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LAWLESS COLUMBIA
Beyond the Warren Dictum

Eclipse of the Nation-State

A new industrial era has begun, the era of global integration, a time of global markets and collapsing nations. Industrial civilization is afflicted with a sort of vertigo. Our challenge is to understand the dynamics of the private, local, national, and international problems whose sum constitutes the motive force behind this change.

Roy Morrison's essay continues on page 5

Asian Transitions

- *Identity troubles in Japan, Tibet, Hong Kong and Myanmar*
- *Immigrant artists deconstruct "the Other"*

TOWARD FREEDOM

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EDITORIALS

Is Clinton Lying?

Let's give the President the benefit of the doubt. Perhaps Bill Clinton isn't aware that the CIA did its best to see that Jean Bertrand Aristide never became Haiti's President and isn't eager for his return. And maybe he doesn't know that the slaughter in Rwanda has been fueled by weapons and support from Russia, as well as U.S. allies Egypt and France.

Clinton may not even realize that the Muslims in Bosnia have been inflating casualty figures, manipulating public opinion in order to draw NATO and the U.S. further into the conflict on their side. And possibly he hasn't been told that China has adopted a eugenics policy that uses abortion and sterilization on unwilling victims.

If Clinton is ignorant about all of this, he probably also doesn't know that his administration's foreign policy includes at least tacit support for genocide in East Timor, brutality in Peru, and violence against women in Saudi Arabia. That could explain why he can call his foreign policy a success, pointing to multiracial elections in South Africa and "progress" in Bosnia. He just hasn't been informed that most of Southern Africa is crumbling, and the Balkan conflict could easily turn into a regional war.

Maybe he really is a clueless bumpkin, unaware of the monumental cynicism underlying America's current conduct in the world. Or he might simply be confused, a man of good intentions managing a superpower he doesn't understand or simply can't control. As bad as that sounds, it's preferable to the alternative — that he knows precisely what he is doing.

America is being led either by a middle-aged yuppie mesmerized by his own rhetoric or a world-class salesman who knows the truth and doesn't care. After decades of disillusionment, it's natural to hope that Clinton, once an anti-war child of the sixties, is somehow different; surely not perfect, and clearly ambitious, but at least someone we can trust. Giving him the benefit of the doubt, despite mounting evidence to the contrary, is easier than grappling with the grim alternative: whatever he may have been, Clinton as President is just another lying hack, leading the country further down the grisly path of moral bankruptcy to disaster.

Asia's Most Favored Bully

It's a 400-pound gorilla, squatting on the edge of the Pacific Rim.

In the old days, before Nixon shook hands with Mao and Bush placed commerce above compassion, it was fashionable to call the People's Republic of China a totalitarian dictatorship. The left, of course, saw this for what it was: a Cold War distortion designed to isolate a socialist experiment. But now that China is experimenting with competition, most of the world — either frightened or bought-off —accepts almost anything it does as long as foreign investment flows.

And China is doing quite a lot, not only to its own people, but throughout Asia. It's a major supplier of military hardware to Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Myanmar. It maintains a virtual police state in Tibet. And it oppresses national minorities in Mongolia and the mineral-rich Central Asian region of Xinjiang. Its abysmal human rights record includes forced abortions and infanticide.

It is also, however, a massive country, with over 1 billion people, a rapidly growing economy, and aggressive regional plans. Hungry for stable markets throughout Asia, China is busy mending fences with India and promoting a South Asia Trading bloc. Meanwhile, dozens of Sino-American projects, including players such as General Motors, Amway and Coca-Cola, are in the pipeline. As a spokesman for Brown Brothers Harriman puts it, "They call themselves communists but act in every other respect like capitalists."

It's no wonder so many people make allowances. China has learned to play the game of nations, combining ruthless intimidation with entrepreneurial zeal. So far it has managed to scare its neighbors and even keep the U.S. at bay.

Nevertheless, it's high time someone taught this gorilla a few manners.

— Greg Guma

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Mission Statement: The mission of Toward Freedom is to publish an international news, analysis and advocacy journal. TF seeks to strengthen and extend human justice and liberties in every sphere. Believing that freedom of the imagination is the basis for a just world, TF opposes all forms of domination that repress human potential to reason, work creatively and dream. ■

LETTERS

Mexico's Air War

To the Editor,

I enjoyed your editorial on Chiapas, "It's the Class Struggle, Stupid" (TF, February, 1994). It took two months for the magazine to reach me down here in San Cristóbal de las Casas. Allow me to give you an update.

Americans tend to think that since their government did not send troops it didn't play a very important role in the conflict. That's erroneous. The U.S. role was to supply the Mexican armed forces with helicopters. These made possible the army's response to the Zapatistas. San Cristóbal, which was the army's forward base, is accessible by only one mountain road from Tuxtla Gutierrez, a big army base. As the saying goes, a handful of men could hold off an army. I assume that the Mexican army didn't want to take the risk of ambush on this road, and instead preferred to transport troops by helicopter.

So the American people, if indeed they have anything to do with their government, contributed to the murder of peasants. Actually, the helicopters were the biggest single factor in that slaughter. The Germans, with their G-3 rifles, and the Swiss with Pilatus planes, used for spotting or fitted up with rockets, also played a part. But it was air transport by helicopter that made the difference.

If the war is resumed, this time in the jungle and bush, these same helicopters will serve as troop transports and gunships. When (Zapatista leader) Marcos is brought out in a stretcher covered in blood and filled with lead, his mask ripped away, we shall say, "Thank you, America."

Sandy Quinlan
San Cristóbal, Mexico

On the cover: Shakyamuni Buddha in Drepung, Tibet.
Credit: Sean Sprague/Impact Visuals

Global Peacekeeping Hits a Blockade

JIM WURST

Faced with mounting evidence that United Nations peacekeeping operations simply are not working, the U.N. and its member states are considering a number of reforms. While they may not solve all problems, they could make failure a bit less frequent.

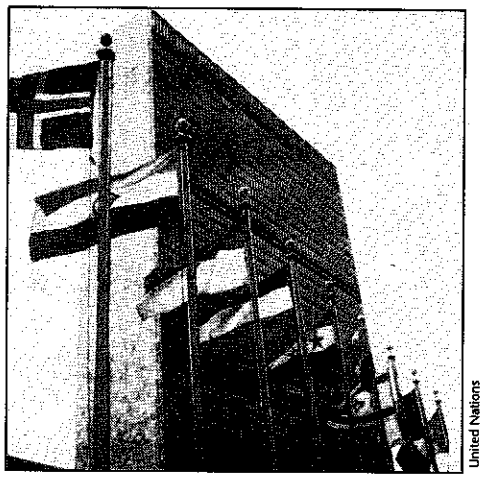
Attempting to cope with a string of failed missions, U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has recently moved to correct the management of peacekeeping operations from headquarters in New York. The United States has meanwhile weighed in with its own recipe in Presidential Decision Directive 25 (PDD-25) on "reforming multilateral peace organizations." The Directive itself is classified, but an administration "white paper" has been released.

Boutros-Ghali's steps center on rationalizing the work of the various departments—Political Affairs, Peacekeeping, Humanitarian Affairs, Legal and Administration—through creation of a task force to integrate and coordinate all peacekeeping operations. But keeping Humanitarian Affairs equal to the Political and Peacekeeping departments is also an acknowledgement that the use of force isn't the only means of crisis resolution. The Field Operations Division, charged with providing administrative and logistical support for missions, has been upgraded, and the Situation Room, which monitors all peacekeeping missions, is almost fully-staffed.

Most of these proposals, however, do not reach the heart of the problem. Debate is limited because any radical overhaul that could make peacekeeping efficient would also make the U.N. more autonomous. More autonomy for the U.N. means less for governments; this isn't popular with the powerful governments, who risk losing some measure of control, nor with countries that suspect such power would be directed against them. Whether the U.N. could actually handle that authority is another question.

The best example of the status of effective control is the non-debate over the creation of an independent U.N. rapid deployment force. Another army is not exactly what the world needs at the moment, but having a small force, answerable only to the Secretary-General and able to be deployed quickly to prevent a problem from turning into a crisis, would address some key issues.

Most governments are cool to the idea; while candidate Clinton favored it, President Clinton rejects it emphatically. According to PDD-25, "The U.S. does not support a standing U.N. army, nor will we earmark specific U.S. military units for participation in U.N. operations." Officials say Washington will never relinquish command over U.S. soldiers. But this evades the point. As argued by former head of U.N. peace-keeping Brian Urquhart, the idea is a volunteer army. No one is asking any government to hand over part of its own forces. Just as civil servants working for the U.N.



United Nations

are supposed to place loyalty to the U.N. over loyalty to their national governments, a volunteer U.N. army would salute only one flag.

Instead, the focus of military reform is the creation of a roster of stand-by forces. A team of six colonels has been jetting around the world for almost a year tying to convince governments to commit resources—ships, planes, supplies, combat troops, engineers and other non-combatants—that would be earmarked for the U.N. but based in their home countries until they are needed. In an April briefing, the team said 18 countries had earmarked a total of 28,000 people, but the specifics haven't been released. The U.S isn't expected to participate.

The key goal of PDD-25 is to define the terms under which the U.S. would approve peacekeeping missions and the commitment of troops. While some terms are reasonable and realistic (better financing, integrated command and control), the attitude expressed in the document is hardly an endorsement of multilateral cooperation.

In explaining the Directive to a House Subcommittee in May, U.N. ambassador Madeleine Albright said, "The United States will be better off if the United Nations is better able to prevent and contain international conflicts." The document is full of language about how the U.N. can be used to fulfill U.S. policy goals, not the other way around. For example, it says, "U.S. participation may be one way to exercise U.S. influence over an important U.N. mission, without unilaterally bearing the burden."

Not surprisingly, reform of financing is on everyone's list. More than a year ago, the U.N. set up a Peacekeeping Reserve Fund to pay the initial cost of a mission. A ceiling of $150 million was authorized but the fund hasn't approached that level. Meanwhile, as of April 30, 1994, Washington owed the U.N. nearly $531 million for the regular budget and more than $650 million for peacekeeping; the $1.18 billion total is more than a third of all outstanding debts. Clinton has asked Congress to authorize the money, but asking and getting aren't the same thing.

Another element of PDD-25 is to reintroduce a Bush administration proposal to cut the U.S. share of the peacekeeping budget from 31.7 percent to no more than 25. This must be negotiated, yet it doesn't necessarily mean a fight. Some governments would be happy to see the U.S. chokehold over finances loosened a bit.

The Directive states, "If U.S. participation in a peace operation were to interfere with our basic military strategy, winning two major regional conflicts...we would place our national interests uppermost." This does damage in two ways. First, it squanders money that is desperately needed for both domestic and international social programs. Second, it accepts as a given the unilateralist Fortress America mentality that helps keep the U.N. in its constant state of crisis. Until this contradiction is resolved, U.S. policy will not fundamentally strengthen the U.N.'s work. ■

Jim Wurst is a journalist based at the United Nations in New York.

(continued from cover)

Eclipse of the Nation-State

The dynamics of global integration

ROY MORRISON

The modern nation-state, which arose in the 19th century and has proven essential for the development of industrialism and capitalism, today has become an obstacle to globalization. For a rising industrialism, it represented a proximate universal, the general good whose interests more or less coincided with the industrialists' need to supplant and, if necessary, to crush traditional local and national power. But now the nation represents a new particular to be overcome, or at least fully domesticated, in the interest of the new industrial universal whose shape is still being formed in the relationships between the transnational corporation and multi-national, transnational, and international groups and agglomerations of power. At the same time, however, the notion of national sovereignty is still essential to maintain the industrial order, even as the power of nations seems to ebb in a globalized world of markets, finance and the corporation.

The dominance of the U.S. and U.S.S.R., long frozen in the military bloc system, has melted and left a framework of weakened nations whose pent up devolutionary energies have been released. The end of the Cold War and collapse of European communism has not only removed an enormous barrier to global integration and world rationalization. It has exposed the fundamental instability of a global system freed from the constraints imposed upon it by U.S./Soviet competition and a rivalry that made the remotest corner of the world a "vital strategic bastion." Now even aggression and ethnic slaughter in Central Europe may not be considered a matter of essential interest to either the U.S. or its NATO allies.

TENSION AT THE CENTER

The industrial state is torn between two conflicting and countervailing imperatives. The first is for competition and the loosening of national restrictions to growth. The second, countervailing imperative is for cooperation, coordination and limits on destructive industrial conduct. What these imperatives have in common is their call for a weaker nation-state, but from the seemingly contradictory standpoints of competition/globalization and cooperation/limitation. Policy-makers must somehow balance two dramatically different imperatives whose common center is the weakening of traditional national power. It is a controlling conundrum of our times—the chaotic strange attractor of globalization—and goes far in explaining why industrial nations have difficulty in agreeing on much more than a need to stop nuclear weapons proliferation.

The imperatives for globalization, and its management, are as yet largely an unexamined source of tension. As the industrial world transforms, a nexus of confusion has developed between the economic and political. Since the collapse of communism removed the threat of an aggressively redistributive industrialism—beyond the limited national parameters of social democracies—growth seems the only way out of industrialism's dilemma, despite the parallel imperative for limits. At the same time, the deepening of economic and social miseries is taken as prima facie evidence that current industrial performance is inadequate, and calls into question the value of the nation-state as an organizing principle.

Political "realism"—that is, the maximizing of national power and self-interest, along with the expansion of spheres of influence and armies—is no longer a reliable guide to policy. Nor is traditional statecraft, essentially the Machiavellian calculations designed to advance both national and personal ambitions, any longer the highest art for wielders of power. For the industrial world, self-interest and the advancement of any particular national interest are not automatically congruent.

As the national sacrifices demanded by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) suggest, national self-interest is increasingly subjugated not merely for delayed benefit but in the interest of a rather murky and ill-defined industrial whole. Power has been linked to globalization, the weakening of national sovereignty, and the active ability to place limits on environmental degradation. And in the short run at least, globalization and environmental limits generally serve no one nation's comparative advantage. The cost of limitations, of cleanup and lost business, as well as the less easy to quantify social costs (for example, of unemployment), typically exceeds the immediate direct industrial benefits.

Globalization means the geometric increase of power to impose, order and manage production and consumption. It cannot be reduced simply to the plans and venality of the transnational corporation, or, as some critics suggest, to an evolving neo-colonial structure through which the rich nations oppress the poor. By necessity, the industrial system is imposing its own logic of global integration and rationalization upon the basic political and economic, cultural and social organization of human diversity. And within this logic, the transnational corporation is an important self-interested means—but not the cause.

Classic industrialism rested on a hierarchical progression from individual to firm to nation, with each nation embedded in a universe of nation-states. The ordering theme was nationalism. In the era of global integration, however, industrial succession is reordered—from individual to nation to firm, embedded in the weak structure of a global market.

The nation-state now represents a limited universal. A political necessity for classical industrialism, it is still needed in the age of globalization to overcome particularism and localism, and to establish a more integrated industrial social order. Industrial evolution thus reflects the creation of successive proximate "universals," and their subsequent destruction when they no longer satisfy the needs of expansion and progress. But the power of the corporation has not yet replaced the nation-state. While transnational corporations are clearly meaningful actors—the new proximate universals of globalization—a political void remains, an underlying tension at the center.

On the other hand, it is inherently unstable to depend upon nation-states to preside over their own loss of power and authority. Appointing technocratic management boards to administer "free trade" agreements in the interest of corporations and to eliminate so-called non-tariff barriers to trade—that is, democratically chosen

national laws—has its limits. The successful pursuit of industrial goals requires enthusiastic participation and collaboration; at least the face of democracy. Industrial growth cannot be sustained by administrative fiat.

TRADE, SELF-INTEREST AND GLOBALIZATION

Confusion over the most appropriate venues for industrial self-interest is reflected in the long and sometimes bitter national debates over trade and economic treaties. Even more disorientation suffuses discussion of political relationships, the proper role of the United Nations, and "multilateralism" in foreign policy.

The real need is for a new political economy to balance our common and mutual interests with changing reality. But the imperative of industrial and capitalist growth does not admit second thoughts about basic matters. Thus a reflexive embrace of free trade, the unfettered movement of goods and capital, is the sine qua non of global integration, heightened competition leading as a whole to more goods, more income and lower prices.

As the gap between local and global interests widens, to make policy is to balance particular local and national interests against common global interests. This has been reflected in the conflicts over U.S. approval of NAFTA; over ratification of the Maastricht treaty advancing European union; and over completion of the Bolivian round of the GATT. In the U.S., the NAFTA debate raised the once obscure question of trade policy to political center stage. NAFTA was contested not only over questions of narrow economic benefit, but over issues of national sovereignty and the preemption of environmental regulations, social programs, worker health and safety, and wage protection as non-tariff barriers to trade. The debate even included broad questioning of the wisdom of globalization and the nature of low wage competition from the global factory in countries with far from democratic governments and far from free trade unions.

European community integration was delayed by Denmark's rejection of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, then its narrow endorsement by the French electorate in 1993, and grudging approval by Britain and Germany. When it finally came, ratification was not celebrated as a triumph. Instead, it followed by a few months the collapse, under assault from financial speculators, of the European Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM). Even with the treaty's ratification, eventual European monetary union and the establishment of a central bank were pushed back. Marking the approval, the Economist, an enthusiastic cheerleader for globalization, aptly illustrated its cover story on "The Maastricht Recipe" with a pie floating in the sky.

Opposition to NAFTA in the U.S. and Canada basically echoed Danish objections to the Maastricht Treaty. Opponents felt they were being asked to surrender more control over their lives and national cultures in exchange for promises of unspecified benefits to come not just from free trade but from integration. Similarly, the Bolivian Round of GATT was stalled by national interests unwilling to accede to an abstract conception of universal benefits. The French government was under enormous pressure to maintain subsidies, protecting farmers and agricultural life in the countryside from devastation by low cost imports. Approval of GATT was pursued most forcefully by governments whose transnationals will benefit by opening markets and removing non-tariff trade restraints.

The trade liberalization debate represented a post-modern recapitulation of traditional arguments over industrial rationalization and corporate control. On the one hand, globalization places the supposed benefits of general economic expansion above the particular economic and social interests of communities, regions and nations. But limitless industrial rationalization means not just "prosperity" of the industrial sort. It also means the deracination of the local human and natural ecologies, and ultimately their destruction. Globalization without restraint means that whatever can be monetized, whatever has the highest short run net worth, is what is valued. What cannot be monetized is either sacrificed, or must be protected within the context of industrial definitions, limitations and power.

The short run illusion of power is that those who count most are defined economically—in other words, the Group of Seven governments (the U.S., Japan, Germany, Britain, France, Italy and Canada), six of whom are also the key members of NATO. Secondarily, those who matter are defined politically, a category that includes nuclear-armed Russia and rapidly industrializing China. These two, along with Brazil, which is distinguished by its large economy and, next to the U.S., the world's largest debt, are sometimes discussed as new G-7 members.

G-7 is supposed to include the seven largest industrialized states based on GNP. But depending on how one counts, Spain exceeds Italy and neither China nor Brazil can be ignored. The latter two are significant in terms of the developing characteristics of globalization and industrialization. The new reality in Brazil and China, as well as India, reflects the creation of a substantial and low-waged industrial base, along with a consuming class in the tens of millions, while average annual incomes and the real standard of living for the majority declines. An increasing portion of their populations lives in squalid poverty within the newly monetized economy.

While economic debate, to a considerable extent, is still limited to quantifiable claims of economic benefit and self-interest, discussion of more clearly political questions and their economic implications is marked by a dazzling confusion and diversity of opinions. This is the case both within nations and among the industrialized "community".

Industrial civilization is in the midst not simply of one of its cyclical crises, but of basic structural instability. The nation-state is weakened but still necessary. The transnational corporation is ascendant but inadequate as an organizing principle. In the era of global markets and collapsing nations, of ecological, social, political and economic crises, of famine and war, the once ruling and competing industrial ideologies—Leninism and Liberalism—are not just exhausted but bereft of effective strategies for constructive change.

In the current ferment, new contesting alternatives are emerging to shape the future. Broadly, we face the choice between an increasingly technocratic global management, an authoritarian anti-modernism, and the path leading toward development of democratic and ecological societies. An ecological civilization will represent not a perfected industrialism, but a fundamental departure from the economic and political verities of the nation-state and a global market system. We continue to rely upon traditional ideologies and policies at our peril. To survive and prosper, democracies must respond creatively to new realities. ■

Roy Morrison's essay is adapted from his forthcoming book, "Ecology and the End of Modern Times," to be published by South End Press.

Tibetan farms winnow the barley.

Sean Sprague/Impact Visuals

Transcending the Himalayas

A Tibetan trek reveals a culture at the edge of extinction

BRANDON WILSON

It began innocently enough, with the vague idea of becoming the first Western couple to trek an ancient 650-mile Buddhist pilgrim's trail from Lhasa, Tibet to Kathmandu, Nepal. China International Travel Service had included it on a list of "impossibilities." The obstacles included harsh weather, no supplies, language barriers, lack of accommodations, avalanches and China's long-standing refusal to issue visas for independent travel.

Always eager to disprove the impossible, Cheryl and I decided to apply for visas in Kathmandu. If that failed, we'd hop an "official" tour to Lhasa, then disappear and sneak back across the Himalayas on our own.

We must have been crazy.

We reached Nepal in October and contacted China Southwest Air, which could either provide visas or prevent entry. Surprisingly, they were sympathetic, or maybe just willing to let two Americans cross the Himalayas in fall, when blizzards could strand us at over 17,000 feet. I prefer to believe, as one of the clerks whispered, "If the Lord Buddha wills it, it will be." So it was. We flew out of Nepal for a five-day propaganda-laden Lhasa tour. Afterwards, we assumed, we could discover the truth while trekking back on our own.

As our minivan headed from the airport to the capital, images sailed past: glittering snow-crowned peaks, rust-hued clouds engulfing black-robed pilgrims, a coffee-ground landscape garlanded by a surreal rainbow. Green fields were dotted with minute adobe huts and shaggy black yaks that looked like sheep dogs on steroids. Two hours later the huts were replaced by concrete block houses. Rickshaws clogged the packed roads. With hundreds of Chinese soldiers flirting with Szechuan women in beehive bouffants, spotting a Tibetan was like finding Waldo. As in Mongolia, China's resettlement of ethnic Chinese into Tibet has been strikingly successful. Foreign settlers outnumber Tibetans and, as a result, ethnic tension simmers.

We sought refuge in a shepherd's hut, sharing photos with a family who nurtured us with food and faith in the Dalai Lama's return.

Over the next four days we were herded by "Wrong Job," an ill-informed guide whose "official" spiel began at the Barkhor Bazaar. Lhasa's ancient trade center is a street market goulash of mostly imported goods peddled by Han merchants, and peppered with shoppers, soldiers, and wary pilgrims. It is also one of the most closely observed areas in the occupied capital, complete with video cameras and plainclothed police. Protests are short-lived and retribution severe, as evidenced by more than 400 political prisoners. Journalists have received sentences from ten years to life; monks face up to ten years just for talking to foreigners.

Wafts of incense drew us into the adjacent Jokhang Temple, filled with lamps burning pungent yak butter, exquisite religious *thangkas*, Volkswagen-sized prayer wheels and prostrating pilgrims. Next, we scoured the Sera and Drepung Monasteries, once seats of

wisdom that were home to 10,000 monks. Today they dispense Disneyesque dioramas of religious tolerance. Still, we felt fortunate even to step inside their massive gates since, during China's Cultural Revolution, thousands of temples were pillaged and tens of thousands of monks and nuns were killed or sent to concentration camps.

After that cultural side-show, we approached the Potala Palace with trepidation. Fortunately, the 13-story, 1,000 room icon, although now a museum, is still intact. Constructed in the 17th century without steel frames, nails or use of a wheel, even the Dalai Lama's apartment remains just as it was in 1959 when he fled into exile.

Our final day in Lhasa brought a last-minute struggle to obtain Alien Travel Permits. But with perseverance came success, and, with a last inspiring glimpse of the Potala, we tied prayer pendants to our backpacks and began our solo odyssey.

After two days with head colds and 30 pound packs, plus a sleet storm at 12,000 feet up, we knew we needed help to cross the 17,000 foot passes before the snows began. We looked for a donkey, a horse or even a yak. Eventually, a farmer agreed to sell his ten year-old gelding, Sadhu. I took it as an omen. In Nepal, a sadhu is a wandering holy man.

Once the packs were strapped to our stout companion, our pace soared from nine to 15 miles a day. But it was still lonely. Few pilgrims trod that windswept road. We watched with envy as crowded trucks sped past, engulfing us in searing sand clouds. Briefly, we were joined by two Buddhist monks—until Cheryl was attacked by a wild-eyed dog. Fearing disaster (or rabid trekkers), even they hitched a ride.

Since villages were scarce, we had to camp or stay with locals. Luckily, the holy men had taught us to say, "Kuchi? Kuchi?" After uttering this password, we were ushered behind whitewashed walls where curious kids poked and former monks struggled to remember English. Soot-covered mothers revived us with traditional meals of *tsampa* (barley flour) mixed with yak butter tea, *thugpa* (noodle stew) and *chang* (homemade beer). Clumsy miming, a phrase book and laughter bridged most gaps.

Even those quaint villages suffer unmistakable oppression. In many of them, loudspeakers spew propaganda morning and night. Nearby troops curb any thought of insurrection. Public schools, when they exist at all, teach only Chinese. Adults secretly throw a crooked little finger insult in the Chinese' direction. And, as if "cultural" genocide isn't deadly enough, Tibetan infant mortality is a shameful 127 per 1,000, versus 43 per 1,000 for the invaders.

Weary from bronchitis and weeks on the road, we were heartened by the golden dome of Shigatse's Tashilhunpo Monastery. But hopes of shedding a pound of dust were dashed when the Chinese package tour's high-rise hotel refused us lodging. We settled instead into a modest hostel that offered frigid water, once you chipped away the ice. The public showers were invaded by soldiers unwilling to share.

After recouping, all that remained was a visit to Tashilhunpo, renowned for its frescoes, jeweled *chortens* and Buddha of the Future, the Champa. Although impressed by its gilded majesty, we were shocked to learn that lamaseries, once centers of higher learning, no longer admit school-aged children. Even monk recruitment is strictly controlled by the Chinese Religious Bureau, with acceptance limited to those who "love the Communist party."

As the threat of snow forced us on, the journey turned transcendental. Faith alone sustained us. But when life was bleakest, our lips bleeding and each step agonizing, a farmer mysteriously appeared and invited us to the simple comfort of his hut. For the next nine days, we and four bicyclists hired yaks and guides for the ascent to Mount Everest. After wheezing up craggy passes, we reached the stratospheric Rongbuk Monastery. From there is was a two hour scramble to the base of the "Mother Goddess." Everest's summit glistened against a sapphire sky, in stark contrast to the Chinese-built bunker toilets below.

After more than a month, our bodies and spirits were wracked by exhaustion. We knew that just two more days separated us from hot springs and a heated room. Warmed by the prospect, we sought refuge in a shepherd's hut, sharing photos with a family who nurtured us with food and faith in the Dalai Lama's return.

The next day we awoke to a stony silence. Outside, a blizzard created a white void. Crestfallen, we slipped down to an obscured road. Within minutes icicles hung from my ski mask, Cheryl's boots were drenched, and Sadhu's muzzle was caked with ice. We shuffled on. Three hours later fate interceded, in the form of an elfin boy who led us to a warm tack room, its wall stacked with dried dung.

At dawn, we skated across the ice with a skittish horse under an ethereal panorama. Stark villages and awkward yaks were purified with a powder. Like a fleeting, fantastic vision, we suddenly faced legendary Shangri-La; one destined to disappear with the rising sun. Approaching the border, we fought anxiety. Would the Chinese prevent Sadhu's escape? But something so obvious as a horse wasn't questioned by Customs. After a final skirmish with a soldier who inexplicably hit Cheryl and kicked Sadhu, we stumbled across "Friendship" bridge into Nepal.

After nearly 40 days, we soaked in Tatopani's hot springs, almost free. Days later, in Kathmandu, Sadhu was turned away at several hotels, until the manager at Lhasa Guest House excitedly led us inside. He cleaned a corner for the "holy man" right in his lobby. During the next week, Sadhu found a home with exiled Tibetans and we presented prayer flags to the King of Nepal, suggesting they wave as symbols of religious solidarity. Although most Nepalese and Tibetans are still prevented from making cross-border pilgrimages to sacred sites, we explained, "Their prayers shall fly with these flags."

But Tibet needs more than prayers. Since the invasion, nearly 1.2 million Tibetans have died. The Dalai Lama warns that, "Tibet's culture, under the brutal hand of China's police state, will be lucky to survive the decade." The U.S. Congress, currently debating the continuation of "most favored nation" status for China, has yet to link trade with human rights. But unless friendship is tied to freedom, Tibet could become a memory, its people held hostage in their own country while the world looks away. ■

Brandon Wilson lives in Hawaii. His Tibetan trek is the subject of a recently completed book, Yak Butter Blues.

Transition Troubles

The door slams on Hong Kong negotiations between China and Britain

FRANCES KELLY

Gemini News

Hong Kong Governor Chris Patten

Hong Kong is in the midst of its most severe crisis since Britain agreed in 1982 to negotiate the colony's return to China. Just three years before it reverts to Chinese rule, legislators in Hong Kong have voted to ignore warnings from Beijing and plow ahead with modest political reforms to expand democracy.

"Our legislature, although still undemocratic, has come of age," declares Martin Lee, leader of the United Democrats of Hong Kong.

But this flirtation with freedom is bound to be brief. After legislators agreed in February to lower the voting age from 21 to 18, scrap appointed seats on municipal councils and district boards, and introduce single-seat constituencies into the limited system of direct elections, China vowed to dismantle every level of government in Hong Kong when it takes over. It also declared that Britain has effectively "slammed the door closed on any further negotiations." According to Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Shen Guofang, Hong Kong Governor Christ Patten "has ruined the basis of Sino-British cooperation on Hong Kong issues."

Britain has released details of the secret Sino-British talks on Hong Kong's future. More than 200,000 copies of the 36-page "White Paper", summarizing 17 rounds of fruitless talks between the two countries, have been distributed at post offices and public housing estates throughout the territory. And in a move that will further widen the rift between London and Beijing, Hong Kong legislators plan to debate a second set of reform proposals that Beijing has already rejected. These include expanding the voter rolls from 110,000 to about 2.7 million in a bid to have a majority of Hong Kong politicians directly or indirectly elected in 1995.

Next year's Legislative Council elections were supposed to produce a slate of Hong Kong representatives who would ride a "through train" over the 1997 transition and serve in the post-1997 administration. Despite Chinese threats, Governor Patten is determined not to back down. "If my next-door neighbor says that in three-and-a-half years he is going to come round to my house and break all the windows," Patten argues, "that doesn't seem to me to be a very persuasive argument for breaking all the windows this afternoon."

Relations between Britain and China have rarely been cordial since a weak imperial China was forced at gunpoint to hand over Hong Kong to British opium dealers a century and a half ago. Under the terms of the agreement to return Hong Kong to China, Beijing agreed to give Hong Kong a large degree of autonomy and to keep it capitalist for 50 years after 1997. But suspicion and distrust persist on both sides. China accuses Britain of causing the breakdown in relations. "During more than 100 years of British rule, Hong Kong never enjoyed democracy, so it is with ulterior motives that the British side is pushing what it calls democracy," says Shen.

Some Hong Kong legislators are also skeptical of British actions. Legislative Council member Elsie Tu accuses Patten of having more interest in his political future than in the fate of the Hong Kong people. "Come 1997, Governor Patten will be in Britain basking in the glory of his fight for what he calls democracy. But we in Hong Kong don't know what's in store for us," Tu says. "It's the Hong Kong people who have to suffer when negotiations break down in acrimony."

The business community also has the jitters. When talks between the two sides crumbled, Hong Kong's stock market shed millions of dollars and dropped 660 points in two days. Plans to built a new multi-billion dollar international airport and container port have also been stalled by China's reluctance to approve financial arrangements straddling 1997.

While some legislators claim the proposed political reforms don't go far enough, others say measures should be taken to avoid riling Beijing further. "Being a lap-dog for China is better than being a running dog for the British," quips independent legislator Chim Pui-chung. Meanwhile, China is pushing ahead with its own plans and is set to appoint 50 to 60 new advisers to a think-tank called the Parliamentary Working Committee.

In remarks to his top Hong Kong advisers, Chinese Premier Li Peng recently warned Britain not to underestimate China's resolve. "Under no circumstances will the Chinese government waver in its determination to recover China's sovereignty over Hong Kong," he said. "China is not what it was 150 years ago. It now enjoys political stability and an ever growing economy. We are full of confidence in the future of the motherland. The wheel of history will roll forward and not be stopped." ■

Frances Kelley is a Canadian journalist based in Hong Kong.

Myanmar Matters

A democratic revival won't stop at the border

GABRIEL CONSTANS

Why would six Nobel Peace Prize winners and representatives of two Peace Prize-winning organizations travel to Thailand and Geneva to publicize the fate of a single woman in an obscure country called Myanmar? Because the country used to be known as Burma, and the woman, Aung San Suu Kyi, is an indomitable campaigner for democracy who has been under house arrest since July 1989. A Nobel Prize winner herself, she was among the thousands of Burmese patriots imprisoned, tortured and exiled by the military government that seized power after her National League for Democracy won free elections by a landslide.

Her captors, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (Slorc), control one of Asia's most repressive governments. They are led by Gen. Ne Win, a xenophobic dictator who has ruled Myanmar since 1962.

Once the richest country in Southeast Asia, Myanmar is today

Ed Peters/Impact Visuals

A clinic provides artificial limbs for citizens fleeing repression.

the least developed in the region. More than half the population has no access to health care, and almost a third has neither safe water nor sanitation. Isolated and poor, with 43 million people in an area the size of Texas, Myanmar is clearly no threat to "our way of life." There's no danger that its army will invade a bordering oil-producing country or spread fundamentalist Buddhism into China, Thailand or Laos. Why then should we care about the place or its people? Because what happens to Aung San Suu Kyi and Myanmar's democracy movement could have far-reaching implications.

The thought of her release so terrifies the powerful military government that dozens of soldiers patrol her gated confinement, arresting anyone who dares to snap a photo. The regime receives massive arms shipments from China, but the weapons can't destroy the ideas she has come to represent, and the military knows it. They also know that when she is released the demand for a democratic government will rise again. And that will mark the beginning of the end for the generals and the police state under their control.

If democracy takes hold in Myanmar, governments throughout Asia will find it harder to hide behind the facade of economic reform. Other totalitarian regimes will be put on the spot, and calls for removing the military from political control might gain momentum in Thailand, Korea, Cambodia, Malaysia, Indonesia and Bangladesh.

Many in Myanmar have already attempted to move in this direction, often paying dearly for their efforts. Two years ago more than 900 students were arrested during a demonstration that demanded the release of political prisoners. One of those arrested, Thet Hyun, was subsequently sentenced to 20 years in Insein Prison. Others have been beaten, harassed or murdered.

The call for Aung San Suu Kyi's immediate release has drawn support from Nobel laureates Desmond Tutu, the Dalai Lama, Mairead Maquire and Betty Williams of Northern Ireland, Adolpho Perez Esquivel of Argentina, and former Costa Rican President Oscar Arias Sanchez, as well as the American Friends Service Committee and Amnesty International. Citizens can increase the pressure by urging representatives and policy-makers to impose an arms embargo and suspend Myanmar from the U.N. until political prisoners are released and elected officials are returned to power. ■

Japan's Frustrating Democracy

Citizen skepticism grows as old alliances crumble

PAUL EVANS

If politics reflects the general trends in a society, then the recent political chaos in Japan begins to make sense. The Japanese are in a period of profound transition. People look forward to the formation of a government with a clear and unified philosophy, yet they are far from consensus on the main issues.

Seeking credibility as a leading world power, Japan is under intense pressure to "internationalize" and heed various western demands. The struggle over those demands has raised thorny questions and threatened long-held beliefs. The very essence of what it means to be Japanese has come into doubt.

As political power shifted last summer for the first time in 40 years, change became a Japanese byword. And for better or worse, change has come. Despite good intentions, recently-ousted Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa has fallen victim to his own enthusiasm for western political models. The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), along with the majority coalition's recalcitrant Social Democrats (SPDJ), made the most of the current political climate with endless comparisons between Hosakawa's fundraising irregularities and Clinton's Whitewater difficulties. Hosakawa was forced to defend practices that hadn't drawn much attention in the past. The likelihood of a serious ethical breach was small, and yet the damage has been done.

The subsequent breakup of the majority coalition had been long predicted. Though many were saddened, few were surprised. Serious differences between various member parties worsened almost from the start. Battle lines have been drawn, and redrawn. Old labels lose their meaning as new alliances, some that would have been unthinkable only weeks before, are formed.

After several years in Japan, I have noticed a recurring theme—the conflict between democracy and tradition. It affects especially how laws are passed and enforced, but is also a constant fact of life. Japanese democracy is still in its infancy, with democratic concepts applied on a rather selective basis. Although Japan was the first non-Western country to adopt a democratic framework, we tend to forget that the transition occurred less than 50 years ago, and then only under duress. For most of its history, the country was ruled by one Confucianist oligarchy after another. Instinct still tends toward top-down decision-making.

Japan's attempt to adapt democracy to its society has met another stumbling block, a lack of experience with citizen participation. Traditional reticence about dissent and opposition has been manipulated by those who have learned how to use the system. Bribery, big private "donations", and peddling influence to buy votes have become business as usual.

Last summer one of Hosokawa's major promises was political reform. It's obviously needed; as things stand, citizens lack incentives

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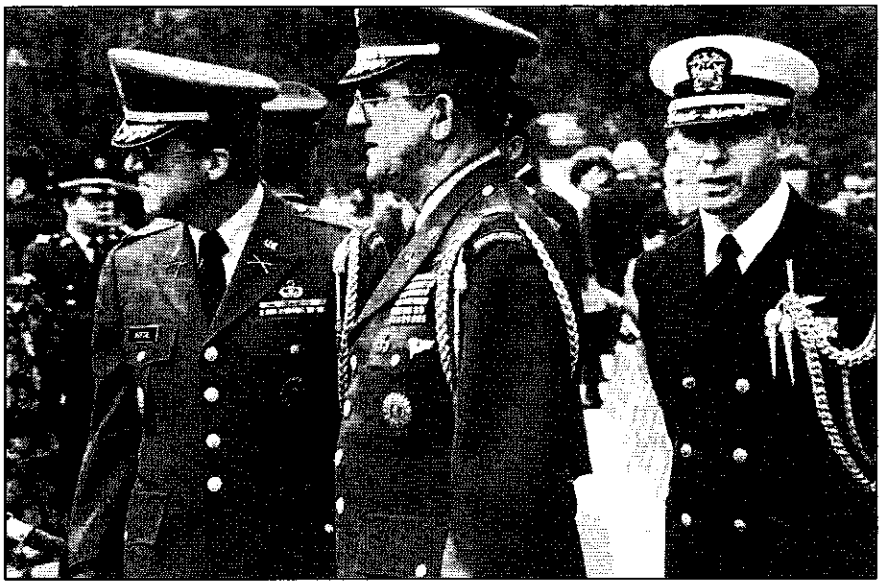
Murder with Impunity

Lawlessness lies at the heart of a major human rights scandal

ED GRIFFIN-NOLAN

The war on drugs is feeding a monster. After half a decade of quietly munching at the trough of United States anti-drug money, the Columbian Armed Forces have advanced to first place among Latin America's human rights violators. "The quantity of U.S. aid going to Columbia," notes a recent Human Rights Watch/Americas report, "and the involvement of Columbian agents in systematic human rights abuses ought to be cause for a scandal. Columbia is now the largest recipient of U.S. military aid in Latin America." But the scandal has thus far failed to materialize. Rather, the killing in Columbia is still excused as collateral damage in the war on drugs.



Close Relations: U.S. special forces attend a Columbian military ceremony. Joe Fish/Impact Visuals

Violence—in Columbia and elsewhere—makes good copy. As a result, many people associate this South American country with cocaine, and also accept the official view that the violence, though lamentable, is a by-product of the trade in white powder that rivals coffee and oil as a leading export.

El Tiempo, Bogota's leading daily, reported 15,000 murders in the first half of 1993, a slight increase over the previous year. But at least 15 percent of the deaths are politically motivated, and the respected Andean Commission of Jurists estimates that ten to 12 political killings are committed each day. A massacre occurs every 48 hours.

In Medellin, over the past decade, 45,000 people have been murdered, 80 percent of them under age 25. More Columbians are killed every year for political reasons than died in the entire 17 years of Chile's Pinochet regime. And in 1992 more labor leaders were murdered in Columbia than in the rest of the world combined, according to the International Labor Organization.

U.S. State Department human rights analysis spreads the blame among the guerrillas, government forces, paramilitary groups and drug lords, acknowledging official government responsibility for nearly half of all reported human rights violations. This plague of violence, which has been largely unreported to date, is not simply a tragedy but rather a scandal hidden behind a multi-layered veil. With new attention focused on Columbia's potential defection from the war on drugs, that veil may gradually be lifting.

For years human rights groups have hoped that dialogue or reform would resolve the core problem of impunity. Frustrated, they are finally turning to the international community.

MANY WARS, MANY COVERUPS

The war on drugs is just one of Columbia's many wars, yet it is the primary focus of world attention. U.S. Embassy officials say that controlling drug traffic eclipses all other goals in their Columbia policy, including the promotion of human rights. Still, the Andean Commission calculates that drug cartels are responsible for only 2 percent of the killings.

The government and drug cartels alternately declare war on each other and profess to seek a modus vivendi. In May Columbia's Constitutional Court issued a ruling to legalize personal use of cocaine, marijuana and other drugs. Columbia's Attorney General, Gustavo de Greiff, has drawn criticism both inside the country and from the U.S. for proclaiming anti-drug efforts a failure and supporting legalization. He has also attempted to strike plea bargains with major drug traffickers, an initiative ironically imported from the U.S. as part of a 1991 constitutional reform. De Greiff feels the new court ruling won't do much to curb violence or limit drug profiteering, reports the New York Times. He has called for international agreements on legalization, along with a massive public health and education campaign.

This dance with the drug cartels hides a multitude of crimes. Under the pretext of the drug war, for example, the army wages its counterinsurgency war against leftist guerrillas, while deaths squads

conduct dirty wars against progressive political figures, rural organizers, and so-called "social deviants."

Human rights groups have also documented cases in which the military and police are working for the cartels instead of catching drug dealers. The killing of a family in Rio Frio, near the new cocaine capital of Cali, demonstrates how tangled these alliances can become. On October 5, 1993 the village awoke to the arrival of armed men who broke into houses, dragging out men, women and children. During the day, 13 people were tortured and executed. The following night Army Lieutenant Colonel Luis Felipe Becerra told a national television audience that his men had defeated a guerrilla unit at the same site.

Investigators with non-governmental human rights groups later learned that a paramilitary death squad had done the killing before Becerra's unit arrived. Troops under his command then rearranged the bodies, dressed them in guerrilla uniforms, and placed weapons nearby before allowing journalists near the scene. Not one of Becerra's advancing soldiers was killed or even wounded during what they described as an hour-long advance against a fixed position. According to one television reporter in Rio Frio that day, the guns "seized from the guerrillas" hadn't been fired.

According to human rights groups, Becerra and his troops were acting on behalf of drug trafficker Francisco Herrera, an outlaw who apparently doesn't fear the police. In fact, he owned most of the land near the site of the massacre and viewed the ladino family, principal victims of the attack, as obstacles to his control of the area. Becerra himself has a sordid history. Charged with the murder of 20 banana workers on two plantations in 1988, he was sent to the U.S. for military training, then promoted from major to lieutenant colonel while still under investigation. Charges were dropped when the statute of limitations ran out, and he was subsequently given command of the battalion now accused of the Rio Frio coverup. He is currently suspended and under investigation, but still on the loose.

If he is charged, Becerra will become the rarest of species—a Columbia officer prosecuted for human rights violations. According to the U.S. State Department, only five official investigations took place in the first half of last year. The new constitution gives police and military personnel the right to be tried by military courts, which almost never convict. This impunity, says Mario Madrid Malo of the Public Defender's office, lies at the heart of Columbia's official lawlessness.

In spite of the meticulous work of the Andean Commission, human rights groups and the Public Defender, no one knows just how bad it gets in the countryside, where impunity is near absolute. On a hot, dusty afternoon last February I traveled for three hours on back roads, through three army checkpoints, to a spot just north of the oil refining town of Barrancabermeja in the tropical north central state of Santander. A group of farmers, being pushed off their land, under army threat and death squad terror, had asked to meet at this desolate spot to tell their story.

When we arrived there was nothing but the wind, a dried stream bed, and a fishnet nylon sack full of lemons. Our meeting spot, a grey clapboard farmhouse, was empty. Our guide grew nervous. After a while we shuffled back to the van and drove off, spreading fresh dust on the lemons. Later the same day we heard that three people had been killed before dawn in a neighboring hamlet. Were these our contacts? Or were they just frightened off? Later rumors labeled it a revenge attack by the guerrillas against paramilitary members. The news said nothing.

When I told this story three days later to the wife of a senatorial candidate in her elegant Bogota home, she said, "This goes on all the time." She then recited a list of massacres, ones "everyone knows about." As bad as official statistics sound, most people in Columbia are apparently convinced that reality is worse. Officials blame the drug dealers and guerrillas, but others say the government itself is responsible for most of the violence.

AMBUSHING THE GUERRILLAS

Guerrillas have been waging war against the Columbian state since before the Cuban revolution. Three major guerrilla armies, as well as several splinter groups, operate in half the municipalities. The Columbian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC) has more than two dozen fronts. The National Liberation Army (ELN), led by two former Catholic priests, has come to rely on sabotage of oil pipelines and the kidnapping of wealthy individuals for ransom. Elements of the People's Liberation Army (EPL), along with the FARC, have signed a peace agreement and formed a political party.

A fourth guerrilla group, M-19, was known in the 1970s for high-stakes, well-publicized armed propaganda. Negotiating its way into the political process by the mid-1980s, it suffered a dramatic setback when it attacked the Palace of Justice. M-19 is expected to poll about 10 percent in this year's presidential voting.

The guerrilla groups have all lost credibility and support in recent years, partly due to ideological splits, but also because of their acceptance of terrorist tactics and ties to drug traffickers. "Their struggle has degenerated," says Madrid Malo. "There is no longer any respected intellectual who endorses them."

In line with a long-term policy of bringing guerrillas into the political process and then exterminating them, President Cesar Gaviria's lame duck administration declared total war in late 1992. This led to a military standstill and created a new refugee exodus; 300,000 people had already been displaced, and 50,000 had fled the country. The next president, scheduled to take office in August, might extend an olive branch. But past evidence suggests otherwise: about 2,500 members of FARC and EPL, who rejoined society in the '80s amnesty era and formed political parties, have been murdered.

In the cities, meanwhile, another war goes on, christened with a name that currently evokes the Balkans—social cleansing. In this version, vigilantes—usually operating with police knowledge—murder "undesirables" such as street children, alcoholics, drug users, prostitutes and homosexuals. In the big cities an estimated 200 people annually are victims of social cleansing. Thousands more are attacked and harassed.

LIFTING THE VEILS

A certain schizophrenia about political life in Columbia deflects attention from the human rights scandal beneath the firmly anchored, democratic trappings. Across the spectrum, Columbians resent comparisons to Argentina's 'night of the generals.' Elections, though occasionally bloody, are vigorous, and two dominant Liberal and Conservative parties rotate in and out of the Presidential Palace. Other parties, congress and the media engage in free debate on social issues. Until recently M-19's political wing ran the Ministry of Health.

The Public Defender's office, along with a few brave prosecu-

(continued on page 20)

El Salvador's Persistent Press

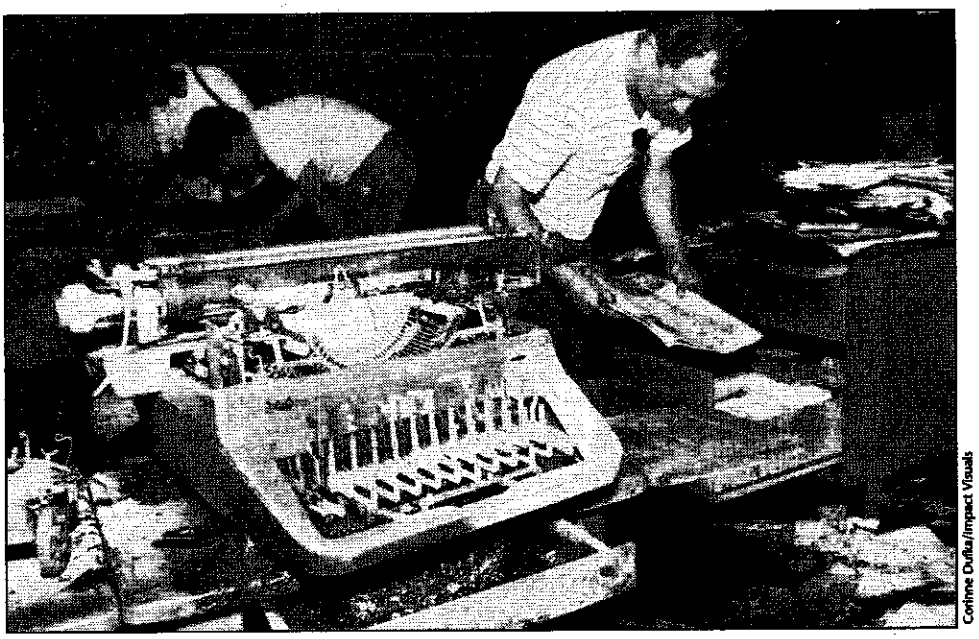
Despite debts and threats, the workers keep Diario Latino alive

MELROSE E. HUFF

A sign near the heavy metal door of Diario Latino instructs visitors to "Ring and wait." A guard asks your business and then disappears inside. After a few minutes he reappears and unlocks the windowless door. You walk through the dim interior, past a deeply cracked wall and up a metal stairway to the editorial offices.

Out of a cavernous, sparsely-furnished space divided by hardboard partitions, El Salvador's only opposition paper—the oldest independent newspaper in Central America—is published daily. The Diario Latino has been waging a determined fight for survival ever since it was pillaged and then, in June, 1989, abandoned by its board and stockholders. The principal stockholder, who owned 45 percent of the shares, was Julio Rey Prendes, head of the Christian Democratic Party during the Duarte administration.

One of the few things on which the left and the right in El Salvador agree is that Rey Prendes was extraordinarily corrupt. He and his partisans on the board borrowed six million colones, using the newspaper as collateral, invested it in unrelated ventures, and lost the entire sum. The Latino's debt has since reached eight million colones, or about $1 million. When the Christian Democrats were voted out of office, Rey Prendes and friends walked away from the institution they had plundered.



Corinne Dufka/Impact Visuals

After the 1991 arson attack Diario Latino workers examined the charred remains of their offices.

At this point, members of the Diario Latino's union decided to continue publishing the paper themselves. They invested in raw materials and secured approval from a prominent shareholder, whose family had founded the paper more than a century ago, to run the publication for five years. In return they agreed to pay a number of debts and convert the paper from a corporation into a cooperative.

The agreement, unfortunately, was oral rather than written. When the shareholders of the Rey Prendes faction realized that the paper was becoming viable again, they launched a series of commercial lawsuits in an attempt to oust the union and regain control.

When the courts upheld the union's agreement, Rey Prendes' group tried another tack: calling in government regulators. Examining the books, investigators discovered that the corporation had lost more than three quarters of its capital. Therefore, under Salvadoran law, it had to be dissolved. Meanwhile, Rey Prendes used another corporate front to borrow nearly 70 million colones from the same bank that held the liens on the paper. When that corporation failed, the bank went broke and had to be closed.

The Latino's account passed from the bank into the hands of an entity called the Fund for Financial Reinforcement (FOSAFI), an arm of the Central Reserve Bank. In 1993 the union succeeded in gaining legal recognition as a cooperative and entered into negotiations with FOSAFI to buy back the paper. All of FOSAFI's collateral in the Latino, except for the land and two badly damaged printing presses, had been destroyed by a February, 1991 arson attempt.

The paper blamed the attack on death squads run by the military or security forces. Shortly before, it had published allegations by U.S. Rep. Joe Moakley linking the 1989 massacre of six Jesuit priests to high-ranking officers in the Salvadoran army. After the attack the employees restarted the paper with a million colones in aid and help from the University of El Salvador's Engineering School, which took charge of rebuilding the two damaged presses.

Arguing that the Latino's workers had made FOSAFI's collateral valuable again,

Accompaniment Continues

GUATEMALA—Peace Brigades International, which sends unarmed peace teams into areas of conflict, is organizing its third delegation to Southern Mexico and Guatemala. The group, scheduled to depart July 30 for two weeks of accompaniment, hopes to draw international attention by visiting refugees in Chiapas and in the new communities they are creating in Guatemala. Since January 1993, nearly 8,000 of the 45,000 refugees in U.N. camps have returned to their homelands. Their situation continues to be precarious in both countries. For information, contact Carolyn Mow, RD 2, Box 117F, Schaghticoke, NY 12154, (518) 664-4670.

coop members proposed a two-part purchase and sale agreement. In the first phase, they committed themselves to buying back the printing presses for half a million colones. On January 10, 1994, the Latino and the Lutheran Church of El Salvador began a campaign to raise that sum. As of March, "Salvemos Diario Latino" had only 100,000 colones, but more than 20 organizations, including a major labor federation, human rights groups and peasant organization, have pledged the balance in interest-free loans.

"The campaign has been very moving," says Lutheran Bishop Medardo Gomez. "Many poor people have been putting in five colones a week." Gomez explained that the church took on the campaign because the Diario Latino is "the only place that will publish denunciations of the rich, the government or the military." In Latin America, human rights groups, labor unions and other popular organizations typically purchases ads to detail abuses. Other Salvadoran newspapers carry paid announcements by death squads.

After the cooperative has discharged the lien on the presses, members plan to buy back the property and then raze the building. In 1986, an earthquake made the structure uninhabitable, but the workers decided to remain due to lack of money and the difficulty of moving presses. However, editor Francisco Valencia acknowledged that working in such a dangerous environment is "oppressive."

Nevertheless, throughout the years of financial nightmare, the Latino has held firm to its editorial integrity. It has continued to call for the removal of human rights violators from the armed forces and for restricting the military's constitutional role. This policy had led to telephoned threats, a kidnapping attempt against its circulation manager, assassination of two correspondents, the arson attempt, and an advertising boycott. Beginning in 1989, the government withdrew its legal announcements.

"From 1989 to 1992 we survived on paid announcements from popular organizations. This was our only source of income besides newspaper sales," Valencia noted. The lack of advertising revenue made it impossible to publish more than 12,000 copies a day. Since 1993 and the official end of political polarization in El Salvador, some government agencies have begun to buy ads again. However, the paper continues to suffer from an information boycott by the military, whose press office refuses to fax its news releases or grant interviews.

This Salvadoran fable of resourcefulness and resolve raises a question: Why have the Latino's workers persisted in the face of so much frustration and danger?

"Well, there are two realities," Valencia explained. "On one hand, jobs are very scarce." Many of the workers began at the paper as kids and have been there for 35 to 40 years. It wouldn't be easy for them to find work anywhere else. For the reporters, many of whom are younger, there is another reason. "Here we don't tell a journalist what to write or how," he said. "They are free. No one censors them, no one makes them follow a political or ideological line.

"We believe we are the faithful representatives of the interests of civil society," he adds. "Because of this we take on the most painful issues and find ourselves in the most difficult situations."

To help the Latino's workers buy back their presses, U.S. money orders can be sent to Acct. #502-004113-6 at the Banco Agricola Commercial, or to Salvemos Diario Latino, 23 Av. Sur, 225 San Salvador, El Salvador. ■

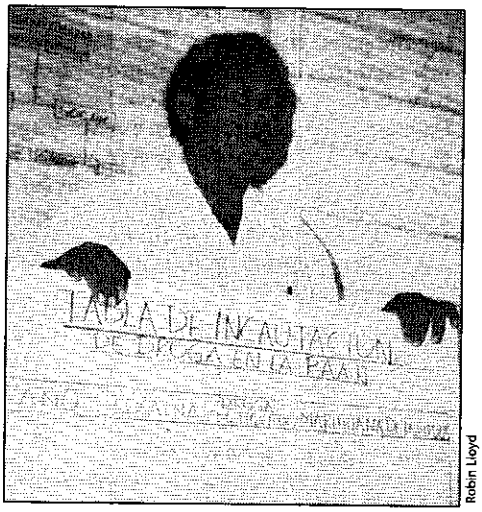
Melrose E. Huff, a Vermont freelance writer, visited El Salvador in 1994.

Burning Drugs While People Starve

The failure of interdiction hits Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast

ROBIN LLOYD

Hundreds of people gathered in the town square of Puerto Cabezas for a ceremony: the burning of eight 100-pound sacks of Columbian cocaine, confiscated during an unusual drug bust in nearby Miskito Cays.



Robin Lloyd

Jose Crawford, a member of the regional Anti-Drug Commission, shows a chart demonstrating the increase in drug confiscations over the past four years.

The police in this poor community on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast dug a shallow hole, and then began to cut open and dump kilo-size packages of tightly wrapped white powder. The crowd pushed forward for a better look; very few of them had ever seen the equivalent of a million dollars go up in smoke.

Then a woman cried out, "How can you burn something so valuable while people are starving?"

Her question may be among the most poignant to come from the "war on drugs," the same question that underlies Christina Johns' conclusion in her highly informative contribution to the Praeger series, Criminology and Crime Control Policy. In **Power Ideology and the War on Drugs: Nothing Succeeds Like Failure,** she writes, " The primary intent of the War on Drugs is not to stop drug trafficking or drug use. The War on Drugs is a tool in a larger war that is about increased authority and social control."

Contrary to anti-drug propaganda, the interdiction campaign of the DEA, police and military in countries throughout Latin America has vastly increased the value of the illegal substances, while simultaneously weakening the social norms that inhibit drug use. Holding a drug-burning ceremony while people starve is just part of the cynical game.

These conflicting currents were obvious when I visited Puerto Cabezas in March as part of a Sister City delegation from

Burlington, Vermont. The town used to have valuable exports such as lumber and bananas. But since those have declined, cocaine has become the region's most important import-export commodity. Johns claims that increased interdiction in the Caribbean and along the Florida coast has produced an increase in drug trafficking through Mexico.

An estimated 70 percent of the cocaine entering the United States makes its way first through Central America. A few years ago the figure was 30 percent. According to a senior Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) official, "Everybody's concerned about small planes and fast boats coming in with 500 to 1,000 kilos...It's cargo containers coming in with thousands of pounds."

During our visit, town pastors asked to meet with our delegation at the Anti-Drug House near the mayor's office. They were looking for ways to deal with the new epidemic that has hit their community.

Since the defeat of the Sandinistas in the 1990 elections, drug abuse has skyrocketed. Eighteen kids died of overdoses last year. In Port, as Puerto Cabezas is known, cocaine is cheap. A dollar and a quarter will buy six 'lines'. The drug is brought up in boats by Columbian fishermen, who are licensed by the Chamorro government, and then transhipped through Port to Managua where it is welded into truck bodies or hidden in containers for the trip up the Pan American highway.

The pastors believe that 15 percent of the powder is consumed locally. In order to develop a cadre of pliant 'mules' to carry it, the narco-traffickers soften up communities by dumping cocaine at sea. The floating boxes, washed up on shore, are welcomed by their discoverers as manna from heaven. Instead of selling it back—a risky venture at best—they hide the stuff under their beds.

Next, they make an investment in plastic baggies. Now they're in business. They've become entrepreneurs. First they hook their families and friends, then their neighbors. Now they're big business. They buy their kids mountain bikes and build themselves concrete houses.

Around the dock area of Port a construction boom is underway, and several late night discos are usually packed. Unemployment is currently 80 percent.

"Help us," the pastors pleaded. "Send us educational material for our schools. You in America have experience dealing with this scourge."

We didn't have the heart to tell them that, despite the millions spent in the DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program in U.S. schools, cocaine and marijuana are as plentiful as ever. In fact, a drug prevention specialist with the U.S. Department of Education states, "Research shows that, no, DARE hasn't been effective in reducing drug use."

Before leaving we promised anyway to send back some anti-drug literature in Spanish. But in truth most of us were more convinced than ever that the source of Nicaragua's drug problem is in our country—not theirs. ■

Robin Lloyd is the publisher of Toward Freedom.

Hyperinflation Shreds the Social Fabric

ERIC HANSON

Could anything be more ironic than parading the motto "order and progress" in Brazil, a country famous for its disorder, hyperinflation and government scandals? Yet there it is, emblazoned across the national flag. Despite this contradiction, however, Brazil has become a bellwether for the success of South America's "new" economic order.

Since the mid-1980s Latin American nations such as Mexico, Chile, and Argentina have balanced their budgets, reduced inflation and privatized state-owned enterprises. Even Columbia and Peru to some extent have put the "lost decade" behind them. Nevertheless, skeptics view their recoveries as fragile. Many Asian countries have sustained economic growth for decades, observers note, while South American nations often have trouble getting from one election to the next without a crash or a military coup.

Brazil has also registered impressive growth recently, but annual inflation remains a staggering 2500 percent and the government appears permanently gridlocked. Twenty political parties have representatives in the legislature, yet the President isn't a member of any one of them. If Brazil could only live up to its motto South America's revival might finally achieve solid validation and the continent might experience at least a decade of consistent growth.

Brazil's importance stems in part from its size; it dwarfs every other country in the region and its economy is twice the size of Mexico's. As local businessmen are proud to report, Brazil "exports a Chile" every year. In addition, the only South American nations that don't share a common border with this giant are Ecuador and Chile.

Brazil's recent economic record is impressive. The real gross national product exceeds $450 billion, without including an underground economy that may push the total up by 25 percent. Privatized industries are doing well, steel exports are strong, and cars are produced at the lowest cost in the region.

Still, Brazil does have problems—namely poverty, government indecisiveness and inflation. And they come in the country's standard size—large.

Colonized by Portugal in the early 1500s, the country's economy was based on slavery until 1888. By then 18 million Africans had been brought across the ocean. To a large extent, Brazil is still defined by the master-slave relationship. Forty-three million citizens, including 18 million children, barely survive with a monthly wage of less than $15. The top 20 percent earn 26 times as much as the bottom 20, and the situation is worsening. As a point of comparison, the U.S. ratio is 9 to 1, while India's is 5 to 1.

If growth is to be sustained and democracy deepened, jobs and wealth must be shared more equitably with the "have nots". Without this Brazil is likely to drift toward social implosion and perhaps even the re-imposition of military rule. But the tools being used at the moment to wrestle with these problems are hardly adequate to the task.

The Constitution, adopted in 1988, does more to inhibit than to empower. When the military surrendered power after 20 years of strong man rule, they crafted a power sharing scheme favoring regions sympathetic to military considerations.

According to the Constitution, 50 per-

cent of all federal revenues must be transferred to the states but responsibility for basic services is a federal concern. Thus, the central government faces a chronic shortage of resources. The 1988 election of Ferdinand Collor, a charismatic reformer, was supposed to rectify the situation. It didn't work out that way. President Collor was indicted on corruption charges in 1992 and forced to resign. The current caretaker government is tentative and ineffectual.

A new presidential election is slated for this fall. The frontrunner at the moment is Workers Party candidate Luis Enacio "Lula" de Silva, certainly no friend of South America's "new" economics. How Brazil would fare under his administration is unclear. The present finance minister, Fernando Enrique Cordoso, may also become a candidate. Cordoso hopes to present a balanced budget this year, as well as another inflation plan — the eighth in nine years.

One reason for the persistency of inflation is the ineffectiveness of the government, which manages to wed real growth with hyperinflation through a complex web of indexes. Everything—salaries, groceries, rents, taxi fares—is indexed to rising prices.

Those who can convert their paychecks into U.S. dollars insulate themselves from price increases. The dollar appreciates as fast as the local currency loses value. Meanwhile, banks pay 18 percent annually on savings accounts, after adjusting for inflation. In short, those who make out, do it handsomely.

The losers include those on fixed incomes and anyone stuck at the bottom of the ladder. Since the minimum wage is only adjusted at four month intervals, basic pay buys nothing after a month or two. Thus, hyperinflation has institutionalized Brazil's widening disparity of wealth.

The New York Times recently admitted that inflation, combined with corruption and government mismanagement, has led to a "fraying of the social fabric." Cynics go further, arguing that the country will have to suffer a complete economic breakdown before consensus can be mustered to seriously tackle the issues. They might be right, since Brazilians have managed to adapt for so long. On the other hand, elections could provide the opportunity for a break with obsolete thinking. ■

Eric Hanson is a Vermont-based investment analyst who specializes in Asian economies.

Resources as Fuel for War

MOHAMED SULIMAN

The usual perception of the war in Rwanda as a cruel tribal conflict between Hutu and Tutsi fails to explain its economic and ecological causes. These are to be found in the abject poverty of a densely-populated country. It is a bitter struggle over the dwindling sorghum-cake.

It is the same with many conflicts on the continent. Ecological degradation is so severe that traditional methods of preventing and managing inter-ethnic disputes, such as those concerning the Tuareg in Mauritania, are no longer workable. Indeed, many disputes, like those in Chad and Sudan, are fought not along political divides but along the ecological borders that divide richer and poorer ecological zones.

In the case of Rwanda, the country's steep gradients are covered by poor soil and the north is dominated by the lofty Virunga volcanoes, whose lava has not yet produced cultivable soils. If you add a population density of 250 per square kilometer to environmental poverty and a destructive colonial legacy, you have all the ingredients of serious social tension.

The Hollywood image of Africa as a continent of overflowing fertility is seriously misleading. Its environment is the most fragile of all the continents, and it has been pushed to the limits in the last century. Although the land and the people often demonstrate remarkable resilience in adversity, a spiral of human and ecological disaster is afflicting the continent, particularly in the vast arid and semi-arid areas of the Sahel and the Horn of Africa.

Persistent drought is one problem. In addition, unsustainable methods of land-use, such as large-scale mechanized rain-fed farming and overgrazing on marginal lands, are destroying the traditional systems that were evolved over centuries to support life in vulnerable regions. As a result, millions of people have been forced to abandon their homelands, becoming refugees or internally displaced.

Now the number of people competing for dwindling resources is increasing. The result is social turbulence and armed conflict. The slow natural processes of environmental wear and tear have been accelerated by the rapid industrial extraction of resources.

On top of all that, the collapse of primary commodity prices has caused the international terms of trade to tilt against Africa. An African country that had to sell, say, 200 bags of cocoa to earn enough money in 1970 to buy a tractor has to sell 300 bags today to afford the same machine. The worsening of the terms of trade filters down to ordinary people and finally translates into lower living standards.

In an attempt to maintain living standards, peasants and pastoralists have to produce more from the land and water available to them, a resource base that is not only meager but shrinking. When they fail to do so, they have no option but to relocate and join the millions of dispossessed and assetless poor. In the past, people in distress moved on to an area with a more favorable environment. Today it is hard to find better areas in which to start life anew. Many have been used up. Population density, large-scale mechanized farming and ethnic tensions also hamper relocation.

Weakening government control of law and order in the countryside also increases people's concern about their personal safety, and contributes to their decision to move to the cities and towns, where both food and physical security are relatively better maintained. The movement of people and herds from one affected ecological zone to another already occupied by a different ethnic group is a recipe for tension and hostility.

When the need to share land occurred only occasionally, it was possible to reach agreement on how it was to be done. But now that the need is for prolonged periods or even for permanent sharing, the strains are much greater. And they are greater still in areas already experiencing environmental difficulties. Exploring the economic-environmental aspects of armed conflicts in Africa would be more useful than attempting to explain everything as ethnic or tribal—more useful not only for the sake of science but also for the sake of the suffering millions who yearn for peace and a better quality of life. ■

Mohamed Suliman directs the British-based Institute for African Alternatives.

The Koran says what?

Many Muslim women would be stunned to learn that the Koran and many Islam historical writings have not only permitted but encouraged birth control. Furthermore, they say that women should have the same access to education as men, and be allowed to earn and keep their own money. These views hardly match the reality for most Muslim women, who generally hear only the version of Muslim practices their fathers and husbands tell them.

The recent publication of **Family Planning in the Legacy of Islam**, an exhaustive study of 14 centuries' worth of views from

Some of the highest and lowest rates of birth control

	% on birth control	Fertility rate		% on birth control	Fertility rate
Turkey	63	3.3	Mauritania	0.8	6.5
Lebanon	53	3.4	Cameroon	2.0	6.9
Malaysia	51	3.5	Ivory Coast	3.0	7.4
Tunisia	50	3.4	Ethiopia	4.0	6.8
Indonesia	48	3.1	Nigeria	5.0	6.6

Gemini News Service

leading Islamic theologians and jurists, offers plenty of evidence that Islam has endorsed contraception for 1400 years. Written by Egyptian population advisor Abdel Rahim Omran, the book points out the irony that some Muslim countries have the lowest rates of birth control use in the world. For example, Pakistan's population of 121.7 million is expected to double in just 23 years. The problem seems not to lie with religion at all, but rather the marginal status and minimal educations of Muslim women, and the patriarchal system that, among other things, disallows women control over their own bodies.

It's little wonder, then, that population agencies have come to see the success of their work as inextricably linked to improving the quality of women's lives in developing countries.

— *Frances Misutka, Gemini News Service*

How many popes does it take to change a vote?

Just one. According to Werner Fornos, president of Population Institute in New York, the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church is in a powerful and unique position to exert authority over the outcome of international conferences. He is the only world religious leader with the status of "Permanent Observer Mission" to the U.N. "Veritatis Splendor," a recent 179-page encyclical to his flock of 980 million, reaffirms the pontiff's hard-line stance against artificial birth control, including condoms—a primary tool in the battle against AIDS. It also rails against abortion, sterilization and masturbation as "inherently evil."

The directive seemed suspiciously timed to coincide with the final preparatory committee meeting for the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) which met in New York in April. While church envoys are not permitted to vote at the U.N., they are allowed into closed-door negotiations leading up to votes.

Fornos also points to papal clout in meetings leading up to the 1992 Earth Summit: all mentions of population and family planning were removed from Earth Summit documents in a prep meeting, due to "the very active participation of the Vatican."

— *from International Dateline*

Sorry, no grandchildren

Zero population growth is more than rhetoric to those in the Voluntary Human Extinction Movement. VHEMT encourages people to live long and die out. In other words, don't have any kids, because there are too many of us already and the population decrease has got to start somewhere. When contraception and family planning are unavailable and abortions are criminalized, too many new humans arrive in a world that doesn't want them and can't provide for them. The United Nations estimates that one-third of the 405,000 daily births are unwanted.

The idea of voluntary extinction has its precedents. END 3000 was a British humanitarian movement dedicated—not very optimistically—to ending human suffering by the year 3000. The American group DWINDLE (Depopulate Willingly Increasing the Natural Delight of Life on Earth) also suggests becoming the last branch on your family tree. In New York, Zero Birthing Now recommends "worldwide Homo Sapiens birthing postponement everywhere until the number of births has been reduced at least to deaths." It also advocates tax rebates for people who don't multiply.

To put it in perspective, consider that each North American not created is the equivalent of 72 years of 100-percent recycling; 56 years of non-car driving, and tons of solid waste and environmental pollution avoided. VHEMT suggests turning the need to nurture into caring for the environment and/or adopting or foster-parenting extant children who need loving homes. The "need" to carry on the family name, nonbreeders contend, simply means trying to please dad. It's time to please, instead, Mother Earth. (VHEMT: POB 86646, Portland, OR 97286-0646,)

— *from These EXIT Times*

More than a numbers game

The Committee on Women, Population and the Environment is an international alliance of women activists, organizers, health practitioners and scholars who challenge the argument that population growth is the single most important reason for global environmental destruction. In a statement that has been presented at major conferences since the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, CWPE stresses additional targets:

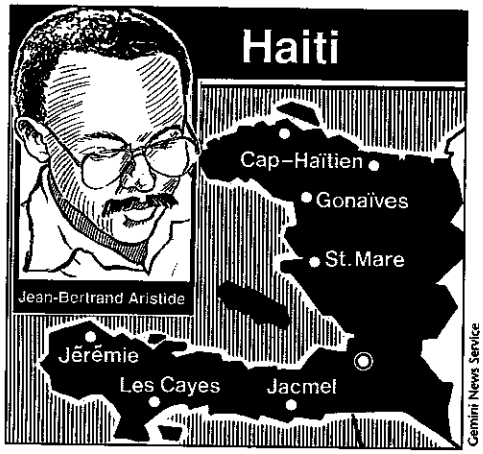
- economic systems that exploit and misuse nature and people in the drive for short-term and short-sighted gains and profits;
- rapid urbanization and poverty resulting from migration from rural areas and from inadequate planning and resource allocation in towns and cities;
- the disproportionate consumption patterns of the affluent the world over (currently, the industrialized nations, with 22 percent of the world's population, consume 70 percent of the resources);
- technologies designed to exploit but not to restore natural resources;
- war-making and arms production, which divest resources from human needs, poison the natural environment and perpetuate the militarization of culture, encouraging violence against women.

The alliance will again present its concerns and recommendations at ICPD in Cairo. To endorse its statement or receive more information, contact CWPE, c/o Population and Development Program/SS, POB 5001, Hampshire College, Amherst, MA 01002-5001 U.S.A. ■

Head Count, edited by Pamela Polston, covers population-related issues, such as policy, birth control, sexual behavior and threats to earth resources. Send your contributions to Toward Freedom.

Smokescreen Conceals Hidden U.S. Motives

HAITI—Despite a barrage of news, selective coverage has distorted the roots of the coup that overthrew President Jean Bertrand Aristide, as well as U.S. complicity and options for Aristide's return. According to the Utne Reader, CIA support for the coup-plotters, combined with silence about the Haitian military's role in drug trafficking, ranked among the top ten censored stories of last year. More recently, the media has been



suspiciously silent about U.S. corporations who benefited from what Aristide called a "sham embargo" that until recently squeezed the poor but exempted business.

More than 60 U.S. corporations have shipped goods intended for assembly into Haiti, then reimported the products back into the United States since the coup, according to the Commerce Department. Among the beneficiaries have been the apparel industry, which increased imports from Haiti by 46 percent in 1993. Products assembled in Haiti for reimport include well-known brand names such as Wilson and Star Sportswear baseballs and softballs, Universal Manufacturing, and H.H. Cutler Co., which produces goods for Disney's Babies, Fisher-Price, Major League Baseball, the National Basketball Association, the National Football League and the National Hockey League. Among the leading retail outlets for goods made in Haiti are Sears, J.C. Penney and Walmart.

Spokesmen for Haiti's General Confederation of Labor (CGT) argue that Aristide's intention to increase the minimum wage to 50 cents an hour was a main reason for his overthrow. Since 1991, exports have risen while wages have been slashed to less than 14 cents per hour, fitting in with the World Bank's structural adjustment plan for the country. In response, the Haiti Anti-Intervention Organizing Committee (HAIOC) has launched a "People's Embargo" of corporations selling goods assembled by slave labor.

Coverage of support for Aristide and public discussion of whether the U.S. should intervene militarily has also been misleading. Despite a CIA-engineered smear campaign designed to discredit Aristide, support for his return is widespread in the U.S. When solidarity is expressed, however, it is often overlooked. For example, Aristide's April 7 visit to Vermont was accompanied by a resolution of support from the Vermont General Assembly, a strongly worded proclamation from the governor, local resolutions, and a turnout of 2,000, mainly white people at St. Michael's College, which organized a three-day celebration of solidarity. Mention of these endorsements didn't make it into local coverage, or onto the national wire.

Most debate over intervention incorrectly assumes that Haitians are incapable of organizing an indigenous resistance and would welcome U.S. troops. In fact, many Haitians are determined to liberate themselves and oppose an invasion. However, they do support French and Canadian plans to train a police force that would assist Aristide upon his return, and, like the Bosnians, they would welcome the freedom to arm themselves. According to Joanne Landy of the Campaign for Peace and Democracy, progressives should increase pressure not for an invasion but rather for a complete embargo, a halt to covert U.S. support for murderers, and creative ways to help Haitians arms themselves.

For more on the People's Embargo, contact HAIOC, Box 334, Cathedral Station, NYC 10025. (212) 592-3612. Information is also available from the National Coalition for Haitian Refugees, 16 E. 42nd St., 3rd Fl., New York, NY 10017 U.S.A.

Pass on Prisoners' Rights

UNITED NATIONS—Public emergencies take precedence over a fair trial, according to the UN's Human Rights Committee, which has decided not to guarantee the rights of prisoners if a government says it faces a crisis that "threatens the life of the nation." The committee, which reviewed a proposal to extend guarantees in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, decided against including articles 9 and 14, which ensure equality under the law as well as a variety of prisoner rights. Although more than 100 nations have ratified the Covenant, which recognizes the "inherent dignity" and "inalienable rights of all members of the human family," they can ignore most human rights if they are in a state of emergency. The Human Rights Committee was considering an "optional protocol" that would have obligated governments to respect the judicial rights of prisoners no matter what the situation. In essence, this UN action sends a grotesque but clear message: almost any "national security" rationale can be used to snuff out human rights.

A Pessimistic Progress Report

PERU—President Alberto Fujimoro, who two years ago staged a palace coup and made himself a "constitutional dictator", is optimistic about Peru's future. With the economic backing of the United States and Japan, political acceptance from regional bodies, a 6.5 percent growth rate last year and a declining inflation rate, he sees no reason he won't be re-elected in 1995. Still, recent polls indicate that if former UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar decides to run, he might win the vote.

The real question is whether the army, the real power behind Fujimoro, will allow it. Although some analysts claim that Fujimoro is a prisoner of the Armed Forces, his policies and actions suggest that he may actually be a willing partner. Kidnapping,

summary executions, disappearances and clandestine common graves occur too often to be convincingly labeled as "excesses committed by individual soldiers." In May the army launched its latest "scorched-earth" offensive against the Shining Path, a program featuring rape, torture and aerial strafing.

Both the government and the army argue that repression is needed to eliminate "subversive organizations." But rather than freeing Peru from corruption, violence and poverty, Fujimoro's authoritarian style and right-wing economics are perpetuating injustice. According to Luis Tricot, a Chilean writing for Gemini News, only 5.3 percent of the work force have formal jobs and more than 86 percent are underemployed in the huge informal sector. At least two thirds of the country's 22 million people are poor, and most are much less optimistic than their president.

Summit Comeback Scheme

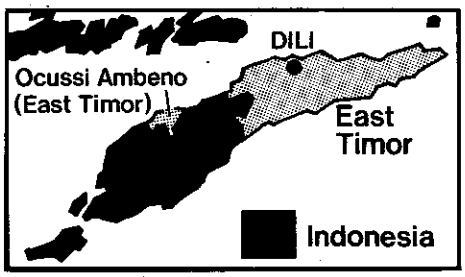
CORFU—Hoping to cover up years of neglect and attract more tourists, Greece used the June summit meeting of the European Union on Corfu as an excuse to give the resort island a $60 million facelift. Albanian migrant workers repaired roads, painted villas, put in new walkways, and expanded the air terminal. Once a playground for Europe's royalty, Corfu has suffered in recent years from the activities of British "lager louts" on cheap package tours. The idea, sparked by the summit, is to bring the elite back. The plan may work—unless the Bosnian crisis spills over to this Balkan island. The mountainous Albanian coast is only a few miles away.

Malaria Breakthrough?

GENEVA—A made-in-Columbia malaria vaccine has passed its first trials in Africa, offering hope in the face of spreading resistance to existing drugs, reports Robert Walgate of the World Health Organization's (WHO) tropical diseases program. Up to 500 million clinical cases of malaria are recorded annually. In Africa the disease kills an estimated one million children a year, while in Southeast Asia and Latin America resistance to chloroquine has developed at an alarming rate. Despite the dire prospects, writes Walgate for Gemini News, the successful testing of SPf66 in Tanzania could lead to a worldwide effort to have a vaccine widely available within four years. Even if this happens, however, effective delivery of the vaccine may still be a problem. Many people without immunity move into malarial areas, and some regions are especially prone to epidemics. In addition, administering the vaccine currently requires three shots 30 and 150 days apart.

Documenting Repression

EAST TIMOR — "Perhaps genocide is too often used these days," says John Pilger in his new film on East Timor, "but by any standards that is what happened here...with the connivance and complicity of western governments." The 90-minute film, "Death of a Nation: The Timor Conspiracy," contains new revelations about events following the November, 1991 Santa Clara Massacre. According to one lab technician,



Gemini News Service

Area in black is Indonesian territory.

soldiers killed up to 200 survivors at the Dili hospital—with doctors present. The documentary also features an interview with the leader of the guerrilla army, which claims to control much of the country's mountainous interior. C. Philip Liechty, a senior CIA officer in Indonesia in 1975, says: "I saw my own government very much involved in what was going on in East Timor. And what was going on was not good. You can be 100 percent certain that Suharto was explicitly given the green light" to invade by President Ford and Secretary of State Kissinger.

A letter from the head of the Catholic Church in East Timor, placed in the Congressional Record by Rep. Tony Hall, indicates that, despite contentions that the situation is improving, torture and brutality continue. Indonesian soldiers are still being trained at U.S. military bases; although military aid has been banned, Indonesia is permitted to purchase the training. To learn more about lobbying efforts to cut off U.S. arms sales and support for East Timorese self-determination, contact East Timor Action Network (ETAN), Box 1182, White Plains, NYC 10602. (914) 428-7299.

Missing Ploughshares

GENEVA—So far the end of the Cold War has produced more job losses than "peace dividends," according to an International Labor Organization (ILO) report that calls for government intervention and support of conversion programs. At least 400,000 workers have been laid off in the United States thus far, and the story in the former U.S.S.R. is the same. Losses may treble within three years. Other big losers will be France and Germany, and the trend could have a snowballing effect. The statistics contradict previous UN predictions that defense cuts could be converted into productive investments and job gains. The problem, according to the report, is that "markets" rather than governments are determining new investments.

Globalization of production is also a factor. According to Chakravarthi Raghavan, writing for Third World Network, globalization could lead to a net gain in world employment, since production in the developing countries tends to use more human labor. But if jobless growth continues, "globalization is likely to erode further the number as well as quality of jobs in the metals trades in the highly industrialized countries." ■

Peltier Weekend Pushes Clemency

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Native activist Leonard Peltier has served over 18 years in prison for a crime he didn't commit. In order to build support for executive clemency, a Peltier Weekend will be held in Washington June 25-26, including a June 25 concert and a day of ceremony and prayer June 26 at Lafayette Park. People will assemble at Foggy Bottom at 8 a.m., then march down Pennsylvania Avenue. Speakers will include spokespersons for the Lakota and Oneida tribes, AIM leader David Hill, actors Michael Horse and Wes Studi, and Peltier's lawyer, Ramsey Clark. The campaign for Peltier's release has the support of Amnesty International, 60 members of Congress, Nelson Mandela, Jesse Jackson, and the World Council of Christians and Jews. People are urged to write to the President and U.S. attorney general. To reach the Peltier Defense Committee, write Box 583, Lawrence, KS 66044 U.S.A., or call 913-842-5774. ■

COLUMBIA

(continued from page 12)

tors, issue blistering attacks on the government's human rights record. The high visibility of official misdeeds is as astonishing as the inaction that invariably follows. And the complexity of the situation has meanwhile blunted international outrage. Until recently Columbians have dealt with their problems privately, national pride and fatalism combining to produce a curious nonchalance in a country where everyone seems to know someone who's been killed or kidnapped, and where the only survivor is the violence itself.

For years human rights groups have hoped that internal developments—dialogue, or reform—would resolve the core problem of impunity. Frustrated, they are finally turning to the international community. The InterAmerican Human Rights Court recently agreed, for the first time, to hear a case from Columbia. Amnesty International has launched a major campaign against impunity, and the UN is being asked to appoint a special Rapporteur.

In the 1980s the Central America wars kept the human rights focus away from Columbia. In a masterful stroke, the government played a high-profile diplomatic role in the Contadora peacemaking group while pursuing its own war at home. But now that war recedes in El Salvador, Guatemala and elsewhere, and attention turns to the failure of the drug war, Columbia is getting a closer look.

In the United States, the campaign to close the U.S. Army School of the Americas (SOA) has brought more notoriety to Columbia. One third of the trainees in recent years have been from Columbia. And of 247 officers cited for human rights abuses in a new study, more than half trained at SOA.

The U.S. military role in Columbia has been growing. More than 250 military advisers are currently stationed there, and five bases have been built by American advisers and their trainees. Many Columbians view these as part of a U.S.-led counterinsurgency program, and politicians of all stripes charge that the presence of U.S. troops both violates the constitution and compromises the nation's sovereignty. ■

Ed Griffin-Nolan, a Syracuse-based writer and consultant, visited Columbia in February.

Let's Keep the Troops Home

JULES ARCHER

Many Americans are impatient with Washington for paying too much attention to foreign affairs and not enough to our severe domestic problems. Support is growing for sharp cuts in foreign aid, and even for eliminating it altogether. Congress is under heavy pressure to withdraw overseas troops and close military bases.

Some liberals, once vehement supporters of foreign aid, have become disillusioned about what we have done with it. More than just feeling that charity begins at home, they now consider our foreign policy a disaster, no better under Democratic than Republican administrations.

A look at the record suggests that when the United States became embroiled in foreign conflicts after World War II, it usually did so on the wrong side, or with devastating results for democracy and freedom.

We intervened in the Korean civil war on the side of South Korea in 1950. After three years of fighting, at a cost of 33,000 American dead, the war ended in an inconclusive truce, with North Korea as strong militarily as ever.

No one disputes the incredible blunder of the Vietnam War, when we intervened in a civil war to set up a Catholic puppet government in a 90 percent Buddhist country, and lost 50,000 American lives in an unsuccessful effort to prop it up.

By aiding the brutal dictatorship of the Shah of Iran we incurred the hatred of the Iranian fundamentalists who overthrew him in 1979 and took American hostages. Nevertheless, when the Iran-Iraq war broke out in 1980 we sent arms to aid Iran, and were subsequently rewarded by the Iranian government's sending out terrorist teams against our country.

We engineered the overthrow of the liberal Arbenz government of Guatemala in 1954. Ever since, Guatemala has rivaled El Salvador in the terrorizing and killing of peasants. Over 200,000 Guatemalans have fled the country.

We secretly aided the brutal Contra attacks on the Sandinista government and the Nicaraguan people during the 1980s, using funds from secret arms sales to Iran. Eventually we brought down the government by buying an election for right-wing opponents. Today the people of Nicaragua are worse off than ever.

We gave military aid to the extreme right-wing government of El Salvador, whose death squads have murdered thousands of liberals and labor leaders, as well as nuns, priests and an archbishop.

We let China know it was really acceptable to murder and injure up to 20,000 students who demonstrated for freedom during the Tiananmen Square uprising in 1989, and to arrest another 10,000.

We instigated the Gulf War against Iraq to restore the Emir of Kuwait to his throne in 1991, only to prop up a regime with one of the worst human rights records in the Middle East. And after our "victory" over Iraq, Saddam Hussein remains in power, still a menace.

In 1993 we sent troops to Somalia to protect the distribution of aid to starving Somalis, then withdrew after "succeeding". But we soon had to send forces back to fight warlords who still retained their power to rob relief supplies.

Recently, about the only credible U.S. foreign policy move was President Clinton's initial decision not to become too involved in the murderous war among Croats, Serbs and Muslims. But some small "defense" force he sent to bordering Macedonia could conceivably drag us into that mess too, especially if the Serbs decided to move into Macedonian territory.

With the Cold War over, and its heavy cost now severely crippling the U.S. economy, most Americans see no need for any more military posturing around the world. They reject the theory that we must be the world's policeman, or else sacrifice our position as world leader.

Certainly our dismal foreign policy record suggests that if we want to do the world—and ourselves—a favor we will keep our troops and military aid home. What good is getting embroiled in foreign conflicts going to do us when we invariably take the wrong side, or end up with inconclusive results? ■

Jules Archer is a California-based author of more than 50 books.

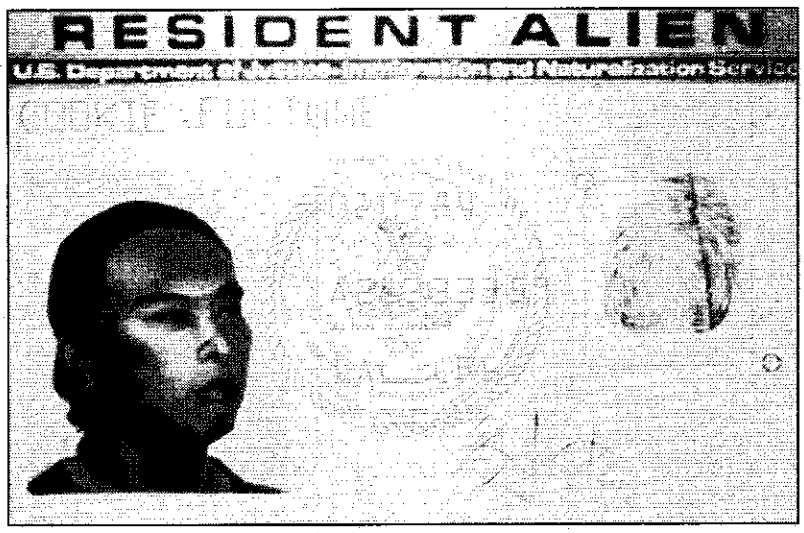
Deconstructing the Asian "Other"

Immigrant artists explore the ambivalence of bicultural identity

MARGARET BALD

Korean grocery. Chinese laundry. Indian restaurant. Filipino nurse. Exotic, Zen-like, meditative, enigmatic. Assimilation v. separation; tradition v. modernity. Asian American immigrant artists contend in their lives and their art with a web of cultural expectations, Orientalist stereotypes and limited paradigms that would define them according to prescriptive preconceptions of Asian-ness.

The 20 artists whose work is on exhibit in "Asia/America: Identities in Contemporary Asian American Art" at The Asia Society in New York come from China, India, Japan, Korea, Laos, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. Ranging from recent arrivals to 30-year residents, some are internationally known; others are emerging artists. What they have in common is their struggle to define themselves as people of Asian descent living in the United States.



Immigration ironies: echoes of Chinese social control. The Asia Society

As curator Margo Machida, a third-generation Japanese American, is careful to point out, the exhibit is not intended as a comprehensive or even representative survey of Asian American artistic concerns. Considering the great diversity of cultures, histories, languages, immigration experiences and class and economic backgrounds, there is no one contemporary Asian experience in America, and no definitive artistic perspective that can be ascribed to Asian American artists as a group.

The exhibit nevertheless explores one significant theme—the varied approaches of foreign-born artists to complex questions of bicultural identity. It's a well-chosen and potent organizing principle, speaking not only to important social and political concerns (which don't necessarily, by themselves, result in good art), but also directly to issues of selfhood that are central to the preoccupations of the artists. Their work, including painting, sculpture, photography and mixed media installations, is diverse, visually powerful and intellectually stimulating.

Sung Ho Coi, who worked in Korean-run grocery stores to put himself through art school, sees the immigration experience as a desperate gamble. A wooden ceiling fan doubles as a roulette wheel in his mixed media contribution, "Korean Roulette." The four fan blades are hands wearing the Korean greengrocers' distinctive red-tipped white gloves. Pasted behind the blades are emblems of survival: plastic fruit and vegetables, cigarettes, calculator, Korean liquor, crucifix, switchblade and toy handgun against a background of want ads from the Korean press. Cheerfully ironic and inventive, his work forces the viewer to see the ubiquitous Korean grocer in a new way.

A similar aspect of the reality of the American dream—the downward mobility experienced by many immigrants of color—is expressed by Pacita Abad. In "I Thought the Streets Were Paved with Gold," her vibrant and densely painted tapestry on padded canvas, Abad recalls both traditional weavings and the decorated "jeepney" buses of the Philippines, portraying vignettes of fellow Asian and Latino immigrants working in service industries.

In "How Mali Lost Her Accent," Abad also expresses her ambivalence toward the rapid assimilation of young, upwardly-mobile immigrants. Mali is surrounded by emblems of her raised status —banners from Yale and Harvard, computer software and Benneton clothes. But has she lost more than her accent?

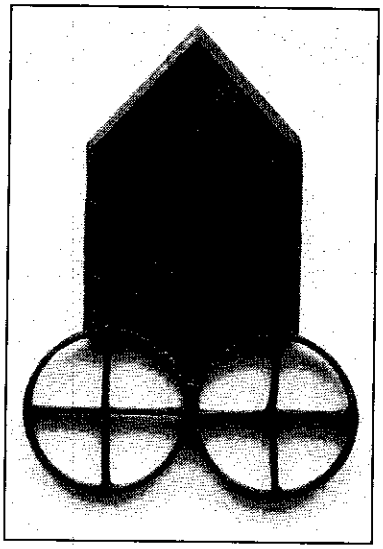
Hang Liu, a painter and installation artist from China, asserts her individuality with the dehumanizing U.S. immigration process, finding echoes of the Chinese bureaucracy's mechanisms of social control. In "Resident Alien," she reproduces an enlarged version of her green card, renaming herself "Cookie, Fortune," the prototypically American idea of what is supposed to be a Chinese desert, ironically marketed now in China as an American delicacy.

Cross-cultural connection and misunderstanding is also a theme for Masami Teraoka, a Japanese-born artist who has lived in Hawaii since 1960. He is the only contributor to draw direct inspiration from a traditional Asian medium, *ukiyo-e* woodblock printing. Using Pop Art images he devises unsettling imaginary scenarios involving Japanese tourists and Americans on Oahu beaches that speak of curiosity, sexual attraction, and thwarted communication.

Ken Chu, who was born in Hong Kong and grew up both in California and Asia, always thought of himself as American. It was only when he permanently moved to New York as an adult that he realized the significance of his racial and ethnic identity, his status as "the other." Chu takes on serious issues of racism and anti-Asian violence by juxtaposing icons of American popular culture and typically Asian motifs in a witty cartoon-like style. "I Need Some More Hair Products," an acrylic painting on foamcore, presents a young Asian man before a mirror while the face of a blond male Caucasian—an unattainable ideal—hovers nearby in a thought bubble. In the luridly colored "Hey, Chinktown, You Killed My Father," about an incident experienced by the artist, a group of men leaning out a car window scream racial epithets.

The legacy of the U.S. defeat in Vietnam is the subtext of Hanh Thi Pham's confrontational photography. Born in Saigon, she expresses anger at white Americans who would subordinate her to their Madame Butterfly fantasies. The antithesis of the stereotypically compliant and lissome Vietnamese female, she portrays herself in a manipulated color photograph, "No. 9 Expatriate Consciousness," as barechested with fist upraised in a profane gesture before an inverted portrait of Buffalo Bill Cody. The Vietnamese text in a side panel reads, "Not As Your Servant."

Zarina, an Indian-born sculptor, creates spare and elegant painted aluminum forms that connote houses on wheels, symbols of her conviction that as an expatriate she carries her home inside of her. The serenity expressed in her work belies the trauma of an incident that led to her choice of a wheel-like image: her memories of being carried to safety in a covered truck as a child during the ethnic violence that accompanied the partition of India in 1947.



Zarina's "House on Wheels" The Asia Society

In contrast to the sense of completion and peace radiated by Zarina's account of her migratory experience, many other works in the exhibit portray stark images of displacement and psychic and physical pain. In "A Thousand and One Restless Nights," sculptor Baochi Zhang of China has fashioned an ominous black metal bed frame, similar to those found in prisons and military barracks. The paintings of Vietnamese refugee Long Nguyen are nightmarish visions of ravaged but enduring human bodies that express the trauma of war and exile.

"Asia/America: Identities in Contemporary Asian American Art" remains at The Asia Society until June 26. It opens at the Tacoma Art Museum in October, and will travel to Minneapolis, Honolulu, San Francisco, Cambridge and Houston over the next two years. ■

Margaret Ball is a New York-based contributing writer who frequently covers human rights, culture and international affairs.

JAPAN

(continued from page 10)

to become politically active. Among my own friends, mainly university graduates who have lived abroad, almost no one votes. Last summer only 67 percent of eligible Japanese voted, despite the high stakes. The two biggest excuses for non-participation are the absence of an honest exchange of ideas, and lack of access once the voting is over.

Such sentiments seem justified. Any Japanese voter who is certain his or her vote counts might want another opinion. Basically, it depends on where you live. One vote can have six times the impact of another, with the weight in favor of rural areas, most of which have traditionally supported the LDP. Although this election system has been challenged, the Tokyo High Court recently ruled that the current procedures are "constitutional."

The electoral process isn't the only area in need of reform. A more crucial question is the true nature of Japan's representative government. Legislator-sponsored bills face tremendous hurdles. The more successful approach is introduction of bills by cabinet members, who commonly have them passed down by ministry bureaucrats. In essence, Japan is governed by unelected ministers whose ties to business are legendary. Statistics confirm that officials and bureaucrats, who generate most Japanese political initiatives, retire from their ministry posts only to walk a well-traveled path to the presidency of corporations they once regulated.

Understandably, citizen movements experience frustration when introducing bills on their own. And since the Japanese don't have the right to call for public referenda, effective challenge is all but impossible. Grass roots groups do exist, but their successes are notable only for their infrequency.

As a foreigner I try not to become upset over political problems—especially since I can't vote. As the law currently stands, although my marriage partner is Japanese I couldn't vote even if I lived here the rest of my life. And even if I'd been born here I couldn't vote, since my father isn't Japanese. Many feminists and members of the large mixed-blood Korean population have criticized this policy, but so far to no avail.

Well over a million foreigners live legally in Japan. We pay taxes but cannot vote or run for office. Even the estimated 500,000 Japanese of voting age who live abroad are excluded. Concerns about "outside" influences run very deep indeed.

Given these political realities, optimism is relatively rare and debate limited. Basically, most people hope only for a leader who can get the country past the recession and tell the American trade representatives where to go. I've yet to see a single bumper sticker, a simple sign of hope that speaking out might make a difference.

Decidedly "anti-democratic" sentiments have been aired lately in many Asian nations. A newly self-confident Singapore and China have taken frank and open stands against Western freedoms, linking these to what they describe as undesirable aspects of American and European society. Japanese character being what it is, we are unlikely to hear quite the same views expressed by Japanese leaders. But in many essential ways, the concept of democracy is being redefined. Although the current conflicts may be a sign of healthy struggle, without guiding democratic principles the outcome is far from assured. ■

Paul Evans is a U.S. writer who lives in Kyoto.

Behind the Hormone Curtain

The struggle over genetically-engineered food begins with BGH

PETER MONTAGUE

The David and Goliath battle of the century is shaping up over a synthetic hormone called rBGH (recombinant bovine growth hormone), approved by U.S. officials in February 1994 for use in milk cows. David is a handful of farm and consumer organizations, and Goliath is a coalition of agrichemical companies backed by top officials in the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Department of Agriculture (USDA).

At issue is the safety of milk, and the right of consumers to know what chemicals and drugs have been added to the milk they buy in stores. Consumer advocates say the public has a right to know. The agrichemical industry and the Clinton administration say not.

On November 5, 1993 the FDA declared BGH "safe" for use in milk cows, and within a few months Monsanto, the chemical company, began selling its version of the drug to dairy farmers. Other companies hoping to get into the business are Eli Lilly, UpJohn, and American Cyanamid. Monsanto's version of the drug is intended to be injected into cows every two weeks, to stimulate milk production by 5 to 20 percent.

Consumer and farm organizations, including Consumers Union, publisher of Consumer Reports, have presented evidence that by-products of the hormone treatment are measurable in milk and aren't safe either for humans or cows. They also claim that approval of BGH violated the FDA's own regulations. Until the product is withdrawn, they want milk containing the hormone labelled so that consumers can make an informed choice about what they buy.

Monsanto has bet its future on genetically engineered farm and food products.

In 11 different surveys, American consumers have indicated overwhelmingly that they don't want milk containing genetically-engineered hormones, and that they want milk labelled so they can make a choice. For example, 75 percent of people surveyed in Wisconsin, a leading milk-producing state, said they would pay as much as 44 cents extra per gallon to avoid such hormones in their milk. This attitude was consistent regardless of income, education, or residence in rural or urban areas.

In response to these consumer concerns, the FDA and Monsanto have spoken with a single voice: the FDA has warned stores not to label milk as free of the hormone, and Monsanto has sued two milk processors who labelled hormone-free milk. This government-industry unity is no surprise; the FDA official responsible for the agency's labelling policy, Michael R. Taylor, is a former partner of King and Spaulding, the law firm that has sued on Monsanto's behalf.

Taylor is a classic product of the revolving door. After working for the FDA for four years, he joined the law firm in 1984. During that period Monsanto sought FDA approval for BGH. In 1991, Taylor returned to the FDA as an assistant commissioner. Last February he signed the FDA warning to stores.

The FDA offers two justifications for its opposition to labelling. First, no one is required to keep track of who uses BGH, and second, they claim there is "virtually" no difference between milk from cows injected with BGH and those that aren't. To remedy the first problem, Consumers Union suggests that Monsanto be required to maintain a public list of its buyers. The FDA has refused, and Monsanto isn't volunteering the information. In fact, its lawsuits are an attempt to discourage anyone from mentioning BGH on labels, a sign of the company's fears about consumer reaction. A 1993 company memo equates a government labelling requirement with a "ban" on its product.

Monsanto has a lot at stake. It has been hurt by lawsuits and publicity over several chemical products it insisted were safe, including the herbicide 2,4,5-T used in Agent Orange, and PCBs, which Congress banned in 1976. Some Wall Street analysts believe that Monsanto has bet its future on genetically-engineered farm and food products. If so, the failure of BGH could significantly damage the company, jeopardizing projected annual earnings of $500 million in the U.S. and $1 billion worldwide.

Both the food and pharmaceuticals industries are concerned that consumer rejection of BGH would dim the future for all genetically-engineered foods. Some 60 products are scheduled for FDA approval in the next few years. The Clinton Administration is counting on genetic engineering to give America a competitive edge in the global marketplace.

Clearly aware of the Administration's enthusiasm, Monsanto has instructed its lobbyist, in a company memo, to "let (USDA) Secretary Espy know that companies like Monsanto will likely pull out of the agriculture biotech area if the Administration will not stand up to persons like Senator Feingold" (a Wisconsin opponent of BGH). Meanwhile, FDA Commissioner David Kessler consistently opposes giving consumers a choice. "The public can be confident," he says. "There is virtually no difference in milk from treated and untreated cows." However, a considerable body of scientific evidence from the U.S., England and Europe indicates that Kessler simply isn't telling the whole truth. Milk from BGH-treated cows is very likely to feature:

- more pus from infected cows' udders
- more antibiotics given to cows to treat those infections
- an 'off' taste and shortened shelf life
- possible higher fat and lower protein content
- more of a tumor-producing chemical, IGF-I, which is implicated in cancers of the colon, smooth muscle and breast.

In return for accepting all of this, what benefits will consumers get? None whatsoever. Even the FDA admits that. In fact, since Uncle Sam already purchases a surplus of milk, increased production will cost taxpayers an additional $200 million or more a year. Family money will be pumped into chemical company pockets. And that's who benefits. ■

Peter Montague, PhD, is director of the Environmental Research Foundation in Annapolis, Maryland. His comments are provided by Third World Network Features.

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