LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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ANOTHER HALF OF THE DOUBLE LIFE
Jare Ajayi
Journalist and coordinator
Jasmur International Arts and Literature Centre
Ibadan (Nigeria)

As your issue on renewable energy (Sources, No. 81) clearly states, the world’s energy reserve may have its limits. But even if the supply was inexhaustible, this would still not excuse the cut-throat manner in which it is presently exploited, resulting in human suffering and a scarred environment. Indeed, there is an urgent need to “democratize” energy supply, distribution and utilization. This fact is so apparent that our failure to recognize and respond accordingly never fails to astound. Perhaps explanation for this refusal lies in the cartels which use energy as an economic and political force for destabilization.

SMITTEN BY PEACE
Magatto Diop
President of the Peace for All Association
Lougã (Senegal)

Permit me to congratulate you for the wealth of information provided by your magazine and the pertinence of the ideas articulated, which, by the way, we share. From the messages conveyed in each issue, Sources seems to be an appropriate instrument for promoting peace, friendship and tolerance between peoples. This is also the objective of our association which is open to all the world’s youth who are smitten by peace and friendship.

The world seems more and more like an enormous battlefield. And the international community doesn’t appear to be very inspired to stop this human decay. The rather forceful interventions on the part of the United Nations to pacify the many hotspots of tension have reached their limits. It is up to us - young people - to take destiny in our own hands. And to me, peace seems to be the unavoidable first step for any future development.

DEMOCRATIZING THE SUN
Jare Ajayi
Journalist and coordinator
Jasmur International Arts and Literature Centre
Ibadan (Nigeria)

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The entire team at UNESCO Sources wishes its readers a happy and prosperous New Year.

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1997
Good luck Mr. Kofi Annan - you'll need it. Certainly the job of United Nations Secretary-General has always been a difficult one. But it has been rendered even more so by an electoral campaign that clearly revealed the different views held over the profile required for the post, and, consequently, over the conception of the Organization's role (far removed from the role set down in the UN Charter).

There are as many egos seated at the table of great nations as participants, the late General de Gaulle would have said. All countries seek to defend their interests during the election for the top job. Logical. But it is going too far when these interests take priority over those of the organization and its mission.

It is difficult, for example, to understand how this mission would be compromised by the nomination of a secretary-general who did not perfectly master the language of Molière - or for that matter, Shakespeare, Cervantes or Tolstoy. It is even more difficult to understand, despite the UN's financial crisis, why the secretary-general must be first and foremost a manager. The UN is neither a factory nor a business enterprise, but rather a centre where nations "unite" their "strength to maintain international peace and security" and help resolve "international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character". Its mission is clearly a political one, in the full sense of the term: the management of the problems of the city - today the global village.

A system of checks and balances between the largely inept states - and the all powerful marketplace, between the legitimacy of the urn and the legitimacy of efficiency (measured only in macro-economic terms) is vital, and its development will unavoidably be on top of the new secretary-general's agenda. Because a well-oiled machine is fine, but why bother if it does not serve the purpose for which it was created?

René LEFORT
BOOKS

ASIA PACIFIC ARTS DIRECTORY
This unique directory, covering 22 countries in Asia and the Pacific, provides essential information for researchers, journalists, specialists and artists wishing to obtain up-to-date information on culture and arts in this dynamic region. Providing background on the territory concerned, including an overview of the arts scene and a brief survey of cultural policy and exchange opportunities, the three volumes provide detailed information on cultural agencies, performing and visual arts venues, festivals, documentation centres, training and research organizations and associations. Funding sources are complemented by a directory providing profiles of inter-governmental and non-governmental cultural agencies, overseas cultural missions, festivals and foundations.

Asia Pacific Arts Directory, by Tim Doling, Visiting Arts/UNESCO 1996, 1619 pp. (three volumes not sold separately) 480 FF.

SEARCHING FOR RELEVANCE: THE DEVELOPMENT OF WORK ORIENTATION IN BASIC EDUCATION
"It is amazing that the thing has been running for two years and it is only in this second year that I am beginning to understand it. Now the emphasis is to orientate the child to be able to use his hands in this world. We had wrongly thought initially that the emphasis was on acquisition of employable skills." In an interview published in 1991, Nigeria's then Chief Inspector of Secondary Schools touches on some of the major complexities of preparing children for the world of work. Part of the Fundamentals of Planning series, the latest booklet (No. 52) explores possible roles that schools can and do play in preparing pupils for working life. The sections examine how this concept has been translated into "curricular reality" in reviewing different approaches taken in various regions. The final chapters focus on policy issues and aspects of planning and implementation.


FARNATCHI AND THE FOURSOME
A birthday celebration goes sour for Farnatchi when a mysterious foursome - alcoholic beverages resembling champagne, cognac, wine and beer - land the young boy in jail with a terrible hangover and a pathetic drunk named A Il. Fortunately, Uncle Wahid sees the danger involved and steers Farnatchi to a doctor who inculcates the boy against the evils involved by recounting the sad story of Ali, whose addiction destroys his family, soul and health. Recognizing his own weakness, our young hero decides that he cannot handle alcohol but can still be the life of the party. Boldly illustrated, this is an entertaining teaching guide for kids between the ages of eight and 13.

- Farnatchi and the Foursome, by Dr Roland Fayard, CIPADED/Vie et Santé/UNESCO 1996, pp. 62, 75 FF.

COMPACT DISCS

NORWAY - FIDDLER MUSIC FROM AGDER
Listeners embark for the mountains of southern Norway with fiddler and hardanger fiddler music from Agder. With all the basic elements of a violin, the hadingfele is set apart by its detailed decorations, short neck and relatively flat fingerboard and bridge with very long f-holes and sympathetic strings reflecting the European fashion of the 17th and 18th centuries. The disc features dance tunes played by the musician Vidar Lande, who has worked since 1970 to transcribe the repertory of this dying musical tradition.

- Norway - Fiddler Music from Agder, Musics and Musicians of the World Collection. UNESCO/AUVIDIS, Price: 145 FF.

PERIODICALS

INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF EDUCATION
Democracy's melting pot does not necessarily assure respect for minority rights. On the contrary, it can serve as an "ideological cloak" to restrict them, particularly in the field of education. This special issue (Vol. 42, No. 4) looks at the major dynamics and approaches involved - with articles exploring general trends such as the "European dilemma" in recognizing minority workers as human beings, to more specific analyses of language education in multilingual India where assuring appropriate language instruction gets tricky in a country with more than 1,600 mother tongues, and the Canadian experience of helping refugee students find their place in Toronto's schools and communities.

THE UNESCO COURIER
To help those excluded from standard banking systems, local financial establishments have been developing alternatives with the aim of assisting the poor in the last 20 years. Entitled "Microfinance - Helping the Poor Help Themselves", the January 1997 issue of The Courier presents these innovative institutions found in the most diverse social, cultural and economic environments, in both the city and the countryside, which are working "to relieve the suffering of more than a billion people". Because "contrary to conventional wisdom, the poor are good credit risks and have a high savings propensity," as Sayeeda Rahman of Bangladesh explains in the opening article. Whether they be in Latin America, Africa, Asia or Europe, we find a kind of financial "solidarity" among these groups in their renewed fight against poverty and social exclusion.
CHIARA LUBICH: HALF-SAINT, HALF-GURU

Without a hair out of place, and discreetly elegant in her suit, Chiara Lubich could pass for an adorable grandmother, calm but energetic. No outward signs of faith with this Italian lady, who at the age of 76 accepted the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education on 17 December. And yet the $25,000 prize will go towards “paying homage to the glory of God”. This is a woman who knows how to shift mountains, directing over the past 50 years, one of the world’s biggest spiritual movements: the Focolare.

Her inspiration stems back to 1943 in Trente, Italy, where she was born to a leftist family. In the midst of the war’s savagery, she decided to recreate a link between peoples, based not just on individual faith but “community spirituality” anchored in society’s basic building block, the family. Implanted in 180 countries, including China (“in Taiwan but also in Communist China”, she says), the Focolare now have about 200,000 members and two million followers, including many young people. Of all nationalities, religions, they not only preach the good word, they also act on it. Their social and humanitarian initiatives range from adopting and sponsoring children to receiving refugees, visiting the terminally ill and helping developing countries. Some of the Focolare live collectively in about 20 pilot-towns (the “mariapoli”) found on the five continents. Others practice an “economy of communion” in sharing their business profits with the poor and contributing to the development of the “mariapoli”.

What is the secret to this formidable expansion? Ripe conditions stemming from excessive materialism and rising inequalities which are leading more and more individuals to spiritual movements and communities of all kinds. The other key to success lies in a simple message, articulated around two evangelical principles: “I love, therefore I am” and “every individual is a candidate for release”. According to Ms Lubich, “the things uniting us are a lot more numerous than those separating us.” These points in common play a unifying role, she says, in ecumenism and inter-faith dialogue.

Half-saint, half-guru, combining fidelity to the Vatican with freedom of action, Ms Lubich has even obtained a unique privilege from the Pope: by statute, the movement’s president must always be a woman. Without a doubt, “Chiara”, as her followers call her, can perform miracles.

YILDIZ AUMEERRUDDY: THE SEEDS OF PASSION

Coming from Mauritius, I must have been predisposed to ethnobotany. My first lesson came from my mother’s gardens. The one in the front of the house reflected the island’s European colonial past - neatly cut grass, rows of rosebeds and straight hedges. The back garden revealed her Indian side - wild with lychees, breadfruit and citrus trees. She tended to whatever sprang up. What’s interesting to see is that as she grows older, the front garden grows wilder. It’s as if her Indian side has taken over…”

Memories of this “paradise” have left Yildiz Aumeeruddy, 35, with a seed of passion for exploring the inter-relations between people and plants, making her the natural coordinator of UNESCO’s project of the same name for the Himalayan region. As a joint initiative with the World Wide Fund for Nature and the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew (U.K.), she organizes training workshops and networks linking local communities, researchers and governments in promoting the sustainable and equitable use of medicinal plants.

“For me, working with people is as important as working on the pure fundamentals, like tree architecture.” While completing her doctorate in tropical ecology at the University of Montpellier (France), Yildiz “learned the most” in Indonesia’s Kerinci valley where a UNESCO scholarship for young researchers, awarded in 1990, enabled her to spend a year and a half understanding how the indigenous people manage these sacred woods.

So when a diverse group of experts met at Headquarters on 2 and 3 December to brainstorm a possible initiative concerning the world’s traditional sacred sites, such as forests, mountains and rivers, they called in Yildiz. These sites are found around the world, where traditional societies perceive deities and spirits or construct shrines dedicated to ancestors. These places often serve as important reservoirs of biodiversity, preserving unique species of plants, insects and animals. Just on the drawing board, the proposed project would aim to better understand and support the people traditionally managing an array of sites.

“The ideas behind the project need to mature, but there are good reasons to continue,” says Yildiz. “We must be careful about linking what intimately belongs to certain peoples to biodiversity problems which affect everyone. This project should aim at learning from the people how they manage their biological resources with respect and recognition for cultural ways and beliefs.”

Amy ÖTCHET
DECEMBER 29, 1996: CARLOS GONZALES, ONE OF THE FOUR COMMANDERS OF THE GUATEMALAN NATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY UNITY, AND GENERAL OTTO PEREZ MOLINA FROM THE GOVERNMENTAL PEACE COMMISSION PUT AN END TO MORE THAN 30 YEARS OF CIVIL WAR, WHICH CLAIMED SOME 100,000 LIVES IN GUATEMALA.

(Photo © Reuters/MAXPPP/K. White).
BUILDING A CULTURE OF PEACE IN LATIN AMERICA

On December 12 last, the 51st session of the UN General Assembly adopted by consensus a resolution calling for the “promotion of a Culture of Peace based on ... the respect for human rights, democracy, tolerance, dialogue, cultural diversity and reconciliation...” thus formally recognizing and supporting an initiative conceived and developed by UNESCO earlier this decade.

The Organization’s Culture of Peace Programme was born in 1992 with the aim of consolidating peace in post-conflict situations. Since then it has broadened to include conflict prevention in all countries. However, it is the emerging and still vulnerable democracies of Latin America (see below and pp. 12-13) that have taken the lead in translating the concept of a culture of peace into action at every level of society: through the efforts of outstanding citizens such as Rigoberta Menchu Tum (p.9); via a regional network of ombudsmen to defend human rights (p. 10); programmes to reintegrate demobilized soldiers into society (p. 11); the provision of fora for academics and politicians to rethink the art of government (p. 14); radio programmes to teach women their rights and how to improve the quality of their families’ lives (p.15); and the revision of history and the way it teaches children to view their heritage and their neighbours (p.16).

If we were to ask what potential sources of conflict there are in Latin America, first of all we would have to try to make sure what kind of conflict we are talking about. This is because ever since renowned Norwegian peace researcher Johan Galtung wrote about structural violence it has been generally understood that there is a difference between direct and indirect violence. Or, stated in different terms, between a negative peace characterized by an absence of war and a positive peace characterized by conditions conducive to the satisfaction of human needs and social harmony, brought about by a reduction in inequalities, sustainable human development, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and the existence of a democratic political regime.

If we compare our own situation with that of other continents, we Latin Americans ought perhaps to feel pleased when we see how internal armed conflicts have been diminishing in our area. Guatemala has, with the help of the United Nations, signed an agreement for the establishment of a stable and lasting peace, thus ending a 36-year-old civil war with one of the cruelest records of civilian suffering and violations of humanitarian law and human rights. El Salvador and Nicaragua have been on the way to making peace ever since, as a result of the Esquipulas II agreement of 1987, they succeeded in putting an end to decades of armed confrontation, also with the UN’s help.

INTERNAL VIOLENCE

There remain, however, several intermittent and virulent internal conflicts. In Colombia, for example, where various organizations continue to defy the government within the framework of a very complex, almost inextricable skein of interrelations involving organized crime, the armed forces, paramilitary groups and guerrilla bands. Peru has obtained better results by implementing what amounts to a military solution of the conflict with Shining Path. But an increase in internal violence could still occur there (as the world has recently witnessed) as well as in Mexico, where peace negotiations with the Zapatista movement have not been successfully concluded and have been postponed sine die just at the time when other armed groups, apparently more radical and intractable, have made their appearance.

There is also a danger that conflicts may occur over territorial disagreements. Border disputes and territorial claims between many countries are simmering. The list of unresolved cases is impressive: Ecuador-Peru, Venezuela-Guyana, Colombia-Nicaragua, Bolivia-Chile, Argentina-Chile, Guatemala-Belize... One of the fiercest issues is still the frontier dispute between Quito and Lima, not only because there is a danger that hostilities may break out anew but also because the associated problems could trigger an arms race, thereby jeopardizing the mediation efforts of the guarantor countries provided for in the Rio Protocol (signed in 1942, this protocol set the frontier limits between Peru and Ecuador).

When it comes to the underlying structural violence, it is striking to note the extent to which the declarations adopted at presidential summits and at innumerable meetings of experts and specialists on such topics as sustainable development or the campaign against poverty, are at variance with the continent’s harsh realities.

Broad sectors of the population are still living in conditions of extreme poverty, political exclusion and economic marginality and show no signs of improving in the near future. According to the World Bank, although the percentage of people living in poverty has fallen, their absolute number...
soared from 120 million in 1980 to more than 160 million in 1995. And this despite a region-wide 0.6% slow-down in population growth between 1970 and 1995 and an acceleration of economic growth. Since 1990 real wages have generally fallen and there are now more jobless in most countries than at the start of the decade. Indeed, the contrast between the dazzling luxury of the opulent shopping centres and the squalor of the shanty towns inhabited by the poor continues to be one of the most deplorable features of the Latin American scene. And, of course, a potential source of a very dangerous form of violent conflict.

**Health and Education**

There is apparently a failure to understand, or a reluctance to understand, that it is not enough to attack the problems of inequality and poverty by using stopgap measures like special funds (which also duplicate the work of ministries and state institutions). To escape from the hell of poverty, the state must formulate coherent, far-reaching policies to promote, in particular, development in education and health. While it is true that great strides have been made in these fields over the past few decades (life expectancy for example, climbed from 54 years in 1960 to 69.5 in 1990, mortality rates for children under the age of five during the same period fell from 159 per thousand to 47 per thousand and total primary, secondary and university enrolment rose from 40 million to 122 million) average health and education levels today are lower than would be expected for the region’s level of economic development. Boosting them would entail drastic reform of tax systems to raise the domestic financial resources needed to carry out such a huge and essential undertaking.

The whole governability problem that is so much in the news these days revolves around the crucial point that governments are legitimate only to the extent to which they are capable of satisfying the needs of the majority of the population: if they fail in this, social conflicts and explosions must be expected. Our governments cannot afford to ignore the opinion polls that clearly show widespread disenchantment with the functioning of democracy in Latin America.

Governments are also being called into question over their handling of ethnic issues which could present yet another source of potential conflict if the claims of indigenous peoples for respect for their cultural rights are disregarded. It must be realized that although ideological incompatibilities have been reduced or have lost their importance as a result of the end of the cold war, at the same time this has led to the emergence of incompatibilities based on culture and civilization. The Mayas of Guatemala or Mexico and the Quechus or Aymaras of the Andean high plateau, who are demanding that their languages and customs be respected, have a right to be listened to by the societies of their respective countries. Otherwise the outcome may be violent responses by ethno-nationalist movements.

Last but not least there is the threat posed by organized crime. A recent article in the British weekly, The Economist, reveals that the murder rate for the region is six times the world average. Colombia alone accounts for half of the kidnappings that take place around the globe each year, with some $100m being paid out annually in ransoms. According to The Economist, the region spends 13%-15% of GDP on security - both private and public.

If the concept of “hemispheric security” is to have any meaning, Latin America and Washington must join forces to combat the drug mafias that are partly responsible for this situation. Grandiloquent declarations, repression and inadequate police measures will not work alone. What is required is decisive action to prevent and punish such offences in the places where they originate - in other words, in the cities and towns where the demand is located.

We conclude by pointing out that integration processes appear to be the right course to follow in order to bring into being a Latin America enjoying security, peace and development. Convened by the regional peace research organization, CLAIP, the first Latin American Congress on International Relations and Research for Peace was held in Guatemala in 1995, having as its general topic the building of peace, a peace culture, and democracy. The second congress, which will be held in Buenos Aires in October 1997, will focus on integration, peace and development. These are signs of the times, but they also show a clear awareness of what is needed to safeguard and reinforce the shaky foundations of peace in Latin America.

**What is a Culture of Peace?**

"In the culture of war, conflicts are resolved by physical or symbolic violence. The culture of peace, on the contrary, is inseparable from recourse to dialogue, mediation and recognition of others as being equal before the law and in dignity, whether in relations among States, social communities and groups, between governments and the people they govern, or between men and women. The culture of peace may thus be defined as all the values, attitudes and forms of behaviour, ways of life and of acting that reflect and are inspired by respect for life and for human beings and their dignity and rights, the rejection of violence including terrorism in all its forms, and commitment to the principles of freedom, justice, solidarity, tolerance and understanding among peoples and between groups and individuals.

However, the culture of peace cannot be identified with abstract pacifism or with a passive tolerance that would call for the cessation of hostilities and violence without proposing measures to redress situations of injustice, inequality or oppression. As it is a moral code ‘in action’, the culture of peace implies a determined commitment to work for the construction of ‘a world acceptable to all’, to quote poet Archibald MacLeish, who was one of the main authors of UNESCO’s Constitution. It implies the creation of an environment for living that is consistent with human dignity, in which all those who are excluded, isolated and marginalized would find an opportunity for genuinely becoming part of society. It implies the elimination of poverty and its attendant ills, more equitable sharing of both prosperity and knowledge, and the possibility for everyone to receive an education or to return to education. It also implies consolidation of democratic processes, because only democracy can ensure the right to the rule of law and the respect of all rights” (excerpt from UNESCO’s Medium-Term Strategy, 1996-2001).
SOWING PEACE IN THE LAND OF MAIZE

With the recent end to Guatemala's civil war, Rigoberta Menchu looks to her Mayan roots, international experience and fellow women in striving for some ambitious goals in her country.

There really is an urgent need to recover the true content of peace by linking it to culture,” says Rigoberta Menchu Tum when defining the meaning of “a culture of peace”. “This means attaching due value to people’s lives and usefulness, as well as to the importance of holding a dialogue between different cultures and the sharing of responsibilities.” For this woman, who at the age of 37 has been fighting for the rights of Guatemala’s Indians since her adolescence, each culture is like a “mysterious garden” which we must get to know, respect and admire. “There are immense values to be discovered and to be put to good use in people, particularly in children because they represent the most vital part of our future.”

These fundamental values have an especially important role to play in countries where conflicts are endemic. “A culture of peace means preventing those conflicts and seeking to solve problems by peaceful means instead of by armed force.” Consequently, Mrs. Menchu stresses that such a culture needs to be associated with the pursuit of democracy and social reform. “The assumption of a culture of peace entails that justice should be better administered and that humanity’s wealth be distributed fairly.”

NEW PATHS

With the recent signing of the peace agreements in Guatemala, the UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador and Nobel Peace Prize winner has a message to send first of all to the long-suffering women. “These architects of so many fundamental values and the first victims of conflicts” must bolster their self-esteem and use their wisdom to recover the respect and place in life which they deserve. According to Rigoberta Menchu, women, like minorities, have to overcome the historical injustices to which they have been subjected, not by denying them but by restating them for the purpose of building a different future. In this quest, “our societies need women who can imagine the future and dream of it creatively,” she says, “without being afraid of travelling along new paths.”

“A woman with imagination is a woman who knows how to plan not only the life of a family,” she says, “but also that of a society with a view to the coming millennium.” From her experience as an indigenous person and as a mother, Rigoberta Menchu knows that those challenges and goals have a cost: “in the form of new habits and a somewhat disrupted family life”.

For her, UNESCO has been an excellent school. Inspired by its work, she and the Director-General, Federico Mayor, are seeking to promote some ambitious goals: “a new ethic, a culture of peace and an inter-cultural education that promotes dialogue and ties of friendship”. Her work with the Organization has shown her that “problems and approaches are universal”. So, “when I return to the Guatemalan countryside, I find communities, municipal authorities and indigenous peoples who are also working to find alternatives in building a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural nation.” At the same time, she says, these very same objectives are indispensable elsewhere in resolving human conflicts such as those in Somalia or Rwanda. But espousing a universal consciousness does not mean forgetting your roots, according to Rigoberta Menchu, who at the age of 21 was forced to flee to Mexico after her parents and brother were murdered by security forces.

GRIEF

“I belong to the land of maize,” she says in referring to the Maya’s traditional cosmology in which the point where the Milky Way appears as a vertical band in the night sky represents both the growth of the maize stalk (the Maya’s staple crop) and the moment of creation. While speaking and writing in Spanish, it is the philosophy of the Maya which guides and inspires Rigoberta Menchu. “I think that joy is to be found in everything... I feel happy when I discover new things, as if I were a little girl, but also when I am with my family which I consider to be fundamental. Seeing people who love Guatemala and Indians who devote all of their time, day after day, to building a better world also makes me happy.” For 30 years Guatemalans have learned to live with grief and war, but now “we have a common agenda, men and women, indigenous and non-indigenous alike: the peace agreements make it possible, for the first time, for all of us to be responsible citizens. We now have hope of experiencing a real democratic future.”

But ideals alone won’t be enough for a culture of peace to take root and flourish. For the million Mayan refugees (one out of three) who fled the war since the beginning of the 1980s, very real problems remain. “We have to dream, but we also have to act,” insists Rigoberta Menchu, in pointing to the example of the 84 dwellings inaugurated last November in a very small town in her country. “To give land to Guatemalan refugees who have spent 14 years in exile and who possess nothing is for me a concrete achievement, a reason for feeling proud,” she says. “For us, the most important thing is land, the basis of life and of the future.” Like any woman, she is both happy and sad, experiencing despair and impotence in the face of reality. When this happens, “I seek strength in myself and in nature... We have to take advantage of life to be creative,” she advises, “because when we are down we achieve nothing either for ourselves or for mankind.”
The construction and strengthening of a culture of peace entails knowledge of and respect for human rights and the protection and development of those rights,” proclaims the declaration made by the seven participants at the Ibero-American Forum of Ombudsmen on Human Rights and the Culture of Peace, held under UNESCO’s auspices in Antigua Guatemala last June 28-29. Out of that meeting was born a region-wide network of Ombudsmen for a Culture of Peace which will work closely with UNESCO’s culture of peace programme.

The role of the ombudsman has developed considerably in Latin America alongside and as part of the democratization process. Serving as defence counsels, public prosecutors, commissioners and chairpersons of human rights commissions, they work in often difficult and dangerous environments to ensure respect for human and citizen’s rights. They are also involved in a range of educational activities designed to create awareness among all sectors of the population of how important it is to be familiar with those rights, to be able to interpret, extend and publicize them, and to ensure respect for them in order to create a way of life that is more just, caring and above all, more coherent. They are, in short, said Dr. Adolfo De Castro of Puerto Rico, “agents of peace - both for its construction and preservation”.

In Colombia for example, lawyer Reynaldo Botero (a member of the Ibero-American Federation of Ombudsmen, but not a participant in Antigua) defended the rights of the poor living in the Cali region for two and a half years before resigning his post to join the Red Cross. A large part of his job entailed explaining their social, economic and environmental rights to these people (many of them enshrined in Colombia’s Constitution only since 1991) and tracking down the evidence to help them prepare and launch legal action to defend themselves. In one case he helped citizens mount a dossier against gold-mining companies whose activities had seriously polluted a local river and poisoned fish stocks. In another case, his investigations led to the convictions of four police officers (two have been jailed, the other two have disappeared) following the torture and murder of three young blacks, and the exposure of what amounted to “a process of extermination of the very poor”. He also investigated the activities of paramilitary groups operating in the region and suspected of committing more than 250 murders, and maintained a regular check on prisoner conditions, seeking out reliable legal counsel for those too poor to pay a lawyer.

The job is not one for the faint-hearted, nor the bureaucratic. An ombudsman, said Dr. De Castro, “must be independent, credible, sensitive to those being helped and armed with a profound respect for the truth and a sense of ethics.” They must also be accessible and flexible, as demand on them is extremely varied.

In another example in Colombia, ombudsmen are working with major newspapers to defend, in particular, the rights of readers. “All those who feel that their honour or their dignity has been offended, or that information published in the newspaper is incorrect, can complain to the ombudsman who is free to investigate and publish the findings in a column reserved for this purpose on the editorial pages,” explained the major daily, El Tiempo, upon the appointment of its ombudsman.

This type of development was clearly promoted in the Antigua Guatemala declaration, which pointed out that “exercising freedom of opinion, expression and information as integral aspects of human rights and fundamental freedoms is an essential foundation for strengthening a culture of peace”. The declaration also called for “the full participation of women and the strengthening of their rights” as well as “essential to the development of a culture of peace”.

“Peace is a complex and cooperative process,” said the Chairman of Mexico’s Human Rights Commission Dr. Jorge Madrazo “to which we must give constant impetus and which we have to strengthen and nourish. The complexity of this process stems precisely from the fact that, as UNESCO warns, peace is not only the absence of war, but is bound up with the construction of a real national and international culture of respect for the dignity of the human person and observance of the law.”

The development of the network established in Guatemala, and given the blessing of the International Ombudsman Institute at its sixth international conference held in Argentina last October, will be one of the top items on the agenda of the next meeting of the Ibero-American Federation of Ombudsmen which will be held next April.

Leticia Rodriguez
in Antigua Guatemala, and S.W.
FROM SOLDIER TO CITIZEN

Nicaragua’s peace promoters work to disarm renegade soldiers and integrate them back into civil society.

The peace accords are signed. The war is officially over. But what happens next? What happens to the soldiers who have lost their homes, their jobs, their families? What place do these recent heroes turned troublesome reminders of the past have in the new society? All too often they are left to fend for themselves and respond the only way they know how: by rearming.

In Nicaragua, some 147,000 soldiers have been demobilized from both sides since the peace accords were signed in 1990. There was no long-term strategy in place for their reintegration, and government promises of land and housing in return for weapons, largely evaporated. With unemployment close to 60%, social services drastically reduced and malnutrition on the rise, the veterans became frustrated and angry. In the northern regions, where austerity cuts saw the police, judiciary, local government services and even the army pull out, armed bands of ex-soldiers took matters into their own hands.

NEW REALITIES

To counter this explosive situation the Centre for International Studies (CEI) was established in 1991 to elaborate and implement peace-building strategies. It started by recognizing the strategic importance and the common characteristics of ex-soldiers from both sides: 60% are under the age of 25, the majority are peasant farmers and all have faced difficulties in accepting the new social reality.

These people, insists Alejandro Bendaña, one of the Centre’s founders, are not interested in maintaining a war, but the official talk of reconciliation rings hollow and the former fighters have developed their own definitions. He quotes ex-combatant leaders who attended a CEI workshop on reconciliation. “Reconciliation with who or what?” they demanded. “Do you want us to reconcile with poverty?” “Let’s talk about reconciliation, not as some pie-in-the-sky ideal, but as a weapon for fighting for our dignity, our rights and our families.”

“We realized,” says Bendaña “that we could no longer distinguish who had been on what side of the battle lines. Poverty had become a common enemy.”

They teach social skills such as listening, communicating, organizing and promoting participation, stress control, active non-violence and value formation. The aim is to transform energy that had been channelled into war into a force for building peace. “We can’t provide land or work,” says Bendaña. “Nor can we convince communities or families to welcome back the soldiers. What we can do is help veterans win back social respect through self respect.”

The peace promoters number 100 working in 30 areas where conflict is most intense. Their successes have won the respect of all sides or families to welcome back the soldiers. What we can do is help veterans win back social respect through self respect."

The peace promoters number 100 working in 30 areas where conflict is most intense. Their successes have won the respect of all civil and military authorities.

FEAR AND INCREDULITY

Demobilizing an armed group is a complex and difficult task, Bendaña explains. The peace promoters not only have to deal with the physical constraints imposed by the mountainous terrain, they must also overcome the defiance of the fighters and the incomprehension, fear and incredulity of the civil and military authorities.

Insisting that they will not shield criminals, the peace promoters investigate the history of each member of the groups they disarm. “We inquire with the police, the people in the zone where the gang operates and we speak with the ex-soldiers themselves,” explains Vida Lainez, a peace promoter in the Mulukuku district.

“The community usually knows who is up in the mountains and why,” adds Bendaña. “Those really guilty of crimes will not usually disarm unless the army/government offers amnesty and fringe benefits. Promoters then act as go-betweens. The other route is to induce members of the band to abandon the leader known to be a criminal.”

Their methods are now attracting attention from other world trouble spots. With financial support from UNESCO, they are developing a South-South network to help train demobilized soldiers as peace promoters in Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Guatemala.

“Governments and the public need to understand that demobilizing soldiers is not a question of keeping them out of trouble by buying them off or keeping them busy with training schemes that may offer no jobs in the end,” says Bendaña. “This may only increase dependency, segregation and expectations. Ex-soldiers do not ask for privileges but for equal opportunity with recognition of their particular needs.”

S. W.

Working on the basis that ex-soldiers have a positive role to play in post-war society, the CEI set up a network of peace promoters - ex-soldiers who work to disarm former Sandinist troops and guerillas of the Resistance (the preferred term to Contra) and help them adopt non-violent means of struggle. They do this through direct contact, negotiation and training, which was considered extremely dangerous, and the gang led by ‘El Charro’, "recalls peace promoter Carlos Aguilar Lopez. El Charro had taken control of all public transport and commercial activity in the region, and government ceasefire negotiations went nowhere.

FOCUS Dossier

UNESCO SOURCES No. 86 / JANUARY 1997
DEMOCRATIZATION CONFRONTED BY POVERTY

Latin America is caught in a paradox. While it is generally wealthier than other major developing regions, the percentage of people living in poverty, the extreme inequalities and rising violence have

PERSISTING POVERTY

While Latin America has an average per capita income far above that of Africa, the Arab States and even Asia as a whole, the percentages of people living below the poverty line in rural (see graph) and urban areas are close to those of countries with much lower average living standards.

The proportion of poor living in urban areas is proportionately lower than that of the countryside by one-tenth to a half.

Overall, the Inter-American Development Bank estimates that more than two-fifths of the population are poor. The percentage of people living in poverty dropped slightly in the 1960s and 70s and their absolute number stabilized. However this percentage has remained more or less the same for about 15 years which means, when population growth is taken into account, that absolute numbers of poor have considerably increased.

UNEQUALLED INEQUALITIES

This graph presents the ratios between the incomes of the poorest 20% of the population and the richest 20%. Basically, if this ratio is ten, a person from the poorest 20% earns one dollar and a person from the richest 20% has an income of ten dollars.

Latin America is the world’s leader in terms of inequalities based on this scale. Out of all the countries with available data, Bolivia is the only one with a ratio less than ten. This number is generally much lower in industrialized countries (5.8 in Germany, 4.3 in Japan, 8.9 in the US) and the most populated developing countries (4.1 in Bangladesh, 6.5 in China, 4.7 in India).

More generally, five of the ten countries (where statistics are available) with the greatest inequalities are in Latin America. These countries occupy the top three places on this scale.
reached proportions rarely seen in poorer countries, leading to widespread disenchantedment with the way democracy is working.

**LEADING IN VIOLENCE**

Presenting the annual number of homicides per 100,000 habitants, this graph must be considered carefully because the definition of what constitutes a homicide and above all the accuracy with which this crime is recorded, vary considerably from one country to another.

Latin America is by far the most violent region in the world, even if we put Colombia aside as well as the opposite extreme, Paraguay, which has a rate similar to that of developed countries (Germany: 3, Japan: 1, USA: 9). The average rate is more than 20 and reaches as high as 50 in countries of the Andes.

According to the same study, one expert estimates that the direct cost of illegal activities like counterfeiting and ordinary crimes (but not including arms trafficking) officially registered in Colombia, represents at least 15% of the country’s gross domestic product.

**DISILLUSIONMENT**

According to the survey presented, Latin Americans have a very poor opinion of how their democracies are working. A fifth, at the most, are satisfied, while those dissatisfied to varying degrees number more than four times that.

The reason is simple: Latin Americans base their perceptions of their democratic systems on more than the official confirmation of basically free elections which eventually lead to changes in the hands of government. They also base their judgements on the behaviour of the ruling class and even more so on their capacity, or rather incapacity, to resolve the region’s immense socio-economic difficulties.

*N.B. Each graph presents the most populated countries with available statistics.*

*Infography: Alexandre Darmon*
FIT TO RULE?

Democracy’s survival no longer depends just on the will of leaders to maintain a state of law but on their ability to solve socio-economic problems.

Although democracy has returned to Latin America since the 1980s with the overthrow of military and civilian dictatorships,” says former Mexican President Miguel de la Madrid, “its nations still face social and economic problems which are a constant threat to their stability.”

There are plenty of warning signals - coup attempts, assassinations of presidential candidates, elected officials resorting to strong-arm government. They underline the urgent task of giving these fragile democracies a second wind.

“First we have to promote discussion and debate and link up all thinking people who don’t have the kind of one-track mind that religiously wants to apply the same cure to different illnesses,” says Peru’s Jorge Nieto Montesinos, coordinator of the UNESCO project “A New Culture for a New Century” (also known as Demos).

The project’s approach is simple: to create an open forum which will bring together Latin America’s intellectual and political elite - from elected representatives, opposition figures, trade union and youth leaders to former guerrillas. To this end, UNESCO sponsored five informal get-togethers in 1995 and 1996, involving about 150 leading figures.

And what came out of these consultations? The need “to raise the level of politics,” according to Nieto. “We find today’s politicians removed from civil society. This and increasing corruption undermine the ability of governments to resist foreign pressure, which is against the interests of those who elected them. Each country’s capacity to decide its own policies.”

But to what end? What is the key to increasing people’s ability to decide their own future at the same time as improving their living conditions? How can the gap between the well-to-do and the very poor be narrowed in this, the world’s least egalitarian continent? The answer lies in two words - “democratic governability”. This notion rests on a shrewd dose of traditional words - “democratic governability”. This notion rests on a shrewd dose of traditional democracy and on efficiency in managing economic and social matters.

For governments to be able to boast of a “legitimacy of origin” acquired through elections, there must be free and honest voting. This means changing the way of financing political parties, “especially in view of the high cost of election campaigns,” says de la Madrid. “It would be preferable to have a system based on public money, with only a limited contribution from the private sector,” so that elected candidates do not have a big “bill” to pay as soon as they take up their posts.

Establishing a representative democracy is essential, but not enough to ensure a society’s stability and progress. These days guaranteeing a state of law is not enough, says de la Madrid, you have to set up an “economic and social democracy”, with elected representatives capable of solving specific problems, like an economic recession, a drop in domestic savings, reduced purchasing power, widening inequality, extreme poverty and drug trafficking, which eat away at society and political life.

UNDERSTANDING CHANGE

So as to resist the temptation of easy popularity and nip in the bud unrest which may turn violent, democrats must earn a “legitimacy of efficiency”. They must enact reforms to cope with growing and more complex demands “which stem from a backlog of standard and expected non-adjustments to the changes caused by globalization”.

These politicians must improve their skills as economic managers and their ability to understand social change. This is why one of the features of the Demos project is a plan to set up a school on governability. “Let’s imagine 15 politicians from the region want to know more about how to negotiate with the International Monetary Fund (IMF),” says Nieto. “They can meet and talk with former presidents, ministers and IMF officials. This might seem elementary but in fact it isn’t, as many Latin American politicians are in the dark about this kind of thing and have to put themselves in the hands of technicians trained in US institutions.”

The Demos project will be completed with a regional summit meeting about political development and democratic principles this July in Brasilia. The summit’s conclusions will be laid out in three documents: a report, “Democratic principles and political culture”; a charter of ethics, - ten commandments for a responsible politician; and a final communiqué, to attract the media and so influence public opinion. For raising people’s level of education and exposure to information, as de la Madrid stresses, is an absolute priority in Latin America.
BETTER TIMES AHEAD

A radio programme in El Salvador teaches women how to improve their own and their families’ lives and stitch the country’s social fabric back together.

I’ve told her to pack up and leave, but she won’t go…”

“What! She doesn’t have any say in the matter. Just kick her out!”

“You’re both wrong... Women have the same rights as men, and they must be respected. And a woman who has lived for three years with a man has the same rights as if she were married to him!”

“Butos tiempos mujer!” chimes an upbeat chorus of female voices, joyfully closing this radio programme of the same name, aimed at signposting the way to better times for El Salvador’s women.

In another sketch, a pregnant employee takes on her boss, reminds him of the law which says he can’t sack her simply because she is having a baby, and saves her job. And in a third segment, a young child reads a letter she has written to her local radio station. “I wanted to write sooner, but I am ashamed. Daddy beats Mummy all the time. He also hits me and my brothers ... I don’t think he loves us...” ‘The words are simple, the message powerful.

QUALITY OF LIFE

“Buenos tiempos mujer” is a 30-minute radio drama that, complete with villains, heroines, a good dose of morals and dramatic music, reproduces ordinary scenes from peoples’ lives in El Salvador and shows how the quality of life can be improved through better human relations. Domestic violence, women’s and human rights, as well as health, self-esteem and the environment, are among the issues dealt with in the series, which is now broadcast voluntarily by 40 radio stations. It is the key element in UNESCO’s Culture of Peace Programme for El Salvador, which, through non-formal education, works to reunify a society shattered by 12 years of civil war.

That war ended in 1992, but the society remained polarized and distrust among different sectors and individuals still exists. The way people behave towards each other has changed along with their ethical and moral values. “Acts of war and violence experienced daily have torn the social fabric of the country apart,” says the education minister, Cecilia Gallardo. “The problem is how to repair that fabric by trying to change peoples’ perceptions and feelings.”

THAT’S why the promotion of self-esteem and quality of life is such an important part of the radio programme. “The war brought death very close to life. Survival was the aim, ideas on how to improve life were superfluous. But now they are what we need,” say the programme’s producers. It’s also why “Buenos tiempos mujer” is essentially aimed at women. “Non-formal education aims to bring about change in the shortest possible time, and women are the pillars of this process. Though socially marginalized, they are the ones who shoulder the greatest responsibility in the home, in education and in the country’s informal economy,” says one education analyst.

After just one year, a network of 60 women working as community contacts has been established. They are trained to use tape recorders, take notes and conduct interviews, to present topics of relevance to all. A female team of 25 educators and 150 organizers, who cater to approximately 3,000 women in the community, follow up the programme’s messages and information using complementary materials such as cartoons, posters and games that stimulate group discussion. They reinforce the messages broadcast, ensure comprehension of legal issues dealt with - on women’s and human rights for example - encourage women to take initiatives such as setting up their own businesses, and at the same time incorporate literacy training.

The fact that the programme is transmitted via a professional medium and that everyone can listen to it authenticates the discussion and makes it easier to raise subjects that used to be hushed up out of fear. The participation of other social actors - government representatives, women’s and other non-governmental organizations for example - confers legitimacy on the solutions and alternatives proposed.

The programme’s success is also due to the input of news and information from communities, which encourages a continuous process of creation and motivation.

This vital input has also allowed for adjustments in form and content to be made along the way - tailoring the programme to precise needs. In a recent survey, 95% of those consulted commented favourably on the programme’s appeal and on listeners’ involvement.

Although the peace accords were a vital first step in silencing the guns, lasting peace can only come from society itself. Education, in this regard, plays a crucial role. And to make that education relevant, programmes must be based on in-depth knowledge of the population’s living conditions. Games and recreational activities are an important tool. The men and women of El Salvador directly targeted by the Culture of Peace Programme were probably forced into adulthood at eight to ten years old. While the programme does not aim to fill-in for a lost childhood, it does try to make learning fun by injecting some of the joy stolen by long years of war.

Deborah BARRY
San Salvador
A NEW VIEW OF HISTORY

Latin America’s history textbooks nourish a culture of war rather than promote a culture of peace. Changing this means taking a new look at the past and going beyond the battlefield.

Protected by the walls that resisted the attacks of English pirates in the 17th century, education experts gathered in the Colombian port of Cartagena a few weeks ago to discuss the history of Latin America. Their goal was to defeat a different band of pirates: those end-of-millenium buccaneers who have been using textbooks to lay siege to history teaching, making the sole protagonists political and military leaders and all the action take place on the battlefield.

Former presidents, foreign ministers, ministers of education and academics from various countries were invited by UNESCO, the Corporation for Cultural and Social Development (CODECAL) and the secretariat of the cultural intergovernmental organization, the Andrés Bello Convention (SECAB), to attend an international conference which had a single aim: to end the misrepresentation of history and prevent its use to perpetuate a culture of war.

As SECAB’s Executive Secretary, Pedro Henríquez Guajardo put it, “history needs to be viewed not as a succession of bitter conflicts between nations, but as a framework of structural and dynamic relations leading to cooperation, solidarity and integration.”

THE TRUE PROTAGONISTS

For UNESCO, SECAB and CODECAL it is essential to redesign the form and modify the content of the history that is being taught to our children, revitalizing it with the contributions of historians and scholars who have moved beyond simple chronological accounts of important figures (usually shown completely out of context) that ignore history’s true protagonists - the people. This is also the guiding philosophy behind the UNESCO-initiated General History of Latin America that has been in the works for more than eight years (see box).

“Life is full of things that can distract our attention from the truth,” said Major-General José Bonnet, Commander of the Colombian Army. “A unified account of the past could help us to reach agreement more quickly, but only if it is based on a common purpose. For example, it might be helpful to study the history of Colombia and see which factors contributed to friendly, unfriendly or neutral relations with our neighbours in the past, in order to avoid repeating the same errors.”

According to research findings of historians and educators from Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela, presented at the conference by teachers Jaime Díaz Castañeda and Jaime Osipna Ortiz, history, as it is taught today, does not make a positive contribution to education. “Unfortunately, children are taught neither how to exercise their responsibilities as citizens nor how to live in a civil society; instead they are taught fragmentation and hostility,” said Díaz Casteñada. The international context is also noticeably absent from most of the region’s history texts. “Eleven of the 13 textbooks analyzed made no mention of international organizations for example,” said Osipna Ortiz.

“In Latin America it is unusual to find analyses which, in addition to chronicling the past and providing documentation, offer explanations which might give some useful insight into the future,” said the former Ambassador of Peru to UNESCO, Juan Miguel Bákula.

Divided into five working groups, the participants worked to lay the foundations for a view of history that breaks with the narrow traditions of nationalism and regionalism. “We no longer wish to have handed down to us a culture of aggression, war, tyranny and authoritarianism,” said one history teacher. “Textbooks must draw more attention to the cultural values of our peoples so that we can reclaim the identity we are in the process of losing.”

The conference made a number of recommendations. It was requested for example that a Chair for Latin American integration and peace be established. It was also asked that universities in border regions should be strengthened and research encouraged on countries sharing common borders, the history of these borders and conflicts and friendly relations between the countries of Latin America.

The conference participants also appealed for legislation on the free circulation of books in the region, and for new history textbooks to be prepared for primary and secondary school pupils. They also called for internships and exchange programmes to be set up for students and teachers, and agreed to establish a scholarship fund for primary, secondary and university teachers and strengthen the network of Latin American archives.

Making history an instrument for peace - which was the title of the conference’s main working document - is a dream that could come true. “The next millennium should mark the end of the history of war and domination by force,” said Augusto Ramírez Ocampo, the special representative of UNESCO’s Director-General, “and usher in an era in which disputes between nations and individuals are settled by peaceful means.” History itself will perhaps be the final judge.

Germán HERNANDEZ
Bogota (Colombia)

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

The General History of Latin America is a nine-volume work that recounts the history of the region’s diverse societies. Launched in 1989, the collection has been guided by a 21-member international scientific committee presided over by the renowned Venezuelan historian Germán Carrera Damas. Instead of focusing on famous dates, conquests and military heroes, which is the usual fare of history textbooks, the General History takes an anthropological approach to the region’s “original societies”, their first contact with Europeans and the establishment of new societies during the colonial period, the growth of Latin American nations and their development up to the present day.

Four volumes have so far been completed and the following five will be finalized over the course of this year.
Thirty master paintings depicting human tragedy complement photographs showing gestures of respect, tolerance and solidarity throughout the world. These values are expressed in texts by such inspiring figures as Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Octavio Paz.
### Learning for Life

In a world of constant change, learning has become more than a luxury. It has become an imperative.

“The inaptitude of traditional educators to respond to the explosion in the demand for adult education has plunged this system of learning into crisis,” claims Paolo Federighi, the president of the European Adult Education Association. A crisis so extreme, estimates the Italian, that the structures that traditionally take charge of it - starting with formal education systems - are struggling to understand it, let alone propose possible solutions. According to Federighi, this situation explains the dense and finally incomplete nature of the work undertaken at the Pan-European Conference on Adult Learning held in Barcelona from 12-15 December and attended by more than 200 participants from almost 50 countries, including the United States, Canada and Israel, as well as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the European Union and the Council of Europe.

#### Dealing with Change

Up until the start of the 1970s, adult education offered a sort of “catch-up” session to those who hadn’t succeeded in the formal education system but who wanted to go further, or literacy training carried out mainly by NGOs.

The “30 glorious years” (as the French like to call them) of remarkable growth in the industrialized world after World War II are long past. The scientific and technological revolution is in full swing: adult education, in previous times “a luxury” according to the OECD’s Abrar Hasan, has now become an “imperative”. To be able to train and retrain in a continually changing context, to learn indeed how to deal with such constant change, would certainly be the ideal way of solving many social and economic woes: giving priority to human resources could prove to be the motor of economic innovation and adaptation, essential for growth and which could go a long way to resolving the plague of unemployment.

Provided it goes far enough. The head of the US government’s adult education department, Ronald Pugsley, told the conference, for example, that almost half of American workers are “at risk”. Although not illiterate in the strict sense of the term, they don’t have the necessary educational base to be trained in those areas where jobs will be opening up in the next 25 years. This gap is also evident in most other industrialized countries. Adult education for these people means going back to basics, not just upgrading skills.

#### A Political Dimension

Apart from the economic rationale, the issue of adult education also has a political dimension. The former French socialist prime minister, Michel Rocard, told the conference that “betweenthe threat of a world numbed by passive consumption and anaesthetizing conformity, and that of spiralling violence linked to linguistic, ethnic or religious fundamentalism, it’s very clearly democracy that is menaced”.

Confronted by the world’s growing complexity, the hold of financial, technical-scientific and media powers (leading us from a representative democracy to a “democracy of opinion” in which commentaries, symbols, fashion and the spectacular weigh more than actual facts), we must “reinstate the primacy of reason”. This demands “the permanent acquisition of knowledge” to “produce the enlightened human being of the 21st century”. Adult education thus also means lifelong education to enable citizens to exercise their “rights and intellectual responsibilities” (one of the five themes of the conference), and is promoted to the rank of “ultimate rampart” from which to combat attacks against democracy.

As if these two missions weren’t enough, the participants added a further charge, but this time more concerned with the individual. Given that our personal lives are increasingly invaded by restrictions of all sorts, we must also “learn to be”: in other words, learn to contain these restrictions and to manage them better. Secondly, the time spent at work is diminishing - working hours are gradually being shortened and retirement age is falling - and we need to learn how to occupy profitably and pleasurably our free time. And thirdly, as health care costs spiral towards the unaffordable, education in preventive care has taken on new importance.

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UNESCO Sources

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However, according to a study carried out by UNESCO’s Institute for Education (UIE) in Hamburg (Germany), the number of people who feel the need for further training and have not been able to get it, is estimated at between 20% and 25% of those between 16 and 56 years of age in the six industrialized countries surveyed. And their needs continue to broaden, from those of new immigrants who need to learn the language of their adopted country and find a job, to the executive who undertakes training in the latest management techniques and the young retiree who wants to return to or discover university.

Offer generally responds to demand, but with glaring insufficiencies. According to the study, between 14% and 43% of adults had spent more than six hours in training over the year previous to the survey: that translates to some 75 million adults out of 200 million or 38%. This runs higher than 50% in those countries well advanced in this area, such as those of northern Europe. But “what is concretely emerging is a dual learning society in all countries” insist the study’s authors.

In one third to half of the cases, individuals or their families paid for this training. The state’s contribution amounts to only 20%. France, for example, allocates little more than 40 billion francs ($8 billion) annually to adult education, as against 130 billion ($26 billion) spent by private enterprises. In the USA, Pugsley said, the education department has only half a billion dollars each year at its disposal. “The national and local governments work only on the margin,” he recognizes. On the other hand, private enterprises spend more than $200 billion annually, “mainly on upgrading the skills of professionals and managers”.

In other words, adult education essentially serves the short-term interests of enterprises, and, in fact, increases the “skills gap”, because those who have most access to it already have some qualifications. One participant in Barcelona went so far as to say that such training turned its back on the very goal it set itself.

Hence the emphasis on what Federighi termed the “contextualization of the offer”: tailor-made adult education programmes, taking into account such factors as people’s availability, learning needs, locality and aptitude. But the different possibilities must nonetheless form part of a coherent whole. So the participants fixed their attention on a few key questions, succinctly summed up by Abrand Hasan: why, despite its growth, had adult education remained “a discreet, structurally and financially weak sector?” Why has “the rigidity or inflexibility of the educational establishment never been overcome” to make the vital connection between initial education and adult education (“vertical integration”)? Why do we find the same gap between adult education policies and those of the workplace, employment and the social domain (“horizontal integration”)? Why is adult education neither education for all nor life-long education?

The Barcelona conference failed to come up with any operational strategies for adult learning that achieved any consensus among the participants. But the questions it raised reveal the importance of this issue that now concerns all of us. The rendezvous in Hamburg has become one not to be missed.

René LEFORT

THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ADULT EDUCATION

The Pan-European Conference on Adult Learning was the third regional conference organized to prepare for the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education, to be held in Hamburg (Germany) next July. The fourth conference took place in 1985. Regional meetings for Asia and the Pacific and Africa were held respectively in Jomtien (Thailand) last September and in Dakar (Senegal) last October. Two more will take place before the main event, in Cairo (Egypt) this month for the Arab States, Brasilia (Brazil) in February for Latin America and the Caribbean.

UNESCO SOURCES No. 86 / JANUARY 1997

UNESCO Director-General Federico Mayor and the president of Italian radio television (RAI), Enzo Siciliano, signed an agreement on 17 December committing UNESCO to support the translation and worldwide distribution of THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF PHILOSOPHICAL SCIENCES.

This multimedia encyclopaedia, produced by RAI and the Institute of Philosophy in Naples, comprises 800 interviews with eminent philosophers from all corners of the globe. It is available in print form, on cassette, computer disk or CD-ROM.

Some 20 educators, academics and European linguists met in Luxembourg from 28-30 November for a seminar organized by UNESCO on the theme “LEAST SPOKEN LANGUAGES: training of teachers and a culture of peace”.

The participants proposed launching a Europe-wide campaign to make future teachers more aware of issues related to multilingualism and multiculturalism. A common course on this theme could be proposed in such a way as to ensure that integration in Europe was not done at the expense of minority languages.

Ninety-one experts from 16 French-speaking countries gathered at UNESCO from 5-6 December to look at HOW WE WILL GET OUR INFORMATION and communicate with each other in the future.

They also attended demonstrations of UNESCO’s renewable energies data base and translation programmes.
SAVING THE POOR COUSIN

Modern technology comes to the rescue of our documentary heritage, and makes it more accessible.

The world’s libraries are chock full of books and documents of every kind and ways of preserving this material are becoming more and more sophisticated. Yet priceless records are still being lost through wars, natural disasters and the simple passage of time. To counter this, and at the same time make these treasures more accessible UNESCO, in 1992, launched the Memory of the World Programme.

According to a report made by the Koninklijke Bibliotheek (The Netherlands’ national library) as part of this programme, the 20th century has the worst record of any for destruction of the planet’s archives.

“The biggest losses were during the two world wars, mainly in Poland and even in Germany,” says Abdelaziz Abid, Memory of the World coordinator. “In Dresden, for example, all the libraries were destroyed.”

After 1945, many totalitarian regimes seemed to compete in refining the art of purging and cracking down on “politically incorrect” books - China and Cambodia were notable examples. More recently, entire libraries have been destroyed in Afghanistan.

Natural disasters too swallow up great chunks of this heritage. The 1993 earthquake in Japan destroyed 700,000 volumes of the Imperial University Library in Tokyo, for example. Many books that had been shipped to the United States to keep them out of the Nazis’ hands were destroyed in a fire that seriously damaged the Jewish Theological Seminary Library in New York in 1966. And in 1988 fire destroyed 3.6 million items in the library of the Academy of Sciences in St Petersburg.

ENEMY ELEMENTS

But the destructive frenzy of humans and nature are not the only foes. Time and the weather are humdrum enough but in the long term are just as deadly, especially in tropical countries.

Documentary heritage is more fragile than natural or cultural heritage sites, being composed of synthetic, natural or organic material which is chemically unstable and so likely to decompose.

“The main enemy is water, which is present in the air,” says Dietrich Schuller, chairman of the project’s technology sub-committee. “Then comes light, which attacks colours, and heat. The hotter it is, the faster the chemical decomposition.”

The world’s memory is also a victim of modernization of its medium, says Abid. “Recently-made paper and film don’t last. Newspapers are especially bad and crumble into dust after 50 years.” Schuller adds that “the cuneiform writings of Babylon are still legible but some computer disks are useless after only a few years because computer programmes change. It’s something of a paradox: as a rule, the older an item is, the more chance it has of lasting a long time.”

About 100 libraries and collections around the world figure on the List of Documentary Heritage in Danger, drawn up by the programme. Egypt’s national library, for example, is threatened by damp, the absence of a proper conservation policy and lack of trained staff. Most of Cairo’s rats and mice seem to live in it. In Moscow, security is sorely lacking, making theft a real risk, along with fire or flooding. In Central and Eastern Europe, 70% to 80% of documentary heritages seems to need urgent attention.
While some of these threats can be brought under control, proper care is a rarity. Documentary material is the less spectacular, less popular, poor relation of monuments and sites as far as conservation policies are concerned.

“People will tell you it’s right to preserve monuments and build museums, simply because they’ve all visited or heard of the Taj Mahal and the Giza Pyramids. But not many of them seem to realize that photographs yellow and fade and are then lost,” says Schuller.

A HALLMARK OF QUALITY

To raise public awareness, the programme in 1996 began drawing up a worldwide inventory of manuscript collections, archives, sound recordings and films with a universal dimension. One example is a series of manuscripts which traced the birth of Korean writing.

The aim is to create a register of documentary heritage in the spirit of the World Heritage List. About 20 applications have so far been made by various countries. An international 14-member advisory committee of specialists will meet next September to examine them and make recommendations to UNESCO’s director-general.

The listing of a collection on the register will be a kind of hallmark of quality, and might help its private or public owner to raise the money for its restoration and conservation.

The three-point golden rule of conservation, says Schuller, is: “Dry air, a cool temperature and darkness”. This, he notes, means tropical countries are at a disadvantage, because conservation measures cost a great deal, as much for proper material (air-conditioning, storage, binding) as for training staff.

“We inherit a memory which is destroyed, fragmented and dispersed,” says Abid. “But we are lucky today in having new technology to help us to stick the pieces back together, or very nearly,” he adds, referring to the promising but expensive method of digitalization, of scanning documents and storing them on compact discs. This way, the original of an item can be both preserved and made more accessible.

“The medium may change - the material can simply be switched to it - but digitization seems here to stay,” says Abid. “It enables easy reproduction of the same quality as the original digital version, unlike photographs, photocopies or printing. The material can also be sent over the Internet.”

But the main snag of this method remains its often impossible cost, in both rich and poor countries.

“Alongside the expense, there is also the risk of material being doctored, used without authorization or even pirated,” adds Abid. These problems will be discussed at a major international conference sponsored by UNESCO in Monte Carlo from March 10 to 12, 1997.

S.B.

UNESCO calls “on countries and citizens throughout the world to join in, as far as their means allow, with the efforts being made by the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority to rehabilitate Bethlehem”, declared Federico Mayor at the inauguration in Rome on 19 December of a travelling photographic exhibition to support THE BETHLEHEM 2000 PROJECT.

The exhibition presents not only Bethlehem’s historical and religious treasures but also the anarchic urbanization and the pollution that threaten the city. It is part of a UNESCO campaign to mobilize the $2.26 million to restore the ancient city and its monuments, develop tourism and create jobs linked to conservation and development of cultural heritage there.

Conservation specialists, archaeologists, architects and engineers have got two years and $515,000 to restore ROMANIA’S PROBATA MONASTERY to its former glory. This sanctuary possesses the oldest (16th C) and the most beautiful murals of Romanian Moldavia. It is also the most perfect example of religious architecture from the time of Stephen the Great. Funded by the Japanese Trust Fund for the Preservation of World Cultural Heritage, the monastery also benefits from UNESCO’s support. The Organization has provided the project’s director, international consultants and equipment and materials not available on site.
FOR CHILDREN IN NEED

A German telemarathon raises $4m to help street and working children.

A dress belonging to the late Audrey Hepburn, a pair of overalls belonging to Formula One racing champion Michael Schumacher and one of German Chancellor Helmut Kohl’s ties went under the auctioneer’s hammer recently to raise funds for educational programmes for children who are homeless, disabled, refugees or living in extreme poverty or in conflict zones.

The auction was one of the events broadcast during a special German RTL/UNESCO Children in Need Telemarathon, organized by UNESCO Special Ambassador Ute-Henriette Ohoven and Daniele Thoma, the wife of RTL’s director-general.

Held over two days (28-29 November) the telemarathon raised some $4 million, all of which will be donated to six educational programmes supported by UNESCO as part of its Children in Need programme in Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Germany, Mexico and South Africa.

The projects were presented during the telemarathon by their sponsors: Ms Ohoven; Pele, Brazil’s minister extraordinary of sports and a UNESCO goodwill ambassador; Michael Schumacher, UNESCO special envoy for education and sports; pop singer Howard Carpendale; opera tenor Placido Domingo; and Hans Dietrich Genscher, former German minister of foreign affairs.

Other well-known figures from the performing arts, culture, politics and sports participated in the telemarathon, German television’s largest fund-raising event that was watched by more than five million viewers. UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador Monserrat Caballe appealed for donations and sang a duo with her daughter Montserrat Monti, “Our Time has Come”, a hymn specially composed for the telemarathon. The Swiss watchmaker Swatch created a special timepiece for the event.

“All those who took part understood their job so well,” said Ms Ohoven. “It was as if they were struggling for their own children. The spectators seemed to understand it in this way too. The sum we raised was a real record and I am very grateful to all those who helped.”

Begun in 1993 in Germany with the active support of Ms Ohoven and the close collaboration of the German National Commission for UNESCO, the Children in Need project has so far collected about $10 million in various events.

The programme has three main aims: on the spot technical cooperation for the development of basic education; raising public awareness of the educational needs of children in distress (who today number more than 100 million worldwide); and broadening the range of partners working in this field.

The money raised by the telemarathon was handed over to UNESCO at the end of December, and has already begun to be channeled out to those projects selected for support, all of which are carried out by non-governmental organizations. UNESCO covers all administrative costs in allotting the funds raised.
The United States “dissociated” itself from the decision, because of concern about the “lack of historical perspective”, stating that, “the events antecedent to the United States’ use of atomic weapons to end World War II are key to understanding the tragedy of Hiroshima”. In addition, “we urge the Committee to address the question of the suitability of war sites for the World Heritage List.”

The Genbaku nomination appears to be an exceptional case. According to von Droste, the Committee is generally wary of nominating war sites on the World Heritage List. “There is a fear that these monuments could revive old animosities and divisions when UNESCO’s aim is just the opposite.”

Cultural sites are usually inscribed for both their unique aesthetic and symbolic qualities. Yet, the dome was accepted solely on the basis of its universal significance, a statutory criteria which can be invoked “only in exceptional circumstances” according to the World Heritage Convention. Von Droste explains that the framers of the Convention intended to use the provision only once - to add Auschwitz Concentration Camp to the List in 1979. For the Centre’s director, Genbaku’s inscription does not necessarily represent a new trend, but rather a “powerful reminder of the greatest human tragedy of the modern nuclear age”. 

A POTENT SYMBOL

The Hiroshima Peace Memorial is among the latest additions to UNESCO’s World Heritage List.

On 6 December, the World Heritage Committee added 37 new natural and cultural sites to UNESCO’s famed List, bringing the total to 506. Among these places of exceptional beauty, historical, cultural and environmental interest, one stood out in the eyes of the press - the Hiroshima Peace Memorial, known as the Genbaku Dome. This is not an architectural wonder. In fact, it's in a state of ruin - and is deliberately kept that way. For what was originally a banal commercial exhibition hall built in 1910 is now one of the most poignant survivors of the atomic explosion unleashed over Hiroshima on 6 August 1945, killing and incinerating some 140,000 people. Four kilometres of the city were reduced to black ash, as the fireball razed everything and everyone in its path. The domed hall standing just 150 metres from the hypocentre of the explosion was the exception. The waves of the blast heaved down towards the structure, but then quickly veered outwards to devastate the greatest surface area possible. And so the building survived - albeit gutted, but with the foundations and core section standing.

RESERVATIONS

“In the eyes of the Committee, Hiroshima has several very important associative values,” explains Bernd von Droste, Director of the World Heritage Centre. “It is the world’s only site to so dramatically provide physical evidence of the tragic event that practically ended World War II. In reminding us of those who died in the blast and after from the effects of radiation, the Genbaku Dome shows us the tragedy of using nuclear power for the purposes of war. Most importantly, it is a memorial symbolizing the hope and need for peace.”

While the Committee (representing 21 States Parties) reached a consensus in adding the dome to the List, China expressed “reservations” in a statement attached to the decision. “During the Second World War, it was the other Asian countries and peoples who suffered the greatest losses of life and property. But today there are still a few people trying to deny this fact of history.” The Chinese are concerned that the dome’s inscription “may be utilized for harmful purpose by these few people.”

WORTHY OF INCLUSION

(Photo UNESCO/Michio Ide).

The legal commission of UNESCO’s INTERNATIONAL BIOETHICS COMMITTEE (IBC) moved one step closer to a Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights when it approved a draft of the text on 17 December. Its seven chapters cover areas such as research, rights of persons concerned, conditions for the exercise of scientific activity and the duty of states to show solidarity towards individuals, families and population groups particularly vulnerable to genetic diseases. The draft will next go to a committee of government experts in July and will be presented for adoption by Member States at UNESCO’s General Conference at the end of the year.

“The A.B.C. of Cyclone Rehabilitation” provides all the basic weather, ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION, needed to keep schoolhouses around the world standing after the onslaught of cyclones and typhoons. Part of the Educational buildings and equipment series, the illustrated manual explains the principles of anchorage, bracing and continuity to laypeople.

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ADOLESCENT REPRODUCTIVE AND SEXUAL HEALTH will be the theme of a United Nations inter-agency workshop scheduled at Headquarters from 10 to 14 February. MIGRATION AND URBANIZATION will be at the centre of discussions of the International Steering Committee of the inter-governmental METROPOLIS project which will meet at Headquarters from 11 to 12 February. In Ouagadougou (Burkino Faso), some 150 representatives of non-governmental organizations will attend a collective consultation, from 17 to 21 February, on Literacy and EDUCATION FOR ALL focusing in particular on gender equality. At Headquarters on 20 February, a multi-disciplinary array of experts will debate the social, cultural and economic impact of TOURISM by looking at the case of Turkey. A scientific seminar on the theme, “CITIES AT RISK from National and Environmental Disasters: An agenda for UNESCO”, will be held at Headquarters on 4 March. In cooperation with the international charitable organization AMAR, a colloquium on “EUROPEAN AND ISLAMIC CIVILIZATIONS - A Permanent Space for Dialogue” is scheduled for Headquarters, 5 - 7 March. About 50 directors of human rights institutes from the world over are expected at Headquarters on 6 and 7 March for an annual meeting and to prepare for the 50th anniversary of the signing of the HUMAN RIGHTS DECLARATION in 1998. In Jakarta (Indonesia), representatives from nine eastern and south-eastern Asian countries will attend a workshop from 7 to 18 March on the development of basic LITERACY LEARNING MATERIALS FOR UNREACHED POPULATIONS in urban areas. International WOMEN’S DAY will be celebrated throughout the UN system on 8 March. In Monte Carlo (Monaco), some 400 experts are expected from 10 to 12 March at the first International Congress on INFOETHICS - the Ethical, Legal and Societal Aspects of Digital Information.

OUR NEXT DOSSIER will dive into the world of underwater heritage, exploring such sites as the lighthouse of Alexandria and the wreck of the Titanic. The articles will focus on the threat posed by modern day pirates armed with high-tech submersibles and the need for of a new convention, now on UNESCO’s drawing board, to protect this treasure trove of humanity’s history.