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Another Development and the Third System

This year of 1985 marks the fortieth year of the United Nations. As a contribution to the discussions in the context of this event, we published earlier in the autumn an advance offprint of Marc Nerfin's *The Future of the United Nations System: Some Questions on the Occasion of an Anniversary*, the opening article of this issue of *Development Dialogue*. A considerable number of copies were distributed and it has already aroused great interest among the many non-governmental organizations concerned with the global issues of our time and within the United Nations System itself. Out of the five major issues raised by Marc Nerfin, particular attention has been paid to the question 'Can the UN give voice to all social actors?' and to the proposal for a three-Chamber UN, one Chamber representing the governments, or first system, another the economic power, or second system, and another the people and their associations, or third system. Such an arrangement, which could make global decision-making accountable to the world's citizens, is not easily achieved but merits careful consideration. Modest first steps could be the systematic inclusion of representatives from all three categories in the delegations to the UN General Assembly as well as in the delegations to different UN conferences.

This idea of a three-Chamber UN, which at first might seem Utopian, nevertheless corresponds to an emerging trend away from governmental management of the world's affairs to an increasing reliance on global cooperation between peoples and their organizations; examples of this are the growing importance of peace movements, religious movements, consumer movements, women's movements, ecological movements, trade union movements and ethnic and human rights organizations. It is, in fact, a trend which is making itself felt all over the world and one which is very much in tune with the ideas of Another Development as set out in the 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld Report (*What Now*) and further elaborated in the 'Third System Project' of the International Foundation for Development Alternatives (IFDA).

A striking example of the role that the people and their associations can play in a national setting—which is not without global implications—is provided by Manfred Max-Neef's article 'Another Development under Repressive Rule'. He describes how a parallel economy is being constructed in Chile, which may later emerge as an alternative social force and make its own distinct contribution to a future democratic Chile. Like similar innovative efforts in other countries, it deserves committed and understanding support.

These general trends, which can be observed in many parts of the world,

also have their implications for the development cooperation agencies of the North. For quite some time, development cooperation, and not least Nordic development cooperation, has been dominated by bilateral government-to-government transfers. But it may be that the heyday of this kind of cooperation is over and that increasing emphasis will have to be given to the people and their associations rather than to their governments. This is the central subject of Ernst Michanek's paper 'Democracy as a Force for Development and the Role of Swedish Assistance', which appraises the Swedish development cooperation programme in the light of how the social and political realities are being perceived in the Third World. 'Support for voluntary organizations—not only Swedish and international but also those in Third World countries—should now more than ever be a guideline for Swedish assistance. This signpost is now placed at the crossroads of development in the Third World, where there is a fast growth of what has been called "the Third System", i.e., the voluntary organizations that come forward representing the people, and its force for development as a factor alongside the two older power groups: the state, which has demonstrated both superpotency and impotence, and the commercial system.' The Third System 'represents a power of liberation and development that is now demanding an opportunity to show its ability'.

A document which strongly supports the arguments advanced in the three contributions touched upon here is the Summary Conclusions from the Dag Hammarskjöld Project on 'Methods and Media in Community Participation'. Arising from three weeks of intense discussion among community organizers from many parts of the world and printed here for the first time, they sum up the problems facing many Third System organizations as seen in a local, national and international context. It is a document which no reader of this journal should fail to consider, and an important contribution to the ongoing discussion of what community participation should mean as a force in democratic development.

The latter part of the journal is largely devoted to a discussion of 'the seeds issue' and the need for Another Development in the world's food policies. Most of the contributions in this section have been provoked by Pat Roy Mooney's study *The Law of the Seed: Another Development and Plant Genetic Resources* published in *Development Dialogue* (1983:1-2). That issue of the journal has—as many readers are aware—attracted worldwide interest, particularly in the Third World, exemplified by the fact that almost half of this 170-page long study was translated into Spanish and published as a 'document' in eight instalments in the highly respected Mexican daily newspaper *El Dia*. Since the publication of Mooney's study, the debate on

this topic has been carried on not only at the governmental and expert level but also among the grass-roots organizations and peasant movements, especially in the Third World. Examples of this are the critique of Mooney's study by a Scientific Adviser to the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and two contributions from South-East Asia and Latin America, which illustrate how the seeds issue is perceived by activists belonging to 'the Third System'. These contributions are followed by a review of how the seeds issue has been handled at the global level since the FAO Conference in 1983 and ends with a reprint of a significant 'Third System' document, *The World Food Manifesto*. Concluding this issue is a review of an extraordinary African novel depicting life at a time when there were no first, second or third systems and no seeds issue.

The Future of the United Nations System

Some Questions on the Occasion of an Anniversary

Ten years ago, it was stated in the 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld Report (What Now: Another Development) that 'if the UN were to be established today, its structural model would be quite different from the present one, resulting as it does from unplanned growth and attempts to meet specific problems as perceived under political circumstances widely different from those of today'. Over the past decade, these problems have become further aggravated and much more acute and affecting in particular those countries which have a stake in the performance of the organization, i.e. the Third World and those smaller powers in the North who have no pretence at world leadership and need a strong international organization. The 40th anniversary of the United Nations 'could be used as an opportunity towards a streamlining and strengthening of the UN system', writes Marc Nerfin in the present paper.



Taking as his point of departure some of the aspects of the multifaceted global crisis, which is seen as a mutation crisis of human society, the author argues that 'what is at stake is indeed survival, and, should we survive, the conditions of a new age on this planet', bringing out the deepest implications of the conception of Another Development. The following part of the paper examines, in this context, the crisis of the United Nations, looking at both its external causes (primarily the Reagan administration campaign against the very idea of international organization) and at its internal causes. Against this background, the paper discusses the question 'what is the UN', and suggests that it is, for one part, a mirror of the world's contradictions and, for another, an entity which cannot be reduced to the sum of governmental postures. It has a certain autonomy, a 'margin of liberty', which can and should be widened. One of the conditions for widening this autonomy, on the basis of an evaluation of the experience of the last four decades, is an aggiornamento of the 'only global tool available to the human species as such'. This would come from a movement of opinion and through bringing the UN 'closer to the people'. Five issues (functions, decision-making, funding, independence of the Secretariat, giving a voice to the social actors) are outlined as guideposts for mapping out the territory of the United Nations future.

The paper is one of the results of a collective effort to reflect on the future of the United Nations, which was launched by the International Foundation for Development Alternatives (IFDA)

early in 1985. A preliminary draft has been circulated by IFDA to some 300 individuals all over the world. Discussions of the draft have taken place in several cities, including New York and Geneva, involving a number of IFDA Executive Committee and Council members and other members of the development community. Many written proposals and suggestions have also been received and a panel was organized on the basis of the draft within the framework of the 18th Conference of the Society for International Development (Rome, 4 July). The present paper is, however, still to be considered as work in progress and is offered here as a basis for further discussion.

Marc Nerfin has worked for ten years (1963—1972) in the United Nations Secretariat, in Addis Ababa at the Economic Commission for Africa, in New York under Philippe de Seynes, then Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs; he was later a member of the small team assembled by Sir Robert Jackson for the Study of the Capacity of the United Nations Development System, and a close colleague of Maurice F. Strong in the preparations for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm, 1972). In 1974/75, he was the Director of the 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld Project on Development and International Cooperation. Marc Nerfin is currently the President of IFDA and a member of the Advisory Editorial Committee of Development Dialogue. He is also associated, inter alia, with ILET in Santiago, the Third World Forum in Cairo, CODEV in Malta, the Marga Institute in Colombo and ENDA in Dakar, and is Vice-Chairman of the Board of IPS Third World News Agency.

**Introduction:
the context**

This paper is being written on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the United Nations, when the very age of the organization invites one to take into account the *time perspective*, both backward and forward. Looking beyond the trees of recent seasons, one should observe the forest of the last 40 years—twice the lifetime of the League of Nations—and, similarly, look ahead to future years. Showing perhaps more ingenuity than the founding fathers, one should endeavour to imagine the year 2000, or even the next 40 years, and how to get there. Such an awareness of the time dimension should inform our thinking about each and every question to be addressed.

One should first attempt to assess what has really changed since 1945, and what has not changed. The most striking factor is the geo-political trans-

formation of a largely colonized world into a polity of 159 sovereign member states of the United Nations, that is the emergence of the Third World, both in numbers (now 127 countries) and in organization (the Non-aligned movement, founded 30 years ago in Bandung; the Group of 77, founded 20 years ago at UNCTAD I; and a number of regional and other South-South groups). One should also ponder over the rise of Japan and Western Europe, and the challenge they pose to the hegemony of the two superpowers which grew out of the 1939—1945 war. And one should attempt to gauge the real significance of the demographic explosion (two out of three of our fellow human beings today were not yet born when the UN was created). What has also changed is the perception that humankind has of itself. The world as seen in 1945 from San Francisco or Lake Success was essentially white, western and Christian; its basic paradigms were newtonian. The global projection of such a limited vision did not make it any less limited. Today, largely as a result of the ‘great awakening’ of the South, but also because we can now view our planet from outer space, humankind is recapturing its wholeness. No one can any longer ignore the existence of the *cultures*, in the widest sense, of Africa, pre-columbian Americas, Arabia, Asia and the Pacific.

What has *not* changed, on the other hand, is the unequal exchange, whatever the innovations in its mechanisms, the hegemony of the North over the South and underdevelopment.

We are at the same time confronted with the immediate holocaust of starvation in Africa, which threatens 30 million human beings, many of whom are likely to die this year, with the possible holocaust of the nuclear winter, with the persisting crisis of underdevelopment and maldevelopment and with the current crisis in the world economy and in international relations (USA - USSR, Afghanistan, Central America, Kampuchea, Iraq-Iran). Under such circumstances, how can we possibly, so as to be able to act, understand better the nature of this general crisis, its multiple aspects, causes and consequences—positive and negative—and their systemic interrelatedness. These include:

1. *the economic and financial crisis*: the inadequate and extrovert nature of most growth processes and its links with the persisting unequal exchange, both within and between countries, and the resulting poverty; the origins and consequences of the debt, its relative importance for the world system and for the debtor countries, its servicing as reverse transfer both from South to North and from poor to rich, the use of the borrowed resources (outward-oriented production capacity,

arms purchase, elite consumption, speculation, private investment abroad, corruption *versus* need-satisfaction-oriented investments, import substitution), the evolution of the rate of interest, the US responsibility (dollar value and real debt burden), the role of the capital market (autonomy from both national interests and productive processes), the rate of profit of the banking system; protectionism and Third World deteriorating terms of trade;

2. *the environmental crisis*: the implications of the withering away of the resource base (deforestation, desertification); the externalization of costs to neighbours (e.g. the acid rains originating from UK or Czechoslovakia); urban decay; new risks as exemplified by the Mexico explosion or Bhopal; the outer limits of the biosphere (ozone layer, climatic changes, etc); the hegemony of short-term rentability; the social causes (the combination of poverty and affluence, that is injustice) of ecological deterioration;
3. *the social crisis*: the growth and irreversibility of unemployment; the challenges to the welfare state; the marginalization of the urban poor in the South; the ‘new poor’ in the North; the small farmer as an endangered species all over the globe; the migrations from South to North; the tide of xenophobia and racism; persisting gender oppression; growing feelings of powerlessness and alienation among people and societies;
4. *the cultural crisis*: the homogeneization of societies; the role of the mass media (propaganda, malinformation, advertisement, standard consumption values and patterns); westernization of the elites of the South; ethnocentrism and lack of recognition of the Other’s values; the identity crisis; the loss of both roots and a *raison d’être*; the poor understanding of the ethnic resurgence;
5. *the ideological crisis*: fundamentalism and integrism—be they capitalist, marxist or religious—their roots and utilization; the shaking Western modernization paradigms—that is, to use different terms, the moral crisis and the spiritual crisis;
6. *the political crisis*: the rise of the authoritarian state in the Third World, and the fragility of the re-born democracies of South America; the risks of ‘friendly fascism’ in the US; the failure of the Soviet system (which did not ‘catch up’, except, perhaps, in weaponry) and the lack of

success of the internal reform movements; the pervasiveness of bureaucracies (public and private) everywhere; the negation of human rights;

7. *the security crisis*: the impact of bi-polarization and hegemonic policies; East-West rather than South-North approaches; invasions (Afghanistan or Grenada); destabilization; terrorism, private and statist; militarization of economies and societies; the scramble for resources and the diversion of resources from the satisfaction of human needs; the ever-open questions of Palestine and Southern Africa; the local wars made possible by arms exports; and, above all, the nuclear risk;
8. *the Third World differentiation crisis*: the 1973/74 missed historical chance for genuine South-South cooperation; relations between oil exporting, NICs and poorest countries; the contradictions within the Non-aligned movement, and the lack of leadership after the death of Nehru, Nasser, Tito, Boumedienne; the inability to establish permanent secretariats in either the Non-aligned movement or the Group of 77;
9. *the theoretical crisis*: the wave of neo-conservatism as an acid test for past development theories; state/market relations in both East and West; the relevance of international discussions for national development strategies and practices; the limited impact of alternative models;
10. *the development cooperation crisis*: the reasons for dwindling expectations and resources; the cooperation 'fatigue'; the shift from aid to Third World development to aid to Northern exports; the role of food aid; the crisis of multilateral channels.

This list is not exhaustive, but it is long enough to suggest that we are light-years away from a mere 'cyclical' economic crisis. As a matter of fact, and without any doomsday suicidal complacency, we are probably in the midst of a *mutation* crisis. What is at stake is indeed survival, and, should we survive, the conditions of a new age on this planet, that is, the deepest implications of *Another Development*¹. Another Development is rooted in the local spaces where people live, but it has national, regional and global dimensions. In the global space, the only available instrument is the United Nations system. This is both the essential challenge that it has to face, and the source of all its contradictions. Its crucial importance, when seen in this light, explains the focus of this paper on the UN system as *an instrument*.

The institutional crisis

For the crisis is also institutional, and the United Nations system is not immune. Different actors, however, have different perceptions of what constitutes the crisis of the UN. The actors are many: the International Organizations unit in the US State Department and committed Third World representatives or former representatives; Western journalists and the opinions they inform and influence one way or another; UN desk staff and senior civil servants in Western capitals and conventional ministries in Third World countries; Non-aligned countries and client countries; countries withdrawing (USA from Unesco or Poland from ILO) and countries sometimes threatened with exclusion; UN civil servants of all grades and citizens who 'in UN believe' There are probably as many perceptions of the crisis as there are actors. The crisis is thus ill-defined, and it would be prudent, for anyone entering this debate, to recognize that his/her views are likely to be partial in both senses of the word.

It may be helpful, at least in a first stage of the discussion, to distinguish between the 'external' and the 'internal' elements of the crisis. There is of course a tendency, among those who criticize the system, to focus on the internal determinants, and among those who defend it, to see only the external ones. Both categories are real, but if they are not tackled as related parts of a whole, any discussion is likely to end in deadlock.

External determinants

Since the lead in the criticism levelled against the UN is being assumed by the Reagan administration and some of its supporters (for instance the Heritage Foundation) as well as by some of the US media, it is worthwhile to try to elucidate the motivations behind the anti-UN campaign. In this connection, the following elements may be considered:

1. *the declining hegemony*: the US used to control the deliberative organs of the system, but its capacity to influence the votes of governments as such or of individual delegates has decreased as Third World solidarity, including its expression through group voting, has increased. Furthermore, its control over the execution of decisions (through key staff and the power of the purse), whilst still very much part of daily reality, appears to be somewhat receding;
2. *resistance to attempts at regulating or restructuring world economic relations*: Third World efforts towards restructuring world economic relations (the New International Economic Order, the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States) or their embryonic regulation

(the Convention on the Law of the Sea, the codes of conduct on transfers of technologies, activities of transnational corporations, marketing of drugs or baby food) and the concomitant emergence of the idea of development *accountability* all somewhat reduce the omnipotence of free enterprise. US companies, which are subject to some control at home, however, oppose its introduction in the other spaces where they operate;

3. *the role of ideology*: the new self-assertiveness of the US, the desire to overcome the moral crisis linked with the Vietnam war, its strategic superiority, the general feeling of being the leader of the world, all these—not to mention obscure but terrifying Armageddon analogies²—are translated into ideological postures such as those of the Heritage Foundation, which believes the US no longer needs the UN since ‘it no longer serves US national interests’.³

Another external determinant seems to be the weakness of the other founders of the UN in the North, the Europeans, in facing the crisis. Setting aside the most conservative governments, even those who were known as ‘like-minded’ seem to have accepted the US case without much discussion, even if their national interests, as smaller powers, would have required a more positive, more autonomous approach. It is as if the economic crisis, rather than imperial postures, had fostered shortsighted unilateralism in Western Europe and provoked a decline in the interest in multilateralism.

True enough, the frustrations over the incapacity of the UN to solve major pending problems—be they political (Palestine or South Africa) or economic (the restructuring of world economic relations)—are often transformed into rhetorical statements and symbolic votes, all the more frequent as they have no impact on either problems or solutions. This image, being one which is created by the media, may affect the credibility of the institution in the North. But what is not usually reported is the fact that the masters of the old order do not recognize the claims of the South and are simply not prepared to negotiate with its representatives.

It is indeed impossible not to note the lopsided nature of the media discussion of the UN crisis: there is much talk, for instance, about the ‘crisis of UNCTAD’, which reflects better the aspirations of the South, and none about the IMF, which acts as the sheriff of the Western banking system. There is much noise about the crisis of Unesco, but none about, for

example, IAEA, ICAO, ITU, WIPO or WMO*, which are necessary to the North. Seen from this angle, the ‘UN crisis’ is largely a Northern expression of a felt challenge to the old order and a reflection of the North’s unwillingness to accept that change is necessary.

*Internal
determinants*

This does not imply that there are no internal problems. On the contrary, there are many, reflecting the aging of the institution as well as the difficulties in adapting to new situations. Among the internal factors of the crisis, the following call for particular scrutiny:

1. *the proliferation of agencies, programmes, funds, etc*: the need to restructure the system as a whole was advocated as far back as 1969 by the Jackson Report and 1975 by the Dag Hammarskjöld Report, *What Now: Another Development* and by the Ad hoc Committee on Restructuring. Instead, attempts were made to address new problems through the establishment of new agencies, thus making even more difficult a system-wide and systemic approach to development cooperation;
2. *the proliferation of diplomatic meetings*: if anything, these are draining the limited resources of Third World and smaller industrialized countries rather than helping them. This may explain at least some of the problems in the quality of representation and the style of deliberation (lengthy, repetitive speeches, lack of real discussion);
3. *the proliferation of bureaucratic reports*: their volume has reached proportions, which exceed the managing or decision-making capacity of any government or delegation; the general decline in UN studies is more serious still, since they are intended for wider audiences;
4. *the whole problematique of the Secretariat and its staffing*: the problem is not one of sheer numbers since the UN bureaucracy, which deals—and rightly so—with almost every aspect of the peace and development problematique, remains rather modest compared to, for instance, that of the European Communities or to most national administrations and many local ones. The real questions are about the methods of recruitment and election (including for the highest positions), duration of

* These acronyms, which may not be familiar to everybody, stand for the International Atomic Energy Agency, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the International Telecommunication Union, the World Intellectual Property Organization and the World Meteorological Organization, respectively.

tenure, working conditions, efficiency, competence, integrity and independence of the Secretariat. There is, however, no evidence that the Third World is more responsible for the present unsatisfactory state of affairs than, say, the permanent members of the Security Council;

5. *the question of the costs*: this is a result of the previous deficiencies and, again, the question is not that of the total cost, which is very small in global terms, whatever yardstick one uses, but rather that of the effectiveness of the operation, the deployment of resources, and, perhaps above all, its financing.

All these problems (and many others, such as the system's relations with the media and other opinion-formers and with the scientific community) are not only real ones, but they affect principally those countries, which have a stake in a better performance of the organization, e.g. the Third World and those smaller powers in the North which have no pretence at world leadership and need a strong international organization. To limit the discussion at this point to the realm of the governments, one may hope that the 40th anniversary could be used as an opportunity to launch a serious drive towards streamlining and strengthening the UN system.

But, what is the UN? The crisis of the UN, at this point, would appear to be (i) *a reflection of the crisis of multilateralism*, itself prompted partly by the current political, economic and ideological crisis, and partly by the fact that some of the founding fathers no longer recognize their creature, which seems to be escaping them; and (ii) *an image crisis*, rooted in the difficulties of adapting the system to new realities, but resulting also from real shortcomings, however deliberately magnified they have been, and wherever the responsibility lies.

But there is also *an identity crisis*, and any serious discussion should endeavour to clarify what the UN really is, and what it can and cannot do, or, to put it differently, understand better *the distance between the United Nations as an aspiration and the United Nations as a reflection of realities* (geo-political, cultural, and others) and explore the margin of liberty that such a distance may offer.

Being *le fait du Prince*, the UN is primarily an instrument of governments, and this may be seen not only as its original sin but also as its major shortcoming. It can function properly only when there is a measure of agreement among governments, and anyhow it has only the political power

they delegate to it. Thus, the UN is in many respects more a mirror of the contradictions of the world than anything else; and, as folk wisdom always knew, breaking the mirror does not improve the image and refusing to see reality brings bad luck.

As a mirror, the UN cannot be held responsible for the failure of the super powers to live up to the commitments to *peace* they accepted when signing the Charter; it cannot be held responsible for their lack of willingness to limit armaments, for their military interventions or for the arms exports, without which the 'local wars' which have never stopped in the Third World since 1945 could not have taken place to such an extent.

Similarly, the UN cannot be held responsible for the failure to set up a proper *development cooperation* mechanism or even a coherent approach to genuine development, since it could not and still cannot go much beyond what governments (so-called 'donors' and 'recipients' alike) want or will tolerate.

The question of *human rights* is perhaps more ambiguous, or, rather, it may be seen to throw some light on the ambiguities of the system as such. On the one hand, one would expect the UN and its member governments to duly perform the task of policing those which violate the adopted conventions. In this sense, the Commission on human rights has an unescapable mandate. On the other hand, governments' usual lack of action in this field (even if there have been exceptions, notably during the presidency of Jimmy Carter) reflects the realities of the 'raison d'Etat' and exemplifies again the unwillingness of many governments to take seriously their own commitments. At the same time, the UN has, for instance, provided a tribune to the victims of torture and sent emissaries to visit prisons. Some of its senior staff have shown an exemplary conduct in this respect. Still the question needs to be posed: is the UN as such responsible for the deficiencies, or is it rather that it was naive to expect governments to do more, and that instruments of the civil society, such as Amnesty International, the Permanent People's Tribunal or the Red Cross are better suited to the task?

Third World *decolonization* is by and large completed, and it would be useful to analyse to what extent, and why, the UN seems to have performed rather well in this respect. Is it only because the two super powers did not have the same interests as their British and French colleagues occupying permanent seats on the Security Council, because Italy had been defeated, and because Belgium and Portugal were only minor powers and the latter reproved as a mere vestige of the pre-war undemocratic regimes?

Still, even in their own space, governments are not everything, and there is something which could be called a *UN entity*, which always had a measure of autonomy, and may thus be seen as constituting ‘the UN’. This entity is made up of three distinct but interrelated layers: (i) *governments in their capitals* (that is, when there is a UN policy, which is not the normal case, the small group of policy makers and senior civil servants who define the government position in the UN assemblies); (ii) *the permanent delegations* (only a study based on insights would reveal the relative autonomy of delegations, but it is well known, for instance, that except for major or well organized powers, influence, in New York or elsewhere, depends more on the quality of the delegation than on the weight of the country); and (iii) *the Secretariat*, which, whatever its essential collective and individual dependence on its governmental masters, enjoys a certain freedom of initiative. These three constituents of the ‘UN entity’ are living in a kind of symbiosis through contacts between delegates and Secretariat (quasi-permanent with resident missions, less frequent but no less regular with visiting delegations) as well as through personnel movements among them: what proportion of new staff members, especially at the decision-making levels, come from the UN desk in the capitals and from permanent delegations?

The relative margin of autonomy of this UN entity appears rather limited in the political sphere of UN activities, and somewhat wider in the development cooperation sphere. In either case, it is probably this margin which caused rising expectations of the UN. However, since it does exist, it may be just as well to try to assess the UN performance from this perspective. After all, the very idea of an international organization implies that there is something which cannot be reduced to the sum of governmental decisions; there has always been a cadre of truly international civil servants, supported by enlightened national ones, who place a global vision above narrow national interests, competition and rivalries, and act at the service of the world at large. The capacity of such forerunners of a world to be to influence the course of events is obviously determined by their imagination and independence.

This is to say that ‘the UN’ has also a *moral role*: even in its ‘operational activities’, the UN is no substitute for governmental action, but the extent to which it has influenced, positively or negatively, peace and development, and in the latter field, theory and practice, should be assessed, as well as its role as the vehicle of the first sense of global awareness ever to occur on this planet.

An agenda for evaluation may, in this light, cover such topics as:

1. the avoidance of war (eg. the role of Secretary-General U Thant in the 1962 'missile crisis' in Cuba); the peace-keeping operations in West Asia and elsewhere; the experience of the 'blue helmets'; the Congo operation; education for peace and the promotion of disarmament;
2. the process of Third World decolonization;
3. the limitations, achievements and potential of the Commission on human rights;
4. the role of the UN system in such strictly global affairs as the common heritage of mankind (especially in the Law of the Sea but also with reference to outer space and 'intellectual property'), as well as in expanding knowledge (including statistical) of this planet and its inhabitants;
5. the role of the UN system in postal services (UPU), civil aviation (ICAO), maritime transport (IMO), telecommunications (ITU), or meteorology (WMO);
6. the development of international law and the place of the International Court of Justice;
7. the role of the Committee for Development Planning, ECOSOC, the Secretariat and others in the elaboration of the three International Development Strategies; the relevance of these strategies to both national development and international cooperation; their usefulness in socializing the development debate and fostering the cooperation movement; their limitations reflecting the prevailing development ideology and the vested interests at stake;
8. the contribution of the sectoral agencies, funds, programmes, etc., to the strengthening of the autonomous capacity of societies to develop, meet their needs and master technologies, for example, FAO and the World Food Council as far as food is concerned, WHO for health, Unesco for education, science and cultural understanding, Habitat for housing and human settlements, ILO for labour protection, UNIDO for industry, UNEP for environment, etc.;
9. the role of ECOSOC, UNCTAD, the regional commissions and their institutes, such as ILPES or IDEP, as well as UNITAR, UNRISD, and perhaps UNU, in clarifying and enriching development theory;

10. the role of UNCTAD in facilitating and moralizing North-South trade and in providing a forum for discussion on the restructuring of the world economy; of the Regional Commissions in support of regional cooperation; and of the Centre on Transnational Corporations in providing information and analysis on global economic power;
11. the results of the 'operational activities' of the system, those of UNDP, UNICEF, IFAD, WFP, UNFPA, HCR, UNDRRO, UNWRA, etc. on the one hand, as well as those of the Bretton Woods institutions, the IMF and the IBRD, on the other. This should include an analysis of the relevance of the implicit models of development informing such activities, the nature of the interaction between suppliers and users of resources, the level and quality of transfers, and the proportion of such transfers which have really contributed to the autonomous capacity to develop, as well as, in the case of relief agencies, the quality, relevance and timeliness of their interventions;
12. the influence of the Joint Inspection Unit through monitoring the functioning of the system; were its analyses properly studied and its conclusions acted upon?
13. the influence of the major World Conferences, since Stockholm in 1972 (environment, population, food, human settlements, desertification, water, science and technology, agrarian reform and rural development, new and renewable sources of energy and, as far as actors are concerned, women) in bringing to the fore the emerging themes of the development problematique, in offering new approaches to old themes and generally, because they reached far beyond the space of governments, contributing to a new global awareness; similarly, the role and significance of the many thematic 'days', 'years' or 'decades';
14. finally, but of great relevance for the next century, the use by the United Nations University of its autonomy (somewhat unique in the UN system) to tackle the fundamental questions of the future through linking up with forward-looking scientists, the wise among us, and the new social actors.

Among the general *criteria* against which to evaluate such activities, one should take into account the contribution of the UN system to the exchange of experiences and the generation and dissemination of new ideas, as well as the countless personal contacts it has facilitated among men and women from all regions and many cultures.

In the final analysis, the basic question is simple: *could the world as we know it today be possible without the United Nations?* The answer is equally simple: no.

There has been no world war since the founding of the organization. Third World decolonization has been virtually completed. Small and otherwise powerless countries now have a tribune. Development cooperation, however problematic, has started. The feeling that we belong to this only one earth is spreading.

The UN is the first attempt in history at global organization, that is at establishing rules accepted by all. It is the first tool ever for global dialogue, understanding, conflict resolution and cooperation. They bear a terrible responsibility, those who weaken the United Nations by refusing the rules of the game, outside which there is only the law of the jungle—that is underdevelopment, war and death.

On the contrary, the UN needs *strengthening*. This can be achieved only through re-thinking, re-structuring, and up-grading. Forty years of experience, that is of achievements, mistakes, shortcomings, failures, successes, and new perceptions of the world and humankind, are there to learn from. We are better equipped than in 1945 to make the UN a more effective tool for peace and development.

Which UN for the world?

The creation of the United Nations, 40 years ago, was an act of faith, and its *aggiornamento*, starting in this anniversary year, has also to be an act of faith. There is, however, a difference. Today's faith is based on the record of these years.

The next question is: *what UN do we need?* This would be beyond the scope of these notes, meant only to start a discussion, and not to offer details of a blueprint. Enough has been written (and not acted upon) to provide food for thought to institutional designers. But a few questions might be of help in mapping out the territory of a better UN. Some of the following are in fact mere extensions of existing practices, others are newer; some may be answered within the framework of the existing Charter, others would require amendments. This is not important at this stage.

Further, the *aggiornamento* will not come from governments alone. However 'realistic' the proposals, governments as such will not act collectively if not pushed. One cannot be limited by too narrow a concern for what

governments may now find 'feasible' since change, if it is to come, will result only from a *movement of opinion*.

Such a movement is possible. For perhaps the most important fact about the United Nations, in this anniversary year, is the result of an opinion survey carried out in May in the US, the UK, Japan, the Federal Republic of Germany and France. It is described in some detail in Appendix I, but the message from the five hard-core industrial countries is crystal-clear:

1. whenever people do have an opinion about the United Nations, the majority (except in Japan) considers it is doing a good job;
2. an even larger majority, in all five countries, does not believe, as some American integrists claim, that the world would be better off without the UN; and
3. except in the US (where this is the position of half of those expressing an opinion), at least six out of ten people do not think that the Third World has too much influence on the UN.

In understanding the UN, people are ahead of governments, just as there have always been people and movements ahead of governments for decolonization, for peace, for human rights, for women's liberation, for the environment, and for consumers self-defense.

This offers to the UN a line of action to consider when it ponders its future this autumn: *get closer to the people*. Here are five questions which, one way or another, appear relevant to the future of the United Nations and its *aggiornamento* in that direction.

1. Which functions?

The UN may not have the power to change the world, but it can certainly do more than record speeches and ineffective resolutions on peace and development whilst *de facto* reflecting the *status quo*. As the only global instrument, that is, strictly speaking, as the only instrument of the human species as such, and if it is to smooth the transition from the old order(s) to the new, more humane, order(s) which survival requires, is not its primary role to be *open*,

- open to *new realities*, notably the multifaceted emergence of the Third World, within and without the nation states;

- open to *new aspirations*, notably the people's expressed need for liberation from the threat of nuclear omnicide, from hunger and other forms of maldevelopment, and for mastering their lives;
- open to *new paradigms*, notably those concerning security, development, relations between societies, human beings and genders, as well as between the species and the environment of which it is part and parcel?

In order to be, in short, open-ended to the future, could the UN do more and better, in a universal, independent and pluralistic manner, to

- monitor both nature and societies, through the collection, analysis and dissemination of all relevant information;
- facilitate the sharing of experiences and ideas;
- promote mutual understanding and education, through dialogue and negotiation among countries, cultures, and societies;
- formulate alternative policy options for the steering of the world society in transition?

2. Can the UN decision-making system be improved?

The voting system in the UN General Assembly is based on the principle of 'one country, one vote', but the Security Council has a politically-weighted voting system, and the Bretton Woods institutions (and UNDP) an economically-weighted one, and whatever the noises about 'automatic majorities', the UN by and large still operates under the control of the big powers of the North.

Would it be possible to overcome such an outdated pattern without moving from one hegemony (real) to another one (possible)? Could an arbitration or reconciliation system be worked out?

Could the fact that, say, Brazil, India or Nigeria, and the US, the USSR or China, have a larger global responsibility than Vanuatu, Dominica, or the Seychelles, be reconciled with the fundamental right of every polity, whatever its size, to have a proper say in planetary affairs, that is in matters concerning its survival?

Could a new system, reflecting both the general and the different responsi-

bilities of different countries in different matters be imagined? Could, for instance, the voting system of IFAD or that of the International Sea-Bed Authority be a precedent for other operational agencies?

Could the post-war Unesco system be revisited, rehabilitated and perhaps extended to other agencies? Its Executive Board was then composed of competent persons serving in their personal capacity 'on behalf of the Conference as a whole and not as representatives of their government'. Only in 1954 were members of the Board made to represent their governments—as a result of a 1952 proposal by the US government, which today complains about 'statism'.

3. Can the UN system have a greater financial autonomy?

Resources at the disposal of the UN system are not commensurate with the magnitude of the needs of development cooperation. How could these resources be increased and become more automatic?

What scope is there for reducing administrative expenditure in favour of development cooperation expenditure (but who ever complained about the administrative budget of the World Bank, which is fully automatic, being financed by the difference between the interests paid to lenders on the market and interests paid by borrowers, that is Third World countries)?

Can a levy on the use of the global commons or a tax on military expenditures be collected by the UN and affected to development cooperation?

The US share in the regular budget of most UN agencies is 25 per cent, and more in most voluntary programmes. This is in agreement with the principle of the capacity to pay embodied in most national tax systems. This also gives the US an excessive leverage on UN activities, either indirectly through staffing or directly through the power of the purse. Can the scale of assessment be modified and the share of any one country be limited to, say, 10 per cent of the total, without decreasing the total income?

Are there effective ways to delink the payment of dues from influence on the actual functioning of the organisation?

4. How can the Secretariat become truly independent?

Article 100 of the Charter provides that the Secretariat ‘shall not seek or receive instructions from any government’ and that ‘each Member of the United Nations undertakes to respect the exclusively international character of the responsibilities of the Secretary-General and the staff and not seek to influence them’.

Possibly no other article of the Charter has been more widely ignored than this crucial one. The super powers have been and remain particularly guilty in this respect, from the dismissal of staff members during the McCarthy era in the US to the exploitation of USSR (or USA) staff positions by the KGB (or the CIA). More generally, this provision has been virtually nullified by the routine submission of appointments to governmental clearance, probably the major weakness of the Secretariat.

True enough, Article 100 expresses the liberal naivety of the founding fathers, who sought to fashion the institution in their image. Even without ‘instructions’, members of the Secretariat, belonging as they do to different cultures (political, ideological, etc.), cannot but reflect them ‘in the discharge of their responsibilities’.

Yet, could the independence of the Secretariat be improved?

How could a Secretariat, of largely American-British-French parentage (as recently as 10 years ago, members were still primarily drawn from these three countries)⁴, become a truly pluralistic image of the diversity of world societies and polities?

Could the best traditions of its servants, both past and present, become the model rather than the exception? Could the example of a Dag Hammarskjöld inspire all Secretariat members, from the most modest to the top?

Do the answers, or at least some of them, reside in different selection procedures; in the enforcement of criteria based exclusively on efficiency, competence, integrity and commitment; and in the delegation of appointment decisions to independent committees of people who themselves have strictly and consistently and over a long time met such criteria? Would the limitation of the terms of tenure restrict bureaucratization? Would the

institution of a staff college help? Could the experience of religious orders or revolutionary parties in the selection, apprenticeship and development of their cadre, be of relevance? What mechanisms of social accountability for Secretariat members could be set up?

How could member states be made to respect their commitment to respect the independence of the Secretariat?

In sum, how could the margin of autonomy of the Secretariat component of 'the UN entity' be widened? How could the Secretariat become the melting pot of a new cadre of men and women exclusively devoted to the world community at large and to its emancipation? There is perhaps no more important question for the future of the UN.

5. Can the UN give a voice to all social actors?

States and governments, important as they are and will continue to be, do not reflect the richness of societies. Even when democratically elected, governments represent at best the majority of a society, not the whole of it, and UN continuity suffers from shifting majorities, as exemplified by the fate of the Convention on the Law of the Sea. There are other social actors. Some represent the economic powers, such as, in the global space, the transnational corporations or the international banking system. They are part of the problem, and they must also be part of the solution. People in their diversity (and contradictions) express themselves through other actors: religious movements, peace movements, consumer movements, ethnic movements, trade unions... Can the UN accommodate these actors?

This would require a radical alternative to past and current thinking and practices.

The question is not to 'mobilize the opinion' (a catch phrase which one will hear in almost every anniversary speech, including those of the Secretary-General): the people are quite able to 'mobilize' themselves, if necessary. The question is not whether to tinker with the bureaucratic arrangements for the so-called 'non-governmental organizations' in 'consultative status' with the UN and its specialized agencies. The question is whether the UN

will be able to perceive that its real constituency lies beyond governments, and is the peoples and the people. The challenge is to seize the opportunity of the 40th anniversary and of the crisis to re-think and re-establish the UN's relations with the people and their associations.

Can one think of a three-Chamber UN, one representing the governments, or first system (which we may call *The Prince Chamber*), another the economic powers, or second system (*The Merchant Chamber*), and another the people and their associations, or third system (*The Citizen Chamber*).*

Can one think, perhaps along the lines of the European Parliament or through some arrangement with the Inter Parliamentary Union, of giving a space in the UN assemblies to the current political minorities, since they may well be tomorrow's majorities?

Are there more immediate ways to open up the UN system to the people? What could the third system itself do? What mechanisms can be devised and established which would make the UN, as it is now and as it may unfold, at least *accountable* to the people?

Conclusion: hope and responsibility

Whatever the depth of the crisis and the predicament looming upon us, there is no excuse for despondency. On the contrary. If 'crisis' means moment of decision, which it did in Greece, our ability to make the right decisions depends on our capacity not to lose sight of the underlying hopes.

Through these first 40 years of the United Nations, scientific, technological, conceptual, practical and, *lato sensu*, political advances have been many and significant. There have been many positive changes in our understanding of nature and society, and the experiences accumulated offer a prodigious capital to choose from and build on. Our task is now to sketch a vision of a more humane world and to explore ways to approach it.

Democracy has had its setbacks. They continue. But dictatorships have not been able to resist people's pressure, in Greece, Portugal or Spain nor, more recently, in Argentina, Brazil or Uruguay. In Western Europe and in

* See Appendix II, *A Three-Chamber UN?* for some elaboration of the idea.

North America, the people's response to and sense of solidarity with those starving in Africa has been overwhelming. Everywhere, over the last 40 years, people have been ahead of governments.

Finally, perhaps, one major reason for hope and confidence is the very youth of humankind. More than half of those living today are less than 25 years old, and the children of today are going to be in charge tomorrow.

At the same time, this places an unavoidable responsibility upon the adults of today, the artisans of the present world order, *to keep the option of life open* and to manage the transition to a world in which people can truly live. In this anniversary year, the first responsibility in this respect is to invent and explore new institutional paths to make the UN the instrument we need. For the UN is much more than 159 member states: it is a *project* which, as the only embryo of a planetary organization, belongs to all of us, members of the human species living on this *only one earth*.

Notes

1. The five pillars of Another Development have been outlined in the 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld Report, *What Now: Another Development* and illustrated in, among others, subsequent issues of *Development Dialogue* and in the *IFDA Dossier*.
2. See Texas Observer editor Ronnie Dugger in *The Washington Post*, 8 April, 1984.
3. See Burton Yale Pines (editor), *A World without a UN: What Would Happen if the United Nations Shut Down*. With a Foreword by Ambassador Charles M. Lichenstein. Washington, The Heritage Foundation, 1984.
4. See Marc Nerfin, 'The United States Sanctions Against Unesco and the Three Vetoes: Is a Democratic United Nations System Possible', *Development Dialogue* (1976:2), pp. 79-94.

Appendix I

Even in the Hard Core Countries of the North

Most People Believe in the UN




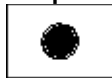

On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the United Nations, the New York Times, the International Herald Tribune and the CBS News arranged for an opinion survey which was carried out in mid-May in France, Japan, the UK and West Germany by Gallup and in the US by the NYT and CBS. The principal results have been published in the International Herald Tribune of 26 June, including the table reproduced here.

The most salient results are as follows:

- Among those who expressed an opinion, more than 55 per cent in the UK and the US and almost two-thirds in France and Germany said that the UN was doing a 'good job' or a 'very good job';
- 58 per cent of the French, 73 per cent of the Germans, 79 per cent of the British, 86 per cent of the Americans and the Japanese clearly said NO to the provocative question 'would the world be better off without the UN?', and less than 15 per

The New York Times / CBS NEWS
Herald Tribune / POLL

Opinion of the United Nations

	West Germany	Great Britain	France	Japan	United States
					
How is the UN doing in solving the problems it has had to face?					
Vary good job	2%	7%	2%	1%	5%
Good job	46	39	45	11	46
Poor job	21	28	22	43	27
Very poor job	6	9	3	5	13
Don't know	26	17	28	41	10
Does the Third World have too much influence in the UN?					
Yes	13	31	25	12	42
No	45	48	37	17	42
Depends/Don't know	42	21	38	71	16
Would the world be better off without the UN?					
Yes	5	11	11	1	13
No	56	69	45	56	78
Makes no difference	16	7	21	8	-
Don't know	23	13	23	35	9

Based on 950 interviews conducted in West Germany from May 17 through 29; 888 in Great Britain from May 8 through 13; 980 in France from May 15 through 22; 1,446 in Japan from May 9 through 13; and 1,509 in the United States from May 29 through June 2.

cent said 'yes'—a good response, especially in the US, to the Heritage Foundation and its pamphlet *A World without a UN*;

- on an issue which seems to worry the supporters of the Western vested interests—does the Third World have 'too much influence in the UN?'—half of the Americans, 59 per cent of the Japanese, 60 per cent of the British and French (former colonial powers) and 78 per cent of the Germans did not believe this to be so.

Finer analysis also reveals that

- women are more favourable to the UN than men (except in France);
- Americans below 40 appreciate the UN more than the older generation;
- in the US, the liberals support the UN more than the conservatives, but the situation is just the opposite in Germany, Japan and the UK;
- two-fifths of the Americans believe that their country has too little influence on the UN (and 13 per cent that it has too much of it).

On the negative side, the proportion of those who 'don't know' is rather high (never less than a quarter in France, Germany and Japan) and follow up interviews in the US showed 'a wide range of ignorance about the UN'. The British seem more aware, but the Japanese case is pathetic: two-fifths have no idea about UN performance or whether the world would be better off without the UN, and seven out of ten just do not know about Third World influence. Among the few who express an opinion, only 20 per cent consider that the UN is doing a good or a very good job.

Two conclusions—and one question—emerge clearly:

First, whatever the media and the governments say, the majority of the people 'in the UN believe'.

Second, there is much scope for re-thinking the United Nations' relations with the people (both policies and practices), especially, of course, in Japan.

Third, how is it that no similar survey has been organized in smaller countries (Sweden, Netherlands etc.) or in the Third World?

(Reproduced from *IFDA Dossier* 49, September/October 1985, pp 71-72.)

Appendix II

A Three-Chamber UN?

1985 is the year of the 40th anniversary of the United Nations. Occurring as it does in the midst of a crisis of multilateralism—some not recognizing their creature, others rejecting the very idea of international organization—this anniversary may offer an opportunity to think about possible ways to rejuvenate and strengthen the Organization.

Not only were the majority of the current 159 member states not independent 40 years ago, but most of the four billion human beings now living on this planet were not yet born. Rather than looking back, can't we see this as an invitation to try and imagine the UN of the next 40 years?

It may be too early to discuss the role of the UN in a world which, assuming we avoid the nuclear and the famine holocaust, our stuttering imaginations find it difficult to figure out. The challenge is rather to invent and explore an institutional path enabling the real social actors, all of them, to tackle the problems facing humankind.

In the global sphere where the UN evolve, the Prince (or governmental power) and the Merchant (or economic power), which control most decisions, have proven unable to offer effective approaches to peace and development. The voices of the third power, that of the people and of the peoples—in whose name the UN Charter was promulgated—remain largely unheard. Could not the people and their associations, which we call the third system—or the Citizen—have a say in the Organization?

Utopian as it may appear today—as did so many ideas, now part of the conventional wisdom, before someone took the first step towards implementing them—couldn't we sketch out a possible UN of 2025? Redeeming its original sin of having been conceived, brought into being and grown up as an organization of governments, the UN of our children and grandchildren will probably reflect better the societies of the world and the actors who make them alive.

This could for instance be achieved through a three-chamber General Assembly of the United Nations. The *Prince Chamber* would represent the governments of the states (not likely to wither away). The *Merchant Chamber* would represent the economic powers, be they transnational, multinational, national or local, belonging to the private, state or social sectors, since at the same time we need them and need to regulate their activities—which is better done with them. The *Citizen Chamber*, where there should be as many women as men, would, through some mechanism ensuring adequate representativity, speak for the people and their associations. At the very least, this would make it possible for citizens to hold Princes and Merchants *accountable* for the consequences of the exercise of their power.

This is a far cry from present arrangements under which, with one or two limited exceptions in ILO (presence of Trade Unions) and UNESCO (some national commissions), bureaucracies, on behalf of governments and on their own, run the place while maintaining the fiction of non-governmental organizations or 'NGOs'.

The concept of 'NGOs' is politically unacceptable because it implies that governments are the centre of society and people its periphery. Further, the hundreds of 'NGOs' in 'consultative status' with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) do not 'consult' on anything, and it may be just as well, constituting as they do a very mixed-bag of groups ranging from, say, the International Association of the Soap and Detergent Industry to the Christian Peace Conference.... Worse, however, is perhaps the situation of the 'NGOs' used by the Department of Public Information which, again with some exceptions, still considers them as conveyor belts of intergovernmental or bureaucratic wisdom distilled from above to a 'public opinion' seen as a passive receptacle.

Perhaps some imaginative and innovative institution designers could start working and offer to the world community, as a 40th anniversary present, some ideas on how to move from the present state of affairs to something more apt to enable people to participate in the management of the planet.

It would be futile, at this stage, to direct the exercise at governments. Like most past restructuring efforts (by far more modest), this one will, in the short term at least, strike the shelves of politico-bureaucratic lack of vision and vested interests. The exercise should on the contrary, not only be directed at, but carried out with, the social actors themselves, the women and the young, the peasants and the city dwellers, the producers and the consumers, the peace marchers and the ecological sit-in people, all those who are vitally interested in Another Development interweaving peace, justice and a better life for all.

The first result of such an endeavour may well be to give us a new sense of hope and confidence in the United Nations, a sense without which there may not be any United Nations or, for that matter, any nations in 2025.

(Reproduced from *IFDA Dossier* 45, January/February 1985, Editorial, pp 2 and 32. IFDA, 2 place du Marché, 1260 Nyon, Switzerland.)

Another Development under Repressive Rule

By Manfred Max-Neef

'There are many examples of people's minds at work for the construction of a society based on participation, mutual aid, solidarity, self-reliance, harmony with nature, human scale, and popular creativity', writes Manfred Max-Neef in this assessment of the situation in Chile today. Max-Neef, who left Chile in the 60s and spent the 70s promoting alternative development efforts in different parts of Latin America, returned to Chile in 1981 to set up CEPAUR (The Development Alternatives Centre) in Santiago. Exploring the conditions in the urban and rural poverty-stricken areas of his home country, he was struck by the strength and vitality of the many popular organizations that had grown up in opposition to the dictatorship. Describing his work in CEPAUR for an alternative Chile, he writes: 'Convinced that our best contribution would be to promote the philosophy of Another Development, we set ourselves the task to preach among our people our new and enlightened development gospel. Once we got there, we discovered that the invisible history was well in advance of us. Our initial missionary self-assurance was quickly changed into a humble awareness of "Here I come and there it is".' Giving a series of striking examples of different types of solidarity organizations in Chile and their heroic work under very difficult circumstances, he concludes: 'Now we know that we have little to teach, a lot to learn and much to cooperate with in order to allow for the consolidation of a people's new historical project.'



Manfred Max-Neef is an economist by training and the author of many books, the most recent being From the Outside Looking In: Experiences in Barefoot Economics (Uppsala, 1982). He is the Director of the CEPAUR/Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation Project on 'Human Scale Economies'. In recognition of his work for development alternatives in Latin America, he received the 1983 Right Livelihood Award, popularly known as the Alternative Nobel Prize. The illustrations to his article are drawn by the Swedish artist Per Elfström.

The winter of our discontent

Repression hits body, mind and soul. It hits them viciously, yet it never totally destroys them. While the repressed have the mysterious capacity of preserving the seeds of revival and reconstruction, the repressors carry within themselves the seeds of their own destruction. There always remains what torture cannot torture, what imprisonment cannot imprison, what

exile cannot sever; what will not vanish with disappearances and what will not be killed despite all the killings. No matter how brutal he may be, the repressor is incompetent; and no matter how painful it may be, repression is always inefficient. Whatever societal purposes a repressive system has in mind, the results in the long run will always evolve in the opposite direction. While constructing ever higher fences around bodies, minds and souls, repression, paradoxically, opens new horizons and fertile grounds for the irrepressible growth of human solidarity. And one day the repressor becomes more frightened than those he is supposed to frighten, because in a sudden stroke of enlightenment he realizes that while solidarity can be a life-long occupation of many lives, brutality can never be more than a seasonal job. And what then? He increases repression in a futile effort to extend his season. But Spring will inevitably come, no matter how long the repressor imposes upon the people the winter of their discontent.

What follows is not an attempt at theorizing. It is a simple and candid tale about my country rediscovered, and about a man's spirit revitalized by the lessons received from those who have kept - and still keep - in hiding the sun rays that will shine upon the coming Spring.

Three scenes about a spring in hiding

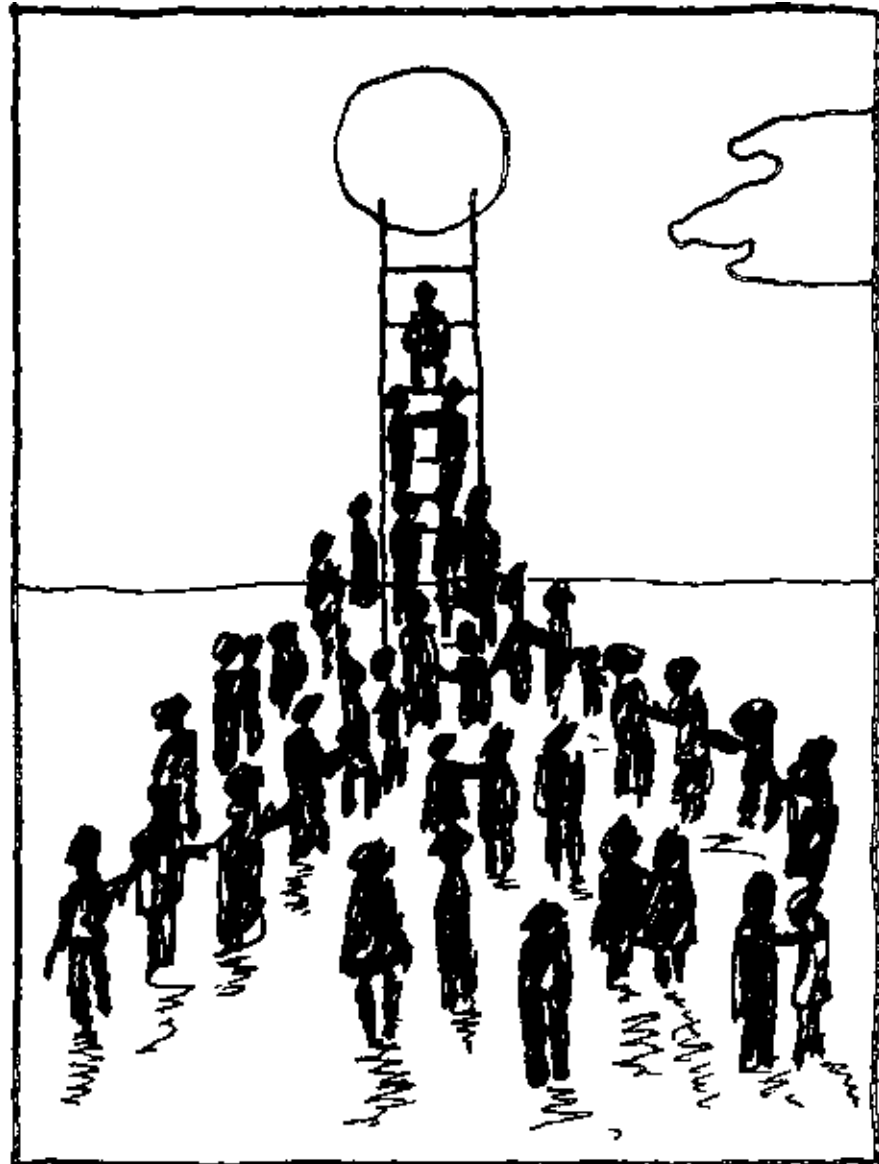
I

- I know, Manuel, that every time I turn right I bother you, and if I turn left I bother the children, so why don't we sell the bed?

- But, Josefa, you must be crazy! Where the hell do you think we are going to sleep?

- I have a great idea, you see? We sell the bed, and with the money we buy ourselves the sun. And once we own the sun, we can get as close to it as we want, and then we will have lots of space for us and for our friends, and we will never be cold again.

In a very old wooden chapel, no longer in use for religious services, the young couple, on a shaky stage, are improvising their dialogue. It has become a drama school and theatre of and for the kids of the surrounding 'poblaciones' (marginal and squatter settlements). The old and much beloved bishop, who died a couple of years ago, had allowed Juan, Maria and Tito—all three of them distinguished actors and directors—to use it for that purpose. They believed that theatre combined with poor people's hidden creative powers, was a perfect equation for the generation of a space of freedom in the midst of a brutally repressive environment. They proved to



be right. Hundreds of teenagers applied. Selection was difficult because they could see there were many more talented youngsters than they could handle in their modest project. The total lack of resources did not hinder, however, the spectacular outburst of enthusiasm and imagination.

Their first play, a parable about what happened to the people and to the judges, after the King of Spades and the King of Gold set up an alliance to overthrow and kill the King of Clovers, was so impressive that even the critic from the most important pro-regime newspaper had to recognize the

performance as being truly outstanding, while regretting, of course, the insidious and subversive undertones of the message.

One year of frantically creative activity gave new hope, and opened new horizons, to youngsters that were so badly affected by the hardship of unemployment and repression that they had reached dangerously low levels of self-esteem. They rediscovered themselves as total human beings, and through the staging of their collective creations they made their own people of the poblaciones feel that their hidden sufferings and silenced voices had found a wonderful and moving way of expressing themselves. Thousands of poor people, who had never seen a theatre performance before, felt proud and invigorated after witnessing the flowering of the creative potentials that had lain dormant in their own milieu. Success transcended the poblaciones, and the excellence of the performances attracted a growing audience of people from all walks of life.

And what of the future? Well, the Illustrious Municipality has decided to expropriate and demolish the building. They surely must have higher social priorities in mind. Most probably the opening of a new street that will go from there to nowhere.

The kids are sad, but feel neither beaten nor depressed. They will go on. We don't know where, but we do know they will be everywhere!

II

- Well, I am happy that you finally showed up. It took us quite some time, you know, before we could get hold of you. I don't remember how many people we asked to give you the message.
- Things are not easy, you know. One has to take precautions.
- Don't worry, I understand. Anyway, here is the letter I brought for you from Sweden.

Confessing my prejudices, he didn't look to me like the kind of person with whom one might carry on a particularly interesting conversation. Yet I thought I might as well be civil and ask him.

- Why don't you tell me a bit of what you and those in your movement are doing?
- How many minutes do we have?
- Forget the minutes and just go ahead.

He undid the zipper of his colourful jacket, pushed up its sleeves, made

himself as comfortable as possible in the chair, and with an impressive self-assurance, addressing me with the familiar Spanish 'tu', he started.

- All right, I'll tell you how things are. You see, there are all the opposition parties fighting to get us back into democracy. We support, of course, whatever fight there may develop, because the present situation is unbearable. But let me make it very clear to you that in my fifty years of age I have never really known democracy. I might say that I have had glimpses of it, but they were always short-lived.

- What do you mean?

- We have always been exploited, you see? There were some good moments, though; but short. I was involved in self-managed workers' enterprises. But before we could consolidate our efforts it was all over again.

- But there were positive experiences in the past that should be reconstructed, don't you think?

- We are not thinking of reconstruction. We are thinking of construction. There is a new culture emerging. You must understand that. A culture that has been growing and developing for over ten years in thousands of hidden corners, a culture of people speaking in whispers and having their discourse always interrupted, to start it all over again in yet another hidden corner.

- I see what you mean, and I know how difficult it is.

- Yes. But hidden corners make a great school, you know. You learn how to become self-reliant. You have to teach yourself, instruct yourself, and dream of your own Utopia, and every one of us is doing the same. And everyone is sharing with the others, and so we construct a culture of self-reliance based on solidarity. But we still have a lot more to learn, although a few things we know very well.

- Like what?

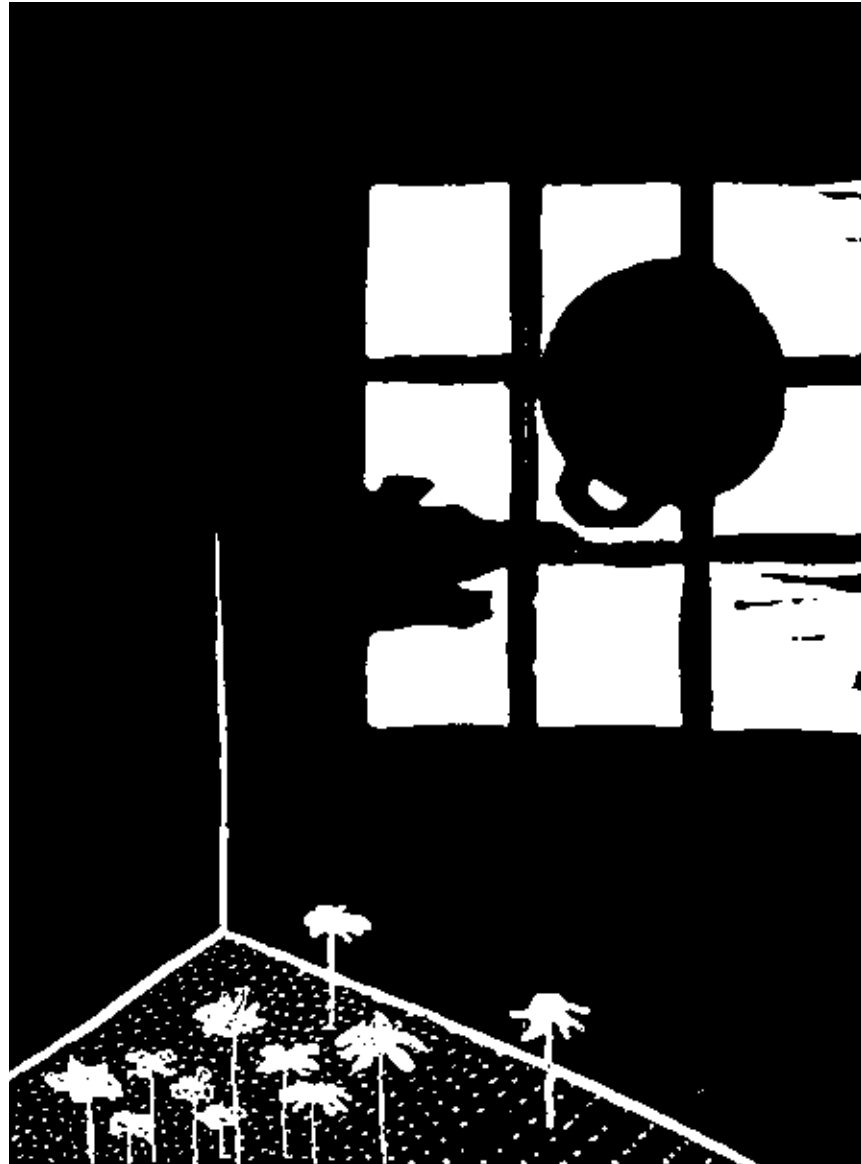
- We have grown. We are more mature than ever before. We know what we want and what we don't want.

- Such as?

- Such as the fact that we will not accept a move from repression today into manipulation tomorrow. We are not expecting others to build democracy for us. Democracy starts with us!

Our conversation, or rather his discourse, continued for over an hour. After the first few minutes I was dazzled by the presence of one of the most lucid minds I had come across in a long time. This encounter generated the definitive course of CEP-AUR,^{*} the Centre we had created a year earlier for

^{*} CEP-AUR is the Development Alternatives Centre, organized in Santiago, Chile, in January 1982, by Norbert and Manfred Max-Neef. It has an International Board, as well as an International Committee of Advisors.



the promotion of development alternatives. We are now a space of encounter for many of the finest grass-roots minds that have grown out of repression. Creative minds, free from conventional ties, and determined to construct a society truly based on self-reliance, solidarity and mutual aid.

III

The far south of Chile is like a Norwegian landscape. Everything is spectacular: the lakes, the volcanoes, the fjords, the forests, and, of course, the

people. They are in a way the humanized synthesis of a natural environment that is half beauty and half hardship.

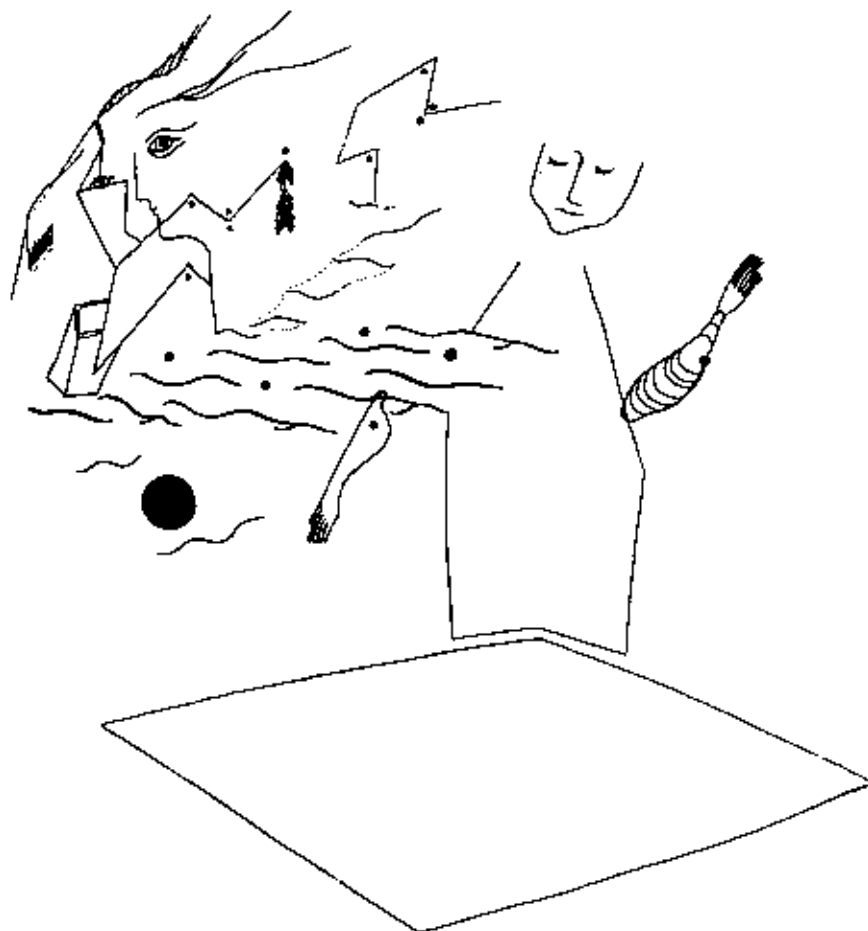
It was cold and raining when we arrived in the village where we wanted to meet with women of the local weavers' cooperative. The only news they had about our visit was a message transmitted two hours earlier through the local radio. Hence, we had little hope of finding anyone waiting for us.

We entered the small house where the rain was pouring in through the wooden joints. About forty women of all ages were sitting around the room, with their backs against the walls. Hands crossed over their laps, a shawl around their heads, wrapped in silence, they seemed carved in stone.

When we greeted them, we felt as if we were intruding into a small and forbidden space of eternity.

- Well, how are things? How are you doing?
 - So, so, señor, answered the oldest of them, a woman perhaps in her early eighties, with shining eyes, things are not too good, you know?
 - How much are you producing?
 - Nothing, señor. We have our tools, but we don't have a penny to buy the wool.
 - And for how long have you been inactive?
 - For about eight years, señor.
 - And how was it before? Did you have a good income?
 - Oh, yes, señor, we sold well and we even could save some money.
 - How many were you in the cooperative then?
 - Forty-five, more or less.
 - And now?
 - Sixty-seven, señor.
- We looked at each other in evident surprise.
- How is it possible that now when you have nothing you are more than before?
 - Aha!, answered the old woman with malice in her voice, there is one thing of which we have plenty.
 - What is that?
 - Hope, señor. Lots of hope! and solidarity.

Silence followed. The women were smiling at each other. Only the lazy rain could be heard through the tin roof. We were chewing over our own thoughts, seeing ridiculously taciturn in the midst of all those kind and tender smiles. We finally broke the silence by changing the subject.



- And what do the men do?
- Well, answered another woman with a high pitched voice, those who have a job work in the PEM.*
- And in what kind of jobs?
- They are constructing a road that is 12 kilometres away from here. They have to walk that distance up the mountain every day. There is no lorry or any other vehicle to carry them. It takes them about three hours to get there. They have to leave at five in the morning to be there at eight.
- And what if there is a rain storm?
- If labour is stopped because of the storm, they have to get there anyway to sign the book and then walk back. If not they lose the pay.

* PEM is the Minimum Employment Plan established by the Municipalities. In a family where no one has a job only one person can apply. The monthly salary is the equivalent of about US \$ 40-50, without any social, medical, or labour security. They can be dismissed from the job at any time, without notice, and without any compensation.

- And that is not all, señor, spoke a young pregnant woman of exotic indian beauty, while on the labour they get nothing to eat, no lunch, not even coffee. Whatever they want to eat or drink they have to carry with themselves.

One looks for answers and cannot find them. The situation overwhelms one's powers of analysis. The brain stops functioning and one only registers and accumulates a whirlwind of angry, frustrated and impotent feelings. Later that night we tried to compare notes, but there was actually nothing to compare. The image still sharp in our minds was 40 colourful handkerchiefs, like butterflies, waving us goodbye in the rain; and in our ears we still felt the vibrations of their farewell laughing wishes for our happy return.

Another lesson learned? Perhaps. We had witnessed so much in a few months. While trying to promote Another Development, as if we were the enlightened owners of a fine idea, we found its foundations at work everywhere. Yet there was something new to it, something more than we could at first see. Today we know what it was. People have taught us that Another Development is also a matter of love.

I

Enter the minds off the people

The culture of hidden corners has had a dramatic and significant development. It began as an atomized reaction of a people perplexed. But after ten years, a network of informal communications has grown into assemblies—mostly under the umbrella of the Church, which has provided the meeting places—and finally into movements, now capable of offering coherent societal alternatives. What follows in this section are excerpts of propositions and proposals that have emerged from two such movements. One is the Movimiento de Renovación Social, MRS (Movement of Social Renewal), based mainly in the metropolitan area of Santiago and in the central region of the country; and the other is the Multisectorial del Sur, MSS (Southern Multisectoral Movement) based in an extensive area covering several provinces of Chile.

However articulate these two movements may be, we have selected them only as an illustration. Although we do not wish to overestimate the concrete power and potential of the examples chosen, we want to caution the reader not to underestimate the power of an ongoing and growing process of which they are only a part.

In the autumn of 1984 we had, as members of CEPATUR, the privilege of being invited to the Third Conference of the MRS. It is a movement without any centralized power structure. Persons, or groups of its members, are appointed for the fulfillment of specific tasks; they are *delegates* of the people, not their formal leaders. The great majority are former industrial or construction workers, with a large number of them presently unemployed. These are some of the basic ideas contained in the document produced, with intense participation, by those who attended the conference:

The fundamental purpose of our alternative social project is to design the social, economic and political foundations for the organization of a new society. This must turn into a permanent and active reflexive process that allows for the enrichment of our concepts and definitions. In our attempt at constructing a people's alternative that may emerge and project itself as a national force, we aim to avoid and, hence, go beyond:

1. The reformist projects which subordinate the people's movement to transactions and negotiations carried out between the top echelons of the political parties, since their answer to the crisis simply aims at the re-establishment of a parliamentary liberal democracy that may allow for agreements and reforms that will only transitorily alleviate the hardships of many popular sectors; and,
2. The insurrectionary vanguardist projects which subordinate the people's movement to a high command, or to an enlightened minority that acts and thinks for them, and from which only instructions, and obscure perspectives about the future, can be expected.

In our attempt at constructing a people's alternative, we aim at developing and strengthening an autonomous popular social power which, despite a decade of atomization, dispersion and repression, has conquered new spaces and is becoming increasingly articulate at grass-roots levels.

The huge problems that oppress our country, like unemployment and marginalization, can neither be solved by the dictatorship nor by the liberal parliamentary democracy that may eventually substitute it. A simple shift will not do the trick. We are, in fact, convinced that, at this stage in history, the conventional answers to our problems—whether capitalistic or otherwise—are exhausted when it comes to the satisfaction of people's fundamental human needs. Development models that favour productivity purely based on profits and gains, that deplete the natural resources, that destroy the environment, and that polarize the distribution of income and wealth, have failed. It is that historical failure that motivates us to search for new forms of social organization.

In our attempt at constructing a people's alternative, we aim at a social organization that, based on principles of participation and solidary freedom, will maintain the human being and the satisfaction of his fundamental needs, as its centre of gravitation.

We aim at constructing a pluralist society that consecrates the diversity of initiatives, based on the exercise of an ample democracy by a people organized as actors and builders of their own destiny. This implies the design of an alternative development model. Of a model that can generate development and social equity. That is, a model where productivity and technology may allow for increasing self-reliance at grass-roots levels.

In our attempt at constructing a people's alternative, we propose the promotion of four necessary simultaneous processes:

1. *Socialization of production*, understood as the collective control by the organized people over the planning of production, distribution and consumption of goods and services; as the collective ownership of the means of production through the development of self-managed initiatives and cooperatives; as participatory—not imposed—planning, in order that the necessary degrees of autonomy of the productive, commercial and financial units be preserved and guaranteed at the local and regional levels; and as the development of a human scale economics that may allow for the adequate satisfaction of people's fundamental human needs.
2. *Socialization of financial resources*, understood as a reorganized financial and banking system that may allow local small-scale people's initiatives to have access to financial resources; and, as a financial policy that stimulates people's productive creativity, self-management and self-reliance.
3. *Socialization of power*, understood as an indispensable requisite to avoid the sprouting of new forms of domination; as a means to allow people at the grass-roots to have direct control over their societal purposes; as a way to avoid av bureaucratization that may limit and undermine people's self-determination; and, as a decentralized administrative action that gives impulse to more autonomous and diverse forms of development based on local and regional self-reliance.
4. *Socialization of knowledge and culture*, based on the understanding that consciousness raising and knowledge are indispensable components of a coherent grass-roots awareness, participation and social conduct; that through sharing it is possible to transform knowledge and culture from a form of domination into a process of liberation; that selfish individual-

ism can be changed into a popular culture centred around human growth and an improved understanding of nature and people; and that it is the best means to enhance solidarity and mutual aid.

This is the politics of common men, women and young people, which has substantially altered the Chilean reality during the last year. Each organization that lives, each institution that is democratized, and each coordination achieved, increase our real strength. Not that of publicity, but that which allows us to fight and truly express ourselves as a people. One doesn't beg for freedom, one achieves it through struggle!

II

An impressive number of southern peasants, fishermen, craftsmen, labourers of different trades, members of the indian Huilliche nation, and professionals from different disciplines have joined in a common effort to reconstruct the people's organizations that were destroyed by the dictatorship. Many of them have suffered persecution, imprisonment, torture and banishment during this tragic decade. Yet they have returned from their visits to hell with a new lust for life and solidarity. Despite their lack of financial resources, and the ever-present hostility of the representatives of repression, their achievements in just two years have been impressive. They have, in fact, revitalized many small cooperatives and grass-roots organizations, forming a solidary network that labours under the coordinating umbrella of the Southern Multisectoral—MSS. In the summer of 1984, delegates from all the organizations that integrate within the MSS met for one week. The occasion was their Second Open Encounter, the purpose of which was to set the foundations for an alternative development strategy for the South of Chile. Of its kind, a unique experience. From the voluminous document produced as a consequence of the event, the selected excerpts which follow refer mainly to the philosophy that underlines their concept of development. No reference will, therefore, be made to technical proposals and considerations, although they are abundant, practical and lucid.

It is the thought of those representing the grass-roots that must be brought the forefront, since they know best what really affects them. We believe this to be the best formula to avoid externally imposed technocratic proposals that alienate us from the concrete and practical capabilities we have, to solve the problems in accordance with our tasks and characters.

Between equals we can be fraternally critical and analytically responsible, in order to achieve unity. But unity is neither the product of decrees nor of occasional alliances. It is the product of sharing our lives with our equals.

The Multisectoral must be the organization that encourages and welds together the widest sectors of labourers, workers, peasants, fishermen, miners, indians, employees and professionals, to create, through consensus, the conditions that may allow each one of them to become active and activating elements of our country's development. The Multisectoral must learn from the rich traditions of many of its member groups, as well as from the practices of the new social movements that have emerged during these years. We must engage our efforts in the growth of our organization, without ever forgetting its democratic structure. Our organization, which represents the first regional experience of its type, must stand on its own feet, must be capable of generating its own development proposals, and must place itself beyond and above the interests of individual political parties, in order to avoid fatal divergencies taking precedence over our unifying goals and purposes.

In order to bring about positive social and economic changes, our organization must stimulate a permanent educational and learning process. Enlightenment, study and education must be the permanent backbone of our solidary behaviour. We must, therefore, always be open to the fully democratic participation of every group, however small it may be.

Fear delays the dawning of our Motherland. Prudence overpowers boldness. Intelligence opens up the doors of hope.

With respect to culture and education, these were some of their statements: Culture is the patrimony of a people. Education is a human right.

For years we have been induced to despise our ways of doing things, the ways in which we cultivated our land. They sold us machinery that chained us to the use of expensive energy, they introduced the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides that have upset the living balance between plants and insects. Through their cultural invasion they attack us with television programmes and domestic gadgets that slowly destroy the conviviality that characterized the way of life of our grandparents. All that has increased our poverty and dependence. We have become increasingly removed from one another. As their cultural invasion has grown, our possibilities of learning and understanding have diminished. Capitalism substitutes the image of the winner for the moral values of solidarity.

Our Multisectoral understands education as a liberating process. Therefore, while we aim at stimulating all grass-roots initiatives, we shall avoid the styles of massive education. We favour working in many small groups,

of not more than 20 people, where promoters will not only impart knowledge, but will also collect the living experiences of the participants. In this manner, in the same way as weaving on a loom, our education will become a growing weft of giving and receiving. Our education is not aimed at teaching, but at stimulating critical awareness.

There is no sage who has nothing to learn, and there is no one so ignorant that they have no knowledge to share. Adult education requires a profound dialogue; the revitalization of the forgotten art of conversation.

The transfer of knowledge from the peasant to the fisherman, from the fisherman to the craftswoman, from the craftswoman to the jobless, from all of them to young people, will allow us to construct and acquire a culture of our own, and in that manner we shall realize that our hearts are close to one another. Much closer to one another than to the world of fantasy of all those 'beautiful people' we were supposed to imitate.

The following are some of their statements about food and nutrition: Two forms of agricultural production coexist in our country: the agriculture of high yields based upon heavy technology and expensive inputs, as in the rich nations; and, peasant or family subsistence agriculture that makes use of limited technology. Despite its imperfections, the latter, mainly concentrated in small plots, contributes impressive amounts to the total agricultural output. In Chile, the properties of less than 20 hectares account for 34 per cent of the total arable land. Yet their contribution to total production is equal to 37 per cent of wheat, 42 per cent of rice, 72 per cent of potatoes, 53 per cent of maize, and 69 per cent of beans.

The green revolution has made us more dependent, and has become a weapon of political pressure against an impoverished rural population. On the other hand, if adequately unified, planned, developed and diversified, the small farmers' production could coherently satisfy the real needs of the population, and generate important surpluses without increasing our economic and technological dependence.

We have committed several mistakes: we imitate what the big producers do and have, and in that manner we destroy our values and our potential; we are not looking hard enough for adequate technologies that can improve our production; we do not produce, as we should, enough of our own organic fertilizers; and we have done little to improve our training and knowledge.

Our aims should therefore be to increase our participation in the market, but only after having guaranteed the nutritional self-subsistence of our families; to search for truly adequate technical assistance; to give preference to labour intensive farming; and to complement our agricultural activities with crafts, construction, and development of appropriate technologies, in order to increase our family income.

The workers of the land of the sea will feed the world, if they know to unite around development strategies designed by themselves, and if they realize the role they have to play in a world where selfishness and greed have been the dominant forces for a long time.

With respect to technical assistance, these are some of their comments: Historically the programmes of technical assistance have been designed by 'experts and professionals', without the supposed beneficiaries having any say in the process. The peasant simply becomes a passive recipient of ready-made prescriptions. Technical assistance has not been aimed at helping the production of the poor, but rather at strengthening the capitalist concept of development, in which the role of agriculture is mainly to provide products and raw materials for urban industry.

We aim at providing a technical assistance that is social, humane, fraternal, solidary, and understanding of the economic reality of our people. Our technical assistance will be participatory assistance among equals. It will be aimed at generating self-reliance as a fundamental goal. We have an incalculable capital: the capital of solidarity.

The promoters of the Multisectoral, when going to the field, will not give recipes; they will share days of labour with those they are supposed to assist. But the peasant and the fisherman must not come alone. He must come with his wife. It is the fundamental purpose of the Multisectoral to enhance the participation and dignity of women.

These are the two great guidelines of our programme of technical assistance: to recover our cultural identity, and to guarantee the self-reliance of the families of our peasants, fishermen, craftsmen and labourers.

Apart from the two cases described, there are many more examples of people's minds at work for the construction of a society based on participation, mutual aid, solidarity, self-reliance, harmony with nature, human scale, and popular creativity. Our encounter with an ongoing social process of which we knew nothing left us perplexed. Convinced that our best

contribution would be to promote the philosophy of Another Development, we set ourselves the task, like new ‘missionaries’, to preach among our people our enlightened and novel development gospel. Once we got there, we discovered that the invisible history was well in advance of us. Our initial missionary self-assurance was quickly changed into a humble awareness of: ‘Here I come and there it is!’ Now we know that we have little to teach, a lot to learn, and much to cooperate with in order to allow for the consolidation of a people’s new historical project.

The interpretations

What is the distance between discourse and fact, between purpose and action? Can we really say that we are witnessing new forms of social and economic organization emerging from the grass-roots? Can we expect movements such as those described, as well as many others, to grow, consolidate, and last? May it not be that they simply represent forms of self-defence against a repressive state? Will they not be absorbed by the traditional political parties, once the season of the dictatorship has come to an end? Do they represent a truly viable alternative?

We cannot expect, at this stage, a definitive answer to any of these questions. Indeed, interpretations of socio-political and economic analysts vary widely. Some see only seasonal reactions that are quite understandable under the given circumstances, but not more than that. Others, at the opposite extreme, see the dawning of a new enlightened societal project of great historical significance. Our* impression is that answers will not be the product of analysis alone, but of a good dose of direct perception as well. But even perception takes different shapes. Some people’s perceptions are influenced by the principle: ‘One must see in order to believe’. As far as we are concerned, we accept our perception to be influenced by the opposite principle as well, that is ‘One must believe in order to see’. In fact, we shared the philosophy of Another Development, and we *believed* in it. So, when we set ourselves the task to go out and share it with the people, we found its principles spontaneously at work all over the place. Had this not been the case, we might have simply perceived a variety of spontaneous organizations and actions without any linking common denominators.

As a consequence of our observations, studies and perceptions, that are the result of direct contact with people’s organizations, we have raised the

* The use of the plural refers to the members of CEP-AUR as well as to those people with whom relationships have been established through the ‘Solidary Network of People’s Organizations for the Promotion of Another Development’ that will be described in the last section.

following working hypothesis: once the State has not only forsaken its traditional role but has become repressive, and traditional political leaderships have been smashed or dispersed (that is, when people have been left on their own), the ‘natural’ defence of the social body seems to depend on the sprouting forth of horizontal, solidary forms of organization. To put it another way: under repressive rule, any movement organized in terms of vertical forms of leadership is highly vulnerable; only horizontal forms of solidary organization can generate movements that cannot be beheaded. This seems to be the case in Chile. Whether it corresponds to a more general human tendency, is something we cannot say. We hope, however, that this article may stimulate the communication of observations made in other Third World countries that have suffered long periods of repressive rule.

In the Chilean case, an additional notion may be worth considering. The horizontal solidary organizations probably flourish easily and ‘naturally’ because they may well be a part of the national collective unconscious, in the sense of Jung. It is a well known historical fact that the Mapuche indian nation fought the conquerors and colonizers uninterruptedly for 350 years. Even today the Mapuches don’t recognize themselves as Chileans. They are Mapuches, and the Chileans are identified as ‘Huincas’. They were able to fight for such a long time, not only because they were extremely brave and courageous, but mainly because of their social organization. Their society did not depend, like the Incas or Mexicans, on a centralized power structure. They had neither a King nor hereditary Chieftains. Organized into groups—or ‘clans’, to use a well known term—whenever they faced a serious problem of any kind, they appointed a ‘Lonco’ (an authority) to guide them in the search for an adequate solution. The Lonco had no power in the formal sense, although he was recognized as an authority who should be listened to. Hence, once the problem was solved, the Lonco became an equal again, while preserving the prestige of having been an authority. Such a system allowed the Mapuches to build a society that could not be beheaded. As their saying went: ‘For everyone you kill, another ten are born to take his place’.*

We have come to perceive an interesting parallel between the solidary people’s organizations under the present repressive regime, and the Mapuche organization under the repression of conquerors, colonizers and

* It is interesting to point out that the ‘Caciques’ (Chiefs) of the Mapuches were a construct imposed at some point in time by the national government. It was impossible for Hispanics to understand how a society could function without a centralized power structure. Furthermore, they needed someone to sign agreements and treaties in the name of the people.

republican governments. The latter was efficient, and the former may be on the way to increasing their efficiency. The notion of a Jungian archetype, in this case of solidarity and direct democracy, present in the collective unconscious of the Chilean people, does not appear in any of the studies which deal with the subject of our concern that we have come across. However, we feel that in order to understand the real significance of these movements and organizations, such a fundamental notion must not be overlooked. Actually, it may be a decisive notion, necessary to reach more definitive conclusions about the matter.

Whatever the opinions of the different experts and analysts may be, the fact remains that the subject is gaining increasing attention. This is probably due to the fact that those sectors variously called informal, underground, alternative, parallel, hidden or submerged, are growing in all countries—rich and poor. The studies carried out elsewhere have influenced the different analyses of the Chilean case. We believe this to be dangerous and, eventually, misleading. Although the growth of what we call the invisible sectors in Chile may also be considered as an example of a more generalized world trend, it exhibits characteristics that are so special and particular that it deserves to be evaluated and understood in its own context. It is precisely these components of solidarity and direct democracy, which we consider to be a sort of Jungian archetype contained in the people's collective unconscious, that make it a very special case.

Three outstanding studies have been produced that stress the importance of the solidary and democratic characteristics of these new movements and organizations.* The authors start by posing a basic question: Can these forms of action overcome the present conditions of subordination and marginalization, and can they attain the dimension and autonomy necessary to generate collective social practices, alternative forces, and the efficient sprout of a new civilization? They also point out that the interest of some studious people with respect to the growth of these new actions and organizations is due to the fact that new social, political and economic problems have emerged that can no longer be interpreted through the use of established theories, and that these organizations represent alternative answers to such problems and crises, in the face of which conventional and traditional answers have ceased to be satisfactory. They complain about the

* Luis Razeto, *Economía de Solidaridad y Mercado Democrático* (1 and 2), *Empresa de Trabajadores y Economía de Mercado*, and Razeto, Klenner, et.al., *Las Organizaciones Económicas Populares*; all three published by Programa del Economía de Trabajo of the Academia de Humanismo Cristiano, Santiago, Chile, 1984, 1982 and 1983 respectively.

difficulties that exist when one tries to define and conceptualize these new processes. When listing the characteristics they have in common, such as not being formal, not being subject to the control of the state, not being integrated into the capitalist process of accumulation, not being considered in the national accounts, etc, they are defined and described for what they are *not*, instead of for what they actually *are and represent*.

From their analysis—with which we concur—it becomes clear that concepts as well as methods have to be reshaped in order to make an adequate evaluation and interpretation of the phenomenon possible. It is necessary to start almost from scratch, by studying the elemental economic units and relations, that compose the structure of these activities and organizations. To accede to the macro-economic level *starting* from the solidary economy, will allow for an understanding of the global economic problems that cannot be achieved when starting from the micro-economics of the capitalist enterprises. The future is no longer seen as one of mixed economies; but as one of *pluralist* economies. This implies a serious theoretical challenge: to study in depth the different economic rationalities and their articulation in order to diversify micro-economics, and design a macro-economics comprehensive of plurality.

Four hundred and ninety-five popular economic organizations have been studied by the above mentioned authors, in the metropolitan area of Santiago. They include workshops, committees of the jobless, consumption associations, groups for housing improvement, and health groups. As has been detected, the underlying values of all these organizations seem to be those of solidarity, self-management, participation, efficiency, and alternativity. They apparently aim at:

1. Becoming a different model from the one traditionally adopted by the popular struggles for vindication, consisting of the formation of small grass-roots communities and groups with a relative autonomy that interrelate and coordinate in order to generate integration.
2. Creating organizations that directly face the problems utilizing, as much as possible, their own resources, and integrating economic, social, political and cultural dimensions into their daily life and that of the community in general.
3. Generating a plurality of organizational forms that may allow for the growth of popular aspirations and initiatives.
4. Searching for alternatives of autonomy, as revealed by the groups' efforts to set themselves apart from the influence of the state, from institutional bureaucratization, and the traditional political parties.

There have been many failures along the way, but generally the surviving groups have matured and improved their organizational skills. However, there is much still to be done. We also share the opinion of the studies' authors with respect to the present and future resources required by these groups. They consist mainly of: (a) technical assistance in different fields; (b) training in order to improve social relationships, organization, management, creativity, knowledge and information; (c) alternative financing for local productive projects; (d) legal counselling in order to overcome permanent insecurity due to conditions of extreme informality; and (e) adequate technologies adapted to the needs and possibilities of the different groups. In order to satisfy such requirements, the integration into the groups of truly committed and highly qualified professionals is indispensable. Fortunately, this is already happening, as shall be shown in the next section, although not yet with the intensity that one would like to see.

To put things into their real dimensional context, a few final remarks may be in order. The organizations and movements that have been described do not represent a new kind of social dynamics that is shared by the majority of Chileans. As a matter of fact, one must recognize the coexistence of three forces. On the one hand is the dictatorship, with all its repressive power. On the other, is the formal opposition, composed of traditional political and labour movements that exercise direct confrontation—using different styles—with the dictatorship; and as a third party, the movements described, whose strategy is more to circumvent the dictatorship rather than confront it directly. This does not mean, however, that the people of these movements have refused confrontation. It is they who, in a physical sense, have been the main victims of repression, and whenever they are attacked and their poblaciones raided, they know very well how to hit back and reorganize their defensive forces. What the concept of circumvention means is that their societal projects goes beyond the re-establishment of a liberal parliamentary democracy; and that implies—all the physical confrontations notwithstanding—that their principal efforts are aimed at the construction of a parallel society that may later emerge as a truly alternative social force.

Much has been written and reported about the formal opposition, and we are, of course, far from denying its tremendous importance. Our purpose has been to bring to the forefront the least known component of the Chilean reality. While the discourses of the formal opposition parties are, in a way, variations on a wellknown theme, the ideas, actions and messages that come from the invisible sectors are exceptionally novel, innovative and worth listening to. It has been among those groups that we found the

philosophy of Another Development, not as a subject of seminar discussions, but as a way of life, that, if it is there to stay, is in urgent need of committed and understanding support.

Support and cooperation

An impressive amount of small research institutions, and local or regional study and support groups organized by professionals of many trades, have emerged during the period of repression. In a way, they are also the informal answer to what can no longer be done through the formal institutions such as universities and different government agencies now under the control of the dictatorship. Just as happens with the grass-roots movements, these new organizations produce the most innovative and creative studies and ideas. A few of them have gained international prestige. They are mainly dedicated to political, social and economic macro-analysis. The others are directly involved in cooperation with grass-roots groups at the local level and, being involved with the invisible sectors, they have remained relatively invisible themselves. Their low profile notwithstanding, they have proved to be very active and quite efficient.

The work of these groups has suffered, however, from atomization. Hence CEPAUR, following one of its mandates, set itself the task of contacting as many grass-roots support groups as possible, in order to investigate the possibilities of establishing links of complementarity and of horizontal communication between them. It was not easy. A repressive environment generates suspicion, and few people actually knew what CEPAUR was. What was the 'hidden' purpose behind our attempt to bring the groups together? This seemed to be the unspoken question in the back of many peoples' minds. There were moments when we felt quite disheartened. It took us several months of visits, letters, talks, messages and small meetings in many parts of the country, before we felt that it would be worth inviting all those willing to come to a three-day workshop in order to discuss our common problems. With the cooperation of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, the Workshop was convened in April, 1984. There were 33 participants, representing 17 groups, including the Chairman of the Foundation, Ambassador Ernst Michanek. The event was organized in the outskirts of Santiago, in order that people would stay overnight. In this manner we thought that the impersonal nature of formal meetings could be avoided, allowing the participants to really get to know each other. The fact that we could work intensely during the day, and then share laughter, songs and walks in the park during the night hours, helped to melt the ice and generate new friendships.

All problems, aims and concerns were discussed with great frankness and in

a constructive manner. The combined work of the groups encompassed action in areas of urban marginality, rural marginality, ethnic marginality (Aymaras in the North, and Mapuches and Huilliches in the South), and popular education and information. The fields of interest and specialization of the different groups included participatory education, cultural promotion, vocational training for youngsters, alternative communication and information through audiovisuals, training in crafts, organization of community centres, health and sanitation, legal counselling, housing improvement, environmental education, organic agriculture, alternative technologies, and technical assistance to small farmers and indian communities. It was soon realized that much greater efficiency could be achieved through the permanent exchange of experiences and human and material resources; the design of joint projects based on complementarity; and, the systematization of experiences, concepts, indicators and ideas. Furthermore, such horizontal communication and cooperation would allow for the construction of a common language and for the design of a coherent alternative development theory. Hence, it was decided to appoint a committee to study the possibilities of organizing a dynamic network.

A second workshop was organized in August, in cooperation with the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation. Nine new groups showed up, increasing the total of groups represented to 28. Two important decisions were adopted. Firstly, to consolidate the organization of the network; and secondly, to institutionalize a series of 'permanent and open workshops', the purpose of which should be the discussion of alternative solutions for the most acute problems affecting people at grass-roots levels. At the time of this writing, the 'Solidary Network of People's Organizations for the Promotion of Another Development' has come into existence, with 34 groups joining it, and three encounters of the open workshops have already taken place. The topic presently under examination is 'unemployment, work and income'. It aims at re-examining the concept of work, not as a synonym of employment, but as a possibility for autonomous, self-managed and self-reliant productive activity that may allow not only for the generation of income, but for the promotion of human growth as well. Concrete proposals are discussed in relation to their actual applicability and replicability.

The meetings are extremely rich in ideas and particularly stimulating, because the results are not destined to end up as a report on some distant shelf, but to be applied whenever and wherever possible.

The invigorating experience of discussing and working together in groups has also stimulated some interesting joint initiatives and research projects.

CEPAUR, together with members of the MRS and others, are engaged in research into 'The trades of survival in the metropolitan area of Santiago'. Under the methodological orientation of CEPAUR, the researchers are labourers, most of them suffering unemployment. This, instead of having experts studying the living conditions of the poorer people, the people themselves are analysing and interpreting their own reality. Close to 400 trades of survival have already been detected and classified. The revelation of such an immense variety of activities among those who are 'economically invisible', would not have been possible without the direct participation of people who are a part of that hidden reality. The analytical phase of the project will soon follow in order to detect—at least for the most important categories of trades—their organizational structures, their economic rationalities, and their creative potentials. Although the project is still in its initial phase, the findings and evidences gathered so far have stimulated another joint initiative worth describing.

In most countries, probably the greatest capital that is not utilized, is that of popular creativity. Informal producers and ingenious inventors are to be found in all poverty-stricken marginal areas. Despite the fact that their inventions, if produced in quantity, could improve the living conditions of the people, they have no chance whatsoever of gaining access to the financial resources necessary for the setting up of self-managed productive units. The formal financial sector is closed to them. In view of this, we have started a campaign among some enlightened entrepreneurial sectors and professional associations in order to establish a fund that may be used for the promotion of popular productive creativity. Contests will be promoted for the presentation of projects that: (a) are small yet labour-intensive; (b) are located in urban or rural poverty-stricken areas; (c) make use of subproducts, wastes or under-utilized resources; (d) adopt a participatory and solidary structure between those who contribute with labour, management and knowledge; (e) make use of appropriate technologies; (f) contribute to greater local self-reliance; (g) are not aggressive to the environment; and (h) benefit the people of the locality in which production takes place.

In the process of promoting this idea, we have come across reactions both sceptical and enthusiastic. Several professional and entrepreneurial groups have already pledged their initial support. We should soon know whether the initiative will succeed. Whatever the case we feel that the idea is right and that it will allow the people at least some slim chance of setting themselves up productively.

Our network, our open workshops, and our joint initiatives form only a partial example of how a growing amount of professionals and people at the grass-roots levels are getting together in a spirit of solidarity, in order to overcome repression and set up the foundations for the Spring to come.

Afterword, in a hidden corner

- You know, I had a funny dream last night.

- About what?

Well, I was looking through the window and it was snowing outside. Millions of snow-flakes were falling from the sky, and it was pretty windy. And then I heard some howling, and a lot of howling beasts, with a thick hairy fur, were running like mad, as if something was hurting them very badly. And then they were wallowing and getting their feet stuck in the snow. And then I realized that it was the snow-flakes hurting them, and I couldn't understand they could be hurt by the snow-flakes since they all had such thick and hairy fur. Then, suddenly, I noticed that I was so concentrating on looking at the howling beasts that I was seeing in black and white. And then the colours appeared, and the snow-flakes were no longer white; they were of all colours.

- And what happened then?

- Well, I went outside because I couldn't believe what I was seeing, because, you know, I hadn't seen colours for a very, very long time. Actually, I didn't remember what colours looked like.

- And then?

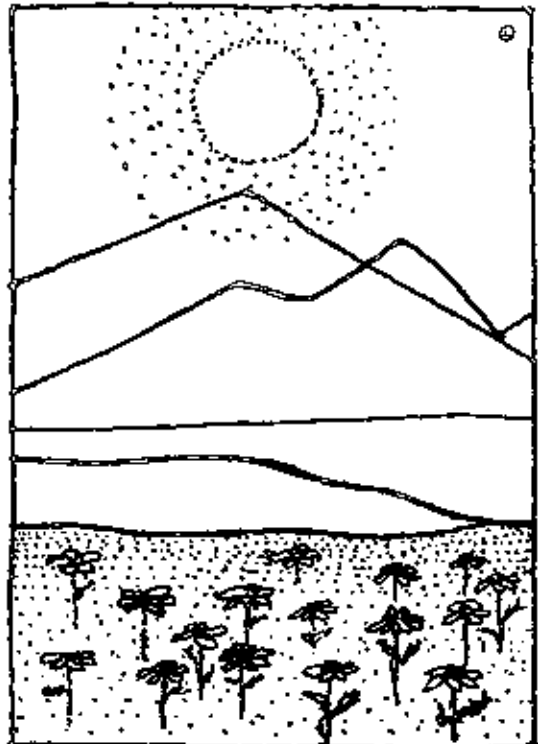
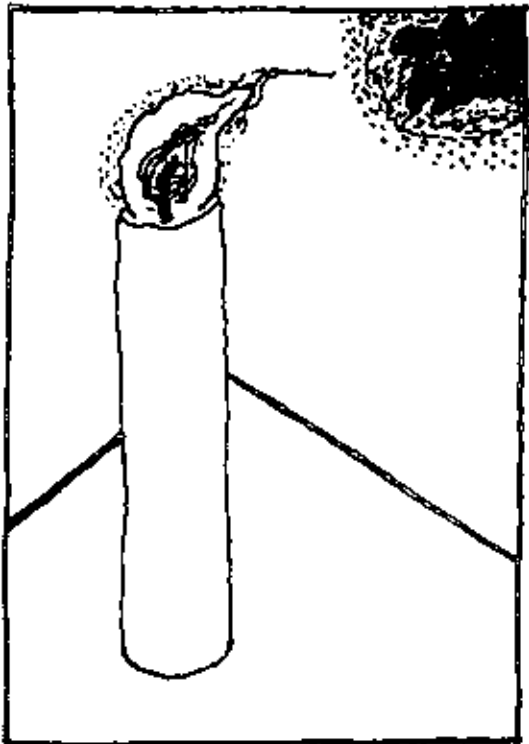
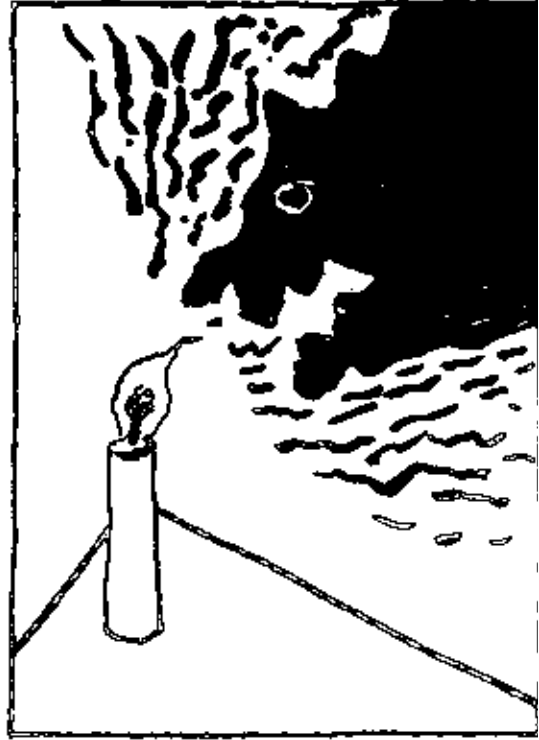
- I looked at the trees and saw the snow-flakes of all colours clinging to the branches and turning into millions of little buds and flowers. And then I realized that the snow-flakes were petals, and it was the petals that were hurting the beasts, and I still couldn't understand how they could be hurt by petals having such thick and hairy furs. And then something incredible happened.

- What was that? Go on!

- In front of each beast was standing a woman, and each woman smiled at her respective beast, and then the beasts melted, and all their fur came together, and it was like a huge carpet covering the ground.

- And?

- Well, then this huge fur carpet began to shiver, and I couldn't understand why it was shivering. And then I saw knives, thousands of knives appearing through the fur carpet. And each knife was opening a hole, and then it was a huge fur carpet with thousands of holes. And then the women looked at the holes and opened their arms, and there was a woman for every hole, and



they were of all ages, and I thought that somehow they were all very beautiful.

- Well, don't stop. What happened then?

- People began climbing out through the holes. Small people, big people, people of all kinds, and all with very big and perplexed eyes. And each woman embraced her big or little person emerging from the hole. And they all cried and laughed at the same time.

- And?

- Well, then... Then all of them, the thousands of them, began to dance away, and the thick fur carpet was no longer there.

- ...?

- What do you think is the meaning of this dream?

- Well... I think I know. I think you know. I think we all know. Don't we?

Democracy as a Force for Development and the Role of Swedish Assistance

By Ernst Michanek

Independence, economic growth, equality and democracy—these four goals were set for Swedish development cooperation in the early 1960s and are still valid. Lately, the cause for democracy has been given greater emphasis in the political fora in Sweden.

‘What has been done and what can be done for democratic development in the Third World through Swedish efforts?’ This is the question raised in this contribution by Ernst Michanek, former Director-General of the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA). It is a revised version of a paper presented to a seminar organized by the International Centre of the Swedish Labor Movement (AIC) in May 1985.

After the struggle for national independence and for the objective that governments should meet certain basic needs, a second struggle is taking place, namely, that of further liberating the people’s forces for self-reliant development. There are rising demands for democracy and empowerment of the people in large parts of the Third World. Non-governmental organizations are emerging spontaneously parallel with a young generation which is increasing in numbers day by day and which has often had more education and makes higher demands than previous ones—and this at a time when it is becoming evident that dictatorships cannot solve the problems of society. Hence, two-way communication between peoples and governments and space for local initiatives that can help solve practical development tasks are popular priorities. Under these circumstances, the cultural dimension of development takes on added importance as do different forms of exchange of experience between Third World countries themselves and with the industrialized countries.

A programme for expanded Swedish assistance aimed at meeting these Third World demands for democratic development from below is called for. Mass media and grass-roots organizations, independent of their governments, should play central roles in these endeavours.

Ernst Michanek graduated from Uppsala University in 1944, went into journalism and then joined the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour where he was the Under-Secretary of State 1957-1964. He was the Director-General of SIDA 1965-1979. Since the early 1950s, he has represented Sweden in many international bodies like ECOSOC, UNDP, ILO and Unesco. He is now an adviser to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and serves as



Chairman of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). He is a member of the Swedish Academy of Sciences.

Introduction

To promote ‘a development towards a democratic society’ is one of the four main objectives of Swedish assistance to development; the others are economic growth; economic and social equalization; and economic and political independence. These aims are virtually the same as those unanimously determined by Parliament in 1962. In 1984, Parliament stressed that development assistance should promote the development of democratic public institutions, and in 1985 this opinion was again expressed by Parliament.

In Nicaragua in 1984, on the eve of the first general election, the Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme made public statements underlining that Nicaragua had an opportunity to show that revolution need not become rigid dogma or minority rule. Referring to the stated goals of the Nicaraguan revolution, namely, political democracy, pluralism, non-alignment and a mixed economy, he stated that in the long term no society could develop in a sound way unless its citizens were in a position to shape their own future. Against the background of Swedish experiences, he said: ‘We are convinced that it is only in democratic forms, with freedom of association and of speech, and after general, free and just elections, that a nation may make lasting economic and social progress.’

‘Not long ago, Sweden was a hard class-ruled society’, Palme said. ‘It was through political and trade union struggle that men and women in joint action were able to change their situation. The lesson we drew was that conscious, critical and active people are a prerequisite for progress. It is only when men and women, with their individual capabilities and dreams, can actively influence and take part in the decisions, that democracy takes root and a society in harmony and justice can be built up.’

This paper deals with the Swedish democratic objective of development assistance and the application of that objective. The aim of the discussion that follows is to promote, in the practice of development cooperation, more systematic endeavours to realize the Swedish democratic objective. This should be seen against the background of the conviction that democracy is a spiritual and political force in development, that strengthens other forces. The concept of democracy embraces a set of human rights; and from a Swedish perspective it is almost self-evident that a government with

whom we cooperate should observe these—at least in principle and as a goal for the future: it is, indeed, a matter of objectives inscribed in the Charter of the United Nations and in other international norms and legal rules; most governments have accepted and acknowledged these objectives as their own.

The point of departure is the aims of development and of development assistance as they are formulated by the Swedish partner in international cooperation. According to other Swedish guidelines for cooperation with Third World countries, development assistance should be directed in such a way that it corresponds to the goals, plans and priorities of the Third World partner countries themselves.

In some respects these principles—Swedish aid objectives and the development priorities of partner countries—are more or less in conflict with each other. Proposals discussed in this paper are based on the assumption that the objectives of Swedish assistance should be maintained even in cases where they do not immediately and unquestionably coincide with the priorities of a government requesting assistance from Sweden.

Often in these cases another principle of official development cooperation has been questioned or even disregarded, namely, that official development assistance from Sweden is put at the disposal of the government of the Third World country in question; this principle is considered applicable also in cases where the public assistance is channelled through a non-governmental body (NGO). In the case of an official Swedish contribution to a voluntary organization for its work in the Third World country, the initiative is usually taken by the NGO which presents its project directly to the official aid agency, SIDA—and the operation may be interpreted to imply that the government of the Third World country is effectively being bypassed; Sweden wants to reach the people of that country or particular groups within it directly, so the Swedes do in fact question whether the government of the Third World country and its public administration are willing or able to realize the objectives of the assistance. It should be noted that the Swedish Parliament is unanimously backing a continuing increase in budgetary allocations for the funding of development assistance activities through non-governmental, voluntary agencies. Such bodies are seen as particularly well placed for the purpose of reaching poorer groups of the population. Their methods of work are expected to promote grass-roots influence in development work in the partner country; in Sweden the voluntary organizations are very important parts of the democratic system.¹

This dilemma needs to be discussed further. One factor that bears upon the discussion is expressed in another statement of principle repeatedly made by the Swedish Parliament: ‘Development assistance should not be used as a means of pressure.’

Main matters relating to the democratic objective

The statements made by the Swedish Parliament and Government refer to the following four main matters within the framework of a development towards democracy to be promoted by official assistance.

First: *Democracy as a force for development*. Democratic methods of planning, decision-making and implementation of public tasks are seen as promoting economic and social development: growth, equitable distribution, independence, and the meeting of basic human needs.

Second: *Freedom of association*. Voluntary (non-governmental) organizations with various objectives should be supported in Third World countries, e.g., cooperatives working in the interest of producers and consumers; trade unions aiming to strengthen the position of workers in the labour market; and other voluntary organizations promoting the education of their members, the status of women in the homes and in society, religious or political freedoms, the observance of environmental questions in physical planning, and action for peace and demilitarization.

Third: *Freedom of speech*. There should be a free flow of information and exchange of opinions and experiences between individuals and groups in society. Mass media such as the press and broadcasting services should be characterized by pluralism and by independence in relation to the government and the state.

Fourth: *Human rights*. Sweden wants to promote general observance of human rights such as the freedom of association and speech just referred to, as well as other rights and liberties pertaining to life, health, education, work, treatment before the law and personal integrity.*

* There is currently discussion in Sweden about whether a democratic polity should be a criterion in the *selection* of countries for bilateral development cooperation. This matter is not dealt with in this paper. Parliament has underlined that the objectives of Swedish development assistance can be obtained in countries of different polity and ideological direction. Questions regarding the appropriate volume and content of assistance to individual countries, having regard to their behaviour in questions of democracy and to their international conduct, for instance in situations of conflict with neighbours, are also not dealt with here.—In a somewhat polemic way it may be said, that such questions are raised by those opposed to assisting countries where democracy *is not already* satisfactorily established, while this paper is devoted to the matter of assistance intended to help conditions *become* more satisfactory from the democratic point of view.

Assistance programmes that promote democracy

A review of Swedish assistance from the point of view of its importance for a development towards democracy in individual countries may demonstrate two things: firstly, that in the past, Swedish assistance has not been passive or unimportant in this regard; secondly, that it may play a greater role in the future. Some programmes will be mentioned to illustrate these points.

National liberation. A prerequisite for the democratic development of a nation is that it is free from the oppressive rule of a foreign power. Nowhere are the human rights of a people more systematically denied than under colonial rule and under apartheid. (See, for instance, the preamble of the UN Charter, which even in its second sentence declares the determination of the peoples of the United Nations to ‘reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small...’.) Swedish assistance to liberation movements was an important factor in the liberation of Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde and Zimbabwe. Equally, the assistance given to SWAPO and the ANC is essential in their struggles to liberate Namibia from the occupation by South Africa, and the people of South Africa from apartheid, the enslavement of a whole nation. When it comes to the liberation and strengthening of smaller nations exposed to overwhelming pressure or military intervention from foreign countries, Swedish assistance has been important for the continued liberation in Southern Africa, that is to say, also for Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland; the same can be said of the assistance to Cuba, Nicaragua, Bangladesh, and Vietnam. Assistance to Laos should offset its dependence on Vietnam. Disaster relief to the people of Afghanistan under Soviet occupation has a similar significance.

Social liberation from domestic dictatorship. Assistance to the victims of dictatorship in Chile and other Latin American countries—like the assistance to the movements struggling for liberation from the white oppressors in South Africa and Namibia—is geared towards the defence of human rights in these countries and preparation for democratic development after the fall of the present regimes. The plight of the Eritreans, caused by the war in Ethiopia, is alleviated by disaster relief; and in numerous other cases aid to refugees is channelled through the United Nations and voluntary bodies. This kind of assistance is strongly characterized by an endeavour to defend human rights.

Development information and basic needs. Self-help assistance programmes aimed at meeting basic needs include many projects that are important for future democratic development, notably basic education for children as

well as adult literacy work. The production of textbooks and training material are important elements in these programmes. Literacy, knowledge, and public debate are improved through the production or importing of paper for education and information purposes, including the publishing of newspapers.

In cases where assistance is given to the establishing of basic education, health and water supply systems, and where an active local population is collectively involved in planning, implementing, maintaining and running the projects, such assistance directly or indirectly supports democratic working methods. This is also true of assistance to small-scale industrial or other enterprises whose products or services aim to meet basic needs. There are many examples of such assistance in the Swedish programmes.

A case in point, and one of particular importance, is Swedish assistance to the spreading of knowledge about and the supply of means for family planning. Such knowledge and means for the regulation of human reproduction was proclaimed in 1969 by the United Nations as a human right. This is a field where development information is an essential part of programmes and should be seen as a means of democratic development; the alternative may be the tremendous limitation of freedom that is being demonstrated in China by the introduction of the one-child-family norm.

In the field of information, joint efforts should be made by voluntary and public agencies to respond to demands for modern mass media technologies for a world-wide spreading of knowledge. Such efforts promote development towards democracy.

Constitutional development

A country's constitutional and other legislation is important for democratic development. At the same time, the most democratic constitution may not prevent a dictator or an elite from disregarding the law.

There has not been much direct effort in Swedish development assistance to contribute to the building or strengthening of democratic institutions or codes of law in partner Third World countries. The legislation that existed at the beginning of bilateral cooperation was in most cases strongly influenced by the earlier colonial power or had been formed on an ideological basis during the struggle for liberation—and it was not seen as appropriate to try to exert direct and active influence on it without being requested to do so. There have been cases where basic rules on the exploitation of agricultural land have been discussed bilaterally in order to promote changes 'in a democratic direction'; but in other cases the nationalization of voluntary

cooperatives or trade unions or political organizations or newspapers has taken place without any protest or publicly visible countermeasures from the official Swedish side.

Sweden has chosen to work for long term development in these fields. Support has been given mainly through the United Nations programmes, and through active participation in the development of the international legal system of human rights, e.g., the United Nations International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and on Civil and Political Rights, in which, for instance, the right of universal and equal suffrage is inscribed. (It took 30 years since the work began, until these covenants entered into force in 1976, when 35 countries had acceded to them; by now, the number of countries is 80, among them many Third World countries.) Swedish efforts for the promotion of democratic rights and institutions have been made not least, and probably most effectively, within the International Labour Organisation; the ILO has a system of scrutiny by tripartite bodies (representing governments, trade unions, and employers) of grievances about governments' violations of international conventions in the field of labour. This kind of activity within the UN system has in some instances received Swedish support from development assistance funds for advisory services. The public institution of the 'ombudsman', originated by Sweden (and in many languages named by this Swedish word), for the protection of individuals against unlawful conduct by public authorities or commercial enterprises, has spread to many countries in the Third World as well as to industrialized countries.

In recent years more attention has been paid by Sweden to the behaviour of Third World countries in matters of democracy. Swedish technical assistance was provided to Nicaragua in its preparations for the 1984 general elections, and this, together with widespread international public attention, is likely to have decreased the risks of actual limitations of the free voting procedures. In 1985 a similar effort was initiated to assist Liberia and thereby influence the technical quality of its elections.

There is likely to be more that could usefully be done to promote the process of democratization without undue interference in the domestic affairs of countries. Time is ripe for such efforts.

The role of voluntary organizations Swedish government assistance to the development of poorer countries grew out of an opinion that began in the political and social grass-roots movements: trade unions, Christian missionary societies, producer and consumer cooperatives, the youth and the women's movements, humanita-

rian aid organizations. These organizations had international experiences of their own. In the 1940's they requested government support for their own initiatives, and at an early stage they were invited to influence directly the shaping of the official programme of development cooperation. In 1952, a central Swedish committee was formed with representatives of a number of voluntary organisations as well as of the government. Ten years later a governmental Swedish international development authority (now SIDA) was formed, and its board of directors included an important number of voluntary organization representatives, who in many ways strongly influence the work of SIDA.

A primary role of the voluntary organizations is to carry out information programmes of their own in Sweden on development cooperation. SIDA has a separate information activity, which is part of its programme in support of Swedish public opinion in this field. SIDA distributes substantial financial contributions for the NGO information activities, but the government body does not control this information, which is often strongly critical of government assistance programmes with regard to direction, volume and performance.

At an early stage, voluntary agencies also received public financial contributions to field projects of their own in Third World countries. These programmes had been initiated and built up through their own efforts, originally by subscription and by public donations, and are now largely extended by contributions from the government through SIDA. The organizations have, to an increasing degree, become channels of the official assistance: around ten per cent of public assistance funds are used for their projects.

Trade union activities in Third World countries are supported through the two cooperating central union federations in Sweden and through the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and its trade secretariats. Their activities strengthen and supplement the work of the ILO, which aims at the build-up of strong labour market organizations in Third World countries through research and training, and through internationally agreed conventions and recommendations including international surveillance of their national application. Trade unions in Third World countries receive Swedish support particularly for the education of their members and elected leaders, as well as for social work among people harassed or victimized for their union work.

The Swedish *cooperatives of consumers and producers* have joined forces in

the Swedish Cooperative Center (SCC), which directly or via the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) contributes to the development of cooperative unions in Third World countries. They endeavour to build up the economic activities of cooperatives on the basis of voluntary association and concentrate on organizing training and independent cooperative work at the local level. A joint organ for SIDA/SCC and their sister organizations in the Nordic group of countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden) have gained profound experiences over the years—including numerous hard-won lessons—and try to encourage Third World governments to provide favourable working conditions for a democratic cooperative movement.

The *Christian missions* have particular opportunities, through their church activities as well as through their social work—primarily the school and health services, supported by public funds from Sweden—to apply democratic methods of work and to disseminate development information. Humanitarian relief organizations like the Red Cross and Save the Children, and UNICEF within the UN System, often perform their tasks in similar ways, with strong support from the official assistance bodies.

The present crisis in the national economy of many Third World countries is in large measure also a crisis for their public administration system. In this situation the non-governmental bodies, which do not place high demands on the public budget of their country, are in a stronger position if they are able to meet social needs independently. Cooperative and humanitarian work may be carried out alongside with central and local government activities. Voluntary agencies in this situation may be a means of conveying important impulses towards democratization.

Increasingly, too, questions about the use of resources and environment are being raised in Third World countries by a growing movement favouring Another Development, or development alternatives, working at the local level and quite often without a central organization.² Initiatives are taken to promote tree-planting for reforestation, social services in villages and townships and handicraft or other small enterprises that may provide gainful employment on a small scale. This takes place with or without participation from outside; in a number of cases such initiatives are supported by SIDA through a voluntary agency. In many countries there is a growing movement at local and national levels aimed at enhancing *the status of women* in the family, in the labour market and in public life, and SIDA has a special programme to support it.

There are examples of a growing *consumers movement* aimed at, *inter alia*, the surveillance of market prices and product quality, that may become a powerful factor in Third World societies. In countries under military dictatorship, rebellion is growing and *human rights movements* are emerging on a significant scale, supported by churches and oppressed political forces. Their programmes often concentrate on finding ways under the dictatorship that may lead towards democratic development and help prepare for the day when the military ruler has to give in. Swedish assistance has found ways of supporting such initiatives taken by grass-roots organizations, and a widening of this support is taking place.

Communication and culture for democracy

It is of fundamental importance, in any development towards democracy, to strengthen the possibilities of communication between individuals and to increase the exchange of information and ideas. Freedom of speech, freedom of association, dissemination of knowledge and development information have been referred to above. The *technical means* for the exchange deserves special mention as a field of activity for development assistance.

The importance for economic development of the supply of *paper* and of *telecommunications* can hardly be exaggerated. Modern high technology in both fields is likely to be so much cheaper than any existing form of low technology, that Third World countries will probably have much to gain by speedily seeking ways to enter directly into the digital system and the industrial processing methods of the age of the computer. The so-called ‘programme countries’ of Swedish development assistance (i.e., countries that have bilateral country programmes of cooperation with SIDA) are in several respects ‘like Sweden, though more so’, as it were: they have a population spread over vast areas, large distances and a complicated topography—and some have great potential to produce the raw material of paper. Because of this it has been reasonable not to decline proposals from such countries that Swedish assistance be used for telecommunications and in some cases for industrial production or deliveries of paper. Telecom systems and paper are important Swedish export products consisting, on the one hand, of machinery, tele material and paper products, and, on the other hand, of expertise in the production and utilization of the products. Because of Sweden’s competitive power in international competitive bidding, these industries have become important parts of assistance programmes to which Sweden is a partner.

Paper for school-books and newspapers as well as telecom systems for the transmission of sound and text and (successively) pictures, have a political dimension that has been of importance in development cooperation, and

this is being increasingly stressed. An official study of Swedish assistance in the fields of communication and information was published in 1983 and accepted by the government in 1984 as a basis for further planning; its proposals were referred to as a potential part of a programme of assistance for the development of democracy.* Underlined in the study was the principle that a donor of development assistance should see to it that all parties to new communication systems, not least at the local level, are aware of and in agreement with the technology being introduced into the country and into the area in question. The population whose environment is about to be radically affected has a right to be informed of what is proposed and to be given an opportunity to discuss and present its opinion at the planning stage.

The introduction of the equipment and the technology already represents a responsibility on the part of the donor for the effect on the environment. Such responsibility is no less when it comes to the utilization of the products. Both paper and the telecom system open up opportunities for wider and deeper cultural cooperation and may contribute to development towards democracy.

Many millions of *school-books* were printed on the first paper delivered from Sweden on a grant basis and sent to Asian countries twenty years ago. Both the paper and the printing, and at times even the content of educational and informational literature, have been transferred since then, under varying programmes of cooperation. This material has been used in basic schools for children, in adult education programmes, and in literacy, health information and other mass campaigns.

As now the start-up of the internationally financed paper factory at Mufindi in Tanzania has just occurred, that country will shortly become self-supporting in *newsprint*. This is an opportunity to discuss what could be done by means of particular cooperation projects to increase the supply of *newspapers* in the country and thereby promote the pluralism and independence of the press that is of such great importance for the development of both democracy and the national economy. As *printing paper for books* is soon to be produced, too, new conditions will have been created for *book publishing*. This encompasses school-books and other educational material as well as literature for entertainment, for which there is great potential demand in a country which has now a high literacy rate and an appalling lack of reading

* See Appendix for extracts from a summary of the study.

material. (The Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation not long ago arranged a seminar, financed by SIDA, on book publishing in Africa, and studies are now completed on an extended domestic publishing capacity in East Africa. See *Development Dialogue*, 1984:1-2). Proposals are being put forward on the use of assistance funds for the support of new cultural products, taking into account the need for caution by the partners in this kind of cooperation, with regard to possible unwanted consequences of external influence.

Swedish assistance provides several examples of financing of construction and equipment that may be combined with an exchange of cultural initiatives. *Libraries, museums and educational institutions* are of this kind. Both public and non-public institutions could be mentioned; many of their activities could be said to work 'towards democracy'. It can be shown that knowledge is a tool for influence exerted in democratic forms and also that outside advisers (Swedes or others) may influence both form and content in a way that is positive for the Third World country's people and their culture—just as indeed it is not always the case. Stories from the field provide many experiences, positive and negative, that offer lessons for the future. The dangers of cultural imperialism are well known, and warnings are always well placed.

'A second liberation'

Support for the people's own organizations—not only Swedish and international but also those in Third World countries—should now more than ever be a guideline for Swedish assistance. This signpost is now placed at the crossroads of development in the Third World, where there is a fast growth of what has been called 'the Third System', i.e., the voluntary organizations that come forward representing the people and its force for development as a factor alongside the two older power groups: the state, which has demonstrated both superpotency and impotence, and the commercial system. The Third System represents a power of liberation and development that is now demanding an opportunity to show its ability.

The reason why the diversified vegetation of grass-roots movements in the Third World has now developed into a part of the power structure to be reckoned with, is not least that the young public education system of these countries has produced a base of knowledge and conscience in an enormously numerous new generation of youth. The contribution of development assistance to this phenomenon is not without importance. Another factor is the communication system, built up as a public infrastructure and to some degree financed through outside assistance. With this modern technology, ideas and information have in many places become an explosive force. Contacts are made possible that bind people together. Trade

union actions are reported through mass media—and South Africa's 'exhaustive' economy is weakened—one day probably to the point of collapse, bringing the apartheid system with it. Assistance through free organizations to the education and information activities of the liberation movements provides non-violent ammunition to the struggle against the violence on which apartheid is based.

In dictatorships like Chile and the Philippines, the front lines are not as sharp as in the South African slave society, but the struggle for survival and against oppression and for democracy is the same. In many other countries, where there is less violence in the wielding of power, the potential of the grass-roots movements is great, not least because governments and administrations of different ideologies have undertaken tasks which it has become apparent that they cannot cope with: this being so, people at last take their destiny into their own hands and find their own solutions.

The second liberation, by peaceful means or may be violent, comes from within and from under—as did the first. And this liberation also may be speeded up and facilitated by external support. Governments like Sweden's may assist with funds, and parts of it may go from government to government primarily to build up the basis of public institutions and services in Third World countries that require central planning and large material resources. A financially smaller, yet at least as important part of the support from outside, passes through voluntary organizations—Swedish, international and domestic. Projects to be supported are not radically different from those already in existence, but the direction is more oriented towards the grass-roots, the alternatives, self-help and self-reliance—and democracy. Such a reorientation of assistance has to some degree been on the way for years, since the weaknesses of governments and bureaucracies have become apparent. It could be accelerated and made more effective by more conscientiously incorporating democratic working methods at all levels of cooperation, from planning to implementation.

Information as part of Another Development

Examples and models of Another Development that grow from the grassroots level are increasing all the time. Those of greatest importance to the South come from Third World countries and particularly the local level. To understand this better, Swedes should observe important parallel phenomena in the movements in favour of development alternatives in the industrialized countries. In the North, the common characteristics of these movements are that they concentrate on specific questions like environmental pollution, or the equality of women and men, or geographically confined problems like oppression in Chile or the suppression of Afghani-

stan or unemployment in isolated areas of Sweden; and they do this independently of the established system of political parties, labour market organizations, ideologies, bureaucracies and the public contributions which are so common in the Swedish world of NGOs. And they have learnt how to make themselves heard and seen via the mass media and thereby observed in the political sphere in ways other than by the ballot paper. The corresponding groups in Third World countries have similar aims—to satisfy local needs with available technology and local resources, e.g., in water supply, production and health services, although the groups in question are severely handicapped by the participants' poverty (which at the same time is their driving force), by lack of communication with the outside world and by the weakness of their country's public services—or attitudes of resistance to the existence of unauthorized pressure groups.

The literature on Third World countries and assistance contains many descriptions and much discussion about the successes and mistakes of the development alternatives of the Third System, derived from experiments at village level or on a somewhat larger scale on the basis of local initiatives.

Many of the initiatives and experiments that are most relevant for Third World countries are better known in Uppsala or Geneva than in the countries where they are located. One of the most important tasks at present for the development of Third World countries is to disseminate knowledge not from South to North or vice versa but from South to South. TCDC', or technical cooperation between developing countries, is a United Nations label for an activity that has not yet nearly reached the volume it should have. And yet, even at its modest beginning close to 40 years ago, the technical assistance programme of the United Nations system was to a high degree aimed at spreading knowledge from Thailand to Haiti, countries very similar in climate and technical conditions, rather than from modern Sweden to medieval Ethiopia.

In the present situation of crisis in the development of many countries, an exchange of knowledge and experiences both from the self-help initiatives at grass-roots level and from the larger development programmes at regional and national level, is one of the most important activities that development cooperation could undertake. The revolutionizing simplicity of communication and information techniques now being developed, which offers solutions for Third World countries until recently out of their financial reach, makes 'a new information order' possible. This order can be democratic, characterized by accessibility for all, by pluralism and by relevance to the development efforts of groups and individuals themselves.

It can offer two-way communication between actors at low and high level—or rather at common and executive level—and so introduce an alternative to the steering from above that has become so typical of Third World countries, and so inefficient, or, rather, so counterproductive.

The many small grass-roots initiatives are visible testimonies to a movement that has a more far-reaching significance and a greater potential than the self-help projects by themselves. As these groups operate together and exchange experiences, a point is sooner or later reached when military dictatorships can no longer prevent their activities and may even be toppled. The consolidation of the new South European democracies during the last few years may be interpreted to show that a considerable degree of development capability was encapsulated under the dictatorship, ready to step forward when the regime had been brought down: prior to the revolution, the educational system and the unofficial information system had been preparing for this.

For a development cooperation programme more definitely assigned to bring democratic objectives into reality, it is fundamental to devote particular efforts to the building of communication and information systems aimed at democratic change.

Some tasks for Swedish assistance to democratic development

Guidelines for Swedish assistance to the development of democracy should first and foremost address themselves to fields where Sweden is already active: these are, as has been shown, national and social liberation, education, communication and information, culture, human rights, and support for a system of voluntary organizations. Regarding central democratic institutions, the ways in which Sweden could actively promote a democratic system of political parties, general and free elections, division of power, decentralization and local government should be studied. AIC, the International Centre of the Swedish Labor Movement, made a special contribution to such thinking through its seminar in May 1985 on the conditions of democracy and the role of grass-roots movements in the Third World.

As already stated, guidelines for a Swedish programme of assistance in the field of mass media were presented in 1983/84 and accepted by Parliament as a basis for continued attention. The government requested the assistance agencies to strengthen Swedish support for democratic media development and made special references to the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, the Swedish Federation of Journalists and Radio Sweden as collaborators in this endeavour. Some of the tasks requiring further activity are outlined below.

The objective may be summarized in the title of an on-going project of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, scheduled for completion in 1985/86: *Methods and Media in Community Participation*. The project has been financed by SIDA with a contribution from CIDA of Canada. It is led by Dale Chandler, and Andreas Fuglesang who has, since the early 1970's, in several books and articles published by the Foundation elaborated ideas which are now being further developed with the participation of a number of specialists not least in the Third World.

This project is in continuation of work that was given a special impetus by the UN Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm in 1972. The Hammarskjöld Foundation has devoted a great part of its efforts to questions of communication and information. Some issues of *Development Dialogue* (1976:1-2, 1981:2 and 1984:1-2) contained primarily a qualified discussion of issues such as 'the right to inform and to be informed'; democratization of communication systems in commercialized and monopolized Third World communities; the impact of the micro-electronic revolution on the Third World; the reasonable meaning of 'a new world order of information and communication'; and experiences of successful and unsuccessful experiments in Another Communication, for instance, through media run as cooperatives or otherwise grass-roots based enterprises. A series of seminars over the years has produced ideas, proposals and publications concerning different parts of the cultural production. 'Global problems, local solutions' is a motto for the endeavour to collect practical experiences. This material is a useful contribution to a programme of assistance for democracy.

Swedish reporting on communication and information activities should also draw on studies and reports being produced under the International Programme for the Development of Communication, IPDC. A study, published in February 1985, on the use of new technology for development (Unesco/IPDC 1985:206/8) contained a number of examples of means and methods employed in recent years to exploit space technology via satellites, radio and television, for development activities from the global to the village level. While in Asia some programmes are already beyond the experimental level, Africa has not yet seen many applications of this new technology. The capacities of space technology have been only minimally employed, the study concludes, and it adds: 'The potentials are staggering'.

Within the field work of SIDA and of SIDA-supported voluntary organizations there is now a mass of experience of grass-roots organizations and their activities in Third World countries. These organizations produce a

large number of publications for use both in Sweden, for information and opinion-forming purposes, and in the Third World for instruction purposes—handbooks, articles etc. Much of this printed material, and probably the audiovisual material too, is no doubt under-utilized and perhaps not even known either by the financing agencies or by field workers who would benefit directly from it. SIDA should initiate a systematic review of such material and consider a periodic selection of it in English in order to acquaint many potentially interested partners with experiences of techniques tried, lessons drawn, successes and failures. For the voluntary organizations, particularly those of the Third World, such an information service should be welcome; they are not yet flooded by such material.

Bringing voluntary organizations of different nations together in Third World countries is another important activity in the promotion of democratic development. Just one example of a cross-fertilizing event: a ‘Workshop on effective involvement of non-governmental organizations in community level development in East and Southern Africa’ was held in 1983 in Harare, Zimbabwe, by the Pan African Institute for Development with financial assistance from the Ford Foundation and the Protestant Central Agency for Development Aid (EZE) in Bonn, West Germany. The report from the workshop contains much useful information on the kind of work dealt with in this paper. The workshop used material that the UN Institute on Training and Research, UNITAR, had brought together (see note 1 and above).

Within the framework of SADCC, the Southern African Development Cooperation Conference, whose aim is to promote by joint action the independence of its nine member countries in relation to South Africa, there is an important programme for development of communication; this is strongly supported by assistance from many countries including Sweden. Such assistance should, wherever possible, be supplemented by support for information services through periodicals and other publications which also promote democracy within the region, counteracting the pressure from South Africa.

**Inter Press Service
—a different news
agency**

The flow of news and reading material for entertainment from the richer parts of the world is flooding the existing information channels of the Third World like a polluted river, and it is creating a need for a movement of environmental protection. A culturally conscientious nation with assistance ambitions such as Sweden can do useful things in this connection, not by strengthening existing government control of the news services or other media monopolies—governmental or commercial—but by efforts to increase pluralism and alternatives in the information flow.

In this connection a practical proposal is to welcome the international, non-governmental, Third World- and development- oriented but non-profit news agency that has squeezed itself into the news market in recent years: IPS, Inter Press Service, Third World News Agency, founded and continuing as a cooperative of journalists. It is independent in relation to governments. Its news and articles are becoming visible in the Swedish press. Its network is strongest in the Third World—but it is increasingly difficult for Third World countries to pay for its services in foreign currency and they need assistance in this regard. The IPS network is now also being extended to embrace voluntary organizations as senders and receivers of development information.

One recent important element in the development information service of IPS—particularly geared towards an exchange between Third World countries (South-South)—is called TIPS, the Technological Information Pilot System. This project has come about after years of preparation in cooperation between some United Nations bodies and a few NGOs. Its origins lie within the UN (where it was discussed under the names of DEVNET or DIN, Development Information Network) and it is now to be financed for a three-year pilot period by the UN Financing System for Science and Technology for Development (UNFSSTD) based on a Trust Fund donated by the government of Italy. The executive UN body is the UNDP which is contracting out the implementation to IPS. Thus the technical facilities of IPS are immediately available for the service. Ten subjects and ten Third World countries have been selected for the initial period: subjects like energy, electronics, food processing and pharmaceuticals, and countries like Mexico, Nigeria and India.

With this service incorporated in its network, IPS will be even better placed to serve as an independent contact between governmental and non-governmental operations, organizations, enterprises and interests.

Through its news service network in Third World countries and its relationship with the Third System of non-governmental organisations, IPS is well placed to be an important guardian of developments relating to human rights, freedom of information and other essential parts of a democratic system; it has also demonstrated great active interest in these matters.

IPS has already been supported by SIDA for its efforts to establish itself in Sweden and to build up its network of contacts with and for the NGOs. Swedish support has also been given for special services connected with coverage of news from the UN organizations and for special subjects like

international population questions. The intention is that the services offer themselves in the news market on a commercial basis, although temporary subsidies are warranted in some fields of international development information to widen the supply, just as the development efforts themselves are supported internationally.

Some Third World countries have been invited to join the IPS news network with the fee paid by friendly countries, and Sweden may consider making such subscriptions possible for some of the countries with whom it has a bilateral development cooperation programme. A country that is brought into the IPS network may be more observed internationally than before, and with more development oriented news material disseminated about it, there may be more concern for the country's problems and the way its own population is wrestling with them. A partner country that gives assistance to its development may see that such a news service could be beneficial to both the cooperating partners.

As specialized training of journalists, as well as of other media staff, is of great importance in strengthening mass media, international training facilities should be made available. Professional training of journalists is provided in many Third World countries; this may be supported, as are other educational institutions, under 'country programmes' of multilateral and bilateral assistance. Interest should be shown also from the Swedish side in discussing such projects insofar as they are in keeping with the principles that the parties have agreed on. IPS has introduced in-service training for journalists within its own network, and Swedish financing of stipends and fellowships should seriously be considered.

In this connection, but unrelated to IPS, the possibility of study tours should be considered, as an important form of development assistance. Studies of democracy in Sweden should be introduced, for instance, for mass media professionals. The Swedish model of democracy may or may not be good — the Swedes themselves recognize some of its weaknesses—but there is no harm in observing it and many people want to know more about it. For journalists or publishers it is certainly interesting to see, how this people has organized its system of government with its element of corporatism currently so much under discussion, with the mass media as a part of democracy, and with newspapers financially supported by the state and yet supposed to be independent in a highly commercialized society. The Commission for Technical and Economic Cooperation with Developing Countries (BITS) is now preparing a pilot seminar where media people can come and see and discuss this version of mass media democracy.—Journalists who were

refugees in Sweden and have now gone back to Latin American countries which have returned to democracy, testify to the value of experiences from here as part of their home-coming baggage. This point arose, for example, at a recent SIDA-supported seminar in Uruguay on the theme of mass media in a democratic society. For Sweden it is certainly of value to see its own system through the eyes of critical observers from abroad.

IPS has been given attention in this paper and in recent Swedish efforts to promote media development, not least because it has been seen as a preferable alternative to the intergovernmental UN agency Unesco, which has not been able to demonstrate efficiency and unquestioned credibility as an agent of the ideology of freedom of information which the organization should represent according to its constitution. Depressing experiences of Swedish-financed so-called multi-bilateral projects, which Unesco has not managed to carry out satisfactorily, has also caused disappointment. With regard to the Unesco affiliate IPDC, Sweden has taken a wait-and-see position after having made it clear that it expects the new body to demonstrate its determination to promote media pluralism and, as far as possible, media independence in relation to government.—It has been interesting to observe that the IPDC is now discussing direct cooperation with non-governmental media institutions. Meanwhile, international reporting through IPDC on media development is of apparent interest and has been financed to some degree from Swedish assistance funds.

In order to promote a free flow of information in and between Third World countries through international bodies which are independent both of governments and of commercial interests, a foundation was created a few years ago called CODEV, Communication for Development Foundation. Founding fathers were some international non-governmental and non-profit bodies such as Third World Forum, the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, IFDA, and IPS. The objective was to support Third World country communication thereby contributing to democratization and stimulating 'unheard voices' to come to the fore. Advice, training and equipment are among the means to be employed for the purposes. CODEV is ready to mobilize resources from its membership to assist in the planning of tailor-made information systems, and also to make modest grants for printing, copying, video and film production in local connections where a small self-help contribution could give results worthwhile as models, to be reported through the IPS network.

CODEV is available for the stated objectives, ready to activate itself if the need arises. Meanwhile, the IPS has become an executive agent of the TIPS

project which was in the making at the time of the creation of CODEV.

**Some problems
regarding support
for democratic
development**

This paper has not been written on the basis of a stated comprehensive theory of democracy. It has dealt with some specific activities included or recommended for inclusion in development cooperation programmes on the basis that they would promote development that would favour the interests of poor strata of people and increase their opportunities of influencing the policies of their country.

One point of departure has been that dictatorships, irrespective of the motives they pursue, are unable to meet the demands for development in this direction—be it exercised by a nation colonizing other nations; by a minority (of, for example, four million whites in South Africa) enslaving a majority; by a majority enslaving minorities; by a military junta; or by a party state suppressing dissenting groups and opinions. Viable development is not considered achievable in a highly centralized system where people are not given opportunities to influence their own destiny. ‘Participation’ and ‘mobilization’ of people for national development, if it is to have a long-term effect, is not a result of orders from above; it comes out of open discussion through two-way communication and horizontal dialogue—often difficult and time-consuming—ending up in a high degree of consensus, or at least majority decision, on what is good policy; this is development by cooperation, not by exhortation.

From a Swedish vantage point, watching the last two decades of frustrated expectations in poor countries, this advice emerges: try democracy! Because on the basis of our own development experience we believe that it works better than any other system of government.

There are a number of rights and freedoms that all men and women possess—human rights—and that a country recognizes for itself and others, for example, by requesting membership of the United Nations. Each government is obliged to respect and protect these rights. Violation of them in one country may create tensions that endanger peace. Such violations, therefore, ‘do not belong to the interior concerns of a state’, the Swedish government stated in its declaration on foreign policy on 27 March, 1985.

This is the basis on which rests the Swedish desire to assist the democratic development of society in countries with whom we cooperate, and to take initiatives for this purpose in our dialogue with them.

It is therefore reasonable that the partner offering assistance, as has been

suggested in this paper, should choose to support programmes, organizations and tendencies in Third World countries, which in his judgement promote 'development towards democracy', just as Sweden has always supported programmes intended to promote equalization of economic conditions within the country.

The development cooperation agency—a governmental body or a non-governmental organization or institution—has the task of assessing whether a body on the partner country's side is suitable for the purpose of assistance to be provided. If, for instance, an organization in the partner country which is presented as non-governmental, is found to have been created by the government and is governed by it—by persons in the leading positions who are at the same time officers of the government—it may be felt that the organization is not well placed as an instrument of the democratic development of society. It may turn out to be a camouflage for state power, probably created only in order to comply in a formal way with the wishes of the assistance agency.

If assistance is coupled with too far-reaching conditions it may not only lose its purpose but even be counterproductive. The assistance agency should be aware of this risk and actively seek intermediaries who are not only willing but appropriate for the purpose insofar as it includes the objective of promoting democracy.

SIDA has recently carried out a study on the capacity of Swedish voluntary organizations as agents of Swedish official development assistance. An equally important task will be to make a study of the organizations on the side of the Third World countries involved, and the working out of criteria for the examination of such bodies. If a Swedish or international voluntary agency creates an NGO in a Third World country, provides its staffing (for example, from Sweden) and then the funds for its operations, this is not necessarily a way of supporting democratic development. There is a danger that even after many years of funding, the project will not be viable without the Swedish financing; then it does not correspond to the purpose of self-supporting development. On the contrary, it may have had the opposite effect by creating dependence on a foreign country and unacceptable inequalities in its national environment.

An important task of Swedish assistance and its organs should be to explain the thinking behind the 'democratic objective' to representatives of the partner countries. The agents of Swedish official development assistance should actively seek organs, already in existence or in an embryonic stage,

that have a grass-roots origin and the broadest possible popular anchorage, in order to discuss in what way Swedish support, if it is requested, could be channelled through them and be utilized in an agreed form for democratic control. The agencies should look out in the countries concerned for projects that may appear promising from a democratic point of view and consider on their own part which methods might be suitable in the individual case. In such cases the Swedish side should be prepared to fund projects or inputs in them outside the financial so-called country frame, as a means of avoiding the type of interference from the government of the Third World country, which may weaken the 'democratic direction' of a Swedish input. Each project would be seen by both sides as an experiment.

It is particularly through the charters and constitutions of the United Nations system, that human rights become international obligations for member countries. For this reason it is important to support efforts of democratization through UN organizations or in cooperation with them. Some would argue that it should be done primarily or exclusively within the framework of such organizations, as the multilateral system is considered more 'neutral' in dealing with questions touching upon national sovereignty and pride. Others would express the view that the UN bodies have gone much too far in their cautious avoidance of 'interventionist' action in domestic matters which are seen as the exclusive domain of governments. Be this as it may, there are many conventions that contain an obligation on the part of the signatories to expose themselves to reporting and checks or hearings in front of an international body in the case of allegations against them for not living up to their international obligations (the ILO has probably one of the most elaborate systems of this kind). To create more arrangements of such a character in order to widen and deepen the open debate on issues of democratic development should be the subject of more Swedish initiatives within the United Nations system of organizations.

Appendix I

Swedish Assistance to Communication Development

Extracts from a summary in English of a proposal for general policy guidelines regarding Swedish assistance towards the development of communication and information in developing countries, submitted in August 1983 by an Interministerial Committee on Assistance to Communication Development.

Basic principles

The main conclusion of the Committee is that the needs of the developing countries demand an increased action by Sweden in the fields of communication and information and that a comprehensive policy for Sweden's development cooperation in this sector is needed.

The Committee states, however, that assistance in the media field should be studied in the same overall context as development cooperation in other sectors of high priority, such as agricultural and rural development. Moreover, it notes that within the framework of most major development projects communication and information aspects—'development information'—will also be of importance.

The four main policy aims of Sweden's official development assistance are, as decided by Parliament, to promote economic growth of developing countries, economic and social equity, economic and political independence, and development towards a democratic society.

Referring to these goals, the Committee recommends that considerations concerning assistance in the fields of communication and information be based on the following general observations:

1. Development towards an increased independence of developing countries and improved living conditions for their populations may be speeded up if they get access to modern technology, in areas such as telecommunications, recording, reproduction as well as radio and television.
2. Economic and social development implies that knowledge is spread to the masses. To developing countries with their rapidly increasing population it is today of utmost importance that as many as possible of their citizens are able to produce their own food supply. Those who besides the need of the family can produce a surplus which can be sold at the market, contribute to the economic growth and self-reliance of their country. Improving the dissemination of information is an important means for reaching these goals.
3. A wide dissemination of knowledge through the mass media may contribute to social and economic equality among different groups of the population, and between women and men.
4. A lasting and self-generating development effort on a massive basis presupposes popular support and cooperation implying wide participation at the local level in the planning, decision-making, and execution of the activities. An effective system of information may make people aware of the possibilities and the goals of development and joint action. It may facilitate an exchange of experiences and opinions—two-way communication—within and between groups and between the vast majority of the people on the one hand and its rulers on the other. Information systems with such characteristics promote the development of democracy.

5. Mass media can be essential tools for preserving and developing the cultural identity of peoples and, at the same time, for enriching every individual culture through exchanges with other cultures.
6. Assistance to the development of the communication and information systems of developing countries may consequently contribute to achieving the main goals of the Swedish development cooperation.
7. In the fields of communication and information Sweden is in a position to take an active????? in a development cooperation effort through its own expertise and knowledge as well as through its production of goods and services.
8. The technological achievements in these fields imply for every country economic, social, cultural and political problems, to which attention must be given in development assistance when making this technology available to developing countries. The obvious imbalance that exists in the fields of communication and information to the disadvantage of developing countries, must not be replaced by new forms of domination and dependence that impoverish the cultures of the developing countries instead of enriching them.

Recommendations

The Committee does not suggest any new type of financing of Sweden's official development assistance in the fields of communication and information. Instead, it makes a number of references to existing aid sources. Nor does it recommend a change of the principles established by Parliament on the basis of which the countries which may receive Swedish development assistance are selected. The selection of those countries should continue to be made on the basis of existing decisions and practice. However, the Committee feels that special attention should be paid to the need for regional and sub-regional projects in the field of communication and information.

The Committee recommends that the present distribution of responsibilities between the Swedish authorities dealing with official development assistance on the whole remain unchanged. Assistance to communication development should as much as possible be dealt with in the same administrative manner as other forms of Swedish assistance. However, in the field of the mass media, the Committee considers it important that for the time being and until further experience has been gained under the proposed guidelines decisions be referred by the aid agencies concerned to the responsible ministry.

As to projects relating to the development of infrastructure and the improvement of equipment, etc. the Committee emphasizes first of all the importance of continuously keeping in mind the need for training as a component of each project.

It recommends that SIDA, taking into account the experiences of other national and international development agencies, draft a special strategy for the telecommunication sector, keeping in mind the increasing importance of questions concerning

planning, project identification, choice of technology etc., and that SIDA and BITS (as an agency responsible for technical cooperation and special credits) develop a training program in this field. Moreover, the Committee recommends that Swedish aid agencies in the dialogue with developing countries clearly emphasize the importance of communication development.

Moreover, the Committee stresses the importance of communication and information components to development projects in general. In particular, it recommends that more attention be paid to questions concerning the participation of the people concerned in development projects and that SIDA carry out a study how to improve the aid methodology in this field, drawing also on the experiences of non-governmental bodies.

The Committee feels that assistance to the development of the mass media raises particular problems. It recommends first of all that the fundamental principles of Swedish media policy, especially those concerning the plurality and the independence of the media, be emphasized in Sweden's dialogue with developing countries and guide decisions on Swedish assistance in this field.

Furthermore, it recommends that Sweden continue to make its stand on these principles known in the international fora concerned and that special attention be paid to the contributions made by non-governmental bodies in the mass media field.

In this context the Committee recommends that an earlier Swedish proposal to arrange a round table on the working conditions of journalists in collaboration with Unesco be discussed anew, that seminars concerning various aspects of the mass media be organized in Sweden, and that attention be paid particularly to the development of radio and press in rural areas.

With reference to, amongst others, the recommendations of the 1982 World Conference on Cultural Policies, organized in Mexico by Unesco, the Committee makes a number of proposals relating to culture and communication. For instance, it recommends that attention be paid to questions concerning the cultural dimension of development, in particular to problem areas which may be similar to Sweden as well as to many developing countries. It also stresses the impact that technological developments may have on cultural creativity in developing countries, and recommends that questions concerning the development and the use of cultural industries in developing countries receive attention as well as questions relating to book printing, especially books for children, and to using new reproduction technologies in the field of film, video, tape-recording, etc. Finally, it recalls the needs of developing countries in the field of copyright.

As to the choice of channels for communication development, the Committee recommends in the first place that Swedish bilateral assistance be financed within the Swedish country programs and multilateral assistance via the international development organizations. In this connection, it also recommends that Sweden

continue to emphasize the importance of the principle that technical assistance in the fields of information and communication also be financed via the regular budgets of the relevant UN organizations. In the field of the mass media the Committee recommends SIDA also to pay attention to the possibilities of channelling development assistance via non-governmental bodies.

A number of recommendations concern the international development agencies and their activities. For instance, the Committee recommends that the questions of the tele-tariffs currently in use for news dissemination and of the allotment of frequencies for radio and television to developing countries be considered also in a development aid perspective, and that Sweden continue to take an active interest in these and other questions of importance to developing countries in ITU and other relevant bodies.

With regard to the International Program for the Development of Communication (IPDC), which was recently established by Unesco, the Committee recommends that attention be given to its coordinating role when projects in the fields of communication and information are being discussed, and that such cooperation via funds-in-trust organized between Sweden and Unesco be considered in the first place within the framework of IPDC.

The Committee recommends that SIDA continue its cooperation with WIPO in the field of training and seminars, and that the possibilities of providing support also to other development communication projects within the UN system be studied.

Finally, as to questions concerning the future organization and coordination in Sweden the Committee recommends the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to study, in cooperation with other ministries concerned, the matter of a system of regular domestic consultations on Swedish assistance in the fields of communication and information. Also SIDA should consider establishing a group of specialists in these fields. Finally, the idea of meeting some of the training needs of developing countries by means of increased educational programmes, possibly organized as an independent foundation in Sweden, is also submitted for future consideration.

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Freedom of information: an official Swedish declaration

Extracts from a Statement by Mr Anders Thunborg, Swedish Ambassador to the United Nations, New York, in the Special Political Committee of the General Assembly on Agenda Item 59: Questions relating to Information, November 19, 1980.

We are convinced that the free press has played and will play an essential role for furthering justice and social and cultural equality in our own society. It is our belief that a free press will also contribute to equality and economic development in other societies. We are equally convinced that a free flow of information and communication between individuals in different countries will further better understanding between peoples and of their hopes, worries and concerns.

The imbalance in the newsflow between countries has been criticized. Such an imbalance, e.g. the strong influence by commercial interests, can obviously be harmful. When we consider how to abolish all kinds of obstacles for the flow of news and information—nationally and internationally—we should also discuss how the present structure in this field can be improved.

The right to speak—and to speak up against the powerful without fear of reprisals—must be afforded not least the underprivileged, for whom it is a weapon in their rightful struggle for human dignity and for better standards of life. New technology such as educational TV may offer cheap and efficient means for communication in countries where the infrastructure needs to be improved. I want to repeat, here and now, that obstacles limiting the exercise of the freedom of expression should be abolished—be they legal, economic, social or cultural. A society that does not permit open criticism of its leadership and its institutions, becomes a rigid and oppressive society. A free debate, independent and diversified mass media and a well informed public are needed both to control and balance every type of power, political, economic and other, and to promote development. We would wish to see these principles applied to the world as a whole and, not least, to the activities of Unesco and the United Nations.

In our opinion the activities of international organizations, be they Unesco or the UN, in the field of communication and information, should contribute to and stimulate open communication between individuals and countries, and they can do so if their activities are based on the following considerations:

1. The flow of information should be free—as expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations (Article 19) and in the Mass Media Declaration of Unesco (Article 1), and as elaborated further in the conclusions of the Report of the International Commission for the Study of Communications Problems, the MacBride Commission, set up by Unesco.
2. Censorship or arbitrary control of information should be abolished, as underlined by the MacBride Commission.
3. Governments, on their part, should promote the free access of journalists to the sources of information.
4. Mass Media should be truly independent of government interference in regard to the content of the information that they disseminate.
5. The status of journalists should be strengthened, and their working conditions should be improved particularly through action initiated by the profession itself. The views and proposals of the profession should be welcomed and duly taken into account by governments and international bodies before any action is taken in such matters.

6. The international community should support developing countries in the buildup of the infrastructure needed for a wide and more balanced flow of information. Such action should be coordinated within each country and within the United Nations System, and with the full cooperation of the non-governmental institutions and organizations concerned. In this context I should like to refer to the recent decision taken by the General Conference of Unesco to establish an International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC). We believe the IPDC has an important role to play in this context together with other organizations—governmental as well as non-governmental.
7. The programmes of international organizations in this field should be concentrated to activities for which their competence and capacity are best suited, taking into account the fact that information and journalism are not primarily an inter-governmental concern. They should also take into account that in some instances other organizations are better placed and equipped to operate to the advantage of countries in need of international assistance. The organizations should have a clear division of tasks between them and cooperate in order to avoid overlapping and duplication of work.

Notes

1. Reference is made to UNITAR (United Nations Institute for Training and Research) paper No. 8/1978 on 'The Role of Swedish Non-Governmental Organizations in International Development Cooperation' by Ernst Michanek (New York, 1978).
2. Reference is made to 'The Third Systems Project' carried out by IFDA (the International Foundation for Development Alternatives), Nyon, Switzerland in 1977-80 and accounted for in the *IFDA Dossier* from No. 17 of May 1980 onwards and in several articles in this journal (1981:1 and onwards).

about understanding

—ideas and observations
on cross-cultural
communication

by andreas fuglesang

For Communicators generally, and
Workers in Adult Education,
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Over the last ten years there has been an ever growing importance attached to the communications *problématique*. Most efforts to transform the present international information structures have been made in a rather abstract manner and at a fairly high political level. *About Understanding* represents a major contribution to the problem of communication at the grass roots level.

In this updated and thought-provoking expansion of his earlier book *Applied Communication in Developing Countries: Ideas and Observations*, Andreas Fuglesang introduces new and bold perspectives in his analysis of the role of communications in social and economic development.

Yet the book is no abstract discourse. As a practical guide to the issue of development communication it offers workers in adult education, primary health care and nutrition in the Third World many valuable observations and ideas which they can apply to their own situations.

Andreas Fuglesang is an internationally recognized authority on information, cross-cultural communication and adult education in the Third World.



Methods and Media in Community Participation



One of the major seminar projects launched by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation during recent years is the Dag Hammarskjöld Project on 'Methods and Media in Community Participation', directed by Andreas Fuglesang and Dale Chandler under the guidance of Lourdes Arizpe (Mexico), Karina Constantino-David (The Philippines), Subhachari Dasgupta (India), Jus-tin Maeda (Tanzania), Manfred Max-Neef (Chile), Miriam Were (Kenya) and Don Snowden and Tony Williamson (Canada).

The preparatory work on the project started in early 1983 but the main activities took place in 1984, when two workshops were organized and the lead papers and most of the case studies were completed. 1985 has been devoted to editing this very rich material, which will be published in three volumes in 1986. The first volume contains a selection of the lead papers, the second a selection of the case studies and the third is a bibliography on the literature relevant to the project.

About 50 people participated in the workshops, the majority of them participating in both. The first was held at Wik Castle and at Uppsala, Sweden, in May and the second at North-West River and Goose Bay in Labrador, Canada, in October, 1984. At the end of the

second workshop, a set of Summary Conclusions were formulated. They are printed here together with a list of the participants.

As is evident from the Summary Conclusions, the workshop participants endorsed the idea of establishing an International Community Organizing Network (ICON), which should, inter alia, exchange 'information, materials and experiences within and across countries and regions in order to enable members to learn from both the successes and failures of each others' experiences', thus counteracting 'the increasing atomization of communities, particularly those of the Third World'.

Immediately after the Summary Conclusions, we are printing a poem about the Labrador Workshop, sent to us some time after the event by one of the local observers attending the meeting. The poet, Anyon Wright, has captured the tragic dilemma of community organizing under the increasing militarization of our time by contrasting the peaceful deliberations of the Third World participants at Goose Bay with the roar of the Black Phantom jets sent into the clear skies of Labrador by the German air force stationed for training at the Goose Bay NATO base.

Summary Conclusions

Adopted by the participants in the Workshops on 'Methods and Media in Community Participation' at Wik Castle/Uppsala, Sweden, and North West River/Goose Bay, Labrador, Canada, May 19-27 and September 29-October 7, 1984; the Workshops formed part of the Dag Hammarskjöld Project on Methods and Media in Community Participation, organized in the context of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation's programme for the promotion of Another Development.

1. Building a common ground

The richness of our experience at the Uppsala and Labrador Workshops cannot easily be condensed in a document, since, as the co-directors of this project intended, our main objective was to share an understanding of our work, our methods, and the process of community participation. However, what has been special about these workshops is that we learned as much by explicit debate as by our involvement in the process of presentation of papers and exercises in the different methodologies. What follows, then, is an attempt to bring together some of the many ideas and feelings which grew out of our shared involvement in the workshops.

From the beginning, the ghost which followed us around, worrying us and edging us on—it probably became attached to us at Wik Castle—seemed to be warning us that community participation is a tool that can be used for many purposes. As each of us went about explaining our projects and experiences, we found great diversity. However, we also found commonality, which expressed itself in the overarching fact that we are all in this to fight for what we believe.

What are we fighting against? First and foremost, against oppression: be it political oppression that robs people of their liberty and culture, and even their lives; or the oppression of poverty that degrades people physically, mentally and culturally; or the domination of one class or one gender or one culture by another; or the twin oppression of disease and malnutrition; or the isolation and the alienated culture produced by ethnic or racial discrimination.

We know what we are fighting against, with different priorities in different countries, and we know what we are fighting for. And in our own work in communities all over the world, it has become clear to us that participation is no more than an abstract and vague concept unless we are able to state, in a way which leaves no room for ambiguity, what we are fighting for. In the course of our discussions, it was found that, although there are differences in timing, strategies and tactics, our aims fall within the framework provided by the conception of Another Development as it has evolved in the work of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation.

We are in agreement that 'Development is a whole. Its ecological, cultural, social, economic, institutional and political dimensions can only be under-

This document represents the broad consensus of the participants, though none of them necessarily agrees with all points in the analysis or recommendations. It should also be noted that the participants attended in their personal capacities, i.e. without committing the organizations or governments to which they belong. The participants are listed at the end of the document.

stood in their systematic interrelationships, and action in its service must be integrated.’

Another Development is structured around the following pillars:

- It is geared to meeting human needs, both material and non-material.
- It is endogenous and self-reliant, that is, relying on the strength of the societies which undertake it.
- It is in harmony with the environment.
- Finally, it is based on the premise that Another Development requires structural transformations, since domination based on, for instance, class, gender or ethnicity expresses itself within the total social system.*

We believe that, in order to achieve Another Development, the diversity of people’s perspectives and cultures must be respected, and not trampled into homogeneity by imposed political will, or by the mass media. It is not uniformity that the world needs, but shared commitment to universal values. Respect for every human life and for individual integrity, for freedom of movement and for the creative flow of ideas are the basic elements which collectively guide our steps in promoting community participation. On this basis, there can be integration of diversity rather than a neutralizing of differences. We are aware that neither the communities nor the local cultures must be idealized, since not everything that human beings invent or do is necessarily for the common good. Our thinking and our actions must be evaluated against the ends they serve in terms of whether they help to oppress or to fulfil human needs and humane aspirations.

Participation, especially, must not be idealized in an abstract way. It is not enough to provide people in the community with basic services; it is not enough to put people’s voices into print, or onto radio or film. The illusion of participation must not blur the reality of most people being unable to influence the decisions that affect their lives. Moreover, participation must enable people to use methods and media only as *means* to achieving more control over their lives and their work. Communities must not be smothered with specialized language, imposed ideologies or charitable hand-outs. Rather, the tools and the space must be provided for people to channel their energies in such a way that the whole of society, local, national, regional and global, will benefit. At the same time, we must strongly oppose processes whereby local communities, Third World

* See The 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld Report, *What Now: Another Development?*, *Development Dialogue*, 1975 1/2, and *Another Development: Approaches and Strategies*, edited by Marc Nerfin, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, 1977.

peoples, or marginalized and powerless communities in the industrialized countries, are made to foot the bill for the affluent living of the privileged classes in the North and their accomplices in the South. That is, participation must not mean adapting the poor to living in miserable conditions giving them the illusion that they participate in decision-making, when all the decisions with real power to back them up are taken in the political and economic centres of the industrialized world.

2. Community Participation

Most communities, all over the world, define themselves either by geographical, historical, ethnic, class, or cultural unity, although internal differences within them can also be perceived. Economic and political domination may exist within them even though they appear to be homogeneous. For the purpose of promoting participation it is necessary, then, to identify groups with common interests in order to build alliances that will give them greater capacity to confront existing power structures and to create alternative structures.

Community participation is the process whereby members of the community are involved in initiating, making, as well as implementing decisions concerning their lives within and beyond their immediate communities. It is an endogenous process empowering members of the community with the continuing capability to critically understand their reality and initiate appropriate actions to deal with it with a view to attaining social, cultural and economic development. Community participation, therefore, involves collective action of the people against socio-economic and political forces of oppression within the community and in the wider national and international context.

3. Participation and the structures of power

The empowering of communities at the local level can only be made possible by recognizing that oppressive forces operate at various levels of power. The local power structures that may exist are related to the national and international structures and may often be the arm of global economic and political interests. The military might and the economic interests of imperialism and transnationals are supported by repressive national regimes and vice versa. Therefore, it is important for community organizers to identify the mechanisms through which control over the people is perpetuated, and to identify those which only give the impression that people participate, as, for example, when democratic processes are a ritual rather than a reality.

Because of the multi-layer nature of this structure of power, community participation for empowering the people must vary in strategy according to

the specific political context, that is, the nature of government; and also according to the economic context, which reflects the position that a country has in the world economic system.

4. Community participation as a process

Community participation must be a process enabling the poor and the powerless to acquire greater control of the natural and industrial resources in their community. But, as a tool, community participation can be used for many different things.

In the first instance, it can be used to fulfill a community's immediate needs, such as improving their water and sanitary conditions, making their farming practices more productive, or increasing their level of literacy. However, too many such projects fail in countries of the South because no in-built mechanisms have been established to sustain long-term development.

In some cases, failure has occurred because individual projects are directed toward one particular social problem without realizing that they will also affect other aspects of people's lives. An example is when high technology agriculture is introduced and this in turn destroys the ecosystems, increases the women's work load or produces illnesses through the use of insecticides.

In other cases, it happens that the increased surplus produced through a project is immediately appropriated by landlords or intermediaries. In the same way, bureaucrats or extension workers may appropriate part of the funds for a project intended for the community. Finally, projects have failed because the people are not the main initiators or decision-makers of the project, and, therefore, lack the motivation to continue with it.

It becomes crucial, then, to build community participation in such a way that the continuity of its projects and undertakings is ensured. Such continuity must be based on self-reliance, meaning that the community members must be responsible for the planning, decisions, management and work processes of projects in which they are involved. This cannot be done in a piecemeal fashion, but will depend on whether the community as a whole has strengthened its powers to negotiate or to build alternative structures against forces that do not respect their economic, political and cultural rights.

One of the major elements that will allow communities to acquire this strength is conscientization, that is, enabling those deprived of power to clearly understand the forces underlying the systems that oppress them. This means that they will develop the motivation and the necessary skills to

enable them to act upon the situations that constrain them. Conscientization leads to greater horizontal cohesiveness through increased communication between communities. The more communities cooperate in concerted efforts, the stronger they will be in carrying out their projects.

Because community participation is a process that is applied in different social and political contexts, its strategies cannot be defined in the abstract. They must be moulded to specific conditions and directed by the specific ends which are to be achieved.

Ultimately, our goal is to build societies based on a wide consensus of the majority of the people so as to achieve the stability and participation needed to foster development. In situations where agreement among different groups will benefit them in attaining common ends, the community organizer may stress consensus-building and conflict resolution strategies. One case in point—brought out at the Labrador Workshop—is that of the Kaminuriak video methodology, which allowed for a greater understanding by the Inuit and the biologists of each others' views about the treatment of the caribou herds. A more general example would be attempts to improve wife/husband relationships by providing them with the means to establish a dialogue through which they might bring about a greater equality in their roles.

Such actions are more likely to be of general benefit in contexts of relatively liberal and benign democracies, where governments are usually sensitive to public opinion, since their political legitimacy is based on the idea of the people's welfare. But even under such conditions it is sometimes necessary to confront the opposition of interest groups, such as landlords or powerful business corporations, to safeguard the rights of tenants, workers or ethnic groups.

The choice of a strategy of either consensus-building or confrontation will depend on the context for the process of community participation. Where no channels exist that will allow people's demands and expectations to influence the course of events, either economic or political, the only possibility is to openly challenge the obstacles to development. This is generally necessary under dictatorial or repressive regimes, because such governments derive their power from military force or from intervention by one of the dominant foreign powers. People's pressure from the grass-roots level, therefore, may have little effect unless it is articulated within the wider movements for social change.

When operating in a repressive context, the community organizer must build consensus among those who support the struggle for structural transformation and, at the same time, confront the power structure of the regime. Active confrontation may be inevitable but requires that individuals and communities carefully assess the strength and cohesiveness of their forces in facing the adversary. This process should result in the creation of alternative structures of power that continue to grow in response to changing conditions.

It may happen, though, that communities who live in peaceful conditions, while respecting the social environment in which they live, may be forced into a defensive position by the aggressiveness of other ethnic, religious or political groups that oppose them.

Confrontational participation can also become a means of raising the consciousness of the community as to the real conditions under which they live. Women who are denied public social services will realize that their social and domestic work deliberately goes unpaid. Peasants who lose the fight to have the prices of their agricultural products increased will realize that they are being exploited by the merchants and through the unequal terms of trade between rural and urban areas. This contradiction between the people in the rural and the urban areas makes it difficult to achieve the kind of solidarity which is needed; a participatory process should try to overcome this contradiction and thereby counteract the atomization of the oppressed.

When beginning a process of genuine participation, in all contexts, the community organizer must start out by increasing people's awareness of their situation. This implies, on the one hand, making people realize that their indigenous knowledge and culture is of great value. On the other, it means increasing their levels of consciousness by linking immediate local issues to the major national, regional and international issues. One example is the seeds issue,* which links what happens to peasants in the villages to the major forces operating in the international markets of agricultural products.

It is also very important, in terms of the strategies for community participation, to critically assess the time context in which we are operating. Conditions for economic and social development in the Third World have

* See *The Law of the Seed: Another Development and Plant Genetic Resources* by Pat Roy Mooney, *Development Dialogue* 1983:1-2.

changed dramatically in the last five years. Now that a majority of such countries are exporting not only their economic surplus but even much of their capital, in order to pay the high interest rates on their foreign loans, conditions for the poor in both urban and rural communities will worsen considerably in the next few years. In such a time context, many actions taken by people to stop the pervasive unemployment, or the decrease in the purchasing power of their wages, is bound to become confrontational. Strife and conflict may increase, particularly in countries where governments are unable to provide basic services for their populations. The community organizer cannot afford to ignore such pressures. His or her awareness of such issues will help enable communities not only to work in the right direction but to win in the fight to empower the people.

5. How to link ourselves together

In order to safeguard the interests of the communities of the world in the struggle against the pervasive consolidation of international economic forces, it is necessary for those community development workers and community organizers who share the common ground articulated in this document to be effectively linked together. An active network, which should in no way develop into another bureaucratic layer, should be set up, composed initially of the practitioners participating in the Workshops of the Project on Methods and Media in Community Participation. This initial network should gradually be expanded to include other dedicated and committed community workers and organizers, from the South as well as from the North.

The International Community Organizing Network (ICON), emerging as a result of the Uppsala and North West River/Goose Bay Workshops, begins with distinct advantages: a commonality that springs from dialogue and a bond of interpersonal relations.

The purposes of ICON shall be modest, especially at its formative stages, growing in scope as well as in depth as the network becomes more stable. ICON is committed to fulfilling the following purposes:

Sharing

The exchange of information, materials and experiences within and across countries and regions in order to enable members to learn from both the successes and failures of each others' experiences. In addition, it includes a programme for an exchange of organizers involved in similar projects, both within and between regions of the world.

Developing appropriate methods

The sharing of materials and experiences must lead to the creation and adaptation of different methods and media. Such a process, especially if it

results from collaboration across national boundaries, will counteract the increasing atomization of communities, particularly those of the Third World.

Research

As a basis for more effective community work, research that is done with the needs of participation clearly in view must be undertaken. Such research will bring about both the intellectual and the experiential cross-fertilization that will enhance organizing work.

Solidarity

Recognizing that certain national situations, especially those prevailing under authoritarian and repressive regimes, pose risks for many community workers, the network will function as a support group for members as well as others involved in community organizing activities. Solidarity can take the form of international pressure in cases of arrest or other forms of harassment as well as moral and material support for victims of repression. It may also manifest itself in initiatives to make more people, especially in the First World, aware of the conditions prevailing in the Third World.

ICON will only fulfill its purpose if concrete actions are undertaken which will directly benefit the people. Therefore, the major part of its resources must be used to support actions and projects for communities. The central administration of ICON must be kept to a minimum; it should primarily orient itself to maintaining communication among its members and channelling funds for its projects. It will consist of an Executive Committee, one of whose members will act as Executive Secretary. She/he will be responsible for coordinating the regional centres which will constitute the basic areas of action of the network. The secretaryship should rotate among the members of the Executive Committee.

The main activities of ICON will be handled by regional centres which will be in charge of designing, planning and carrying out clusters of activities, focused around specific themes. Members of the region may participate in activities related to these themes and will meet periodically for this purpose, but may also participate in activities carried out in other regions. The regional centres will channel relevant information and materials and may also hold training seminars for practitioners. ICON will also actively relate to other organizations, institutions and networks that share its vision.

The specific operational guidelines will be drafted by the Executive Committee, subject to the approval by the initial membership.



List of participants

Third World Practitioners: Arturo Argueta-Villamar (Mexico), Subhadra Belbase (Nepal), Rosie Brown (Dominica), Ravadee Chaiyaparn (Thailand), Dembele Sata Djire (Mali), Mahbulul Karim (Bangladesh), Samuel Kenyi (Sudan), Fanice Khanali (Kenya), Lakshmi Krishnamurty (India), Helen Mateega (Uganda), Maria Nakano (Brazil), Thomas Nyitambe (Tanzania), Ricardo Ramirez (Colombia), René Salazar (Philippines), Juan Jose Silva (Chile), Didi Soetomo (Indonesia), Pek Leng Tan (Malaysia), Azalech Teklemariam (Ethiopia), Virginia Vargas (Peru).

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Project Advisory Group: Lourdes Arizpe (Mexico), Karina Constantino-David (Philippines), Subhachari Dasgupta (India), Justin Maeda (Tanzania), Manfred Max-Neef (Chile), Miriam Were (Kenya).

Lead paper writers and resource persons: Tom Armor (USA), Christian Bay (Canada), Govind Kelkar (India), Ross Kidd (Canada), Rafael Ramirez (Mexico).

Project Management and Workshop Organizers: Dale Chandler (Canada), Andreas Fuglesang (Norway), Sven Hamrell (Sweden), Paul MacLeod (Canada), Mary McGugan (Canada), Olle Nordberg (Sweden), Tony Williamson (Canada).

'The Law of the Seed' and the CGIAR

A Critique of Pat Roy Mooney

By Donald L. Plucknett

The 1983:1-2 issue of Development Dialogue was in its entirety devoted to the publication of Pat Roy Mooney's 'The Law of the Seed: Another Development and Plant Genetic Resources'. It attracted wide international attention and has played an important role in stimulating the international debate about the seeds issue. One of the institutions discussed in Mooney's study is the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). In this contribution, which was received in the spring of 1984, Dr Donald L. Plucknett, Scientific Adviser to the CGIAR Secretariat, examines Mooney's treatment of the activities of the CGIAR.

Pat Mooney's 'The Law of the Seed' illustrates all too well the way an important topic like plant germplasm can become embroiled in international politics. While it is gratifying that germplasm work is receiving increased, and deserved, attention by the world community—and calls for increased support for germplasm work are frequent in Mr Mooney's article—there are still some troubling aspects of 'The Law of the Seed'. Probably the most troubling is the fact that Mr Mooney has written a polemic, and like all polemics, the discussion tends to be unbalanced and misleading. Two of the main targets of the article are commercial companies and Plant Breeders' Rights, both of which need not be defended here, since both are perfectly capable of doing so themselves. However, Mr Mooney has made some misleading statements about the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) which must be addressed.

The CGIAR was established in 1971 to provide a means to organize and support high-quality agricultural research that would benefit Third World countries. Three UN-related organizations—FAO, UNDP and the World Bank—serve as co-sponsors. Donors to the Group include industrialized and Third World countries, development banks, international development organizations, and private philanthropic foundations. The CGIAR now supports 13 International Agricultural Research Centres (IARCs), ten of which are located in Third World countries. The centres are semi-autonomous in nature, with both scientists and members of the boards of trustees being drawn from the inter-national community. Most of the CGIAR centres are heavily involved in breeding improved crop varieties that can be used by national programmes in meeting their own farm problems. Thus germplasm collection, preservation and utilization is a central theme of most of the IARCs, and many maintain major base collections or medium-term gene banks for their crops. The focal (and

focusing) point for all CGIAR germplasm conservation efforts, however, is the International Board for Plant Genetic Resources (IBPGR), which has its headquarters at FAO in Rome and operates worldwide to plan, stimulate and coordinate germplasm conservation in cooperation with national programmes, regional centres and the other IARCs.

The CGIAR is recognized and respected for its high-quality research, training and publications, as well as its leadership in research cooperation. The modern varieties of wheat and rice which were developed by Centro Internacional de Mejoramiento de Maíz y Trigo (CIMMYT) and International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), and bring about several billions of dollars worth per year of increased production (the so-called Green Revolution) are well known. Less well known are similar improvements for several other major food crops, including barley, maize, millet, potato, sorghum, cassava and several grain legumes. The benefits of IARC'S research are worldwide, but are realized principally in Third World countries.

Mr Mooney takes a stance in which he advocates strongly on behalf of Third World countries, a position with which the CGIAR would identify. His forceful plea for more emphasis and support for the conservation of plant genetic resources is also in agreement with CGIAR objectives. Moreover, the article seems to support strongly the concept that farmers in Third World countries should receive more consideration in research, a point that is central to the work of the IARCs. However, Mr Mooney's solutions for every problem focus on increased control, especially bureaucratic and governmental and inter-governmental control. He seems to have little interest in agricultural development or the improvement of the farmer's circumstances, including higher productivity and income, and seems to dream of a world where farmers stay as they are, where they are, in a bucolic setting.

At its most recent Conference, FAO reaffirmed its support for the free exchange of germplasm. The CGIAR also strongly supports this principle. It is a desirable concept that would appear to conflict greatly with Mr Mooney's call for greater bureaucratic and inter-governmental controls. Germplasm currently moves freely in scientific circles, with minimal controls or surveillance by political bodies. Why should this be disturbed?

The CGIAR and the IARCs have worked very hard to ensure that their work is directed toward helping national agricultural research programmes (NARPs) in Third World countries to ideal more effectively with the pro-

blems faced by their farmers. IARC training programmes are organized to help NARPs gain improved research capacity. Research networks assist by providing materials, training and support in cooperative research within a given crop or problem area. Improved germplasm from the IARCs is provided on request to NARPs to help accelerate the development of new crop varieties that can be grown profitably and productively by farmers in the Third World.

The amount of germplasm that flows each year to and from the IARCs and the Third World (and between Third World countries themselves, exchanges which the IARCs often help to facilitate) is impressive, and increases year by year. For example, between 1962 and 1982 IRRI's germplasm bank provided more than 91,000 seed samples of cultivated and wild rice to thousands of rice scientists around the world.¹ CIMMYT annually sends out several tons of seeds of improved materials, in tiny packets, to nearly 100 countries. Similar stories can be told for other IARCs. Because of the nature of its crop, the International Potato Centre (CIP) sends new germplasm to key multiplication centres in each region, from which both vegetative materials and true seeds are distributed to NARPs.

The impact of the new technology of the IARCs, particularly in wheat and rice, but increasingly in other crops such as beans, cassava, chickpeas and maize, is the best indication that the IARCs work directly for the benefit of the Third World.

Mr Mooney proposes to place the CGIAR under direct FAO management, in order that it be responsible to inter-governmental controls. As was already stated, CGIAR has three co-sponsors: FAO, UNDP and the World Bank. Its membership includes six Third World countries that contribute funds to centres, as well as eight fixed-term Third World country members. Third World country representatives comprise six of the 13 members of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), half of the members of the individual boards of trustees of the centres, and numerous scientists on the staff of each centre. Its co-sponsors and donors have deliberately chosen to leave the centres they support free from their direct control, because experience has shown that this is the best way to get high-quality and effective research.

Mr Mooney obviously does not understand what makes the CGIAR work and why it has received increasing support for more than ten years. The informal, decentralized, non-bureaucratic nature of the CGIAR is a strength, not a weakness, and is essential to the environment of freedom

and flexibility that ensures excellent research and effective response to Third World country problems. To interfere with this now would threaten the existence and effectiveness of the CGIAR and bring about a real loss to agricultural development efforts which have come to depend on the CGIAR for new technology, training, and independent leadership.

Perhaps the most misleading impression given by the article is the idea that the IARCs are the hand-maidens of private companies. It is even stated that the IARCs conduct basic research for the benefit of private companies. This is untrue. The bulk of IARC activities is applied research aimed at boosting food production in the Third World. While cooperation with private companies is not excluded, and is in fact welcomed, the overwhelming focus of the work of the IARCs is with and for national programmes. Third World country systems are far and away the largest beneficiaries of the germplasm distributed by the centres.

Mr Mooney also singles out IBPGR for special critical attention. He wants it to be brought directly under the control of FAO and the then-proposed International Convention. It is not clear just what benefits he envisages from such a step. IBPGR is run by an independent board, chosen by the CGIAR (and not self-perpetuating as Mr Mooney says). It is located at FAO, partially staffed by FAO, and works closely with FAO. Moreover, it has proved that it can work effectively with many organizations and countries to stimulate and develop germplasm activities for the major food crops. That much more needs to be done is undisputed, but germplasm conservation efforts depend on an awareness of the needs in the long-term commitment of many nations and organizations. By itself, IBPGR does not now have—and neither will it ever have—enough resources to ensure the conservation of all the necessary plant germplasm for the world. But its efforts to stimulate, plan, train, coordinate and initiate germplasm activities are vital. Increased control is not what is needed, but rather increased commitment and cooperation by all parties in the global germplasm conservation network.

A few technical points probably should be made. Heavy emphasis is placed in the article on the value of germplasm such as wild relatives, primitive cultivars and landraces. It is true that such primary germplasm categories may contain genes that can produce useful traits in crops, but until the germplasm is characterized, evaluated and tested in preliminary crosses, such materials' sources are just seed samples and virtually useless in crop improvement. Special, systematic efforts need to be made to determine the potential value of individual accessions of wild relatives and landraces. This

depends first of all on recognition of needs for specific genetic traits, and then on the availability of wide genetic pools that have been or can be combed for specific desirable traits that can be incorporated into parental lines.

A significant point that should be made is that the short-term costs of germplasm characterization and evaluation will be relatively high but that the longer-term costs may not be as great, once proper evaluation is done. Evaluation of landraces and wild relatives should be carried out in several locations so as to place the individual materials in conditions with different insect and disease populations and environmental stresses. Mr Mooney's article seems to indicate that once placed in the bank, germplasm will prove its worth. But without evaluation there is no worth. Also, the article gives the impression that if one bank has a coin (e.g. a landrace or wild relative), another bank cannot also have it. In practice, any genebank can have any plant genetic coin it chooses to acquire and preserve, within its physical limitations. Indeed, once established, some genebanks will find—because of storage limitations and operational costs—that they should specialize in particular crops or categories of germplasm and let others handle the larger long-term collections. In this way smaller genebanks can obtain their own small or occasional requirements from cooperative medium-term collections. The IARC genebanks play a useful role here.

The article places heavy emphasis on seed, but one of the major problems in germplasm work is how to collect and preserve germplasm of crops that are vegetatively propagated. This is especially important for tropical crops such as cassava, yams, and some of the tree crops.

The problem of *in situ* conservation of landraces cannot be underestimated. Farmers will not sacrifice the welfare of their families to grow less productive varieties than are otherwise available, unless there is something wrong with the available improved varieties. It is theoretically possible to pay farmers to grow their traditional varieties *in situ*, as Mr Mooney suggests, but the administration of such a programme would make it unworkable.

Mr Mooney cites the CGIAR Technical Advisory Committee paper on Plant Breeders' Rights, but misses the critical point of the paper. What was intended, and agreed upon, was that certain elementary precautions by the IARCs could protect the availability of IARC germplasm to researchers in national programmes and could prevent the work of the IARCs from being appropriated unfairly for private gain.

The call for environmental impact studies before new varieties are released in areas where landraces are being used is ridiculous. No one can predict the impact of any new crop variety, because it is the farmers who determine whether or not a variety will be used. A related point is the inference that farmers may be forced to grow crop varieties that are unsuited to their land or that otherwise do not suit their purposes. It would be a rare farmer indeed who would grow seeds that do not suit his situation for more than a season, unless under the most direct and encompassing totalitarian system.

Mr Mooney is an imaginative writer. He has succeeded in making lively and interesting what for some would be a rather boring subject. Indeed, reading *The Law of the Seed* is a bit like working your way through a detective story; it contains elements of intrigue and conspiracy, presents its 'good guys' and 'bad guys' and as a bonus includes some interesting background or historical information. The article even has its humorous moments. Mr Mooney's characterization of the IBPGR as a 'hybrid without parents' gives one reason for pause, especially in an article about seeds. Also, his interesting observation that farmers can now 'buy fluorescent maize seed (allowing farmers to plant it at night under the glow of their own seed)' surely seems to signal the beginning of a new and wonderful agriculture. Interesting and informative works on plant germplasm are always welcome. This one would have been more welcome had it been a little less polemical, a little sharper technically, and more balanced in its view of institutions working effectively for increased agricultural production in the Third World.

Note

1. Chang, T.T., *Science*, 224, 1984, pp. 251-256.

The Law of the Lamb

By Pat Roy Mooney

This reply to Donald L. Plucknett's critical examination of Pat Roy Mooney's discussion of the activities of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) was written soon after the receipt of Dr Plucknett's contribution. A few illustrative examples were added in the autumn of 1985.

Once upon a time a lamb, with a love for objective knowledge, decided to find out the truth about wolves. He had heard so many nasty stories about them. Were they true? He decided to get a first-hand report on the matter. So he wrote a letter to a philosopher-wolf with a simple and direct question: what are wolves? The philosopher-wolf wrote a letter back explaining what wolves were: their shapes, sizes, colours, thoughts, social habits, etc. He thought, however, that it was irrelevant to speak of the wolves' eating habits since, according to his own philosophy, these did not belong to the 'essence' of wolves. Well, the lamb was so delighted with the letter that he decided to pay a visit to his new friend, the wolf. And only then did he learn that wolves are very fond of barbecued lamb.

Ruben Alves, World Council of Churches' Conference on 'Faith, Science and the Future', July 1979.

If 'The Law of the Seed' is a polemical (i.e. controversial) document, it does not appear so from Dr Plucknett's rejoinder, which I like to think of as 'The Law of the Lamb'. Indeed, the only point of factual dispute may be in the regenerative powers of the International Board for Plant Genetic Resources (IBPGR). Dr Plucknett argues that directors are chosen by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and are not 'self-perpetuating'. I will maintain that the Board is 'appointed for three-year terms and allowed to serve two terms before nominating their own replacement'.¹ Effectively, they appoint their own successors for later *beatification* by CGIAR. This encourages a level of clonal propagation within the Board which should be the envy of biotechnologists.

All other areas covered by Dr Plucknett are matters of opinion, which expose, perhaps, the polemics of the wolf as much as the lamb. Much of what he writes related to the work of the CGIAR and the importance of germplasm characterization represents a constructive contribution to public understanding of a complex issue. I gave CGIAR rather brief treatment, in fact, and I welcome Dr Plucknett taking the occasion to elaborate.

The area of dispute rests on pages 170-171 of *The Law of the Seed*. Readers may also wish to review pages 88-93. In essence, Dr Plucknett is saying that my Vavilovian concern has led to a Pavlovian response: that the solution to all germplasm problems lies in inter-governmental control. He also contests my view that germplasm exchange is a problem. 'Germplasm currently moves freely...', he says, 'Why should this be disturbed?' Finally, Dr Plucknett suggests that I have a naive and idealistic view 'of a world where farmers stay as they are, where they are, in a bucolic setting'. Let's address each of these points in turn.

**Vavilov and Pavlov
(or putting the wolf
in UN clothing)**

I don't believe I have ever heard a diplomat or scientist from an industrialized country say a kind word about FAO. Its bureaucracy, the foibles of its senior officers, and its technical mediocrity are the stuff of legend. Although it is distressing that the scientific wolves enjoy feeding so splendidly from the rich diet of myths and cruel anecdotes, I would agree with much of what lies behind the exaggerated tales.

Because of the deprecation of FAO but more because of the rise of the Third World within the UN System the wolves in the white hats (the pure wolves who really know what's good for sheep) despaired of ever feeding the hungry through FAO; opted out of the UN family; and set up CGIAR. Appropriate genuflections were made in the direction of Rome and New York, but all the good wolves and most of the sheep were well aware of what was happening.

In the years since, the loose-knit federation of institutes and industrialized donor countries (the paper participation of Third World countries and individuals alluded to by Dr Plucknett is mere window-dressing) has been effective. Science has been given a freer rein and creativity has flourished.

But this 'hands-off style like riding a bicycle only works with the 'feet-on'. A high degree of homogeneity of social and political views and of scientific direction is essential. In this context, the structural ambiguity of CGIAR benefits those who have power, those whose feet are on the pedals.

A great deal has happened to the world and to the United Nations since 1971. Whether it wishes to recognize it or not, CGIAR is at a crossroads. If it continues to cling to its theoretical independence, good science will force it to pursue germplasm identification and improvement work rather than to release finished varieties. This is as it should be. The Northern donor states with their 'feet on' will welcome this and also acquiesce to transnational biotech companies (located in the North) who will seek to adapt and market

the improved CGIAR material. Like it or not (and the scientists will, I believe, dislike it intensely) CGIAR will become the *de facto* hand-maiden of commercial interests. This will happen not because of malevolence on the part of scientists nor as a consequence of policy changes. It will happen because of the ambiguity of the CGIAR network which will make its work available to all and sundry in the belief that this makes it apolitical. In reality, transnational companies will be the first and the fastest at acquiring, adapting and marketing the fruits of CGIAR labour.

Some scientific wolves and virtually all Northern governments take the political view that this division of labour between the public and private sector is entirely beneficial. Many scientists and most Third World countries have their doubts.

CGIAR has a choice. It is in a position to bargain from strength and it could and should negotiate its full entry into the UN System via FAO. Its track record and substance gives it much to offer and a reason to demand a much more flexible administrative approach. Some lessons learned by CGIAR should be transplanted to the FAO bureaucracy. Indeed, CGIAR could catalyze extremely helpful changes in FAO.

What would CGIAR's scientific wolves gain? Strange as they may find it, they will gain the freedom to work more fully for the benefit of the Third World. In the political fora of FAO, policies can be developed which facilitate the distribution of their work to the Third World ahead of wider dissemination to private interests.

Agricultural research has political implications. The issues are politicized and they will not go away. CGIAR's wolves are an endangered species. No one wants to lose them. To survive, they must fundamentally re-evaluate their position and take a much harder look at the trends in corporate agricultural research and at their own ability to influence the UN System. The assumption that they can be above politics or that they can set their own political course from a scientific compass is an absurd throw-back to the 1960's or early 70's. CGIAR and its institutes cannot expect to remain 'as they are, where they are, in a bucolic setting'.

Those who were at the FAO Conference will always remember the speech by Canada's then Minister of Agriculture and President of the World Food Council, Gene Whelan. The Minister reported a remark by some FAO official about the futility of all the ceremonial speeches made by Agriculture Ministers. Whelan's angry response was that his right to speak to the

Conference plenary was his only way to be heard, the only way to get his views across. And without this right, he asserted, FAO would go on its own merry way.

Third World governments are asking for the same opportunity to be heard in CGIAR. At the moment, CGIAR functions independently... and is effectively answerable to no-one. Indirect controls may be applied by the major donor countries, but even these controls are remote and cumbersome to operate. The one overwhelming value in bringing CGIAR and its institutes firmly under the member nations of FAO is that the voice of the South will have to be heard.

Where is the problem? (... said the wolf to the lamb)

When the powerless say there is a problem and the powerful say there is not—as is the case in the genetic resources debate at FAO—the only thing absolutely certain is that there is a problem.

The gene-donor countries of the Third World have been saying that a problem exists at least since the FAO Conference of 1977 (well before the so-called ‘polemic’ debate). After detailing in *The Law of the Seed* 27 examples of constraints to the free exchange of germplasm,² copying the American Government’s letter admitting that political considerations can dictate the exchange of germplasm,³ and reporting on the failures of the IBPGR survey and the list of embargoed states offered by a senior US official, one could expect more from CGIAR than the complete avoidance of these very specific criticisms. So, in the hope of a better response, let me add more examples.

Where is the problem? In 1985, the US Government announced a trade embargo of Nicaragua. According to Treasury Department officials, responsible for the embargo, this includes any genetic resources held in American genebanks—even when this material originated in Nicaragua. And then there is the case of the US Government move in 1984 to deny agricultural research benefits to socialist countries in SADCC. The American aid programme offered to fund a major regional breeding programme in sorghum and millet for SADCC members and involving ICRISAT scientists as long as none of the training or improved varieties benefitted Tanzania, Angola and Mozambique.

Where is the problem? The Canadian Government asked this question in Rome at the FAO Conference. According to a research study undertaken by the Canadian Parliamentary Library, the problem is in Canada. Canada also embargoed germplasm shipments to the Soviet Union during the grain

embargo. It now seems that all or most grain-embargoing countries extended it to include cereal germplasm.

Where is the problem? It took Nicaragua six months, and public criticism at a Central American food conference, to retrieve maize material given to CIMMYT in the 1960's. It is still not clear if all the material has been returned or if it actually matches that which was first shipped to CIMMYT.

Where is the problem? The Japanese Government is actively discouraging the exchange of rice germplasm due to a patent dispute with Occidental Petroleum and a fear that others might take material which could be adapted to form hybrid rice varieties.

Where is the problem? Every meeting brings forward more stories of official or unofficial embargoes—North and South: Unilever monopolizing palm oil germplasm; American universities denying Australian research institutes fruit germplasm; Hawaiian sugar companies withholding cane.

The stance taken by Dr Plucknett—that there is no problem—is simply not credible and does a disservice to the political acumen of CGIAR.

Lambs as luddites

Finally, Dr Plucknett suggests, rather contradictorily, that I want to keep farmers 'as they are, where they are', while at the same time criticizing my proposals to involve the farmers actively in the conservation process, as farmer/curators. I should say that this proposal⁴ has been well received by Dr Charles Bishop, Chair of the Plant Genetic Resources Committee of Canada and a board member of IBPGR, and is being actively pursued in a number of countries including Thailand, Sri Lanka and Nicaragua.

Dr Plucknett's message does seem a trifle tangled. He argues that my solution to everything is more government intervention. Then he draws the conclusion that lambs must be luddites. I am not a luddite and I have no profound faith in the sanctity of governments. In fact, it is because governments are not very good at eternity that I have called for farmer/curators as an additional mechanism of prevention against major losses in genebanks. I believe it was at Pioneer Hi-Bred's annual conference in Iowa in 1983 that William L Brown, then Chair of the company, noted that more germplasm was being lost in the genebanks than in nature. I agree. I think farmers have to be made full participants in the conservation process.

Beyond conservation, I have enough faith in farmers to believe that they can play a much larger role in the science of plant selection and breeding.

The wolves have for too long ignored the competence of the farmer. In fact, it is the wolves who have frozen the farmer in a certain bucolic setting.

**Learning to never
cry wolf**

I want to repeat the admiration I expressed for CGIAR scientists in *The Law of the Seed*.⁵ The many scientists and administrators I have met have, in every way, been impressive. I like wolves. As a lamb, however, I have learned that major decisions about our world cannot be made by wolves alone. To up-date an old saying, it is time for the wolves and the lambs to lie down together. We are both endangered species. We need to discard our old myths and pretences and plan, realistically, for the future.

Notes

1. *The Law of the Seed*, *Development Dialogue* 1983:1-2, p. 67.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 39
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 169
5. *Ibid.*, p. 5

Rice—A Stills Film from the Grass-roots

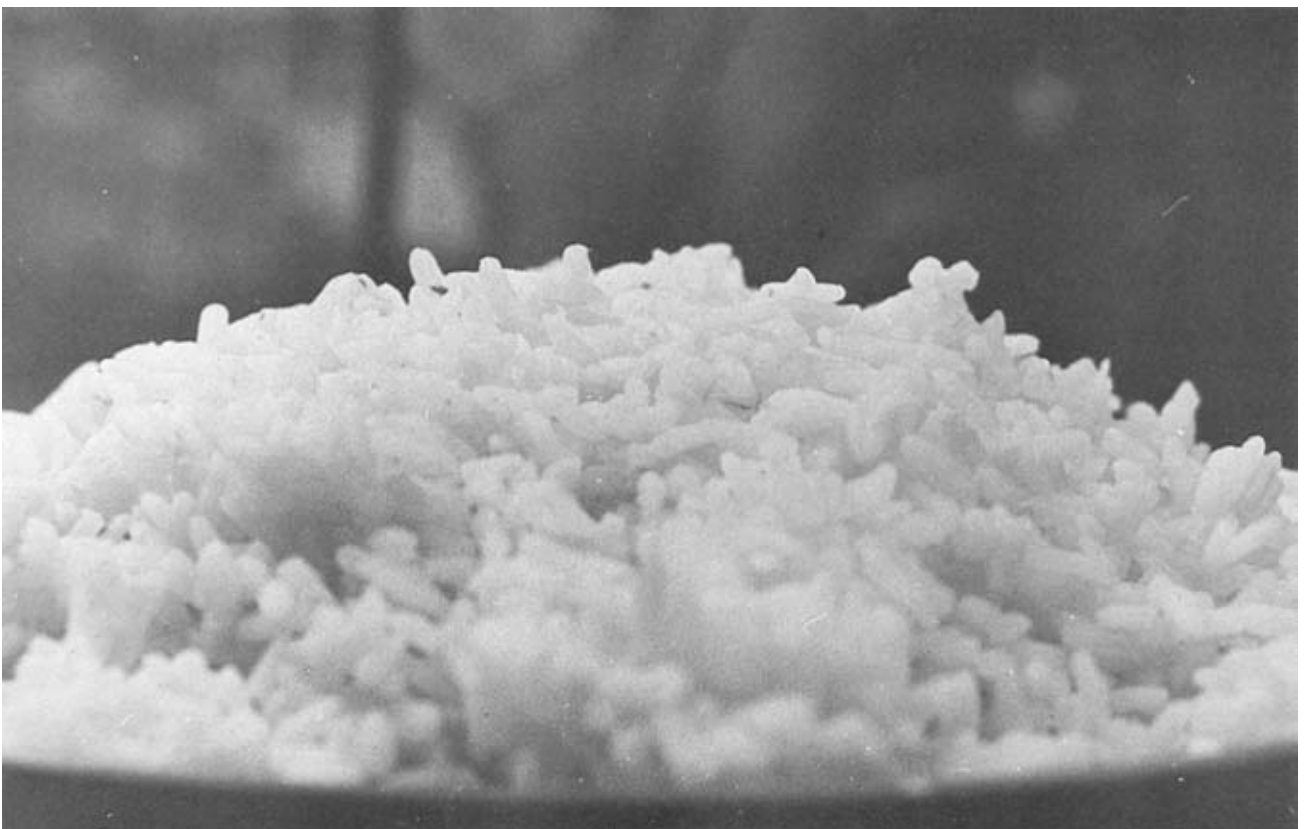
By René Salazar and Didi Soetomo



It is not always recognized by academicians and ‘development experts’ that the ‘seeds issue’ is close to the heart of the world’s poor farmers and a subject of continuous discussions among them. For these poor farmers, most of the ‘innovations’ of the last 10—20 years have been of little importance and often meant increased poverty and hunger, greater dependence on big farmers and, in the worst case, loss of their small plots. The stills film, from which a selection is made here, analyses this situation in a South-East Asian setting and suggests a way to deal with it. It is intended as a discussion starter for use in study groups composed of poor farmers and has been produced by two community organizers, René Salazar in the Philippines, and Didi Soetomo in Indonesia. Both are members of the International Community Organizing Network (ICON) and their stills film was made in the context of the Dag Hammarskjöld Project on Methods and Media in Community Participation.



Rice, the principal food for most of the people of Asia, is the Philippines' major food crop. Cultivation of this grain goes back hundreds of years to the Philippines' prehistoric age. The Banaue rice terraces, Asia's most extensive, remain a monument to the ancient Filipino's success in the propagation of this life-giving grain.



The Filipino farmers, exploited for centuries by an oppressive and obsolete feudal economy, have always depended on the production of rice for their survival.

Until recently, they had relied on time-tested varieties which have evolved over centuries in response to natural threats in the environment.

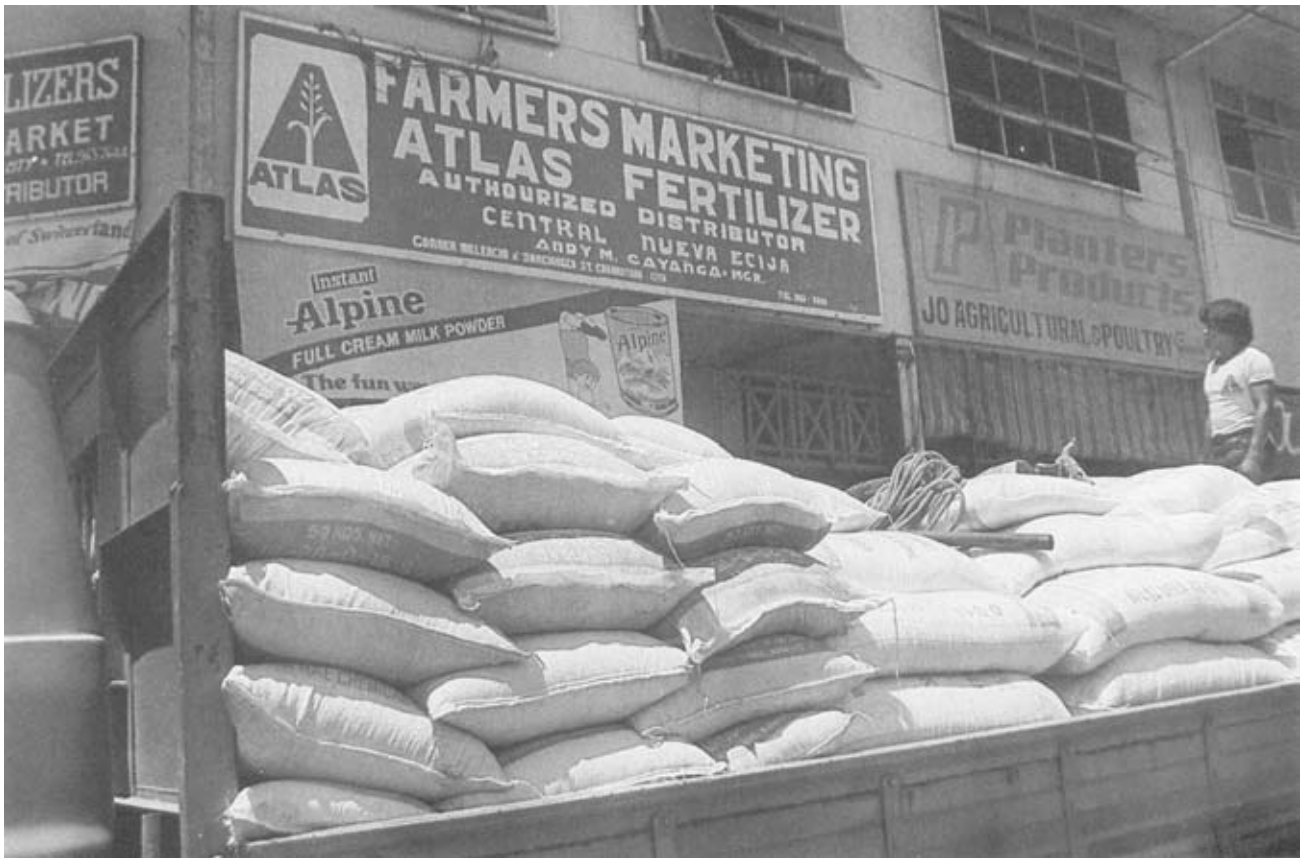


In 1965, The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) was established in the Philippines and launched the Green Revolution. The movement promised to raise grain production and thereby solve the chronic problem of hunger in the region. At the heart of the movement was the High Response Rice Varieties (HRV). The new seeds, genetically developed in the laboratories of IRRI and initially funded by the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, promised to increase productivity by as much as 50 per cent compared to the traditional rice varieties.



Under the spell of a massive media campaign sponsored by both the government and the business sectors, the farmers started to adopt the HRVs. Government incentives were set up and attractive credit schemes were implemented through the rural banks. Initial success of the HRVs in demonstration farms also helped to encourage the farmers.

By 1980, 77.5 per cent of the country's total rice-land was planted with the HRVs. But the shift from the traditional rice varieties to the 'miracle' seeds created new problems and concerns. Serious questions are now being raised about the technology embodied in them.



The HRVs depend heavily on large amounts of chemical fertilizer inputs for their productive performance. They need large quantities of pesticides because they are highly susceptible to disease and pest attacks.

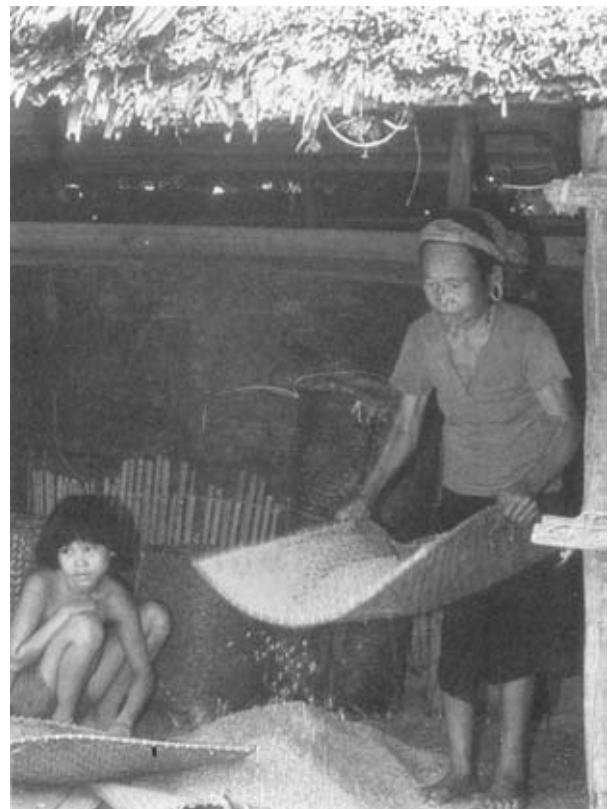


Moreover, irrigation and the controlled management of water is of vital importance to the HRVs. The adoption of the HRVs has led to a drastic shift from a labour intensive operation to a capital intensive one. This is particularly disastrous for the poor farmers who constitute the majority of the rural population.









Mechanization of rice production, with the full backing of the government through its credit programmes is also causing serious dislocation among the poor farmers, who are increasingly being displaced in the field with the growing use of farm machineries. Intensive capitalization and high technology, the main thrusts of the Green Revolution, found its fulfilment in General Order No. 47, otherwise known as the Corporate Farming Programme issued by President Marcos in 1974.



It requires big corporations, joint ventures and subsidiaries of foreign firms with at least 500 employees to engage either in the direct production of rice or its importation.

As the giant corporations began to acquire vast tracts of land for their agricultural ventures, more and more farmers found themselves without land and employment.



The Land Reform Programme of the government, which was never really seriously implemented before, is now working—in reverse. Meanwhile, the widespread adoption of the HRVs led to large-scale importation of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. The organization of new irrigation districts and the rehabilitation of old ones also required enormous investments. To keep the production level high, government subsidies for fertilizers and pesticides had to increase.

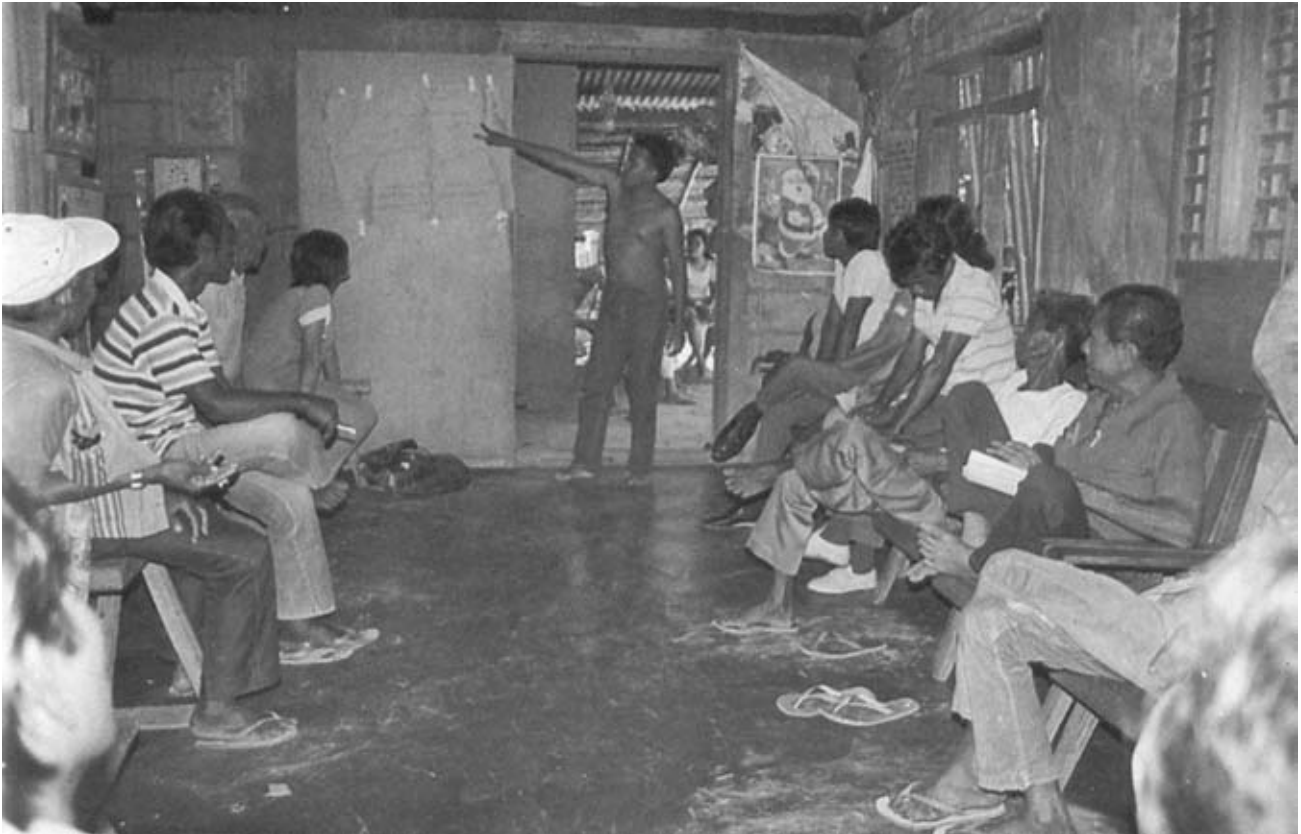


The HRVs are having their own set of problems, too. The laboratory conditions under which they were bred could hardly be duplicated in the fields. Without the expertise of the scientists and laboratory technicians, productivity of the HRVs has suffered. Up to now, a large portion of the land planted with HRVs remains without the benefit of irrigation. Finally, the HRVs low resistance to diseases and crop infestation often has resulted in extensive crop damages and big losses to the farmers. After almost two decades of widespread HRV adoption, hunger is still a major problem in the countryside. Malnutrition afflicts 80 per cent of the population. The Green Revolution, with its requirement for intensive capitalization, is entirely inappropriate to the Philippine conditions of surplus labour and limited capital resources. Farm income has deteriorated against the rising costs of production.



The heavy application of chemical fertilizers and pesticides has killed other lifeforms that are necessary for the natural maintenance and revitalization of the soil. Fish, snails and other edible molluscs, which are among the traditional sources of protein on the farm, have disappeared. Mono-culture and monocropping have also led to massive soil exhaustion. The miracle rice which requires miracle drugs are also creating equally miraculous pests and plant diseases. As the prices of oil-based products continue to rise, national expenditures on agriculture rapidly increase. Yet, with the current series of devaluations imposed on the Philippine peso by the international financial institutions, subsidies to the farmers have had to be withdrawn by the government. As the situation turns from bad to worse, pressures are mounting from the countryside to abandon the HRVs.





Once more, we are confronted with the question of the seeds. Over the years, IRRI has collected for their seed banks some 70 000 different traditional rice varieties. Almost 4 000 of these are from the Philippines. The seed business controlled by transnational corporations thus flourished. These are the same transnational corporations who control the fertilizer and pesticide industry. And these are the same syndicates which are funding in part the operations of the IRRI—the agency responsible for developing and promoting the HRVs.

It is, therefore, hardly surprising that unlike the traditional rice varieties, the HRVs are not self-perpetuating—they have to be completely replaced after several generations, allowing for the introduction of new seeds. And, not unexpectedly, the transnational corporations are using the seed as a potent and very profitable vehicle for their agricultural products.

With this in mind, it is imperative that we once more gain control of the seeds and of our destiny. For the seeds are the only living legacy from our forefathers that more than four hundred years of continuing colonization failed to vanquish.



What Is Happening to Andean Potatoes?

A view from the Grass-roots

By Jorge Dandier and Colin Sage

Pat Mooney's study 'The Law of the Seed' and the discussions at the World Food Assembly in Rome in November 1984 provoked Jorge Dandier and Colin Sage to make the following inquiry into the contemporary role of potato production in Bolivia, relating it to the increasing vulnerability of Bolivia's farming systems and the livelihood of its massive peasant population. In pursuing their inquiry, the authors solicited the views of peasant producers, technicians and social activists and came to the conclusion that 'we are witnessing what appears to be a search for alternative development strategies that take as a central concern the need for sustainable, endogenous yet productive agriculture'. But while potatoes essentially remain a 'peasant' crop in Bolivia, their importance continues to be devalued, even to the extent of importing varieties from Holland because they are easier to peel. Bolivia, as part of the cradle of potato domestication, does, however, 'possess an enormous stock of genetic resources' and if genetic resources are to be retained in the South along with the right to produce one's own food within sustainable farming systems, the case of potatoes in Bolivia is a telling example of the need for awareness to develop from below'.

Jorge Dandier is a Bolivian anthropologist and Director of the Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Económica y Social (CERES) in Bolivia. He is the author of numerous papers on the peasant movements in Bolivia. Colin Sage is an English geographer, associated with CERES, who is now completing a doctoral dissertation dealing with the social and environmental issues of intensive potato production.



Introduction

The recent issue of *Development Dialogue* on the 'Law of the Seed: Another Development and Plant Genetic Resources' by Pat Mooney,¹ raised important issues concerning the depletion and transfer of genetic food plant resources from the Third World to the North, and prompted us to write this article. In addition, one of us (Dandier) attended the World Food Assembly in Rome (November .1984), where a Manifesto² was launched (see pp. 155-171), which highlights the urgency of finding alternative strategies to ensure sustainable food production in the Third World. Significantly, a consensus was reached at this conference which extended beyond the issue of the right to food to embrace the Third World peoples' right to produce their own food.

This article attempts to raise some of the issues posed in the two documents

mentioned above, by focusing on the historical and contemporary role of potato production in Bolivia and by relating it to the wider issue of the increasing vulnerability of that country's farming systems and the livelihood of its massive peasant population. Our observations are based on first-hand fieldwork in Bolivia,³ including conversations with peasant producers, technicians and social activists. We perceive an expanding awareness of these issues illustrating a concern that is still largely ignored by policy-makers in the country, yet shared with many grass-roots organizations in the Third World and concerned analysts in both South and North.

It is worth remembering that Andean civilizations were exceptional in achieving a harmonious mastery over their environment and in domesticating plants and animals after several millenia of experimentation. It is common knowledge that since the discovery of the New World, the Andes contributed quite substantially to the world's food basket with the transfer of many domesticated plants such as potatoes, sweet potatoes, manioc, corn (simultaneously found in Mesoamerica), tomatoes, and others.

Among the most spectacular of these transfers has been the potato, which became a basic food staple in the North. Indeed, it became part of Europe's agricultural and social history. As in the case of many food crops originating in the Third World, the North has achieved extraordinary productivity and output in potato production, while the South exhibits low yields, depletion of genetic stocks, indiscriminate use of fertilizers and pesticides, as well as changing consumer demands which downgrade local food staples; at the same time, there is the pervasive phenomenon of malnutrition, & rural exodus and state policies which place greater priority on food exports for foreign exchange rather than self-reliance in food production for domestic consumption.

These phenomena are also associated with an increasing concentration of food production in the North and related forms of control and influence on the livelihood of the Third World poor. According to a recent study,

The potato is one of the world's most nutritious plant sources of food for human consumption. The ratio of protein to carbohydrates is higher in potatoes than in many cereals and other roots and tubers. The quality of potato protein also is higher than that of most other food crops. The potato is superior to almost every other crop in food production per hectare per day. In developing countries, potatoes rank first in energy production per hectare per day, significantly above cassava, the cereals, and pulses. Among major food crops, the potato also ranks high in protein production per hectare and per day.⁴

Significantly, the highest yields of potato production are found in Europe and North America, i.e. Switzerland (40 tonnes per hectare), Belgium/Luxemburg (39.9 t/ha.), Holland (37.7 t/ha.) and the United States (30.3 t/ha.), while original producers such as Bolivia and Peru achieve 5.2 t/ha. and 7.9 t/ha., respectively. Bolivia's yields are the lowest in South America, yet it has the highest potato production per capita in the western hemisphere (140.2 kilo per capita compared to 89.9 kg/cap. in Peru). Bolivia is also notable for having the highest potato consumption per capita in the Americas (94.3 kg/cap., in contrast, for example, to Peru, with 66.7 kg/ cap).⁵

During the twentieth century, Andean countries such as Peru and Bolivia have become deficit producers of food, resorting to imports of such staples as wheat, other cereals, and milk products. Food imports today, in both countries, represent a heavy burden in an increasingly difficult context of falling foreign exchange revenues and rising external debt service obligations.⁶ Bolivia has even been compelled at times, in emergency situations such as the 1983 drought, to import potatoes from neighbouring countries or to accept donations from Europe to meet consumption demands.

The traditional farming system in the Andes

Potato and maize became the essential staples for the development of Andean civilization. According to Karl Troll, the environmental conditions within the South-Central Andes which favoured the capacity to produce dehydrated potatoes (*chuño*) for short- and long-term storage, made possible the development of an advanced civilization that sustained a massive agricultural population and a non-agricultural population of artisans, priests, armies and rulers. Meanwhile, in the Páramo Andes (Ecuador and Colombia), the environmental conditions—limited diurnal temperature change and lack of night frost—prevented the development of potato dehydration capabilities and long-term storage and thus the rise of complex, stratified societies.

Within Andean societies, ecological adaptation to a diverse physical environment alongside complex social relations of reciprocal exchange and redistribution, provided for the maintenance and reproduction of groups in marginal environments. Evidence of large-scale hydraulic and land engineering works (terraces and drained, ridged and sunken fields) indicate considerable and long-term investment of human labour and social organization, which also brought marginal land (i.e. with problems of slope, drainage and water deficit) into sustainable production systems.

Potato production was not an isolated mono-cultural practice and most clearly brings out the traditional elements of an Andean world view, in which agricultural practices are tied into belief systems, such as a *Pachamama* or earth goddess that ensures soil and human fertility.

Traditional practices of potato cultivation have been deeply rooted in local community organization and a complex agricultural and livestock cycle, involving ritual, economic exchange and a profound relationship to an environment imbued with natural and supernatural signposts regulating people's livelihoods.

Andean peasants possess a comprehensive understanding of their environment which incorporates complex classification schemes for soils, domesticated and non-domesticated plants. Such empirical understanding has been recently re-evaluated in a positive light as an 'indigenous technical knowledge' or 'ethno-science'. The recognition and classification of cultivars includes the selection and maintenance of hundreds of clonal varieties of potatoes, each attributed with certain characteristics, such as colour, taste, consistency, seed viability, resistance to frost and various diseases, storage quality, growing season and others.⁷ For example, Hatch⁸ reports that in one Aymara community in the Altiplano, five households named 38 'sweet' and nine 'bitter' varieties of potatoes which they cultivate. The former are used for home consumption and commercial sale, but are more sensitive to frost and cold, while the latter are more frost resistant and commonly used for dehydrated forms of potato (*chuño*, *tunta*). Such practices of crop and varietal diversity represent one of a number of risk minimization or counter-seasonality strategies designed to reduce the environmental vulnerability to which agriculture is subject (hazards such as frost, hail, drought, floods and pest attack).

Crop and field rotations and following systems complement crop and varietal diversity, producing an ecologically stable and a nutrient-conserving, sustainable agriculture.

The vertical organization of production in an ecologically diverse environment such as the Bolivian Andes, creates complementary exchange relationships between different horizontal zones. For example, the higher altitude areas act as the repository of clean potato seed to provision the lower intermontane valleys. Such vertical organization permits a sequential timing of production tasks through a series of consecutive, though overlapping, agricultural cycles. This allows households to spread the demands on labour more evenly over the year, reducing the burden on women and

children, whilst providing for nutritional complementarity and the regular provisioning of food from different ecological zones.

The transformation of traditional agriculture

Although many features of the traditional system outlined above may be found in Bolivia's highlands, the 1952 revolution ushered in profound social and economic changes, including an agrarian reform which was largely a response to peasant mobilization. In the highlands and valleys, a process of hacienda expropriation and consolidation of smallholder agriculture took place. At the same time, the state executed a policy of economic diversification, channelling financial resources, subsidies and infrastructure to develop the tropical lowlands on the basis of large-scale farming and cattle-raising. Colonization by highland and valley peasants was also stimulated to provide labour for agro-industry.

Highland areas and valleys were bypassed in credit and technical assistance, irrigation schemes, road infrastructure, adequate price policies and other incentives. This imbalance in state agricultural policy contributed to the downgrading of 'traditional' agriculture vis-a-vis 'modern' agriculture. Although initially geared for the internal market and import substitution of certain agricultural products that were previously imported (sugar, cotton, rice, meat), the agro-industrial sector became increasingly export-oriented and heavily dependent on state aid and subsidies. Indeed, as the prices of agricultural commodities fell on the world market, capital was increasingly channelled into speculative activities (cocaine, real estate abroad) rather than into productive agricultural and livestock enterprises.

Bolivia stands out in Latin America as the clearest example where the peasant is the main producer and provisioner of food. Yet, even today, a myth persists in Bolivia that peasants are only marginally integrated into the national economy, either as producers or consumers. In fact, they not only provide the bulk of the food staples that are consumed in the country—such as potatoes and other tubers, corn, vegetables, rice, sizeable proportions of the meat, dairy and sugar cane production—but also are increasingly integrated into the market as consumers of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, farm tools and tractors.

A pervasive phenomenon is the proliferation of middlemen—both in commerce and transportation—who have encouraged small producers to enter the marketplace, with the resultant intensification and specialization of production. We have seen the consequences of this in many areas: a complete inversion of traditional practices directed at conservation and sustainability. Instead, intensification of production has led to reduced

following, the substitution of organic by chemical fertilizers, diversity replaced by mono-culture, and genetic variety by the homogeneization of 'consumer-preferred' types.

The transformation of traditional patterns of production by incorporation into the market has many diverse implications. Elements of Andean social organization, such as reciprocal exchange of products and labour and mutual cooperation, have been displaced in many areas by monetary transactions conducted through the market. Changes brought about since the agrarian reform, such as the privatization of land and the rapid commoditization of the rural economy, have led at the same time to a mass of small producers confronting the market as individuals and households in competition with one another. Yet, despite this, they continue to display considerable awareness of their deteriorating and vulnerable position as producers.

In many valley areas, where the land base is inadequate to support a livelihood from agriculture, peasants have developed a range of non-agricultural strategies, including commerce, transport, seasonal wage labour and spatial mobility, which are developed in response to economic conditions and possibilities. In many cases, these activities are not merely supplementary to agriculture, but rather provide the bulk of the cash income. Elsewhere, where the land base remains adequate in both extension and agricultural potential—for example, when the availability of irrigation permits multi-cropping—there has been a noticeable intensification and specialization of agricultural production oriented to the market.

In a country where more than half of the population is rural, the majority of whom are small cultivators in the highlands and valleys, traditional crops such as the potato remains an essential staple of both rural and urban diets. Despite continuing low yields (5.2 t/ha., the lowest in South America), the potato is of primordial importance in its supply of calories and more importantly, proteins, providing the highest proportion (12.9 per cent) anywhere in the world.⁹ Despite the land area devoted to potatoes and the nutritional importance of this crop, state pricing policies and infrastructural services have so far failed to give it priority or to provide the necessary incentives to increase production. The absence of state services leaves peasants in a particularly vulnerable position with respect to merchant intermediaries who provide transport, wholesale crop mortgaging, agricultural inputs and consumer goods. Thus, peasants persistently face unfavourable terms of trade between the price of potatoes and other crops, and the cost of commodities for productive consumption (chemical inputs,

seeds, tools) and for household consumption (food, clothing, utensils). During the last three years, the rural population has carried the main burden of an acute economic crisis—the highest inflation rate in the world (an annual average of about 5,000 per cent), drastic devaluations, speculation and food hoarding by intermediaries—whilst recovering from the severe drought of 1983.

Crisis and sustainability in potato production

A complex interaction of external and internal factors during recent years has profoundly transformed the nature and sustainability of the country's farming systems and peasant livelihoods. This section attempts to identify the growing vulnerability of the country's food provisioning potential and the impact on environmental resources which stems from processes which are simplifying complex social and physical ecosystems, from the rigidities of top-down planning, and from makeshift improvisation in times of crisis. We shall try to illustrate the sense of incipient awareness and critical questioning that has begun to find a voice amongst concerned technicians, social activists, and more importantly, peasant producers themselves. We focus on the issue of potato production as illustrative, first, of the consequences of specialization and intensification in the Ayopaya highlands of Cochabamba, and secondly, of the problems arising from the 1983 drought in a national context where emergency planning measures turned a short-term crisis into a longer-term dilemma.

In the Ayopaya highlands, since the early 1960's, we have observed a growing specialization and intensification of potato production, resulting from increasing incorporation of the area into regional and national markets. Although hampered by continuing difficulty of access, the area is favoured by considerable ecological diversity and the widespread availability of irrigation water. These permit peasant households to obtain two crops a year in the low to intermediate irrigated fields (1,800-3,000 m. above sea level), and one annual crop at higher altitudes fed by seasonal rainfall. Despite the range of crops that were produced in the area under the pre-1952 hacienda system (from subtropical fruits and vegetables to the high Andean tubers, cereals, and livestock), it has since become one of the most important potato-producing provinces in the country, able to provide the earliest crop to the regional market and sustain supplies throughout most of the year.

Despite the intense commercial orientation of the area, Ayopaya remains one of the poorest provinces within the Department of Cochabamba (high rates of infant mortality and adult illiteracy and lack of health and other basic services). In the virtual absence of any State credit and technical

assistance, intermediaries have stimulated the development of potato mono-culture through the provisioning of chemical inputs, transport, credit and farm gate purchases.

A number of disturbing points arising from intensive mono-culture production in a highland environment marked by steep slopes, deserve attention:

1. The marked deterioration in yields over recent years has forced peasant households to intensify production through increased investments of both labour and scarce capital. In an effort to maintain earlier levels of production, households have brought into cultivation even higher and steeper land previously used for livestock grazing. One consequence of this has been to displace and reduce the number of animals kept by households (a form of insurance against unexpected crises, as well as occasional supplies of meat). As one campesino (Eliseo Rodriguez) told us: 'We are now moving up and further up the *purumas* (high altitude slopes) to have more land under cultivation; somehow we are not getting as much yield in lower fields as before and we have also fewer animals. What will our future generations have?'

2. The use of chemical fertilizers has increased substantially to compensate for the reduced availability of animal manure, though soil fertility and structure have deteriorated in the absence of a renewal of organic material and reduced following. As a result, we have observed with growing concern a process of ecological degradation as soils lose their ability to retain moisture, surface cracking appears, followed by gully formation during the heavy seasonal rains, with the consequent loss of rich top soil. In the village of Yayani, an older peasant posed the following dilemma: 'During the hacienda times, at least there was an attempt to keep agriculture and livestock going evenly; we had many different crops in all these different lands, including sugar cane in the bottom lands. We had never heard of fertilizers and these insecticides. We had plenty of *guano* (animal manure). Now there is a shortage of manure, everybody is using fertilizers, the yields are good in the first two years, then our production goes down. Nobody has come here to study the soil.'¹⁰

3. Intensification of land-use associated with the problems of fuel-wood removal has had some dramatic consequences on slopes in excess of 40 degrees. Problems of slumping and soil avalanches have become a common feature of the area, cutting road communications for six months of the year during and following the rainy season, and sometimes causing major disasters. In March 1984, the community of Jatun Ciénaga in Ayopaya was

completely destroyed by an avalanche of soil, rock and water, which killed over 40 people and swept away their houses, fields and livestock.

4. Less dramatic perhaps, although symptomatic of the pervasive influence of commercial interests in the area, has been the indiscriminate promotion of chemical products designed to inhibit the spread of infectious diseases and pests. Fungal infections such as late blight (*phytothera infestans*) spread rapidly through an area of contiguous fields all planted with potatoes at different stages of maturity. Agricultural chemical suppliers in the city and locally promote certain products, frequently without reference to, or knowledge of the types of infestation problems encountered. A local extension agent working in the area, for example, was acting more as a commercial supplier of fertilizers and pesticides (also having a shop in the valley town of Quillacollo), than as a provider of technical advice to peasant producers. Such an example is not unique in Bolivian countryside. But without the technical advice necessary for the efficacious employment of such chemicals, results are often poor. Rural merchants who sell such products in markets are known to 'water down' the content of liquid chemicals to increase their profit margins. Peasants try to improve their effectiveness by mixing together several different products creating a broad spectrum 'cocktail'.

Uninformed of the need to take safety precautions when using pesticides and lacking proper backpack sprayers, peasants often resort to applying chemicals by hand. Incidences of intoxication and death are not uncommon; in 1982, a young farmer in the village of Chinchiri died after spraying a field of potatoes with an insecticide. It is well known that the continual use of a particular product over a number of years allows the pest or disease to develop resistance. A local producer went around his crop recently, methodically picking off aphids and dropping them into a container filled with a chemical concentrate he had used for years. He then showed the swimming aphids to a startled agronomist.¹¹

5. The process of specialization has led to a uniformity in the variety of potato cultivated in Ayopaya. '*Waycha paceña*' is cultivated in the higher altitude communities as seed, which are then sown in the lower irrigated fields as the commercial crop. However, there is no discriminating seed selection process, and with no renewal or improvement of the genetic stock of this variety, mutations, susceptibility to disease and declining yields have increased. In contrast to the Aymara community cited earlier, households in Ayopaya are no longer accustomed to cultivating a range of potato varieties.

6. Finally, use value production for direct consumption by the household is increasingly being displaced by potatoes destined for sale in the market, although part of the total harvest may be retained by the household for its own use, in addition to that put aside for seed for the following year. However, we have noted a tendency for households to maximize their sales to the market, even at the expense of experiencing shortfalls later in the year in seed and in the amount of food available for their consumption. Consequently, there is a puzzling sale of protein-rich food—potatoes, eggs, meat—in order to purchase foodstuffs provided by the subsidized agro-industrial sector (white bread and noodles made of imported wheat, sugar, rice, vegetable cooking oil). There is a need for some research to more exactly determine the net calorific balance of such flows and the nutritional consequences for peasant producers.

The 1983 drought

During 1983, much of the highland and valley departments in the country were gravely affected by prolonged drought associated with the El Niño oceanic currents. Although Bolivia has experienced periodic droughts in the past, the crisis of 1983 triggered a massive rural exodus to the cities, which highlighted both the vulnerability of the peasant population and Bolivia's position as a deficit food producer.

An emergency programme was launched by the government, incorporating religious and private organizations, and an appeal for international aid and food donations was sent out. For the first time it became apparent to much of the country that the peasant population was indeed an important provider of basic food staples for urban consumption.

In highland areas, largely dependent upon seasonal rainfall for cultivation, crop losses and food shortages became acute. Considerable concern was expressed at the dilemma of peasants consuming their last sacks of potato seed, and emergency relief organizations contracted for the importation of potatoes for immediate consumption and for use as seed in the following planting season.

Through the National Emergency Committee, subcontracts were placed for the importation of potatoes from northern Argentina, with money provided by the Inter-American Development Bank. The potatoes were transported by rail and distributed through the regional emergency committees and development corporations. Although largely destined for consumption, some agencies intervened to promote part of the imported potato for use as seed. Specialists from the Toralapa Potato Experimental Station¹² made an effort to warn official agencies of the danger of planting seed that had not

been thoroughly vetted and sanitized. Their warnings, however, went largely unheeded, as many officials in charge of emergency planning at national and departmental levels, were neither knowledgeable nor aware of the issues involved. However, as the potatoes were unloaded, it was found that many of the tubers were in a state of decomposition after a long period of storage and transport. In Santa Cruz and Chuquisaca, potatoes were distributed as seed to peasants, and the consequences were disastrous.

By late 1983, a large area of Chuquisaca was in quarantine to prevent the spread of the bacteria *Erwina Sp.* (black leg rot). The infestation problems are believed to be so serious as to require that, even under the best technical advice and eradication programme available, the area should remain fallow for at least ten years before being planted once more with potato.

This illustration of the consequences of short-term expediency and badly planned ameliorative measures, contrasts with the example of the neighbouring department of Potosí, where the conscientious efforts of planners, field workers and potato specialists were marked by a greater sense of self-reliance—probably learned from years of state neglect. Although situated in the middle of the drought-stricken highlands, the departmental emergency committee did not import potatoes from outside the country, although it procured other forms of food aid. Meanwhile, personnel from a local potato experimental station (Chinoli) collected, propagated and disseminated local seed varieties that had some ability to withstand drought conditions. Consequently, whilst the region was able to survive the worst of the crisis on some outside assistance, it was, more importantly, able to recover relatively quickly from the drought, because it recognized the value of its own indigenous expertise: peasant knowledge and practices supported by the technical training and dedicated efforts of potato specialists.

A case for expanding awareness? In the preceding sections, we looked at Bolivia's vulnerability as a food producing nation in a context of economic change and environmental crisis. Conventional development approaches and the institutional interface between the state, concerned activists and peasant producers, also raise a number of issues.

The social history of Bolivia has created a contradiction between the city and the countryside. The top-heavy hierarchical structure of state organizations and their inbuilt urban bias leaves them with a frequently weak and ineffective presence in rural areas. Training in technical fields is heavily reliant on exogenous experiences, compartmentalized and specialized. Emphasis is given to 'economies of scale' and modern technology which

have little bearing on the specificities of an Andean agriculture. Also, most state agents see their rural activity as a necessary period of transition towards obtaining a more prestigious administrative urban job.

Nevertheless, we are witnessing what appears to be a search for alternative development strategies that take as a central concern the need for sustainable, endogenous yet productive agriculture. A critical awareness is emerging among some dedicated individuals, of both state and non-governmental organizations, who despite the lack of resources, are incorporating peasant participation and expertise in experiments along new paths.

There is also a new generation of promoters, social activists and researchers who, less rigidly confined within disciplinary boundaries and in greater contact with peasants, popular organizations and technicians, are involved in promoting debate and communication and developing new approaches, often within the interstices vacated or ignored by the state.

The patronizing and hierarchical nature of many state agencies—and even some private organizations—have more recently been explicitly questioned or rejected by peasant organizations. Peasants in Bolivia have been historically significant political actors;¹³ many localities and regions have exercised some influence in national decision-making. Many peasant organizations—strongly rooted in their cultural traditions and citizenship rights—are engaged, through a range of activities, in recovering and systematizing their own indigenous expertise (medicine, appropriate technology, collective historical memory, agriculture, etc.), and are confronting conventional impositions.

In Bolivia, potatoes remain essentially a ‘peasant’ crop, but their importance continues to be devalued, even to the extent of importing varieties from Holland because with fewer eyes (a question of breeding) they make peeling easier, at least for some urban consumers. Bolivia, as part of the cradle of potato domestication, possesses an enormous stock of genetic resources, yet spends an increasing proportion of its foreign exchange on imported food.

If genetic resources are to be retained in the South along with the right to produce one’s own food within sustainable farming systems, the case of potatoes in Bolivia is a telling example of the need for awareness to expand from below.

Notes

1. Mooney, Pat Roy, 'The Law of the Seed: Another Development and Plant Genetic Resources', *Development Dialogue 1983:1-2*, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, Uppsala. An abbreviated edition in Spanish was published serially by the Mexican newspaper, *El Dia*, March-April, 1984.
2. The World Assembly, Manifesto: That All May Eat, WFA International Secretariat, 15 Devonshire Terrace, London W2, November 1984. See pp 00-00 in this issue of *Development Dialogue*.
3. Sage, Colin, 'Intensification of Commodity Relations: Agricultural Specialization in the Cochabamba Serrania, Bolivia', *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, Oxford, 1984, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 81-97. See also 'Diversificación, complementación y procesos de trabajo de la economía familiar en la región de Cochabamba, Bolivia', a CERES project supported by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, the Inter-American Foundation, the Programa de Investigaciones sobre Población en América Latina, Social Science Research Council of Great Britain, the University of Durham, and the International Development Research Centre, Canada, mimeograph published by CERES in La Paz.
4. Horton, Douglas F. and Fano, Hugo, *Potato Atlas*, International Potato Centre (CIP), Lima Peru, 1985, p. 32.
5. *Ibid*, pp. 96-97.
6. Samaniego, Carlos, 'Perspectiva de la agricultura campesina en el Perú', in Amat y Leon, C., Caballero, J.M., et al (eds.), *Realidad del campo peruano después de la Reforma Agraria: 10 Ensayos Críticos*, Centro de Investigaciones y Capacitación, Lima, Peru. See also Dandier, Jorge, Blanes, Jose, Prudencio, Julio and Munoz, Jorge, 'Análisis integral de la estructura y funcionamiento del sistema agroalimentario en Bolivia', study prepared for the FAO/CEPAL Joint Division, United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America, Santiago, 1985.
7. In addition to the many hundreds of domesticated potato varieties, there exist thousands of wild varieties which represent an enormous reservoir of genetic wealth. Pioneering work by Martin Cardena, the father of Bolivian botany, and Professor J G Hawkes, possibly the greatest authority on the potato, in collecting and cataloguing this wealth, contrasts with the many European and North American expeditions which over the years have carried away tons of tubers to improve their own genetic stock. For an interesting reference to Russian and other expeditions during the 1920's and later decades, see also Bukasov, S.M., 'Theoretical Bases of Plant Breeding (Potato Section)', in Ochoa, Carlos and Cardenas, Martin et al, *Materiales para el Curso Internacional sobre Producción y Fitomejoramiento de la Papa*, Instituto Interamericano de Ciencias Agrícolas(IICA), Lima, Peru, 1956.
8. Hatch, John K., (ed.), *Our Knowledge: Traditional Farming in Rural Bolivia: A textbook by subsistence households*, Ministry of Agriculture and Peasant Affairs, Agency for International Development, Rural Development Services, La Paz (Spanish edition also available), 1983, Vol. 1, 'Altiplano Region', p. 84.
9. Horton, Douglas F. and Fano, Hugo, *op. cit.*

10. From a discussion with Julio Carrasco, who was a serf in a hacienda, had participated as a leader of rebellion in 1947, was imprisoned for five years, until the 1952 revolution, and later became active in peasant organizations in the context of the agrarian reform; see Calderon, Fernando and Dandier, Jorge (eds.), *La fuerza histórica del campesinado en Bolivia: Movimientos Campesinos y Etnicidad*, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development/ CERES, Geneva and La Paz, 1984, Chapter 4.
11. From an interview with Gerardo Caero, agronomist at the Toralapa Agricultural Experimental Station, Cochabamba (see below).
12. The Toralapa Agricultural Experimental Station was established in the 1960's as one of five potato research centres in Bolivia. Since 1971, Toralapa has become a national centre for the collection, dissemination and propagation of potato seeds, as part of the Instituto Boliviano de Tecnología Agropecuaria (IBTA). This centre maintains a close relationship with the International Potato Centre, Peru. Although considerably lacking in financial resources and infrastructure, a number of dedicated specialists there have close links with peasant areas, where they provide technical advice and have begun a programme of training individuals as semilleros or seed 'guardians' in their communities, as part of an effort to stimulate indigenous expertise.
13. Calderon, Fernando and Dandier, Jorge (eds.), *La Fuerza histórica del campesinado en Bolivia: Movimientos Campesinos y Etnicidad*, op. cit.

The Law of the Seed Revisited

Seed Wars at the Circo Massimo

By Pat Roy Mooney

'The seeds issue', which began to be discussed in international political fora in the late seventies, gave rise at the FAO Conference in Rome in November 1983 to one of the most heated debates in the history of the organization. Pat Roy Mooney's study 'The Law of the Seed: Another Development and Plant Genetic Resources', published in Development Dialogue (1983: 1-2) and widely circulated in the context of the Conference, played a part in this debate and has continued to influence the discussion of this important topic ever since.

One of the results of the deliberations at the FAO Conference in 1983 was the decision to establish a Commission on Plant Genetic Resources and an International Undertaking in favour of full and free exchange of germplasm.

Taking as his point of departure the first meeting of the Commission in March 1985, Pat Mooney here gives a detailed account of how the strategies and tactics of governmental and institutional actors have changed in response to the increasing importance attached to the seeds issue by Third World governments and many non-governmental organizations.

In concluding his overview, Pat Mooney draws attention to a number of proposals that Third World governments may wish to see implemented in the years to come. Among them are the expansion of the mandate of the Commission and the Undertaking to include all forms of genetic material, including animals and micro-organisms; the strengthening of FAO's financial support for genetic resources through the development of a World Gene Fund; and a study of the opportunities for Genetic Cooperation among Developing Countries (GCDC).

Pat Roy Mooney, a Canadian working in the International Genetic Resources Programme of the Rural Advancement Fund International, has also represented the International Coalition for Development Action (ICDA) and the International Organization of Consumers Unions (IOCU) in numerous international meetings on the seeds issue. Together with his close collaborator for many years, Cary Fowler, he is a recipient of the 1985 Right Livelihood Award, popularly known as 'the Alternative Nobel Prize'.



Procrustus at FAO: The Greek robber Procrustus came to Rome in November 1983—cutting and hacking so that all wayfarers might fit in his bed of iron. During the long weeks of diplomatic battle, resolution 6/81 on genetic resources was also

The 1983 FAO conference

tied to the bed and the FAO Secretariat and ambassadors from industrialized countries set to work in Procrustus's service. Despite their best efforts, however, by the time US Agriculture Secretary John Block gavelled the FAO Council and Conference to a close, Third World delegates had wrested both an International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources and the establishment of a high-level Commission on Plant Genetic Resources from the rusted bed. As the US, UK and Canadian delegations—the most vociferous opponents in the debate—angrily withdrew, Mexico's ardent young Ambassador, José-Ramon Lopez-Portillo, was embraced by his fellow Third World Ambassadors as the undeniable hero of the battle.

The twenty-second session of the FAO Conference had been—by any standards—a gruelling affair. The half-day allotted to genetic resources in the Conference's second commission had stretched into three days and adjourned before final approval could be given to the contentious report. In a surprise move, John Block called for the Commission report in Plenary before most delegations had arrived. The 15 minute wrap-up turned into a half-day of renewed debate which saw Block repeatedly overruled by governments as he attempted to steamroll the discussion. Time and again, Portillo was forced to his feet to challenge the Chair. Mexico, in the end, carried the day—with the support of not only the Latin American delegations but also the vocal strength of many African and Asian states.

In the aftermath of the Conference, many diplomats and NGO's recognized that the most significant achievement may have been that the South had taken anything from the bed and that Procrustus had been overcome. The voluntary Undertaking—while strongly worded in opposition to the plant patenting legislation and in favour of a full and free exchange of germplasm—was still a far-cry from the legally-binding Convention initially proposed. Further, although the IBPGR (International Board for Plant Genetic Resources) had been bloodied and discredited during the debate, its semi-independent status and its role as 'traffic cop' directing the flow of the South's genetic heritage to the North remained largely undiminished.

The best news, however, was the creation of a Commission (the highest-ranking inter-governmental structure outside of the biennial Conference and semi-annual Councils) with a general mandate to look into both technical and political issues related to genetic resources. For the first time ever, the world would have an inter-governmental overview of the first link in the food chain. All eyes turned to the Commission's first session slated for March of 1985.

The gene donors have their day—the Commission in March

When 93 governments gathered for the first session of the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources in March of 1985, it marked the first time that States have formally united for the sole purpose of discussing the fate of genetic resources. It was bound to be a contentious week. Earlier in the year, agricultural attaches to various US embassies around the world had passed on a memo from Washington proposing that governments refuse to attend the Commission. When this effort failed, the US argued for as many states as possible to come only as ‘observers’ rather than as participants. This ploy was originally successful and Belgium, Canada, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland and the US itself searched for seating at the back of the hall along with fellow observers like IOCU (International Organization of Consumers Unions). During the five days, this observer crew experienced their own form of genetic erosion with many of the Third World countries announcing their formal participation as new instructions arrived from their capitals and as hard-liners like Ambassador Millicent Fenwick of the United States found themselves drawn irresistibly into the debate.

The change in attitude from November 1983 was immediately evident. Whereas the Latin American countries sustained the debate at the FAO Conference, Asian and African states carried their full weight in the Commission with particular leadership shown by Pakistan and the Philippines. For the first time, Third World delegations made it abundantly clear that they knew who the real ‘donor’ countries were and who were the real ‘beneficiaries’ of genetic resource transfers and of IBPGR in particular.

Figure 1 *The Donors of germplasm duplicates*

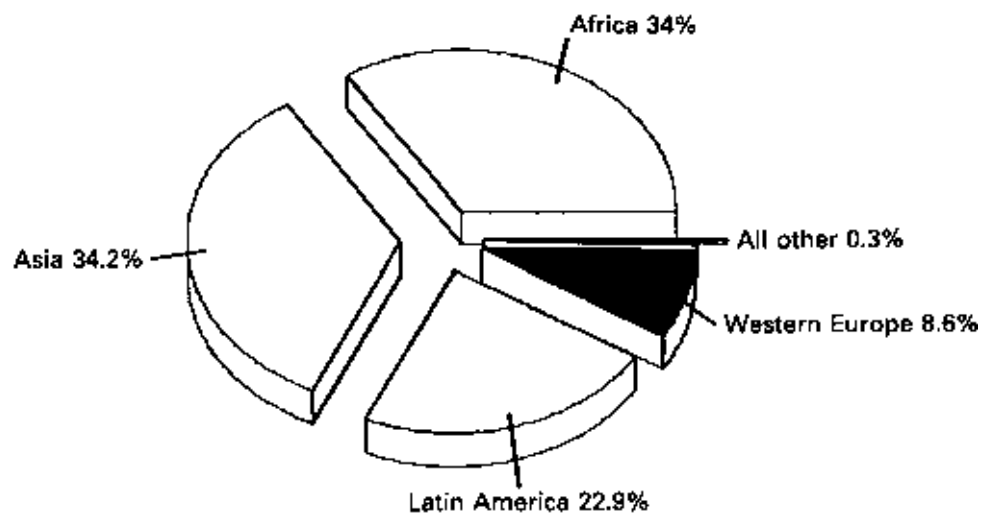
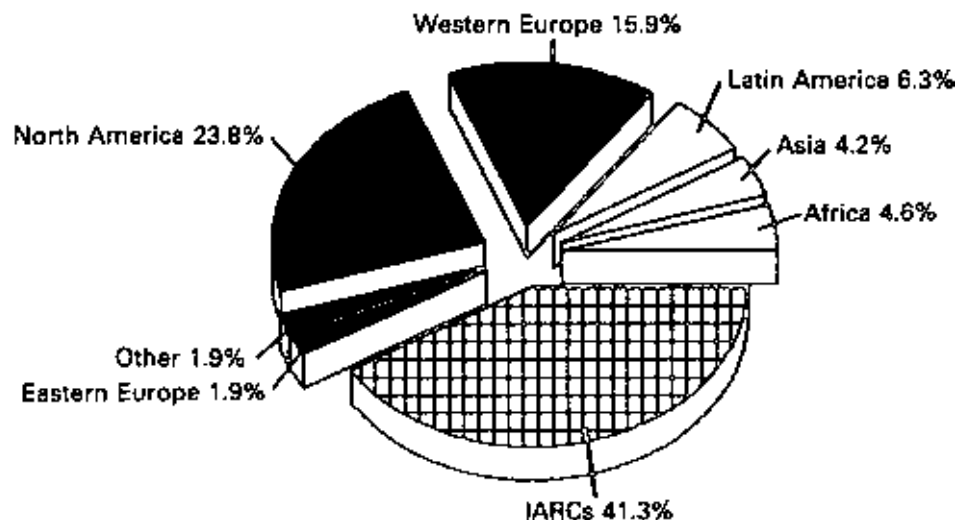


Figure 2 *The Beneficiaries*: Recipients of germplasm

Industrialized countries were forced to speak in romantic generalities about the free flow of germplasm as a common heritage, while Third World countries retorted with blunt statistics about who gives germplasm, who receives it; who has obtained grants from IBPGR and who dominates the Board. (In a survey of the nine major gene importers via IBPGR, the Rural Advancement Fund International, RAFI, has found that three countries, France, Italy and the United Kingdom, have actually received as much or more money from IBPGR than they have contributed to the Board and that the United States, which has received 28 per cent of all IBPGR collected germplasm, has obtained more than 2.5 million USD in grants from IBPGR. Interestingly, the major germplasm and grant beneficiary states include many of those countries, which have opposed the FAO Undertaking and Commission.)

In a surprise turn-about, delegates from the South actually moved their attention from the solely political issues of genetic resources to address the major technical problems of *in situ* conservation, information systems, training programmes and the need for long-term support. Although professing to want to address these issues to the exclusion of more political matters, industrialized country delegates were consumed with the political implications of inter-governmental debate and seemed unable to offer positive practical proposals.

IBPGR—all packed up and nowhere to go?

The most controversial issue—as is often the case at UN meetings—was not on the agenda at all. Following the violent debate of 1983, the IBPGR Board and Executive Secretary began a serious examination of their option to leave FAO Headquarters and find another home. Emeritus Chairman Dick Demuth drafted one paper outlining the potential for IBPGR ‘to go public’ and seek funds from private seed companies who, Demuth reasoned, could see support to IBPGR as a matter of enlightened self-interest.

Trevor Williams, IBPGR's Executive Secretary, also took up the matter with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Swiss government officials in hopes of finding a home either at Gland (by IUCN) or at Nyon (by ASSINSEL—the international seed trade lobby).

Just prior to the Commission meeting, the Board received both a helping hand and the back of the hand from a TAC (Technical Advisory Committee to the CGIAR—Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research) Review Panel which had been commissioned to review the programme and administration of IBPGR over the previous five years. While very critical of the role of the Board and the management style of IBPGR, the Review Panel did see a need to clarify IBPGR's legal status and to make it more autonomous from the slings and arrows of outrageous FAO. In fact, the Panel gave the Board a series of choices ranging from modest technical changes in the IBPGR/FAO relationship to an all-out split, with the Board becoming a small but full-fledged 'Centre' in the tradition of CIMMYT and IRRI. In reality, the TAC Panel was inviting the Board to set up housekeeping elsewhere.

At its annual February meeting, the Board met with the Panel to receive the report. In the same meeting, the Board voted to leave FAO as quickly as possible and—if at all possible—before the next FAO Conference in November 1985.

A hasty departure, the Board discovered, was fraught with indelicacies and uncertainties. The ambiguities of IBPGR's legal status made it hard to determine if it had the right to leave—or, if not, whose permission was required. Both FAO and CGIAR had some reason to be consulted. As it turned out, the full TAC was meeting in Rome at FAO at the same time as the Commission. The Board concluded that courtesy dictated the formal approval of TAC in March and the CGIAR at its Tokyo session in June. Under no circumstance did the Board want their travel plans raised during the Commission.

By the time the Commission opened in March, everybody but the Third World knew that IBPGR wanted to leave FAO. As is their way, the various documents and minutes had wended their way through the CGIAR labyrinth in Washington into the hands of industrialized country delegations and NGO observers. It was with shock then that representatives of IOCU heard Professor Kåhre (IBPGR Chair) address the Commission and announce that his Board hoped for even closer cooperation with FAO in the future. He made no mention of the Board's intention to leave the House. It fell to

IOCU to advise the meeting of the Review Panel's recommendation and the Board's vote.

The result was a diplomatically discreet pandemonium as irate Third World delegations sought more information and as FAO Assistant-Director-General, Dieter Bommer, and IBPGR stonewalled = claiming that the option to leave FAO was only one of many under consideration and that no final decision had been made by anybody. One of the US Government 'observers', William T. Schapaugh, of the American Seed Trade Association described the situation...

Mid-week during the Commission meeting, Pat Mooney, who along with Cary Fowler attended as observers representing IOCU (International Organization of Consumers Unions), announced that IBPGR's Board had taken a position 'to leave FAO'. He proceeded, with audacity, to say 'Goodbye', described the FAO-IBPGR relationship as one 'we've been living with, illicit or not', and questioned 'how the bags are being packed—what possessions will IBPGR take with them'? Further, he questioned IBPGR's plans for the coming decade which he asserted would reduce collection and conservation efforts on poor peoples' crops.

During the course of the conference, Pakistan, Mexico, Cuba, Senegal, and others repeatedly called for reassessment and legal delineation and definition of relationships between FAO and IBPGR and often referred to Pakistan's analogy that IBPGR would be the engine and FAO the driver because the Commission 'will have the political clout' along with the 'vision' and 'answerability' to fully implement the Undertaking and to determine allocation of funds by programme and function.

IBPGR's hot denials caused further confusion and consternation and ultimately prevented Third World countries from having a full discussion of the implications of the move. Once the Commission was over, however, FAO, CGIAR and other official bodies involved were discussing the IBPGR move with more candor. The CGIAR offered this analysis of the situations in early May...

The panel clearly believes that an independent centre model would be more appropriate for such a program of research than an operation within a large international organization, and that such a model should be fully explored. This explains, in part, the panel's proposal on the creation of a task force of the group, the approach normally taken when a new organization is to be established.

The IBPGR has taken a clear position on this issue. It strongly endorses the independent centre option.²

The Tokyo meeting was inconclusive and CGIAR moved to establish a task force to review both the review panel and IBPGR recommendations as well as concerns expressed by TAC. At various times during the summer, no

fewer than three teams were tramping the corridors of the World Bank and FAO seeking solutions to the awkward problem.

Following an unsuccessful face-off between the FAO Director-General and the Chair of CGIAR in October, it became clear that the best strategy for IBPGR was to again delay the fateful decisions until after the FAO Conference in November. Once again, at all costs, intergovernmental involvement was to be avoided.

Despite these efforts, IBPGR's future was a major topic at the November Conference. Third World countries lined up to call for IBPGR to remain in FAO while Canada, the USA and Australia encouraged the Board to pull out. Surprisingly, France and the Federal Republic of Germany wanted IBPGR to stay. By the close of 1985, a consensus seemed to be forming on two topics. First, some part of IBPGR—likely the part dealing with collection, conservation and training—would be politically obliged to remain in Rome; a second wing of the Board dealing with evaluation and research might be developed elsewhere in Rome or the Netherlands. The second tacit understanding: both the Executive Secretary and the Chair of IBPGR were too politically damaged to remain. Waiting in the wings, according to the Circo Massimo rumour mill, one Donald Plucknett of the United States ready to become the new Traffic Cop'.

Germplasm conservation: no more need to collect?

Aside from the bureaucratic problems of leaving FAO, IBPGR has been faced with a much more practical one: how could it leave a recognized broad-membership international organization and continue to collect germplasm in the member countries? As a Board without any membership or any legal identity, IBPGR has always donned the mantle of FAO in order to launch germplasm collection programmes in the Third World. Only because of its identification with FAO has IBPGR been permitted into many countries.

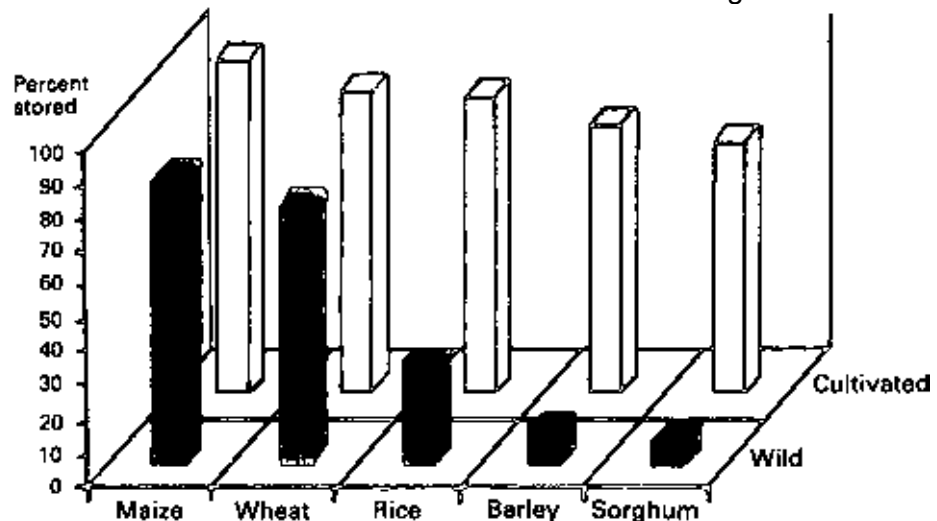
The Board's solution is to dramatically reduce its collection work in favour of a new move into germplasm research. Such a move coincides wonderfully with the interests of breeders in industrialized countries who, at present, are making poor use of the banked germplasm because of the uniformity constraints imposed by Plant Breeders' Rights legislation and because of the extremely limited information accompanying collections. Given the economic climate, many breeders and more governments are also inclined to the opinion that enough has been collected and that the thrust should now be on 'utilization'.

In other words, the ‘brownie points’ from IBPGR’s cash donors have moved from genetic resources rescue to pre-breeding research. Germplasm evaluation work did not have to be done at FAO nor did it require the involvement of the South. By lucky coincidence, IBPGR’s collection work of the past decade had resulted in the major stocks of important germplasm being banked in northern industrialized countries. What could be more logical than to undertake a major research programme where the germ-plasm is stored?

That germplasm research is not a part of IBPGR’s mandate poses but a minor problem. A somewhat greater problem is the need for the Board to gracefully extricate itself from its low-margin collection role. After years of preaching the threat of germplasm loss and genetic erosion, IBPGR has now come to the conclusion that the major collection work is near completion. On the eve of the TAC Review Panel’s study, IBPGR released a Rockefeller Foundation report estimating the percentage of genetic diversity of major crops stored in genebanks.

Linnaeus would have been amazed. A science which can only guesstimate the number of higher-order plant species to the nearest 50,000; a science that concedes that at least 65 per cent of the material in genebanks has not even basic passport data; a science that admits that between half and two-thirds of the genetic diversity placed in storage may have already been

Figure 3 ‘On the seventh day IBPGR counted’: percentage of wild relatives and cultivated landraces stored in genebanks.



destroyed can still bravely tell the world that farmers and nature have produced (more or less) 110,000 wheat varieties (including landraces) and between 12,000 and 12,500 wild wheat types... and that 90 per cent of the cultivars and at least 75 percent of the wild wheats are safely housed in genebanks. On the seventh day when God rested, IBPGR was obviously out counting!

During the Spring and Summer of 1985, RAFI travelled extensively to show IBPGR's data to geneticists and genebank directors. From Ethiopia to China to Nicaragua, the data was greeted with disbelief and derision. Here and there, for specific crops, scientists felt that the general figures indicating total diversity were 'within the ball park' but nobody was prepared to bet that the gene diversity collected in the 1940's or 1960's would still be found in a genebank today.

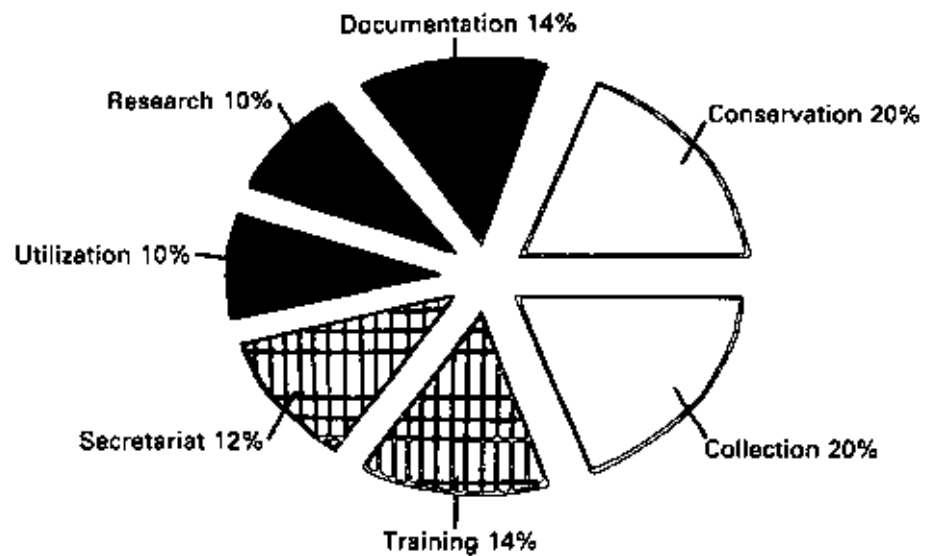
As Dr. Melaku Worede of the Ethiopian genebank pointed out, almost all plant collecting expeditions follow the road maps. What they collect is what is within a stone's throw of major thoroughfares. Since the collectors are in the field for only a few hours, they miss both the early-seeding plants and the late-seeding varieties. The collectors go home and mark on their maps that such and such a region has been 'collected'. In reality, they have a sampling of what was available on the roadside on September 3 or November 16.

The final blow to the IBPGR-TAC data, as has often been the case, came from IBPGR itself, when it published a Rockefeller Foundation study completed at the same time as IBPGR's own data was compiled. While the Rockefeller and IBPGR data concur on the number of collected germplasm accessions, they differ dramatically (by one third) on the number of these accessions, which are distinct, and they also disagree enormously on the total genetic variability of the crop studied—by 33 per cent. No effort has been made to explain the considerable difference.

Despite the illogic of its data, the Board now claims that it has been largely 'successful' in saving the world's major crop diversity. The per cent of IBPGR's total budget devoted to collecting has already fallen by one-third, from 30 to 20 per cent. Since the actual costs of collecting are escalating and the Board projects no overall dollar increase over the coming decade, this also means a serious decline in collecting work even over the already reduced levels.

This move parallels similar moves in other industrialized countries. The

Figure 4 Shifting the budget emphasis, IBPGR 1984-93



United States, for example, will increase its ‘acquisition’ budget until 1986 to a level of \$ 500,000 and then will drop its funding by 40 per cent to current levels of \$ 300,000 from that year onward. Meanwhile, financial support for germplasm evaluation is on the rise.

According to IBPGR documents, general collecting will be ended around the close of this year whereupon the budget will be oriented to the gathering of wild species until about 1988. Thereafter, attention will be given to ‘gap-filling’ and ‘hot spots’ to the end of the decade. Two years of collecting wild types with a reduced budget will do very little to improve collections—particularly since the cost of collecting wild species is substantially higher than gathering local cultivars on roadsides and in markets.

Figure 5 Priorities in the first decade: IBPGR’s target crops 1974-83

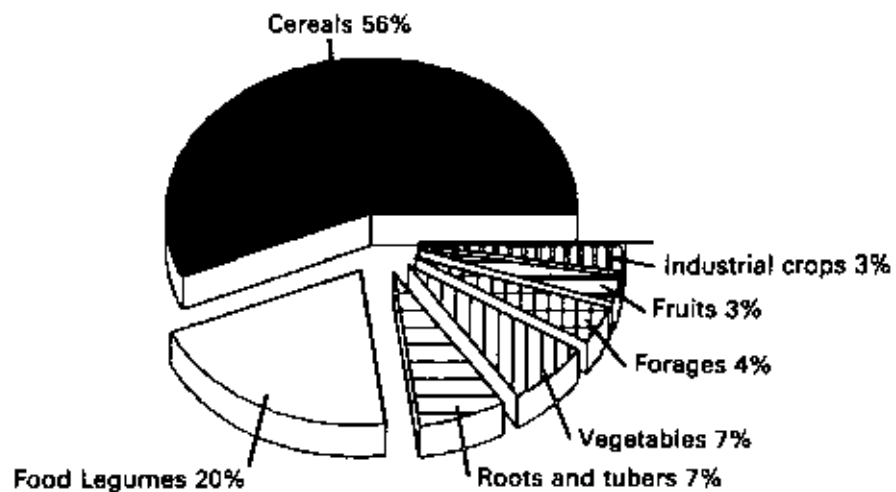
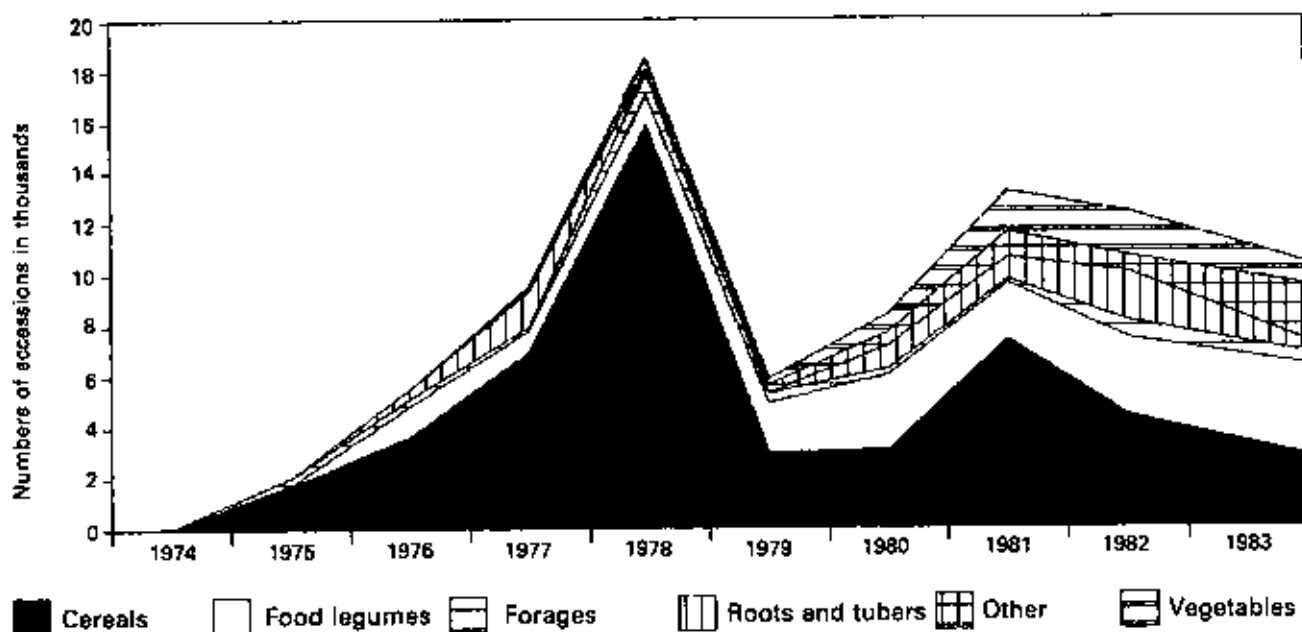


Figure 6 IBPGR collection practices 1974-82: record by plant type



Aside from ‘emergency’ situations (one might ask what constitutes an emergency in the midst of a prairie fire?), the Board’s long-term approach to collecting is for gap-filling. Since the strategy of the first decade has been to focus on major food crops (i.e. wheat, rice and maize), such projections do not bode well for the gathering of those crops of particular regional interest in the Third World or those so-called ‘minor’ crops which make a substantial contribution to the poor but are often outside the cash economy. These crops, it would seem, are to be abandoned to their fate.

Figure 7 Shift in the second decade: IBPGR’s revised crop targets 1984-93

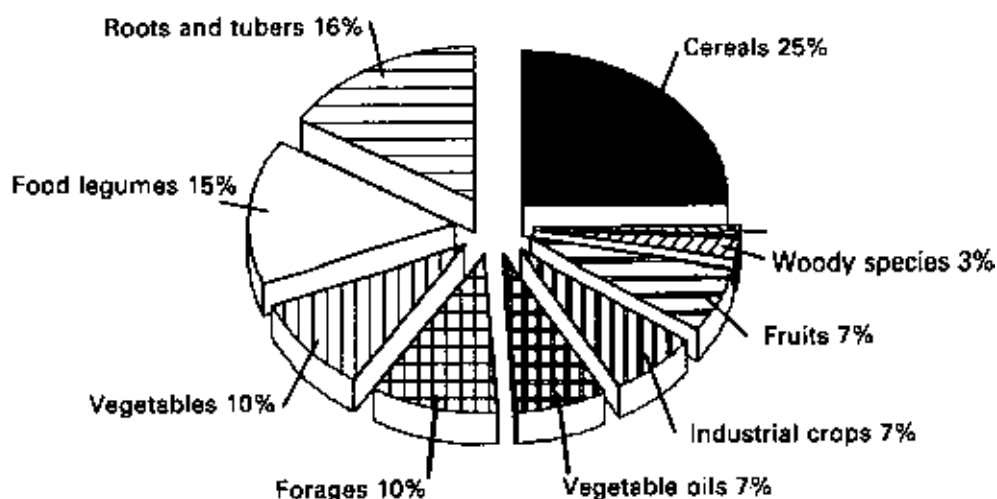
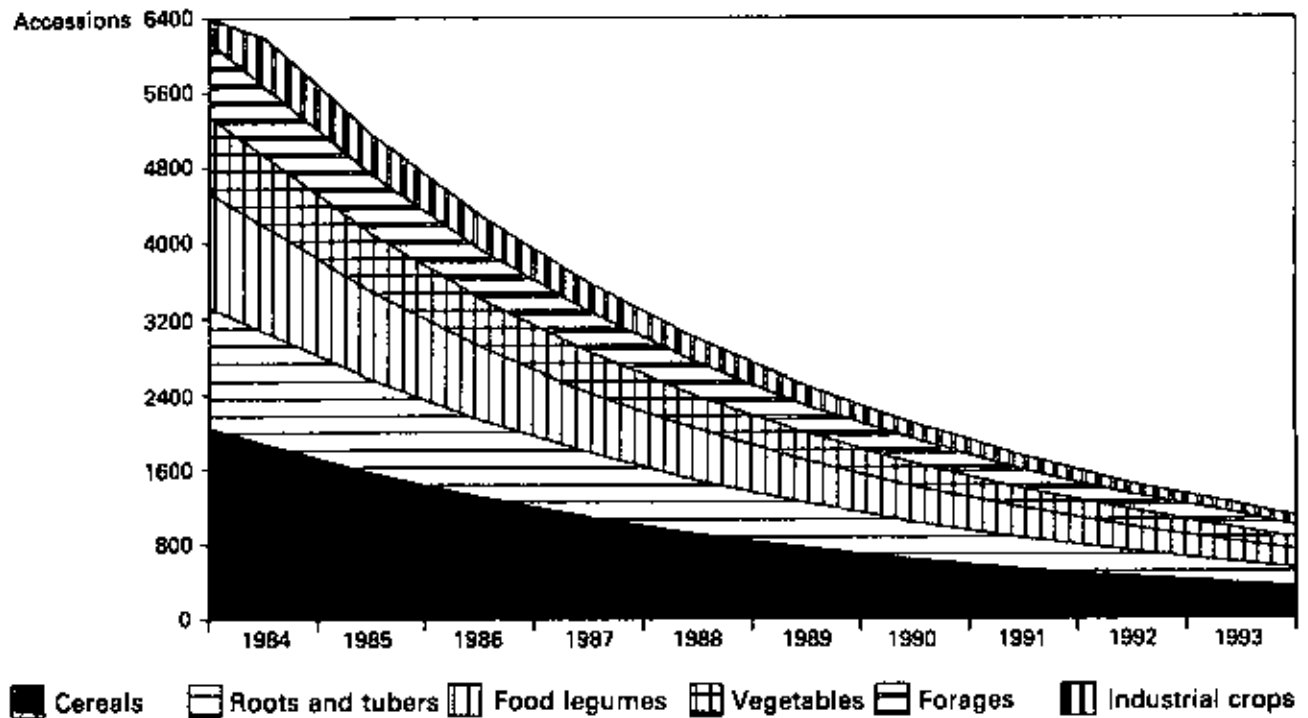


Figure 8 Decline in future collections: budget reductions and cost increases reduce future collections



In order to ameliorate the anxieties of Third World countries, IBPGR has restructured its crop collection priorities to show that much larger slices of the 'pie' will go to non-cereal crops. What the Board does not show is that the pie itself is much smaller.

To the officials with whom we talked in several Asian countries, the history of IBPGR was offensive... A vaguely structured, independent body is created in association with FAO. It uses the FAO flag in order to collect and direct the flow of Third World botanical treasures to the North. It focuses on crops of major economic interest. Once substantial quantities of germ-plasm are stored in the North, it moves out of FAO and transforms itself into a research-oriented body doing pre-breeding work for the major corporate and public breeders in the industrialized countries.

No history, of course, is this simple or direct. Nevertheless, in its haste to escape inter-governmental control through FAO, the IBPGR may be jettisoning the great work for which it was created and, thus, be jeopardizing the food security of the world.

The FAO conference in November 1985 When agriculture ministers made their biennial pilgrimage to Rome in November, 1985, genetic resources were again (for the third time) dominating the political agenda. If the North was caught off guard in 1981 and 1983 it was not taken unawares again. The focal point was the Commission Report and its specific plan to establish a 23-member Working Group (equivalent to an Executive Committee) intended to protect the interests of governments in the two year intervals between Commission sessions—and

to undertake a series of studies of national legislation, including plant breeders' rights, that may hinder the exchange of germplasm. As was fully recognized by all concerned, the first task of the Working Group would be to ensure that either IBPGR was brought under the FAO umbrella and Commission control or that it would leave FAO with a revised mandate on pre-breeding work that would leave the majority of its budget and all of its old collection/conservation mandate firmly in the hands of the international organization.

On the surface, the debate at FAO was very low key. Australia, the USA and Canada took their traditional positions as critics but were chastened by heavy domestic press attention to lower the level of their normal rhetoric. Third World countries, resolving to consolidate their progress, stuck to proposals for a World Gene Fund and the need to expand the Commission to include non-FAO members. (Between March and November, Commission membership actually soared from 66 states to 83.) The total public debate lasted only a day.

Below the surface the situation was much tougher. Mexico and the USA fought in the Drafting Committee in a 75 hours, weekend-long battle over the need for a World Gene Fund. The hard line US view was made clear by Bill Schapaugh of the American seed trade who made the following recommendation at a meeting of the US National Plant Genetic Resources Board six months earlier.

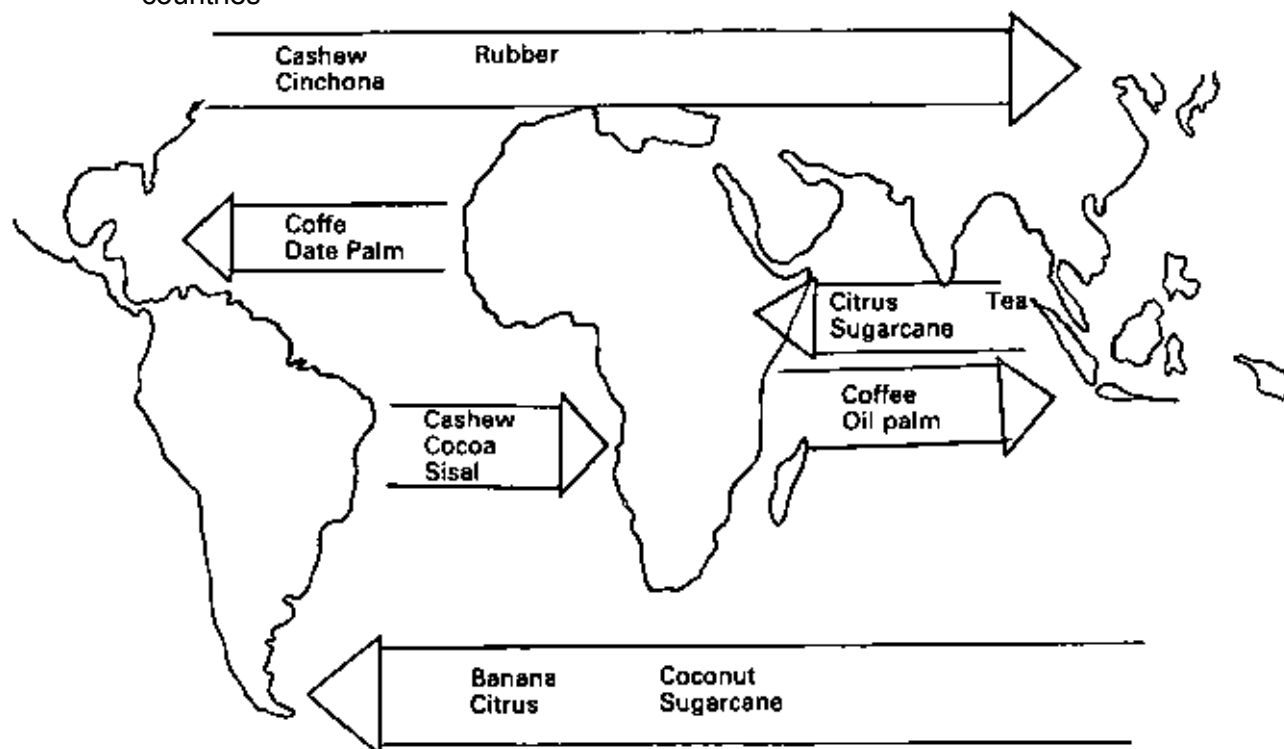
Finally, it is recommended and urged that the United States condition future financial support to FAO on whether the Undertaking is implemented in its present form and on whether the Commission continues in its attempts for FAO to dominate the world's plant germplasm system¹.

In the end the Conference agreed to accept the report of the Commission and to invite the Director-General to look into the feasibility of establishing a gene fund. Peculiarly, the USA and others hotly denied the need for more money for collections claiming that IBPGR was already sufficiently funded. In fact, the USA ate up 70 thousand dollars of FAO conference funds on this very point, almost double the amount of money the US Department of Agriculture spends annually on its own collection programme—43 thousand dollars.

**The future agenda
for the Commission**

From our own conversations with ministers and ambassadors, it appears that both the Commission and the Undertaking are unassailable. In fact, the South can be expected to grasp the initiative one more time with a series of new proposals. Among those currently being discussed are:

Figure 9 The opportunity for 'GCDC': An indication of the potential for mutual cooperation in the development of germplasm resources of major plantation crops among Third World countries



- Expansion of the Commission and Undertaking to all forms of genetic material including animals and micro-organisms important to food and agriculture;
- Strengthening FAO's financial support for genetic resources through the development of a World Gene Fund of US \$ 100 million along the general lines raised by the Netherlands and Norway;
- Renewed discussion on the development of an International Gene Bank and a revised network under the auspices or jurisdiction of FAO and the Commission;
- A study of the opportunity for Genetic Cooperation among Developing Countries (GCDC) in the context of the expanding role of genetic raw materials in genetic engineering.

There may be only one point of mutual agreement in Rome—Procrustes will be playing to a packed house on the Circo Massimo for many years to come.

Notes

1. Schapaugh, William T., Executive Vice-President of ASRA in the Trip Report'.
2. Farrar, Curtis, Open letter to the Chair of CGIAR, May 1985; attached as document CG/85/06 for the CGIAR Tokyo meeting.

The People's Food Alliance

An Introduction to the World Food Assembly

By Robin Sharp

Robin Sharp is General Secretary of the World Food Assembly. For further information and membership inquiries, you may contact the WFA Secretariat at 15 Devonshire Terrace, London W2 3DW, England. (The World Food Manifesto as well as other documents published by WFA are also available in French and Spanish.)



In the context of people's struggles for food-with-justice or merely for survival, the most notable phenomenon of the early 1980s has been a steady convergence in the thinking and practical orientation of independent groups of all kinds engaged on the front line.

The number and variety of people's organizations now moving consistently in the same direction means they can no longer be dismissed as development's camp-followers, engaged in trivial pursuit or united simply in their disapproval of the dominant system. It is true, perhaps, that they are still scattered rather haphazardly across the landscape. It is also true that this broadening consensus on the root causes of hunger has evolved in parallel with a greater awareness of the damage so often done by conventional development. But in positive terms the non-governmental vanguard active on food issues has by now put together countless micro-schemes embodying the principle of development-from-within and aiming to be environmentally and humanly as well as economically sustainable.

Such a progressive alignment of groups throughout the North and South should, it seemed, provide the spearhead of a powerful movement for change. In fact, the energies of many who would form the natural core of such a coalition have been fully absorbed by the pressures of work in their own localities or sectors. Thus they have tended to remain isolated from one another—cut off either by distance, by language, by barriers of learning or by the apparent unconnectedness of their immediate goals. There were few contact points to lend coherence to the overall thrust of their separate endeavours.

When the World Food Assembly convened in Rome for four days in

November 1984, it brought together 160 participants and observers from a network which in two years has grown to nearly 500, representing a very broad spectrum of independent people's organizations. Their presence in Rome implied acceptance of the basic premises of the meeting: that the strategies propounded by the 1974 World Food Conference had in many cases made things worse, not better; and that it was time for the independent sector to concert its own knowledge and experience in order to put forward real and sustainable alternatives.

At the outset, it was an open question whether the meeting would establish sufficient common ground for an effective alliance among so many superficially disparate interests. By the end, the virtual unanimity achieved on all key issues and the specific commitments to action adopted for inclusion in the Manifesto spoke for themselves. The WFA network was recognized to have an important continuing role in mobilizing people's organizations as a united front on issues of poverty, food and hunger.

For 1985/86, the WFA programme is being directed to three areas of work:

- *Food and debt.* An international campaign will be mounted, challenging the IMF's criteria for debt management in countries of the South and proposing alternatives to protect the food rights of the poor. The campaign will be built around a popular book on food and debt, backed up by two or three detailed country case studies.
- *Regional action.* WFA networking and programmes will be focused primarily at national and regional level, and plans have already been drawn up for regional meetings in Latin America and the Pacific. Consultations are also underway with a view to similar meetings in Asia and Europe during 1986. The objective in each case will be to consolidate the regional network and to draw up action programmes.
- *Network information exchange.* The WFA Secretariat is now publishing a regular quarterly newsletter and aims to extend its information clearing-house function as resources permit, including the setting-up of a databank on food politics and grass-roots action, and the servicing of sub-networks on special topics such as biotechnology.

While being the first in this field, the WFA is one among many coalitions of people's organisations which have arisen in the ten years since the Hammarskjöld Foundation asked 'What Now?'. And they have some impressive achievements to their credit in terms of campaigning to reform existing development policies and institutions. Over the next ten years, may be they will become as effective in promoting the paradigm shift to development-from-within.

Document

The World Food Assembly Manifesto

1. Introduction: A new coalition

The World Food Assembly is a coalition of independent groups of people from all parts of the world, united in the conviction that radical changes are needed if we are to meet our human responsibility of ensuring food for all.

This coalition presently spans more than 200 organizations in 60 countries and represents a wide spectrum of people's movements. We are small farmers, rural women, development workers, peasants, environmentalists, trade unionists, researchers, priests, journalists, nutritionists, and people working in the fields of appropriate technology, human rights and alternative lifestyles. In coming together to make common cause on what we regard as the fundamental moral issues of food and justice, we believe our coalition can be an important force for change. Indeed, the WFA network can be said to represent directly the interests of more people in more countries than any other organization in the fields of food and agriculture.

The World Food Assembly has arisen as a challenge to the hunger and distress which our government institutions and commercial systems continue to inflict on countless millions of people. It is a challenge made urgent by the weight of evidence that present policies are actually undermining the capacity of people and the land to produce food in the future. In response to worsening famines in Africa in 1984, public opinion in many countries demonstrated its sense of outrage that such extremes of human suffering should recur 10 years after the governments of the world pledged all their efforts to eradicate hunger from the world.

Our governments and the international aid establishment have had their chance. Yet today more people are hungry, more rural families continue to be forced off their land, and every day more food-growing land is being destroyed or expropriated for other uses. The time has come for us to insist on the more just and sustainable alternatives which are by now well-known and in many cases proven.

Our primary task, therefore, is to mobilize mutual support among all like-minded people and groups, firstly to strengthen the hundreds of initiatives already being pursued to help people gain control of their own lives, and then to extend our influence beyond the local level of action. In this way we shall demonstrate that more equitable, human-scale paths of development are not only viable, but, more than that, a necessary precondition for any future worth having.

Between us, we have all the moral, intellectual and material resources needed to pursue a sane alternative path—and at the same time to challenge

the power structures and conventional models of development which deny people their right of access to food. We are committed to the basic principle of *development from within*, that is to say, self-motivated growth by people and communities in accordance with their own and others' needs and with a sustainable use of the earth's resources. It is our collective intent to overcome any obstacles that block this path.

* * *

The World Food Assembly met in Rome in November 1984. It brought together 120 members of the network, in almost equal numbers from North and South, to share ideas and experiences and to launch this coalition as a worldwide movement for change.

As the basis for future collaborative action, the meeting welcomed many examples of effective grass-roots projects and campaigns on land and food issues. At the same time, the Assembly's eight working groups were unanimous in their indictment of the many exploitative development strategies pursued by governments and international agencies (with some honourable exceptions) over the past two decades. Country reports and case studies illustrated the extent to which, in practice, 'development' has meant the development of poverty.

The Assembly thus concluded that one of its essential future tasks should be to campaign for reform of existing institutions and policies. It was recognized, however, that general acceptance of the most-needed reforms by the international community was highly improbable. The meeting therefore gave precedence in its future work to the building of a strong and autonomous people's movement to pursue genuine alternatives to 'development'. All participants committed themselves to seeking practical ways of supporting one another's work, using their combined strengths to lobby official institutions and to mobilize public opinion in favour of socially just and sustainable food policies.

The Assembly elected an international committee to direct and co-ordinate the network's future plans. Meetings will be held in all continents during 1985 to develop regional strategies and detailed programmes of work.

2. The real roots of hunger

One person out of every seven or eight in the world today is condemned to a half-life of hunger or chronic malnutrition. That means at least 600 million people pushed out to the very margins of survival: many more than 10 years ago, despite the disappearance from the statistics of all those who have died

from hunger-related causes in that time. Every day some 20 000 children die in this way, and every day another 20 000 or more come forward to take their place in the ranks of the hungry.

For the victims it means nothing that the world currently produces more than enough food to sustain the entire population of our planet. It means nothing, because most of that hypothetical sufficiency is swallowed up by misuse, waste or overconsumption in the rich countries. And all our farm systems, both in the North and the South, are increasingly plugged into a global food auction where the poor can never hope to compete.

The rising toll of hunger over the past decade is variously attributed to the effects of climate, overpopulation, natural disasters, insufficient foreign aid and many other factors, according to the standpoint of those making the analysis. Whatever validity they have, most of these arguments are deployed in a way that effectively masks the real issues. Hunger, in fact, is not confined to poor countries; it is also recognized in some rich nations, where the factors cited above are hardly an issue. So the root causes must lie elsewhere.

Invariably, hunger strikes in the shadow of poverty, wherever people are excluded from access to the resources of their environment, from other essential means of livelihood or from an adequate say in the decisions that affect their lives. And invariably, too, it is women, children and old people who suffer most. Hunger, therefore, is rooted in political decisions which constitute a violation of the most basic human right: the right to feed oneself.

For most countries of the South, it is not that their land or other natural resources are too meagre to feed the people; it is, rather, that their governments choose (or are constrained) to pursue only those development strategies which ensure a continued monopoly of wealth and power by the elite, at the expense of the majority.

*Debt, dependency
and aid*

In pursuit of the mirage of high-speed economic development, Third World governments have been encouraged, especially by the Northern banking system and government agencies, to take land away from the subsistence sector in order to promote agricultural exports. Originally this way intended to finance their industrial growth, but now, increasingly, exports do little more than pay the interest on their foreign debts. Land for food becomes land for 'growing' hard currency, which in turn quickly filters back to the treasuries of the North. By chasing a rate of growth they could not

sustain, developing countries have been driven deeper into debt and dependency. Their economies have been distorted by attempts to integrate them in global markets governed by the industrial nations of the North. The expropriation of their resources and the destruction of their natural environments proceeds apace.

Dependency creates a vicious circle. Control of the land—already held by a small minority in most countries of the South—becomes still more concentrated as the large-scale production of export crops gains momentum. Faced with a rising tide of cheap food imports, domestic production stagnates. More and more peasants find themselves unable to make a living and are forced off their land to swell the ranks of the urban poor. The consequent failure to increase food production, combined with swelling demand in the cities, is then taken by governments to justify more imports—and more debt.

Some donors, recognizing the failure of past policies, as evidenced by the continuing crisis in Africa, have recently begun to give more attention to peasant farmers and programmes for local food production. There is a danger, however, that production incentives may benefit middlemen more than the farmers and may also help agribusiness to extend its hold in the small-farm sector, while food price rises are frequently disastrous for low-income city-dwellers. These new aid initiatives therefore need to be carefully monitored to ensure that they work for the benefit of the people as a whole.

In the meantime, much so-called development aid remains inappropriate, inequitable and environmentally damaging. And because of the huge interest charges on outstanding loans, we have now reached to monstrous illogicality of wealth being transferred from the poor to the rich. For the privilege of keeping our morally bankrupt system afloat, the Third World in 1983 had to pay back to the rich countries more than they received in loans and grants combined.

People who receive aid are commonly termed beneficiaries. The system does not admit that many are, in fact, victims of aid. Women are perhaps the most glaring example of this. In many parts of the South, women are the principal food producers—yet the UN World Food Council reports that in the period 1974-82 only one-thousandth part of all UN resources were allocated to programmes for rural women. And as in the case of women, aid programmes have contributed to victimizing indigenous peoples, uprooting them by force from their land and destroying their livelihood and culture in

the name of economic development. Protection of the rights of indigenous groups and other minorities must be given much higher priority by donors in order to counteract this negative effect.

The rural exodus

Pressures resulting from the rapid, unplanned growth of Third World cities—which are expected to swell by an extra 1 000 million people in the next fifteen years—make the food problems of many countries more intractable year by year. And a large proportion of these additional city-dwellers will be refugees from the countryside. In many rural areas, as much as one-third of the population is already landless. Appropriate policies for land redistribution and rural employment could therefore appreciably reduce the rate of urban migration. Some of the measures required are: development of small rural industries providing inputs or processing for the farm sector; a pricing policy and market organization for basic foods; access to credit for peasant producers; the development of appropriate technology; and access to goods and services enabling rural people to improve their living conditions.

At the same time a range of measures is required—varying according to the circumstances in each country—to meet the needs of the urban poor. Among other things, Third World governments must strive to reduce their excessive dependence on food imports for feeding the cities—a dependence which cannot be sustainable. For while the urban infrastructure may offer some protection against mass famine on the scale seen in rural areas, hunger in the cities will become ever more acute if the exodus from the countryside continues unabated.

In Asia and Latin America, the record shows that where farm modernization has advanced furthest, landlessness, rural poverty and hunger have increased hand in hand with spectacular gains in overall agricultural output. Parts of Africa, now in the first throes of the Green Revolution, may be destined to follow suit.

Distortions in the North

In the affluent societies of the Northern hemisphere, meanwhile, hunger and poverty have once again been recognized as a significant problem. Underdevelopment remains endemic in several countries of the European periphery, while in the United States the chairman of a Presidential Task Force acknowledged in 1984 that hunger was ‘a real and significant problem throughout the nation’. Current trends also show that a large proportion of family farmers in the U.S. will be forced out of business within the next decade.

Agricultural and food systems in the North pay scant regard to the nutritional needs of their own people and even less to conservation of the agricultural resource base or the legitimate food interests of people in other countries. The Common Agricultural Policy of the European Community, for example, has resulted in massive overproduction of certain food crops, burdening the world market with surpluses which have severely disrupted the production and trade of Third World countries, and, in some cases, their consumption patterns. The Community's surplus production of sugar alone takes up an area of land equivalent to the whole of Trinidad and Tobago.

Powerful agribusiness lobbies exert heavy pressure on governments to swing farm policies in their favour—and oppose moves to give the public more accurate information on which to base their choice of diet. Together with commercial landowners and large-scale farmers, it is these corporations—controlling a major slice of the world's food trade—that are winning most of the battles. The losers are the small farmers, agricultural labourers and people buying food for their families, who have little choice but to take on trust the highly-processed products they find in the shops.

Northern agriculture is increasingly operated as the centre of a global food system, in some cases to ensure its import requirements but most importantly to permit the disposal of its surpluses as exports (grain, sugar, dairy products). Arriving in the Third World at subsidized prices, or even free in the form of food aid, these surpluses damage the recipient countries' prospects for food self-reliance, increase demand. Moreover, such food exports are not infrequently used as a political or commercial weapon to further the strategic interests of Northern governments.

*Biotechnology:
threat or promise?*

Food systems everywhere are on the verge of being transformed by dramatic advances in the field of biotechnology. Tissue culture and other forms of genetic engineering with plants and animals have already demonstrated their potential for enormous gains in productivity within the next few years.

While reserving judgment on the ethical issues involved, it is clear that the biotech revolution could contribute enormously to the eradication of hunger—but only if it is pursued with the object of meeting human needs and with proper accountability. At present, in the absence of action by governments to enforce any adequate controls, the dangers greatly outweigh the opportunities. Biotechnology will rapidly devalue the role of agriculture in food production and could ultimately make it redundant for many crops. Using bacteria to produce an identical chemical equivalent of

crops such as cacao, sugarcane and tobacco, production could suddenly be switched from plantations in the South to factories in the North. If not regulated, research and development in biotechnology will be dictated mainly by profitability, i.e. the requirements of the best-paying customers. If this is the way it goes, the biotech revolution will successfully enrich a few, and impoverish many.

With few exceptions, hunger today is the consequence of policy choices by those who control resources at the local, national and international levels. And the concentration of power in the hands of small, interconnected elites makes it ever more logical and attractive, as well as easier, to adopt policies which have hunger as an inevitable but politically affordable by-product.

*Putting down the
people—and the
people's response*

Protests by those unable to feed themselves are met, in the North, with handouts and homilies; in the South, as often as not, by violent repression. In the North, demands by citizens' groups for change in the structure of farm and food systems evoke a smile, a nod and maybe an occasional committee to report on food labelling or the cruel practices of intensive husbandry. In the South, those who organize resistance and fight for land reform, political rights and social justice meet with imprisonment, torture, disappearance and death.

But the hungry are no longer remaining passive in the midst of oppression. In many parts of the South people are organizing themselves; they are working together against the repressive forces of landlords, corporations and/or governments, which would condemn them to an endless prospect of poverty.

Faced with institutionalized violence, many oppressed peoples in the South now despair of peaceful solutions to their problems. Within the national security model that prevails in these countries (often sustained and manipulated by the dominant powers of the North), military and police repression has bred a new form of slavery. And if violence from below breaks out anywhere, the entire population is victimized in order to stifle opposition.

The growth of authoritarian and dictatorial regimes in the South, and the economic and military support given to them by governments of the North, must be emphatically denounced. In their struggle for survival, peasants, rural workers and others seeking greater control over their own food resources must choose whatever form of resistance is appropriate to their case. Where popular movements have overthrown repressive regimes, distributed land to the poor and introduced 'food first' policies, in countries

such as Nicaragua, international support is needed to defend these policies against internal or foreign subversion.

At the United Nations, governments talk blandly of the need for ‘political will’ to overcome the scourge of hunger. Few are prepared to take their own medicine. In any case, almost by definition, where hunger exists that will is absent. The appeal to political will is a deception which encourages us to believe that the powers-that-be could wipe hunger off the map if they tried just a bit harder. The truth of the matter is that the powers-that-be, precisely because of their irresistible centralizing force, are themselves a very large part of the problem.

The more that power is amassed in any centre, the more those outside become disempowered and marginalized by it. For this very reason the key centres of the global agri-food system are incapable of responding to the real needs of the majority—indeed the rationale of the system has nothing at all to do with needs. If this dangerous obesity of government and international agencies and agribusiness corporations cannot be cured by decentralization and effective controls, the only hope lies in development of a countervailing social model of collective self-reliance among autonomous communities.

In recent times there has been an upsurge of social creativity among independent peoples’ organisations, especially in the developing countries. It is clear from this that nearly all the components of such an alternative model are already available. One element lacking up to now has been a mechanism to take the process forward and to link these myriad micro-initiatives together into an effective, non-hierarchical network. The World Food Assembly is committed to providing a framework of this kind, within which our actions can be concentrated and directed into building sustainable futures for all.

3. The shape of essential reforms

From the foregoing analysis there emerge a number of clear priorities which would have to be recognized and adopted by the international community as the basis of any serious effort to meet the world’s food needs. A few of the more far-sighted official agencies may endorse them, and that is to be welcomed, but in general these are not the priorities that governments choose to see; hence it is unlikely that they can provide the key to major reforms in the near or middle future. We nevertheless consider it important to address these areas of official policy, partly to encourage those moving in directions compatible with our own, and partly because—whether good or bad—official policies largely determine the context for all other initiatives.

Food policies in the South

Developing country governments need to adopt national policies of food autonomy, in full consultation with peasant associations and other groups representing the urban and rural poor. These policies must provide for a reorientation of farm finance, prices and other incentives to revitalize rural communities and encourage domestic food-crop production. While it is true that the vested interests of many Third World governments may make them deaf to such proposals, some can be expected to respond more positively. In certain cases, disinterested help from international agencies and their Northern partners may have a valuable role. Many countries of the South still desperately need agrarian reforms to achieve a just and more efficient distribution of land and food production assets. More generally, the majority of governments need to reshape their development priorities in order to discriminate positively in favour of the poor.

Food policies in the North

Governments must evolve new agricultural strategies geared to their peoples' real nutritional needs, a healthy rural economy keeping small and family farmers on the land, and sustainable farm practices to protect the environment. This calls for the introduction of appropriate incentives for working farmers; improvement of the quality, variety and genetic diversity of foods produced, rather than simply the quantity; limits on the size of individual landholdings, as part of a more general agrarian reform; regulation of agri-food corporations, which can manipulate market demand without any liability for consequent social costs; better agricultural terms of trade for indigenous Third World producers, where income from export crops is used to benefit the rural population as a whole; credit to help establish alternative farming methods; and the provision of appropriate education and training for those who work the land.

The debt trap

Third World Governments trapped by heavy chains of debt and unable or unwilling to break free must insist upon loan and repayment conditions which protect the basic rights of the poor majority of their people. They should concert their resistance to austerity programmes, such as those imposed by the International Monetary Fund, which blatantly contravene these rights. Northern governments and financial institutions must agree to write off debts which can only realistically be repaid at the expense of human lives.

Development aid

Official development assistance channelled through Third World governments has been shown usually to entrench, rather than redress, the existing disparities of wealth in recipient countries. To overcome this, donor governments and international agencies must seek ways (a) to concentrate their resources as far as possible in those countries showing a real will to

tackle the structural causes of poverty, and (b) to channel a higher proportion of their funds directly to projects or to people's organizations working at first hand with the intended beneficiaries. Local knowledge, traditions and experience—and especially those of rural women—must be fundamental factors in any policies for food and agricultural development. Food aid donors must also give greater attention to new and more effective ways of using food aid funds.

Research and technology

Governments must act to dismantle the near-monopoly of food technologies and research by transnational corporations and some international agencies. Choices in research and technological development are now mostly determined by considerations of short-term profit and/or production, regardless of the fact that many of these interventions actually jeopardize the longer-term food supply. As part of this process, resources and knowledge which should be in the public domain are being privatized, patented and sold for profit. Governments separately and collectively must take decisive action to direct future research towards appropriate and sustainable farming methods.

Transnational agribusiness

To curb the exploitation of Third World resources, markets and people, stringent measures must be introduced to regulate international agri-business, which now wields enormous power through its control of genetic resources, farm inputs, trade in raw materials, food processing and marketing. Without such action, many poorer countries will be forced into selling more of their birthright for a bowl of soup.

* * *

Every one of these actions is vital, if the established international system is to show itself capable of attacking the real roots of hunger. Members of the World Food Assembly intend to exert sustained pressure on these and related matters, to challenge the power structures that stand in the way of change, and to raise public awareness of the issues at stake. For the reasons set out at the beginning of this chapter, however, our first objective will be the development of alternative systems having in common their commitment to autocentric development, sustainable farming methods, human-scale institutions and the people's right to feed themselves.

4. Our programme

We, the participants in the World Food Assembly, commit ourselves to building a strong international coalition of people's movements in order to reinforce our own efforts and to exert pressure for change in world food policies. In particular, we undertake:

in all countries to support peasants and small farmers, women's groups, food industry workers, consumers' associations and other people's groups in their struggle to obtain full participation in all the decisions that affect food policy and their right to food—this being dependent upon their access to land, technology, employment and civil and political liberties;

in the South to work wherever appropriate for the adoption of 'food first' policies, giving precedence to the needs of the poor rather than the large-scale production of crops for export;

in the North to campaign for reform of agricultural and food systems, and development assistance policies, one primary aim being to end the exploitation of Third World people and resources and thus to promote the right of people in the South to feed themselves;

in the North and the South to press for an equitable distribution of land and rural resources, along with other measures to generate investment and employment in the countryside, so that those without land have an alternative to migration to the cities:

internationally to campaign for changes in the policies of development agencies, in order to harmonize their interventions (or minimize their conflict) with grassroots initiatives against hunger and poverty.

With these ends in view, member agencies of the WFA network are already engaged in numerous cooperative projects and campaigns. The following examples illustrate the range of these initiatives, on which the WFA will aim to build. They include: exchange visits between peasants and artisans from different countries of Asia and Africa, permitting an interchange of techniques and know-how among equals and creating new bonds of trust and solidarity; campaigns for food aid reform and 'for people's right to feed themselves', conducted by a consortium of European non-governmental development agencies; programmes in Europe and North America to engage farmers in a continuing dialogue on non-exploitative patterns of agricultural development for themselves, their own communities and their counterparts in the South; new efforts by human rights and development workers to find practical ways of enforcing the universal right to food; action by global networks of concerned citizens' groups demanding regulation of the use and marketing of baby foods, medicines, pesticides and genetic resources; and interventions by development groups in the South to defend peasants' land and legal rights, along with technical and organizational support for small farmers.

A manifold path

The alternative path towards sustainable development which we propose is not a one-track strategy, nor is it an economic or social 'model', implying a fixed framework of behaviour. The alternative path rejoices in human diversity and does not attempt to subsume it in aggregates or averages—the fatal error of so much macro-economic development planning. This path is each person's and each community's course towards a socially just and sustainable future. All share the same vision and purpose, but since each one begins from a different starting-point they must follow, in reality, a thousand different paths.

To give substance to the alternatives which our network stands for, and to strengthen the bonds of solidarity between us, the World Food Assembly has adopted the following proposal for action. As resources permit, these proposals will form the basis of our future work programme.

It is thus resolved:

1. *that* an international food action network be organized to investigate violations of the right to food, to draw such violations to the attention of world opinion and to sue for redress; and that this network should build up an alternative information base, bearing in mind that while the right to food is established in international law it has not been backed by an effective non-governmental platform for information and action;
2. *that* WFA member groups join in a united campaign to expose the gaps between the rhetoric and the reality of 'aid', including food aid, in order to demand greater accountability and to highlight the adverse social effects of much so-called foreign assistance; at the same time, however, to stress the positive efforts and achievements of some agencies, whether independent or at the official level;
3. *that* a specific campaign be mounted worldwide to oppose the austerity programmes imposed on Third World governments by the International Monetary Fund, which inflict added hardship on the poor while leaving military and other non-essential budgets largely intact;
4. *that* the WFA will exert sustained pressure for agrarian and food reforms in the North, which are essential if agriculture in the advanced countries is to respond to the social objectives of sustainability;
5. *that* local and regional levels of information-exchange be established between grassroots organizations (producer and consumer groups,

peasant and indigenous communities, women's groups, etc.) and supporting non-government development agencies; that encouragement also be given to the exchange of practical techniques and food products in the South, both within countries and between neighbouring states, and to the strengthening of relations between grassroots groups of North and South; and furthermore that Northern development groups working in the South should operate wherever possible through local organizations genuinely representative of the people;

6. *that* non-governmental agencies active on food and development questions will actively seek to extend their alliances with environmental, peace and women's groups, and others—including, where appropriate, like-minded governments and international agencies—in order to forge a united front on important issues;
7. *that* an index be compiled of independent organisations North and South active in the food field, to be made available to network members needing information on appropriate partners—a basic tool for developing closer cooperation and trust;
8. *that* the special needs of women and children must be addressed explicitly in any alternative food strategies, in order to enable women to assert their rights and to begin to overcome the appalling scourge of hunger and death among children;
9. *that* an international biotechnology network be established by grassroots workers, non-government groups and like-minded workers in the industry for the purposes of monitoring and information-exchange, in order to break down the information monopoly of corporations in the biotech field through independent research, legislative action and educational campaigns;
10. *that* independent groups engaged in food research use their influence to demand a reorientation of research priorities towards sustainable alternatives and to persuade governments to resist the privatization of the results of publicly-funded research;
11. *that* encouragement be given to food research and development based on (i) dialogue with small-scale producers, (ii) 'environmentfriendly' techniques, and (iii) minimal use of non-local agro-industrial products; and that steps be taken to strengthen documentation centres concerned with alternative food production systems;

12. *that* detailed consideration be given to publishing an annual Alternative World Food Report, evaluating the world food situation and prospects as seen from the perspective of the poor.

This document is adopted as the *World Food Assembly Manifesto* in the name of those attending the Assembly in Rome. We declare our readiness to collaborate with other interested organizations, local, national or international, on the basis of the ideas and proposals for action set out above, and we call upon people's organizations throughout the world to join us in the struggle to shape our future so that all may eat.

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Book Review

An Extraordinary Novel Out Of Africa

By M.M. Mulokozi

Aniceti Kitereza's novel Bwana Myombekere na Bibi Bugonoka, originally written in his mother tongue Kikerebe and depicting pre-colonial life on the beautiful evergreen island of Ukerewe in Tanzania, is the longest Swahili novel ever published. 'It establishes Kitereza as a leading Swahili—nay—African novelist, and the first and the last of his kind. For as there was only one Homer, one Shakespeare, and one Tutuola, there can only be one Kitereza', writes M. M. Mulokozi in this review. Mulokozi is a Ph.D. candidate in literature at the University of Dar es Salaam and has been collecting and researching examples of the epic poetry of the Bahaya people of the Kagera region of Tanzania. He is himself a poet and formerly worked as an editor in the Tanzania Publishing House.

Aniceti Kitereza, *Bwana Myombekere na Bibi Bugonoka na Ntulanalwo na Bulihwali*, Tanzania Publishing House, Dar es Salaam.

When Mzee Aniceti Kitereza died on 20 April 1981, at the age of 85, few people in Tanzania, and fewer still outside Tanzania, had ever heard of him. The local mass media did not even mention the incident. He had lived, and died, an ordinary man. On the surface, his life had been no different from that of hundreds of other German educated contemporaries: he had been a teacher, catechist, petty trader, building clerk, cooperative officer and, finally, in his old age, peasant.

Yet this apparent 'ordinariness' was deceptive. The practical, matter-of-fact worker was also a passionate thinker, educator, philosopher and scholar. He was a walking encyclopedia of the ways and customs of the Bakerebe, and, above all, a lively, unique, confident, and highly talented novelist.

Aniceti Kitereza was born in 1896 in Usukuma, where his father, Bwana Malindima, a Kerebe prince, was then in exile. Upon the death of his father in 1901, Kitereza and his mother returned to Ukerewe. For some years Kitereza lived in the palace of his uncle, who was the Omukama (king) of Ukerewe. In 1905 he joined the mission school at Kagunguli, Ukerewe. Upon graduation in 1909, he was sent to Bukoba for further training in languages and theology. He graduated in 1919 and became a teacher and catechist at Kagunguli.



Mzee Kitereza and his wife

After the First World War the Germans were thrown out of the then Tanganyika. Kitereza, who was already fluent in German, began to teach himself, using a dictionary, the language of the new masters: English. Dissatisfied with the meagre wages offered by the mission, he resigned and became an assistant to a Greek businessman until 1939, when he left the job because of the war.

He again worked for the mission, largely as the translator of religious material, until 1955, when he relinquished his job to become one of the leaders of the powerful Victoria Federation of Cooperative Unions. In 1956, however, rheumatism forced him to retire to his village. In the early seventies, during the villagization drive, he moved to Kagunguli Ujamaa village, where he lived with his wife, Anna Katura.

When Anna, whom he had married in 1919, died on 7 February 1980, it was clear that her husband would not outlive her for long. An infirm rheumatic, Kitereza had become too dependent on his wife to survive without her. The couple had had four children, but they had all died. This was a serious blow to Kitereza, and its impact is discernible in his writings.

In a way, Kitereza, like his hero, Myombekere, considered himself a failure

for not being able to leave behind any offspring to carry on his name and his deeds. As he once remarked to the present writer: ‘Among us, the Bakerebe, the childless man is a very poor person indeed; only sorrow and disgrace is his eternal lot’.

Kitereza probably hardly realized what an inestimable offspring he has bequeathed mankind in the form of his 618-page, two-volume novel, *Bwana Myombekere na Bibi Bugonoka na Ntulanalwo na Bulihwali*.

First written in his mother tongue, Kikerebe, and completed in February 1945, this novel suffered, for 30 years, the fate of many similar ‘vernacular’ writings. No publisher could be found anywhere for it. For who, indeed, was interested in investing money in a novel, however great, which was written in a language with a limited number of speakers and still fewer readers.

All the ‘local’ publishers turned it down. Undaunted, Kitereza had the manuscript typed, and gave a copy to a Canadian friend, Dr. Simard, who promised to find a publisher for it overseas. He never did, and never returned the typescript to Kitereza, for he died in Canada a few years later.

There the matter rested until 1968, when some publishers advised him, through Professor Gerald Hartwig, to have the manuscript translated into Kiswahili to improve his chances of getting published. At once Kitereza set to work: and within a year 874 pages, beautifully written in German longhand, in lively and unique Kiswahili, were ready for the press. But still no publisher was forthcoming.

Kitereza entrusted the handwritten copy of the translation to Professor Hartwig, who promised to find a publisher. It was from him, through the Ford Foundation and Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., that the late John Alien got a photocopy of the work, which he forwarded to the General Manager of Tanzania Publishing House (TPH), Walter Bgoya, in 1975. This is how this publisher came into possession of this valuable work*.

* An English translation of a shortened version was also made by Alien with a view to stimulating interest in the original Kikerebe and Kiswahili texts. The Tanzania Publishing House has not, however, considered it possible to publish an English translation since it has proved very difficult to do justice to the book in English; in the opinion of the publisher, the English language fails to capture the cultural and literary significance of what is in itself a pioneering work which does not fit into any of the categories of European literary forms.

At once, TPH set to work to have the novel published. Agreement was reached with the author, and some money advanced to him, for he was completely penniless. Editing the bulky manuscript proved an herculean task, and the author had to be constantly consulted in order to clarify certain points. Finally, the work was done and the typescript went to press.

This is the brief background history of this novel and its author. Clearly, the prospects for a Third World author are extremely grim. Kitereza's 'adventures with a pen' are worthy of a full length novel in their own right, as is his lifelong quest for livelihood, recognition and, of course, offspring. Throughout his many years, Kitereza has had more than his rightful share of life's tragedies. In many ways, the tragic streak of his life is paralleled, in the lives of his major characters, Bwana Myombekere and his wife, Bibi Bugonoka. They, like Kitereza, are obsessed by a desire for offspring. It is true that they do have two children. But the first child is prematurely stillborn, and the second child, also born prematurely, lives for only one day. Thereafter, Bugonoka has no more pregnancies, and as a result becomes increasingly despised and alienated by her husband's relatives. Only Myombekere loves and tolerates her, all the while striving to find a cure for her 'barrenness'.

Matters reach a head when Bugonoka's parents, Namwero and his wife, Nkwanzi, hearing of their daughter's maltreatment, decide to take her back, leaving Myombekere without a wife. Thus to the shame of barrenness is added that of bachelorhood and the accompanying loneliness and distress. Myombekere has to decide whether to marry another woman or to bring back Bugonoka. His half-hearted attempts to woo another woman prove futile. He ends up prostrate before his father-in-law, begging for forgiveness and the return of his wife.

Thus begins the story of the adventures of this unhappy Kerebe family who is supposed to have lived sometime in the seventeenth or eighteenth century. It revolves around the twin poles of production and reproduction, creation and procreation. Through production, within the framework of his clan, his village, his kingdom, and the accompanying traditions, beliefs, customs and taboos, Kerebe man produces wealth in order to build his *eka* (or *kaya* or household) and hence realize his humanity and his manhood. This he can achieve by interacting and cooperating with his fellow humans, obeying the common law, and not daring to go beyond the limits sanctioned by society in whatever he does.

Society in turn protects and helps him to realize his possibilities; to build his

eka. Man is not only a social animal, he is *the* working animal; he is not so much the *homo sapiens* as the *homo faber*.

Yet work, labour, is only one leg of the *myombekere* (the hows, means and conditions of building and consolidating the *eka*). In order for the household to stand on its two feet, production ought to be accompanied by reproduction. For man is both the agency and the purpose of the *myombekere*. Man builds for man, the older generation builds for the younger generation, and the old ones wither away so that the young ones may flower. By their death, they achieve immortality—through the lives of their offspring for generations to come. Hence Myombekere's kinsmen tell him:

Weve ni ndugu yetu, sasa unakubali kweli kukaa na mke wako huyu akiwa mgumba hivi, uzuri wako huu wote uishie chini! Hivi wewe unadhani kufufuka kwa watu hapa duniani ni nini? Si kuzaa na kuacha mbegu yako ikiwa hai ndiyo maendeleo ya ukoo wetu?

The purpose of labour is to build the *eka*, the purpose of marriage is to consolidate that *eka* by supplying it with offspring who will both protect and perpetuate the *eka* and, through the *eka*, the clan and, ultimately, the species. Hence the need for interaction and exchange, both human and material, between different *eka*, different clans.

And this is where the central problem of this story lies, for Myombekere and Bugonoka fail to have children. Without children, what basis is there for him and Bugonoka to remain united in marriage? Can love alone sustain marriage in a society where offspring come before everything else, where barrenness is a social stigma? More seriously, can Myombekere and Bugonoka build their *eka* without offspring? How, and what for? Can life have any meaning without children?

A modern reader, living in a highly competitive urbanized society, schooled in the best *umati* traditions, may see these issues differently. Indeed, he might consider barrenness a non-tragedy, if not a blessing in disguise. But not so in the Kerebe peasant society in this novel, for whom abundance of manpower is the precondition for material abundance, security of life and, indeed, survival itself. Hence Myombekere must get back his wife, and what is more, get her to conceive and bear living children.

Detailed descriptions of his endeavours to this end take up the best part of Volume I. They include successive trips to his in-laws to retrieve his wife,

his efforts to get the fine (which includes six pots of banana beer) to pay for her return, and his perennial search for a *muganga* who can cure his and his wife's 'barrenness'! Finally, the treatment itself is described and how his struggles are eventually crowned with some success.

Volume II begins with the birth of Myombekere's son, Ntulanalwo. He survives, but at great cost to his parents, for he is constantly in need of medicaments and protective charms, as well as close care and attention. As one misfortune after another assails him, we are reminded that (*Obunaku bugonoka*—misfortune—comes all of a sudden, without warning. It has befallen the family through Bugonoka's failure to have children. Now, misfortune's twin brother, death, seems to be bent on wiping out the family. The reader cannot but feel, like Myombekere, that (*Olufu ntulanalwo* (I always live with death)). It is only after he is transferred to his maternal grandfather's home that Ntulanalwo begins to enjoy some health.

While wondering whether their sorrow and suffering will ever come to an end, Myombekere and Bugonoka are blessed with another child, this time a daughter. In sceptical optimism, they name her *Bulihwali* (when will sorrow end in this world?) hoping that their sorrow would now cease. Life for them now begins to have some meaning.

The rest of Volume II is, really, the story of Ntulanalwo and Bulihwali: how they grew up, married, had numerous children and, after the death of their parents, became quite prosperous. The story ends with their death.

The story is, of course, much richer than the above skeleton may lead one to believe. It is not confined to the lives of Myombekere and Bugonoka and their children, but deals rather with the life of the Kerebe society of the time, seen through the life, actions, problems and aspirations of this family. Myombekere represents Kerebe manhood just as Bugonoka represents Kerebe womanhood. Their quest is the perennial quest of their society, for they are expressing and enacting the dominant value of that society. As their lives unfold before us, we are gradually introduced to the whole tapestry of the Kerebe world: the culture, customs, beliefs, practices, human relations and productive activities; the geographical environment, flora and fauna, months and seasons; and the sciences, oral literature, arts and crafts.

The story takes place against a background of the rich flora and fauna that is the feature of the island of Ukerewe. Ukerewe, situated in Lake Victoria, some few miles from Mwanza, is a beautiful evergreen island, very fertile,

heavily populated and potentially very wealthy. Its forests and grasslands had, until early this century, plenty of useful trees and wild animals, which were hunted for their meat and fur. The trees were felled for house building and boat construction (Ntulanalwo is, in fact, a great hunter and a carver of canoes).

Along the extensive coastline fishing is a regular preoccupation of some men, as is the hunting of hippopotami. Indeed the life and culture of the Bakerebe, as depicted in this book, is to a large extent based on fishing and agriculture. The lake is the second *shamba* to the Bakerebe; its products supplement their agricultural diet. Its water forms a natural highway, in addition to serving most domestic needs. No wonder the lake looms large in this novel, and numerous types of fish are mentioned and their properties minutely described.

Beyond the coastline, agriculture is predominant. All typical tropical crops—cassava, millet, bananas, beans, sweet potatoes, etc.—grow effortlessly. The wealthier families have, in addition, some cattle from which they get milk, meat and manure. Cultivation is sometimes done individually and sometimes collectively (*obuyobe*). There is enough land for everybody, and apparently everybody except the *Omukama* (king) and the aristocrats, works or is expected to work.

This is pre-colonial Kerebe land and society as it was and as it is depicted in *Bwana Myombekere na Bibi Bugonoka*. It is an apparently healthy, peaceful, hardworking society. True, it is superstitious and technologically not very developed. It is, nevertheless, far from being ‘savage’ or ‘primitive’—as many anthropological works on pre-colonial Africa have led us to believe. While not defending its shortcomings, Kitereza, like Achebe (in *Things Fall Apart*), re-asserts the values and achievements of his people.

This novel is, in short, a mine of ethnographical, historical and scientific information about pre-colonial Bakerebe and its people. Yet it is not history, nor is it, strictly speaking, a historical novel. All the characters are imaginary, all the incidents fictitious. There is no mention of the reigning kings nor any appraisal of their historically known actions. There is very little about the political feuds and upheavals that characterized the Kerebe Kingdom in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. All this is beyond Kitereza’s intentions. His primary objective is to preserve the language, customs, practices and cultural traditions of the Bakerebe, seen from the point of view of the ordinary nineteenth-century Kerebe, for the benefit of

future generations. *Bwana Myombekere na Bibi Bugonoka na Ntulanalwo na Bulihwali* is primarily and deliberately a cultural novel.

It is not autobiographical, although anyone familiar with Kitereza's own life cannot fail to see parallels between his personal problems and those of his protagonist, Myombekere. Like Myombekere, he lost all his children in childhood, yet, unlike Myombekere, he never tried to look for another wife and, apparently, never went to consult the traditional *Waganga*. Kitereza, born at the crossroads between the past era and the present (colonial) era, is satisfied with merely serving as a bridge between the two, revealing the past to the youth of today, without much praise or censure, while personally remaining staunchly modern and progressive in outlook and in practice.

This novel is a great work indeed, not only because of its wealth of cultural information, but because Kitereza has put his whole personality, linguistic and artistic talent, knowledge, experience and meticulous care, into its execution. This is much more obvious in the original unpublished Kerebe version. In the present Swahili translation something of the original is inevitably lost. One hopes that the Kerebe original will also one day find a publisher.

In the meantime, this work remains a classic of Swahili literature. It is the longest Swahili novel ever published, the most racy, and the richest culturally. Without question, it establishes Kitereza as a leading Swahili—nay—African novelist, and the first and last of his kind. For as there was only one Homer, one Shakespeare, and one Tutuola, there can only be one Kitereza. Kitereza represents his age and his generation, and these two can never be seen again.

Bwana Myombekere na Bibi Bugonoka is not only Kitereza's masterpiece, it is his *eka*. For without offspring he has, in the Kerebe view, no *eka*. His *eka* is this book, in which he placed all his talent and aspirations. It is his only child, and his only wealth (at the time of his death he was a very poor man living in a one room hut built for him by the Kagunguli Ujamaa villagers). His greatest desire, as he admitted to the present author, was to see his book in print before his death.

How tragic that even this small wish was never granted. The day he died, the publisher, unaware of his death, went to the Post Office twice, hoping that the notice he had received of a parcel awaiting collection would be the advance copies of Kitereza's book. The book arrived two weeks later.

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Manfred Max-Neef is a Chilean economist, founder and Managing Director of the Centre for Study and Promotion of the Urban, Rural and Development Alternatives—CEPAUR.

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