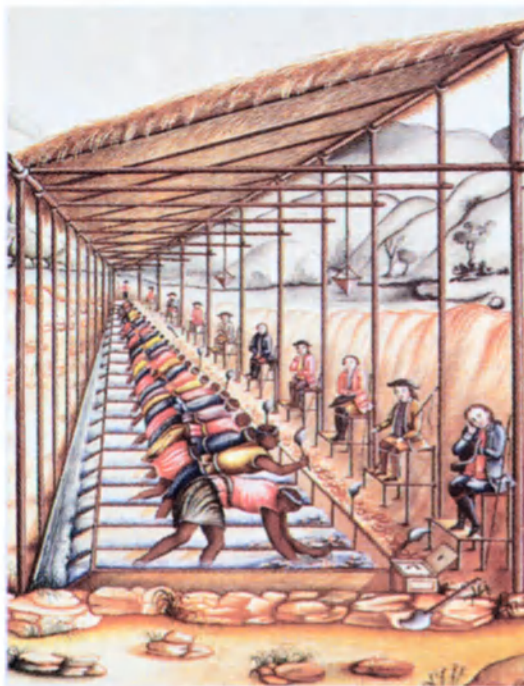
Forced labour existed in a variety of forms throughout Antiquity—in the Egypt of the Pharaohs, the Middle East (Babylon and Assyria), and Greece and Italy. However, slavery as an institution, in which the slave became a commodity or what Aristotle called “a piece of property which is animate”, was first devised by the Greek city-states.

Slavery is essentially a relationship in which one person dominates another. It is based on the power of a master, who imposes his will by force and threats. The slave system was created and maintained by violence. Whipping slaves was not only a means of inflicting punishment on them but of dominating them, making an impression on them and reminding them of their state of servitude. Slaves were kept apart from one another. The alternatives before them were “abject submission”, escape or rebellion.

This domination was justified by the “original alienation” of the slaves and their status as “people

without honour”. Stripped of any rights or title, they no longer had any family history, ancestry or issue. Completely isolated, they could not receive or hand down any heritage. In their state of rootless alienation, they were tools whose owners could treat them as they saw fit. Masters had a whole array of physical or symbolic instruments which they could use to control the bodies of their slaves.

When did the slave system start to go into decline, or rather to be replaced? In Italy, the first imperial measures against the breaking-up of slave families were promulgated in the year 325 of our era. According to some historians, however, the ancient form of slavery is considered as having ended under the reign of Charlemagne. Even so, the Church at that time was still a considerable owner of slaves. The Anglo-Saxon theologian Alcuin, one of Charlemagne’s closest advisers, owned 20,000 slaves in the four abbeys under his control. Almost 20 per cent of Europe’s population in Charlemagne’s time consisted of slaves. Some forms of medieval slavery continued to exist from the ninth to the fifteenth centuries and gradually faded out only when they were superseded by the African and Asian slave trades.



Exploitation and torture

How many men, women and children left Africa in the holds of the slave ships? How many African and Malagasy captives were sold on the slave markets of the Caribbean and mainland America? The answer is that they were probably tens of millions, but we shall never know the exact figure because there are no reliable statistics. In this respect, the stumbling-block historians have to contend with lies in the conditions and practices of the trade, both legal and illegal, which went on from the mid-fifteenth century to the closing decades of the nineteenth century.

The slaves of Antiquity, like those of modern times, had to submit to the sexual demands of their masters. Prostitution was only one feature of



the relationship. Trimalchio, one of the characters in the *Satyricon* of Petronius, the Roman author of the 1st century A.D., says: “For fourteen years, I was the light of my master’s eyes. There is no shame in doing what your master orders you to do. In the meantime, I also kept my mistress happy”.

A variety of methods, such as changing slaves’ names, inflicting corporal punishment on them or torturing them, were used to dehumanize and degrade them, deprive them of their personality and make them different from other human beings, who were not chattels. This was the sole purpose of the practice whereby all male slaves, regardless of their age, were called “boy”—*pais* in Greek, *puer* in Latin.

Attempts have been made to minimize, and indeed conceal, the many acts of physical cruelty meted out on slaves, and to deny the existence of torture in Greece and Italy. Torture was practised in Athens, however, and the instruments used are well-known to specialists. As Demosthenes noted, freedmen differed from slaves because the latter had to answer for all their crimes with their bodies. What we do not know, however, is whether the slave-owners of Antiquity displayed the same refinement as the planters of the Americas in inflicting cruelty on their slaves. The atrocities perpetrated by the latter have provided material for a large number of books on the subject and are borne out by irrefutable eyewitness accounts.

A totalitarian system based on racism

There were two ways of escaping from slavery: emancipation or flight. Emancipation meant that the slaves were no longer chattels. In Greece, they became “metics”, resident aliens who were free but were debarred from discharging polit-

ical obligations, whereas in Rome they automatically acquired Roman citizenship. Their legal status changed from being that of an object to that of a person recognised by law. The emancipated slaves of Antiquity were able to become absorbed into the mass of the population within the space of one or two generations. The poet Horace, whose father was an emancipated slave, complains in his *Satires* of having sometimes been insulted about his origins.

This was by no means the case of the emancipated slaves of the Caribbean and the Americas, for whom the colour of their skin was the indelible mark of their slave origins. Writing in 1776, the colonist Hilliard d’Auberteuil noted that “In San Domingo, for the sake of our own interests and security, we show such contempt for the black race that anybody descending from it . . . is marked with an indelible stain”² In Brazil, emancipation was regarded as a powerful form of pressure whereby slave-owners were able to keep control over their slaves and sow discord among them. In the Spanish colonies of the Caribbean, a system of gradual emancipation, known as *coartación*, under which slaves could buy back their freedom in instalments, was introduced in the sixteenth century. The emancipated slaves remained dependent on their masters and were therefore obliged to respect and honour them or work for them.

Slavery in the Caribbean was more than an institution with its own laws and customs and methods of keeping order. It was literally a “totalitarian” system of economic, political, social and sexual exploitation based on force, violence and the ideology of racism. The ceremonial in which the slaves were integrated into the system was



Above left, the slave market at Zabid, in Yemen. Illustration from the *Maqamat* (“The Assemblies”), short anecdotes told in rhyming prose by the Arab writer al-Hariri (mid-13th century).

Below, the prison for Christian slaves in Algiers. Engraving by an unknown 18th-century artist.



The same seed

Please reflect that the man you call your slave was born of the same seed, has the same good sky above him, breathes as you do, lives as you do, dies as you do! You may see him free, he may see you a slave—the odds are level.

SENECA
Letters to Lucilius,
65-65 A. D.

meant to blot out their past and their culture, and kill them as free men and members of society. It was only by making a bid for freedom that the black *cimarrón*, the runaway slave, could regain his identity as a man (by again using his African name) and his will to work.

In Greece and Italy, and also in Roman-occupied Egypt, slave-owners had specially designed instruments, in the shape of metal chains and collars, to prevent the slaves from escaping. If slaves did escape, the owners offered rewards through public announcements or called on the authorities or engaged professional slave-hunters known as *fugitivarii*.

What fate lay in store for the runaway slaves? They could flee into the bush and form small bands living off robbery. One account from the third century B.C. tells of a celebrated example on the island of Chios, at some unknown date. A band of runaway slaves had sought refuge in a rugged, forest-covered mountain region, under the leadership of a chief called Drimacos. They successfully resisted several punitive expeditions until Drimacos eventually concluded a formal agreement with the authorities. He gave an undertaking to protect the property of Chios and only to accept as members of his band those slaves who had "suffered intolerably" and returned the others to their masters. On his death, he was raised to the dignity of "benevolent hero".

In the course of history, only four slave revolts took on the proportions of actual warfare, with thousands of armed men on either side, pitched battles, sieges and the occupation of towns. The first three took place in Sicily and Italy over the period from 140 to 70 B.C. The fourth was the major insurrection on the island of San Domingo, which culminated in the independence of Haiti in January 1804. ■

1 "Slavery is not a moral category: it is an institution which provides a large fraction of the labour force. As long as that force is necessary, slavery cannot merely go into decline, it has to be replaced". Moses I. Finley, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology*, New York, Penguin, 1983.

2 Hilliard d'Auberteuil, *Considérations sur l'état présent de la colonie française de Saint Domingue* (1776-1777).

"For the emancipated slaves of the Caribbean and the Americas, the colour of their skin was the indelible sign of their origins". Right, photo taken in South Carolina (U.S.A.) in 1899.

ORUNO D. LARA,

of Guadeloupe, is a historian who heads the Caribbean-America Research Centre at the University of Paris X-Nanterre. His published works include *Les Caraïbes* (1986), *Caraïbes en construction: espace, colonisation, résistance* (2 vols, 1992) and, in collaboration with Nelly Schmidt, *Les abolitions de l'esclavage, Une longue marche* (Centre national de documentation pédagogique, Paris, 1993).





Who was responsible?

by Elikia M'Bokolo

Africans were above all victims of the slave trade, but some of them were partners in it

Above, "The slave trade in Africa". Late 18th-century engraving (artist unknown).

To judge from the number of countries taking part in it, the slave trade must have been for Europeans both a profitable business and, considering the number of years it lasted, a familiar fact of life. Even so, in some of the ports involved in the trade, like Nantes, the slave-traders themselves were reluctant to call it by its name and instead spoke of it in more veiled terms as the "matter".

What about the Africans? Were they merely its victims or were they conscious and consenting partners in a business arrangement with whose terms they were perfectly familiar?

A controversial question

There has always been heated debate over the part played by Africans in the slave trade. For a long time, the slave-traders took refuge behind what they saw as the irrefutable argument that the Africans made a regular practice of selling their fellow Africans, and that if the Europeans refused to buy slaves from them, other people—meaning the Arabs, who also used black slaves, among others—would hasten to do so. Nowa-

days, African intellectuals and statesmen contend that that these exchanges were always unequal (in that human beings were bought with baubles) and that the Europeans always resorted to violence to get the Africans to co-operate against their will.

For historians the story is not quite as simple as that, in the first place because our criteria are not the same as those of 500 or even 150 years ago. We believe that if only one slave had been shipped across the Atlantic, it would have been one too many. But did Africans think like this in the past? Secondly, the slave trade, which went on for almost four centuries, was a very complex process involving a very wide variety of power relationships and participants whose interests and responses were bound to have changed with the course of time. This has prompted the British historian Basil Davidson to say that the "notion that Europe altogether imposed the slave trade on Africa is without any foundation in history. . . . [it] is as baseless as the European notion that institutions of bondage were in some way peculiar to Africa."^{*}

Thinking of the millions of my brothers

Each morning, when I wake up, I have the taste of death in my mouth. . . . But, after doing a few physical exercises, I open the windows of my bedroom. They overlook the sea and, away in the distance, I can just make out the island of Gorée. And when I think of the millions of my black brothers who were shipped from there to destinations where misfortune and death awaited them, I am compelled not to despair. Their story goads me on. . . .

LÉOPOLD SÉDAR SENGHOR

From slave-raiding to slave-trading

The first method by which the Europeans acquired African slaves was through straight-forward abduction. Striking examples of this can be found in the celebrated *Crónica dos Feitos da Guiné* (*Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea*), written by the Portuguese Gomes Eanes de Zurara in the mid-fifteenth century. When the Europeans landed on the coasts of Africa, they stopped at random at places they thought might be suitable for their purpose and set out on man-hunts. This was not without its risks, however, as evidenced by the massacre in 1446 of almost all the members of the expedition led by Nuno Tristao near the Cap Vert peninsula in present-day Senegal. This was not the only such massacre, but it certainly shows that the Africans were determined to fight against enslavement.

The drawbacks of slave-raiding were that its outcome was uncertain and it was incapable of catering for the constantly growing demand, when the plantations and mines of the Americas had to be supplied with slave labour. The Portuguese were the first to switch from merely seizing captives to actually trading in slaves, following a suggestion made by Prince Henry the Navigator in 1444 and subsequently followed by Portuguese sovereigns until the end of the fifteenth century. However, even after this

trade had become a routine matter, raiding continued to provide slave-traders with an additional source of supply. The so-called “roving” trade—in which slaving ships sailed along the coast and captured slaves at various places until they had a full consignment—often took the form of armed incursions against villages situated near to the coast. When countries engaged in the slave trade, they often began by organizing raiding expeditions, as did the first vessels hailing from the “twelve colonies” (the future United States of America) in the first half of the seventeenth century.

By that time, however, the leading European nations had imposed a code of ethics of a kind on the slave trade. The English, Portuguese and French agreed to make a joint declaration to the effect that the slave trade was justified only when it involved slaves duly sold by Africans. Forts were built along the coastline in order to organize the trade and at the same time to instill a healthy sense of fear among the Africans. The message they conveyed was perfectly clear: “Sell us slaves—and we shall leave it to you to choose them as you see fit—or else we shall take the slaves we need at random.”

The slave trade was therefore a one-sided relationship, founded and maintained on the threat of force. We once again have to agree with Basil Davidson when he says, “Africa and Europe were jointly involved. . . . Europe dominated the connection, shaped and promoted the slave trade, and continually turned it to European advantage and to African loss.”

Affairs of state and lineage societies

At its height, the slave trade was regarded by Africans as a kind of diabolical plot in which they had to be accomplices or perish. Hence almost all the lineage or state societies of the African seaboard were compelled to become involved in it. They did this in ways and under conditions which differed significantly from one region to another and from one period to another.

The social history of pre-colonial Africa shows that slavery was a widespread institution in states where, in some instances, a domestic trade in slaves already existed for military or economic reasons. However, a distinc-

The European powers built slaving forts in west Africa as the bridgeheads of their military presence and used them for storing their merchandise and holding their African captives until they were shipped to the Americas. From left to right: Cape Coast Fort built by the English in 1665 on the former Gold Coast, in present-day Ghana; the Portuguese fort of São Jago (1482); Fort Patience, a Dutch stronghold (1697); the English fort of Metal Cross (1693).





“Sale of blacks in the West Indies”, engraving from *La France maritime* by Amédée Gréhan, Paris, 1855 (artist unknown).

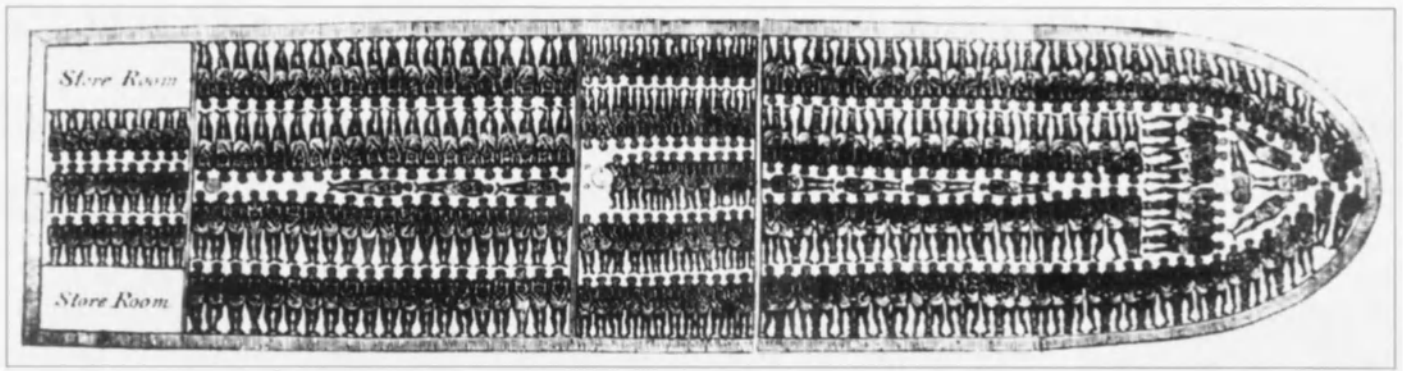
tion has to be made between those states which maintained relations with the outside world and those which did not. The former were quicker and more ready to join in the slave-trade cycle. This was true of the states bordering the Sahel, which were already in the practice of selling slaves, among other goods, to their Arab and Berber partners, who actually went on to sell some of them to the Europeans. The chronicler Alvise de Ca' da Mósto, who took part in a Portuguese expedition to Senegambia in 1455-1456, reported that the local sovereigns were skilled at taking advantage of the new competition that was growing up between the trans-Saharan trade and the Atlantic trade by selling slaves to the Arabs and Berbers in exchange for horses, and other slaves to the Portuguese in exchange for European goods.

The situation was by no means the same in those states which had no trading links with the outside world. The part these played in the slave trade is a pointer to the ambiguous and contradictory attitudes they displayed and the difficulties they faced when they came to take decisions, often under duress. The kingdom of

Kongo, one of the most powerful in Africa at the time of its encounter with the Portuguese at the end of the fifteenth century, is a typical example. In the view of contemporary historians, its economic, political and social standing was on a par with that of Portugal. From the time of the very first contacts, the Kongo nobility became converts to Christianity and the king saw fit to address the Portuguese sovereign as “my brother”. Yet the fact was that the slave trade had already started, in violation of the agreements, both tacit and formal, concluded between the two states. A number of letters, in which the king of Kongo protested against the seizure of slaves, including members of noble families, have survived to the present day. There is still some controversy as to what was really the motive behind these protestations. Some historians regard them as being an outburst of nationalist sentiment, but others look upon them more as a sign of the concern of the country's aristocracy not to allow so lucrative a business to slip through their hands. In any event, the kingdom did not survive the impact of the slave trade for very long. The same drama



* Basil Davidson, *Black Mother, The Years of the African Slave Trade*, Boston/Toronto, Little, Brown and Company, 1961.



Cross-section of the slave ship *Brookes*, showing how the captives were crammed together between decks. Engraving from *The History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade*, by Thomas Clarkson (1808).

was to be played out to varying degrees elsewhere in Africa.

The kingdom of Dahomey was also exposed to the bitter experience of the slave trade. In the mid-eighteenth century, it took over the port of Ouidah, one of the main centres of the trade in the Gulf of Guinea. The king of Dahomey regarded the port—where there was a growing buildup of firearms—as posing a threat to the security of his possessions, since the slave trade gave it a tactical advantage over its neighbours. Once they took control of Ouidah, the rulers of Dahomey were caught in a vicious circle: in order to maintain a strong state, they needed rifles and gunpowder, but to obtain these they had to sell slaves to the Europeans. The answer was really very straightforward: since the sale of the kingdom's own subjects was strictly forbidden, powerful armies were raised to raid neighbouring peoples and make war on them for the purpose of taking slaves.

Unlike states, lineage societies did not have any means of obtaining slaves by force. In such cases, servitude was based on complex practices in which various categories of social outcasts, such as criminals, misfits, sorcerers and victims of natural or economic disasters, were relegated to being slaves. Even so, this would not have been sufficient to turn the slave trade into the vast and lasting business it became. Other means were therefore found of meeting the Europeans' demands. For example, in the city of Arochukwu ("the voice of Chukwu", the supreme deity), in the Niger delta, a celebrated oracle whose authority was respected by all the population was called on to designate those who, for whatever reason, were condemned to be sold into slavery. This practice continued until the beginning of the nineteenth century.

In other regions, especially in central Africa, trading networks were gradually established, extending from the coast deep into the interior. All the goods exported or imported via these networks—predominantly slaves—transited through the heads of the lineages. In Gabon and Loango in particular, the coastal societies forming the key links in these trading networks had a highly developed ranking social order based on the extent to which their members were involved in the slave trade. Kinship rela-

tions, which are fundamental in lineage societies, gradually gave way to relations based on fortunes made in the trade, which came to dictate people's standing in society.

Africans and the abolition of the slave trade

On the African side, however, the basis of the slave trade was very precariously balanced. The part played by Africans in the trade cannot be discussed without reference to the part they played in its abolition. In a one-sided view of history, the role of Europeans—philosophers, thinkers, men of religion and businessmen—is too often stressed, while that played by the Africans is left in the shade. Some people have even gone so far as to tax the Africans with being the main impediment to the phasing-out of the trade in the nineteenth century. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Outside Africa, the resistance of the victims of the slave trade—which took a variety of forms, including the "Back to Africa" movement, the founding of "Maroon" communities and even armed insurrection, like that in San Domingo in 1791—was primarily instrumental in calling the whole institution of slavery into question. Those who had managed to escape its clutches took a very active but often unacknowledged part in the campaign for abolition. They included people like Ottobah Cuguano, who had been born in Fantiland, in present-day Ghana, had been a slave in the West Indies, and published his *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of Slavery* in London in 1787. In 1789, another African, Olaudah Equiano, alias Gustavus Vassa, a native of Iboland, in Nigeria, published, again in London, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa the African, written by himself*. These books played a significant role in the movement of opinion which led to the abolition of the slave trade.

In Africa itself, all through the "years of trial" of the slave trade, along with slaves, blacks continued to sell the produce of their soil and subsoil, such as timber, ivory, spices, gold, vegetable oils, and others besides. Changing European demand was sufficient for the Africans to turn to a more "legal" form of commerce. ■

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'My name is Moses Grandy'

I was born in Camden County, North Carolina. I believe I am fifty-six years old. . . .

I remember four sisters and four brothers; my mother had more children, but they were dead or sold away before I can remember. I was the youngest. . . .

[The master's] wife, with much to be done, prevailed on him not to sell me; but he sold my brother, who was a little boy. My mother, frantic with grief, resisted their taking her child away: she was beaten and held down: she fainted; and when she came to herself, her boy was gone. She made much outcry, for which the master tied her up to a peach tree in the yard and flogged her. . . . My young master and I used to play together; there was but two days' difference in our ages. My old master always said that he would give me to him. When he died . . . I fell to young master: his name was James Grandy. . . .

This continued till my master and myself were twenty-one years old. . . . The first who hired me was Mr. Kemp, who used me pretty well: he gave me plenty to eat and sufficient clothing.

The next was old Jemmy Coates, a severe man. Because I could not learn his way of hilling corn, he flogged me naked with a severe whip made of a very tough sapling; this lapped round me at each stroke, the point of it at last entered my belly and broke off, leaving an inch and a-half outside. I was not aware of it until on going to work again it hurt my side very much, when on looking down I saw it sticking out of my body: I pulled it out and the blood spouted after it. The wound festered, and discharged very much at the time, and hurt me for years after. . . .

My brother Benjamin returned from the West Indies. . . . While I was sitting with his wife and him, his wife's master came and asked him to fetch a can

Below, an advertisement which appeared on 4 October 1775 in the *Feuille d'annonces, Affiches et Avis divers des Isles de France et de Bourbon*, a newspaper and advertising gazette published in the islands of Mauritius and Réunion, which were then French possessions.

For sale:
furniture, silverware, a negress. . .

Person leaving for France wishes to sell items of furniture, silverware, household utensils, and a Malagasy negress, 25 years of age, seamstress and dressmaker, doing washing and ironing for a family with three children, two girls aged 11 and 7 years and a boy aged 9 months. Also one young black Mozambican male, with good French manners, a reliable servant and subject; a well-built black man of the same origin, capable of keeping a house supplied with water and firewood; and a young black Bengali cook, good presentation and very well-behaved. Apply to the newspaper office.



of water: he did so, and carried it into the store. While I was waiting for him and wondering at his being so long away, I heard the heavy blows of a hammer: after a little while I was alarmed and went to see what was going on. I looked into the store, and saw my brother lying on his back on the floor, and Mr. Williams, who had bought him, driving staples over his wrists and ankles; an iron bar was afterwards put across his breast, which was also held down by staples. I asked what he had been doing, and was told that he had done nothing amiss, but that his master had failed, and he was sold towards paying the debts. He lay in that state all that night; next day he was taken to jail, and I never saw him again. This is the usual treatment under such circumstances. ■

Narrative of the Life of Moses Grandy; Late a Slave in the United States of America, London, C. Gilpin, 5 Bishopsgate Street, 1843.

Slaves in Dahomey (present-day Benin), photographed in the second half of the 19th century.



One hundred and forty million Africans died or were sold into slavery. For every slave taken aboard ship, six or seven other Africans lost their lives as indirect victims of the trade.



A

continent of fear

by M'Baye Gueye

One of the most patent consequences of the slave trade was without any doubt its effect on Africa's population. Although it is difficult to put a precise figure on the numbers involved, it may reasonably be estimated that 20 million slaves were taken to the New World during the four centuries or so that the trade existed.

When one remembers the kind of methods used to obtain slaves, the losses suffered by

Africa take on appalling proportions. Naturally, thieves, criminals, witch doctors and all kinds of misfits were unceremoniously sold to traders. But most slaves were seized in the course of wars and plundering forays. In such cases, in addition to those who were exported as slaves, there were direct and indirect victims of the trade—people who died fighting or as a result of the famine, diseases and epidemics that followed in the wake of destroyed harvests, burnt grain

stores and the disruption of the population's fragile equilibrium with its environment.

Such infamous acts were familiar events in all regions of Africa involved in the Atlantic trade. Oral literature is haunted by the sound of groaning victims and the sight of burning villages lighting up the horizon. That permanent state of war, with its succession of massacres, destruction, plundering and violence, made fear "one of the dimensions of the African soul". It may be estimated that for every prisoner taken aboard the slave ships, six or seven Africans died on the continent.

Yet these losses, which were spread over a period of time, represented barely more than 1 per cent of the black population. It may be wondered why such a relatively small manpower drain had such a paralysing effect on African society. The reason is that slave-traders mainly took young people. The massive deportation of those sections of society that were able-bodied and of an age to have children resulted in a population shortfall which new births were increasingly unable to offset.

A political disaster

The political repercussions of the slave trade were equally drastic. The former political structures of northern Nigeria, Chad and the Congo entered a period of decline, as they were unable to adjust to the situation created by the slave trade. The Congo, then at the height of its prosperity, failed to resist the pressure of the Portuguese, who sallied forth from their base on the island of São Tomé to seize Congolese slaves for their colony in Brazil—despite the fact that cer-

tain members of the ruling aristocracy, who had converted to Catholicism, were well disposed towards them. The Portuguese furthered their own interests by encouraging provincial chiefs to rebel and by fomenting strife among the factions that were struggling for power, with the result that the country eventually lapsed into anarchy.

The same fate was suffered by the kingdoms of Oyo and Benin, which had achieved a certain degree of institutional stability until the Europeans arrived. They failed to withstand the continual wars caused by the slave trade. Soon their provinces set themselves up as independent principalities. By the end of the eighteenth century, an outstanding culture over two centuries old had been turned into a vast theatre of constant conflict which resulted in Benin being grimly known as "bloody Benin".

However, the coastal states and those in their vicinity managed to recast their institutional structures and set up strong regimes. In the Senegambian region, for example, traditional political structures underwent far-reaching



Opposite page, "The rebellion of a slave on a slave ship", oil on canvas by the French painter Edouard Renard (1802-1857).

Below, ivory pendant probably representing an "oba", or king, of Benin (16th century). The heads of bearded Portuguese are carved on the tiara.



The best hope of earth

In giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free—honourable alike in what we give and what we preserve. We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last, best hope of earth.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Annual Message to Congress, 1 December 1862

changes. A system of monarchy by divine right, which set the king apart from his subjects and put power in the hands of his representatives, was replaced by a form of autocracy. Although the latter system, which relied on a considerable centralization of power, inevitably resulted in abuses, it did make it possible to keep the slave trade within “tolerable” bounds. The Futa, the Waalo, the Kayor, the Banol, the Sine and the Salum had succeeded in neutralizing each other, so their respective kings felt little temptation to venture on to their neighbours’ territory.

The state of Akwamu, near the coast, took advantage of its dealings with the slave traders to assert its supremacy in the area. By controlling roads to the hinterland, it was able to exert pressure on commercial transactions. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, it imposed

This plate made of bronze, a metal which the Europeans traded for slaves, adorned a wooden pillar in a royal palace in Benin.



heavy levies on its neighbours. Akwamu’s rise to power was not an isolated case. The state of Denkyira, in the western part of the “gold coast”, also expanded spectacularly as a result of trade with Europeans. It secured substantial revenues by acting as a broker, and built up a powerful army that enabled it to impose levies on the Ashanti confederation, whose various districts decided to unite against their powerful neighbour.

Ashanti achieved political and spiritual unity towards the end of the seventeenth century. Then, after a series of victorious campaigns against Denkyira, it established its authority over the main gold trade routes and opened up a road to the coast. In order to administer its new conquests, it set up a bureaucracy whose docility only reinforced the central power.

Inadequate restrictions

Yet the Africans did not always take the slave trade lying down. Many local chiefs reacted as best they could to halt the practice. Slaves rebelled on many occasions. Their uprisings in Gorée in 1724 and 1749, in St. Louis in 1779 and in Galam in 1786 ended in bloodbaths.

Several kings and religious leaders tried to organize resistance against the slave trade. Between 1673 and 1677, a Moor called Nasir al-Din conquered the kingdoms of Futa, Waalo, Jolof and Kayor by leading a veritable crusade against local kings involved in the slave trade. After repressive action was taken by the trading post in St. Louis, the former regimes were returned to power. In 1701, Lat Sukaabe, king of Kayor and Bawol, kidnapped a slave-trader and released him only after obtaining a tidy ransom.

Agaja, king of Dahomey, embarked on a campaign that was as resolute in the resources it marshalled as in the ambiguity of its aims. After opening up a way to the sea, he took steps to restrict the slave trade in his kingdom. Europeans were not allowed to put their merchandise on board ship or to leave the territory without his permission. He then posted a permanent military unit on the coast and turned the slave trade into a state monopoly.

But all such efforts, however commendable they may have been, were incapable of putting an end to the slave trade. African chiefs hostile to the practice had no way of forming a united front against it. The initiative shifted to the marabouts, who urged the people to convert to Islam on the grounds that it was their only chance of salvation. In 1725, the revolution of the marabouts triumphed at Futa Jallon. In 1776, it was Futa Toro’s turn. Between 1787 and 1817, Uthman Dan Fodio founded the theocratic state of Sokoto. But despite the efforts of various parties to stop the slave trade, it continued until the end of the nineteenth century.

By that time, all these political entities had ended up losing their cohesion. As well as being ill-defined geographically, they were handicapped by having populations which were very unevenly distributed and scarcely growing at all. The oppressive authoritarianism of the ruling aristocracies, combined with political exclusion, social discrimination and extreme tribal idiosyncracies, resulted everywhere in a constant state of tension that did not favour the emergence of peaceful societies. By the time slavery was about to die out, those societies had become profoundly weak and vulnerable to colonialism, which was poised to take over where the slave-traders had left off. ■

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the Black Code

by Innocent Futchu

In the France of Louis XIV slaves were legally regarded as chattels but were also considered to have souls

The *Code Noir* (Black Code) was one of the first attempts in the history of slavery to codify a hitherto unregulated practice. Published as an edict by Louis XIV in March 1685, it included some sixty articles aimed at regulating the way black slaves lived—and died—in French possessions in the West Indies and the Indian Ocean. In 1724, the same legislation was extended to cover Louisiana.

The provisions of the *Code Noir* had three aims: to Christianize slaves, to specify the prohibitions imposed on them and the punishments applicable to them, and to define the conditions of their emancipation. Described in these oversimplified terms, the *Code Noir* might seem to have been designed to facilitate the transition of blacks from slavery to freedom via Catholicism.

APPARENT LENIENCY

Because it advocated the baptism of slaves and stated the conditions under which they could be emancipated, the *Code Noir* apparently recognized blacks as belonging, to some extent, to humankind. Some of its provisions granted them explicit rights. They could, for example, lodge a complaint against their masters if they were not fed and clothed according to the law (Article 26). Although they were required to wed according to the rites of the Catholic Church, a spouse could not be imposed on them (Article 11), and if slaves were seized or sold it was forbidden to separate husband, wife and children (Article 47). Masters were required to support disabled and sick slaves (Article 27), and could emancipate slaves in their service without the consent of their parents from the age of 20 (Article 55).

Taken separately, some articles of the *Code Noir* were undeniably an improvement on the kind of practices endured by slaves in other parts of the world until the nineteenth century. However, it has to be recognized that in its overall effect “the *Code Noir* is the most monstrous legal text produced in modern times”. This might seem to be a rather harsh judgment were it not for the startling paradoxes that mar the spirit and letter of that legislation.

The fact that the *Code Noir* emphasized the need to Christianize slaves, a subject to which thirteen articles are devoted, might suggest that it at least recognizes them as having their own soul and personality. Yet it

also proclaims: “We declare slaves to be moveable property” (Article 44), and “We declare that slaves may not possess anything which does not belong to their master . . . people unfit to possess or contract in their own right” (Article 28). This tendency to see slaves as objects, which clearly underlies the spirit of the *Code Noir*, is spelled out in the two articles referred to, which refuse to recognize them as human beings.

The nature of the slave changes, depending on circumstances. While he is regarded as “moveable property” in Article 44, he becomes “immoveable property” in Article 48, which sees him as an integral part of the “sugar works, indigo factories and dwellings” where he works. The legislator does exactly what he likes with the slave, since he has first made sure that the slave has no civil existence. Article 30, for example, states that the testimony of slaves is null and void, and therefore cannot count as evidence, while Article 31 stresses that slaves may not take out proceedings before either a civil or a criminal court.

A CASE OF CATCH-22

What is the point of passing legislation on individuals who are patently not regarded as subjects of law? Yet Article 26, mentioned above, allows slaves the right to lodge a com-

“I am a man: nothing human is alien to me”: this aphorism by Terence, the Latin poet of the 2nd century A.D. and himself an emancipated slave, was the caption to this 1791 engraving depicting the supposedly more humane version of slavery created by the *Code Noir*. The engraving was produced by Louis Joseph Masquelier, from an allegory painted by Jean-Michel Moreau.



plaint against their masters if the latter do not feed them as laid down by the law. This is a case of Catch-22: slaves are subject to the law, yet their legal existence is denied by the very same text which entitles them to seek justice.

More generally, the *Code Noir* constantly affirms one thing as well as its opposite, especially where slaves' interests are concerned. For slaves are above all regarded as property which can be disposed of by their owner as he sees fit. Eleven articles regulate the exchange of that property between buyers and sellers, debtors and creditors.

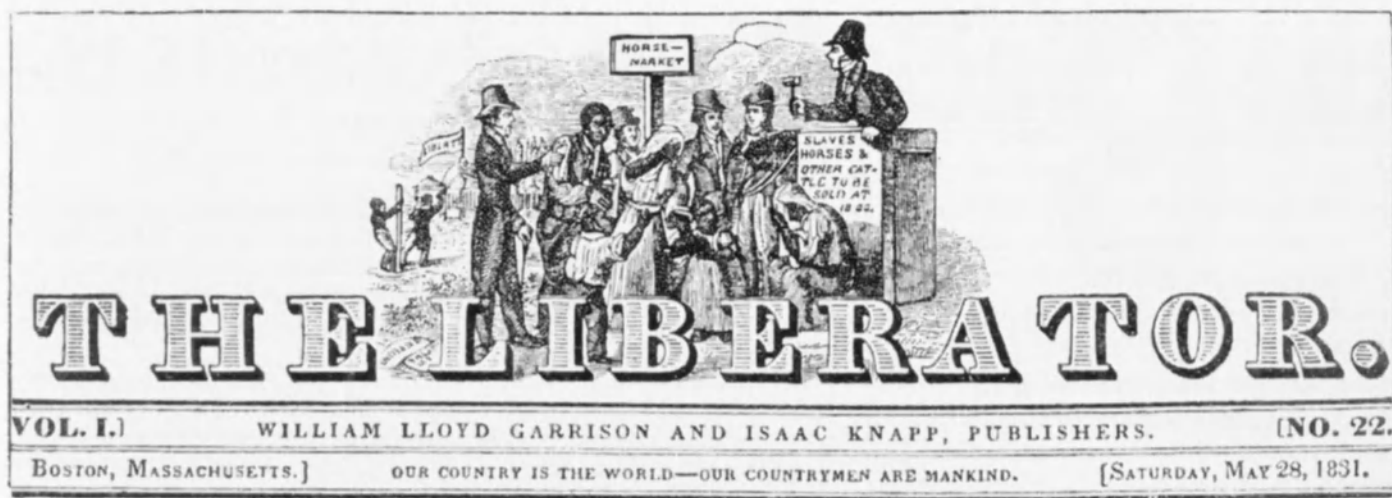
The major part of the *Code Noir* is devoted to the rules which should be imposed on slaves to keep them under the control of their masters. Every aspect of their relationship is taken into account. Among other things, a slave is not permitted to drink spirits, carry arms, assault his master, hold meetings or above all abscond. The first time he tries to run away the slave loses an ear. If he tries again, he is hamstrung. And if he is brave enough to try yet again, he is beheaded. Even activities in the *Code Noir* relating to the emancipation of slaves comprise provisions which restrict their liberties.

In this respect Article 58 is typical. It urges emancipated slaves “to pay especial respect to their former masters, their widows and their children; thus any disrespect they may show towards them shall be punished more harshly than if it had been shown towards another person”. The imposition of such conditions on emancipated slaves was tantamount to demanding that they behave submissively towards whites in general, all of them actual or potential owners of slaves. The distinction between master and slave was compounded by the henceforth insuperable divide between black and white—which at another time and in another country came to be known as apartheid. The enabling texts of the *Code Noir* even went so far as to regulate the dress of emancipated slaves in order to perpetuate their differences from their former masters.

All in all, the *Code Noir* did not do much to help slaves on their way to freedom. In it, emancipation was seen as the transition from one form of domination to another. But then it could hardly have been otherwise in a world where the economic interests of the dominant class were more powerful than any humanitarian considerations. ■

1. Lluís Sala-Molins, *Le Code Noir ou le calvaire de Canaan*, Paris, PUF, 1987.

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The long road to abolition

by Nelly Schmidt

The eradication of slavery in North America and the West Indies proceeded at snail's pace. Even the leaders of the French Revolution dragged their feet.

Above, masthead of *The Liberator*, the newspaper published in Boston in 1831 by the writer William Lloyd Garrison, an ardent advocate of the abolition of slavery in the United States.

Some words are historically loaded. “The abolition of slavery” is of course a convenient phrase, but historical authenticity requires us to choose terms more faithful to reality. The process the Americas went through in the nineteenth century and are still going through today, may be more accurately described as the destruction of the system of slavery. It was a slow process, beginning with the ending of slavery in San Domingo/Haiti in August-September 1793.

The crucial importance of resistance movements by slaves themselves in triggering this process is just beginning to be realized. The case of San Domingo/Haiti is a typical example

of this: a slave revolt that turned out to be impossible to curb was what triggered the abolitionist movement there in 1791.

In response to Spanish and British threats to invade the island, Sonthonax, the civil commissioner assigned to the colony by the revolutionary government in Paris, decided on 29 August 1793 to end slavery in the north, and this measure was extended to the west and south of the colony in September and October of the same year. The measure was confirmed on 4 February 1794 (16 pluviôse of the year II) by the Convention, which decreed that “all men without distinction of colour domiciled in the colonies are French citizens, and shall enjoy all the rights guaranteed by the Constitution”. The 1795 Constitution even specified that “the French colonies are an integral part of the Republic and are subject to the same constitutional law”, and provided for their accession to the status of departments.

This assimilationist legislation, however, never came into force. In 1802, the legislative body declared itself in favour of reintroducing slavery. On 17 May the Consulate, taking the view that “illusions of liberty and equality have been spread to these remote lands” (i.e. France’s American colonies), where “the difference between civilized and uncivilized men” was too “striking”, passed a decree providing that “In the

Though Marster was a Mef’dis’ preacher, he whip his slaves, an’ den drap pitch an’tuppentine on dem from a bu’nin’ to’ch.

Marster preach to de white folks Sunday mo’nin’. Den, at night, all de marsters roun’ dat country sen’ dey slaves, an’ he preach to us. He had two fav’rit tex’es he uster preach from to de slaves. One was, “Serv’nts, obey your marsters”. He didn’ say much ‘bout de Marster in Hebben, but allus tole us to obey our earthly marsters. De other tex’ was “Thou shalt not steal”. He preach dat over an’ over, to de niggers. Dey couldn’ read deir Bibles, so dey hatter b’liebe jis’ what he say.

Since I’s got to readin’ an’ studyin’, I see some of de chu’ches is wrong, an’ de preachers don’ preach jis’ like de Bible say.

Jack White
slave

colonies restored to France under the Treaty of Amiens dated the 6th germinal of the year X, slavery shall be maintained in accordance with pre-1798 laws and regulations”.

The opposition aroused by the coming into force of this decree obliged Napoleon Bonaparte to dispatch military expeditions to Guadeloupe and San Domingo. The colonial war that raged in these two islands ended with the reintroduction of slavery in Guadeloupe. In San Domingo one of the great leaders of the insurrection, Toussaint Louverture, was captured and imprisoned in France, at Fort-de-Joux in the Jura, where he died in April 1803. But the French troops sent to impose the reintroduction of slavery were defeated, and the independence of the colony (under its old Amerindian name of Haiti) was finally proclaimed on 1 January 1804.

The British practise “the right of search”

Emancipation in the British colonies which followed thirty years later was likewise largely the result of the long rebellion by the slaves of Jamaica (1831-1832). As early as 1780 a humanitarian trend had emerged in England, one of its supporters being a young M.P. of aristocratic origin, William Wilberforce: in 1807 he persuaded the House of Commons to prohibit the



When Dr. Cannon found out dat his carriage driver had larned to read and write while he was takin' de doctor's chillun to and f'om school, he had dat nigger's thumbs cut off, and put another boy to doin' de drivin' in his place.

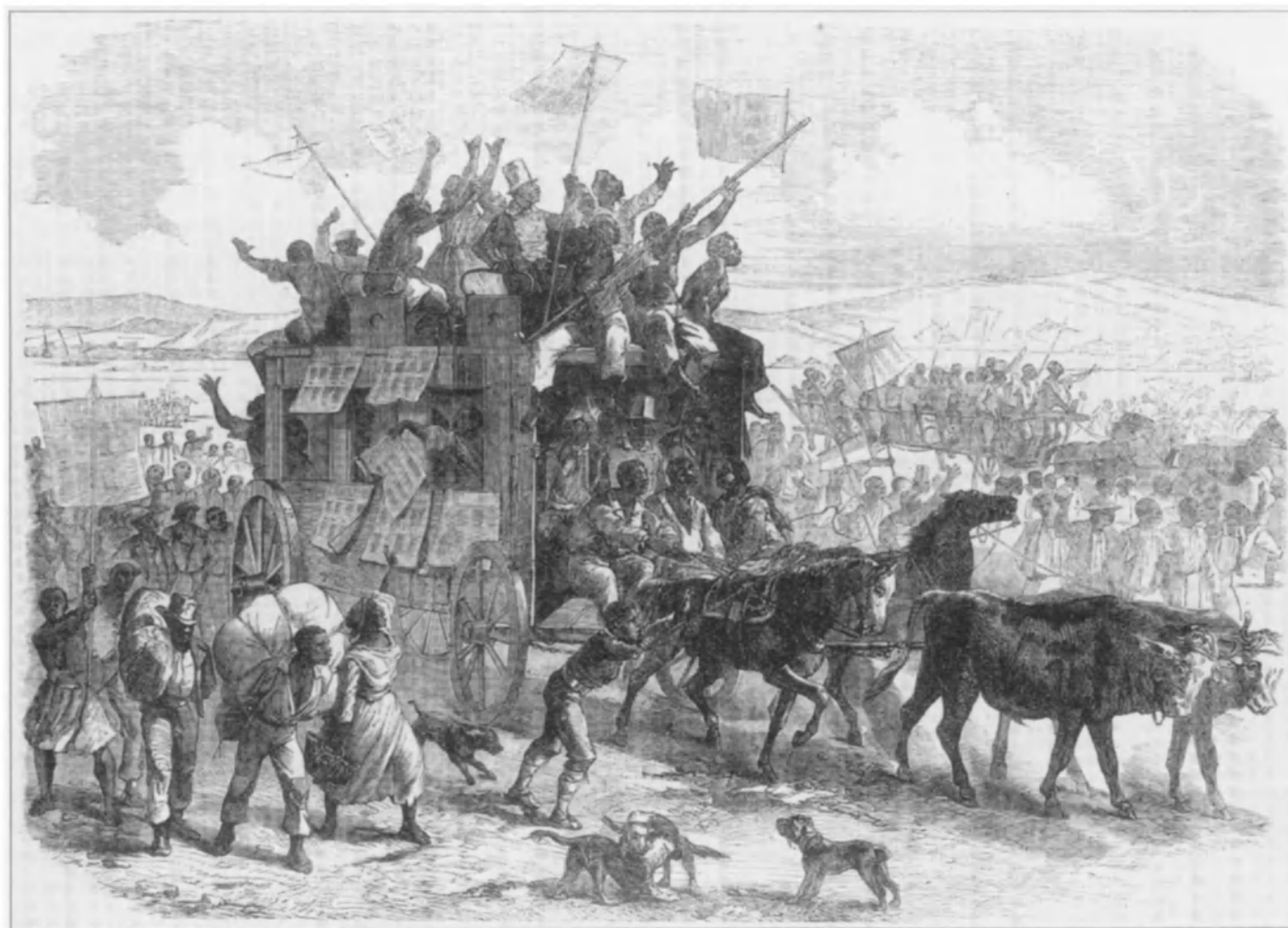
Tom Hawkins
slave



transatlantic slave trade. From that date onwards, and then after the 1815 Congress of Vienna (which drew up a European agreement on ending the slave trade), Britain was to lead a campaign for the inspection of slave-ships, which were pronounced illegal.

Well-established networks of illicit slave trade had grown up from the coasts of Africa to Brazil, the United States, Cuba and the French colonies of Guadeloupe and Martinique. Propaganda against this trade—though not against the system of slavery itself—developed particularly in London, where numerous leaflets circulated in several languages. One of them entitled *The cry of the Africans against their*

“The emancipation of slaves in the United States”, an engraving published in the *Illustrated London News* in 1864 (artist unknown).





Poster depicting Harriet Tubman (1820-1913), a celebrated black activist in the United States before the Civil War. Herself a fugitive from a Maryland plantation, she helped more than 300 runaway slaves to reach the northern states and Canada.

European oppressors, or a look at the murderous commerce known as the slave trade, by Thomas Clarkson, which appeared in 1822, contained the famous cross-sections of the slave-ship *Brookes*. The “right of search” practised by British transatlantic vessels aroused lively controversy. France and the United States in particular grudgingly accepted the role of policeman of the seas first performed by the British.

A proliferation of petitions and the creation of a society for the abolition of the slave trade eventually brought about an investigation by the Crown. But it was not until 1823 that an Anti-Slavery Society was founded in London. In 1831 the Crown manumitted slaves within its own lands, and on 28 August 1833 the King approved an Act voted by Parliament emancipating slaves in the British West Indies, Guyana and British Honduras (now Belize). This Act

No sreee, I never did learn how to read and write. I just hold to the end of the pencil so the white man can sign my name.

Eli Davison
slave



My master would put slaves in a calaboose at night to be shipped de next morning. He always limited de lashes to five hundred. After whipping dem, he would rub pepper and salt on deir backs, where whipped, and lay dem before de fire until blistered, and den take a cat, and make him claw de blisters, to burst dem.

Robert Burns
slave

Right, Victor Schoelcher (1804-1893), one of the leading architects of the abolition of slavery in the French colonies in 1848.

gave the planters generous compensation, and set a time-limit of four-to-six years for the complete liberation of slaves employed in farming and domestic work. They were subject to compulsory unpaid apprenticeship under their masters, limited to four years because of the difficulty of enforcing such a system. Only children under six and adults over sixty were declared free in August 1834.

The new citizens of the Republic

Little attempt is usually made to situate the beginnings and the acceleration of abolitionist processes in the context of the resistance by slaves themselves to the system of slavery. By and large, European abolitionist movements remained very timid. In Paris a decision to abolish slavery was not on the agenda of the *Société française pour l'abolition de l'esclavage*, founded in 1834 and modelled on the British Anti-Slavery Society. Nor did it form part of the programme of the provisional government that came to power after the revolutionary days of February 1848. But Victor Schoelcher, who had travelled in the French colonies and had set himself up as the apostle of the abolition of slavery, managed to persuade the Minister of the Navy and the Colonies that a general uprising was imminent if the *status quo* were maintained; he got the government to accept the principle of abolition in the French colonies. It was only at this price that law and order, and work on the sugar-cane plantations, could be maintained. He was appointed Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies and Chairman of



Old Missus and young Missus told the little slave children that the stork brought the white babies to their mothers, but that the slave children were all hatched out from buzzards' eggs. And we believed it was true.

*Katie Sutton
slave*



states, where industrialization had come relatively early and progressed relatively quickly, were exposed to effective propaganda from the Quakers and other Protestant sects. Indeed, the Quakers were the only white group to plead the cause of emancipation of the negroes in England's North American colonies before the War of Independence. As early as 1688 the Quaker community in Pennsylvania had protested against "the business of buying and keeping blacks".

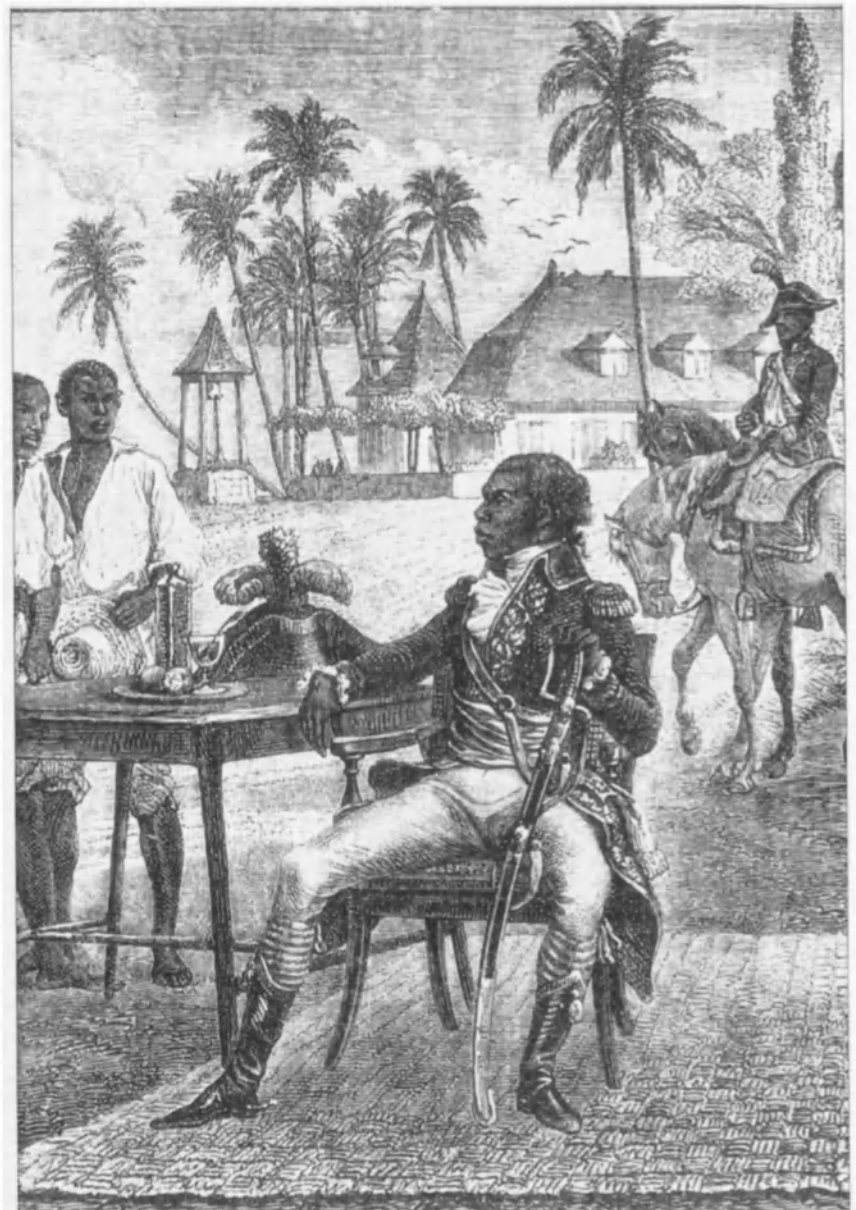
Toussaint Louverture, below, as depicted in an engraving published in the *Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire* (1845-1862) by the French historian and statesman Louis Adolphe Thiers.

the Commission for the Abolition of Slavery, which on 27 April got the new government to sign a decree providing for immediate emancipation. This instrument was modelled on the British precedent, and granted slave-owning colonists compensation; but its original feature was that it made the "new freedmen" citizens empowered to elect their representatives to the National Assembly in Paris by universal suffrage.

The introduction of this decree in the French colonies—where rebel slaves had already forced the governors to proclaim liberty even before the text arrived from Paris—caused riots in the Danish colonies of the Virgin Islands (St. Croix, St. John and St. Thomas), where in July 1848 Governor Von Scholten had urgently to promulgate an emancipation decree drawn up by King Christian VIII's government. In 1863 a similar decree was brought into force in the Dutch colonies.

A different kind of emancipation of slaves was to be seen in the United States and the Spanish colonies, in the context of armed conflicts. This was the case in Latin America in the days of Bolivar, and also in Cuba starting with the Ten Years' War, between 1868 and 1878. Slaves were promised their freedom in return for enlisting in the armies being raised against Spain. The Moret law (from the name of the Spanish Minister for the Colonies) was passed by the Cortes in 1870 and brought into force in Puerto Rico in 1873, and then progressively in Cuba in 1880 and 1886.

In the United States slavery was not so much a colonial as a national problem. The northern



I recollect seein'
one biscuit crust,
one mornin'. Dey throwed
it out to de dogs, an' I
beat de dog to it.

Alex McCinney
slave

In 1775 the principles set forth in the Declaration of Independence were injected into the debate on slavery. During the war the negro slaves of New England intensified their anti-slavery activities and produced a stream of petitions. They claimed to be following the example of the oppressed colonists "in their present glorious struggles for freedom". Vermont, by prohibiting bondage in its 1777 Constitution, took the lead among the northern states which proclaimed the ending of slavery. The same step was taken by Massachusetts and New Hampshire, while Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Connecticut opted for gradual emancipation.

Disappointed hopes

In 1830 the movement acquired fresh impetus. William Lloyd Garrison founded the newspaper *The Liberator*. In 1845 Frederick Douglass, a fugitive arrived from the south, published his famous autobiography and settled in Washington, where he made a career in journalism and diplomacy. Harriet Tubman helped to organize the clandestine departure of slaves from the south to the north and Canada via the "underground railroad". In 1848 the Free Soil Society and then in 1854 the Republican Party (whose candidate Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States in 1860) included in their manifestoes the ending of slavery throughout the country. The end of the War of Secession in 1865 made it possible in any event to enshrine abolition in the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution.

After Puerto Rico in 1873 and Cuba in 1886,

it remained for Brazil in 1888 to promulgate the last slave emancipation decree in the Americas—having received the largest number of captives from the illicit slave trade in the nineteenth century.

Each decree was followed by an often lengthy period of transition to other ways of regulating labour and social relations. In the Caribbean, agreements were very soon concluded between the European governments and various agencies in Africa, India, Indonesia and China for the importation of underpaid contract (indentured) labour. With the arrival of several hundred thousand of these coolies, recruited from among the most deprived peoples, the "new freedmen" inevitably found themselves excluded from the labour market: the central administrations had fixed their wages at four times those of the new immigrants.

While the Second Republic in France gave freedmen in its colonies citizenship rights, this was not the case elsewhere. In the British West Indies, for instance, decentralization of power by the Colonial Office allowed the local planters' assemblies to institute a means-tested suffrage which disenfranchised the slaves recently freed from their period of apprenticeship. In the United States, when the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, officially ending slavery in all the states of the Union, was approved, the Ku Klux Klan came into being in Tennessee in December 1865. The southern states adopted a policy of discrimination and racial segregation similar to apartheid, and it was to take another century to bring this to an end. ■

Makandal burned alive (1991), acrylic on canvas by the Haitian painter Frantz Zéphirin. François Makandal, a slave of Guinean origin, was known as the "Black Spartacus". The instigator of an uprising in Haiti, he held out with his comrades-in-arms against the French army, terrorizing the plantations until he was caught and burned at the stake in 1758 on the square in front of Cape Haitien cathedral.



The quotations from the testimony of slaves that accompany this article are taken from *Bullwhip Days*, edited by James Mellon © 1988 Grove/Atlantic, New York.

NELLY SCHMIDT

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1794: the French Convention abolishes slavery

by Lluís Sala-Molins

In 1783, a ten-year “boom” began for the slave trade. The price fetched by slaves had never stood so high, and during those ten years French ports dispatched more than 1,100 slave ships to the coasts of Africa, accounting for one-third of the entire turnover of the slave trade in the eighteenth century. From February 1788, when the *Société des Amis des Noirs* (Society of Friends of the Blacks) was founded, until 1793, 424 slave ships—one-eighth of the total trade—set out from French ports to take on board their cargoes of “black gold”.

In 1791, the rallying cry of the insurgent black leader Bouckman to the slaves gathered in the Bois Caiman forest was the signal for a revolt that would not be relegated to history like all its forerunners. The events that were sparked off that night were to culminate in the eradication of slavery from San Domingo and the forced removal of Haiti from French domination.

It is true that, in pre-Revolutionary France, the *Société des Amis des Noirs* had worked to emancipate the mulattoes from slavery and had advocated setting a series of time-limits of up to as many as seventy years for the gradual phasing-out of slavery after the source of supply provided by the slave trade had dried up. These time-limits were meant to ensure that everything would proceed under the orders of the whites, whose sovereignty and ownership, which they regarded as sacrosanct principles, would be respected. The fact is that the “amis des Noirs”, who were “Physiocrats” in politics and “enlightened” philosophers, were advocates of free labour—in the long run. They argued from time to time over the prospective merits of setting up colonies in Africa itself, where the whites would govern the blacks infinitely better by engaging them in “free labour” on their own continent rather than by shipping them to the other side of the Atlantic. Above all, however, they dilated endlessly on the monstrous nature of slavery, the intolerable human price of the slave trade, the crime of seizing the blacks from their homes, and the most appropriate length of time that should be allowed to elapse between the scheduled end of the slave trade and slavery

and the abolition of both practices once and for all.

However, the slaves themselves in the Bois Caiman laid down the absolutely non-negotiable condition that there should be no more slavery and no more paternalistic management. In 1791, with gunpowder in their belts, a machete in one hand and a torch in the other, the slaves acted out the death sentence of slavery. They had cast off their chains and set themselves free. At last they were free!

The triumph of Toussaint Louverture

The authorities in Paris did not take kindly to this unexpected outcome and pointed the finger of guilt at the “amis des Noirs” who, through their immoderate language and their fiery rhetoric, were regarded as being responsible for the ransacking of the colony. The “amis des Noirs” protested. They insisted that they were in no way responsible and also made it plain that they were only concerned about the mulattoes. They had repeatedly said that the blacks would have to wait in calm, humility, patience and resignation, and that they would be better off if they were kept under control by the liberated mulattoes who, in that capacity, would have interests identical to those of the whites and would seek to ensure peace and calm in the colony and a profitable return on labour.

The Convention provided as best it could for the defence of its island possessions in the face of English and Spanish incursions, the consequences of the slave revolt and the anti-revolutionary and secessionist attitudes of the local parliaments. It beat about the bush. It held debates on the nature of the powers it should delegate and . . . on the colour of the people to whom it would agree to delegate them. Its immediate and constant aim lay in trade and its colonial interests and in effectively opposing the claims being made to its territories by the other powers.

It was against this background that it sent Sonthonax and Polverel to San Domingo to inform those “who were not free” (since the Convention, which was dragging its feet on the “matter”, deliberately refrained from men-



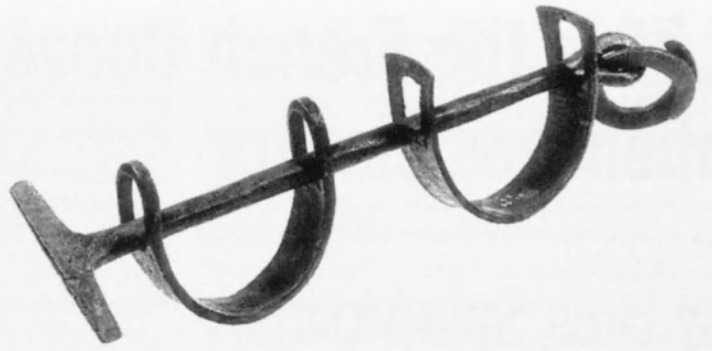
A French engraving dating from 1789 (artist unknown).

tioning the word “slave”) that their recognition as human beings would come more quickly if they threw their weapons into the rivers and went back to their picks and shovels. No matter how well-disposed the envoys of the Convention may have been to expediting matters, the fact remains that it was the “slaves” and Toussaint Louverture who dragged the abolition decree out of them on 29 August 1793.

How could the people in Paris contend with the threefold danger of secession, revolt and seizure by the English which put such fear into them? The only way of keeping the West Indian possessions—or what was left of them—was to arm the slaves so that, as free men and citizens, they could serve as soldiers and defend the land and the plantations with their bodies still laced with the freshly inflicted scars where the lash had bitten into them. Then came the abolition decree of 1794 endorsing the uprising of Louverture in 1793. Even people like the Abbé Grégoire were taken aback by the suddenness of the events, while others such as Robespierre were busy with other matters. Danton expressed his satisfaction at the trick played on the English, whose trade he predicted as coming to an end. However, some very pretty phrases were also heard that day: the least that could be done at the height of the Enlightenment was to open the floodgates of rhetoric and to congratulate the Convention on having taken so imaginative a step. The event was even celebrated at a splendid ceremony held at the Temple of Reason. ■

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From sub-Saharan Africa to southeast Asia, the International Labour Organisation is rooting out the last vestiges of slavery. But it is easier to change laws than to free children from exploitation in factories and prostitution.



Forced labour

human bondage in today's world

by George Thullen

Slavery was a feature of many societies until fairly recent times. For instance, according to information brought to the attention of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in 1992, it appears that slavery has not been eradicated in Mauritania, despite being outlawed by official decrees and constitutional provisions. Lack of adequate and effective inspection measures and of a mechanism to coordinate the struggle against slavery have hampered efforts to stamp out a practice deeply rooted in the country's economy and culture. Similarly, reports supplied to the United Nations Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery showed that slavery and practices analogous to slavery, such as certain forms of serfdom, still exist throughout the country, and that cases of kidnapping and sales of children and their exploitation continue. Even where freed, ex-slaves have been finding it very difficult to support themselves away from their former masters. The ILO's Committee of Experts has asked the Government for information on specific measures and policies which would lead to a real abolition of slavery in Mauritania.

Traditional slavery also survives in modern-day Sudan. Allegations of slavery in that country reached the UN Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery for the first time in 1988 and were also discussed at the International Labour Conference in 1989 and subsequently. Indeed, as a result of that country's civil war, slavery seems to be on the increase.

The Sudanese Government maintains that the allegations are related to conflicts of a tribal nature, such as disputes over pasture and water

resources in areas where there was an overlap of tribes. As a result, each tribe involved in a dispute captures members of the other tribe or tribes as hostages while waiting for the dispute to be settled according to tribal traditions and customs. However, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Sudan, who visited the country in September and December 1993, has concluded that reports and eye-witness accounts reveal a great deal of consistency regarding the circumstances of abduction, the locations of destination, the names of locations where children and women are said to be kept in special camps, and where people from the northern Sudan, or even from abroad, reportedly come to buy some of these people.

Debt bondage, a widespread evil

Sale or traffic of children, the Special Rapporteur has noted, seems to be an organized and politically motivated activity, of mass character. Abductions of children have been repeatedly reported, including the abduction in the summer of 1993 of 217 children, mainly Dinka. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, in a report of January 1993, has also expressed concern regarding issues of forced labour and slavery in Sudan. In the light of all this, the ILO Committee of Experts has asked the Government to provide full information on measures taken or envisaged to ensure that forced labour practices are really eradicated.

Other forms of slavery, such as debt bondage, or exploitation of or traffic in persons, particularly of women and children, are a far more common occurrence. No region is

spared. Debt bondage is a mechanism whereby an employer entraps a labourer by offering an advance which he or she has to pay off from future earnings. But because wages are generally very low, and the employer frequently makes deductions for accommodation or tools and often levies fines for unsatisfactory work, the worker is unable to repay. Instead, the debt increases steadily and the employer may insist that it be passed from parent to child or even grandchild: there have been instances of people slaving to pay off debts eight generations old.

Debt bondage is particularly widespread in South Asia and in Latin America, and its victims often tend to be the poorest, often tribal people, who are illiterate and relatively easy to deceive and to keep in ignorance of their rights. If they try to leave their employment they are usually caught and returned by force, if not punished severely or killed outright.

India and Pakistan have long faced some of the most serious problems of bonded labour. In India, the non-agricultural occupations in which bonded labour has been identified include, among others, stone quarrying, the brick-kiln industry, fishing, building and construction, forestry, carpet weaving and pottery-making, with child labour found predominantly in carpet weaving, glass-bead manufacturing and the match and fireworks industries. Bonded labour in Pakistan is very common in the brick-kiln industry, but it is also found in other fields, such as quarrying, shoemaking, carpet weaving and in the making of *bidis* (cigarettes), as well as in agriculture.

On paper, whether by Acts of Parliament or by constitutional provisions, bonded labour should have ceased to exist a long time ago. In practice, however, enforcement of the legal texts has been hampered by ingrained social, economic and cultural patterns and practices. Action by non-governmental organizations and trade unions, combined with the effects of the media and improved communications between various parts of India is leading to growing public awareness of the existence of bonded labour and is making it easier for the authorities to take the requisite steps to stamp out the practice.

Pakistan officially abolished the bonded labour system by an Act promulgated in March 1992 and there seems to be a strong commitment in Government circles, up to the highest levels, to make a clean break with past practices. The Act provides that every bonded labourer stands freed and discharged from any obligation to render any bonded labour. One of Pakistan's trade union federations, however, has alleged that bonded labour continues to be practised in many areas and industries, particularly in the brick-kiln industry.

Forced labour of the bonded labour type can also be found in other regions. The ILO Committee of Experts has noted that in Peru, for instance, as confirmed by a Government-appointed committee, practices of debt bondage, deceitful or violent recruitment of labour, sub-human conditions of work and the exploitation of children in the indigenous communities of Atalaya are still current.

Exploitation of children

Unquestionably, as the ILO Committee of Experts has put it "forced labour exploitation of children, be it in forced child labour, child prostitution, child pornography, be it in factories, sweatshops, brothels, private houses or elsewhere, is one of the worst forms of forced labour". This year the Committee has chosen to condemn strongly the exploitation of children for prostitution and pornography by tourists and visitors from other countries. Eradication of "these deplorable practices", it states, should no longer be seen as a responsibility only of the country in which it occurs, but as an international responsibility. Yet child prostitution for international tourist consumption is only the tip of the iceberg—recent studies show that the largest share is for local consumption and must be tackled there.

While child prostitution and pornography may represent one of the worst forms of forced child labour, millions of children are bonded labourers, are kidnapped or otherwise lured away from their families to be imprisoned in sweatshops, to work "unseen" as domestic servants or to be given or sold at a very young age to another family. There they receive little or no pay, are stripped of any control over their own lives, and are often beaten, sexually abused, starved and subjected to abnormal working hours and hazardous working conditions. They are deprived of the right to lead a normal childhood, deprived of education, deprived of a future.

A direct contacts mission of the ILO to Thailand in September 1993 reported that



Men debased

The surest way of making people vile is to vilify them. Slavery debases masters and slaves alike, hardens people's hearts, snuffs out morality and paves the way for all manner of disasters. . . .

ABBÉ GRÉGOIRE

De la traite et de l'esclavage (1815)

despite existing laws for the protection of children, recruitment of children by force and deception for work in factories, sweatshops or brothels continued in Bangkok as well as in the provinces. In a study of child labour conducted in 1986 by the National Youth Bureau in the Prime Minister's Office, it was stated that children lacked the opportunity to go home for a visit, or even to get in touch with their family, or were found to be confined, scolded and physically and psychologically assaulted by their employers. According to information received by the ILO mission, such practices continue to exist. One rescued boy, for instance, who had been kidnapped at a railway station, was forced with other children to work extremely long hours, was beaten and was not allowed to go out or look through the windows. As noted by the ILO's Committee of Experts, another facet of forced labour in Thailand is sexual exploitation of children. It is an extremely serious problem there in terms of both scale and complexity: it is hidden from view, protected by gangs and mafias.

Effective policies to enhance social justice and equity, says the ILO's Committee of Experts, can go a long way to help children and families left at the periphery of development and contribute to the protection of children. This is in essence the message of the Programme of Action against Child Bondage adopted in November 1992 by the Asian Regional Seminar on Children in Bondage, held in Islamabad, Pakistan, and sponsored jointly by the ILO and the UN Centre for Human Rights.

By subscribing to this Programme of Action, the countries which participated—Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand—have pledged themselves to “effective and immediate abolition of child bondage” as a priority goal of a national policy on children. They have acknowledged that there must be a firm political commitment, a clear and unambiguous declaration against bondage, and a comprehensive national policy and programme of action covering legislative reforms, effective enforcement systems, and a system of compulsory and free education. All this would have to be sustained by a vigorous media campaign aimed at changing attitudes and values and at engaging the public in the larger cause of freedom and respect of human rights.

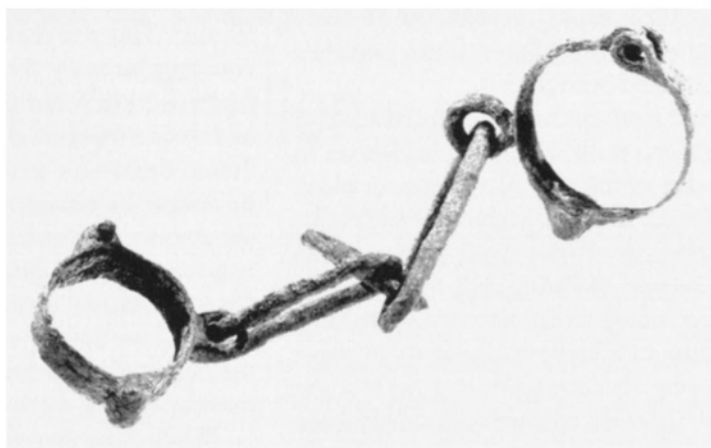
The ILO's Committee of Experts considers that governments should redouble their efforts in fighting forced child labour and punish those guilty of it severely and in a manner commensurate with the physical and moral harm done to the children. To back governments in their fight against forced labour exploitation of children, the ILO launched at the end of 1991 an inter-



Indivisible freedom

Violence committed against the humblest member of the human race affects the whole of humanity. We must all take an interest in oppressed innocents, or else be victims in our turn, when somebody stronger comes to enslave us. One man's freedom is part and parcel of universal freedom. You cannot touch one without at the same time jeopardizing the other.

VICTOR SCHOELCHER (1848)



national programme for the elimination of child labour (known under the acronym “IPEC”) with a substantial financial contribution from the Government of Germany. The elimination of hazardous and bonded child labour is the priority of this programme. In India, for example, one of the first countries to participate, five “action programmes” are being conducted in the carpet industry of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, where the incidence of bonded child labour is notoriously high; their aim is to rehabilitate children who have been working in this industry, and particularly those who have been liberated from bondage.

Non-governmental bodies are a vital instrument in mobilizing public opinion and public awareness. Thus, for example, at a meeting convened in The Hague in October 1993 at the initiative of the Dutch economist and Nobel laureate Jan Tinbergen, he and four other Nobel prizewinners, and representatives of non-governmental organizations and experts from different parts of the world, laid down a strategy for combating child exploitation around the world. Since then, a further 104 Nobel prizewinners have agreed to join in the campaign named “Child Right Worldwide” to stop exploitation of children. ■

GEORGE THULLEN, of Ecuador, is the English-language editor of the International Labour Organisation's annual *World Labour Report*.

A NEW INTERNATIONAL PROJECT

THE SLAVE ROUTE

In September 1994, at a meeting held in Cotonou (Benin), UNESCO launched an international study project on the slave trade which will help to promote research and other activities relating to this major historical phenomenon. Here Doudou Diène, the head of UNESCO's Division for Intercultural Projects, talks about the new Slave Route project.

■ How did the project come about?

—The initiative came from Haiti and the African countries, including Benin, which is particularly concerned by the project. In the days of slavery, its port of Ouidah, on the west coast, was one of the leading centres of the black slave trade. At the same time, Benin was one of the few countries to which slaves returned after they had been set free, and even today many Beninese families still have names of Brazilian origin. It is doubtless this historical heritage that prompted President Nicéphore Soglo to give priority to the Slave Route and to decide to host the Conference formally launching the project in Cotonou.

■ What are the main features of the project?

—Its first objective is to re-examine a major historical event over which, for a variety of reasons, a veil has been cast by its European perpetrators and African victims alike. This will entail studying the slave trade and its causes, and the manner and sequence in which it proceeded. In other words, it will mean retracing our steps along the "middle passage". There is more to the project than that, however. This journey back in time is only one way of

understanding the events involved. The most important thing is to analyse them and shed light on their consequences. I believe it is essential to take a closer look at the paradox inherent in the fact that the initial act of the black slave trade, barbaric as it was, came strangely enough to be instrumental in laying the foundations of a new civilization. More than any other event in history, the slave trade led, through brutality and coercion, to a far-reaching interpenetration of the African, European and American continents. The massive displacement of slaves brought in its wake a similar displacement of cultural values, sensibilities and traditions.

■ Can you be more specific?

—The slave trade had a cultural impact first of all in Africa, where the violence originated. But its consequences can also be detected, in more or less disguised form, among its European perpetrators. It influenced their ways of thinking, their forms of artistic expression, and even their spiritual lives. However, the cultural influences were strongest in the Americas, the Caribbean and the West Indies, where the actual physical encounters took place. It is there that cross-fertilization flourished. It began with ethnic intermingling between blacks, Indians and whites, despite the resistance to it, as we well know. It was followed by cultural intermingling, because the slaves' ancestral traditions, which had become an essential factor in their survival, were kept alive and came to influence not only the local cultures but also those imported from Europe. Whether in music, poetry or other areas, these encounters produced an extra-

The initial act of the black slave trade, barbaric as it was, came strangely enough to be instrumental in laying the foundations of a new civilization.



ordinary mix that nobody could have possibly foreseen. It created a whole give-and-take relationship which still exists today and is being projected into the future. Identity is a process, the outcome of intermixing, of borrowing and appropriation.

■ So the Slave Route project is both intercultural and interdisciplinary. Can we expect it to give rise to activities such as scientific debates, historical, literary or musical research, cultural events, exhibitions, and so on?

—The Slave Route project had actually got underway even before it was formally inaugurated. When we asked the countries concerned for information on their projects, we discovered that some of them had already started work. This was the case, for instance, of an exhibition entitled "Les anneaux de la mémoire" which a group of intellectuals from Nantes—once one of France's largest slave ports—put together after several years' work. A permanent exhibition is being prepared in Liverpool, once a British slave port. In Africa, Senegal launched its Gorée-Almadies Memorial project to create a historical monument on a small island in the Atlantic from where millions of slaves were shipped across the ocean. We have already sponsored several exhibitions, including one at Arc-et-Senans in eastern France on art produced during the slave trade and another at Nantes on the image of blacks in advertising, and seminars. The proceedings of one seminar on the abolition of slavery held under the auspices of the University of Paris VIII are being published jointly by UNESCO and Paris VIII. We are aiming to cover a very broad spectrum of activities, situating them in a global context and providing them with UNESCO backing. The Slave Route project sets out to bring people together.

Official abolition of slavery

SIGNIFICANT DATES

- 1793:** San Domingo (Haiti).
- 1794:** 4 February, the Convention, France's revolutionary assembly, adopts a decree abolishing slavery in all the French colonies.
- 1802:** Napoleon Bonaparte restores the slave trade and slavery in the French colonies.
- 1804:** 1 January, San Domingo proclaims its independence as Haiti.
- 1807:** Great Britain and, later, Denmark prohibit vessels flying under their national flags to participate in the slave trade.
- 1807:** The United States of America abolishes the slave trade.
- 1815:** The Congress of Vienna. The European nations participating in the Congress ratify the decision to abolish the slave trade but reserve the right to set a deadline for its application. The illegal Atlantic slave trade still goes on.
- 1822:** San Domingo
- 1823:** Chile.
- 1826:** Bolivia.
- 1829:** Mexico.
- 1833-1838:** British colonies.
- 1843:** India. However, slaves are not emancipated.
- 1846:** Tunisia.
- 1846-1848:** The Danish Virgin Islands (St. Croix, St. John and St. Thomas).
- 1847:** The Ottoman Empire prohibits the slave trade in the Gulf and closes public slave-markets in Constantinople.
- 1847:** St. Barthélemy (then a Swedish colony).
- 1848:** The French colonies.
- 1851:** Colombia and Ecuador.
- 1853:** Argentina.
- 1854:** Venezuela.
- 1855:** Peru.
- 1863:** The Dutch Caribbean colonies of Curaçao, Bonaire, Aruba, Saba, St. Eustatius, the Dutch part of St. Martin, and Dutch Guiana (Suriname).
- 1865:** The United States of America.
- 1869:** Portugal.
- 1873:** Puerto Rico. Application of the Moret law adopted by the Spanish Cortes.
- 1880-1886:** In Cuba, progressive application of the Moret law, after a period of gradual emancipation following the Ten Years' War of Independence (1868-1878).
- 1885:** The Berlin Conference: Britain, France, Austria, Germany, Russia, Spain, Portugal, Holland, Belgium, Italy, Sweden, Denmark and the United States agree to "help in suppressing slavery", although no direct measures are taken against the slave trade in Africa.
- 1888:** Brazil. Slaves in the country's provinces were gradually emancipated during the second half of the 19th century.
- 1896:** Sierra Leone.
- 1896:** Madagascar.
- 1897:** Zanzibar.
- 1900:** Nigeria (in the British-occupied parts of the country).
- 1926:** In Geneva, 44 countries ratify the Slavery Convention of the League of Nations.
- 1928:** Iran
- 1942:** Ethiopia.
- 1952:** Qatar
- 1962:** Saudi Arabia.
- 1981:** Mauritania.

F A C T

20 books on slavery

The phenomenon of slavery (philosophy, anthropology, sociology)

The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture

David Brion Davis, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1966, 505 pp. By the same author: *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution 1770-1823*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1975, 576 pp.

The Anthropology of Slavery: The Womb of Iron and Gold
Claude Meillassoux, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1991, 416 pp.

Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology

Moses Immanuel Finley, New York, Viking Penguin, 1983, 208 pp.

The Arrogance of Race: historical perspectives on slavery, racism and social inequality

George M. Fredrickson, Middletown, Conn., Wesleyan University Press, 1988, 310 pp.

Slavery

Benjamin Whitaker (report prepared by), Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, New York, United Nations, 1984, 53 pp.

HISTORY OF THE SLAVE TRADE

Africa

Black Mother, the Years of the African Slave Trade

Basil Davidson, Boston/Toronto, Little, Brown and Company, 1961, 311 pp.

Transformations in Slavery, a History of Slavery in Africa

Paul E. Lovejoy, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983, 348 pp.

At the Rendezvous of Victory

C.L.R. James, London, Allison and Busby, 1984, 303 pp.

The African slave trade from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century

Paris, UNESCO, 1979, 330 pp. (*General History of Africa: Studies and documents 2*).

Forced Migration: the Impact of the Export Slave Trade on African Societies
London, Hutchinson, 1982.

Equiano's Travels

ed. Paul Edwards, London/Ibadan, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd, 1967, 198 pp.

The Americas

Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study

Orlando Patterson, Cambridge Ma, Harvard University Press, 1982, 528 pp.

From Slavery to Freedom: a History of Negro Americans

John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss Jr, New York, Alfred A. Knopf Inc, 1987, 624 pp.

Africa in Latin America: Essays in History, Culture and Socialization

Manuel Moreno Fraginals, New York, Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1984, 342 pp.

West Indies and the Caribbean

The Black Jacobins: Toussaint Louverture and the Santo Domingo Revolution

C.L.R. James, London, Allison and Busby, 1980, 426 pp.

The Sociology of Slavery

An analysis of the origins development and structure of Negro slave society in Jamaica
Orlando Patterson, London, 1967, 310 pp.

African Slavery in Latin America and the Caribbean

Oxford, Herbert Klein, Oxford University Press, 1986.

The Arab World and the Indian Ocean

Slavery in the Arab World

Murray Gordon, New York, New Amsterdam Books, 1991, 272 pp.

The Sulu Zone, 1768-1898: the dynamics of external trade, slavery and ethnicity in the transformation of a Southeast Asian maritime state

James Francis Warren, Singapore, Singapore University Press, 1981, 390 pp.

F I L E

The international community against slavery and forced labour

The international community has proscribed slavery on a number of occasions, one of the earliest being the Congress of Vienna in 1815. The 1926 Slavery Convention of the League of Nations was the first modern undertaking to outlaw slavery and the slave trade, but lacked formal procedures or institutions to monitor violation. Forced labour—the usual purpose of slavery—was targeted by the International Labour Organisation when it adopted the Forced Labour Convention (No. 29) in 1930.

Compliance by ratifying States with its provisions is monitored, as with all the ILO's Conventions, by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations. Set up to supervise the application of ratified ILO Conventions, this group of eminent jurists from all over the world can also examine allegations of violations submitted by employers' or workers' organizations.

In 1957, the ILO went a step further when it adopted the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (No. 105), which banned forced labour altogether, whether exacted, for example, as a means of political coercion or as punishment for striking or other infringements of labour discipline.

The United Nations for its part expanded the scope of the 1926 Slavery Convention by adopting a Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery in 1956. However,

it was not until 1974 that a monitoring mechanism was established, a five-member Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery.

The ILO is an active partner of the Working Group and the two complement one another in that each tends to acquire information from different sources. The ILO relies chiefly on governments, employers' organizations and trade unions, while most submissions to the Working Group come from non-governmental organizations.

Forced Labour Convention (No.29), 1930

Article 1:

Each Member of the International Labour Organisation which ratifies this Convention undertakes to suppress the use of forced or compulsory labour. . . .

Article 2:

For the purposes of this Convention the term forced or compulsory labour shall mean all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily. . . .

Article 25:

The illegal exaction of forced or compulsory labour shall be punishable as a penal offence, and it shall be an obligation on any Member ratifying this Convention to ensure that the penalties imposed by law are really adequate and strictly enforced.



Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (No.105), 1957

Article 1:

Each Member of the International Labour Organisation which ratifies this Convention undertakes to suppress and not to make use of any form of forced or compulsory labour:

(a) as a means of political coercion or education or as a punishment for holding or expressing political views or views ideologically opposed to the established political, social or economic system;

(b) as a method of mobilizing and using labour for purposes of economic development;

(c) as a means of labour discipline;

(d) as a punishment for having participated in strikes;

(e) as a means of racial, social, national and religious discrimination.

Article 2:

Each Member of the International Labour Organisation which ratifies this Convention undertakes to take effective measures to secure the immediate and complete abolition of forced or compulsory labour as specified in Article 1 of this Convention.

The price of a living tool

Cost price

Purchase of slave
21 september

No.10. A woman 16-17 years of age purchased by friends met on the ship Garonne, whom I took on the King's account in defence of the private trade in order to prevent any abuse. By name of Chiandvuba.

4 service guns
1 trading gun
4 bottles brandy
The service guns were supplied by the said friend

No.11. A man of 18-20 years of age, purchased by the chief gunner of the Garonne, also taken on the King's account. By name of Emaka.

5 service guns
50 pounds gunpowder
10 bottles brandy

Left, an extract from the "Ledger of extraordinary expenditure for the account of the [French] King's trade in Madagascar", 1767.



PIRATED AFRICAN ART

More than \$600 million in profits are stolen each year from the African arts as a result of international piracy, said the president of the African Association Against Pirating (ACOP) at a recent conference held in Brazzaville (Congo) to evaluate the implementation of UNESCO's 1980 "Recommendations concerning the status of the artist". More than 100 musicians, painters, sculptors, writers, actors, scholars and representatives of non-governmental art associations from 30 African and European countries attended the conference, which was organized by UNESCO, ACOP and the Congolese government. Participants noted sadly that little has been done to implement the UNESCO Recommendations and that artists are being increasingly marginalized.

UNESCO AND CNRS SIGN SCIENCE TRAINING AGREEMENT

UNESCO and the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) have signed an agreement on training programmes in the natural sciences. The agreement is the first of its kind to help French-speaking researchers from developing countries to train in France and to enable French experts in ecology, nutrition and certain diseases such as Aids to travel to these countries to meet local researchers and share their expertise through lectures. UNESCO and CNRS will share the costs equally. The programmes focus on French-speaking Africa and countries such as Egypt and Viet Nam where French is spoken but is not the official language. UNESCO has signed similar agreements with English-speaking research institutes.

PEDALLING FOR THE PLANET

Two young Englishmen, environmental consultant Steve Smith, 27, and musician Jason Lewis, 26, have set off on a round-the-world "Pedal for the Planet" expedition on push-bikes as part of a campaign to promote environmental awareness and international understanding. Using only the strength of their leg muscles, they will cover about 20,000 miles across

UNESCO'S DIRECTOR-GENERAL CONDEMNS TERRORISM AND INTOLERANCE

"Education is a fundamental right," said Mr. Federico Mayor, Director-General of UNESCO, in a statement condemning terrorist threats to students and teachers in Algeria, where a fundamentalist group warned students and teachers to stay away from high schools and universities and threatened to blow up or burn any schools that remained open. In recent months some 30 teachers have reportedly been murdered and almost 20 schools and universities have been damaged. Mr. Mayor also spoke in the spirit of the tolerance, non-

violence and dialogue that inform UNESCO's activities when he expressed concern about another violation of a fundamental right, that of freedom of expression, and called for steps to ensure the freedom and safety of the Bangladeshi writer, Taslima Nasreen, who is under a death threat because of her writings. "It is deplorable," Mr. Mayor said, "that religions, which are based on compassion and love, can be used to express intolerance and contempt for the lives of those who think differently." ■

Europe, America and Asia, as well as travelling 9,000 miles across the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans in a unique 8-metre pedal-powered boat. During the expedition they will be talking to children and teachers in 40 UNESCO Associated Schools about how different cultures can live together in harmony with the environment. UNESCO's Associated Schools project is an international network of some 3,000 educational institutions in 120 countries. It was created in 1953 to encourage young people to work together for a better future.

UNESCO HONOURS YOUNG REPORTERS

On the outskirts of Lima, Peru, an old man sifts through the ashes of giant pits filled with burnt rubbish in the hopes of finding metal scraps to sell at a local market. His story is told in *The King of the Ashes*, a video which was awarded UNESCO's Gold Medal at the Fourth International Festival of Young

Reporters held last June in Port-de-Bouc, France, by UNESCO and the World Federation of UNESCO Clubs and Associations (WFUCA). The Festival, which centred on an international competition of short video news reports by young video artists between the ages of 13 and 30, attracted 120 students and reporters from 26 countries. Workshops on the practical and ethical dimensions of audiovisual journalism were also held as part of the Festival. Other prize-winning videos included *Invalid* (Russia) in which a man with severely deformed limbs and an enormous head remembers being once told by doctors that he was better suited for scientific experiment than a normal life and talks proudly about his wife and job; *Vettiyan*, the story of young Indian children who work in factories, putting matches in small boxes; and *L'Artiste artisan*, in which children in a small Tunisian village are enchanted by a would-be magician who makes cartoons with an old camera. ■

The challenge of cultural pluralism



I believe that the coming century will give increased prominence to culture. On the world map, the imprint of culture is proving more permanent than the overprint of politics. Culture is emerging as a major factor in relations within and between nations, and in intercommunal living. In these circumstances, we find ourselves confronted by an increasingly

urgent question: what can and should be done to promote genuine cultural pluralism—locally and in the world at large?

The very concept of culture is notoriously difficult to define—a liquid in an age of solids, as it has been described. However, we might not go far wrong if we were to describe it as everything we create and preserve as a group or—in a wider context—as a species. Such a definition has the advantage of encompassing culture both in its restricted sense of the arts and in its broader anthropological sense of a “whole way of life, material, intellectual and spiritual”. It makes the link between artistic creation and the creativity of everyday life. It also explains the characteristic diversity of cultures, since creativity and diversity are synonymous. It points, finally, to the essential problem posed by cultural difference, which relates to the permanent tension between creation and preservation at the heart of culture itself. Our behaviour is largely shaped by the interplay of these contending forces within a given cultural character.

Language, one of the main vehicles of culture, highlights the problem inherent in cultural diversity. Languages do more than map a given reality according to different codes. They determine to some extent the way in which we view that reality. The implications of such linguistic factors for our relationships with each other and our environment are far-reaching indeed. Linguistic diversity must be seen as an essential resource, and its preservation assumes the same importance as the protection of bio-diversity in general.

Yet language differences—as the Tower of Babel myth underlines—can also give rise to cultural misunderstanding and even conflict. The reason for this may well be—as George Steiner has argued—that there is an inherent duality in our use of language: it serves as a means of communication but also of affirming our separateness. The continuous creation of private sub-languages within language—slang and jargon—would support this view. Language is to this extent a form of “shared secrecy” as well as “shared expression”.

What is true of language is true of culture. Our world needs a diversity of cultural viewpoints, characterized by attitudes of openness and responsiveness rather than mistrust and rejection. One of the most urgent tasks at the present time—in a world of ever closer cultural contacts—is to encourage recognition of the rights of others and to help those whose cultural rights have been disregarded to maintain and develop their identity. This is the challenge of cultural pluralism.

The achievement of such pluralism requires that a sense of cultural difference be complemented by a recognition of wider cultural affinities. The great masterworks of culture—and of nature—are of inestimable value since they are perceived instinctively by most people as part of a common human heritage. UNESCO has embodied this concept of a common heritage in its World Heritage Convention, under which over 400 cultural and natural sites in 95 countries have been inscribed on the World Heritage List in recognition of their outstanding universal value. The notion of universality enshrined in the world heritage is a paradigm for the promotion of cultural pluralism.

A SHARED HERITAGE

The shared heritage transcends, of course, the sites and monuments that constitute the wonders of the modern world. Our varied cultures have to a greater extent than is generally realized a common history and have been mutually enriched by their contacts down the ages. To promote awareness of these links UNESCO is engaged in a series of major projects on the historical interchanges between cultures and is supporting the creation of networks of cultural institutions in different world regions to promote intercultural exchanges.

To talk of cultural pluralism in today's world is to be constantly reminded of how far removed we are from our goal. The reality in many parts of the globe is all too often one of cultural confrontation and conflict. The causes of such antagonism are obviously inseparable to some degree from problems such as poverty, overpopulation, environmental degradation and global asymmetries of all kinds. However, some tensions are inherent in cultural contacts themselves. UNESCO is currently engaged in studying potential causes of cultural conflict and is exploring in its Culture of Peace programme how cultural initiatives can be employed in confused post-conflict situations.

I believe that action of this kind is inherently worthwhile because of the catalytic effect it can have. Dropping a pebble in a pond is a small gesture that can spread ripples far and wide. We must never tire of making the gesture that helps to promote cultural pluralism and the values of democracy, tolerance, justice and peace that it implies. ■



The Danube delta

'A place the gods forgot'

by Matei Cazacu



UNESCO IN ACTION
HERITAGE

IT matters little whether scientists consider the Danube delta as being only 7,000 years old and treat it as if it were born yesterday. In the eyes of the traveller, the delta is a place the gods forgot, where land and water still merge imperceptibly into one another, where everything—river, sea, silt, sand—is tinted with ochre. Over its entire expanse of 3,500 square kilometres . . . it is impossible to tell where the waves end and where the sand of the river banks begins. And the same doubt persists over a swathe 100 kilometres wide right down to the Black Sea. . . .

“Yet the solid mass carried down by the Danube is encroaching on the sea at a rate of ten metres every year. Vegetation grows on it haphazardly, forming a carpet of white flowers. But if you try to pick them, you fall into the water. You may think you can see foam, but all you are seeing is sand. One night we could not moor our boat because the reeds were drifting, forming an island several kilometres long. Animals make the same mistake and I have seen them drown in the broad alluvial valley of the Balta.

“The delta is a world still in the making, giving off the raw smell of fresh



Above, aerial view of the Danube delta.
Right, young Lipovan women.

*A carpet of
white flowers.
But if you try to
pick them,
you fall into the
water.*

it collects on its 2,850-kilometre course, with its average stream-flow of 6,500 cubic metres per second. Europe's biggest river after the Volga, it has a catchment area of more than 800,000 square kilometres, where the rivers of central and southeastern Europe, Austria, Germany and Hungary all come together, as it flows through the former Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria and Ukraine.

Sacred waters

For the people of Antiquity who lived along its middle and lower reaches, the Danube was a sacred river. Its waters purified warriors before they set out to do battle, and sacrifices were made to it, in particular by the emperor Trajan, who gave thanks to it for its benevolence to the Roman army during its campaigns in the 2nd century A.D. against the Dacians living in the Danube plain and the Carpathians. On Trajan's column in Rome, the river is represented in the shape of a bearded giant. Trajan was the first person to cross the Danube on a stone bridge, built by the architect Apollodorus of Damascus in 105 A.D.

The ancient Greeks looked upon the delta as a self-contained country bounded by seven, five or three arms of the river, depending on the seasons. In the course of time, at least four of the river's outlets became silted up and gave rise to innumerable freshwater channels



seaweed, moist earth, darting fish and still warm caviar. . . .

"There is no sign of man having ever lived here, no trace of history having been written on the elements, which continue on their unwavering course. There is nothing for us to understand, except that time and space are infinite."¹

This description of the Danube delta, which dates from 1936, is still true today apart from the figures, which keep on changing. The delta now covers an area of more than 5,500 square kilometres, since the Danube each year carries down some 200 million tons of silt which

Fishing is still one of the main activities of the people of the Danube delta.



and lakes separated from the sea by floating or fixed islands covered in reeds and trees such as poplar, oak, willow and alder.

The names of the three arms through which the Danube empties into the Black Sea are, from north to south, Chilia, Sulina and Sfintu Gheorghe (St. George). These hark back to the times of the ancient Greeks (Chilia means “monk’s cell” and Sulina “channel” or “tube”) and to the presence there in the Middle Ages of Italians, or rather Genoans, whose patron was St. George. Along with Istria, located further south, they were the site of trading posts and later of cities, from which ships loaded with salted and smoked fish, cereals, honey, furs and slaves set out for Greece and Italy.

For the sailors of ancient times, the Black Sea—the Pontus Euxinus of Antiquity—into which the Danube flows, marked the limit of the known world. They plied its inhospitable waters, buffeted by violent winds, until 6 December, the feast-day of St. Nicholas, the patron saint of sailors, when navigation came to a halt—by then the waters of the Danube and even the sea had often started to freeze over—and only started again at Easter.

Birdlife in danger

Legend has it that the island of Peuce (the Greek for “poplar”) in the heart of the delta was once occupied by a mysterious kingdom inhabited either by Amazons or—as would be more consistent with historical fact—by tribes of Germanic origin. Off the mouth of the Danube lies the island of Leuce (the Greek for “white”), now known as Snake Island, which belongs to Russia. According to Greek mythology, it was the site of the entrance to the Kingdom of the Dead and also of a cult to Achilles, who is supposed to have taken refuge there.

As in ancient times, the Danube delta today is a stopping-off point for birds flying from central and northern Europe on their annual migration to the Mediterranean. More than 300 species have been recorded, 176 of which breed there, including cormorants (3,000 pairs) and pygmy cormorants (2,500 pairs, comprising 61 per cent of the world’s population), while pelicans (2,500 pairs, comprising 50 per cent of the Palaearctic breeding population), 287,500 red-breasted geese (a threatened species), and hundreds of thousands of white-fronted geese and ducks, egrets, herons and a variety of birds of prey, including a few pairs of rare white-tailed eagles. The marsh tern colonies are particularly notable.

Otters, weasels and mink are to be found on the floating islands. Fish are another source of wealth of the Danube delta and lakes: more than sixty species have been identified, including forty-five native to the Danube and its tributaries, plus fifteen marine species. Some of these, such as sturgeon, whose eggs provide caviar, swim upriver to spawn, while other species, such as the eel, swim downstream into the sea.

However, for the past fifty years or so, the fauna and flora of the Danube—the delta has the world’s largest area of reedbeds—have been threatened by pollution, which has caused considerable damage. The fish catch has plummeted. Barely 20 tons of sturgeon were caught in 1989, only 2 per cent of the amount caught a century ago. In the last ten years alone, five species of birds have

disappeared, eight have declined in number, twenty-seven have become rare and eighteen are on the verge of extinction.

This critical situation is primarily due to the growing imbalance caused to the fragile ecosystem of the Danube delta by such factors as the drying up and dredging of lakes and canals such as Braila lake and the Caraorman canal; the introduction of agriculture, especially maize-growing, on an area of 420 square kilometres, less than half of which have proved productive; the widening of canals to enable them to take ocean-going vessels that are too large for the Danube-Black Sea Canal opened in 1984; and the intensive harvesting of reeds with heavy-duty machinery in order to provide feedstock for paper and cellulose mills, such as that at Calarasi upstream of the delta.

Increasing protection

In addition, there has been a dramatic increase in the pollution of the waters of the Danube. Many factories and agro-industrial complexes are dumping phosphates, nitrates, oil residues, mercury and pesticides into the river and its tributaries. Urban sewers release their effluents directly into the river without prior treatment and waste water discharges trigger off epidemics of diseases such as swine fever, hepatitis B and cholera.

At the other end of the chain, the situation in the Black Sea is just as disastrous: 80 per cent of the fish species caught in 1960 (twenty-one out of

twenty-six) have now disappeared and the tendency for underwater life to be destroyed still goes on.²

The reaction of the Romanian and Ukrainian authorities (20 per cent of the delta is on Ukrainian territory) to this ecological catastrophe is still rather hesitant, owing to lack of resources.

It is true that a promising start has been made by halting drainage work in 1990, including the site as a biosphere reserve on the World Heritage List in 1991, and setting up a Danube Delta Institute at Tulcea to study and monitor the region. However, if the current trend is to be reversed, assistance from the international community will be needed. In September 1990, a mission from the World Conservation Union (IUCN) consisting of experts from a number of international organizations, including UNESCO and the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF), visited the delta. Its proposals and recommendations have still by no means all been implemented. However, Romania's adoption in 1993 of a law aimed at strengthening the protection of the delta is a step in the right direction. Mechanized reed harvesting and reclamation

works to allow ocean-going vessels to sail through the delta have been gradually reduced and a policy has been drawn up for the natural rehabilitation of the polders and replanted forest areas.

The delta is also home to human settlements. It is inhabited by some 20,000 people, mainly fishermen. More than 80 per cent of them are Lipovans—Russians belonging to Orthodox sects which were persecuted by the official Church and the Czars and took refuge in the delta. Their numbers have declined sharply, from 30,000 some fifty years ago to only about 12,000 at the present time. ■

1 Odette Arnaud, *Pêcheurs de rêves*, Editions de la Nouvelle Revue Critique, Paris, 1936, p. 22.

2 John Pomfret, "Communism's messiest legacy is a gasping Black Sea", *International Herald Tribune*, 21 June 1994.

MATEI CAZACU,

a Romanian-born historian, is a research assistant at the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS). He has published a number of studies and books including *L'Histoire du prince Dracula en Europe centrale et orientale au 15^e siècle* (1988) and *La Moldavie ex-soviétique: histoire et enjeux actuels* (1993).

*80 per cent of
the fish species
caught in 1960
have now
disappeared*

Below, fishing boats at Sfintu Gheorghe, on the southern arm of the delta.



Hermann von Helmholtz

anniversary

Physiologist and physicist

by Reinald Schröder

THE German philosopher and scientist Hermann von Helmholtz was born in Potsdam in 1821, the eldest son of a secondary school teacher. He is remembered for his statement of the law of the conservation of energy, which holds that the amount of energy in the universe is always the same, and for his major contributions to optics, physiology, electrodynamics and other branches of science.

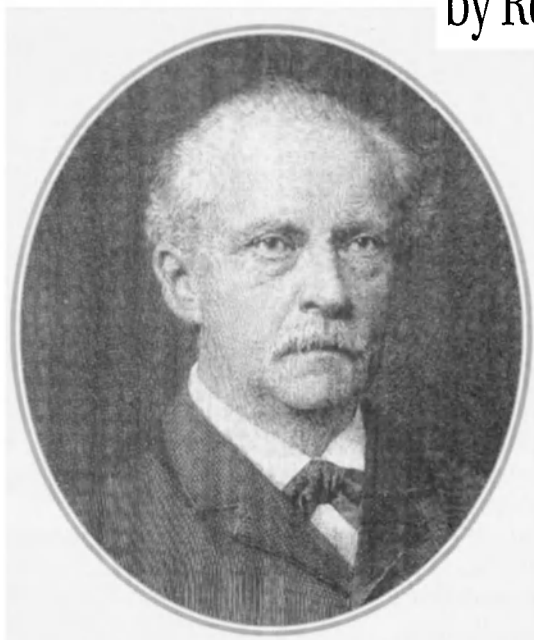
Helmholtz showed a keen interest in nature from an early age, and became consumed by a passion “for discovering the causal relationship between natural phenomena”. At that time, however, physics offered few career prospects, and since his father could not afford to pay for him to study the subject, he opted for medicine instead. He enlisted in the Prussian army as a doctor, in exchange for which he received a medical education in Berlin virtually free of charge.

Looking back as a man of seventy on his early years, Helmholtz said: “Young people like to come to grips with the most intractable problems from the very beginning. I therefore turned my attention to the enigmatic nature of the vital force”. The problem continued to intrigue him after he had taken up his duties as an army doctor, and he started to examine its implications for nature as a whole, not just for living beings. The question he asked was: “What sort of relationship must exist between the different forces in nature if perpetual motion cannot provide an explanation covering every eventuality?” (The possibility of a perpetual motion machine had been rejected by scientists in the late eighteenth century).

In his study of the conservation of energy, he drew on his knowledge of mathematics, and in 1847 delivered an epoch-making paper on the subject to the newly founded Berlin Physical Society. As a “callow” young doctor, he had half-expected his findings to be received with amused tolerance by the eminent physicists in the audience, only to discover to his astonishment that they were determined to “dispute the truth of the law and, in their diatribe against Hegel’s natural philosophy, to look upon my own work as likewise being the rambling of an undisciplined mind”. Fortunately, friends of his own age present at the meeting thought differently and greeted him with wild applause. His paper has been described as “one of the first, and certainly the clearest, statements of the principle of the conservation of energy.” A few years later the theory of the conservation of energy had become the most widely accepted tenet of physics.

Thanks to his growing scientific reputation, Helmholtz was released from his military obligations and in 1848 went on to teach anatomy at the Berlin Academy of Fine Arts. In 1850, he was made an assistant professor of physiology at the University of Königsberg. Subsequently, after a brief interlude at the University of Bonn, in 1858 he became head of the Institute of Physiology specially created for him at the University of Heidelberg.

Although he was unable to devote all his time to physics, his main interest, he made a virtue out of



Hermann von Helmholtz
(1821-1894)

necessity by applying physics to the study of human beings, thereby providing a modern basis for physiology as a natural science. This approach proved to be particularly fruitful in the study of sensory organs in which physical stimuli are converted into physiological signals.

While preparing his first lecture at Königsberg Helmholtz hit on the idea of the ophthalmoscope, the scientific accomplishment which brought him the greatest fame. It was known that cats’ eyes shine at night because of the light reflected from the retina. Helmholtz therefore designed an instrument which, by focusing light on the retina, made it possible to examine the eye through a magnifying lens. As a result of this discovery, a number of illnesses could be studied for the first time through direct observation of the eye.

Helmholtz’s theories of colour vision and musical harmony were also instrumental in relating physics to physiology and were to have far-reaching consequences for our knowledge of the mechanisms of hearing and vision.

Despite these great successes in his specialized field, Helmholtz wrote to his friend Emil Du Bois-Reymond that “he had lost interest in physiology and was only really interested in mathematical physics”. When Germany’s most prestigious chair of physics at the University of Berlin became vacant, as Du Bois-Reymond later put it, “the unthinkable happened: a medical doctor and professor of physiology was appointed”.

The Berlin post was admirably suited to Helmholtz’s talents and temperament. From 1885 onwards, however, he began to suffer from poor health. He was gratified to be appointed Chairman of the new Imperial Institute of Physical Technology responsible for supervising Germany’s system of weights and measures, a post which enabled him to devote much of his energy to scientific research. Active to the end, he died on 8 September 1894 of a brain haemorrhage. ■

REINALD SCHRÖDER

is a German journalist and publisher specializing in the history of science and technology. He is the author of a number of books, including a study of the industrialization of the German printing industry in the 19th century, published in 1993.

GREENWATCH

SAVING THE ARAL: THE DRAMA OF CENTRAL ASIA'S GREAT LAKE

BY FRANCE BEQUETTE



All that remains of once thriving fishing ports are rusting hulks stranded on the sand.

IN the wake of *perestroika*, banner headlines such as “Aral Sea being strangled to death” have brought home to the world in the last few years the scale of the ecological catastrophe caused by the gradual drying-up of this vast lake—wrongly called a “sea”—located in Central Asia, in what used to be the Soviet Union.

“For the first time in the history of humanity”, writes Professor Nikita Glazovsky, First Deputy Director of the Institute of Geography of the Russian Academy of Sciences, “a lake whose surface area is greater than that of some countries is disappearing through human agency. The deterioration of the environment is responsible for declining health standards among the population and the growing child mortality rate. It is also having a far-reaching impact on the region’s economic development.”

Before 1960, the Aral had a surface area of 66,000 square kilometres and was the world’s fourth largest lake, but it has now slipped back to sixth place. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, its catchment area is now divided among five independent Republics—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. In the early 1960s, the lake’s average depth was 53.4 metres and had not varied by more than one metre since the beginning of the century. Today it is no more than 38 metres. Thousands of workers were employed in the fishing industry and in 1962, nearly 40,000 tons of fish were delivered to the canning

plants in the surrounding region. Stockraising was also a flourishing activity. The lake shore was girdled by native forests, known as *tungai*, and marshes whose flora and fauna had adapted to the salinity of the water. Now, its two former ports of Muryak and Aral’sk are situated some 40 kilometres inland. Their fishing fleets, stranded high and dry and rusting away, bear all the signs of a ships’ graveyard.

Soviet scientists started to sound the alarm at the beginning of the 1970s, but the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet did not get around to discussing the problem until 1986. It took twenty years for international public opinion to get moving. The geographer Monique Mainguet, former lead of the Desertification Control Programme Centre of the United Nations Environment Programme in Nairobi (Kenya), has spent many years studying the Aral. This is how she describes the present situation: “Because the water from the Aral’s two main tributaries, the Amu Dar’ya and the Syr Dar’ya, has been used for industrial-scale irrigated cotton-growing, the lake’s volume has shrunk by 60 per cent and its shoreline has receded by as much as 65 kilometres in some places. In 1942, its salinity level stood at 10 grams/litre, but it has now risen to 30 grams/litre and is responsible for the disappearance of the original flora and fauna. There is only one remaining fish variety, and this is unsuited to the once thriving fishing

and canning industries. As a result of the emergence of part of the lake bed above the water-line, salt particles are picked up by the wind and are carried for distances of hundreds of kilometres, polluting the air and soil and both surface and deep water deposits. The defects in the irrigation systems responsible for salt encroachment are compounded by the pollution caused by the uncontrolled use of fertilizers, herbicides, defoliants and pesticides. Drinking water and fruit and vegetables have become toxic, particularly for children”.

A REGION INHABITED SINCE THE OLD STONE AGE

Turania, the name by which geographers often call Turkestan, is a semi-desert plain covering an area of 3.5 million square kilometres, with a climate rather similar to that of the sub-Saharan Sahel in Africa. In their book on the Aral, Monique Mainguet and the bio-geochemist René Létolle explain the lake’s role in these terms: “Recent meteorological studies have shown that, through evaporation from the lake surface, the Aral created a sort of mattress composed of moister air, which varied with the seasons and rose to an altitude of 9 kilometres. The influence of this mattress used to

extend for distances of several hundred kilometres southeast of the lake. Through its local regulating effects, Lake Aral gives rise to gentle breezes which are instrumental in creating a milder climate well beyond the lake's immediate shoreline". One of the consequences of the drying-up of the lake has accordingly been a change in climate, which is gradually growing harsher.

Even so, archaeological excavations have shown that the region has been inhabited since the Lower Palaeolithic era, in other words for the past 100,000-300,000 years. Although the arid plain is swept by dust-laden winds, it forms a land corridor in which a variety of modes of production have been practised at different periods. In the fifth millennium B.C., agricultural settlements already existed in the southern part of present-day Turkmenistan. By the fourth millennium, cattle, sheep and goats were being raised, and wheat, pomegranates and apricots were grown. Irrigation was a very ancient practice dating back to the eighth or ninth millennia B.C., but owing to its limited scale, it did not yet represent a threat to the ecosystem.

COTTON-GROWING AND AGRICULTURAL OVER-EXPLOITATION

The real danger came with mechanization. By 1843, there were already more than thirty large canals and an extensive secondary irrigation network. "In 1918, during the Russian Revolution," write Monique Mainguet and René Létolle, "Lenin signed a decree allocating 50 million gold roubles to the development of irrigation". In the agricultural sector, priority was given to growing cotton, for which there was a heavy demand not only from the Soviet textile industry but for use as gun-cotton. Since a hot climate and abundant amounts of water are needed to grow cotton, the crop can be said to be at the origin of the ecological disaster of the Aral.

In June 1993, Michael H. Glantz, Alvin Z. Rubinstein and Igor Zonn published a detailed study of the Aral in the magazine *Global Environmental Change*, in which they noted: "... in 1953 soil scientist Viktor Kovda captured the spirit of socialist transformation when he wrote: 'the Party ... and the Soviet government are doing everything possible to transform nature, to do away with deserts, to attain a further big rise in agricultural productivity. ... The grand projects outlined by Stalin's genius ... will make it possible to master the forces of nature in the U.S.S.R.'. Khrushchev later reasserted a well-known Soviet saying that his society



could not wait for nature to produce benefits and that society must extract those benefits from nature". It was this short-sighted view of things that was to cast such a blight on the future.

It is true that, at the end of the 1980s, "modern" agriculture in Turania supplied the former Soviet Union with 95 per cent of its cotton, 40 per cent of its rice and 30 per cent of its fruit. But at what a cost! The figures for the agricultural inputs responsible for pollution are very impressive, ranging from 900 kilograms of fertilizer per hectare for rice to 1,500 kilograms of ammonium sulphate, 100-200 kilograms of potassium chlorate and 200-250 kilograms of superphosphate per hectare for cotton and, to cap it all, 54 kilograms of pesticides per hectare compared with only 3.5 kilograms in the rest of the Soviet Union. Between 1960 and 1990, 118,000 tons of the highly toxic defoliant known as "Agent Orange", used by the Americans in Viet Nam, were sprayed in the Karakalpakstan region south of the lake alone.

As a result of these practices, there was a sharp decline in the quality of the water in village wells and ponds. People's health was threatened: "the child mortality rate of 51 per thousand is more than double that for the former Soviet Union, and 70 per cent of all adults and 60 per cent of all children have health problems". These figures quoted by Monique Mainguet and René Létolle are still increasing.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Professor Glazovsky ascribes the drama of the Aral to the management errors made by Soviet officials, who were paid according to the number of kilometres of canal they built. It was therefore to their advantage to continue expanding an irrigation network consuming vast

quantities of water. "One possibility considered was to divert water to the Aral from Siberia or the Caspian Sea. The same old mistakes should not be made by persisting in digging more canals. The first step should be to adopt legislation common to all five Republics, but this will not be easy because they do not necessarily have the same interests."

Does the answer lie in action by international organizations such as the World Bank, the Global Environment Fund, or the United Nations Development or Environment Programmes? The Republics concerned have appealed for international assistance and nineteen projects have already been put forward. The budget for the first stage works out at some \$50 million and the second stage is expected to cost \$220 million. As the World Bank acknowledges in its report of 26 April 1993: "Aside from the daunting technical problems, the greatest risk to the success of the proposed programmes would be the failure of the Republics to co-operate and make the required sacrifices, in terms of their financial contributions and also in terms of their willingness to release a part of their water allocations for improving the environment of the deltas and the Aral Sea disaster zone".

Will the appeal to save the children of the Aral region which a group of women scientists made in October 1990 to the Presidents of the Republics and the heads of organizations of the United Nations system be heard before it is too late?

Contaminated by pesticides, the water supplying village wells in areas around the Aral has become a health hazard.

FURTHER READING:

- *Aral*, by René Létolle and Monique Mainguet, Springer-Verlag, Paris, 1993.
- *Sécheresse*, September 1992, No.3, Vol.3, and June 1994, No.2, Vol.5, ed. John Libbey
- *Aral Sea Programme*, World Bank, March 1994.

FRANCE BEQUETTE is a Franco-American journalist specializing in environmental questions. Since 1985 she has been associated with the WANAD-UNESCO training programme for African news agency journalists.

ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING: FINDING THE RIGHT WORDS

The World Industry Council for the Environment (WICE) has published a short handbook, "Environmental Reporting", setting out guidelines on how industrial enterprises should report on their environmental policies, practices and performance. The handbook encourages managers to deal with controversial issues openly: "If your report is to be credible, publish good and bad news. Be sure that you can substantiate your data". The handbook also points out that such reporting can contribute to a dialogue with even the severest critics of environmental damage caused by industry. A useful course in transparency for industrialists, who are so often accused of polluting the planet. ■

COMMON SENSE ABOUT POLLUTION

Carol Browner, Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency, has had an ingenious idea. She has proposed that in future the laws which have hitherto regulated industrial pollution on a pollutant-by-pollutant basis should take account of the overall effect on the environment. This would foil some current practices, such as using waterways for disposing of pollutants which it is forbidden to release into the air. This "Common Sense Initiative" will be initially tested on six major industries disposing of 345 million pounds of toxic substances annually. ■

GIANT GALAPAGOS TORTOISES IN DANGER

Isabela Island, in Ecuador's Galapagos archipelago, has recently been victim of a huge month-long fire, during which rescue workers discovered the

remains of 42 giant tortoises that had been eaten by some of the island's 1,000-strong population or by people from other islands. The giant tortoise (*Testudo elephantina*) is in danger of extinction and is an internationally protected species.

When the fire broke out in mid-April and destroyed 2,700 hectares of woodland, trenches were dug to protect the island's 6,000 tortoises. However, according to Michael Bliem-srieder, an official at the Galapagos National Park, 400 of the tortoises had to be moved to a special reserve not so much because of the threat posed by the fire as for fear of the appetites of the inhabitants. Tortoise-hunting, although illegal, is apparently a traditional practice. The meat of the tortoises, especially females, and their blood are regarded as having medicinal properties, apart from being particularly succulent. ■

STEPPING ON THE GAS

The big three American vehicle manufacturers Chrysler, Ford and General Motors have reached an agreement on lowering the price of natural gas-powered cars and trucks. Last June, they decided to combine research efforts to improve the gas tank, the most expensive part of natural gas-driven vehicles. Another problem is that natural gas has only one-quarter of the energy density of gasoline, so that vehicles have to be refuelled every 250 kilometres. As far as pollution is concerned, gasoline-powered engines give off carbon dioxide, which is a greenhouse gas. However, natural gas contains about 93% methane, which is released into the air after the fuel has burned and contributes just as much to the greenhouse effect. Is the project really worthwhile? ■

THE DANGEROUS DARDANELLES

Up to 1,500 ships a day sail through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, the two straits linking the Aegean and Black Seas off the coast of Turkey. In order to take the pressure off these international waterways between Europe and Asia, it would be necessary to build an oil pipeline linking the Caucasus to the Mediterranean. Last March, a Russian tanker carrying 100,000 tons of crude oil caught fire



following a collision. Existing regulations allow complete freedom of passage both day and night, regardless of the nationality of the vessels or their cargo. The assistance of a pilot or tug continues to be discretionary, although the strong current and the large number of winding stretches and shallow sections would warrant their use. To respect new regulations drawn up by the International Maritime Organization, notice of dangerous cargoes must now be given. From November onwards, two navigation channels will separate ships heading for the Black Sea from those making the return voyage. A step in the right direction. ■

THE VOICE OF AFRICA

Over the past few months, the Pan-African News Agency (PANA) based in Dakar (Senegal) has set up an environment desk to put out information that may have been overlooked by other news agencies. On 27 June this year, for example, it reported on the dramatic spread of soil erosion in the kingdom of Lesotho in a plateau region of southern Africa, where some 18 to 20 tons of topsoil per hectare, or 2 per cent of the total, is being carried away every year, an estimated loss of some 40 million tons. At this rate, there will be no arable land left in Lesotho by the year 2040. The consequences are already startling: food self-sufficiency is under threat and there is an acute shortage of wood fuels, while the population is increasing. Owing to lack of fuelwood, crop residues and manure are being burned, thereby depriving the land of natural fertilizers. Food yields and the land's water retention capacity are declining and erosion is continuing to spread. This situation is particularly alarming, since only 9-10% of the country's land is suitable for agriculture. ■



NEW LESSONS ON THE ENVIRONMENT FOR PORTUGAL'S CHILDREN

A provision guaranteeing citizens "a right to the environment" is written into Portugal's 1976 Constitution, according to a report produced for the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1993.

Portugal first started to put together an environmental policy in the early 1970s, but the real turning-point came when it joined the European Community in 1986. In 1987, an outline law on the environment was adopted, and this was followed in 1990 by the creation of a Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources.

Agricultural land accounts for 45 per cent of the country's land area. However, since the arable topsoil layer is very shallow, erosion is a major problem and only 10 per cent of the land has an adequate level of fertility. Moreover, in coastal areas much of the land is taken up by holiday villas, industry and roads. More than three-quarters of the country's 10.6-million population live less than 50 kilometres from the coast. On Portugal's 600,000 farms, fertilizer is either not used at all or is applied in enormous quantities—as much as 250 tons per square kilometre in the case of greenhouse horticulture! The reforestation programmes set up by the Ministry of Agriculture have not been entirely successful in ensuring soil protection: extensive forests of highly combustible species such as eucalyptus have been planted and a large number of forest fires have been recorded.

Although the creation of 31 protected areas covering 5.6 per cent of the country has had a positive impact, the scheme has not enjoyed full financial support. Between 1988 and 1991, its budget was cut back by 9 per cent (at a time when the cost of living increased by 41 per cent).

Another problem is the lack of waste water treatment facilities. Only 21 per cent of all effluents are recycled before being released into the natural environment. The amount of inadequately treated waste rose from 933,000 tons a year in 1986 to 1,755,000 tons a year in 1990. Three-quarters of all hazardous industrial waste is dumped without being treated. According to an estimate made by



The fishing town of Nazaré, in Portugal's Estremadura province.

the Commission of the European Communities, there are thought to be more than 1,800 "blackspots" in the shape of unregulated dumps, industrial wastelands and casual refuse tips.

MOBILIZING THE PUBLIC

Over the past few years, the Ministry of the Environment has embarked on a policy of voluntary agreements, or "programme contracts", with local authorities and some branches of industry. Through a new "environmental pact" procedure announced by the Government, industry will be required to come progressively into line with the environmental legislation. Government expenditure under this heading increased by 172 per cent between 1988 and 1991.

The population must become more involved in environmental issues, and in this respect Portugal is taking a number of remarkable steps. A major reform of the education system in the 1980s made protection of the environment a cross-disciplinary subject at the primary and secondary school levels. Protection of the physical environment, the cultural heritage and the social environment now forms part of courses in the natural sciences, geography, history and even foreign languages.

The Ministry of Education has undertaken to train primary school teachers and provide them with teaching materials. Starting in 1990, more than 1,000 primary school teachers and 2,500 secondary school teachers received environmental training. In the same year, a school for vocational training in environmental studies and development was set up to train technical workers. A dozen or so universities or equivalent institutions offer environmental courses to degree level and beyond.

In addition, the National Institute for the Environment is endeavouring to satisfy the public's "right to know" about the environment. It has set up data bases, from which material is also published. The Ministry of the Environment is not lagging behind either. It has set up an Environmental Information and Documentation Centre which supplies photocopies to the media and the public. However, environmental defence associations are still in their infancy and their role and the resources at their disposal need to be strengthened at the earliest opportunity. ■

SUGGESTED READING:

OECD Environmental Performance Reviews, OECD, Paris, 1993.

global view... global view..



The plight of the world's street children

Many people remember Pixote. Some may remember two Pixotes—the tragic little hero of José Louzeiro's novel about Brazilian street children,¹ and Fernando Ramos da Silva, the squint-eyed child who played his role in the film version of the novel made by Hector Babenco in 1981. Both of them were killed, the fictional one in a cemetery, the boy actor on the steps of his home, their deaths mirroring the violence of their lives. The destiny of thousands of Brazilian children is played out in the streets. Alcohol, drugs, disease, prostitution, rape, kidnappings or remand centres form the sum total of their childhood. Death squads take care of the rest.

Fatherless, Fernando Ramos da Silva was living in dire poverty with his mother and his four brothers and sisters when he was chosen to play the role of Pixote. The film achieved worldwide success and the life of his family was transformed. For the budding actor the future would surely hold a home, work, drama lessons. . . . But it was not to be. The street claimed him for good. It was already too late. No one was able to save him from the only too predictable end that stalks a hundred million children gone astray in streets, marketplaces and railway stations all over the world.

"Dropouts", "urchins", "children of the dust"—the terms used to describe them vary from continent to continent, but their lives bear an aching similarity. Driven out by unbearable poverty or the brutality of their

parents, sold or abandoned for those very same reasons, they are orphans no one wants to feed, let alone educate. Everywhere they share a terrible plight. But the laws that govern life in the street are not the same everywhere.

In some of the world's sprawling megacities, hundreds of thousands of children live in the streets without the slightest protection, prepared to do almost anything for a few coins. Violence, however, is not common. The street children are generally looked upon as urchins who have learned to survive on their wits.

Elsewhere, the story is one of forced

Combating sexual violence

As part of preparations for the World Conference on Women, which will be held in Beijing in 1995, UNESCO organized a seminar on "Sexual exploitation and the trafficking of women and children in Latin America" in Caracas in March 1994. The purpose of the seminar was to draw up strategies for combating a reprehensible practice which is particularly rife among disadvantaged sectors of the population. UNESCO has also commissioned a group of experts to prepare an exhaustive report on the violence to which the women of Bosnia are exposed, with a view to drawing up a plan for the reintegration into society of the victims and their children. ■

The cultural dimension

"Rethinking Development", a newly-published booklet about the World Decade for Cultural Development is available (in English, French and Spanish versions) free of charge from UNESCO. Its contents include articles on integrated rural development in the Sahel, the Silk Roads project, the Library of Alexandria, theatre and Aids education, the Maya world, and pluralism and the culture of democracy. ■

Copies may be obtained from:

Secretariat of the World Decade for Cultural Development, UNESCO, 1 rue Miollis, 75732 Paris Cedex 15, France.

labour and prostitution. Tourism tied to child prostitution is on the rise and corruption triumphs over legal sanctions. A policeman who bought a twelve-year-old Thai girl, Mii Chuu, from her stepfather to sell her into prostitution paid less than \$200. Saved by an American missionary, Mii Chuu now plans to become a teacher. Her case is clearly an exception, as is the fact that she did not contract Aids.

While many children spend their nights in sleazy hotel rooms in the vain hope of rejoining their parents after having paid off the family debts with their bodies, others bargain for their pavement beds with local policemen and await the morning to go scavenging for food. Still others expect nothing at all. When hope has gone, why make the effort? Suicide or war on the adult world are all that's left. They have nothing to lose and they are afraid of nothing. Eventually, they get used to the tough ways of the street, grow a thick hide against fear and pain. Rage begets rage, and small-time go-getters turn into hardened criminals.



"Children take over the streets the way pirates take over the sea," writes Jacques Meunier,² who was told by a Bogota child: "At first I was ashamed. But not for long." This is a journey from which there is no return.

A UNESCO priority

These children have become society's open wound. For some, eradicating the problem means eliminating the children

themselves. In 1990 the press revealed that 492 children had been murdered in Rio de Janeiro alone—more than one child per day. In July 1993, a mysterious group killed eight Rio children in a single night.

Following this massacre, the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences, France's Centre Unifié d'Enseignement et de Recherche pour les Services de Sécurité, UNICEF, and UNESCO organized a seminar on "Children and Adolescents in Conflict with the Law" in Rio de Janeiro from 8-11 November 1993. This seminar, the first of its kind, tied in with a project launched by UNESCO in 1989 in order to alert public opinion, seek sources of funding, and, through publications and seminars, provide training for educators and social workers working with street children. In close collaboration with UNICEF, two international meetings for Africa were held in Cotonou and Nairobi in 1990. As part of the same project, an international workshop of field specialists, held at UNESCO Headquarters in 1991, was devoted to identifying the priority educational needs of street children.

The purpose of the Rio seminar, which was attended by 81 representatives from the police and justice departments of six Latin American countries, was to examine ways and means of educating and informing police and legal officials so that the problem of violence perpetrated against street children and child workers can be tackled head-on.

1 José Louzeiro, *Pixote*, Karthala, Paris, 1990 (French only).

2 Jacques Meunier, *Les Gamins de Bogota*, A.M. Métaillé, Paris, 1989.

The world in your pocket

Following the publication of an overview of the *World Education Report*, the "World in Your Pocket" collection for young people published by the World Federation of UNESCO Clubs, Centres and Associations has brought out a second booklet, this time on the *World Labour Report* prepared by the International Labour Organisation. A short version of the *World Human Development Report 1994*, drawn up by the United Nations Development Programme (see our feature "World View" in the September issues of the *Courier*) will appear shortly. ■

Further information from:

FMACU-WFUCA, UNESCO house,
1 rue Miollis, 75732 Paris Cedex 15,
France. Tel. (33-1) 45 68 28 18;
Fax: (33-1) 42 73 05 21.

Learning about solidarity

On the occasion of the launching of the "Terre d'Avenir" Foundation, whose aim is to alert public opinion to the main challenges of the closing years of the century and to the problems of the Third World, a symposium on the subject of "Land of the Future: training the citizens of a world of solidarity" was held in Paris in September 1994. The purpose of the symposium, which was organized by the Comité Catholique contre la Faim et pour le Développement, a leading French non-governmental organization, was to define the subject areas on which the Foundation's action will be focused. The globalization of social and economic processes and the problems of development viewed from the standpoint of different cultures provided the starting-point for discussions on economics, culture, world security and peace, along with the contribution of the media, associations and schools to education, development and solidarity. ■

Further information may be obtained from: CCFD, 4 rue Jean-Lantier, 75001 Paris, France. Tel: (33-1) 44 82 80 00. Fax: (33-1) 44 82 81 43.

FURTHER READING:

- ✓ *UNESCO Courier*, "Children in Danger", October 1991.
- ✓ *Survey on Street Children in Three Urban Centres of Namibia*, Peter Taçon, Ministry of Local Government and Housing, Windhoek, 1991. Study carried out with UNICEF'S support.
- ✓ Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, "Enfants des rues" in *La Ville partout, et partout en crise*, "Manière de Voir" series, *Le Monde diplomatique*, 1991 (French only).
- ✓ *Protecting working children*, ed. William E. Myers, New York, UNICEF, 1992.
- ✓ *Street children of Madras, a situation analysis*, Joe Arimpoor, Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India, National Labour Institute, 1992.
- ✓ *Blossoms in the dust: street children in Africa*, Jean-Pierre Vélis, Paris, Unesco (in preparation).
- ✓ *The State of the World's Children*, UNICEF, 1994.

Federico Mayor: keeping ahead of the future

by *Edouard J. Maunick*

The publication, in French, of *La Mémoire du Futur* ("The Memory of the Future") offers a fresh opportunity to share the thinking of Federico Mayor, the author of *Tomorrow is always too late*. The book is written with the same breadth of inspiration as its predecessor, the same determination "to pave the way for the best possible future" and, above all, the same lucidity and faith in human beings—qualities that go to make the Director-General of UNESCO a man of action who never gives way to despair.

In this new work, Federico Mayor embarks on an open-ended dialogue on the problems which he knows "with the certainty of instinct that they will be—indeed, already are—the vital challenges of the coming millennium". These problems, doubts and anxieties we can already read in the eyes of children all over the world.

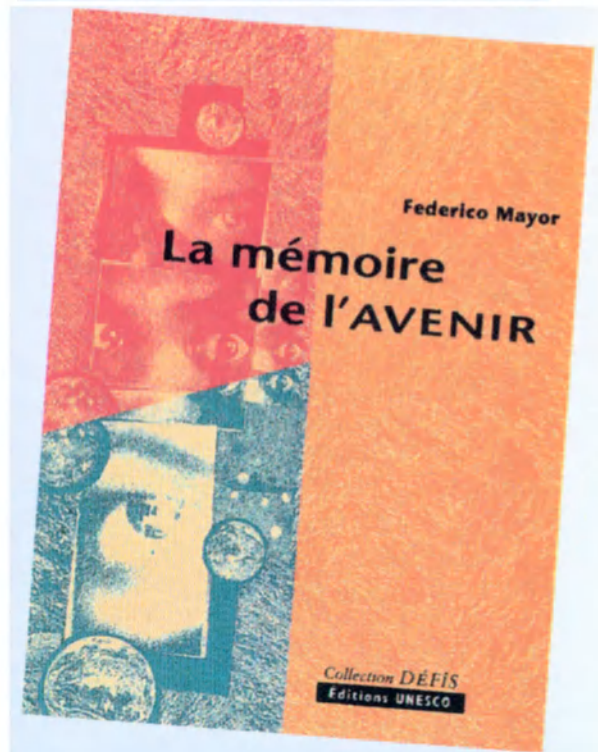
When he says that "the main thing is loving and sharing", he cuts what he regards as the "Gordian knots" that constrain the world today. For Federico Mayor, the "main thing" is to feel a sense of urgency, and "loving and sharing" imply commitment. It is urgent to break down the walls between the "haves" and the "have-nots", to rethink the way we live our lives, individually and in communities, and take a fresh look at how we "control" nature. This means pledging to eradicate illiteracy once and for all, calling a halt to the brain drain, making scientific and technical knowledge universally available, safeguarding the memory of humanity, preserving the earth from ecological disaster—in short taking charge of our future.

Writing in convincing and down-to-earth language, Federico Mayor recommends that we form a conspiracy—"conspiracy" in the etymological sense of "breathing together". It should be the kind of conspiracy that "transcends frontiers, nationalities, religions and ethnic groups". It lies at the heart of any solution to our problems, whether education for international understanding, the preservation of the cultural and natural heritage, development, the environment or the future of humanity.

All these issues are carefully discussed by an author who is concerned but remains resolutely opti-

EDOUARD J. MAUNICK, Mauritian poet and writer, is his country's Ambassador to South Africa. He has published many books, including *Ensoleillé vif*, which won the Apollinaire Prize in 1976), *Anthologies personnelles* (1984) and *Paroles pour solder la mer* (1969).

BOOK REVIEW



mistic. After making a brief survey of their historical background, he approaches the problems directly, examines the facts, assesses the attempts that have been made to solve them and charts the future prospects.

Between a past for which we are not responsible but which we must accept, and a future that we wish to control, today's world, our lives—our survival, as Federico Mayor says—must be taken care of. For survival is the basic issue for so many people, including the Cameroon villager who, after making sure that he really was talking to the Director-General of UNESCO, asked him: "Why have you come to see us? Is it to defend the elephants or to defend us?"

The answer to this question is to be found on the page of "The Memory of the Future" where the author says: "We should never lose sight of the fact that the first thing we have to do is to protect the human species".

In Federico Mayor there is a deeply-felt need to look towards utopia. Has not the quest for a perfect world given impetus to people's lives ever since the world began? How can we dream of overcoming the adverse circumstances of the present except by assuming that the impossible is possible? Hence "The Memory of the Future", a title spelling out a message of faith, that tomorrow is *already* another day. ■

La mémoire de l'avenir,

BY FEDERICO MAYOR,

collection Défis, Editions UNESCO, Paris, 1994,

216 pages (in French only)

Gregorio Marañón

The future of culture

The Spanish polymath Gregorio Marañón (1867-1970), one of the pioneers of endocrinology, was also a historian, art critic and moral philosopher. He was a prolific author (a bibliography compiled towards the end of his life listed more than 1,200 titles), notably of historical and literary works which reached a wide public of readers attracted by the clarity of his style and ideas. In May 1933, he took part in a symposium on the "Future of Culture" organized in Madrid by the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation. An extract from the address he gave on that occasion is reproduced below.

REGARDLESS of how we define the term, culture is the highest form of expression of the human mind. It exists and will continue to grow in parallel with the development of humanity, which is still only in its adolescence and whose sins are the sins of youth. People today are much the same as they always have been. It is a mistake to think that we are at the very hub of history. When we see everything around us going from bad to worse, we imagine that it is the world that is about to disappear and change, not us.

In future, as new forms of culture emerge, it will be difficult for us to associate them with what we currently understand by

the term, and hence to predict their future course. The same kind of thing will happen to the family of the future: it will differ from the family as we know it but its existence will not be jeopardized, as some people nowadays are apt to think. Change, which is synonymous with renewal, is all too often confused with death.

The evolution of culture down the ages has something in common with the evolution of living organisms. Both have various growth centres, each with a cycle of its own. The focus of evolution shifts as it advances from one phase to the next. In each of these phases, specific external factors confer a different physiognomy on organisms and culture alike. Yet the general course of all these random events follows a constant direction, at first upwards, then to maturity, and eventually to the stage of "involution", when the process starts going into reverse. Suffice it to say that human culture has barely reached the mature stage and still has a long way to go before it starts to regress.

MACHINE CIVILIZATION AND THE ART OF LIVING

The culture of the future will accordingly differ from our own in its forms and will undoubtedly go deeper and be more effective. The difficulty lies in predicting what its fluctuating surface movements and features will be in the phases immediately following our own generation—in that future which we shall only just manage to glimpse in the distance before we hand over to the next generation.

However, there are a number of very important factors which partly dictate the shape that culture will take in future. These are bound up with the way our human instincts will develop—a subject on which we could hold forth at great length without any danger of getting things wrong. One such factor is the spread of the civilization of the machine. Another is the growing influence of biological concerns, especially as they pertain to the physical culture

of the body, the prevention of disease or the precepts underlying eugenics. In the generations coming after us, these concerns will become actual mandatory rules of conduct. Both factors are affecting and will continue to affect the instincts of human beings; they will, in the first instance, have a direct influence on the tone of culture.

People today often wonder whether the advances that machines are bound to make in the coming decades—and they will certainly be phenomenal—will have a decisive impact on culture. There can be no doubt that they will. There is, however, one point on which I cannot agree with other people. I do not believe that the impact of the progress they make will do any harm to human culture. There can be no doubt that at the present time—perhaps only because the progress of machines is still going through its honeymoon period—we attach undue importance to machine-minded people, people who use their instincts, to the detriment of cerebral people. But that fact should not be regarded as being any more important than the purely incidental and negligible importance that it actually possesses. It is unfortunate that somebody driving a car should earn more than a poet and that the winner of an automobile race should be borne aloft in triumph by a crowd that is unaware of the publication of a fundamental work in the arts or sciences. But all this, I repeat, is only of incidental importance. The main thing is that the progress made by machines spares humanity much toil and trouble and therefore allows it complete freedom to attend to its spiritual development. It also adds a happy zest of precision and speed to the human mind and culture, although we ourselves do not realize this.

MAKING HASTE SLOWLY

Speed is a virtue, but at the same time it is instrumental in spawning a vice, the vice of precipitation. There can be no doubt



Text selected and presented by Edgardo Canton

that undue precipitation has had a harmful effect on culture because it has forced intelligent people to sacrifice the quality of what they write to the need to spread the word at great haste among the harried and faceless mass of the population. We have all stopped writing page after densely-packed page of slowly pondered thoughts which came to us unobtrusively and which may perhaps have made a deep impression on people's minds. Instead, we have all scattered our half-baked ideas and our still inchoate emotions in the now yellowing pages of newspapers and in the endless comings and goings of congresses and conferences.

But there is an antidote to this poison. The same progress of the machine that indisposes and demeans us because of our lust for speed at the same time helps to bring us into direct and ready contact with the timeless rules of the universe. As a result of this progress, people nowadays may perhaps not live in such close communion with nature, but they go out increasingly in search of it and have a better grasp of its inner meaning, which is to synchronize our waking lives with the variable rhythms of differing worlds.

RELIEVING PAIN

Living in communion with nature and reading the humanities will automatically compensate for the petty dangers to which the present machine age exposes culture. In short, the distorted image which it is responsible for imprinting on our personality has a significant effect on our outward demeanour but is less important in terms of our innermost being. It is like the facial expressions which we unwittingly copy from our cinema heroes and which, in their outward forms—and in those forms alone—make people nowadays so different from those of forty years ago. For example, it is surprising how slight an impact the possibility of flight has on our minds, although the fact that such a possibility exists at all is in itself quite mind-boggling. It has done little more than step up the pace at which age-old sentiments and ideas are handed down and make it easier for us to gain a deeper knowledge of them. If Leonardo da Vinci were to come back to life, he would have to admit that the pilot of an aeroplane is, by the act of piloting, not really any different from the helmsman of one of the galleys that sailed the oceans of his time.

What is much more important for the culture of the future is the whole range of biological concerns to which we referred earlier. Today lack of money or a fragil-



digestion are the only things that stop people from eating all they want. Future generations will behave differently. They will eat in accordance with a scientific method imposed on them by the economy of the future and the laws of nutrition. They will not passively allow their bodies to suffer the wear and tear of maturity and old age, but will defend them by practising sport and leading open-air lives. They will not leave responsibility for their offspring to the vagaries of physical passion or fleeting love affairs but will turn love into a reasoned emotion, separating simple pleasure from the procreative function.

Yet, all these things—and they are reminiscent of the sort of pedantic statements experts in hygiene are wont to make at their gatherings—are already a reality being thrust on peoples furthest from the mainstream of civilization. In the very near future, these principles will be inviolable rules governing our behaviour, and thereafter they will become essential hereditary factors. I wonder how deep down into people's souls this influence will pene-

trate, and to what extent it will have an effect on the way culture evolves.

To those who ask themselves what new universal concern may come to replace the fight for individual freedom, which set the tone of culture for several centuries, the answer may be that any such concern will probably aim at relieving people of physical pain, of the ordeal of pain suffered by individuals and the species alike. Naturally, I believe in the need for pain as a fount of progress. But the effectiveness of suffering really lies in keeping alive the struggle to prevent it from occurring, so that the soul will remain thereafter alert and receptive to all forms of struggle. People who do not rebel against pain have no feeling for life or for efficiency as the key to progress. As long as progress keeps on being made, humanity will suffer and will struggle in order not to suffer. On the day people gain their freedom, they can then be afraid—and rightly so—of the coming of the Anti-Christ and the end of the species, which will no doubt come to pass when we enter the reign of absolute happiness. ■

The story of the
guitar from the
Renaissance to
the age of jazz
and rock



Strings down the centuries

by Isabelle Leymarie

The guitar, with its sensually curved body, is a favourite instrument of folklore and popular music, the faithful companion of footloose travellers, students and hippies. It can be heard not only in classical compositions but in Spanish *flamenco* and Portuguese *fado*, in folk music, blues, jazz and rock, in the high-life music of Ghana and the *soucou*s of Zaire, and, in one form or another, in almost all of Latin America and some of the countries of Asia. Although the word "guitar" may have originally been derived from *kithara*, the name of an ancient Greek stringed instrument, it has been used to describe instruments differing both in the technique used to play them and in their shape.

A member of the lute family, the guitar as we know it first made its appearance in Renaissance Europe. However, instruments with similar names already existed some 300 years earlier, and there are references in medieval French literature to the *gitere* and in fourteenth-century English literature to the *gitarer*. Prototypes of the guitar may have existed in ancient Mesopotamia, Anatolia and Egypt and also in Central Asia at the beginning of the Christian era.

As time went by, changes were made to the shape of the instrument and to the layout of the soundboard and fret. The guitar was initially smaller than it is today and had "courses" or sets of four and later five or even seven strings, and eventually ten individual strings. The modern classical guitar, on which Andrés Segovia (d. 1987), and Alejandro Lagoya are regarded as being among the foremost virtuoso performers, was developed by nineteenth-century Spanish instrument makers.

The guitar was first used as a solo or chamber instrument, especially in Spain and Italy. The first compositions for the instrument were published in about the mid-sixteenth century. In Italy, the guitar tended to be superseded by the lute and the *viuela*, but in France it became very popular, giving added zest to courtly entertainments and providing the accompaniment to the songs of troubadours and folk dances. It reached the height of its popularity at the end of the eighteenth century through the compo-

sitions of Luigi Boccherini (1743-1805), the Catalan Fernando Sor (1778-1839) and Niccolò Paganini (1782-1840).

FROM FLAMENCO TO BOSSA NOVA

In Europe, there are still a number of popular variants on the guitar, like the vertically-held flamenco guitar made of Spanish cypress wood, which weighs less than the rosewood used in the classical guitar and is fitted with a fingerboard for beating out the rhythm. Other forms include the *chitarra battente* of Calabria, with its single-note bass string, and various types of Portuguese guitar.

The American guitar, which usually has six to ten metal strings mounted on a slender neck, first came into prominence in the nineteenth century. It was later to become the preferred instrument of blues musicians and singers like Big Bill Broonzy, Leadbelly and Bukka White, who often played it using the "bottleneck" (or "slide") technique, where the strings are stroked with the sharp edge of a knife, a broken-off bottleneck or a brass ring fitting on the middle or index finger of the left hand. It is widely used in country and western music and is particularly popular with folk singers like Joan Baez and Bob Dylan.

From the 1920s onwards, jazz bands and variety orchestras also started using the crisp sound of the non-amplified guitar, later followed by the electric guitar, whose sound is amplified by a microphone and whose strings are plucked with a plectrum. Freddie Green, a member of the Count Basie orchestra, and subsequently Charlie Christian, the pioneer of the bebop guitar, along with Django Reinhardt in Europe, were primarily responsible for the growing popularity of the electric guitar, which gradually took on a variety of forms. The ultimate in fantasy was reached in rock music, in which the guitar is both a marvel of technology and a sex symbol, while musicians like Jimmy Hendrix have experimented with electronic effects known as wa-wa, reverb or phaser. Acid rock and heavy metal in particular are noted for their use of outlandish distortion effects.

In the cooler bossa nova style, guitarists João

Gilberto, Laurindo Almeida and Charlie Bird prefer to use an acoustic guitar with nylon strings, and João Gilberto has invented a form of off-beat accompaniment to produce a swinging effect known as the *balanço*.

At the end of the nineteenth century, a type of three-course metal-stringed guitar known as the *tres* appeared in Cuba's Oriente province. Rudimentary *tres* were often made of old salt-cod cans. From the 1920s onwards, the *tres* became the typical instrument of the rhythm known as *son*. Arsenio Rodríguez and Niño Rivera were among the best-known *treseros* of the 1950s and 1960s.

The guitar was the preferred instrument of Cuban solo singers (*trovadores*), duos and trios. Guitar trios, such as the famous "Trio Matamoros" from Santiago de Cuba, also played in Puerto Rico and Mexico. In Puerto Rico, a guitar with four pairs of strings, the *cuatro*, was originally used in peasant music, but was introduced into *salsa* in the 1970s. In Mexico, people play the *jarana*, while the *charango*, which is sometimes made from an armadillo shell, is played in Bolivia, Peru, Chile and northern Argentina. Musicians in Brazil play the samba and other rhythms on the *viola* or the *cavaquinho*, while Venezuela has its own type of *cuatro*, as well as the *quinto*, with its five pairs of strings.

Throughout Latin America, and especially in Peru, Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, the guitar continues to be the preferred instrument of singers of the folk song style known as *nueva trova*. In Hawaii, the guitar, which may have been introduced by Portuguese seamen, later gave rise to the four-stringed *ukelele*. Java has its own five-stringed guitar and the Philippines the *tiape*, a three-stringed guitar which may have been named after the small Latin American guitar known as the *tiple*. In Viet Nam, sentimental songs are often sung to a guitar accompaniment. ■

ISABELLE LEYMARIE, a Franco-American musicologist, is the author of *La Salsa et le Latin Jazz* (PUF, Paris, 1993). She is currently working on a study of black music in Latin America and the Caribbean.

the African

by George Darley-Doran



3 A CHIEF IN HIS WISDOM New Year's Eve in Jukwaa

For eleven months of the year, Elvis Johnson-Idan lives in a London suburb with his wife Elizabeth and their three children. However, in mid-December every year, he goes back to Jukwaa, his native village in Ghana, where he reigns supreme as Nana Otumayin Kofi Idan I. In the two previous issues, George Darley-Doran accompanied Elvis on his annual visit to Jukwaa. In this third and final episode, he discovers the subtleties of tribal organization and the role Elvis plays in the village.

By 9:30 in the evening the whole village was buzzing as a funeral rite got underway. It should be explained that a Fanti funeral rite is not at all solemn and depressing, but rather an occasion of celebration and joyful remembrance of those who have passed away. Tonight was no exception. There was an outdoor disco for the children, where the music was loud enough to . . . wake the dead. And once the spirits had been fully aroused, they were serenaded by the Wesleyan anthems belting out from a largely female congregation in the Bethel Chapel—just a few steps up from the disco. A good chunk of the male population was to be found at Paoli's and Vic's, Jukwaa's two watering holes, both of which are located directly outside the Chapel. Vic's lovely barmaid Theresa—a devout Mormon and a strict teetotaler—could not keep the schnapps and *akpeteshie*¹ flowing quickly enough. Up by the main road, young women and girls were cooking and selling food by the light of their hurricane lamps. The party continued until the early hours. It was almost dawn when the men and women gathered into a procession and swayed up and down the main road, chanting praises to the spirits of the deceased. Then everybody went to bed.

By now New Year's Eve was upon us. This year, the usual celebrations would be coinciding with the tenth anniversary of Ghana's December 31st Revolution. Those who bought newspapers could read about it, and those with televisions (perhaps two households in the village) could watch all the speeches, but that was the extent to which the village was affected. Ghana's revolution (if that is the correct word for it) is to a large extent an urban phenomenon. The central government simply lacks the resources necessary for effective local administration. Until that changes, local chiefs will remain the practical managers of the areas under their control.

The power of the chiefs in Ghana is officially formalized in the National House of Chiefs. This is situated in Accra. There are also regional houses around the country. All the tribes of Ghana are represented—the Fantis and Asantes, the Ga and various others. The National House of Chiefs convenes twice a year. All aspects of local gov-

ernment issues are covered: education, transport, communication, social policy and so on.

The concept of central government is relatively new to this part of the world. Modern Ghana was born out of an arbitrary amalgamation of many tribal elements. This national entity is still very much in the gelling process. Even today, for most of Ghana's population, the word of the local chief is law. A villager might be tried for a crime by the Supreme Court, and perhaps sent to prison, but he will not feel that justice has been done until he has been tried by his chief.

A noble lineage

The more I discovered about the nature of chieftaincy in Ghana, the clearer it became why Elvis in particular had been targeted by the king-makers of Jukwaa. The village is in great need of the managerial and diplomatic skills that Elvis has picked up in the course of his career.

The Idan family to which Elvis belongs controls one of the five stools—seats of power—relating to the area surrounding Jukwaa. Each stool carries with it a specific area of responsibility. Elvis, as Brahene, is responsible for harnessing and developing the resources of the "abran" section of the population. The loose translation of abran is "youth", but any able-bodied adult can be classified as a member of this class—in other words, just about everybody between the ages of fifteen and sixty. Most of Elvis's activities tend to be in the economic area, trying to create incentives for young people to stay in the village. He is trying to improve farming techniques; promote land-clearance for bigger and better-yielding farms; experiment with new crops and seeds; and introduce small-scale technology such as charcoal-making. A bakery and street-market have both been established in Jukwaa since he was enstooled. Goats are, as always, raised in profusion but cattle-raising is impossible due to the tsetse fly.

Elvis works in co-operation with the other four chiefs of Jukwaa. One of these is the "Odikro", Nana Kojo Idan VII. The direct translation of Odikro is "village owner" but this title is, in fact, a largely ceremonial one—similar to that of an English mayor. His sceptre features a golden parrot, a symbol of intelligence in Fanti mythology. Nana Kwesi Ansa—the man who had presided over sports day a few days earlier—is the "Omankrado" of Jukwaa. This title indicates his role as the spiritual unifier of the village. His responsibility is to keep the peace and to resolve matters of civil dispute. The other two chiefs are the "Tufuhene", who is in charge of the asafo military caste, and the "Gyasehen", who acts as a kind of lieutenant to Elvis in his role as Brahene.

The role of chief is not necessarily one that

GEORGE DARLEY-DORAN

is a Turkish-born Englishman who lives in London, where he works as a television correspondent.

"I used to come here when I was a boy and find a canoe like this one. I'd sit in it and look out over the sea."

Elvis would have chosen for himself. Indeed, his mother (prior to her death in 1985) had been adamant that he pursue his own life, independent of the village. The kingmakers of Jukwaa were well aware of this. But kingmakers take a long-term view. They could see, even when Elvis was young, that he had a potential capacity for decision-making and leadership. They waited until the death of his mother before thrusting chiefdom upon him.

Elvis is descended from "noble" lineages on both sides. Most of the tribes under the Fanti umbrella are matrilineal, in that men inherit power via the senior females of each generation. Elvis's mother—Esi Nyarkoa Johnson—was of such a clan. Her family controlled (and still controls) an important stool situated in Ekumfi Abaka, to the southwest of Jukwaa. She had been groomed to be the "queen mother" of her people. She never accepted the title as such but due to her stock, as well as her personal strength of character, she was a formidable woman. Elvis's father—Kobina Otumayin Idan—was born into a division of the Fanti tribe that happens to be patrilineal. The Idans are divided into two branches: one controls an important stool in Winneba, and the other controls the Jukwaa stool. Elvis's father was directly descended from both of these branches. Elvis is therefore the immediate product of three families that are all-powerful in their own right. The kingmakers see in Elvis a chance to consolidate the power of the three families.

The schemes and manoeuvrings of the kingmakers have implications not just for Elvis, but for his offspring too. All four of his children—Eunice, Theresa, Matthew and Christopher—will grow up to occupy positions of considerable influence. It is up to them to decide whether or not they will exercise that influence. Each of the children has a Fanti name in addition to his or her Western one. These names were chosen by the family elders, and each of them relates to a particular stool or forebear. The relevance of the name increases in proportion to the potential status of the child in question. Christopher has a particularly significant Fanti name: Nana Kwame Akyen. This was the name of Elvis's paternal great-grandfather, of whom Christopher is seen to be a reincarnation. The original Nana Kwame Akyen was the Idan family head before his descendants separated into the Jukwaa and Winneba branches. The kingmakers see Christopher as potentially being in a position to further consolidate the two halves of a family that has been divided for generations. But the kingmakers are in no hurry. They bide their time, waiting entire decades for their plans to come to fruition.

Liz, Elvis's English wife, has taken her husband's rise to chieftaincy in her stride and maintains an active interest in the future development of Jukwaa. She is particularly interested in the development of Jukwaa's female population. The lives of the village women consist of a great deal more than just pounding away at fufu all day. The men might have all the glory of chiefdom, but it



is the women who get most of the work done. All the market traders are female. The bars and shops of Jukwaa are all owned and run by women. It is the women who run the households, often with their own finances. They make all the important decisions regarding the welfare of their children. For the most part, the women of Jukwaa—like those all over Ghana—do what they want, in their own right, without seeking permission from their husbands. The extended family solves the child-care question at a stroke, leaving women to lead their own lives. Birth out of wedlock is accepted and not regarded as the stigma that it is in the west. I could sense a great feeling of solidarity among the women of the village. They have a robust sense of humour, particularly regarding men, and at the various festivities I attended it was always the women who were the life and soul of the party.

Beyond the horizon

The next day a whole crowd of us drove to Winneba together and visited the fishermen's neighbourhood to get what we needed for a barbecue on the beach. The children were happy when we got to the seaside, and immediately began splashing about in the surf. Elvis climbed onto a beached canoe and sat gazing out over the horizon. I went over to join him. He was in rather a philosophical mood. "That's where they came from all those hundreds of years ago," he said, "from beyond the horizon. They came and turned our world upside-down. I can't say whether it was for better or worse, but we have to accept what happened and come to terms with it. I used to come here when I was a boy and find a canoe like this one. I'd sit in it just as I'm sitting here and look out over the sea. I'd wonder what the world across the horizon could possibly be like. I'd dream about going to that world one day. I'd imagine myself taking what was best from here and bringing back with me what was best from over there."

1. A spirit derived from sugar cane. *Editor*

THE END

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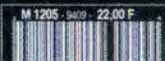
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