

MARCH 1995

THE UNESCO COURIER

DEVELOPMENT

THE HAVES AND THE HAVE-NOTS



HERITAGE

THE STONES OF BYBLOS

ENVIRONMENT

**HARMONY IN THE HILLS—
MONTSENY BIOSPHERE RESERVE**

SPECIAL FEATURE

AUNG SAN SUU KYI
WINNER OF THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

**DEMOCRACY,
THE COMMON HERITAGE
OF HUMANITY**

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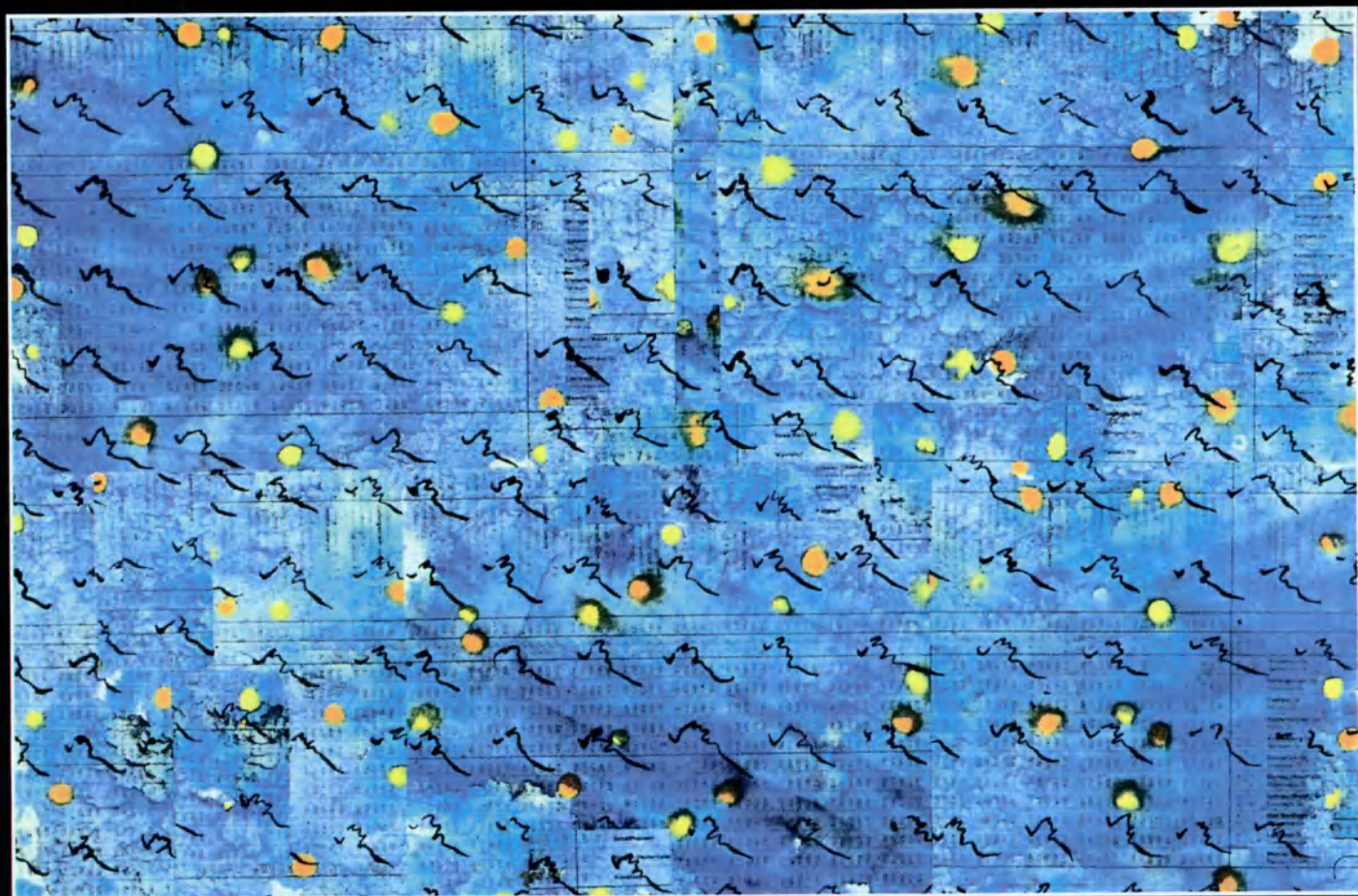


E N C O U N T E R S

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.



Recommencements
1988, watercolour and
Indian ink
(35 x 54 cm)
by Masako

This watercolour by Masako, a Japanese artist who has lived in France for more than twenty years, seeks to express the eternal renewal of life, symbolized by an interplay of waves, reflections and flowing calligraphic motifs. Painted on a printed page, it combines the rigour and delicacy of Japanese draughtsmanship with bright, impressionist colours.

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48th year
Published monthly in 30
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"The Governments of the States parties to this Constitution on behalf of their peoples declare,

"that since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed . . .

"that a peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world, and that the peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.

"For these reasons, the States parties . . . are agreed and determined to develop and to increase the means of communication between their peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other's lives. . . ."

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We live in a complex, contradictory, chaotic world in which landmarks and systems that worked in the past are breaking down, unpredictable factors are increasingly at work, and the forces of regression and the forces of progress sometimes mingle confusingly. In such a world it is normal that people should lose their bearings and feel afraid.

But surely pessimism is no more justified than optimism. We must make our choice. To profess an informed optimism is to decide that the worst is not bound to happen, that worthwhile things can still be done, and that freedom should be used to do all we can to make sure that good prevails.

Choosing to hope and act implies a certain way of interpreting what is happening in the world, of clear-sightedly promoting the possibilities of change, of reacting positively to alarm signals and regarding them not as reasons for despair but as opportunities to break new ground and turn failures into success.

To take one example, what assessment should we make of the mass of data that has accumulated about development, one of the thorny problems that have dominated the second half of this century?

The tragic rise of unemployment, exclusion, poverty and violence has occurred, paradoxically enough, in a world that continues to grow wealthier all the time, in the South as elsewhere. In dozens of developing countries, hundreds of millions of people are living longer and more comfortably, are studying longer and producing more sophisticated goods. Some eastern Asian countries are even becoming the direct competitors of the industrial North.

These two trends are two sides of the same coin. Both are a part of the same modernizing process. The alarming thing is that they are both happening simultaneously. What is becoming intolerable is the widening gap between the haves and the have-nots, between those who are involved in modernization and those who are excluded from it (both internationally and within each society). The kind of development that generates inequality as well as growth is now under fire.

This counter-attack has been launched everywhere at the same time and in the same terms on the level at which the real problems exist—the planetary level. It is a radical new departure in human history. A gigantic first step towards change, an irreversible new awareness of the need to impose human demands for fairness and solidarity onto the blind play of market forces.

Development must now be conceived in social terms. This is why a World Summit for Social Development has been convened by the United Nations and is opening in Copenhagen on 6 March and why a Forum of non-governmental organizations being held simultaneously in the same city will be attended by hundreds of organizations representing civil society from almost every country in the world. Unesco has taken an active part in preparing for the Summit and Forum, and this issue of the *Unesco Courier* is intended to give our readers a preview of the debates and introduce them to some current thinking on development.

BAHGAT ELNADI AND ADEL RIFAAT

AUNG SAN SUU KYI

Winner of the Nobel Peace prize, under house arrest in Myanmar since 1989



Human rights activist, champion of democracy in her country, daughter of the Burmese nationalist leader Aung San (assassinated in 1947), Aung San Suu Kyi has been under house arrest since 1989. In spite of the victory of her party in the elections of May 1990 and support from all over the world, the authorities have so far refused to restore her freedom. She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991. A collection of her writings, edited by her husband, Michael Aris, has been published under the title *Freedom from Fear* by Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, UK.

Peace as a goal is an ideal which will not be contested by any government or nation, not even the most belligerent. And the close interdependence of the culture of peace and the culture of development also finds ready acceptance. But it remains uncertain how far governments are prepared to concede that democracy and human rights are indivisible from the culture of peace and therefore essential to sustained development. There is ample evidence that culture and development can actually be made to serve as pretexts for resisting calls for democracy and human rights. It is widely known that some governments argue that democracy is a Western concept alien to indigenous values; it has also been asserted that economic development often conflicts with political (i.e. democratic) rights and

that the latter should necessarily give way to the former. In the light of such arguments culture and development need to be carefully examined and defined so that they may not be used, or rather misused, to block the aspirations of peoples for democratic institutions and human rights.

'Development means more than economic growth'

The unsatisfactory record of development in many parts of the world and the ensuing need for a definition of development which means more than mere economic growth became a matter of vital concern to economists and international agencies more than a decade ago¹. In *A New Concept of Development*, published in 1983, the French economist François Perroux stated,

"Development has not taken place: it represents a dramatic growth of awareness, a promise, a matter of survival indeed. Intellectually, however, it is still only dimly perceived"². Later in the same book he asserted that "... personal development, the freedom of persons fulfilling their potential in the context of the values to which they subscribe and which they experience in their actions, is one of the main-springs of all forms of development"³.

While the concept of human development is beginning to assume a dominant position in the thinking of international economists and administrators, the Market Economy, not merely adorned with capital letters but seen in an almost mystic haze, is increasingly regarded by many governments as the quick and certain way to

**Democracy,
the common heritage of humanity**

'It is not enough merely to provide the poor with material assistance. They have to be sufficiently empowered to change their perception of themselves.'

material prosperity. It is assumed that economic measures can resolve all the problems facing their countries. Economics has been described as the "*deus ex machina*, the most important key to every lock of every door to the new Asia we wish to see".

When economics is regarded as "the most important key to every lock of every door", it is only natural that the worth of man should come to be decided largely, even wholly, by his effectiveness as an economic tool⁴. This is at variance with the vision of a world where economic, political and social institutions work to serve man instead of the other way round; where culture and development coalesce to create an environment in which human potential can be realized to the full.

The value systems of those with access to power and of those far removed from such access cannot be the same. The viewpoint of the privileged is unlike that of the underprivileged. In the matter of power and privilege the difference between the haves and the have-nots is not merely quantitative, for it has far-reaching psychological and ideological implications. And many "economic" concerns are seldom just that, since they are tied up with questions of power and privilege. The problem of poverty provides an example of the inadequacy of a purely economic approach to a human situation. Even those who take a down-to-earth view of basic human needs agree that "... whatever doctors, nutritionists and other scientists may say about the objective conditions of deprivation, how the poor themselves perceive their deprivation is also relevant"⁵.

The alleviation of poverty thus entails setting in motion processes which can change the perceptions of all those concerned. Here power and privilege come

into play: "The poor are powerless and have no voice. Power is the possibility of expressing and imposing one's will in a given social relationship, in the face of any resistance. The poor are incapable of either imposing, coercing or, in many cases, having any influence at all"⁶.

It is not enough merely to provide the poor with material assistance. They have to be sufficiently empowered to change their perception of themselves as helpless and ineffectual in an uncaring world.

'Empowerment is central to culture and development'

The question of empowerment is central to both culture and development. It decides who has the means of imposing on a nation or society their view of what constitutes culture and development and who determines what practical measures can be taken in the name of culture and development. The more totalitarian a system the more power will be concentrated in the hands of the ruling elite and the more culture and development will be used to serve narrow interests. The "national culture" can become a bizarre graft of carefully selected historical incidents and distorted social values intended to justify the policies and actions of those in power⁷. At the same time development is likely to be seen in the now outmoded sense of economic growth. Statistics, often unverifiable, are reeled off to prove the success of official measures.

Many authoritarian governments wish to appear in the forefront of modern progress but are reluctant to institute genuine change. Such governments tend to claim that they are taking a uniquely national or indigenous path towards a political system in keeping with the times. In the decades immediately after the Second World War socialism was the popular option. But increasingly since the 1980s democracy has gained ground. The focus on a national or indigenous way to socialism or democracy has "the effect of stressing cultural continuity as both process and goal; this in turn obviates the necessity of defining either democracy or socialism in institutionally or procedurally specific terms; and finally, it elevates the existing political elite to the indisputable position of final arbiter and inter-

preter of what does or does not contribute to the preservation of cultural integrity"⁸.

It is often in the name of cultural integrity as well as social stability and national security that democratic reforms based on human rights are resisted by authoritarian governments. It is insinuated that some of the worst ills of Western society are the result of democracy, which is seen as the progenitor of unbridled freedom and selfish individualism. It is claimed, usually without adequate evidence, that democratic values and human rights run counter to the national culture, and therefore to be beneficial they need to be modified—perhaps to the extent that they are barely recognizable. The people are said to be as yet unfit for democracy, therefore an indefinite length of time has to pass before democratic reforms can be instituted.

The first form of attack is often based on the premise, so universally accepted that it is seldom challenged or even noticed, that the United States of America is the supreme example of democratic culture. What tends to be overlooked is that although the U.S.A. is certainly the most important representative of democratic culture, it also represents many other cultures, often intricately enmeshed. Among these are the "I-want-it-all" consumer culture, mega-city culture, superpower culture, frontier culture, immigrant culture.

There is also a strong media culture which constantly exposes the myriad problems of American society, from large issues such as street violence and drug abuse to the matrimonial difficulties of minor celebrities. Many of the worst ills of American society, increasingly to be found in varying degrees in other developed countries, can be traced not to the democratic legacy but to the demands of modern materialism. Gross individualism and cut-throat morality arise when political and intellectual freedoms are curbed on the one hand while on the other fierce economic competitiveness is encouraged by making material success the measure of prestige and progress. The result is a society where cultural and human values are set aside and money value reigns supreme.

No political or social system is perfect. But could such a powerful and pow-

erfully diverse nation as the United States have been prevented from disintegrating if it had not been sustained by democratic institutions guaranteed by a constitution based on the assumption that man's capacity for reason and justice makes free government possible and that his capacity for passion and injustice makes it necessary?⁹

Democracy in the plural

It is precisely because of the cultural diversity of the world that it is necessary for different nations and peoples to agree on those basic human values which will act as a unifying factor. When democracy and human rights are said to run counter to non-Western culture, such culture is usually defined narrowly and presented as monolithic. In fact the values that democracy and human rights seek to promote can be found in many cultures. Human beings the world over need freedom and security that they may be able to realize their full potential. The longing for a form of governance that provides security without destroying freedom goes back a long way¹⁰.

Support for the desirability of strong government and dictatorship can also be found in all cultures, both Eastern and Western: the desire to dominate and the tendency to adulate the powerful are also common human traits arising out of a desire for security. A nation may choose a system that leaves the protection of the freedom and security of the many dependent on the inclinations of the empowered few; or it may choose institutions and practices that will sufficiently empower individuals and organizations to protect their own freedom and

[In a totalitarian system] 'the "national culture" can become a bizarre graft of carefully selected historical incidents and distorted social values intended to justify the policies and actions of those in power.'

Aung San Suu Kyi in October 1988. She is holding a photo of her father, Aung San (1915-1947).



security. The choice will decide how far a nation will progress along the road to peace and human development¹¹.

Many of the countries in the Third World now striving for meaningful development are multiracial societies where there is one dominant racial group and a number—sometimes a large number—of smaller groups: foreign, religious or ethnic minorities. As poverty can no longer be defined satisfactorily in terms of basic economic needs, “minority” can no longer be defined merely in terms of numbers. For example, it has been noted in a study of minorities in Burmese history that “In the process of nation-building . . . the notion of minority in Burma changed, as one group defines itself as a nation those outside the group become minorities”¹².

Once again, as in the case of poverty, it is ultimately a question of empowerment. The provision of basic material needs is not sufficient to make minority groups and indigenous peoples feel they are truly

part of the greater national entity. For that they have to be confident that they too have an active role to play in shaping the destiny of the state that demands their allegiance. Poverty degrades a whole society and threatens its stability while ethnic conflict and minority discontent are two of the greatest threats to both internal and regional peace. And when the dispossessed “minority” is in fact an overwhelming majority, as happens in countries where power is concentrated in the hands of the few, the threat to peace and stability is ever present even if unperceived.

As the United Nations Development Programme's *Human Development Report* points out, “National governments must find new ways of enabling their people to participate more in government and to allow them much greater influence on the decisions that affect their lives. Unless this is done, and done in time, the irresistible tide of people's rising aspirations will inevitably clash with inflexible systems,

leading to anarchy and chaos. A rapid democratic transition and a strengthening of the institutions of civil society are the only appropriate responses"¹³.

The argument that it took long years for the first democratic governments to develop in the West is not a valid excuse for African and Asian countries to drag their feet over democratic reform. The history of the world shows that peoples and societies do not have to pass through a fixed series of stages in the course of development. Moreover, latecomers should be able to capitalize on the experiences of the pioneers and avoid the mistakes and obstacles that impeded early progress. The idea of "making haste slowly" is sometimes used to give backwardness the appearance of measured progress. But in a fast developing world too much emphasis on "slowly" can be a recipe for disaster.

There will be as many kinds of democracies as there are nations which accept it as a form of government. No single type of "Western democracy" exists; nor is democracy limited to a mere handful of forms such as the American, British, French or Swiss. Each democratic country will have its own individual characteristics. With the spread of democracy to eastern Europe the variety in the democratic style of government will increase. Similarly there cannot be one form of Asian democracy; in each country the democratic system will develop a character that accords with its social, cultural and economic needs. But the basic requirement of a genuine democracy is that the people should be sufficiently empowered to be able to participate significantly in the governance of their country. The thirty articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are aimed at such empowerment. Without these rights democratic institutions will be but empty shells incapable of reflecting the aspirations of the people and unable to withstand the encroachment of authoritarianism.

The democratic process provides for political and social change without violence. The democratic tradition of free discussion and debate allows for the settlement of differences without resort to armed conflict. The culture of democracy and human rights promotes diversity and

dynamism without disintegration; it is indivisible from the culture of development and the culture of peace. It is only by giving firm support to movements that seek to empower the people through democratic means that the United Nations and its agencies will truly be able to promote the culture of peace and the culture of development.

Let me in conclusion summarize my argument. The true development of human beings involves much more than mere economic growth. At its heart there must be a sense of empowerment and inner fulfillment. This alone will ensure that human and cultural values remain paramount in a world where political leadership is often synonymous with tyranny and the rule of a narrow elite. People's participation in social and political transformation is the central issue of our time.

This can only be achieved through the establishment of societies which place human worth above power, and liberation above control. In this paradigm, development requires democracy, the genuine empowerment of the people. When this is achieved, culture and development will naturally coalesce to create an environment in which all are valued, and every kind of human potential can be realized. ■

Extracts from an address written by Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi and delivered at her request by Ms. Corazón Aquino, former President of the Philippines, at a meeting of UNESCO's World Commission on Culture and Development held in Manila on 21 November 1994.

'It is precisely because of the cultural diversity of the world that it is necessary for different nations and peoples to agree on those basic human values which will act as a unifying factor.'

1 It has been pointed out that the idea of growth as a performance test of development and not an end in itself was put forward by economists as early as the 1950s: Paul Streeten et al., *First Things First: Meeting Basic Human Needs in the Developing Countries*, Oxford, 1982.

2 François Perroux, *A New Concept of Development*, UNESCO, Paris, 1983, p. 2.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 180

4 "The logic of an economy governed by solvency and by profit, subject to the increasing value attached to capital and to the power of those who command it is to reject as 'non-economic' everything which cannot be immediately translated into quantities and prices in market terms", Paul-Marc Henry (ed.), *Poverty, Progress and Development*, London, 1991, p. 36.

5 Streeten et al., *First Things First*, p. 19.

6 Henry (ed.), *Poverty, Progress and Development*, p. 34

7 The Palestinian writer Edward Said comments that governments in general use culture as a means of promoting nationalism: "To launder the cultural past and repaint it in garish nationalist colors that irradiate the whole society is now so much a fact of contemporary life as to be considered natural". See Edward Said, "Nationalism, Human Rights and Interpretation", in Barbara Johnson (ed.), *Freedom and Interpretation: The Oxford Amnesty Lectures*, 1992, New York, 1993, p. 191.

8 Harry M. Scoble and Laurie S. Wiseberg (eds.), *Access to Justice: Human Rights Struggles in South-East Asia*, London, 1985, p. 57.

9 See Clinton Rossiter's introduction to Hamilton, Madison and Jay, *The Federalist Papers*, Chicago, 1961. I owe thanks to Lady Patricia Gore-Booth for the original quotation on which Rossiter presumably based his words, "Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible; but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary", from Reinhold Niebuhr's foreword to his *Children of Light and Children of Darkness: A Vindication of Democracy and a Critique of its Traditional Defence*, London, 1945.

10 "The best government is that which governs least" are the words of a Westerner, John L. O'Sullivan, but more than a thousand years before O'Sullivan was born it was already written in the Lao Tzu, a Chinese classic, that "the best of all rulers is but a shadowy presence to his subjects". The notion that "in a nation the people are the most important, the state is next and the rulers the least important" is to be found not in the works of a modern western political theorist but in that of Mencius.

11 Ehsan Naraghi has shown in his memoirs, *From Palace to Prison: Inside the Iranian Revolution* (I. B. Tauris, London, and Ivan R. Dee, Chicago, 1994), that a critical attitude towards the monarch, decentralization of power and division of responsibilities were part of Oriental tradition. His fascinating conversations with Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi throw into relief the dangers of cultural and development policies divorced from the aspirations of the people.

12 Ronald D. Renard, "Minorities in Burmese History", in K. M. de Silva et al. (eds.), *Ethnic Conflict in Buddhist Societies: Sri Lanka, Thailand and Burma*, London, 1988, p. 79.

13 *Human Development: Report 1993* p. 5. Scoble and Wiseberg (eds.), *Access to Justice*, p. 5, point out the difference between fundamental reform that "involves a redistribution of power, a broadening of participation and influence in the making of authoritative decisions" and contingent reform that "involves a sharing of the benefits of power holding, or the uses of power, in order to avoid the sharing of power itself".



Dismantling the mechanism of exclusion

by Ignacy Sachs

What can be done to prevent societies from disintegrating as a result of worsening unemployment and poverty?

IGNACY SACHS

is a French socio-economist who heads the Research Centre on Contemporary Brazil at the School of Advanced Studies in Social Sciences (EHESS) in Paris, where he is also in charge of doctoral studies on comparative research on development. His works published in English include *Development and Planning* (Cambridge University Press, 1987) and *Studies in Political Economy of Development* (Pergamon, 1980).

In June 1992 the Rio Earth Summit laid down the founding principle of eco-development or “sustainable development”. The idea is that any development worth the name should promote social justice, while respecting nature and seeking economic efficiency without the latter two factors’ becoming ends in themselves. The Burkinabe historian Joseph Ki-Zerbo aptly summed up this approach when he wrote: “Ecodevelopment? Yes. But only as long as it is people-centred.”¹

The Social Summit in Copenhagen also turns its back on an exaggerated emphasis on eco-

nomics, which regards economic growth as the necessary and sufficient condition of development. Our societies are paying a very high price for having put economics in the driver’s seat instead of being dependent on a social project democratically defined. The crisis brought about by structural unemployment and underemployment affects the whole world. According to United Nations estimates, almost one-third of the workforce is affected.

With very few exceptions, all the models seem to be running out of steam or even collapsing. The social cost of restructuring the former communist societies and economies in eastern Europe on capitalist lines is very high. It is creating distortions similar to those observed in the countries of the South which are engaged in an impossible endeavour to copy models taken over from the industrialized nations. Here, the processes of



The modern sector no longer needs the services of marginalized men and women. At best it relegates them to the purgatory of the informal economy." Above, selling bread in a Yaoundé street (Cameroon).

development, or maldevelopment, are bringing benefits to a minority to the detriment of the majority.

A 'fair-share' civilization

Contrary to forecasts made by theorists of the "dual" economy—functioning at two or more speeds—forms of social exclusion have emerged on a massive scale. The modern sector no longer needs the services of marginalized men and women. At best it relegates them to the purgatory of the informal economy, which is put forward as a solution to maldevelopment, of which it is actually one of the worst symptoms. In the absence of social protection, productive relationships in the informal sector are often extremely brutal. The survival strategies deployed by those involved in the informal economy remain, for the time being, a mere palliative. They must not be allowed to serve as

Black market trading in Moscow (Russia).



The growth mechanism functions in and through inequality. Redistribution of income should be part of the production process.

a pretext for states to evade their responsibilities and opt out of the fight against the root causes of exclusion.

This "dualization" of the economy is also happening in the industrialized countries, where the problem of social exclusion has become front-page news. We are witnessing what might be termed the creation of a "Third World" on a global scale. This is where the Copenhagen Summit comes in. To varying extents and in different ways, the fight against poverty and for social integration and the creation of productive jobs concerns most of the member countries of the United Nations.

We must rethink our development strategies and invent new ways of regulating mixed economies (those in which the public and private sectors coexist). Development transcends the material dimensions of human existence but it cannot disregard them. Even if we view it as the construction of a civilization based on human beings, such a civilization cannot flourish unless resources are fairly shared out.

But resources are increasingly unevenly distributed within and between nations. The growth mechanism functions in and through inequality. It is very hard to correct this phenomenon by redistributing a small percentage of income on the margin. Only the distribution of income that is part of the production process will have a decisive impact. Unemployment is not an inevitable result of the globalization of the economy. The great majority of countries still sell the bulk of their products, especially services, on their domestic market. The growth of the latter will continue to play an essential role in development. This is particularly true of big countries and those in which a significant part of the population is barely integrated into the



Making buckets from used tyres in Peshawar (Pakistan).

market economy because of its extremely low purchasing power.

How can hundreds of millions of marginalized or semi-marginalized people be made more productive? By identifying opportunities for employment and self-employment which are still under-used. These opportunities are bound up with better management of the resources of our planet and with the production of services. This means making a detailed assessment of all the latent potential for employment, analysing obstacles, and proposing public policies that are capable of changing the existing state of affairs.

The situation is less desperate than it seems. I believe that the barriers are essentially political and therefore capable of solution if a broad consensus of public opinion can be reached on the measures to be taken. The situation will have to be examined country by country. But I would suggest that there are four priority fronts.

Four front-line targets

■ In rural areas we must introduce forms of modernization which improve the condition of small farmers without causing a massive reduction in their numbers and which simultaneously create large numbers of rural jobs in the non-agricultural sector. We must avoid the disproportionate growth of cities through the influx of refugees from the countryside and, wherever possible, halt rampant and excessive urban growth of the kind experienced in Latin America and elsewhere. Because they reproduced, in the name of an ill-conceived modernity, a model of agriculture requiring little manpower, many Latin American countries now find themselves with tens of millions of city-dwellers living in precarious conditions. These countries have been unable to reconcile the enormous reserve of agricultural land at their disposal with the abundant supply of labour.

Two new factors have changed the nature of the problem of the rural economy. First, environmental awareness: we must learn more about biodiversity and the knowledge acquired in this sphere by different cultures—not in order to revert to ancestral practices but so as to find better forms of environment-friendly exploitation of the agricultural and forest biomass. In theory, progress in biotechnologies brings highly productive processes (genetic selection, in vitro reproduction, direct nitrogen fixation, new methods of fish farming) within the reach of small farmers. The range of energy-bearing and industrial products derived from biomass should be greatly extended as a result.

Secondly, a decentralized form of industrialization is taking shape. Small towns and villages will become the setting for units that

A filling station for mopeds in Korogho (Côte d'Ivoire).



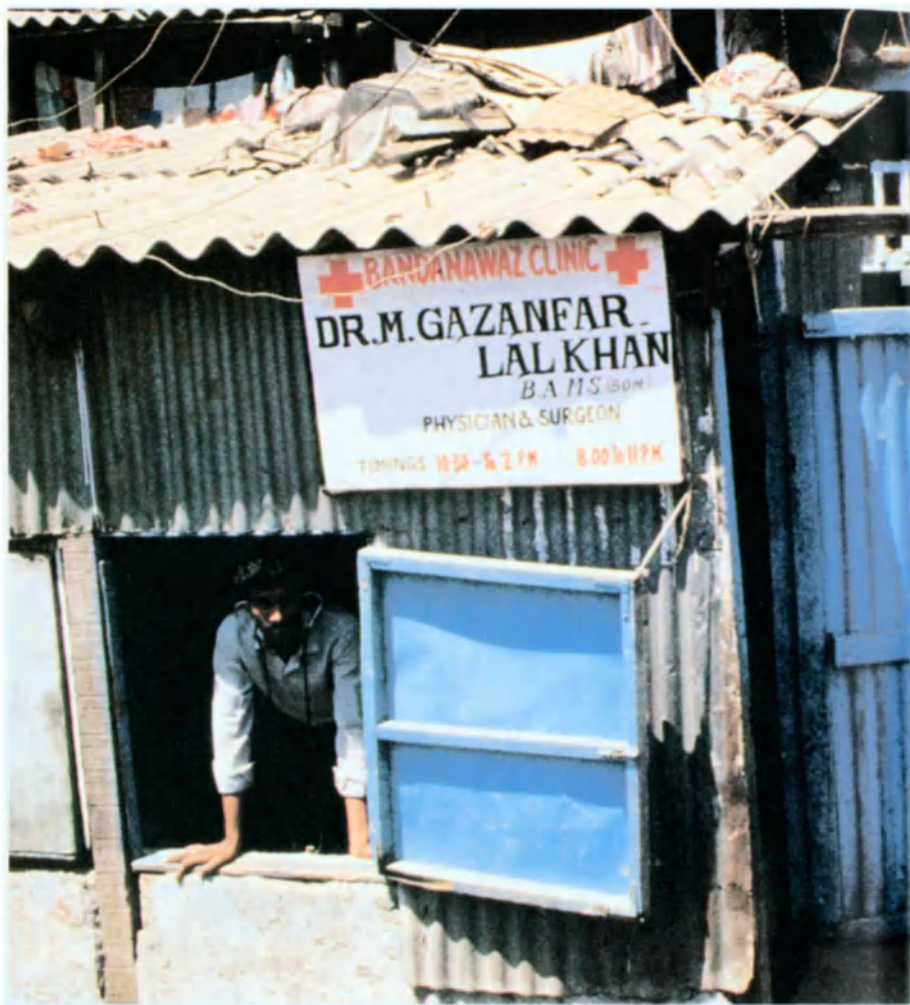
There is no point in expecting any significant increase in jobs in industry, but it is possible to increase jobs in the social services.

process biomass and produce goods and services for local use and perhaps even for external markets. A growing number of industries are already evolving from mass production towards flexible specialization.

The redeployment of activities in rural areas is also of direct interest to certain industrialized countries which are obliged to reduce the land area given over to food crops because of surplus production. These countries may well become rural deserts dotted with urban archipelagos unless they find new productive activities for the countryside.

However, the countryside and small towns cannot be fully developed without the implementation of public policies to provide access to the land for small farmers, to make information available about loans and market outlets, to define and protect outlets for rural industries. Furthermore, agricultural research should not be left to a handful of multinational companies which today enjoy a near-monopoly in the field of genetics.

■ In the countries of the South, the enormous current wastage of energy and other natural resources must be reduced. An enormous amount needs to be done here in such fields as recycling waste, re-using materials, finding uses for by-



The clinic of a Bombay physician and surgeon (India).

A dispensary in Hué (Viet Nam).



products that are now neglected, and conserving energy and water. Above all, capital savings must be made through better maintenance of infrastructures, equipment and buildings.

These activities demand a great deal of manpower but they are at least partly self-financing through the savings they make in the use of resources, and they are also relatively simple to organize. The greatest need is for financing systems, and these could be established by the public banks. But nothing much is happening here, even though we know that the fight against waste is one of the key elements in ecodevelopment strategies.

■ There is no point in expecting any significant increase in jobs in industry. In countries which are already industrialized, the number of jobs in industry will continue to decline. Is it possible, however, to increase jobs in the services sector, especially in the social services? If there is one area in which large numbers of people can quickly make a specific contribution, this is it—in education, health care and caring for people of all ages, from young children to the elderly.

Substantial unsatisfied demand exists in the richest countries, but it cannot be met in commercial terms. We must therefore seek new



forms of partnership between users, citizens' associations, the state and the market in order to reduce the need for public funding. The social economy—co-operatives, mutual-aid institutions, clubs and associations, community-based business ventures, non-profit-making private enterprise—has a promising future. But at present it is relegated to the sidelines.

As for the countries of the South, instead of waiting to become rich before acquiring efficient social services, they should on the contrary bank on the fact that even a modest allocation of resources will permit the financing of an extensive range of educational and primary health care services. Social services, and increasingly research, are an area in which the countries of the South retain their greatest comparative edge.

■ Finally, one traditional sector must not go unmentioned, i.e. public works which are imperative in countries that lack adequate infrastructures, to say nothing of low-cost housing. However, although their importance is acknowledged in theory, very little is being done as yet in practice. ■

1 Joseph Ki-Zerbo, "L'écodéveloppement: seul développement viable et valable", BREF, No. 13, June 1994.

The culture of silence

by Aminata Traoré

My point of view is that of a woman from one of the world's poorest countries, Mali. The word *development* has no equivalent in our local languages. It is primarily an imported theoretical construct, which has left a mark on our individual and collective lives and given rise to some surrealist situations.

TERRIBLE HUMAN DAMAGE

In material terms the result of development can be gauged from the dilapidated state of our infrastructure and from the extent of insubriety and mendicity. In mental terms the damage is even greater, though less easy to evaluate. Under colonialism, and more insidiously during the last thirty years, self-contempt has been continually instilled into us. This has profoundly undermined African societies.

Our birth rate is a nuisance; people think we are poor because there are too many of us. But they forget that without young people there would never have been democracy in Mali, for it was they who took to the streets and did what adults no longer dared to do. People do not realize the tragedy of their lives. Young people represent 60 per cent of the African population. What future can they look forward to?

DISENCHANTMENT

Nobody talks about the real causes of the failure of development. Nobody talks about all the waste, or the way this crazy debt has been contracted. On the ground the process goes quietly on, with its succession of senseless projects and programmes. Young people and their parents do not know about this debt; they do not know that their present and future are mortgaged; they do not know that the World Bank even exists. Newly elected representatives need fresh money, and so they keep quiet and let the projects started under previous governments go on. African research workers talking to foreign research workers also keep their mouths shut, because they are ambitious to get jobs in international organizations. On the spot, despite the institutions' good faith, we deal only with arrogant, pretentious people who listen to nobody.

It is as though a culture of silence has developed. On the one side are the so-called illiterate people, entitled neither to information nor to the truth, and on the other are the decision-makers who prefer to keep quiet. As for illiteracy, it is not a blemish. My mother, watching some of your television, said to me: "It seems to me as though hearts no longer love one another. All this development business is a story of disenchantment; everybody feels anger towards everybody else". ■

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EMPOWERMENT

An escape route from poverty

by John Friedmann
and Leonie Sandercock

The needy lack power as well as possessions

*Hey
C'mon
Come out
Wherever you are
We need to have this meeting
At this tree
Ain' even been
planted
yet*

JUNE JORDAN "CALLING ON ALL SILENT
MINORITIES" (1989)

This poem by African-American poet June Jordan is about the process of empowerment. It urges those without a voice to find their collective voice, to get out there and meet and discuss and make demands.

There are, according to United Nations estimates, about 1.3 billion people in the developing world living in poverty. If we add to these the people who live near the edge of absolute poverty, the world's poor would easily rise above 2 billion people. That is more than a third of world population—a silent minority on a global scale.

Economic growth has not trickled down to them. On the contrary. To all intents and purposes, the poor are excluded from "development".

The failure of economic policies over the last thirty years to address the plight of the world's poor requires that we rethink first the very definition and interpretation of poverty, and second what solutions are appropriate.



Our new definition centres on the notion of poverty as disempowerment, and we argue for a politics of collective self-empowerment on the part of the world's poor, complemented by certain new state policies.

The old theory of poverty

The United Nations figures on poverty cited above are derived by calculating a "poverty line" which is expressed in money terms, whereby the poor are defined according to their ability (actually inability) to consume. Although household income is sometimes used in surveys, the usual emphasis is on the individual.

This understanding of poverty fits neatly with the assumptions of neo-classical economists, wherein the population is roughly divided into producers and consumers. Both are treated individually. Individuals enter labour markets, and what their labour earns, they consume, sharing their income with whomever they choose.



According to this theory, the situation of the poor may be improved by increasing the productivity of labour, by redistribution of income through various forms of subsidies and welfare programmes, and by the (increasingly faint) hope of “trickle down”.

This neo-classical model makes invisible the huge amount of work that takes place outside the market, specifically, work that is performed inside the household economy. For the most part this work is done by women and children, and its object is the social reproduction of the household and its members. Perhaps each household should be seen as a small group of producers who have joined together to produce their life and livelihood. This production of life and livelihood includes work that results in paid income, but it gives equal worth to the unpaid work of household members. In short, it acknowledges the value of the moral economy of the household, which is based on reciprocity and affection, as distinct from the market, which is based on profit.

The household economy is double-edged. It is both the smallest unit for the self-production of life and livelihood, and the smallest political community. As such, it involves both cooperation and conflict, both a “collective” and a conflictive arrangement among individuals with greater and lesser degrees of dependence on each other, and with claims on the household and its distribution of resources.

Empowerment

Those who are relatively well off can claim to be relatively empowered, because they have reasonable access to resources that enable them to pursue the ends of life that they value. Those who lack such access are relatively disempowered, or poor.

There are three kinds of disempowerment: psychological, social and political. Psychological disempowerment has to do with low self-esteem. Social disempowerment means having little or

'To all intents and purposes, the poor are excluded from development'



The production of life and livelihood in the household acknowledges the value of the household's moral economy, which is based on reciprocity and affection." Above, mother and daughter in Cairo (Egypt).

no access to the bases of social power. Political disempowerment means having no say in how one's life is shaped and determined within the political communities in which one moves.

All three forms of disempowerment are important in the definition of poverty and in the ways of escaping from poverty. To begin the long climb out of poverty, all three forms of power must come together and be engaged.

Here we will emphasize social disempowerment. From the perspective of the household, eight bases of social power are crucial: a protected life space; surplus time over and above the time needed for the maintenance of life and livelihood; social organization; social networks; knowledge and skills; information related to using existing knowledge and skills; tools and instruments of production, including good health; and, finally, financial resources.

The bonds of family and community

A protected life space is the most basic condition for the production of life and livelihood. This implies housing and, in the case of rural settlements, access to productive land. Landless labourers and unhoused households in cities are among the poorest, most disempowered segments of a population.

But households also need connections to the world beyond their walls. They need social organization and social networks. This includes the bonds of family, of community, and of networks of individuals (friends, work companions, quasi-kin, patrons, and so on) who operate largely on the basis of reciprocity.

Reinforcing and strengthening these connections between household and community must be worked at, which involves investments of time, care and effort. (By community we mean social organizations based in local neighbourhoods where people know each other and where relations of personal trust can be established.)

The production of life and livelihood is a social process that requires co-operation. In the case of poor households, the dependence of members on each other, on family, friends, neighbours and social organizations, is substantial. But before these social relations can be meaningfully engaged, an even more fundamental condition of social power comes into play: surplus time, in the context of protected life space.

A co-operative grain mill in a Burkina Faso village.



Households obviously need the relative security of a home. But they also need to have time, over and above that needed for subsistence at present levels, in order to improve their life conditions.

Whether it is political action, starting a small business, participating in community affairs, or contributing with sweat equity to the construction or improvement of their home, time has to be salvaged. This could mean living closer to the centre of the city, to minimize commuting; having child care services available during the day; having access to piped water; having basic community facilities nearby. These are only a few examples of what might save on and release time for other (productive, political, community-building) activities.

There are, however, limits to what poor households can do for themselves. The intervention of the state is still needed.

The importance of the state

Access to productive land and to housing, for instance, cannot usually be generated exclusively from within poor communities. Access to the use of land is regulated by the state, and housing aid and investments for poor people must come from the state. The same is true for surplus time. Household and community efforts are basic, but action by the state is required, for example, in water and sewerage service provision, in transport facilities, in the location of new settlements and so on.

Now it is one thing to argue that states have a responsibility to act in these ways, and quite

another to get states to use their powers on behalf of poor people's livelihoods. States do not act out of benevolence but because they are politically pressured to do so. The development of a politics of poor people's movements is essential. The object of such a politics is to call the attention of the state to the basic needs of the poor, and to pressure governments to act on behalf of these needs.

Successful political and other collective actions are very empowering psychologically to those who participate in them. And political and collective action in securing rights of access to the bases of social power draws particularly on the strength, leadership and imagination of women. For women, such struggles are empowering in a special sense, as they emerge from the privacy of their households into the public sphere of community-based action on behalf of their own families.

But state actions—when states respond at

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In Lima (Peru) young people from rural areas are taught the techniques of photojournalism (above right) by "Social Photography Workshops" (TAFOS). During their training, the budding photographers build up a portfolio of photo reports on social issues that help them to defend their identity. Photo right, taken by a TAFOS-trained photographer, shows strikers blocking a railway line.



all—can be both empowering and disempowering. When solutions are imposed from above, they are disempowering to both poor people and their communities. Solutions are empowering when they work through democratic, participatory processes in which the energy and inventiveness of communities are directly engaged. Solutions to problems of livelihood are most meaningful when they are tailored to community conditions and needs and involve the active collaboration of the organized community.

States have found it convenient to rely on non-governmental organizations for meeting some of the needs of poor people, and much good has been done in this way. But the resources devoted to non-governmental efforts are woefully inadequate when faced with the massive needs of poor people.

The state alone has the resources—and the legislative powers—to address the problems of life and livelihood of the disempowered on a scale that begins to be meaningful.

Our model of poverty as disempowerment has a number of advantages over the old bureaucratic model based on neo-classical assumptions. It acknowledges and includes the importance of non-market work. It validates co-operative action, inherent in the production-orientation of the model (as opposed to the consumer-based individualism of neo-classical economics). It argues for an anti-poverty strategy that is based on the needs of life and livelihood rather than on the logic of accumulation. And it envisions anti-poverty strategies that combine individual and collective forms of psychological, social and political empowerment. Finally, our model acknowledges the role of the state in improving the access of the disempowered poor to the bases of social power, while emphasizing that any state intervention must be democratic and participatory, strengthening civil society. ■

“Households need connections to the world beyond their walls. They need social organization and social networks. This includes the bonds of family, of community and of networks of friends, work companions, patrons and so on, who operate largely on the basis of reciprocity.” Below, a family outing (Turkey).



d a t e l i n e



Some of the neediest people of Pune, an Indian city (pop. one million) 200 kilometres south of Bombay, recently took the initiative of launching a garbage-recycling programme that brings them a small income as well as helping to improve the city's hygiene. Some 10,000 women rag-pickers methodically sort the 600 tons of garbage thrown into the street each day and then sell recyclable material at one of 150 "shops" forming part of a buyers' co-operative. One quarter of the city's waste is sent for recycling in this way. After three years' efforts the rag-pickers have succeeded in forming their own trade union which defends their rights and today has 4,000 card-carrying members.

THE RAG-PICKERS OF PUNE

Photos by Denis Rouvre
Text based on a report by Christel Chapin





South Africa: leaving apartheid behind

by Roger Meunier

A reconstruction programme for a country with a ruinous heritage

ROGER MEUNIER, of France, is a staff member of the School of Advanced Studies in Social Sciences (EHESS) in Paris. A member of the southern Africa research group at his country's National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), he is currently working on problems of agriculture and agrarian reform in South Africa.

The new South Africa is on the move. Representatives of the whole nation, now headed by Nelson Mandela, are still working on a final draft of the constitution. Meanwhile, they have already embarked on a reconstruction and development programme. This is a package of social and economic measures which will make it possible, now that political equality has been achieved, to erase the terrible consequences of over a hundred years of colonial plunder and nearly half a century of government whose very foundations rested on a policy of social exclusion.

The task at hand is all the more daunting because the final years of apartheid resulted in a serious economic crisis, a downturn in investment, an appreciable decrease in national wealth and the institutionalization of regional inequalities. The self-governing—and supposedly independent—Bantustans (Transkei, Ciskei, Bophuthatswana and Venda), which now once again form an integral part of the South African national framework, were pockets of destitution, overpopulation and environmental disaster.

Even today, there are those who refuse to accept the apartheid regime's responsibility for the maldevelopment of South Africa. The appro-

priation by the white minority of the lion's share of the country's wealth tends to be regarded by its beneficiaries more as the natural result of economic laws or a legitimate reward for hard work and expertise than as the product of massive overexploitation based on political domination and racial discrimination.

A ruinous social and economic heritage

In fact, the years of growth leading up to 1980 were a time when inequalities increased in every sphere and the great majority of the rural black population were impoverished. The scale of the phenomenon can be gauged from the findings of a nationwide survey on poverty carried out by hundreds of researchers in the early 1980s.

The survey painted a damning picture of the predicament faced by millions of South Africans in meeting their basic needs for water, energy, food, housing, work, medical care and education.

The problem of water is particularly revealing. White homes have two or three water taps per inhabitant, and middle-class residences are often graced with a swimming pool. But in

the townships (black suburbs) in the east of Cape Province, it is not unusual for several hundred inhabitants to share the use of a *single* water-supply point. In rural areas the situation is often even worse: a study of three Transkei villages showed that members of each household spent an average of more than three hours a day fetching and carrying water. The quality of the water available to the poor is so low that they have to buy drinking water at a price tens of times higher than that paid by the more privileged. The same goes for energy: photographs showing women carrying heavy loads of firewood against a background of electricity pylons are familiar to everyone.

Democracy and the fight against poverty

In a speech he gave at Atlanta University a few months before coming to power, Nelson Mandela summed up the situation as follows: "A democratic constitution must address the issues of poverty, inequality, deprivation and want in accordance with the internationally recognized standards of the indivisibility of human rights. A vote without food, shelter, and health care would be to create the appearance of equality while actual inequality is entrenched. We do not want freedom without bread, nor do we want bread without freedom."

Representatives of the nationalist movement (the African National Congress) long believed that the best way to achieve this kind of justice was to bring the whole economy under public control in a manner modelled on the Soviet,

Chinese and Cuban revolutions. This approach has been comprehensively called into question. The reconstruction and development programme now being implemented by the government of national unity is clearly geared to a market economy. It gives priority to the absolute need for national cohesion rather than the redistribution of wealth. It takes for granted that there can be no policy of growth without the confidence of domestic and international investors, or without the trust of the nation's elites, whose departure could result—as it has elsewhere—in South Africa making a great leap backwards.

The aim is to meet people's basic needs while making as few changes as possible to South Africa's general macro-economic equilibrium and production structure. As regards housing, ambitious targets have been set: within five years, the number of homes built annually is due to rise from 50,000 to 300,000. By the year 2000, 2.5 million homes and all schools will have electricity. Running water and medical care will also become generally available. Sweeping agrarian reforms will provide for part of the 85 per cent of land appropriated by whites to be returned to the dispossessed. The public works policy that is part of the programme should create many jobs.

There remains the problem of financing such a programme. Several possible solutions are being looked at. They include a rationalization of the administrative system, a decrease in some military spending, the creation of a development fund for certain long-term investments, and a limitation on the use of international financing.

'The reconstruction and development programme being implemented by the government is geared to a market economy.'

Opposite page, this inhabitant of Orange Farm, a black township in South Africa, belongs to a group of citizens who make bricks to build their houses and for sale.

Right, standing in line to vote in a black township during the 1994 elections that took Nelson Mandela to the presidency of the Republic.



Change from within

by Peter Anyang Nyong'o

Governments in the South are kept in power through a combination of internal and external factors. In the 1960s and 1970s, it was easy for authoritarian regimes to remain in power in Africa. Thanks to revenues earned from mining and agriculture, and with the help of the West, a cohabitation could easily be sustained between bureaucratic elites and popular masses. The state had enough resources to maintain the elite while supporting the consumption of the masses. But this led to an increase in state debt, and when state revenues began to decrease and foreign aid diminished, cohabitation between the bourgeoisie and the mass was blown away and popular rebellion exploded. This rebellion took the form of ethnic conflicts, religious and secessionist movements, and various movements in the name of democracy. . . . While it is true that popular rebellion now expresses itself through a strong demand for democratization, it should not be forgotten that the success of democratization will depend largely on the availability of resources such as land for agricultural production, technology to transform raw materials into manufactured goods, and a trained and skilled workforce, workers and decision-makers alike.

THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

But if the powerful continue to deny the developing world its share of development resources, to maintain unfair trade relations and biased investment protocols, it will not be possible to establish the proper conditions of development without breaking away from these patterns. Global economic policies and relations must be democratized.

There are many examples of inept projects conceived by Western companies and supported by their governments and by the corrupted elites of countries of the South. Whenever the forces of opposition have wanted to establish responsibility for the failures which resulted from these projects, Western governments have sided with the corrupt governments in power. The success of inner change necessarily depends on how international relations evolve.

DEVELOPMENT, CHANGE AND DEMOCRACY

Of course nothing will be done without a leadership that is committed to the well-being of populations. Some believe that non-governmental agencies can take over responsibility for development in the Third World. That is an illusion. These organizations may provide medicine and dispensaries, and help women's groups in their endeavours, but they will not be able to construct roads or railways or create an infrastructure for health and education. Only national governments can fulfill that role.

Most of all, change has to come from within. The emergence of new leaders has to be encouraged, leaders who can guide their fellow citizens and who are genuinely committed to development and change, without ever losing sight of democratic principles. Otherwise, debt and underdevelopment will be perpetuated and governments will continue to repress and neglect people's demands. These new leaders should be real trustees of the people and not mere inheritors of on-going privileges. ■

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'Sweeping agrarian reforms will provide for part of the 85 per cent of land appropriated by whites to be returned to the dispossessed.'

But the crux of the programme is the redistribution of existing resources so that the needs of the most underprivileged can be met. It is impossible, for example, to increase education spending on a massive scale (it already accounts for 7 per cent of GNP and 24 per cent of the budget). But it will be possible to devote a bigger slice of it to the generalization of high-quality primary education by calling on higher education institutions to shoulder a greater share of their costs. Similarly, the agrarian reforms will be partly funded by reducing the subsidies that now go to big commercial farms run by whites. In the electricity and water sectors, new pricing systems will provide the necessary funding: a transfer of resources will take place between the present beneficiaries of existing networks, who are often large-scale consumers, and those who have not yet been connected up to the network.

Quite apart from the purely financial aspects, the success of such a programme hinges on two crucial factors. First, there must be a social and political consensus. The well-to-do minority, consisting overwhelmingly of whites, will have to accept a number of sacrifices. As for the victims of apartheid, they will have to curb their impatience and accept that priority be given to the most underprivileged members of their community. The second key factor is the ability of the new government to marshal a competent and highly-motivated administration. Given the difficult situation it has inherited, this will be no easy task. ■

Primary school children in the black township of Katlehong.





PRONASOL: Mexico's bid to fight poverty

by Jaime Marques-Pereira

Above, fetching water in a Mexico City suburb.

■ Pronasol, the National Solidarity Programme launched by the Mexican government in 1989, is regarded in many quarters as a model in the fight against poverty. It has three priorities: to improve the living conditions of the rural population, the Indians and people living in working-class urban districts; to promote regional development and create the productive basis for a higher standard of living; and to strengthen the participation of social organizations and local authorities in development.

It is guided by two principles. It seeks, firstly,



A demonstration for peace and human rights in Mexico's Chiapas state, January 1994.

to concentrate public action on extreme poverty and, secondly, to make contracts with the social groups concerned so that they can share the costs and assume administrative responsibility for social projects carried out jointly.

The aim is to limit and reduce the costs of social intervention by the state, but above all to make this aid more effective and more equitable. After 1981, economic management marked by an increase in external debt led to the worsening of inequalities and poverty in Mexico. Between 1981 and 1987, the number of poor people rose by 9.2 million and the number of the extremely poor by 3.6 million (the population increased by 9.8 million in the same period). While unemployment and underemployment among the active population rose (from 12.8 per cent to 29 per cent between 1982 and 1989), social expenditure decreased.

Nobody denies the beneficial effects that Pronasol may have on social infrastructures, but it seems doubtful whether it can eliminate poverty. All the same, it remains a valuable supplementary policy which has the merit of stabilizing the number of poor people, if not the ranks of the extremely poor. Will it be enough to prevent outbreaks of popular discontent?

By responding after the event to the deterioration of poverty and inequalities, the state is acting as a social fire brigade. The shocks stemming from economic liberalization measures and the resulting trade deficit are paralyzing the resumption of growth. The Chiapas uprisings may simply mark the beginning of a broader movement.

Little room for manoeuvre

Pronasol's record shows how narrow is the path, for all Latin American governments, which reconciles opening up the economy with political democratization. The priority given to the fight against extreme poverty soon proved ineffectual without an economic recovery that would improve the distribution of income by raising levels of employment and earnings and providing room for manoeuvre to finance social expenditure.

The Mexican case seems to be particularly significant. The fight against extreme poverty which is waged on a broad and deep front in this society (this is not just a pilot experiment of the kind that can be observed in some other Third World countries) also reflects the limits

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'An effective fight against poverty must be accompanied by a return to economic growth.'

encountered by all reform in the direction of liberalization. A social policy of this kind is no remedy for extreme poverty; at best, it helps to integrate people who are excluded from the social protection linked to paid employment.

Certainly this is a "consolidation" of democracy which extends citizenship to a growing percentage of the population. One of the most original features of Pronasol is that its cornerstone consists of more than 80,000 "solidarity committees" which put forward requests for action and follow them up. Through their numbers and the flexibility of their organization, they provide a new sphere of collective decision-making open to those who have hitherto taken no part in the corporative structures which control the distribution of social benefits. The innovative feature is the room for manoeuvre open to community leaders, who can either use these structures or not, as they see fit.

The distribution of Pronasol's financial resources establishes a direct link between the central government and local authorities. Many analysts believe that Pronasol points the way to a kind of neo-corporatism which could modernize clientelism by giving it roots not only in the trade unions, as in the past, but also at the territorial level and by giving political weight to the new social actors who have emerged from the neighbourhood associations.

Pronasol thus reflects a remarkable social opening. All the parties agree that it is evidence of a new political determination to broaden the social base of the state. But it is clear today that it guarantees neither social peace nor the transition to democracy. What some observers had called the "Mexican model to recover from crisis" is certainly not a panacea.

With the passage of time, the limits of Pronasol have become clear. An effective fight against poverty must be accompanied by a return to economic growth. But it is hard to imagine how growth could resume without more resolute public intervention designed to improve the job situation and wages, thus revitalizing the domestic market. Social policy must be the spearhead of a development strategy that lives up to its promises. ■

An ethical commitment

by Devaki Jain

Not everyone shares the pessimistic view of development that seems to be in the air. Development is the mirror of social action and the result of an active civil society. In the field we are resisting development that brings economic growth without bringing jobs, and this resistance is wasting a lot of our energy. We are trying to reconstruct on a local level, using our natural resources to protect our environments against destruction.

GANDHI'S MODEL

Ethics and development go together, and Mahatma Gandhi was successful in combining the two. He implemented a growth model based on "bubble-up" rather than "trickle-down" economics. This calls for two basic reforms:

→ A political reform: government must be decentralized and run by democratically elected local officials. But political decentralization is only viable if it is accompanied by economic and technological decentralization as well.

→ An economic reform: attention should be focused on the poorest of the poor, who should be at the core of our preoccupations.

India, for example, recently adopted a reform that extends the power of local government while giving the poor a much greater share of representation (30 per cent for women and 30 per cent for lower castes).

MAKING UTOPIA A REALITY

Much is said about alleviating poverty but not about eradicating it. I believe, however, that the eradication of poverty is the key to sustainable development. We have to build up economic development within a framework of justice. To accomplish that, North and South have to show solidarity. But first the North must become more democratic by changing its economic policies and allowing its society to play a bigger role. Personal commitment, solidarity in thought and action, moral imperatives, ethics, sacrifice, altruism and confidence in the people's competence, are all key values in the struggle for development. Intellectuals should mobilize so as to give these ideas a wider audience. Utopia must be given a chance.

DEVAKI JAIN

is an Indian economist with the Institute of Social Studies Trust (Delhi and Bangalore). She is a founder member of several associations, including DAWN (Development Alternative with Women for a New Era).



Brazil: a country in arms against hunger

by Herbert de Souza

Spurred by a citizens' campaign, the mobilization of Brazilian society against poverty marked the birth of a new political awareness

Hunger and unemployment have become blots on the world. They haunt the faces of Somali refugees and the street children of Rio. There are 35 million unemployed in the world's seven wealthiest nations, and in Brazil alone there are 20 million workers for whom having a job does not even mean that they will be able to eat their fill.

In 1993 Brazil invented an original way of tackling these complex problems. It is known as the Citizens' Action Campaign against Poverty

and for Life (ACF), and its 3,000 committees nationwide have managed to mobilize all of Brazilian society to relieve the hunger of 32 million persons.

The committees were spontaneously and independently set up in communities, companies, churches, non-governmental organizations, trade unions, neighbourhood associations and schools.

The results of a 1993 survey showed that 96 per cent of the persons polled approved of the campaign and that 32 per cent had either contributed financially or offered their time to it. These surprising and telling figures show that something can be done, and that appealing to people's civic spirit is not a waste of time. Brazil's main bank, O Banco do Brasil, has put its net-

"Above all, I am a human being." Above, street children demonstrate in Rio de Janeiro.

'A driver stopped at a red light rolls up his window when he sees a street urchin coming his way for a handout. When the light turns green, the car roars off, leaving the boy empty-handed.'

work at the campaign's disposal, and employees in nearly 2,000 of its 3,000 branches have volunteered to collect and distribute food, build shelters and crèches and mobilize public opinion in 1,500 Brazilian towns.

Public sector businesses were not to be outdone. Some thirty of them today belong to an extremely active support committee. The private sector also pitched in, and the C & A Institute of Social Development (*Instituto C & A de Desenvolvimento Social*) allocated about \$2 million last year to projects on behalf of needy communities. All the religious faiths have combined their efforts and established an interdenominational fund that has received donations for underprivileged children amounting to almost \$600,000. Brazilian university students have enthusiastically supported the campaign by organizing meetings and debates on the causes of hunger and its possible solutions. The civil service has also been very active; regional officials have worked with citizens' committees on a range of measures against hunger and unemployment.

Donations from businesses, the performing arts and prisons

But the most high-profile responses have come from the performing arts. Right from the start actors and singers organized supporting events all over the country. For months, before every performance, actors in Rio and São Paulo appealed to their audiences to support the campaign. Some theatres accepted food as payment for tickets. The campaign was carried into music halls, cinemas and onto television, and gave rise to a gigantic "happening" in which 500 performers took part in a Week of Art against Hunger, inspired by the famous Week of Modern Art held in São Paulo in 1922. Chico Buarque, Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil and other singers took part in concerts held in many parts of Brazil.

Perhaps the most amazing reaction came from the female inmates of Rio's Talavera Bruce prison. They came up with the idea of asking prisoners in nine other institutions to give part of their food rations to the anti-hunger campaign and were able to gather 2.5 tons of provisions that were used to feed some 200 needy families for a fortnight in November 1993.

Brazilians living abroad demonstrated their solidarity by creating support committees in France, Switzerland, Italy, the United States, Japan, Finland, Australia and Chile to collect funds for the inhabitants of the southern Brazilian states, especially hard hit by a very severe winter.

Lifting the curtain of indifference

None of this would have been possible if Brazilian society had not discovered a new decentralized way of organizing itself and practising politics at grassroots level, relying on individual initiative and a partnership between generosity and need to lift the heavy curtain of indifference between the middle and upper classes and the reality of hunger and poverty.

For the state, the campaign was an opportunity to innovate. The President set up a National Council for Food Security (*Conselho Nacional de Segurança Alimentar*) in which nine ministers and twenty-one representatives from civil society met to see what the authorities could do about hunger. It was through this mechanism that the citizens more or less forced the state to organize a massive distribution of provisions to 2 million drought-stricken families in the northeast. In a country the size of a continent (the area of Brazil is more than

For the past eight years Beliza, below, has devoted her life to the street children of Fortaleza, a port in northeastern Brazil, and has founded an association to help them find shelter.



8,500,000 km²) transporting and distributing more than 7.5 million staple rations of rice, beans, wheat, salt and oil was a major operation.

Today, a year after taking to the streets, ACF has shown Brazilians a new kind of politics based on principles and reflexes that have always been latent in their country. The first sign of this change was the discovery of a new feeling in Brazil, the feeling that things could be done on the initiative of society rather than the state. This gave rise to an entirely new way of looking at politics.

The first new factor was the realization that decentralization works. ACF has neither leaders, nor political slogans nor a central committee. It simply encourages a sense of individual initiative and responsibility (what the institutional left calls "spontaneism"). The campaign has showed that the capacity of citizens to mobilize should not be underestimated. For the first time they prevailed over society, and society over the state.

A political turning point

The media have played a decisive role in alerting public opinion to a problem which had hitherto been widely and scandalously ignored. One of the first ads broadcast free of charge on television summed up the general mood. It showed a driver, clearly a wealthy member of society, stopped at a red light, hurriedly rolling up his window when he sees a skinny, sad-faced street urchin coming his way for a handout. When the light turns green, the car roars off, leaving the boy empty-handed. At market rates it would have cost ACF \$5 million to run this and other similar ads on Globo TV (the country's main network with 80 per cent of the market) for six months!

Hunger became a major issue in the 1994 election campaign because television showed the general public (as the newspapers showed the elites) that hunger is an ethical matter, that democracy cannot accept poverty and that no country has the right to turn a blind eye to 32 million needy citizens. By now it was impossible for candidates and voters to ignore a problem that the whole of Brazilian society had grown familiar with. No one could forget that there were 32 million hungry Brazilians.

When the first accusations of corruption emerged in 1992 against the then President, nearly 900 citizens' associations, backed by public opinion, combined in a movement defending morality in politics to demand his ouster. Brazilians took to the streets (their faces



Homeless people on a beach in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil).

painted with the national colours), there were student demonstrations, and the media rallied public opinion. The president was forced to resign, and democracy won the day. In the wake of this victory the movement's leaders decided to create ACF.

During the election campaign which led to the election by universal suffrage of the new president—the second to be democratically elected after a long period of military dictatorship—ACF activists monitored the campaign's moral aspect, urging various candidates on all power levels to take a stand on the hunger issue.

In Brazil there are 2 million child workers between the ages of 10 and 13, whites are paid twice as much as blacks, and men twice as much as women. The minimum wage is \$65 a week, but millions of peasants work more than 40 hours a week and do not even earn that paltry amount. The average monthly wage may be \$280, but 28 million persons share 10 per cent of GNP and just under 5.6 million privileged Brazilians control half of it.

The present model of development has failed. For most Brazilians the wealth that has been accumulating for decades means nothing. That

HERBERT DE SOUZA, a Brazilian sociologist, is executive secretary of the Brazilian Institute for Social and Economic Analysis and a leader of the Citizens' National Action Campaign against Hunger and Poverty and for Life. He is also one of the representatives of civil society in the Pact for Childhood, which combines the efforts of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Brazilian government and citizens on behalf of Brazilian children. He is a member of Brazil's National Council for Food Security, which was founded at his instigation.



Brazil has become the ninth richest country in the world is a joke to them. And the solutions recently adopted at the instigation of the major economic powers have only led to worse poverty.

Citizens working at grassroots level are thinking about the ethical issues as they start to build a new socio-economic model that questions the role of the state, the market and private enterprise.

In 1993 and 1994 the Campaign against Hunger demonstrated that the development model that creates poverty and exclusion is neither irreversible nor inevitable, and that it should not be accepted fatalistically. The fight against hunger augurs well for the future. It began by rejecting what seemed unavoidable. It enabled people to say, "We can and must all be able to eat, work, have a roof over our heads, medical care, basic facilities and access to education and culture. Everyone has a right to human dignity and citizenship."

Much, of course, remains to be done, but at least the wind of change has blown into Brazil. ACF's optimism is that of people who know that the struggle has only just begun. ■

Hoping against hope

by Edgar Morin

Development is a key word which has run through all political ideologies, but it has never been thought out in depth. At present three revolutions are taking place in the field of knowledge, particularly in science. They will give rise to a new analysis of development:

- Science used to think that it could state certainties: we now know that room must be found for uncertainty;
- Science used to think it could deal with problems separately from each other, but everything that is linked to a context and to a system can no longer be isolated;
- It used to be accepted that a single rationalizing logic sufficed for understanding reality. Rationality has now opened itself to new logics.

DOUBTS ABOUT DEVELOPMENT

These revolutions have thrown doubt on the presupposition that progress has only positive consequences and leads inevitably to the development of humankind. We now know that technology is ambivalent and that both people and nature need to be protected from its negative effects.

We can see that economic issues cannot be separated from social, human and cultural issues. So long as the link between economic and non-economic factors was concealed, everything that could not be quantified was neglected. Intellectually satisfying economic models were constructed, but they were not capable of taking account of reality. We have so far not taken account of the destructive effects of technical and economic development on our cultural heritage and on nature. These destructive effects explain why fundamentalism is gaining many devotees and finding leaders among intellectuals who possess the tools of modern knowledge but have been disappointed by it.

So it is the end of the euphoric concept of development, which favoured the idea of a single model applicable to all situations.

A NEW APPROACH

The notion of development must be put back into an ensemble encompassing nature, history, society and culture. But we still lack an awareness of a common earthly destiny. We must foster the growth of a kind of human solidarity based on a uterine link between people, for instance the idea of an earth-motherland. As the poet Machado put it, "Hiker, there is no road; you make the road by walking". We need to seek a new way, trying to draw inspiration from Heraclitus's thought, "You cannot hope if you do not seek the un hoped-for". ■

EDGAR MORIN

is a French sociologist who is emeritus director of research with the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS). His most recent work published in English is *Towards a Study of Humankind, Vol I: The Nature of nature* (1992)

■ Developing countries devote on average only 13% of their national budgets (\$57 billion a year) to basic human development concerns.

■ On average, bilateral donor countries allocate only 7% of their aid to the various human priority concerns (basic education, primary health care, mass-coverage water supply systems and family planning services).

■ In the past two decades, the number of jobs in industrial countries has increased at only half the rate of GDP growth and failed to keep pace with the growth in the labour force. By 1993, more than 35 million people were seeking work, and a high proportion were women.

■ In developing countries, registered unemployment is commonly above 10%, and total unemployment probably way beyond that.

■ The overall availability of food in the world is not a problem. There is enough food to offer everybody in the world around 2,500 calories a day—200 calories more than the basic minimum.

■ Some 800 million people around the world go hungry.

■ In developing countries, the major causes of death are infectious and parasitic diseases, which kill 17 million people annually.

■ In industrial countries, the major killers are diseases of the circulatory system (5.5 million deaths a year).

■ In the industrial countries, on average there is 1 doctor for every 400 people, but for the developing countries there is 1 for nearly 7,000 people (in sub-Saharan Africa the figure is 1 per 36,000).

■ The widest gap between the North and the South in any human indicator is in maternal mortality—which is about 18 times greater in the South.

■ At the beginning of this century, around 90% of war casualties were military. Today, about 90% are civilian.

From the *Human Development Report 1994* © 1994 by the United Nations Development Programme/Oxford University Press

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT—UNESCO'S MAIN TARGETS

- ☛ Endogenous capacity building through fostering human resources, a thorough renovation of educational contents and systems at all levels, knowledge transfer and sharing within and between countries.
- ☛ Combating poverty and exclusion effectively by ensuring people's participation in social development, respect for human rights, tolerance, non-violence and democratic attitudes, through education from early childhood onwards and support of citizens' organizations, as well as the pluralism and independence of the media.
- ☛ Recognizing cultural factors as an integral part of balanced development strategies and paying due regard to the historical, social and cultural contexts of each society—essential conditions for sustainable social development.
- ☛ Promoting a new vision of employment and work within the broader concept of "active life", which includes production, as well as civic, social solidarity and leisure activities, as the basic principle of a "caring society".
- ☛ Improving the quality of life of rural populations through education and training, as well as raising their income levels, by promoting productive activities in cultural tourism and eco-tourism.
- ☛ Promoting environmental awareness and people's participation in the equitable and rational use of resources for sustainable human development and the preservation of the environmental rights of future generations.
- ☛ Harnessing science and technology to greater effect and sharing them more equitably.
- ☛ Using for social development the opportunities offered by communications networks and informatics.
- ☛ Developing "early warning" devices to enable governments to monitor the implementation of social development efforts. ■

Further information about UNESCO's activities related to the World Summit may be obtained from:

The Secretariat of the Co-ordination Unit of the World Summit for Social Development, UNESCO, 1 rue Miollis, 75352 Paris Cedex 15.

Tel: (33-1) 45 68 37 19/45 68 37 44

Fax: (33-1) 43 06 07 72

THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

(COPENHAGEN, DENMARK, 6-12 MARCH 1995)



Why a "social" summit?

Instead of the social and economic progress that it seemed to promise, the end of the cold war has given way to a "cold peace" reflected in widespread political fragmentation and social destabilization. Instead of the long-awaited social harmony and affluence, poverty and unemployment are increasing and there is a growing sense of insecurity.

What has happened? In the words of United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "the world is suffering from a social and moral crisis which, in many societies, is of immense proportions".

A change of course is necessary.

Changing course is not so simple. . .

The problems are planetary. They must be addressed in a global context. The international approach requires foresight, collaboration and consensus in order to formulate a truly global strategy to combat the intertwined crises of poverty, unemployment and social disintegration.

. . . but it can—and must—be done

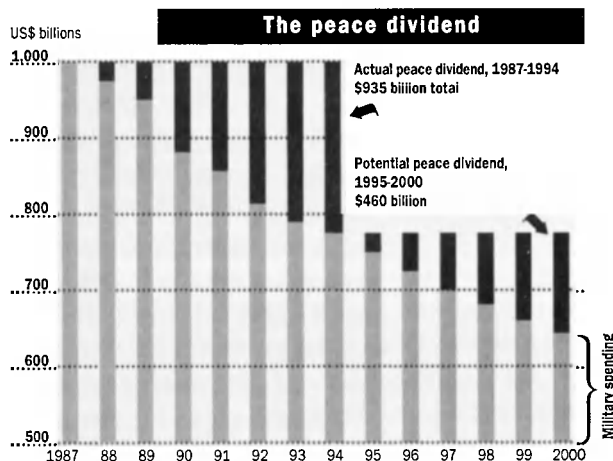
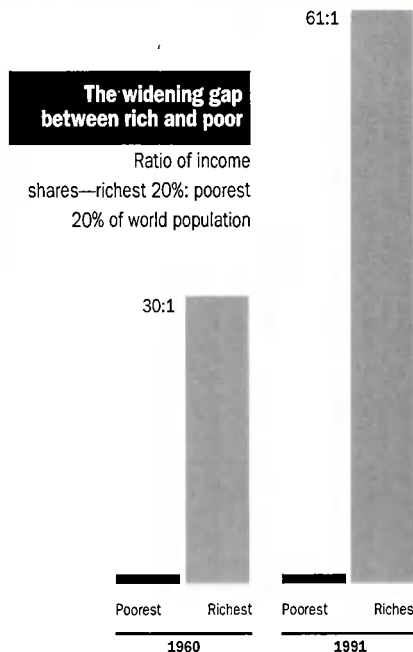
"The globalization of economics and culture", characterized by increasing interdependence in everything from markets to population movements and methods of decision-making, "should benefit all people". It is the ultimate responsibility of governments to ensure that the major problems of this decade—poverty, unemployment and social disintegration—are addressed through principles based on social justice and democracy and through actions built on respect for human dignity, individual freedom and equality of rights and responsibilities.

The UN's role: in the forefront of social progress

The United Nations responded to socially deteriorating conditions worldwide by calling for a World Summit for Social Development to address three issues: poverty, unemployment and social disintegration. This key event is one of a sequence of eight UN-sponsored conferences being held within the framework of the Fourth United Nations Development Decade (1991-2000).

Putting people first

The World Summit for Social Development is the centrepiece of the UN's commitment to put social issues at the centre of development. ■



Between 1987 and 1994, the decrease in military spending generated a peace dividend of some \$935 billion. Unfortunately, this peace dividend has not been used to finance the world social agenda. During 1995-2000, if global military spending were to continue declining by 3%, another \$460 billion could emerge as a peace dividend. The World Summit for Social Development provides a unique opportunity to agree on capturing the potential peace dividend and translating it into improved human development.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

For substantive information relating to the Summit and its NGO-related activities, please contact:
 UN Secretariat of the World Summit for Social Development
 United Nations, Room DC2-1362
 New York, NY 10017, U.S.A.
 Fax: (212) 963-3062

For more general public information, please contact:
 UN Department of Public Information
 United Nations, Room S-1040
 New York, NY 10017, U.S.A.
 Fax: (212) 963-4361



Sharing our knowledge

UNESCO's mission, whether it be in the natural sciences or in the social and human sciences, is to correct the glaring disparities in the scientific research effort being made throughout the world and to promote the development of

scientific knowledge for its intrinsic value and for its contribution to general education, but also to provide the backing for social and economic development.

For UNESCO's science programmes cover the basic sciences, the sciences applied to the environment and the development of natural resources, and the engineering sciences. While UNESCO promotes the advancement of the social and human sciences, it also encourages their application to the management of social transformations, as well as interdisciplinary approaches to such complex problems as population, development and the environment, the status of women, and human rights, democracy and peace.

UNESCO regards the social sciences as an area of knowledge that has to be strengthened but also believes in using them to solve the main problems of humanity and societies, in tune with its work in education, culture and communication, its other areas of competence. In so doing, it is helping to lay the foundations on which the programmes of the other specialized agencies of the United Nations system can be built.

UNESCO contributed to the creation of CERN, the European Centre for Nuclear Research. Together with the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Italian government, it is responsible for administering the International Centre for Theoretical Physics in Trieste, which each year trains several hundred researchers from developing countries. It participated in the foundation of the International Centre for Pure and Applied Mathematics in Nice, and was instrumental in setting up two international non-governmental research organizations, one on the brain and the other on cells. It has also set up co-operation networks linking research institutes such as the Microbial Resources Network and the Molec-

ular and Cell Biology Network, and co-operation mechanisms involving, for example, the human genome and biotechnologies (the Biotechnology Action Council).

This international and regional approach has been applied in the launching of major intergovernmental scientific programmes that bring together and stimulate national, regional and international activities. This is the case of the activities of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, the International Hydrological Programme, the Man and the Biosphere Programme, the International Geological Correlation Programme and, in the last year or so, the Programme for the Management of Social Transformations.

Human development priorities

The goal common to all these activities is that of sustainable human development, which is recognized as being both the prerequisite for peace in the world and the prize to be won for its achievement. Sustainable human development has obvious priorities, such as combating poverty, improving living conditions, especially in rural areas, preventing the acceleration of the growing disparities between and within nations, and establishing a more equitable international economic environment.

However, the priority in which UNESCO is specifically interested and which has a place in all its programmes, especially in the sciences, is the development of human resources, in other words, skills training aimed at creating or strengthening endogenous capacities at national and local level. We should derive great satisfaction from the fact that all the agencies engaged in funding economic and social development projects—I am thinking above all of the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme—now acknowledge that the enhancement of human resources, the training of professionals and the improvement of people's skills are all key factors in development.

In the few years now separating us from the next century, our strategy will therefore consist in stepping up the transfer and sharing of scientific knowledge and in promoting its application to the development of natural resources and the management of social transformations. In this transfer, the importance of the basic sciences should not be underestimated. As we all know, "there are no applied sciences unless there are sciences to apply". In sharing knowledge, it is important to remember the passing on of information as well as skills. In briefing decision-makers, whether in the private or public sectors, scientists contribute decisively to a clear and rational understanding of problems and of possible solutions to them.

Science and the decision-makers

This briefing function should not be confined to what we regard as being recent advances in science; it is essential, for example, to explain the scientific principles underlying traditional practices which might otherwise be treated with undeserved contempt. Obviously it also includes the publication of research findings—I am thinking, for example, of those involving malaria or hydrophilic polymers.

In order to accelerate the transfer of knowledge, UNESCO has set in motion a number of projects, among which I would mention the UNITWIN programme, which involves twinning and co-operation arrangements between universities and the setting up of networks linking them; the project providing for the granting of short-term fellowships to researchers from developing countries; and the UNESCO chairs programme under which scientists from the North can go to countries of the South and help to train their future colleagues in those countries. These forms of knowledge-sharing are also clearly designed to combat the brain drain and wastage of skills.

The primary aim of UNESCO's strategy regarding the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development will be to find sound scientific solutions to the problems involved in developing natural resources and in managing social transformations and population issues, with a view to promoting sustainable human development. These solutions will be based on the results of projects in which research will be combined with educational, training and information activities. The implemen-

tation of this strategy will entail collaborating more closely with scientists, engineers and technicians and with their international, regional and national non-governmental organizations and professional associations, in order to increase and step up the pace of the transfer and sharing of knowledge.

Networks of co-operation

Such transfers and sharing will be brought about by:

- improving the relevance of higher education and training by adapting syllabuses to new requirements;
- linking research more closely to training;
- establishing or strengthening links between production sectors, industry and higher education and research systems;
- continuing activities designed to collect and disseminate scientific information;
- consolidating co-operative networks in this area.

In this connection, I would like to mention two multidisciplinary programmes of international co-operation in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Common Market of Knowledge (MECCO), an extremely worthwhile venture, and the ENLACE Plan, which is designed to foster co-operation between industry, universities and research as part of the "Bolívar" programme.

UNESCO's strategy will draw on increased collaboration and synergy between the Organization's intergovernmental programmes in the environmental and social sciences, in an endeavour to find solutions to a number of urgent environmental and development problems. Particular emphasis will be placed on improving our knowledge of the working of ecosystems, on the management of social transformations and on promoting environmental and population information and education, in order to encourage changes of attitude, especially among young people, and inculcate behaviour patterns conducive to sustainable human development.

We shall also be trying to encourage small-scale field projects that will help to foster a spirit of enterprise, especially in rural areas, and induce people who might be tempted by the mirage of urban life to remain in their home environment. ■

The stones of Byblos

by Sawsan Awada Jalu



Time and cultures have left an indelible mark on Byblos in Lebanon, trading centre of the ancient world and a cradle of the modern alphabet

Above, the courtyard of the temple of the obelisks.

Opposite page, the church of St. John the Baptist, a fine Romanesque building with three apses (12th century).

THE ancient Phoenician seaport of Byblos (the biblical Gebal) on the coast of Lebanon is reputed to be the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world, with a history stretching back 7,000 years to the time when the first community of fishermen settled there.

Today the Lebanese town of Jbeil stands on the site of Byblos, which in ancient times maintained close ties with the powerful empires of the Orient and Mediterranean and was one of the great cultural centres of Antiquity.

The violence that has ravaged Lebanon

has left the narrow streets of Jbeil's old souks virtually unscathed. Here, as if reading a book whose pages date back thousands of years, the visitor can begin to retrace the story of the serene city to which Yam, the ancient god of the sea, was believed to have given the fine natural harbour that for centuries brought it fame and fortune.

A mighty crusader castle

A visit to the medieval town is the first stage of a journey into the past of Byblos. The decoration of the elegant baptistry of the twelfth-century Romanesque church of St. John the Baptist, once the cathedral of Gibelet (as Byblos was called by the crusaders), is a reminder that the city was for a time under the sway of the Genoese. Nearby, a small Orthodox chapel with massive



Renan carried out the first excavations on it in 1860, but it was the work done by the French archaeologist Pierre Montet between 1920 and 1924 and continued by his successor, Maurice Dunand, that did most to reveal the secrets of the thousands of years of urban history that unfolded here.

Dunand discovered earthenware vases ornamented with sea shell impressions, dating from the sixth and fifth millennia, great funeral urns and jars containing grain, food, weapons and jewellery buried between the aeneolithic dwellings. The earliest shelters were simple cabins; houses with stone walls were not built until the end of the fourth millennium. The first urban layout worthy of the name—multi-storied houses, a water drainage system and ramparts—reveals the influence of Mesopotamia and Egypt. Starting from the centre, a narrow, twisting street ran through the town; little alleys ran off it, winding their way between the dwellings. A twenty-six-metre-long stretch of the city wall has survived. Originally

supported on the inside by pillars four metres square, it only enclosed the city on the landward side. The rocky promontory on which Byblos was built provided a natural rampart on the seaward side.

The land of the gods

The golden age of Byblos, in the third millennium, is inseparable from its special relationship with Egypt. There were numerous temples in which the same gods were worshipped as in Egypt. The Pharaohs would send to Lebanon for timber for their ships and the resinous wood needed for mummification. In the great temple dedicated to Baalat-Gebal (remodelled and restored until Roman times), vases bearing the names of pharaohs have been found. They reveal the veneration by the Egyptian sovereigns of the “Lady of Byblos” (the Phoenician goddess Astarte, paredros or secondary deity of the god El, believed by the Phoenicians to have founded Byblos), who was worshipped here for centuries.

The vestiges of another temple, in this case dedicated to a male divinity, which was destroyed by fire in 2150 B.C., and those of the “Grand Residence”, a vast and luxurious villa, attest to the city’s prosperity at this period.

However, Dunand’s major discovery was the “Temple of the Obelisks” (beginning of the second millennium B.C.) and the remarkable set of standing stones in its courtyard. These small obelisks (between 0.5 and 2 metres high) symbolized the presence of the faithful near their god, who was himself represented by an obelisk mounted

abutments dates back to the Byzantine era.

The imposing crusader castle whose massive bulk dominates the town stands on the site of a structure built by the Fatimids of Egypt in the ninth century. Its stones were taken from Phoenician and Roman monuments. A fortress with vast vaulted halls, it was begun in the twelfth century and has been constantly remodelled down the centuries. From the top of the keep, the visitor can look out over the vast archaeological diggings of the ancient city, formed by the superimposition and intertwining of several ancient towns.

One of the first Mediterranean cities

The site covers more than ten hectares. The French writer and historian Ernest



on a pedestal. Perforated bronze, gold and silver axes, daggers with repoussé gold scabbards, bronze figurines covered in gold leaf and other precious offerings unearthed in the temple show the artistic refinement of the local craftsmen.

Byblos was a great commercial and artistic crossroads. Trade was conducted in the east with Mesopotamia, in the south with Egypt, in the north with the Hittite empire and in the west, across the sea, with the brilliant civilization of Crete.

Under Persian domination, Byblos became a strategic point in the defence system of the Persian empire in the eastern Mediterranean. After its conquest by Alexander the Great, it experienced a period of enormous influence as a centre for the cult of Adonis, a Phoenician divinity who later entered the mythological pantheon of Greece. In the Roman era, the site was covered with temples and public

buildings. Excavation of a theatre dating from the third century has revealed a beautiful mosaic floor.

The cradle of the Phoenician alphabet and art

The territory of the Phoenicians was fertile but too confined, and so they sought their fortune elsewhere. The Phoenicians were great navigators and shrewd merchants. They are described in the Bible as talented carpenters and ivory carvers who cut the beams for the Temple of Solomon and fashioned its chryselephantine decorations.

The earliest artistic evidence that has survived consists of votive objects with geometrical motifs of undeniable originality. They were discovered in the ruins of the temple of Baalat-Gebal. Highly stylized zoomorphic vases strikingly capture the movements and characteristic postures of the animals they depict. If the

stylization is sometimes crude, it always possesses the characteristic vividness of Phoenician art which, as the French archaeologist André Parrot has written, was to become "an elegant and harmonious synthesis of all the finest and most sophisticated features already achieved by neighbouring civilizations".*

To meet the needs of merchants who wanted contracts and invoices to be made out rapidly, the scribes of Byblos ("byblos" is the Greek word for papyrus, an Egyptian product which reached Greece via the merchants of Byblos) developed a simplified alphabet and writing system with just twenty-two signs. Taken over by the Greeks and Romans and propagated throughout the Orient and Occident, this was the direct ancestor of all the Western alphabets. ■

* André Parrot, *Les Phéniciens*, by A. Parrot, M. Chehab and S. Moscati. Gallimard publishers, Paris, 1975.

A CONTINUING DIALOGUE

THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE HUMANITIES

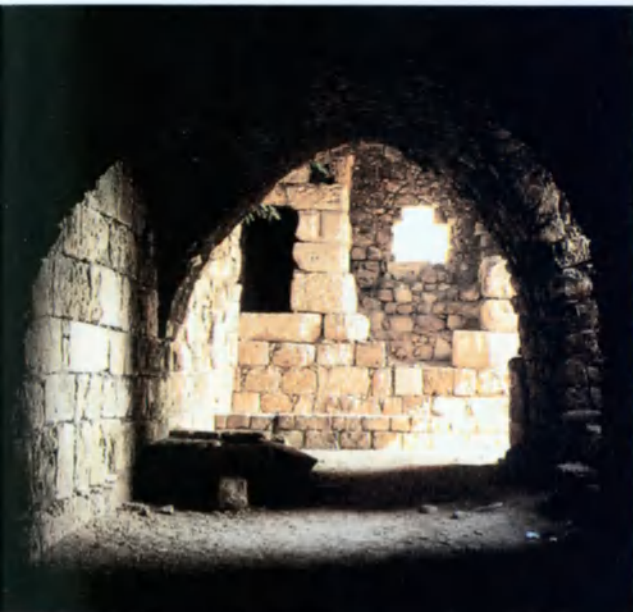
Since Byblos was for so long a meeting-point between civilizations, the idea arose in the 1960s of creating an international centre there to encourage a dialogue between faiths and cultures. In 1974, UNESCO gave its support to this Lebanese project, which was included in the programme of its Philosophy Division under the name of the "International Centre for the Humanities and Development at Byblos". The Centre's aim was "to study contemporary man, his relations with nature and society and the problems posed by development in all its different aspects".

After sixteen years of war had ravaged Lebanon, an International symposium was held at UNESCO Headquarters in February 1992 in order to relaunch the idea of the Centre. One of the participants pointed out that despite the long conflict, Lebanon had remained a land of coexistence, mutual acceptance and dialogue and that at Byblos in particular different religious communities had continued to coexist in a climate of uninterrupted tolerance.

Byblos, the setting of a brilliant synthesis of the arts of the great civilizations of Antiquity and the birthplace of modern principles of written communication, may again become a crossroads of encounters, exchanges and creation. ■

S. A. J.





Above, vaults in the crusader castle, a rectangular fortress begun early in the 12th century and remodelled several times later.

Top, the 3rd-century Roman amphitheatre with its mosaic floor.

Left, low walls and colonnades on the site of ancient Byblos.

SAWSAN AWADA JALU

is the cultural attachée with the Lebanese permanent delegation to Unesco.

7,000 YEARS OF HISTORY

5000 B.C.: First human settlement on the western part of the promontory.

3200 B.C.: Construction of stone houses

3000-2800 B.C.: Incipient urban organization on the site. Occupation of the entire promontory, construction of a rampart and establishment of a water drainage system. Byblos becomes a centre for meetings and trade between the great civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia.

c. 2150 B.C.: The Amorites destroy Byblos by fire.

c. 1950 B.C.: The city, temples and ramparts are rebuilt and ties with Egypt are restored. Trading activities extend as far afield as the Caucasus and Crete.

1725 B.C.: The Hyksos invade Egypt and the development of Byblos is interrupted.

1580 B.C.: Egypt expels the Hyksos and makes Phoenicia its protectorate, thus sheltering Phoenician civilization from the invasions of the Mitanni and later of the Hittites. Trade activities are resumed in Byblos and flourish thanks to the invention of the alphabetic system.

1200 B.C.: The power of Egypt wanes. The region is threatened by the peoples of the sea, and Tyr gains supremacy over all the other Phoenician cities.

725 B.C.: Assyrian domination

612 B.C.: Babylonian domination

539 B.C.: Persian domination

332 B.C.: Hellenistic domination

63 B.C.: Roman domination

Despite these successive dominations, Byblos experiences relative economic prosperity. Above all, it is one of the main religious centres of the Orient (notably through the cult of Adonis). Its sanctuaries are considered to have a special aura and its religious festivals attract great crowds.

638: At the time of the Muslim conquest, the importance of Byblos declines.

1104: The town is captured by the crusader Raymond de Saint-Gilles. After becoming the lordship of Gibelet, it is entrusted to the Embriaco family of Genoa in 1109. The era of the crusades restores wealth and trade to Byblos.

1187: Saladin I recaptures Byblos, dismantles the crusader castle and razes the ramparts.

1199: The city is recaptured by the Franks.

1266: Byblos ceases to play a leading role in history and becomes the peaceful fishing port that it is today.

1960: Ratification by Lebanon of the Hague Convention (Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict).

1984: Byblos, with Anjar, Baalbek and Tyr, is included on Unesco's World Heritage List.

1993: Application for inclusion of the Lebanese World Heritage sites on the "International Register of Cultural Property under Special Protection" of The Hague Convention.



Man of action, writer and political thinker, José Martí (1853-1895) was one of the great architects of Latin American consciousness

THE first Cuban-born member of a poor Spanish immigrant family, José Martí (1853-1895) never denied his Spanish roots but felt himself to be first and foremost a son of the land of his birth. As a child he witnessed the cruelties of slavery and swore that he would devote his life to "expunging this crime". While still an adolescent, he fought against colonialism, was sentenced to hard labour and put in irons in a prison for political activists. During his imprisonment, whose horrors he later vividly denounced, he paradoxically achieved spiritual freedom and worked out a militant ethics that would lead him to call for a war of liberation that was "necessary" but should be waged "without hatred".

Exile in Madrid and Zaragoza, where he pursued his university studies, strengthened his affinities with the rebellious side of the Spanish character but also his conviction that Cuba could hope for nothing from the rulers of Spain, whether they were royalists or republicans. Visits to Mexico, Guatemala and Venezuela familiarized him with the problems faced by these newly independent republics still fettered by the evils of colonialism. He spent nearly fifteen years in the United States, which he studied by analysing the ideas of its founding fathers, the positive and negative aspects of its social system, the characteristics of its people and the increasingly imperialist tendencies of its government.

During these years he produced a flow

JOSÉ MARTÍ

Cuba's man of destiny

by Cintio Vitier

"I may fade away. But my thinking will not."

of notable literary and journalistic work, especially after visiting Venezuela in 1881. He was a man of many parts. The orator who delivered a memorable speech to the Caracas Chamber of Commerce, the editorialist who founded the *Revista Venezolana* ("Venezuelan Review"), the poet who wrote *Ismaelillo*, and the author of the preface to Juan Antonio Pérez Bonalde's *Poema del Niágara* heralded the renaissance of Hispano-American literature. After his death on the battlefield at Dos Rios, Rubén Darío, who would later become the most conspicuous leader of this renaissance, referred to him as the "Master".

Yet Martí did not devote his life to making a literary reputation. He dedicated his talents as an orator and journalist to Cuba and to what he called in a memorable work, "Our America". His writings helped to make this America become more self-aware.

Throughout his life he was guided by a sense of ethics, duty and sacrifice. When he proclaimed the Cuban Revolutionary Party on 10 April 1892 in New York, poor immigrants in Florida revealingly dubbed him the "Apostle", a man whose destiny transcended the political context. Earlier, on 26 November 1891, he had made a speech at the University of Tampa in which he set forth the foundations of a new Republic, "With all and for the good of all".

Martí then embarked on a period of intensive revolutionary activity. He made speeches, published articles in the *Patria* newspaper, corresponded and travelled constantly, notably in order to secure the help of the two most distinguished generals of the Ten Years' War between Cuba and Spain (1868-1878), Máximo Gómez, who was chosen as commander in chief of the Liberation Army, and Antonio Maceo.

In his Tampa speech Martí said, "Either the Republic must be based on the integrity of each of its sons, on the habit of working with one's hands and thinking for oneself, on complete self-fulfilment and respect, as sacred as family honour, for the complete self-fulfilment of others, and

on a passion for human dignity; otherwise the Republic is not worth a single tear shed by our womenfolk or a single drop of our brave men's blood."

These fruitful ideas appear in the documents written by Martí that were, at the end of the war, to inspire the creation of the Cuban Republic, especially an article entitled "Our ideas", the Montecristi manifesto and two letters to Federico Henríquez Carvajal and Manuel A. Mercado. In these and many other writings the Republic is presented as an absolute democracy, without privilege based on race or class, founded on a fair distribution of wealth and culture and on the demands of the productive masses.

In a letter to his Mexican confidant, written only a few hours before he was killed in battle on 19 May 1895, Martí wrote, "... from now on I am likely to die any day for my country and my duty, a duty which I know and am determined to perform." Duty meant wresting Cuban independence from Spain in order to prevent a new imperialism from spreading through the West Indies and bringing greater oppression to the Americas.

It was for this and not only to free Cuba from Spanish dominion that José Martí helped to organize the war in which he would perish. But the parable of Martí's life continued to inspire future generations. As he once said to Mercado, "I may fade away. But my thinking will not."

Perhaps Martí's greatest quality was his ability to speak to the poor and to children, his readiness to live and die for them. His example will continue to inspire us. The task he began is still unfinished both in his homeland and elsewhere in the world. ■

CINTIO VITIER

is a Cuban poet, essayist and novelist who won his country's national literature prize in 1988 and is president of the study centre on José Martí in Havana. The editor of the critical edition of Martí's complete works, he is the author of *Nupcias* (1993), a collection of poems, *Temas martianos* (1982), an essay on Martí, and a novel, *Rajando la Leña está*.

GREENWATCH

MONTSENY: HARMONY IN THE HILLS

BY FRANCE BEQUETTE

A Biosphere Reserve in the Catalanian
massif not far from Barcelona



Right, a typical wooded valley in the Montseny Biosphere Reserve, which extends over more than 30,000 hectares.

MONTSENY National Park is wrapped like a scarf round a mountain massif. But the scarf is not all cut from the same cloth. To the south, it is perpetually green, woven from evergreen oaks, pines, arbutus, broom and heather. To the north, the trees are deciduous beech and chestnut. On this winter Friday, only a few pine trees and giant holly bushes add a touch of greenery to the grey trunks. The road is deserted, even though the Barcelona conurbation with its 4.5 million inhabitants is only 50 km away. What is more, access to Montseny is easy: a motorway, two railway lines and buses. The public throng here, especially on Saturdays and Sundays in the spring and autumn. In summer, they prefer the sea.

FREE ENTRY

However the visitor chooses to get to the Park, there is no barrier at the entrance. At weekends, three young people in green uniforms occupy a roadside cabin from which they signal to cars to slow down and hand the passengers a brochure containing a plan of the Park and information about how it functions. The reader learns that farming and

timber are the main source of income for most of the inhabitants of Montseny; that the land is in both private and public ownership; that forestry is governed by the law of Catalonia and the rules laid down by the park authorities; that hunting is regulated; that the Park is an ideal centre for all kinds of sports and also provides an opportunity to admire the natural and cultural heritage; that everyone must help to protect it for future generations; and that camping is permitted only at certain designated sites. There follows a list of six prohibitions: lighting fires, riding motorcycles off the marked tracks, disposing of refuse anywhere except in the many dustbins provided for this purpose, gathering mushrooms with a rake, picking up chestnuts without permission from the owners of the land, and cutting branches of holly, which is a protected plant.

From the 1,712-metre-high summit of the Turo de l'Home, the Mediterranean can be seen through a gap in the coastal mountain range. The Pyrenees lie to the north. A few lighter points stand out in the forest as it stretches down into the valley: Romanesque churches built of pink sandstone, farms, inns, restaurants and the buildings directly associ-

ated with the Park's activities: the house of popular culture, the school of nature, a research station, information offices and interpreting centres. Between the meteorological observatory and the military post with its two huge circular antennas, a parapente school launches a few foolhardy adepts out into the void. Further down is a hang gliding base. With all these colourful activities, it is hard to imagine that you are in a biosphere reserve—the very term evokes a certain austerity (see box page 41). Be that as it may, the Park complies with UNESCO standards. Its eleven central zones, where tree felling and hunting are prohibited, are surrounded by a vast protected area which itself forms part of what is known here as the “zone of influence” or transition zone.

VISITORS AND LOCALS

Is it hard to ensure that the Park is protected? Because of its proximity to Barcelona, it was visited by 1,616,800 people in 1993. Since there are no barriers, how was this figure calculated? The answer is that a vehicle counting system was installed and it was estimated that each car carried an average of three passengers. The Park's director,

TOURISM AND THE HERITAGE

A World Conference on Sustainable Tourism, or ecotourism, will be held from 24 to 29 April 1995 in Lanzarote, Canary Islands (Spain). It is being organized jointly by UNESCO, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Tourism Organization and the International Scientific Council for Island Development. After oil and cars tourism is the world's third largest export industry. Travel-related activities represent more than 12% of world GNP and employ one out of every sixteen working persons. But tourism can have a destructive impact on lands and cultures, and one of the questions to be discussed at the Conference is how the environment and the cultural heritage can be reconciled with it. One feature of the Conference will be a forum-exhibition presenting a wide variety of case-studies designed to encourage an exchange of viewpoints and ideas. ■

Conference secretariat: Nuria Ortega
Tel: (34-22) 60-30-61
Fax: (34-22) 60-30-74

TORTURED TURTLES

Calypto Log, the magazine published by the French environmental group Equipe Cousteau, has come out strongly against the way in which green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) are farmed on the French island of Réunion in the Indian Ocean. For breeding requirements between 4,000 and 10,000 wild baby turtles are taken every year from the Eparses Islands to the north of Réunion. Only half of them survive. This kind of operation is illegal. Green turtles belong to an endangered species, and the farm has no authorization to remove them from their natural habitat, transport them and market their shells. Furthermore, the physical condition of the turtles is deplorable. Diseased and poorly fed, they cannibalize one another. A complaint against France has been lodged with the European Commission. ■

PARAGUAY PROTECTS ITS BIODIVERSITY

Paraguay's congress has enacted a law committing to conservation nearly 10% of its landmass, which in all is about the size of the American state of California. Thanks to The Nature Conservancy, a U.S. non-governmental organization, a Conservation Data Centre has been created in Paraguay and has made a series of inventories that have helped to demonstrate the need to protect the country's rich biodiversity. Considerable responsibility for implementing the law will fall to the private sector, and the Fundación Moisés Bertoni, which has managed the Mbaracayu Forest reserve with assistance from the Conservancy since 1991, plans to establish six

AN INTERNATIONAL BIOSPHERE RESERVE CONFERENCE

An International Conference on Biosphere Reserves, organized on UNESCO's initiative, will take place in Seville (Spain) from 20-25 March 1995. Its aim is to draw up a new action plan for biosphere reserves on the basis of an evaluation of results and experience acquired so far, and in the light of the international context after the Rio Conference. It is also expected to draft statutes for the international network of biosphere reserves. Some 400 participants are expected to take part in the Conference, notably biosphere reserve managers and co-ordinators, scientists working on co-operative research programmes in biosphere reserves, and decision-makers in the field of conservation and natural resources management.

F. B.

Eduard Botey Puig, an agricultural engineer who also has a diploma in geography, denies that the visitors cause any problems. "The asphalted roads are open to everyone. The earth tracks are closed off by a chain. Once they have parked their cars in a parking area, visitors walk around for a few minutes and then return to their vehicles or go for lunch. Bicycles on the other hand can be ridden anywhere. But the destructive invasion of mountain bikes does not seem to have reached this region yet."

What about the 850 permanent inhabitants? How do they view the tourists? "They benefit from them," Eduard says. "The restaurants are full at the weekend and served 1,300,000 meals last year! We are working with the local people to develop pottery making and wood carving and the sale of local products such as pork sausages, cheese, chestnuts, mushrooms, honey and firewood. We also intend to organize a Sunday market in the Park. The old people stay in the village with their grandchildren. They still till the land and raise a few cattle, but the wooded area is encroaching

An information office in the Reserve.



on the fields. Young people go to the city, but come back to look after their woods. One family still works a marble quarry that existed before the Park was created. Life here is not easy, but some people won't accept change: they don't want electricity or telephones and they don't have cars. Park rangers on skis deliver bread when the snow falls".

We come across a big white cross-country vehicle sprouting radio aerials. A girl in a brown uniform sporting the insignia of the forest rangers jumps down. Dolores Rodriguez, aged twenty-five, is the first and only woman to do this job. She holds a diploma from a forestry school and completed her one-year training course before joining the eleven other rangers in the reserve. Twelve people to look after nearly 30,000 hectares! They have no weapons and the only sanction they can take is to note down the names of persons who commit offences and report them to the police. Education and prevention are the key words. Apart from the rangers, twenty-six other officials work in the Park, plus another sixty who are under contract to the local authority. Exploring the north face of the massif with Luis, a young ranger who is a passionate nature-lover, we come across a big padlocked chain which bars off the asphalted road. He sounds his horn and an old man, his face wreathed in smiles, runs up holding a wooden box and a book of tickets: "240 pesetas," (around \$2) he says.

THE LANDOWNERS ARE UNHAPPY

This toll charge, unusual in a biosphere reserve, is highly revealing. We learn from Ignasi Castello, head of the Catalan parks service, that 90 per cent of Montseny is in the hands of private owners! The problems that Eduard did not mention certainly exist. As far back as 1922, attempts were made to protect Montseny but they did not succeed until 1977. In the following year, the park became a biosphere reserve. In 1994, round table meetings open to the general public were held for a month to review the status of the Park and adapt it to the region's new socio-economic situation.

Ignasi Castello does not deny that the creation of the Park brought land speculation to an end. Building land is highly sought-after for second homes in this "outer



This restored farmhouse is now an inn run as a co-operative.

suburb" of Barcelona but, at the stroke of a pen, the area ceased to be building land and is now only worth the price of agricultural or forest land. But lawsuits are proliferating. One example is that of a private individual who bought a plot of land crossed by a public footpath. He wanted to close the path, but after an enquiry the courts ruled in favour of the Park. As Ignasi Castello points out: "The aristocrats of the mountain who ruled the roost in the past find it hard to adjust to the new situation. They are trying to set up a pressure group within the Park administration."

The Montseny biosphere reserve also has to fight on another front. Hard-line environmentalists would like to turn it into a sanctuary and put it under wraps. Jacques Ducros, of the Cévennes biosphere reserve in France, which is twinned with the Montseny reserve, said in 1988: "What is the primary function of a biosphere reserve? The harmonious coexistence of man and nature must be our primary aim. . . . A biosphere reserve must be created on inhabited lands where non-destructive activities are pursued and where the population is willing to accept, for its own well-being, a few elementary rules of management which help to preserve the environment, to protect the existing heritage, promote education and further knowledge." ■

FRANCE BEQUETTE
is a Franco-American journalist specializing in environmental questions.

CONSERVATION AND THE WISE USE OF NATURE

A world convention on biological diversity was signed at the Rio Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 and is now coming into force.

We know that we must protect animal and plant species which may one day be needed and which form part of the irreplaceable natural heritage of humanity. But we also know that all over the world the ecosystems in which these species live are threatened by urbanization, road-building, deforestation and other developments. In tropical countries, which are the richest in biological diversity but the poorest in economic terms, rural populations often have no choice but to cut down trees for firewood and for the practice of subsistence agriculture.

How can these vital human needs be reconciled with the protection of nature? In the last twenty years or so, UNESCO has proposed a solution to the dilemma in the form of what are known as "biosphere reserves". These are land areas of varying size in which biological diversity is protected in central zones, while local populations have an opportunity to use the natural resources in peripheral zones and thus guarantee that the core areas are protected. This way of reconciling environment and development on the ground is based on wisely chosen forms of scientific research, management and zoning and on international co-operation.

Today 324 biosphere reserves have been designated in 82 countries as part of a worldwide network run by UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme. This is a very encouraging start. At the end of March 1995, a major International Conference on Biosphere Reserves will be held in Seville (Spain) in order to strengthen this network and adopt an action strategy in line with current developments in the conservation of biological diversity and the management and use of land in the interests of those who live on it. ■

Michel Batisse

Former Assistant Director-General in UNESCO's science sector and promoter of the biosphere reserve concept

WORLD

new reserves per year in partnership with private landowners. The new law institutionalizes protected areas in Paraguay, which were previously designated by presidential decree and faced the possibility of being revoked with each new administration. Now, as a spokesman for the Fundación says, "it is up to us to raise the money and inspire local landowners to make this national vision a reality." ■

RUSSIA'S ENVIRONMENTAL CLEAN-UP

In November 1994 the World Bank loaned Russia \$110 million for an Environmental Management Project to upgrade the country's environmental protection systems and clean up pollution. The sum comes on top of \$84 million provided by the Russian government, enterprises and banks. The Project will help Russia to reverse more than 70 years of neglect during which harm to the environment has been severe and widespread. Until recently production was the only criterion of success for huge industrial complexes, gas, oil and mining operations. Environmental degradation is evident in cities, rivers, lakes, forests and plant and animal life. The task is immense. ■

LIMA ADOPTS A TWO-WHEELED STRATEGY

Traffic in Lima (Peru) is causing growing pollution, and many workers can barely afford public transport. To solve the problem a World Bank specialist has suggested promoting greater use of bicycles. He argues that Lima is flat, without much rain, and enjoys relatively mild temperatures for most of the year. Moreover, 63% of the city's 6.5 million people are under 30 years old and thus can be considered potential pushbike riders. One stumbling block is that bicycles are relatively expensive. They currently cost at least \$150 each, but it is possible that two Peruvian companies may introduce less expensive models that workers could buy with the help of a new credit programme. The next stage will be to build cycle paths, rehabilitate roads and bridges, and persuade people of the benefits of the bike. ■

BOUNTIFUL BREADFRUIT

Marie-Françoise Lamy, a teacher who lives in Martinique, has written to tell us about the amazing properties of the breadfruit tree (*Artocarpus altilis*). Breadfruit can be turned into cakes, syrup, jam, chewing gum, vinegar, yeast, starch, soap and even sheets of paper. Waste can go for animal food or can, as a last resort, be used as compost. The breadfruit tree grows in tropical areas. M.-F. Lamy, La Vierge, F-97213 Le Gros Morne, Tel.: 596-67-62-98. ■

WELCOME TO THE SIERRA CLUB!



THE Sierra Club, which currently has almost 600,000 members, was founded by John Muir and his artist and mountaineering friends in 1892 to protect the forests and wildernesses of the United States. Now, for more than a century, volunteers have kept a vigilant eye on more than 60 million hectares of land. The Club's extremely active members constitute a pressure group that works to influence how legislators vote on environmental issues, and when a law is enacted they are ready to go to court to make sure it is enforced. Over the years the Club's objectives have broadened to include planetary issues such as the ozone layer, acid rain, the greenhouse effect and rainforest protection.

In the early days, before the environment became a widespread preoccupation, Sierra Club outings looked more like scout camps than scientific expeditions. Members would gather round campfires, sing songs and recite poetry with the spectacular scenery of California's Yosemite Park as their back-drop. By 1949 the numbers of visitors had risen so high that two Club members wrote anxiously of the national parks as "a sort of synthesis of the public library, the art gallery and the museum, out of doors and full of native inspiration. . . . But the public library ceases to function at some point if overcrowded. . . . So, too, does the national park."

One of the Sierra Club's most spec-

tacular operations took place in 1966 when it used full-page newspaper ads as part of a campaign against the building of two dams on the Colorado River where it passed through the Grand Canyon. The project was eventually dropped. The following year the Club protested against a scheme to build a nuclear power plant near the rare ecosystem of the Nipomo Santa Maria dunes on the California coast. A deal was finally struck with the power company, which agreed to build its facility a little further away. Next, the Club turned its sights on Alaska, which had been admitted to the Union as a state in 1959 and was a fabulous treasure trove of countryside, resources, plant and animal life. After a nine-year lobbying campaign, it was eventually granted legal protection. This was the biggest campaign in the history of a Club which is never short of causes to defend. It would, for example, like to ban the sale abroad of pesticides that are outlawed in the United States, and notes in surprise that only 2% of the 400 pesticides that the American Congress requested the Environmental Protection Agency to re-examine in 1972 have actually been studied and then only for their carcinogenic properties without considering their effects on the nervous, immune, or reproductive systems.

A recent Sierra Club campaign was combined with a voyage to a remote and beautiful region when, in Feb-

ruary 1994, a handsome three-masted schooner sailed along the coast of British Columbia in western Canada with a crew of scientists and journalists. Their aim was to focus global attention on the region's spectacular temperate rainforests and to record in words and images what may well be lost to chainsaws in the next few years. At the end of the voyage they trumpeted their indignation at the massive deforestation that logging companies had carried out on the quiet, far from prying eyes. In a recent issue of the Club's handsome bi-monthly magazine, *Sierra*, a botanist described how a trek along the California coast by a small group of conservationists revealed the presence of so many plants foreign to the area that indigenous species were in danger of being forced out altogether. The botanist did, however, ask the pertinent question of how many centuries it takes before a species can be considered indigenous to a region. ■

Readers who would like to receive *Sierra* and find out how to take part in the Club's spectacular back-packing treks in the American wilderness or to see how it goes about the business of persuading decision-makers to protect nature should write to:

The Sierra Club, 730 Polk Street,
San Francisco, California, 94109 USA.
Tel: (1-415) 776-22-11;
Fax: (1-415) 776-03-50.



Population growth and development

interview with Jean-Claude Chasteland

Poverty, unemployment, social disintegration and other items on the agenda of this month's Social Summit cannot be fully understood without reference to demography. Here Jean-Claude Chasteland, a former director of the United Nations Population Division and currently scientific advisor to the French National Institute for Demographic Studies in Paris, outlines his thinking on demographic problems today.

The international community has been concerned about population questions since the 1950s. At that time world population was two billion; today, it is 5.7 billion. How should we be reacting to this situation?

—The world population situation has changed radically in the past forty years and especially in the past twenty. Of the 5.7 billion people living on the planet, about one billion live in the so-called developed countries, where fertility is low. But people should realize that only some 700 million of the other 4.7 billion live in countries where fertility has not yet begun to fall. In most Third World countries, fertility has definitely declined. That was not the case in 1974. Today, the problems of very high fertility are centred geographically on sub-Saharan Africa, some regions of south-west Asia and one or two countries of Central America.

In the other areas with a high population density, such as North Africa—notably Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco—and above all China, fertility has fallen very rapidly. The case of China is particularly extraordinary. A developing country with 1.2 billion inhabitants, representing one-quarter of the population of the Third World and one-fifth of total world population, has managed to bring its birth rate down below replacement level within a single generation. Europe took more than a century to reach that stage. This unprecedented

decline is an encouraging sign, especially since other equally spectacular downturns have been observed in a different political context, in the Republic of Korea and in Thailand.

However, despite the fall in fertility, the number of births is still rising in the Third World and will continue to do so. There are fewer births per couple but a very large number of couples have already reached the age of procreation. It is only when their children in turn reach that age that the number of births will fall in absolute terms. There is a gap between the time when fertility falls and that when the number of births itself begins to decline in absolute terms. Because of that gap, population growth will peak early next century and will only begin to fall later on.

For the time being, rapid population growth is continuing and all these people must be properly provided with food, education and health care, and have access to work and shelter. That calls for consider-

able investment and poses problems in terms of development.

Development has been described as the most effective contraceptive. The specific link between population and development was to be examined at the Cairo Conference in September 1994 and is also on the agenda of the Social Development Summit.

—The Cairo Conference was supposed to be dedicated to the problems of population and development, but the development issue was to some extent sidelined. The emphasis was placed on reproduction and on the condition of women, all this being seen in an individualist perspective which disturbed a number of participating countries. Some twenty of these countries expressed reservations about the content of some paragraphs of the action plan, whereas a paragraph in the introduction stipulates that the recommendations are acceptable only to the extent that they are not incompatible with religious beliefs. This is a retrograde step in comparison with the previous population conferences held in Bucharest (1974) and Mexico City (1984).

How do you explain this disagreement?

—It must be accepted that the action plan was inspired by a Northern approach. The model of the condition of women is based on that of women in Sweden rather than in Saudi Arabia. Similarly, the countries of

'Population growth will peak early next century and will only begin to fall later on.'



The crowded streets of São Paulo, capital of Brazil's São Paulo state.

the North tried to win acceptance for their very open concepts of the family. Of course this gave rise to keen controversy, underlining the dichotomy between a religious vision of the world and what I would term a more modernist approach without religious overtones.

Regardless of their theme, the big United Nations conferences always reflect the international atmosphere prevailing at the time when they are held. The Cairo Conference was the first population conference to be held since the collapse of the Communist bloc. Previously, these conferences were generally the setting for East-West ideological confrontations in which the South played whatever role it could. With the disappearance of the "left hemisphere" of international life, confrontations have shifted onto religious ground, with on one side the Vatican and certain Islamic countries and on the other industrialized nations which subscribe to radically different concepts of the family, the condition of women, abortion and sexual life in general.

strategies, as desired by the United Nations?

—It was probably the emphasis laid on individual problems, leaving aside development issues, that weakened the expected consensus on the programme of the Cairo Conference. There are other development problems as well as that of the condition of women. I fail to see how women's condition could be improved independently of other development factors such as water supplies, electrification and employment. A woman is not really free if she has to walk several miles every day to fetch water, just as a family cannot flourish in an environment of poverty.

Everybody agrees on the need for development, regardless of their religious

or ideological convictions. Let us not be pessimistic. Extraordinary progress has been made in the last forty years, in the Third World as elsewhere. Mortality in the Third World has declined substantially, because of education as well as vaccination campaigns. In the 1950s the level of illiteracy was very high—as much as 90 per cent in the case of women. Today, even if progress has been uneven, we are dealing with illiteracy rates of between 20 and 30 per cent.

On the whole, the 5.7 billion people alive today lead far better lives than the 2 billion who lived in the 1950s. The proof is that their life expectancy has risen. We have made enormous progress. Now we must maintain the pace of advance and also adopt a cautious attitude towards population growth and its potential impact on the environment. We must also avoid polarizing attention on some aspects of the problem, such as pollution or depletion of natural resources, for which the critical thresholds are constantly being pushed back either by new discoveries or by the appearance of substitution products. ■

'Let us not be pessimistic. Extraordinary progress has been made in the last forty years, in the Third World as elsewhere.'

Baldomero Sanín Cano

Sensationalism and the popular press

In 1933 the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation asked a number of journalists to give their views on the educational role of the press. In his reply, extracts from which appear below, the Colombian writer Baldomero Sanín Cano (1861-1957), a columnist with the leading Buenos Aires daily La Nación, expressed his concern about the growing difficulties of reconciling “the lust for sensation which is a public failing in all latitudes” and the duty of an open-minded press dedicated to intelligent popularization.

IN the course of its transformation into an industrial enterprise, a company of shareholders, the modern newspaper has naturally been compelled to give priority to dividends over all other interests. To maintain the popularity of his paper and its daily sales, the editor of a widely read organ is obliged to cultivate the sensational taste of his readers.

The fascination of crime

The realms of science, morals and philosophy are, by their very nature, almost incapable of producing facts or phenomena calculated to appeal to that lust for sensation which is a public failing in all latitudes. From time to time, a discovery such as the application of the theory of Hertzian waves to wireless telegraphy or the first aeroplane flights provide matter that appeals to the masses; but the need to keep the reading public in a perpetual state of tension in order to maintain or increase sales forces newspaper propri-

etors to seek the sensational item in other aspects of human activity.

In this branch of information, crime provides usable material every day. There is no need to recall that criminal news items exercise a veritable fascination on all classes of readers. It seems that the record of crime in all its odious fecundity would suffice to slake the daily curiosity of the public. But the papers are often compelled to resort to an inordinate amplification of detail in order to arouse more interest; and there are undertakings which do not hesitate to invent a crime if the annals of criminality do not furnish one.

Bread and circuses

Sport and the social column provide the modern newspaper with another kind of publicity which is easily explained. From the point of view of publicity, these subjects differ from that of crime, insofar as the illustrious actors on these stages of modern life seek an advertisement which others endeavour to elude.

The press has greatly contributed to the propagation of sport, and it accepts complacently the plaudits which the public unjustly lays at its door for the welcome effects of such activity upon the sociability and the health of the human race; but the truth is that such influence is reciprocal, and that the press would lose a great number of its readers if it devoted to other forms of contemporary life the space which is taken by tennis, football, pelota, golf and portraits of champions.

Sport is developing because those



Text selected by Edgardo Canton

interested in its practice know that by this means they achieve the honours of publicity, and the press occasionally gives inordinate space to its sporting chronicle in order to recruit an assiduous reading public of professionals and amateurs whose number increases thanks to the encouragement of publicity.

In the course of its natural interests, the press tends to attach to certain activities more importance than they deserve. News concerning literary and artistic trends, the theatre and other manifestations of taste and intelligence occupy less and less space, unless they have a sensational flavour. The literary chronicle, which, half a century ago, was the main attraction of the better papers in France, England, Italy and learned Germany, has been abandoned to monthly or weekly publications specializing in this type of study.

If perchance the great daily press publishes literary news of some length and real interest, the public smiles disdainfully, for it regards such news as publicity at so much a line, inserted by publishers.

Cut-throat competition

In all aspects of journalistic activity, the absorbing and to a certain point deplorable influence of commercial interests can be discerned at a glance. It would be unfair, and, above all, vain to demand that the press should renounce commercial activity because it was originally an educational medium; what the writer of these lines would desire is the reconciliation of two apparently contradictory tendencies.

To this must be added that the great commercialized press as it exists today has been suddenly confronted with a menace, in the form of competitors whose means of dissemination for certain branches of trade are superior to its own. The wireless, which derives its nourishment from the daily press, is tending to supersede it in certain activities. This mode of dissemination, intelligently com-

bined with the cinematograph, could easily become the most effective of educational mediums; but, fortunately for the newspapers, both wireless and cinematograph have up to the present been commercial experiments whose development is governed by exactly the same principles as that of the powerful rival which they are seeking by merciless competition to supplant.

To sum up, it is necessary to put quite frankly a very serious question: Can it be said that there is not only a danger, but also the possibility that the press, by virtue of its unlimited power, may voluntarily exert its influence in the service of tendencies contrary to the progress of civilization, provided the exploitation of such tendencies results in a pecuniary gain for the newspapers thus proceeding?

The disclosures made on this point during the past few years, according to which certain newspapers have not hesitated to make a dangerous appeal to national feeling in order to realise massive profits, unfortunately warrant the conclusion that, in more critical circumstances, they would not hesitate to disturb the peace, if, by so doing, they achieved a durable and profitable increase of influence and revenue.

Having stated the above considerations, I must ask the following question, "Does the information, habitually furnished by press to public, tend in general, by its nature, to develop the education and the general knowledge of the latter?" From the foregoing, it is clear that this question must be answered in the negative. The education received by the public from large-circulation newspapers is of a bad quality. Special literary preparation and a very lively sense of reality are necessary in order to combat the evil influence of the daily press and to derive from it useful knowledge. So long as big newspapers are guided by the principles that make for commercial success, it is impossible for them to become a factor in education.

What is newsworthy?

When the reader has devoured the sensational paragraphs devoted to crime, championships, war, earthquakes, railway and other accidents, he has just time to read the Stock Exchange prices and perhaps an esoteric political leader. His mind is too weary to read articles on the new atomic theory or to assimilate the latest discoveries about the stratosphere.

Information about foreign nations and culture is provided by newspapers in accordance with local requirements. In Buenos Aires, where there are a million foreign residents, a majority of whom have retained a business or sentimental connection with their home country, information about foreign events occupies as much, if not more, space than the local news. This predominance of foreign information has widened the outlook of the reading public of this city by the influence it exercises on national feeling.

As a matter of fact, up to recent years, the Buenosairean followed international questions with great equanimity, tolerance and detailed knowledge. The quantity of foreign information in the press of this capital had produced this result on popular education.

But it must be admitted that the abundance of foreign news daily offered the public by the Buenosairean press was in all probability not so much the result of an educational endeavour as a calculation based on the need to increase the sales of the papers. At all events, this instance shows that abundant information is of indisputable educational value, if news is published without interpretations foreign to its real significance and historical value.

To sum up, if a newspaper is to become a conveyor of useful notions, an instrument of civilization, if it is to serve the real cause of mankind, it must begin by casting off its character of a commercial undertaking, a role too dependent upon contingencies in a world exclusively governed by the law of competency. ■

Federico Mayor

Director-General of UNESCO

Violence, an affront to humanity

The Cold War long justified the intolerable. So long as the world was divided into two camps, hostilities, violence and massacres were concealed or sanctioned. Today, we know. In a more transparent world, we no longer have the excuse of innocence.

Today there are no longer any camps and the world is one. But alongside the joy and hope occasioned by the progress of freedom, democracy and peace, unhappiness continues to advance through the violence of ethnic cleansing, terrorism, cultural and religious extremism, genocide, exclusion and discrimination.

Violence, especially when it imperils life, is inexcusable. How can it be justified by "religious" arguments when all religions are founded on love and generosity? Violence can and must be combated as such, as an affront to everything that makes for humanity in a human being and as the expression of an inability to move from dreams of hegemony to the reality of interdependence.

From now on, the archaic culture of war must yield to the culture of peace—in which the cult of force and the apology of competition will be replaced by the emergence of new horizons of human solidarity, the daily epic of freedom and justice, the sense of fellowship embracing, at once, human beings everywhere and generations to come.

From now on, humanity must be able to devote itself to the safeguarding, restoration and construction of peace, through the creation of the necessary areas of dialogue, co-operation and reconciliation. Yes to disagreement, no to violence. What is required by democratic principles—which must be consolidated every day—is neither docility nor submission. On the contrary, it is involvement in discussion, it is the expression of the ideals and ideas of all, with verve and perseverance. But this is not, ever, violence.

If we wish to remedy the asymmetry of our world, reduce inequalities in the distribution of its resources, we must not slacken in the fight against ignorance, poverty and humiliation. We must strengthen our efforts and pursue them unremittingly in order to counter hostile interests and correct shortsightedness, which is always a bad counsellor. But violence—never again.

From now on, let us decree that citizens should no longer sacrifice their lives but rather live them; that the finest tribute one can pay to the dead of all the wars of this century is to preserve the lives of their children. From now on, in the conscience and behaviour of each of us, tolerance should assume its strongest significance: not simply the acceptance of others with their differences, but a spontaneous movement towards others, to know them better and to know ourselves better through them, to share with them, to extend to them the hand of fellowship and compassion, so that universal values, common to all, are enriched by the precious individuality of every culture and every language, and by the irreplaceable creativity of every person. ■

OPERA FROM TAIWAN

by Isabelle Leymarie

Beijing Opera, widely regarded as the paragon of Chinese opera, is severely stylized. Its Taiwanese cousin (*ke tsai hsi*), less well known abroad until recently, is more flexible and has shown a remarkable capacity to adapt to the contemporary world.

The ancestry of Taiwanese opera can be traced back to *ke tsai chen*, a form of street theatre that developed from folk songs and folk tales introduced into Taiwan by immigrants who arrived there in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries from Fujian province in southeast China. In the 1920s, it returned to Fujian, then spread to Singapore and developed fully in Taiwan after the Second World War. It has never lost its spontaneity or its roots in folk art.

The Ming Hwa Yuan company, founded in 1929, is a distinguished exponent of *ke tsai hsi*. One of the main works in its repertoire is *Buddha Incarnate*, the plot of which is based on the conflict between the fatalistic Taoist master Ch'un Yang, who believes that there is a fundamental difference between human beings and non-human beings, and the Buddhist monk Ji Gong, who professes unconditional love for all living creatures. These are two of several archetypal characters from Chinese literature and folklore who appear in the opera. Ji Gong is thought to have been a wild, drunken monk who lived in the thirteenth century in Zhejiang province and, in spite of his unkempt appearance and contempt for conventions, achieved illumination long before his more respectable correligionists. Another stock figure is the Taoist master who is able to perform supernatural feats but is power-hungry and amuses himself by baiting the Buddhist hero. Other characters in the opera include a cunning white fox, who is also a figure of Japanese mythology, and a peach-tree, a sturdy figure whose symbolism is obscure.

MEN PLAYED BY WOMEN

Bored by the hereafter, the white fox and his acolyte the peach tree decide to assume human form and come down to earth to see what is going on in the living world. The fox is victorious in a martial arts competition organized by a man who is on the look-out for a suitor for his daughter, and duly wins the young woman's heart. His love is returned, but he is unmasked by the Taoist Master, who tries to prevent the union. Now aware that the fox is a superhuman being, the young woman's family opposes the wedding. To prove his sincerity, the fox gives up his natural form and the magic powers that go

A colourful form of entertainment inspired by music hall, cinema and folk theatre

with it, and turns into a simple mortal. After many adventures and with the help of Ji Gong, who fights with the Taoist Master in the presence of the rulers of hell, the fox becomes a scholar, brilliantly passes his state exams, weds his beloved and wins the affection of her parents.

In Chinese theatre, the feminine nature of certain characters is heightened by the fact that—even in rural China—women play male roles (in Japanese kabuki drama the reverse is the case). In *Buddha Incarnate* the fox and the peach tree are both played by young women. "Taiwanese theatre is very gentle," explains Ming Hwa Yuan's director. "We don't like violent things. Women have gradually come to play male roles because with a woman it is more beautiful."

A METAPHOR FOR THE BUDDHIST WAY

Although archetypal characters appear in Taiwanese opera, the legends on which it is based are sometimes modified or invented. In *Buddha Incarnate*, for example, Ji Gong is moved by the sincerity of the fox's love for the young woman and uses all kinds of stratagems and martial arts skills to help bring about their marriage—an episode which does not appear in the original version of the drunken monk's biography. After suspense worthy of a Kung Fu movie, *Buddha Incarnate* comes to a happy end. The moral undertones of such operas—in this case the themes of redemption and the deceptiveness of appearances—are very important. In order to get what he wants, the fox triumphs over dark forces. As his inner revolution progresses from the opening of his heart to the renunciation of false friendships, the fox becomes a metaphor for the Buddhist way.

Once a family affair, the Ming Hwa Yuan company today recruits actors among teenagers who have completed their secondary studies. In the past, Chinese peasant families found their children a place in theatre companies to provide them with a future. Chen Kaige's film

Farewell, My Concubine shows that their training could be hard and often cruel. In Taiwan today, however, young people are only too happy to embark on a career in show business. The aspiring performers follow their apprenticeship, which lasts about two years, by watching their seniors and playing small parts. "We like young people," says the director. "They have lots of enthusiasm and energy."

Plenty of physical energy is certainly needed for the long daily grind of rehearsal, and early to bed and early to rise is the rule when the company is on the road. The performers rehearse on stage for hours, learning not only their lines but collective choreography, acrobatics and martial arts, especially the arm gestures taken from the *chen* form of *Tai chi*, the ancient Chinese art of body movement. Everything is made more attractive by emphasizing the surreal and the fantastic in order to enchant the audience. Without their extraordinary make-up the actors look much more vulnerable than they do during the show. Many of them are still children or rebellious teenagers, sometimes tired, preoccupied or unruly.

A DAZZLING SPECTACLE

Taiwan opera is a dazzling spectacle with its blend of sets, lights and traditional and kitsch costumes taken from music hall, movies and other kinds of theatre. All kinds of odds and ends are tacked on to the main plot. "It is a free form," says the director. "In this way the show becomes a mirror of present-day life. The audience feels that what is happening on stage is close to their lives, and this has an effect on them. We have to rehearse constantly because even a well prepared show never follows a set course. It is subject to constant variations."

The lively, rhythmic music also plays an important role. Played on traditional Chinese string and percussion instruments, it is based on peasant songs arranged by the company's own composer who, depending on requirements, adds snatches of already existing music or composes original passages. It may be used deliberately to go against the flow of the action, relax a tense situation or create a comic atmosphere and special effects. At various moments during the performance the players start to dance disco style, keeping a two-four beat as in black music, a scansion unknown in the Asian tradition. ■

ISABELLE LEYMARIE

is a Franco-American musicologist.



SLAVERY IN HISTORY

I am writing to express my indignation as an African about certain articles published in your October 1994 issue *Slavery, a crime without punishment*.

The so-called triangular slave trade (ships plying from European ports to West Africa, then the West Indies and back to Europe again) and the black slave trade were not the only manifestations of slavery, although in time and space they constituted its bloodiest and hence most massive and inhuman form. The cover illustration, whatever its historical accuracy, is too selective and is yet another affront to black dignity and may encourage anti-African racism.

First of all, I would remind you that the word "slave" is not African. It comes from "Slav", a name still borne by the peoples of central Europe, a region which in the Middle Ages supplied slaves to the Ottoman Empire, the East, the Middle East, and even western Europe. Where does this put pharaonic Egypt, ancient Greece and imperial Rome?

I was particularly shocked by the interview with Mr. Doudou Diène ("The Slave Route", p. 29) which I regard as the expression of a dead African memory. "The initial act of the black slave trade," says Mr. Diène, "barbaric as it was, came to be instru-

mental in laying the foundations of a new civilization." What intellectual processes lead him to see the enslavement of our ancestors, which I consider to be the biggest act of genocide in history, as an act "laying the foundations of a new civilization"? . . .

When a production system reduces 200 million human beings to the state of chattels for three centuries (from the 16th to the 19th centuries), what justification can there be for talking about "civilization"? Some, like the late Cheikh Anta Diop, preferred the term "barbarity". . . .

I note the same contempt for the memory of Africa and our deported brothers in the article by the historian Elikia M'Bokolo ("Who was responsible?", p. 11). To ask who was responsible for the black slave trade is no more nor less than sophistry. . . .

The slave trade originated in violence. Might prevailed over right and ruled out any notion of choice. In the ensuing centuries the same balance of power continued to operate against the black man, who was no match for Western slavers.

Among many statements that seem to me to be unwarranted let me draw your attention to this one: "The social history of pre-colonial Africa shows that slavery was a widespread institution in [some] states" (p. 12). This is either a lie or pure ignorance.

Slavery was unknown to the African peoples before the onslaught of the slave-traders. This was the case, for example, of the Bwo and Minianka of Mali and the Fang of Equatorial Africa. What is more, the writings of the first Arab travellers to Africa, in the 8th and 9th centuries, show that there was no institutional slavery in, for example, Ghana and Mali.

Some features of the Cisse (Ghana) and Keita (Mali) empires were not unlike those found in the feudal societies of western Europe. In the Mali empires (Ghana, Mande, Songhai, Macina, Segu) there was a kind of vassalage that was initially based on a relationship of military dependence and protection.

The only form of pre-colonial slavery was of European origin. The African states were forced to superimpose on the system of feudal serfdom, traces of which still exist in Mauritania and northern Mali, a new system from outside that was alien to previous practices.

I feel it is a serious matter to confuse the

"merchandizing" of Africans by Europeans with the feudal practices (prisoners of war and serfs often eventually became part of the families they served or recovered their freedom) that were features of our states before contact with the Portuguese and, later, with other Westerners. . . .

Thus in ancient Kongo, a so-called "slave" was called "navana", the child. He did not become a commodity until the coming of the European slave trade. Here, as in the Sahelian social groups described by Mr. M'Bokolo, a slave—should the term even be used?—was part of the lineage and could even wed the master's daughter. He possessed rights. He was not, as described in the "Black Code" of Louis XIV (p. 19), "movable" or "immovable" property.

So let's have no more intellectual speculation about our millions of deported and dead. May they rest at last in peace and dignity.

Tingé Coulibaly
Paris (France)

THE THIRD ROOT

The historical arguments used in Mr. Tingé Coulibaly's letter justify the urgent need, which UNESCO wishes to meet, for a new look at the black slave trade.

In his letter the debate hinges on two points:

*a) The specificity of the black slave trade. Although slavery may be a widespread phenomenon, it is generally agreed, as historian Jean-Michel Deveau acknowledges in the introduction to his recent work, *La France au temps des négriers (France-Empire, Paris, 1994)*, that the black slave trade "by virtue of its magnitude and duration constituted the greatest tragedy in human history".*

The extreme complexity of studying this major historical phenomenon and its consequences has led the Director-General of UNESCO to set up a multidisciplinary International Scientific Committee with some thirty members. At the end of its first session, held in Ouidah (Benin), the Committee recommended to the Director-General that in the framework of its Slave Route project UNESCO should give priority to the triangular black slave trade, without, however, ignoring the trans-Saharan and Indian Ocean slave routes.

b) The consequences of the black slave trade. It should be remembered that the black slave trade was a brutal, enforced

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encounter between millions of Africans and the Amerindian and European populations of the Americas and the West Indies. It was also a cultural encounter insofar as it is through culture that African slaves were able to survive and face the terrible conditions that were forced on them.

This is why one of the fiercest struggles of the descendants of African slaves has been to achieve recognition of their identity and of the fertilization of Amerindian and European cultures by African culture. It is in this context that the black slave trade may be said to have contributed to the foundation of civilizations.

In addition to their activities in the United States, which are well known, communities of African origin in several Latin American countries are voicing intellectual and political demands for recognition of a cultural pluralism to which they have made a large contribution. It is significant in this regard that intellectuals and researchers of non-African origin are also waging the same struggle. A case in point is Mexico's Third Root programme, which seeks to promote recognition of the African as well as the Amerindian and European root of the civilizations of the Americas.

Doudou Diène
Head of UNESCO's Division
for Intercultural Projects

THE SLAVE TRADE AND TWENTIETH-CENTURY NEO-COLONIALISM

Mr. Tingé Coulibaly's letter has the merit of recalling two important points. Firstly, that debate and controversy are part and parcel of historiography. Secondly, that assumption of the collective memory is always accompanied by disagreement. All the same, unless one believes that one has a monopoly of the truth, one cannot simply dismiss those who differ from one's own point of view as liars or ignoramus.

1) Slavery in Africa. Discussion is no longer in order about the existence of slavery in Africa because of the number and diversity, not only of the contemporary sources we possess on the subject, but also of earlier and later sources both from outside Africa (Arab and European travellers of very different backgrounds and status) and from within the continent (the writings of African scholars and oral sources) all of which confirm the existence of a form of African slavery.

What may legitimately be discussed is the use of concepts such as slave, serf, prisoner or dependant on the one hand, and on

the other, the unequal distribution of this slavery over the continent in different types of society (whence the useful distinction between "state" and "society without a state") and in different regions. What may also be discussed are the chronology and the nature of the interactions between "the slave trade" and interior slavery.

My position is based not only on the sources but on an obvious fact and a hypothesis: slavery was practised in ancient times by all known states in all the cultural areas of humanity. So, unless one believes that Africans do not form part of this common humanity, it is legitimate to put forward the hypothesis (confirmed by the sources) that their states also practised a form of slavery that was specific to their particular social organization and independent of the European and Arab slave trades.

2) The transition from the period when slaves were abducted to the age of the slave trade. This phenomenon has been generally established and solidly documented in studies on the Sahelian states, Senegambia, "Upper Guinea", the Gulf of Guinea, Kongo and Angola and the hinterland of Zanzibar. Slave trading was clearly based on constant violence, but it should not be restricted to a European/African, white/black polarization.

After the abduction phase, the duration of which varied from place to place and sometimes depended on commercial practices, came a time when African states specialized, whether we like it or not, in capturing slaves using firearms sold by Europeans. I will put it differently by using an anachronistic metaphor: the slave trade functioned like 20th-century neo-colonialism: the profits went to the states and companies of Europe and the Americas, while the on-the-ground task of producing goods for export at any cost (war in the past, autocracy today) was left to the Africans.

A mass of documentation exists on all these questions. I have made an honest effort to identify the points of agreement and divergence. Whatever Mr. Coulibaly may think, the real differences between historians concern harder questions than those I discussed in my article, e.g. quantifying the slave trade and its effects on the economic, political and psychological future of Africa.

Elikia M'Bokolo
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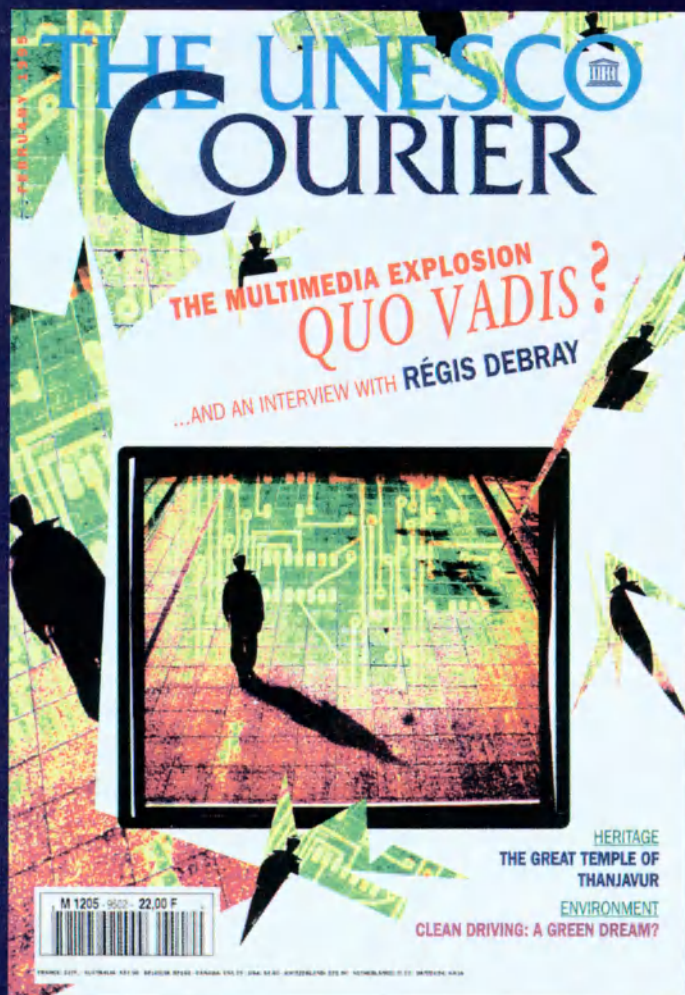
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