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HUMAN RIGHTS

Back to the Future



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Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

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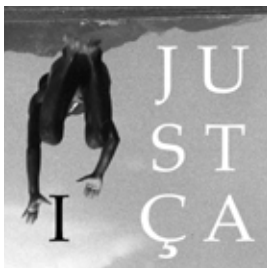
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“The days of closed systems of divergent civilizations and, therefore, of divergent conceptions of human rights are gone for good”

Humayun Kabir (1906-1969)
Indian poet and politician
UNESCO survey, 1947-48



© Françoise Schein (www.francoiseschein.com)

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is undoubtedly one of the greatest documents in history. The first international treaty of ethical values to be adopted by humanity as a whole, it has served for seventy years “as a common standard of achievement for all peoples of all nations,” to quote from the speech of Eleanor Roosevelt – Chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights and of the UDHR Drafting Committee – delivered at the United Nations General Assembly on 9 December 1948, the day before the Declaration was adopted.

Hailed as a unique charter of humanity and accepted as a key reference in today’s world when it comes to upholding the human dignity of people everywhere, the Declaration has not been immune to criticism, notably invoking the argument for cultural diversity.

While it is true that in its form, the UDHR is largely inspired by the Western tradition, it is equally true that, in substance, its principles are universal. “Tolerance and respect for individual dignity are foreign to no people and native to all nations,” stated Kofi Annan, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations (1997-2006), at the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Declaration at UNESCO in 1998. We pay tribute to the Ghanaian diplomat, who passed away on 18 August 2018.

For his part, Federico Mayor, Director-General of UNESCO at the time, declared that “In ‘commemoration’, there is ‘memory’. We cannot act without memory. But what we must remember in order for our actions to be worthy of our fathers is not so much the date, the place or the letter, but more the sounds, the colours, the feeling or the spirit of the moment.”

This is precisely the goal of this issue of the *Courier*: to rediscover the spirit of the time, so that we may better inform our reflections on human rights today. The Wide Angle section presents a selection of texts sent in response to a major survey on the philosophical foundations of human rights, launched in 1947 by Julian Huxley, the first Director-General of UNESCO.

Citizenship, Solidarity, Justice, Dignity, Liberty
– digital photomontages by Belgian artist
Françoise Schein, who defines herself as an
“Artist of the Human Rights”.

More than sixty prominent thinkers responded to the call of the young Organization. Mahatma Gandhi was one of them, as were Benedetto Croce, Aldous Huxley, Humayun Kabir, Lo Chung-Shu and Arnold Schoenberg.

“Such a project was particularly timely, for a world consciousness had developed towards this question. Our whole social structure had been shaken by the repercussions of total war. People everywhere sought a common denominator to the problem of fundamental Human Rights,” wrote Jacques Havel – who coordinated the project – in the August 1948 *Courier*. The answers – some very brief letters, others long studies of the question – reflected, according to the young French philosopher, “nearly all the world’s national groups and nearly all ideological approaches”.

Certainly, the world has changed a lot in the last seventy years. Many nations have cast off the colonial yoke, and many cultural traditions have resurfaced since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December 1948. Yet this effort by UNESCO – to develop a global philosophy based on a broad knowledge of the world’s cultures – has lost none of its relevance or validity.

In 1949, UNESCO compiled many of the responses to the survey under the title *Human rights: comments and interpretations*, to “help the creation of a better understanding between men of different cultures”, as Havel put it.

Today, the *UNESCO Courier* subscribes to the same logic. Because of limited space, we can only reprint a few of the hundreds of pages received by UNESCO in 1947. More texts are available in the *Courier* online. We are aware our selection cannot do justice to the full scope of the project, but we hope it will provide some food for thought.

This issue is accompanied by a supplement containing about fifty drawings by Fernando Bryce; we also publish an interview with him (p. 54). The Peruvian artist was inspired by the pages of the *Courier* (from 1948 to 1954) for his series of drawings titled *The Book of Needs*. The title is taken from a book published by UNESCO in 1947, which assessed the losses and the global needs in education, science and culture at the end of the Second World War.

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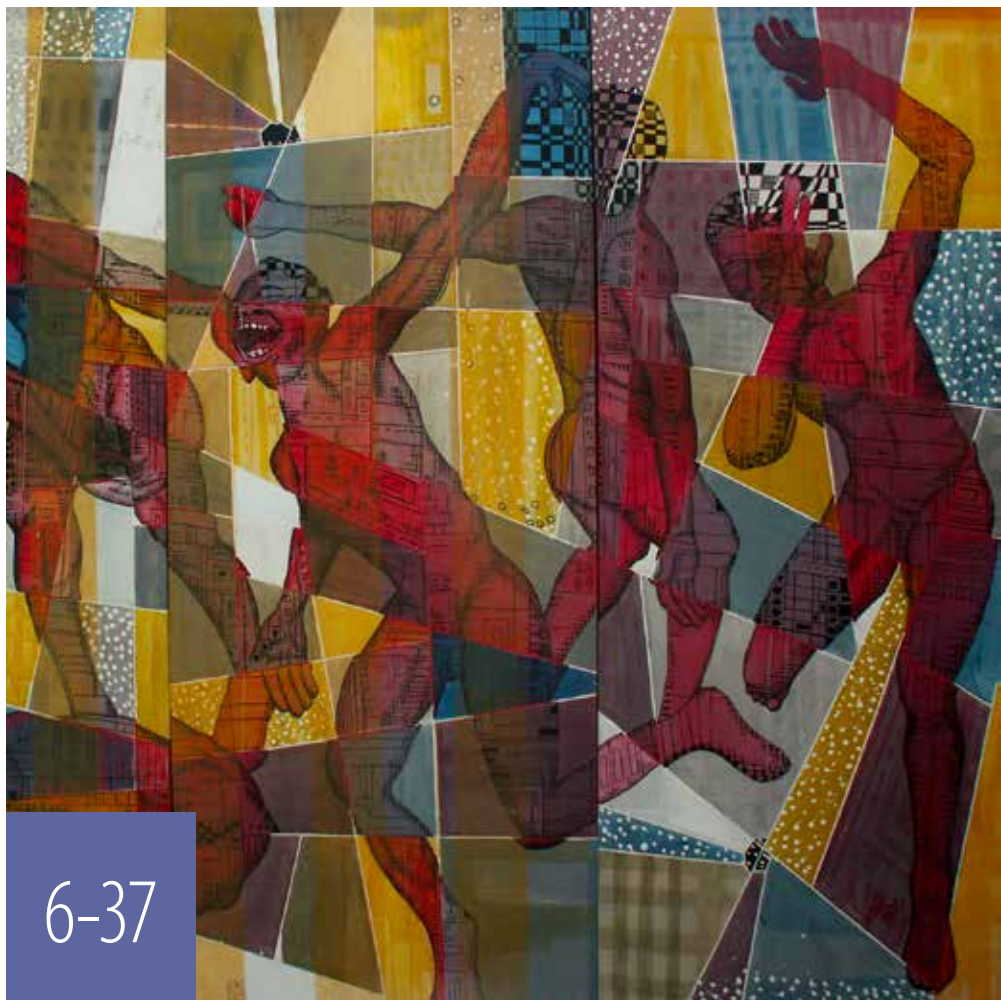
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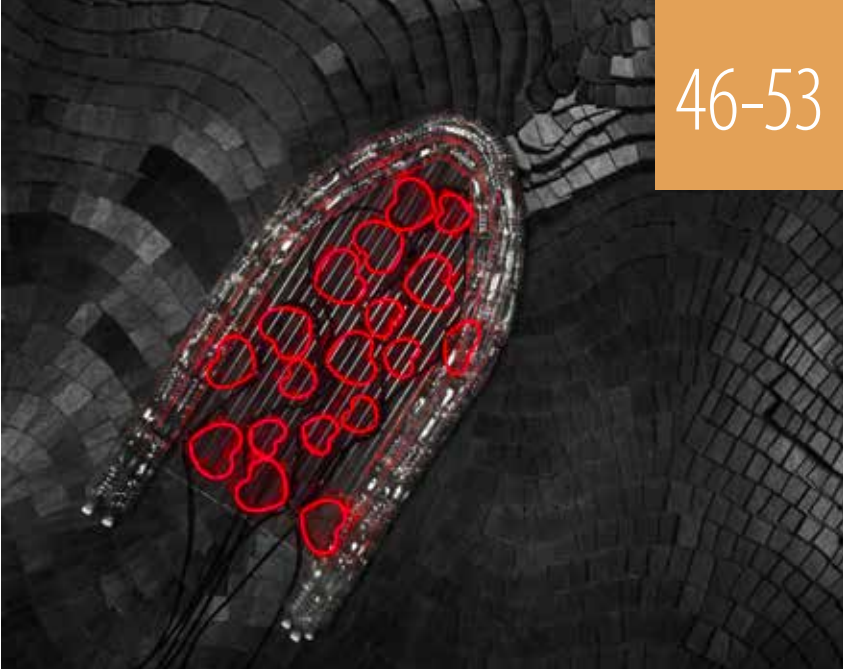
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HUMAN RIGHTS: Back to the Future

Wide angle



Poster by Brazilian designer
Eduardo Soares Gomes, exhibited
at the Culture Counts competition,
organized by UNESCO to mark
the International Year for the
Rapprochement of Cultures, 2010.

© Eduardo Soares Gomes



Seventy-year-old views that remain contemporary

Mark Goodale

In 1947 and 1948, UNESCO conducted a worldwide survey of a diverse group of intellectuals, political leaders, theologians, social activists and other personalities to gather their opinions on the philosophical foundations of human rights. A survey that was not widely publicized at the time, but one that is surprisingly relevant today.

The international system that was created in the aftermath of the Second World War took time to emerge. This is, of course, true institutionally – agencies had to be created, headquarters had to be built, staff and leadership positions had to be filled. The difficulties with this “practical” aspect of the new post-war order should not be underestimated. For example, during its first twelve years, the headquarters of UNESCO were located in the Hotel Majestic in Paris’s 16th arrondissement, where bedrooms and bathrooms were used for offices and closets and bath-tubs were used to store files.

But the complications were even greater at the political level. Although the general outlines of the relationships between the various international agencies were spelled out in charters and constitutions, the actual interactions between these organizations were ambiguous, to say the least, in those early years.



Children of United Nations staff members in New York take a close look at the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, two years after it was adopted on 10 December 1948.

To understand the background of the international system during this period, it is important not to read the history of these early years through the lens of much later developments. Re-reading those formative years with what I have called a “period eye” allows us to appreciate the extent to which the international system – including UNESCO – existed on a shifting landscape, an unsettled firmament that would continue to be in motion to a greater or lesser degree over the succeeding decades.

Such a perspective is particularly pertinent in the area of human rights. The embryonic international community faced two main problems in 1945. The first was how to organize itself in a world devastated by global war and shaped by the contours of colonialism. Would Realpolitik continue to prevail – in a world in which national sovereignty and interests were paramount – or would a new, egalitarian model be created, one that would redistribute power along new political and geographic lines?



“Rights and freedoms don’t seem to me to exist on the universal scale (...). The very words cannot be interchanged internationally without ambiguity and misunderstanding (...). I am inclined to think that there is only one problem which is fundamental – the cause and cure of sadism and aggressiveness – and that until we have done something about this problem, it is merely futile to discuss human rights. At present we are, in a collective sense, savages, and not entitled to any human rights. . . ”

Herbert Read (1893-1968)
British art historian, philosopher and poet
UNESCO survey, 1947-48

The creation of the United Nations Security Council was the answer to the first question. Not only would the UN system be one in which the nation-state would continue to play a foundational role; it would be a system that both reflected and legitimated the fact that *certain* countries were more powerful than others.

The second question was related to the first, but was even more complicated. Given the horrors that had been unleashed during the recent global conflict – horrors that followed only two decades after the unprecedented carnage and destruction of the First World War – what kind of moral statement could the international community make that would adequately express its collective outrage and hope, however utopian, for a better future?

The answer, or the beginning of the answer to the second question, was to be found in the 1945 UN Charter, which examined the ravages of genocide and imperial militarism and nevertheless “reaffirm[ed] faith in fundamental human rights [and] in the dignity and worth of the human person.”

It was not entirely clear what would be needed for this “faith in fundamental human rights” to take more concrete forms. As the answer to the first question suggests, the powerful members at the core of the new UN system were reluctant to create any structure that could pose a threat – however abstract – to their political and legal prerogatives. Nevertheless, there was sufficient support for what United States president, Harry Truman, described as an “international bill of rights” that the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) created an international Commission on Human Rights (CHR) in 1946, with eighteen members and with Eleanor Roosevelt as its chair.

Even so, the actual procedure through which the CHR was supposed to produce a bill of human rights was left open. More specifically, it was not at all clear in 1946 how the CHR would establish the moral, religious and philosophical principles on which such a bill of human rights should be based. It was clear that they should be universal and not privilege any one national, regional, or cultural tradition. But where were such principles to be found?



An unprecedented approach

It was at this moment that UNESCO boldly entered the picture. It should be remembered that Julian Huxley, the controversial and charismatic first Director-General of UNESCO, had written a sixty-page blueprint for the new Organization, titled *UNESCO: Its Purpose and its Philosophy* (1946). In it, Huxley makes the argument that a special international agency was needed in order to help the world overcome its many divisions.

Huxley believed that this only would take place if what he called a “world philosophy” could be developed through cultural understanding, education, and scientific collaboration. For Huxley, UNESCO was to be this unique international agency, charged with overseeing the emergence of what he described as a “single world culture, with its own philosophy and background of ideas.”

It was not surprising, therefore, that the proceedings of the first UNESCO General Conference in Paris took place in this spirit of visionary activism for the new Organization.



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Apart from electing Huxley as its first head, UNESCO also established a number of major priorities for the coming year. One of these instructed the Secretariat to “clarify the principles on which might be founded a modern declaration of the Rights of Man” [Records of the General Conference, first session, 1946, p.236].

This was precisely the mandate that Huxley needed. In his view, a decisive intervention in the field of human rights would quickly establish UNESCO as the leading UN agency, the fulcrum of the post-war international system, with a unique role as the guardian of what he called a “unifying and unified” global culture.

The unit within UNESCO that was responsible for carrying out this mandate was the philosophy subsection of what was in the beginning the Subcommission on Philosophy and Humanistic Studies. It was headed by a young French philosopher, Jacques Havet, who had recently published a well-received book on Kant (*Kant et le problème du temps*, 1947). Havet would go on to play a key role in UNESCO’s first human rights project, although the extent of his influence was not known until recently.

Working with a sense of urgency – since they worried that UNESCO’s human rights activities would be overshadowed by the much more high-profile labours of the CHR under Roosevelt – Huxley and Havet got right to work to design a procedure. After several false starts, they decided to do something unprecedented – to conduct a global survey among a diverse group of intellectuals, political leaders, theologians, social activists and others, in order to establish the philosophical principles of human rights.

To do this, they prepared two documents – the first, an aide-mémoire, which provided a short history of national human rights declarations and outlined the important stakes involved in drafting an international declaration; and second, a list of specific human rights and freedoms that respondents were asked to consider in their replies.

In March and April 1947, between 150 to 170 of these surveys were dispatched to an impressive list of social institutions, state organizations, and individuals.

Detail from the Camouflage installation on the windows of an abandoned electricity power plant in Rijeka, Croatia, 2016, by the Spanish artist, Pejac. It is a tribute to Belgian artist René Magritte.

Around sixty responses were eventually received by UNESCO – they were not nearly as comprehensive as accounts of the process described, either at the time, or decades later. Nevertheless, the UNESCO human rights survey managed to capture a spectrum of viewpoints on the question of human rights that was arguably wider and more diverse than that produced by the CHR.

The verdict

Under Havet’s supervision, UNESCO convened an experts committee in Paris in late June 1947 to evaluate the responses and produce a report to be sent to the CHR, so that it could use UNESCO’s findings as the basis for the eventual human rights declaration.



The experts committee – E. H. Carr (chair), Richard McKeon (rapporteur), Pierre Auger, Georges Friedmann, Étienne Gilson, Harold Laski (see p.13), Luc Somerhausen, and Lo Chung-Shu (see p. 30) – debated the survey results and sent its conclusions to the CHR in August 1947. At the same time, they discussed the possibility of publishing some of the survey’s responses, which became the basis for the UNESCO volume, *Human Rights: Comments and Interpretations* (1949).

Meanwhile, throughout most of 1947, there was much confusion among the different UN states about just which agency was responsible for drafting the human rights declaration. Both Huxley and Havet had suggested that UNESCO was undertaking the survey as either the leading institution, or, at the least, in close collaboration with the CHR. Yet, when UNESCO’s report was finally considered by the CHR, in a closed session in Geneva in December 1947, it was met with confusion, and even anger.

Apparently the majority of the CHR members had no idea that UNESCO was undertaking such a survey. In the end, by a vote of 8 to 4 (with one abstention), the CHR decided not to distribute UNESCO’s report to its member states or include it as part of the drafting process that would eventually lead to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

Lessons for the future

Yet, in spite of the fact that the UNESCO human rights survey of 1947-1948 did not serve its original purposes, it remains strikingly relevant today. The responses offer a unique window into the diversity of thinking about basic issues of human dignity, society, and rights and duties, among many others, in the period *before* the UDHR codified a much more limited understanding of the Rights of Man.

As recent research on the survey demonstrates, the ability to rewind the history of human rights back to this transitional post-war era has given us an unexpected treasure-trove of ideas at a moment in time in which the status of human rights is as threatened as ever.

As scholars, international officials, and activists struggle to reassert the legitimacy of human rights in the face of contemporary challenges such as resurgent nationalism, the weakening of the European Union, and especially global inequality, the UNESCO human rights survey is proving to be an extraordinary, if unexpected, resource for new perspectives as well as, at least potentially, new solutions.

Professor of Cultural and Social Anthropology and Director of the Laboratory of Cultural and Social Anthropology (LACS) at the University of Lausanne, Switzerland, **Mark Goodale** (United States) is the editor of the Stanford Studies in Human Rights series and the author or editor of thirteen volumes, including *Letters to the Contrary: A Curated History of the UNESCO Human Rights Survey* (Stanford, 2018). This book analyses dozens of recently discovered documents about UNESCO’s activities in the field of human rights during the first two years of the Organization’s existence, thus expanding and revising the general history of human rights.

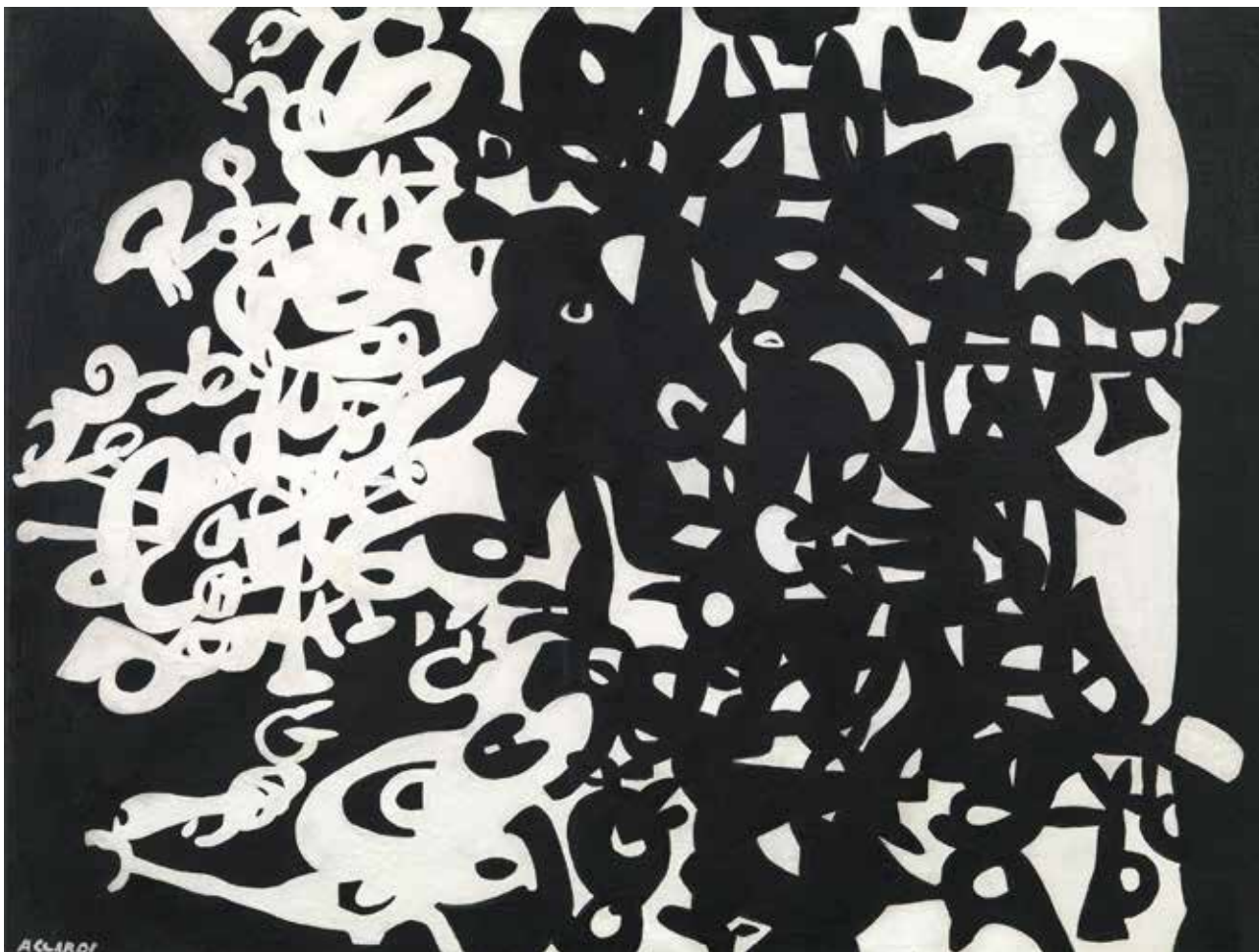
Fragile, a poster by Greek designer Dimitris Arvanitis, one of the participants in the One for all, all for one! competition organized in 2018 by 4tomorrow, to celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



© posterfortomorrow 2018 - Dimitris Arvanitis



A debate on the principles of human dignity



© Carla Accardi / Antonella Sanfilippo

Negative and Positive, 1956, by Italian artist Carla Accardi (1924-2014), who co-founded the artist movement, *Forma Uno*, in 1947.

Benedetto Croce

For UNESCO to conduct “a formal, public and international debate on the necessary principles underlying human dignity and civilization” so that “the force of logic, culture, doctrine and the possibility of fundamental agreement would secure the triumph of free minds over the adherents of autocracy and totalitarianism” was the best way forward, advocated Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce (1866-1952) in his text, sent to UNESCO from Naples on 15 April 1947, with the title “The Rights of Man and the Present Historical Situation”.

Declarations of Rights (of the *natural and inalienable* rights of man, to quote the French Declaration of 1789) are all based upon a theory which criticism on many sides has succeeded in destroying: namely, the theory of natural rights, which had its own particular grounds during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but which has become philosophically and historically quite untenable. Nor can we argue from the moral character of such rights, for morality recognizes no rights which are not, at the same time, duties, and no authority but itself – this is not a natural fact but the first spiritual principle.



This, moreover, is already implied in the report you have sent me [Memorandum on Human Rights, 27 March 1947], when it says that these rights vary *historically*; thereby abandoning the logical basis of those rights regarded as universal rights of man, and reducing them to, at most, the rights of *man in history*. That is to say, rights accepted as such for men of a particular time. Thus, they are not eternal claims but simply historical facts, manifestations of the needs of such and such an age and an attempt to satisfy those needs. As a historical fact, the Declaration of 1789 had its importance, since it expresses a general agreement which had developed under European culture and civilization of the eighteenth century (the Age of Reason, of Enlightenment, etc.) concerning the certain urgent need of a political reform of European society (including European society in America).

Today, however, it is no longer possible to realize the purpose of the Declaration, whether of rights or of historical needs, for it is precisely that agreement on the subject which is lacking and which UNESCO desires to promote. Agreement, it is obvious, is lacking in the two most important currents of world opinion: the liberal current and the authoritarian-totalitarian current. And indeed that disagreement, though moderated in its expression, may be discerned in the report I have before me.

Will this agreement be obtained? And by what means? By the reinvigoration of the current of liberalism, whose moral superiority, power of thought and persuasion and whose political wisdom and prudence will prevail over the other current? Or will it be through a new world war which will bring victory to one or the other side, according to the fortunes of war, the course of events or Divine Providence? And would the immortal current of liberalism emerge from its opposite, should the latter be temporarily victorious?

Is compromise possible?

I assume that UNESCO reckons with the first alternative or hypothesis and I need not tell you that, for my part, I am heart and soul in favour of this endeavour for which each of us is bound to work with all his energies and for which I myself have been working for nearly twenty-five years in Italy and also further afield.

“ We must not imagine that all nations have now reached the same degree of perfection in the recognition and guarantee of the rights of man. But the joint declaration will serve as a guide to the legislators of the different countries; it will encourage the expansion and improvement, along the same lines, of national declarations, which are still incomplete or inadequate, raising them to the level which all should attain ”

Levi Carneiro (1882-1971)
Brazilian jurist and essayist
UNESCO survey, 1947-48

If that is so, however, a working organization such as that you invite me to, and in which representatives of all currents, especially the two most directly opposed, will participate with the same rights, cannot possibly proclaim in the form of a declaration of rights, a declaration of common political action, an agreement which has no existence, but which must, on the contrary, be the ultimate outcome of opposed and convergent efforts. That is the point to be carefully considered, for it is the *weak point*.

Nor do I even see how it would be possible to formulate any half-way or compromise declaration, which would not prove either empty or arbitrary. It may be that you and your colleagues, when you get to work, will discover the futility and the impossibility of it, and even, if you will allow me to say so, the danger of causing readers to smile at the ingenuousness of men who have conceived and formulated such a declaration.

In my opinion, there is only one useful form of practical work for UNESCO to do: namely, a formal, public and international debate on the necessary principles underlying human dignity and civilization. In such a debate I do not doubt that the force of logic, culture, doctrine and the possibility of fundamental agreement would secure the triumph of free minds over the adherents of autocracy and totalitarianism, who are still reduced to reiterating the same slogans and the same sophistries to catch the public ear.

Once that debate was held, it would no doubt be possible to formulate the declaration of certain historical and contemporary rights and needs in some such short form as the Ten Commandments or, if it were to include details, at somewhat greater length.

An Italian philosopher, essayist and historian, **Benedetto Croce** (1866-1952) was a member of the Prussian Academy, of the British Academy, and of the American Academy of Letters. Noted for his literary criticism, he founded *La Critica*, a journal of cultural criticism in 1903, and was the author of almost seventy books.



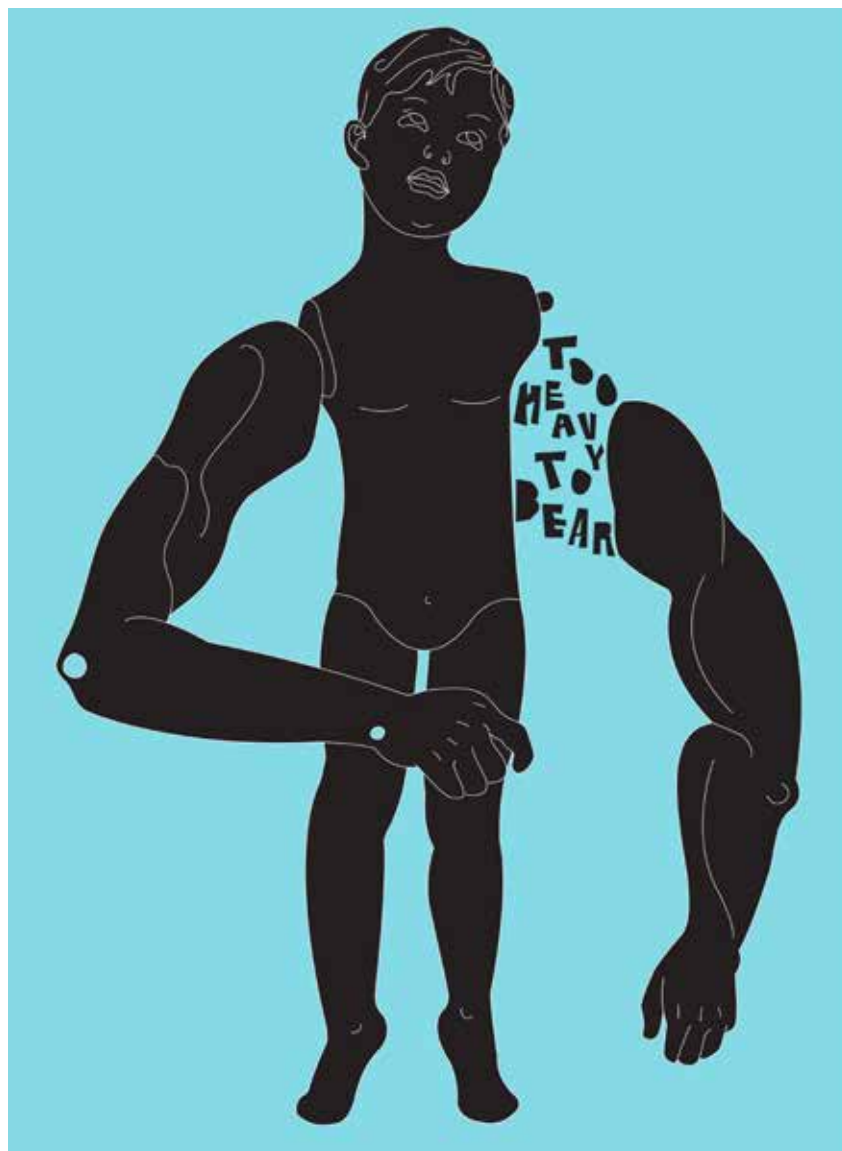
Against an individualistic impasse

Harold Joseph Laski

“Any attempt by the United Nations to formulate a Declaration of Human Rights in individualist terms would quite inevitably fail,” wrote the British academic and politician, Harold J. Laski (1893-1950). According to him, to go beyond these individualistic terms, the state must intervene to ensure a certain number of social rights for its citizens. This is an excerpt from his text, sent to UNESCO from London in June 1947, under the title “Towards a Universal Declaration of Human Rights”.

It is of the first importance, if a document of this kind is to have lasting influence and significance, to remember that the Great Declarations of the past are a quite special heritage of Western civilization, that they are deeply involved in a Protestant bourgeois tradition, which is itself an outstanding aspect of the rise of the middle class to power, and that, though their expression is universal in its form, the attempts at realization which lie behind that expression have too rarely reached below the level of the middle class.

“Equality before the law” has not meant very much in the lives of the working class in most political communities, and still less to Negroes in the Southern states of the United States. “Freedom of Association” was achieved by trade unions in Great Britain only in 1871; in France, save for a brief interval in 1848, only in 1884; in Germany only in the last years of the Bismarckian era, and then but partially; and, in a real way, in the U.S.A. only with the National Labour Relations Act of 1935; this Act itself is now in serious jeopardy in Congress.



Too Heavy to Bear, a poster by Chinese-German artist Ji Kun, one of the participants in the Work Right! competition organized in 2014 by the human rights non-profit, 4tomorrow.

All rights proclaimed in the great documents of this character are in fact statements of aspiration, the fulfilment of which is limited by the view taken by the ruling class of any political community of its relations to the security of interests they are determined to maintain.

It must be remembered, further, that one of the main emphases which have underlain past Declarations of Rights has been the presumed antagonism between the freedom of the individual citizen and the authority of the government in the political community. It is not merely that the rights of the citizens have been conceived in individualist terms, and upon the political plane.

© posterfortomorrow 2014 - Ji Kun

“ Let us define man's chief right-duty in life as that of seeking, and if possible, finding himself in experience, i.e. of understanding as much as he can of the world, of himself and of the true relation between the two. A minimum guarantee against starvation is to be proclaimed as the first right of man; but the foremost right of man is a guarantee that he will be free to live his life in his own way ”

Salvador de Madariaga (1886-1978)
Spanish engineer, writer and diplomat
UNESCO survey, 1947-48

There is the deeper problem that has arisen from the unconscious, or half-conscious, assumption of those who wrote the great documents of the past that every addition to governmental power is a subtraction from individual freedom. Maxims like Bentham's famous "each man is the best judge of his own interest" and that "each man must count as one and not more than one", have their roots in that pattern of social organization so forcibly depicted by Adam Smith: in which, under any "simple system of natural liberty", men competing fiercely with one another in economic life are led, each of them, "by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention"; and that end, by some mysterious alchemy, is the good of the whole community.

Even if it be argued – and it is at least doubtful whether it can be argued – that this liberal pattern was ever valid, it is certainly not valid today. There are vital elements in the common good which can only be achieved by action under the state-power – education, housing, public health, security against unemployment; these, at a standard acceptable to the community in an advanced society in Western civilization, cannot be achieved by any cooperation of citizens who do not exercise the authority of government.

It becomes plain, on any close analysis, that so far from there being a necessary antagonism between individual freedom and governmental authority, there are areas of social life in which the second is the necessary condition of the first. No statement of rights could be relevant to the contemporary situation which ignored this fact. [...]

Ideological differences

In the light of such considerations as these, any attempt by the United Nations to formulate a Declaration of Human Rights in individualist terms would quite inevitably fail. It would have little authority in those political societies which are increasingly, both in number and in range of effort, assuming the need to plan their social and economic life. It is, indeed, legitimate to go further and say that if the assumptions behind such a Declaration were individualistic, the document would be regarded as a threat to a new way of life by the defenders of historic principles which are now subject to profound challenge. Its effect would be to separate, and not to unify, the groping towards common purposes achieved through common institutions and common standards of behaviour which it is the objective of such a Declaration to promote.



Nothing, in fact, is gained, and a great deal may be lost, unless a Declaration of this character notes the fact of important ideological differences between political societies and takes full account of their consequences in the behaviour both of persons and institutions. To attempt to gloss them over would be to ignore completely the immense changes they involve in the attitude that a socialist society, on the one hand, even a society beginning to embark on socialist experiment, and a capitalist society, on the other, is likely to take to things like private property, law, both civil and criminal, the services of health and education, the possibility of living, between certain ages, without the duty to earn a living, the place of the arts – of, indeed, culture in its widest sense – in the society, the methods of communicating news and ideas, the ways in which citizens adopt a vocation in life, the conditions of promotion in the vocation adopted, and the relation of trade unionism to the process of economic production. [...]



Human Rights, 1995, by Algerian-born Belgian artist, Boubeker Hamsi.

The weight of the ruling class

It is difficult, moreover, to avoid the conclusion that was aptly formulated by Marx when he said that “the ruling ideas of an age are the ideas of its ruling class”. From that conclusion it follows that, historically, previous Declarations of Rights have in fact been attempts to give special sanctity to rights which some given ruling class at some given time in the life of a political society it controlled felt to be of peculiar importance to the members of that class. It is no doubt true that they were often, even usually, written out in universal form; perhaps even their claim to the status of universality gave them a power of inspiration beyond the area in which they were intended to be effective. But it remains generally true that in their application, the status of universality was always reduced to a particularity made, so far as possible, to coincide with what a ruling class believed to be in its interest, or what it regarded as the necessary limits of safe concession. [...]

Towards a Declaration that is bold and concrete

An International Declaration of Human Rights which was based on these premises and built upon these conclusions, to which men and women all over the world might look for a programme of action, would be a valuable stimulus to the recognition of the need for reforms, any long denial of which is likely to result in violent revolution here, to violent counter revolution there, and perhaps, even more grimly, to international conflict which may easily assume the character of a global civil war.

To provide the appropriate inspiration, such a Declaration would have to be both bold in its general character and concrete in its detailed conduct. It would have to take account rather of the possibilities which are struggling to be born than of the traditions that are dying before our eyes. It would be better to have no Declaration than one that was half-hearted and lacking in precision, or one which sought an uneasy compromise between irreconcilable principles of social action. A Declaration such as is proposed would do more harm than good unless it was issued in the confident expectation that the members of the United Nations gave to it an unquestionable faith and respect.

An age like our own, which has seen the impotence of the League of Nations, the contemptuous disregard of the Kellogg-Briand Pact and the cynical violation of international law and customs, and has lived under the barbarous tyranny of regimes which made torture and wholesale murder the sanctions of their policy, cannot afford another failure of so supreme a significance as this failure would mean. They have no right to offer hope to mankind who are not prepared to organize the essential conditions without which it has no prospect of being fulfilled. The next betrayal by statesmen of what the common man regards as the basis of his self-respect as a human being will be the prelude to a disaster this civilization is unlikely to survive.

A British political scientist and academic, **Harold J. Laski** (1893-1950) was a prominent member of the British Labour Party. He taught at McGill University in Canada, Harvard University in the United States, and the London School of Economics and Political Science in the United Kingdom. He was also the author of numerous books on democracy and socialism. Laski was one of UNESCO's most ardent and valued collaborators on several of its early projects.



Economic and social rights

Maurice Dobb

The right to employment, to social security, to a minimum wage, to the freedom of assembly and association, to free access to employment. These are the essential elements to integrate into a charter of human rights, in order to imagine a new kind of society, according to the British economist, Maurice Dobb (1900-1976).

Clearly, the notion of a declaration of rights which shall hold true of all times and conditions is too abstract to be tenable in this age, which is more conscious than its forbears of the historically-relative character of social and economic problems. Problems, needs, rights and duties only have a meaning within the framework of a particular set of social institutions and social relations – institutions and relations which are subject to historical change, and in the contemporary world are continually changing before our eyes. Yet declarations of rights can have a function in summarizing the aspirations of progressively-minded persons in a given age, confronted with the given situation and a given group of problems – as pointers to the direction in which efforts at social advance must be turned.

Foremost among the requirements of any new society must be the attainment of full employment. This is nowadays a commonplace. But it has not always been so; and there are even some today who resist its attainment, or if they accept the ends, will not accept the means. Until recently, unemployment was considered to be either an inevitable accompaniment of so-called “free society” or even a desirable reserve without which a capitalist economy would lack a vital instrument of flexibility and of discipline. It is of interest in this connection that the 1936 Constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.) included as the first among its “basic rights of citizens;” “the right to work” (Article 118).

To banish poverty and want

Secondly, there is the need for guaranteeing a certain minimum subsistence for all, sufficient to banish poverty and want. This has two aspects. First is the guarantee through a comprehensive system of social security against loss of earning power from any of the risks to which the wage-earner is prone: risks arising from accident, sickness or old age. Second is a guarantee of certain minimum terms and conditions of employment: a prohibition of any contract of employment which fails to secure a certain minimum standard of earnings. This is not only a matter of aspirations: it is a matter also of attainment; while the standard that is regarded as the minimum standard – as “a living wage” – is itself subject to change from one generation to the next and varies with the level of social and historical development in different parts of the world.

Over large parts of the world, any desirable minimum standard is at present unattainable (even with radical alterations in the distribution of income) owing to the low level of productivity per man-hour. Here the practical realization of this “right” requires a planned development of these regions as a prior condition (development which is systematically integrated under public auspices over a wide area, and not left to laissez-faire; and preferably development that is financially assisted from outside, provided that undesirable political conditions are not attached to such assistance).

A guarantee for everyone

Thirdly, it is necessary that rights of assembly and of organization should be guaranteed to all employed persons: moreover, that this right of organization should be made actual by extension of the right to all representative workers’ organizations to negotiate regarding the terms of their employment and to be represented on bodies responsible for controlling the conditions of work. It is manifestly inconsistent with the dignity of man that labour should be regarded (as hitherto) as a mere hired factor of production, excluded from any voice in the conduct of industrial policy.

Fourthly, it is necessary that employment and access to the means of livelihood should be unrestricted by any considerations of race, creed, opinion or membership of any legal organization.

Against private-owned monopolies

It can reasonably be held that ownership of the means of production (including land) by private individuals on such a scale as to imply that independent access to these means of production is barred for a substantial section of the community, represents an infringement of the economic rights of man in any full sense of the term. Where ownership of land and productive equipment is concentrated in the hands of a class, the remainder of the community is deprived of the possibility of a livelihood except as hired servants to the former – a situation which involves a substantial inequality of rights, de facto, and in an important sense, involves a deprivation of freedom from the class of non-owners.

Such an interpretation of human rights is, of course, incapable of being reconciled with Capitalism as an economic system.



© posterfortomorrow 2014 - Bruno Raul



Work is Dignity (for the employer), a poster by Bolivian artist Bruno Raul Rivera Catacora for the Work Right! competition, organized in 2014 by the human rights non-profit, 4tomorrow.

In a more modified form, however, this interpretation could be held to debar the existence of private-owned monopolies which dominate whole industries and control the production and sale of essentials of human existence or essential raw materials and requisites of production, and which are accordingly in a position to dictate their terms to private consumers or to other producers.

A distinguished Marxian economist, the British academic **Maurice Dobb** (1900-1976) taught at Cambridge University, in the United Kingdom. He joined the Communist Party of Great Britain in 1920, and was one of the founders of its Historians' Group.

“ In many, the continued existence of capital punishment is an assertion that in the last resort, the individual may forfeit every right ”

Margery Fry (1874-1958)
British magistrate
UNESCO survey, 1947-48



Defeating the enemies of freedom

Aldous Huxley

Analysing the gravest threats facing humanity, the British novelist Aldous Huxley (1894-1963) recommended that a world Bill of Rights should include efforts to increase available resources to meet the needs of the world's population; limiting the power of those who, through their wealth or hierarchical position, effectively dominated the masses of ordinary, unprivileged men and women who constituted the majority. He elaborated on these suggestions in his article, originally titled "The Rights of Man and the Facts of the Human Situation", which he sent to UNESCO in June 1947. Excerpts follow.

The increasing pressure of population upon resources and the waging, threat of, and unremitting preparation for, total war – these are, at the present time, the most formidable enemies to liberty.

About three quarters of the 2.2 billion inhabitants of our planet do not have enough to eat. By the end of the present century, world population will have increased (if we manage to avoid catastrophe in the interval) to about 3.3 billion. Meanwhile, over vast areas of the earth's surface, soil erosion is rapidly diminishing the fortuity of mankind's four billion acres of productive land. Moreover, in those countries where industrialism is most highly developed, mineral resources are running low, or have been completely exhausted – and this at a time when a rising population demands an ever-increasing quantity of consumer goods and when improved technology is in a position to supply that demand.

Heavy pressure of population upon resources threatens liberty in several ways. Individuals have to work harder and longer to earn a poorer living. At the same time the economic situation of the community as a whole is so precarious that small mishaps, such as untoward weather conditions, may result in serious breakdowns. There can be little or no personal liberty in the midst of social chaos; and where social chaos is reduced to order by the intervention of a powerful centralized executive, there is a grave risk of totalitarianism.

Because of the mounting pressure of population upon resources, the twentieth century has become the golden age of centralized government and dictatorship, and has witnessed the wholesale revival of slavery, which has been imposed upon political heretics, conquered populations and prisoners of war.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the New World provided cheap food for the teeming masses of the Old World and free land for the victims of oppression. Today the New World holds a large and growing population, there is no free land and over the vast areas, the much-abused soil is losing its fertility. The New World still produces a large exportable surplus. Whether, fifty years from now, it will still have a surplus, with which to feed the three billion inhabiting the Old World seems doubtful.

It should be added, at this point, that while the population of the planet as a whole is rapidly increasing, the population of certain extremely overpopulated areas in Western Europe is stationary and will shortly start to decline. The fact that, by 1970, France and Great Britain will each have lost about four million inhabitants, while Russia will have added about seventy-five million to its present population, is bound to raise political problems, which it will require consummate statesmanship to resolve. [...]

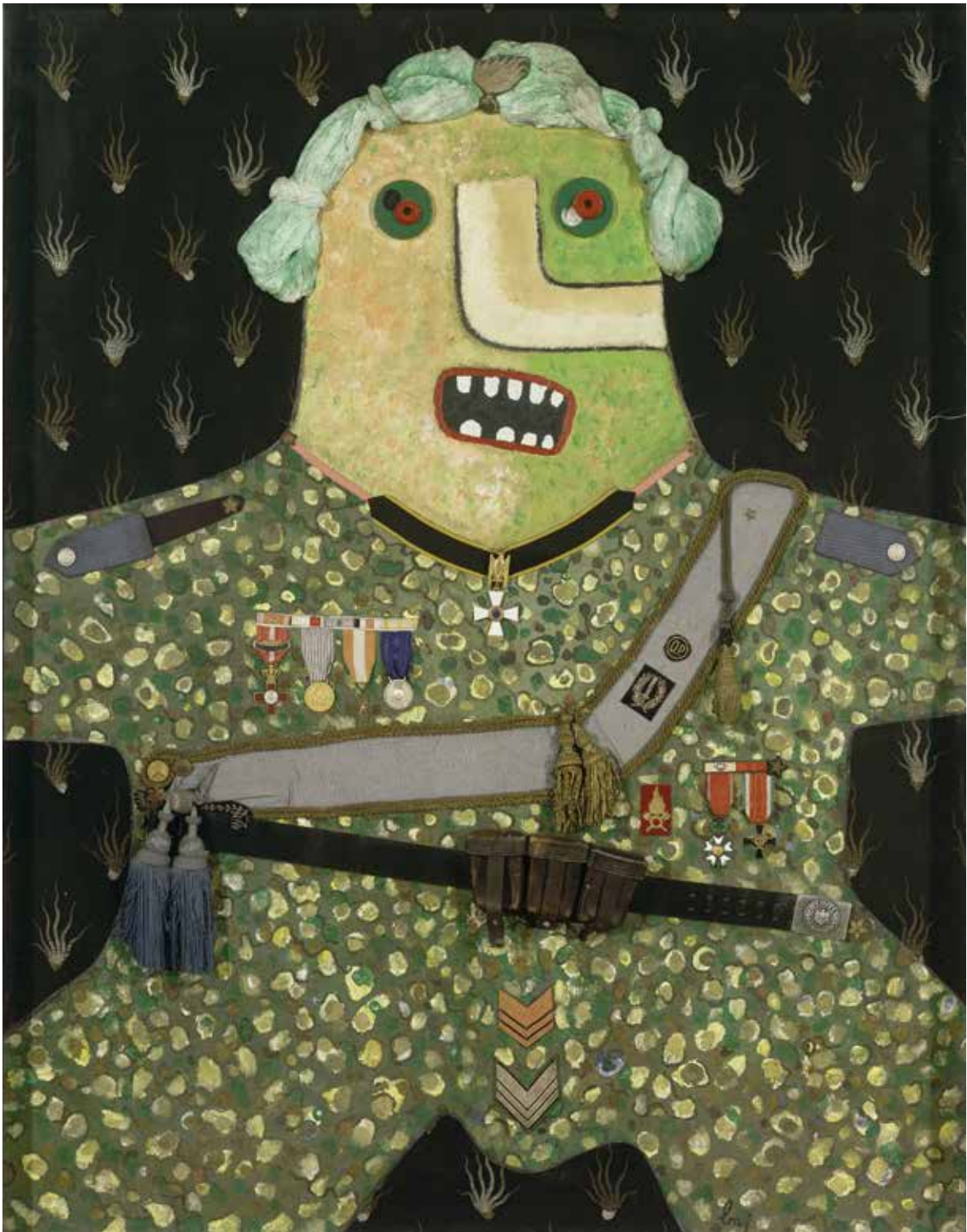
A constitutional Bill of Rights, whose principles are applied in specific legislation, can certainly do something to protect the masses of ordinary, unprivileged men and women against the few who, through wealth or hierarchical position, effectively wield power over the majority. But prevention is always better than cure. Mere paper restrictions, designed to curb the abuse of a power already concentrated in a few hands, are but the mitigations of an existing evil. Personal liberty can be made secure only by abolishing the evil altogether.

UNESCO is engaged at present in facilitating the task of mitigation; but it is in the fortunate position of being able to proceed, if it so desires, to the incomparably more important task of prevention, of the radical removal of the present impedimenta to liberty. This is primarily an affair for the scientific section of the Organization. For the problem of relieving the pressure of population upon resources is primarily a problem in pure and applied science, while the problem of total war is (among other things, of course) a problem in ethics for scientific workers as individuals and as members of professional organizations. [...]

The British novelist and critic **Aldous Huxley** (1894-1963) was best known for his dystopian *Brave New World* (1932), which vividly expressed his distrust of politics and technology in the twentieth century through satire. He was the younger brother of Julian Huxley, the first Director-General of UNESCO (1946-1948).



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The General, 1969, by Italian artist Enrico Baj (1924-2003), who co-founded the Movimento Arte Nucleare in 1951 – creating art to warn of the dangers of nuclear technology.

“ It is clear that recent scientific progress brings us almost to the end of a cycle in which science risks appearing to be one of the main factors in the enslavement of humanity ”

W. A. Noyes Jr. (1898-1980)
American photochemist
UNESCO survey, 1947-48



Information as the means of free thought

René Maheu

“The same is true of the right to information as of all other rights: its legitimate content must be defined in terms of real needs,” wrote the French philosopher René Maheu (1905-1975), adding: “Conditionally, of course, on the word ‘needs’ being understood to mean the needs of human development, and not of self-interest or passion.” This is an excerpt of his contribution to UNESCO’s survey on the philosophical foundations of human rights, which he submitted on 30 June 1947, under the title “Right to Information and to the Expression of Opinion”.

The inclusion of the right to information among the Rights of Man means more than seeking a mere increase or improvement in the knowledge available to the public. It involves a radical reconsideration of the function of information. It means that the products, the methods, and even the organization of the news industry must be reassessed from the point of view not of the interests or prejudices of those who control its production, but of the human dignity of those who henceforth are justified in expecting of it the means of free thought.

From the moment that information comes to be regarded as one of the rights of man, the structures and practices which make of it an instrument for the exploitation, by alienation, of the minds of the masses, for money or for power, can no longer be tolerated; information becomes, for those who impart it, a social function in the service of intellectual emancipation.



© Shilpa Gupta / courtesy of the artist and YARAT

The right to information is a natural extension of the right to education, and that very fact makes it possible to define its concrete content.

That content is sometimes defined as “facts” or raw news, i.e., news that is not interpreted. There should be no illusion about the practical value of the traditional distinction between fact and opinion.

For, in your tongue, I cannot fit,
an installation by Indian artist
Shilpa Gupta at the YARAT
Contemporary Art Space in Baku,
Azerbaijan, 2018.



“ It would be proper, I think, for UNESCO to urge that the United Nations consider [human rights] as a minimum standard of national conduct and not as a fixed maximum which is static and rigid in its application. What we want to create is the notion that human rights should be always expanding as man’s control over his own behaviour and the forces of nature make possible an enlargement of opportunities for human development ”

Frank R. Scott (1899-1985)

Canadian poet and constitutional expert
UNESCO survey, 1947-48

What is a fact? A piece of evidence. And the selection of a fact is an implicit expression of opinion. There is nothing more misleading than the chimera of mechanical objectivity. Nor can human liberty look for salvation to the impersonal.

A better definition of information would probably be a detached presentation of materials capable of use by anybody in the formation of an opinion. Whereas an expression of opinion – whether persuasive or challenging – is always militant, the characteristic of information, unlike propaganda or publicity, which proceeds by obsession, is availability.

This being so, it will be asked whether a corollary of the recognition of man’s right to information is not an admission of the right of all to access to all sources of knowledge in all circumstances. Leaving out of account questions of physical impossibility, this straightaway suggests to the mind the many restrictions imposed for the protection of the most legitimate political, economic or personal interests: secrets of State, manufacturing secrets, domestic privacy.

A realistic appreciation of relativity

But the proclamation of the right to education does not ipso facto mean that the child has a right to learn anything, at any age, and anyhow. It only means that it is the duty of adults to give the child the knowledge necessary for his development in the light of his needs (and capabilities) at his age. A right is no more than an instrument – an instrument for building up man in man’s mind. And an instrument is only an instrument if it is related to needs.

The same is true of the right to information as of all other rights: its legitimate content must be defined in terms of real needs. Conditionally, of course, on the word ‘needs’ being understood to mean the needs of human development, and not of self-interest or passion.

Of their very nature, those needs involve a large measure of recourse to human fraternity and to exchanges between men, an appeal that will always extend far beyond mere egotism. It is true, however, that, as there are great variations in living conditions and modes of development, the needs of human groups are not identical at all points in time and space. These groups do not all need the same information.

There must be no fear of introducing into a consideration of the rights of man this element of historical and sociological relativity. So far from putting in peril the effective achievement of those rights, only a realistic appreciation in the light of that relativity can give them concrete meaning for the men who must fight to make them triumph.

The right to the expression of opinion is much more closely geared to historic relativity. While the right to information must be numbered among the conditions of democracy and thus has the force of a principle, the right to the expression of opinion is part of the exercise of democracy and, as such, shares the relativity of all political realities or practice. A regime blessed with stable institutions and with a body of citizens apathetic or tolerant or whose critical faculties are highly trained, can give the freest rein to the expression of individual views. Indeed it must do so, in the sense that, more than any other, it needs that indispensable stimulus to maintain progress.

Against this, a democratic order in peril in a State torn by passion or possessed of the devils of credulity or, again, a democracy fully committed to a revolutionary or systematic process of reconstruction, is justified in imposing considerable limitation on the freedom of individual expression, the exercise of which is necessarily hostile to complete unity.

Recognition that the right to the expression of opinion must be conditioned by the historical perspective of a particular democracy, is not sacrificing a human right to reason of State. On the contrary, that right is thus given its full meaning by refusal to sacrifice to an abstract concept the merits and chances of success of a concrete undertaking. [...]

French philosopher **René Maheu** (1905-1975) joined the staff of UNESCO when it was set up in 1946, and went on to serve two consecutive six-year terms (from 1962 to 1974) as Director-General of the Organization. He was head of UNESCO’s Free Flow of Information division at the time he submitted this text.



Education: the essential foundation for human rights

Isaac Leon Kandel

“Education for freedom does not mean, as it has frequently been thought to mean, a laissez-faire programme of content or of methods of instruction, but the intelligent recognition of responsibility and duty,” wrote the American educator Isaac L. Kandel (1881-1965), in his article “Education and Human Rights”, sent to UNESCO in 1947. Excerpts follow.

A study of recent statements on human rights reveals the curious paradox that the one condition which is essential to their realization and proper use is hardly ever mentioned. Perhaps the omission of any reference to education can be explained on the assumption that it is taken for granted as a human right and as the essential foundation for the enjoyment of human rights.

The history of education, however, provides ample evidence that education has not been regarded as a human right nor has it been used as an instrument for developing an appreciation of the importance of human rights for the fullest development of each individual as a human being. Historically two motives have dominated the provision of education. The first and the earliest motive was directed to indoctrinating the younger generation in the religious beliefs of their particular denominations. The second motive, which came with the use of the national state, was to develop a sense of loyalty to the political group or nation. In both cases, the ends that were sought emphasized acquiescent discipline rather than education for freedom as a human being. [...]

Because education has not yet been recognized universally as a human right, it is essential that it be included in any declaration of human rights that may be drawn up. The right to education needs greater emphasis than it is given in the Memorandum on Human Rights, prepared by UNESCO [27 March 1947].

Two-tier education

One of the tragic results of the traditional organization of education into two systems – one for the masses and the other for a select group – is that, even when equality of educational opportunity is provided, certain social and economic classes feel that the opportunities are not intended for them. The provision of equality of educational opportunity demands in some countries, measures to change the psychological attitudes produced by the traditional organization.

Thus Henri Laugier, in discussing plans for the reconstruction of education in France, wrote [in the *Educational Yearbook of the International Institute, Teachers College, Columbia University*, p. 136 f, New York, 1944]: “So many generations in France have lived in an atmosphere of theoretical equality and actual inequality that the situation has in practice met with fairly general acceptance, induced by the normally pleasant conditions of French life. Of course, the immediate victims of the inequality are barely conscious of it or do not suffer from it in any way. It does not occur to the son of a worker or an agricultural labourer that he might become the governor of a colony, director in a ministry, an ambassador, an admiral, or an inspector of finance. He may know that such positions exist, but for him they exist in a higher world which is not open to him. Most frequently this situation neither inspires nor embitters him, nor does it arouse in him a desire to claim a right or to demand a definite change!” [...]

The recognition of education as a human right is, however, only one aspect of the problem as it concerns the Rights of Man. Free access to education at all levels may be provided without affecting either the content or the methods of instruction. Traditionally, the quality of elementary education differed from the quality of secondary education; the former was directed to imparting a certain quantum of knowledge, most generally to be acquired by rote and resulting in what the French call *l'esprit primaire*; the latter was intended to impart a liberal or general cultural education. In neither case was there, except by indirection, any deep-rooted training for the use and enjoyment of those freedoms which are included in the list of Human Rights. The emphasis, particularly, since most types of education were dominated by exigencies of examinations, was rather on the acceptance of the authority – either of the printed word or of the teacher.

Freedom is not license

When the pendulum began to shift from an emphasis on discipline, indoctrination, and authoritarianism to an emphasis on freedom, it was too often forgotten that freedom is a conquest and that education for freedom of any kind demands a type of discipline in learning to appreciate the moral consequences of one's actions. Education for freedom does not mean, as it has frequently been thought to mean, a laissez-faire programme of content or of methods of instruction, but the intelligent recognition of responsibility and duty.

If this principle is sound, it also means a change in the status of the teacher and of teaching. If the teacher is to be more than a purveyor of knowledge to be tested by examinations, then the traditional limitations placed upon him by courses of study prescribed in detail, by prescribed methods of instruction, and by control through inspection and examinations must be replaced by a different concept of the preparation that is desirable for the teacher.



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Education Rewards, a poster by German artist Sarah Hartwig, judged one of the Ten Best Posters in the Right to Education competition, organized in 2014 by the human rights non-profit, 4tomorrow.

That preparation must be raised to the same level as preparation for any other liberal profession. If the efforts of the teacher are to be directed to the development of free personalities and to education for freedom of speech, expression, communication, information and inquiry, the teacher through his preparation should become professionally free and recognize that freedom without a sense of responsibility easily degenerates into license.

Before the Rights of Man can be incorporated into programmes of education, another change is essential. In the past, education has been used as an instrument of nationalistic policy, which too frequently meant indoctrination in either national or racial separatism and superiority. And even where the humanities formed the core of the curriculum, so much attention was devoted to the scaffolding that the essential meaning of humanism was lost.

The common goals inherent in the ideal of the Rights of Man can only be attained as programmes of education and instruction are based on the realization that there is no national culture which does not owe far more than is usually admitted to the influence of the cultural heritage of man of all races and of all ages. It is upon this foundation that the freedoms included in the Rights of Man can be laid; it is only in this way that the true concept of humanism as an end in education can be developed. Their attainment, finally, depends upon training in the methods of free inquiry. Education for the various freedoms demands discipline. To paraphrase Rousseau, man must be disciplined to enjoy the freedoms which are his rights.

“It is, in my opinion, a sign of respect for an absolutely essential freedom not to create in children, at an age when they are defenceless, any conditioned reflex (psychological or otherwise) that they would subsequently be incapable of making disappear. Respect for this freedom has as a corollary the prohibition against anyone teaching the child anything as an absolute and unquestionable truth that is not recognized as such by the majority of educated adults. This applies to religion as well as history”

Albert Szent-Györgyi (1893- 1986)
Hungarian biochemist
Nobel Prize in Medicine, 1937
UNESCO survey, 1947-48

A pioneer in the field of comparative education, the American educator **Isaac L. Kandel** (1881-1965) conducted extensive studies of education systems around the world. Born in Romania, of British parents, he was the author of more than forty books and over three hundred articles, the editor of several academic journals, and taught at his *almae matres*, the University of Manchester in the United Kingdom and Columbia University in the United States.

Individual rights and respect for all cultures

Melville Jean Herskovits

How can individual rights be reconciled while respecting the cultural sensibilities of different human groups? For the American anthropologist, Melville J. Herskovits (1895-1963), this is the main difficulty facing the formulation of a world declaration of human rights. He elaborates on this dilemma in this excerpt from the text with the title "Statement on Human Rights", which he sent to UNESCO in 1947.

The problem faced by the Commission on Human Rights of the United Nations in preparing its Declaration on the Rights of Man must be approached from two points of view. The first, in terms of which the Declaration is ordinarily conceived, concerns the respect for the personality of the individual as such, and his right to its fullest development as a member of his society. In a world order, however, respect for the cultures of differing human groups is equally important.

These are two facets of the same problem, since it is a truism that groups are composed of individuals, and human beings do not function outside the societies of which they form a part. The problem is thus to formulate a statement of human rights that will do more than just phrase respect for the individual as an individual. It must also take into full account the individual as a member of the social group of which he is a part, whose sanctioned modes of life shape his behaviour, and with whose fate his own is thus inextricably bound.



© Barkinado Bocoum

Path of thorns, 2014, by Senegalese artist Barkinado Bocoum.

Because of the great numbers of societies that are in intimate contact in the modern world, and because of the diversity of their ways of life, the primary task confronting those who would draw up a Declaration on the Rights of Man is thus, in essence, to resolve the following problem: How can the proposed Declaration be applicable to all human beings, and not be a statement of rights conceived only in terms of the values prevalent in the countries of Western Europe and America? [...]



“ A bill of rights for all the nations cannot be based solely upon the traditional values and ideological assumptions of any one of the nations. If it is to capture the aspirations and ideals of all the peoples of the world, it must be rooted in at least some of the accepted institutions and social doctrines of each and every people ”

F. S. C. Northrop (1893-1992)
American philosopher
UNESCO survey, 1947-48



All peoples do achieve these ends. No two of them, however, do so in exactly the same way, and some of them employ means that differ, often strikingly, from one another.

Yet here a dilemma arises. Because of the social setting of the learning process, the individual cannot but be convinced that his own way of life is the most desirable one. Conversely, and despite changes originating from within and without his culture that he recognizes as worthy of adoption, it becomes equally patent to him that, in the main, other ways than his own, to the degree they differ from it, are less desirable than those to which he is accustomed. Hence valuations arise, that in themselves receive the sanction of accepted belief.

The degree to which such evaluations eventuate in action depends on the basic sanctions in the thought of a people. In the main, people are willing to live and let live, exhibiting a tolerance for behaviour of another group different than their own, especially where there is no conflict in the subsistence field. In the history of Western Europe and America, however, economic expansion, control of armaments, and an evangelical religious tradition have translated the recognition of cultural differences into a summons to action. This has been emphasized by philosophical systems that have stressed absolutes in the realm of values and ends. Definitions of freedom, concepts of the nature of human rights and the like, have thus been narrowly drawn.

Alternatives have been decried, and suppressed where controls have been established over non-European peoples. The hard core of *similarities* between cultures has consistently been overlooked.

The consequences of this point of view have been disastrous for mankind. Doctrines of the “white man’s burden” have been employed to implement economic exploitation and to deny the right to control their own affairs to millions of peoples over the world, where the expansion of Europe and America has not meant the literal extermination of whole populations. Rationalized in terms of ascribing cultural inferiority to these peoples, or in conceptions of their backwardness in development of their “primitive mentality” that justified their being held in the tutelage of their superiors, the history of the expansion of the western world has been marked by demoralization of human personality and the disintegration of human rights among the peoples over whom hegemony has been established. [...]

The disintegration of human rights

Over the past fifty years, the many ways in which man resolves the problems of subsistence, of social living, of political regulation of group life, of reaching accord with the Universe and satisfying his aesthetic drives has been widely documented by the researches of anthropologists among peoples living in all parts of the world.

A declaration with global influence

The problem of drawing up a Declaration of Human Rights was relatively simple in the eighteenth century, because it was not a matter of *human* rights, but of the rights of men within the framework of the sanctions laid by a single society.

Even then, so noble a document as the American Declaration of Independence, or the American Bill of Rights, could be written by men who themselves were slave-owners, in a country where chattel slavery was a part of the recognized social order. The revolutionary character of the slogan "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" was never more apparent than in the struggles to implement it by extending it to the French slave-owning colonies.

Today the problem is complicated by the fact that the Declaration must be of worldwide applicability. It must embrace and recognize the validity of many different ways of life. It will not be convincing to the Indonesian, the African, the Indian, the Chinese, if it lies on the same plane as like documents of an earlier period. The rights of Man in the twentieth century cannot be circumscribed by the standards of any single culture, or be dictated by the aspirations of any single people. Such a document will lead to frustration, not realization of the personalities of vast numbers of human beings.

Such persons, living in terms of values not envisaged by a limited Declaration, will thus be excluded from the freedom of full participation in the only right and proper way of life that can be known to them, the institutions, sanctions and goals that make up the culture of their particular society.

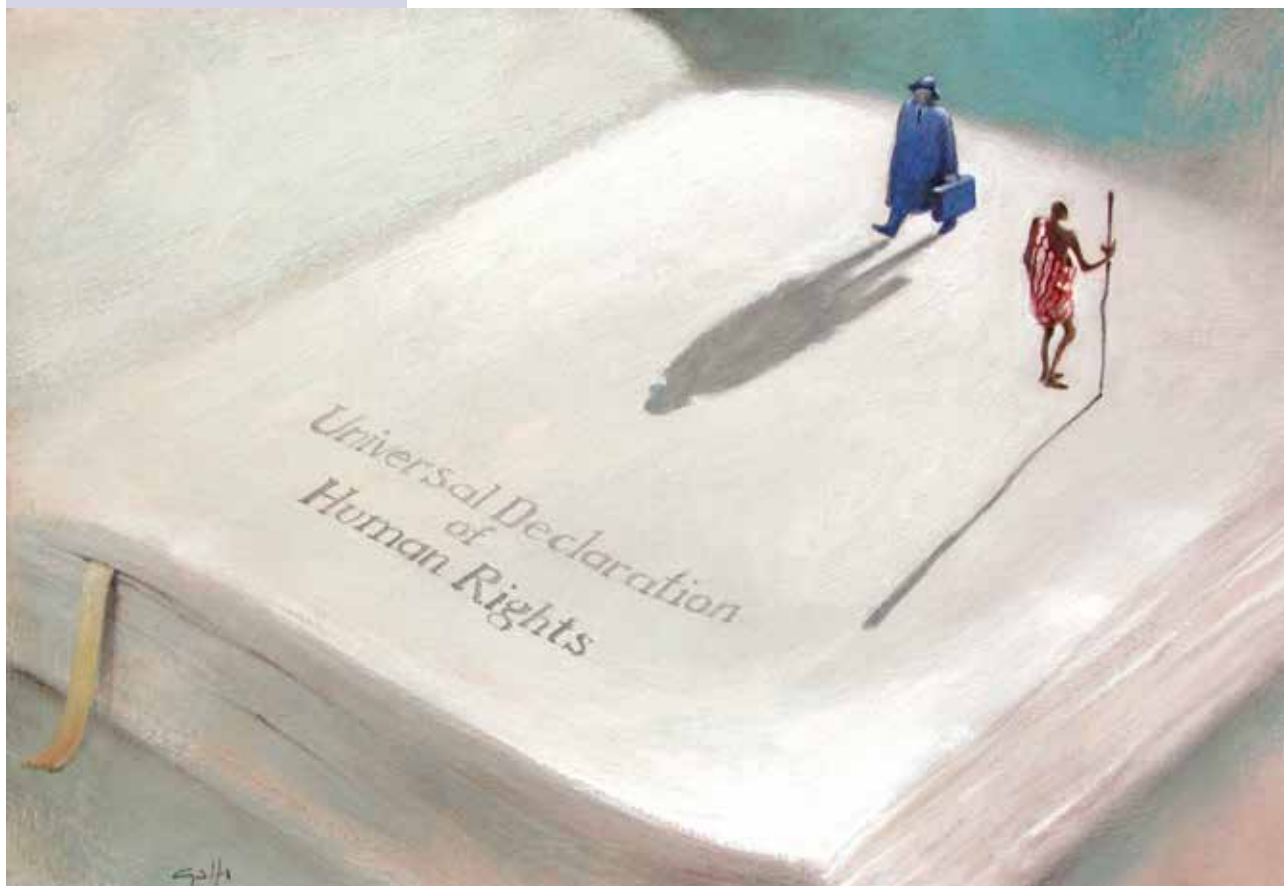
Even where political systems exist that deny citizens the right of participation in their government, or seek to conquer weaker peoples, underlying cultural values may be called on to bring the peoples of such states to a realization of the consequences of the acts of their governments, and thus enforce a brake upon discrimination and conquest. For the political system of a people is only a small part of their total culture.

Worldwide standards of freedom and justice, based on the principle that man is free only when he lives as his society defines freedom, that his rights are those he recognizes as a member of his society, must be basic. Conversely, an effective world order cannot be devised except insofar as it permits the free play of personality of the members of its constituent social units, and draws strength from the enrichment to be derived from the interplay of varying personalities.

The worldwide acclaim accorded the Atlantic Charter, before its restricted applicability was announced, is evidence of the fact that freedom is understood and sought after by peoples having the most diverse cultures. Only when a statement of the right of men to live in terms of their own traditions is incorporated into the proposed Declaration, then, can the next step of defining the rights and duties of human groups as regards each other be set upon the firm foundation of the present-day scientific knowledge of Man.

Known for his humanistic and relativistic study of culture, American anthropologist **Melville J. Herskovits** (1895-1963) is noted for opening up the study of the New World Negro as a new field of research. A specialist in African-American cultural and social issues, he taught at Columbia University, Howard University and at Northwestern University, Chicago, where he held the first chair of African Studies in the United States (1951).

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, by the Italian illustrator and painter Alessandro Gatto.





The Hindu concept of human freedoms



© photo Sebastiano Luciano / courtesy Fondazione MAXXI

Strands, an installation at the National Museum of 21st Century Arts (MAXXI) in Rome, Italy. Passers-by, who are part of the installation, form a human garland under the watchful eye of the artist, the Indian painter N. S. Harsha.

Shrikrishna Venkatesh Puntambekar

Criticizing the Western emphasis on reason and science that marked the emergence of European human rights doctrines, the Indian political scientist S.V. Puntambekar was of the opinion that “we shall have to give up some of the superstitions of material science and limited reason, which make man too much this-worldly, and introduce higher spiritual aims and values for mankind.” He focused on the spiritual nature of human beings in his text, “The Hindu Concept of Human Rights”, sent to UNESCO in May 1947. Excerpts follow.

The proper study of mankind is man. There is something more in man than is apparent in his ordinary consciousness and behaviour under a given system of environment – something which frames ideals and values of life. There is in him a finer spiritual presence which makes him dissatisfied with merely earthly pursuits. The ordinary condition of man is not his ultimate being. He has in him a deeper self, call it soul or spirit.

In each being dwells a light and inspiration which no power can extinguish, which is benign and tolerant, and which is the real man. It is our business to discover him, protect him and see that he is utilized for his own and humanity’s welfare. It is the nature of this man to search for the true, the good and the beautiful in life, to esteem them properly and to strive for them continuously.

Then we must note that there is also an incalculable element in the human will, and an endless complexity of human nature. No system, no order, no law can satisfy the deep and potential demands of a great personality, be they religious, political, social or educational. Men are often endowed with great potential energy and creative power which cannot be encased within the bounds of old formulas and doctrines. No fixed discipline can suit the developing possibilities of new human manifestations in the psychological, ethical or spiritual fields. No system can satisfy the growing needs of a dynamic personality. There always remains something unthought of and unrealized in the system. Hence we want freedom for man in the shape of human freedoms.

Freedom encourages growth

There is always a tendency for new values and new ideals to arise in human life. No ready formulas and systems can satisfy the needs and visions of great thinkers and of all peoples and periods. Freedom is necessary because authority is not creative. Freedom gives full scope to developing the personality and creates conditions for its growth. No uniformity or conformity or comprehension of all aspects of life will be helpful. The present centralization of all authority, its bureaucracy and party dictatorship, its complexity and standardization, leave little scope for independent thought and development, for initiative and choice. [...]

Can we be aware of a call for national freedom and for human freedom, when we are so rigid, inflexible, fanatic and exclusive in our political, religious, cultural and socio-economic outlook? Not having succeeded in disposing our rules and systems on all countries and continents, some of us still harbour feelings of superiority and hatred, coercion and dominance against our neighbours.

Therefore first let us “be men”, and then lay down the contents, qualities and interrelations of human freedoms. We must respect humanity and personality, tolerate our differences and others’ ways of internal and external group behaviour, and combine to serve one another in calamities and in great undertakings.

To talk of human rights in India is no doubt very necessary and desirable, but hardly possible in view of the socio-cultural and religio-political complexes which are so predominant today. There are no human beings in the world of today, but only religious men, racial men, caste men or group men. Our intelligentsia and masses are mad after racial privileges, religion, bigotry and social exclusiveness. In short, we are engaged in a silent war of extermination of opposite groups. Our classes and communities think in terms of conquest and subjugation, not of common association and citizenship.

There is at present a continuous war of groups and communities, of rulers and the ruled, in our body politic and body social, from which all conception of humanity and tolerance, all notion of humility and respect, have disappeared. Bigotry, intolerance and exclusiveness sit enthroned in their stead.

The world is mad today. It runs after destruction and despotism, world conquest and world order, world loot and world dispossession. The enormous hatred generated against human life and achievements has left no sense of humanity or human love in the world politics of today. But shall we renounce “being men” first and always? What we want is freedom from want and war, from fear and frustration in life. We also want freedom from an all-absorbing conception of the state, the community and the church coercing individuals to particular and ordered ways of life. Along with this, we desire freedom of thought and expression of movement and association, of education and of expansion in the mental and moral spheres. In any defined and ordered plan for living, we must have the right of non-violent resistance and autonomy, in order to develop our ideas of the good human life.

Seeking higher spiritual values

For this purpose, we shall have to give up some of the superstitions of material science and limited reason, which make man too much this-worldly, and introduce higher spiritual aims and values for mankind. Then on that basis, we shall have to organize our social life in all its aspects. We want not only the material conditions of a happy life but also the spiritual virtues of a good life. Man’s freedom is being destroyed by the demands of economic technocracy, political bureaucracy and religious idiosyncrasy.

Great thinkers like Manu and Buddha have laid emphasis on what should be *assurances* necessary for man and what should be the *virtues* possessed by man. They have propounded a code, as it were, of *ten essential human freedoms* and *controls* or *virtues* necessary for a good life. They are not only basic, but more comprehensive in their scope than those mentioned by any other modern thinkers. They emphasize five freedoms or *social assurances* and five *individual possessions* or virtues.

The five social freedoms are (1) freedom from violence (*Ahimsa*), (2) freedom from want (*Asteya*), (3) freedom from exploitation (*Aparigraha*), (4) freedom from violation or dishonour (*Avyabhichara*) and (5) freedom from early death and disease (*Armitatva* and *Arogya*).

The five individual possessions or virtues are (1) absence of intolerance (*Akrodha*), (2) compassion or fellow feeling (*Bhutadaya*, *Adroha*), (3) knowledge (*Jnana*, *Vidya*), (4) freedom of thought and conscience (*Satya*, *Sunrta*) and (5) freedom from fear and frustration or despair (*Pravrtti*, *Abhaya*, *Dhrti*).

A photo from the series, In Praise of India, by Greek photographer Giannis Papanikos.



© Giannis Papanikos (giannispapanikos.com)



“ It is not by self-isolation (as one might have thought), but by proper association with all other human beings that the individual can hope to achieve full development of his person (full development of energy and movement, and full development of consciousness particularly) since we cannot become completely “reflexive”, each of us, except by reflecting ourselves in and taking reflections from other human beings ”

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955)
Jesuit priest, palaeontologist and French philosopher
UNESCO survey, 1947-48



More comprehensive freedoms

Human freedoms require as counterparts, human virtues or controls. To think in terms of freedoms without corresponding virtues would lead to a lopsided view of life and a stagnation or even a deterioration of personality, and also to chaos and conflict in society. This two-sidedness of human life, its freedoms and virtues or controls, its assurances and possessions must be understood and established in any scheme for the welfare of man, society and humanity. Alone, the right to life, liberty and property or pursuit of happiness is not sufficient; neither, alone, is the assurance of liberty, equality and fraternity. Human freedoms and virtues must be more definite and more comprehensive if they are to help the physical, mental and spiritual development of man and humanity.

In order to prevent this open and latent warfare of mutual extermination – national and international – we must create and develop a new man or citizen assured and possessed of these *tenfold freedoms* and *virtues* which are the fundamental values of human life and conduct. Otherwise our freedoms will fail in their objects and in their mission to save man and his mental and moral culture from the impending disaster with which the whole human civilization is now threatened by the lethal weapons of science and the inhuman robots of despotic and coercive powers and their ideologies and creeds.

We in India also want freedom from foreign rule and civil warfare. Foreign rule is a damnable thing. This land has suffered from it for hundreds of years. We must condemn it, whether old or new. We must have self-rule in our country under one representative, responsible and centralized system. Then alone we shall survive.

I know that men who are devoted to and dominated by rigid ideas of cultures and religions cannot feel the call of national or human freedom. But we cannot give up higher objectives and aspirations for their sake and their prejudices.

An Indian academic educated at Oxford University, **S.V. Puntambekar** taught at Banaras Hindu University and Nagpur University. He is the author of several books on politics and foreign policy.



A Confucian approach to human rights

Lo Chung-Shu

“The basic ethical concept of Chinese social political relations is the fulfilment of the duty to one’s neighbour, rather than the claiming of rights. The idea of mutual obligations is regarded as the fundamental teaching of Confucianism.” This is what the Chinese philosopher Lo Chung-Shu (1903-1985) wrote in his text, titled “Human Rights in the Chinese Tradition”, sent to UNESCO on 1 June 1947. An excerpt follows.

Before considering the general principles, I would like to point out that the problem of human rights was seldom discussed by Chinese thinkers of the past, at least not in the same way as it was in the West. There was no open declaration of human rights in China, either by individual thinkers or by political constitutions, until this concept was introduced from the West. In fact, the early translators of Western political philosophy found it difficult to arrive at a Chinese equivalent for the term “rights”. The term we use to translate “rights” now is two words “Chuan Li”, which literally means “power and interest” and which, I believe, was first coined by a Japanese writer on Western Public Law in 1868, and later adopted by Chinese writers.

This of course does not mean that the Chinese never claimed human rights or enjoyed the basic rights of man. In fact, the idea of human rights developed very early in China, and the right of the people to revolt against oppressive rulers was very early established.

“Revolution” is not regarded as a dangerous word to use, but as a word to which high ideals are attached, and it was constantly used to indicate a justifiable claim by the people to overthrow bad rulers; the Will of the People is even considered to be the Will of Heaven. In the *Book of History*, an old Chinese classic, it is stated: “Heaven sees as our people see; Heaven hears as our people hear. Heaven is compassionate towards the people. What the people desire, Heaven will be found to bring about”.

A ruler has a duty to Heaven to take care of the interests of his people. In loving his people, the ruler follows the Will of Heaven. So it says in the same book: “Heaven loves the people; and the Sovereign must obey Heaven”.

When the ruler no longer rules for the welfare of the people, it is the right of the people to revolt against him and dethrone him. When the last ruler Chieh (1818–1766 B.C.) of the Hsia Dynasty (2205–1766 B.C.) was cruel and oppressive to his people, and became a tyrant, Tang started a revolution and overthrew the Hsia Dynasty. He felt it was his duty to follow the call of Heaven, which meant obeying exactly the Will of the people to dethrone the bad ruler and to establish the new dynasty of Shang (1766–1122 B.C.)

When the last ruler of this dynasty, Tsou (1154–1122 B.C.) became a tyrant and even exceeded in wickedness the last ruler Chieh of the former dynasty, he was executed in a revolution led by King Wu (1122 B.C.) who founded the Chou Dynasty, which in turn lasted over 800 years (1122–296 B.C.). [...]

The right to revolt was repeatedly expressed in Chinese history, which consisted of a sequence of setting up and overthrowing dynasties. A great Confucianist, Mencius (372–289 B.C.), strongly maintained that a government should work for the Will of the people. He said: “People are of primary importance. The state is of less importance. The sovereign is of least importance”.

United Nations: Babel of the Millennium, 1999, an installation by Chinese artist Gu Wenda, part of The Divine Comedy of our Times project.

© Gu Wenda / Collection San Francisco Museum Of Modern Art, Gift of Vicki and Kent Logan / CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 photo by Steve Rhodes





“No declaration of human rights will ever be exhaustive and final. It will ever go hand-in-hand with the state of moral consciousness and civilization at a given moment in history. And it is for that reason that even after the major victory achieved at the end of the eighteenth century by the first written statement of those rights, it remains thereafter a principal interest of humanity that such declarations should be renewed from century to century”

Jacques Maritain (1882-1973)

French philosopher
UNESCO survey, 1947-48

Mutual obligations

The basic ethical concept of Chinese social political relations is the fulfilment of the duty to one's neighbour, rather than the claiming of rights. The idea of mutual obligations is regarded as the fundamental teaching of Confucianism. The five basic social relations described by Confucius and his followers are the relations between (1) ruler and subjects, (2) parents and children, (3) husband and wife, (4) elder and younger brother and (5) friend and friend.

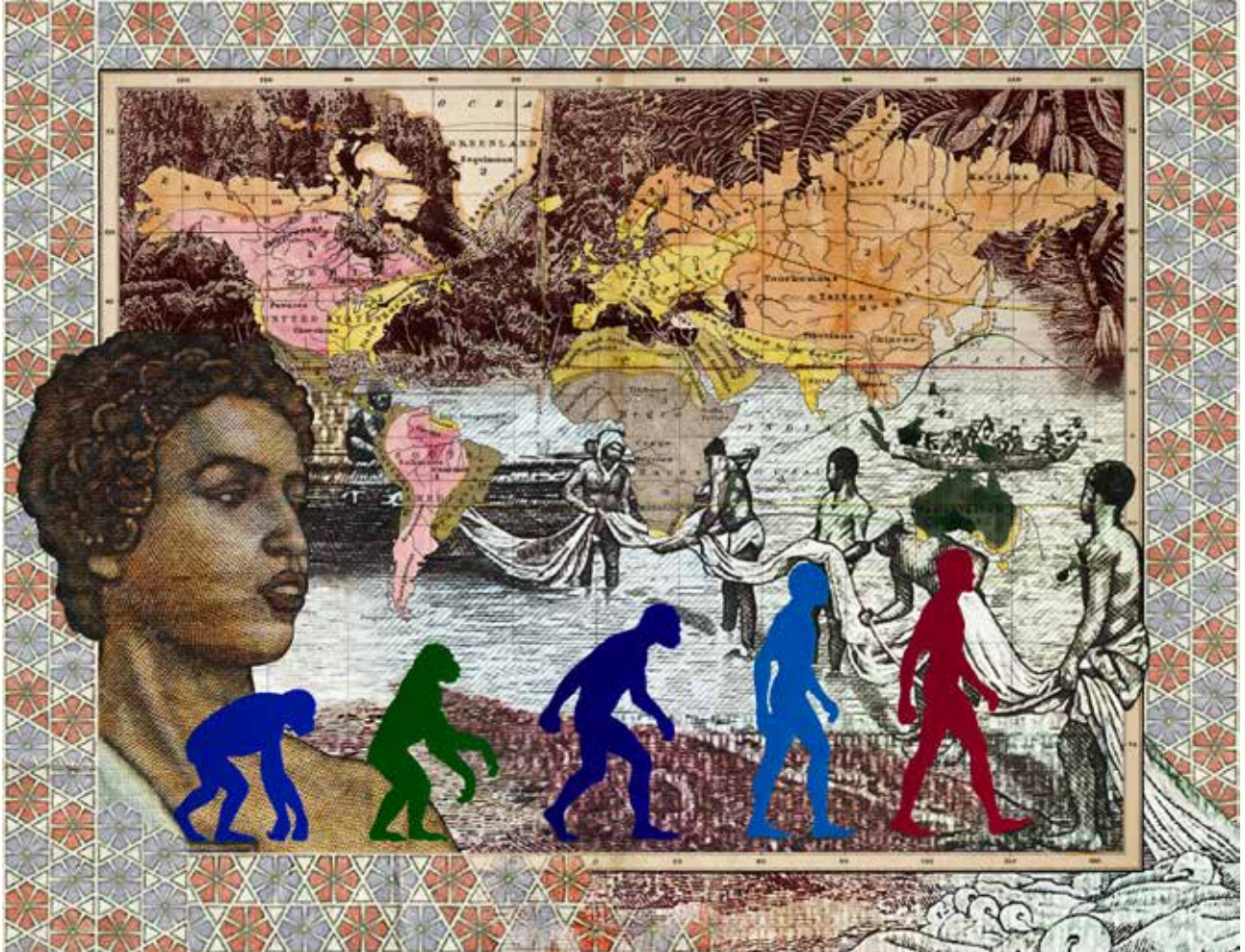
Instead of claiming rights, Chinese ethical teaching emphasized the sympathetic attitude of regarding all one's fellow men as having the same desires, and therefore the same rights, as one would like to enjoy oneself. By the fulfilment of mutual obligations, the infringement of the rights of the individual should be prevented. So far as the relation between the individual and state is concerned, the moral code is stated thus: "The people are the root of the country. When the root is firm, the country will be at peace."

In the old days, only the ruling class, or people who would be expected to become part of the ruling class, got the classical education; the mass of the people were not taught to claim their rights. It was the ruling class or would-be ruling class who were constantly taught to look upon the interest of the people as the primary responsibility of the government. The sovereign as well as the officials were taught to regard themselves as the parents or guardians of the people, and to protect their people as they would their own children. If it was not always the practice of actual politics, it was at least the basic principle of Chinese political thought. The weakness of this doctrine is that the welfare of the people depends so much on the goodwill of the ruling class, who are much inclined to fail in their duties and to exploit the people. This explains the constant revolutions in Chinese history. [...]

A professor of philosophy at the West-China University, Chengdu, Sichuan, the Chinese scholar **Lo Chung-Shu** (1903-1985) was also a special consultant for UNESCO.



Human rights for the colonized



© Malala Andrialavidrazana (www.andrialavidrazana.com)

Leonard John Barnes

“It might be predicted that when colonial peoples set about drafting a Bill of Rights, their claims will tally generally with those of depressed and disabled groups everywhere, but will also show a special distribution of emphasis corresponding to the special character of colonial disabilities,” wrote the British anti-colonialist writer Leonard J. Barnes (1895-1977). An excerpt of his article, “The Rights of Dependent Peoples”, sent to UNESCO from London in June 1947, follows.

The general picture of a colony is of a territory where economic subordination entails political disability; where political disability may bring with it severe restrictions upon civil liberty and an exceptional widening of the legal meaning of the word “sedition” (such restrictions being at their most severe when the metropolitan authorities regard the native culture as backward or inferior); and

Leading Races of Man, by French-Malagasy artist Malala Andrialavidrazana, whose collages use atlases, stamps, banknotes and other objects produced in the colonial era, to create an artistic cartography of today's world.

where official anxiety about sedition and allied offences leads to judicial and police practices, which in the metropolitan country would be regarded as unusually harsh.

The consequence is that the subject peoples as a whole, and particularly their more cultivated and better-educated representatives, exhibit to a marked degree, the frustrations and the corruptions of impotence. For it should not be forgotten that, true as it may be that absolute power corrupts absolutely, the psychological effects of absolute powerlessness are no less damaging.



The reflection of frustrations

Formulations of human rights naturally tend to reflect the major frustrations of those who make them. If a right, declared and claimed, is to be more than an empty aspiration, if it is to serve as “a working conception and effective instrument”, it will express the natural demands of dissatisfied groups and of the have-nots of the social order. Liberty is the cry of the bond, equality the cry of the victim of discrimination, fraternity the cry of the outcast; progress and humanity are the cry of those whom their fellows use as means instead of respecting as ends; full employment is the cry of the worker whose daily job, or lack of job, stunts his soul and mocks his capabilities; social planning is the cry of those who are trampled underfoot when privilege and power strive to make the world safe for themselves. That is why declarations of the rights of man are strong allies of social progress, at least when they are first promulgated. For social progress is reorganization in the interests of the unprivileged.

Hence it might be predicted that when colonial peoples set about drafting a Bill of Rights, their claims will tally generally with those of depressed and disabled groups everywhere, but will also show a special distribution of emphasis corresponding to the special character of colonial disabilities. And in fact, wherever colonial discontent achieves articulate form, it shows a keen awareness both of the fundamental significance of an equity-less economy, with its necessary corollary of political subordination, and of the organic connection between these and the denials of civil liberty common in colonial territories. It is, further, ready enough to subscribe to the traditional democratic slogans of liberty, equality, and fraternity, partly because colonial peoples have wide experience of being used as means to other people's ends, and partly because such slogans are handy for embarrassing the metropolitan authorities.

A colonial livery

But all these diverse sentiments and attitudes are given a particular colouring, they wear a particular livery, distinctive of colonial experience. This colour, this livery, is the claim to equal rights with citizens of the metropolis, the protest against a discrimination that appears, to those on whom it falls, to be as arbitrary as it is comprehensive.

“ Human rights suggest rights which are alike for all human beings. Yet it is recognized that much of human nature is a product of the particular culture in which the individual has developed. Consequently, if all men have something in common which might provide the basis for a universal bill of human rights, it must reside either in common biological, psychological, or spiritual characteristics which persist in spite of cultural differences, or in those common elements of the many cultures which may be regarded as a world culture ”

Quincy Wright (1890-1970)
American political scientist
UNESCO survey, 1947-48

For this reason, progressive movements among colonial peoples tend to assume a nationalist and liberationist form. They are liberationist because their awakening political consciousness sees the established constitutional ties with the metropolis as emblems of foreign domination. They are nationalist because separate nationhood is the repository of state power, and without state power at their disposal, the liberationists can neither sever their political and economic dependence on the metropolis nor take over the administrative functions of the metropolis after the severance has been made.

We should, therefore, see the colonial peoples both as aggregations of individuals repressed and thwarted by specific forms of disprivilege, and as emergent nations struggling to attain equal status with the so-called independent countries in point of sovereignty and international recognition. The claim – we emphasize this – is to formal equality of status. It is not to material equality of function. Nor is it necessarily to full national sovereignty in the classical signification of the term.

Colonial peoples object to limitations of sovereignty when they are fastened on them from without, and appear as badges of inferiority. They might well accept limitations, provided they could do so of their own choice in the interests of effective international organization, and provided they were assured that the majority of other free countries were genuinely making the same acceptance.

Such is the position of the dependent peoples, and such are their needs or rights. The needs cannot be satisfied by legislative enactment, nor can the rights be guaranteed by constitutional charter. Attempts to give the force of unalterable law to the claims of particular groups or communities have often been made. But since no legislators can bind their successors for ever, the attempts prove in the end either fruitless or superfluous. [...]

A British anti-colonialist writer, journalist and educationalist, **Leonard J. Barnes** (1895-1977) worked in the British colonial office and had first-hand experience of colonial rule in South Africa, where he was based as a journalist. He is best known for his book, *Soviet Light on the Colonies*, published in 1944.



A sacred and universal character for human rights

Arnold Schoenberg

“The heathens could always deny the immortality of the soul, and yet the believers will not stop to see it as a certitude. Even if the pagans were right today, the power of faith the believers have would one day make the soul immortal,” wrote Austrian-American composer Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951) in the text he sent to UNESCO from Los Angeles on 21 July 1947, under the title “The Rights of Man”. **“The same will apply to human rights, if we do not cease to believe in their existence, even though they should remain unknown and ill-defined for a long time to come,”** he added. Excerpts follow.

It is sad to admit that most men consider it their right to challenge the rights of others and even fight them. What is even sadder is that the present aspect of the world does not offer any hope for improvement in the near future.

This should not however stifle our aspiration for a world where the sanctity of the Rights of Man would be an intangible evidence for everybody. Humanity has never been able to access this kind of happiness unless a growing number of individuals pursued with fervour, an ideal conceived a long time ago, until its accomplishment. All the progress of social thought or social sentiment that allowed for a life together without any discord could have been achieved only through the strength of such aspirations.

We must not give that up.

The heathens could always deny the immortality of the soul, and yet the believers will not stop to see it as a certitude. Even if the pagans were right today, the power of faith the believers have would one day make the soul immortal.

It will be the same with the Rights of Man if we do not cease to believe in their existence, even though they may remain unknown and ill-defined for a long time.

If there is a difference between the common law, the civil law and the rights of man, it should be limited to this:

- The rights of man seek to balance powers and resistance even in areas where the common law has not yet found solutions.
- We must find a minimum of rights valid for all peoples and all races.

The task of formulating a Declaration of the Rights of Man clearly lies with an organization that purports to be at the “vanguard” of the progress of the common law. [...]

The difficulty of defining the rights lies in the opposition of interests we’re about to protect. Galileo who questioned Genesis, and the Church, which does not admit any violation of God’s word, both need equal protection and both have equal rights. [...]

A civilization and a culture based exclusively on scientific knowledge should put a stop to their progress in order to balance competing interests. After long centuries, no doubt, because powerful forces oppose it; moreover, all the interests involved are either unknown or fail to be revealed in time. But the study of rights has more refined instruments at its disposal and more requirements it must meet.

Which leads us to the protection of honour.

The Archbishop could afford to slap Mozart in the face, without wondering whether he entered the history of music by that action.

Who could guess then that the sense of honour associated with the artist would assume such proportions in the future? Who could have predicted that this or that artist would be disgusted with life after having surprised himself with unworthy thoughts?

But who could have, on the other hand, envisioned that the injuries the critics dealt Wagner, Ibsen, Strindberg, Mahler, and others would be ultimately considered a mark of honour? Without such enemies we could not be truly great.

When then will the rights of man – without, of course, preventing people from being forced to participate in injustice – make others understand the shame of inflicting such suffering? [...]

It is tragic that the rights of man are, like democracy, unable to defend themselves against attacks and against destruction. All that could be undertaken on behalf of these rights would indeed undermine the rights of the aggressor. Just as everything that tends to consolidate democracy is undemocratic.

That leaves us only with having recourse to persuasion.

It seems that the rights of man should be limited to a smaller number of claims that would not render this concept too ambitious.

Most forms of belief are exclusive and antagonistic, sometimes even combative, provocative, aggressive. It would be a suicide for them to be tolerant. Let’s think, for example, about the communist or fascist States, where belief is a governing instrument.



Does the man have the duty to believe what is true? Does the right to believe what is falsehood deserve to be protected?

The Ten Commandments are undoubtedly one of the first Declarations of the Rights of Man that have ever been formulated. They guarantee the right to life and the right to property; they protect the marriage, oath-taking and labour, but, as there is only one God, they deny any freedom of belief.

“How can I truly love the good without hating the evil?” Strindberg asked himself. Wherefrom the desire and even the obligation to fight evil.

This is why some believe they must fight “bourgeois” art and others, the Palestinian style, which is foreign to our race and began with the great Adolf Loos.

The fighter has the will and the duty to defeat, the will and the duty to oppress the conquered.

But what is then to become of the human rights of those who believe in vanquished art forms or ideas? [...]

Is the right to be born one of the rights of man? Or is it the right to control births one of them? And does one have the right to starve those who are born in surplus?

What do religions say about this? [...]

We have there serious problems that could turn us into pessimists.

Nevertheless, we must not give up our desire to bestow a sacred and universal character to the rights of man.

We have in our hearts the strength of desire combined with the intensity of creation.

A photograph from the series Visible/Invisible, 2015, by French photographer Flore-Aël Surun.

© Flore-Aël Surun / Tendance Floue

One of the most influential and innovative composers of the twentieth century, Austrian-American composer **Arnold Schoenberg** (1874-1951) created new methods of musical composition involving atonality. Like many other Jewish artists, Schoenberg emigrated to the United States in 1933. He taught at the Malkin Conservatory in Boston, and moved to California in 1934, where he spent the rest of his life. He held major teaching positions at the University of Southern California and the University of California, Los Angeles, and became a US citizen in 1941.



Human rights and cultural perspectives

Lionel Veer and Annemarie Dezentje

The current debates that question the universality of the Declaration of Human Rights are bringing to the fore the initiatives that UNESCO has been taking since 1947, to encourage the discussion on diverse cultural horizons.

Today, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is widely accepted by most States and is an integral part of international law. Even so, it must be recognized that the global scene has changed since the Declaration's adoption in 1948. Not only is the composition of the United Nations General Assembly more diverse, but States are no longer the only political actors. They must now deal with supranational, transnational and local actors who generate, reconstruct or challenge existing normative assumptions.

Moreover, international human rights law is not the only normative order. There are other non-legal options, such as customary, religious, social and cultural norms, which are invoked to uphold fundamental human rights.

In many African societies and some Asian countries, the rights and duties of human beings are observed in relation to the community rather than the individual. While liberalism focuses on the inviolable rights of the individual, Confucianism in China, for example, is more concerned with communal duties. In Africa, the *ubuntu* philosophy, based on notions of humanity and fraternity, inspired the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa.

The Gacaca courts, which joined the process of national reconciliation following the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, are another well-known example of the use of traditional mechanisms. But there are many others.

Community alternatives

The Manden Charter, for example, is considered one of the oldest constitutions in the world, although it is oral and transmitted from generation to generation. Proclaimed at the beginning of the thirteenth century by the Mandingo Empire – which extended over a large part of West Africa in the Middle Ages – the Charter is composed of a “preamble” and seven “chapters” advocating social peace in diversity, the inviolability of the human person, education, the integrity of the motherland, food security, the abolition of slavery by razzia (a raid) and the freedom of expression and enterprise. These principles, that define the rights and duties of members of the Mandingo community, are still in force and are supported by the local and national authorities in Mali.

The Charter was inscribed by UNESCO on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2009 because it represents an eloquent example of traditional social and legal organization – which should not be forgotten.

At the other end of Africa, a community solution that has been established in Swaziland also merits our full attention. In this country, as in many others, a woman who is a victim of domestic violence has only one option to defend herself: to go to the police and file a report. But this is counter-productive, because if the husband is convicted, the breadwinner of the entire family ends up behind bars. This is why women have developed an alternative strategy.

At festive celebrations or solemn occasions, women traditionally perform songs together, while other members of the community, including men, are expected to remain silent and listen. Many of these female choirs, which sometimes perform for hours, have included songs condemning domestic violence in their repertoire. Publicly confronting the men in this way has proven to be far more effective than any recourse to formal justice – according to research conducted by the Cross Cultural Human Rights Centre, established by Chinese, African and European academics in Beijing, China, in 2014.

Another example of the effectiveness and social legitimacy of non-state mechanisms has been identified in India, where *Nari Adalats*, or women's courts, have been established in rural areas. They are presided over by women who have only a basic knowledge of the Indian Penal Code, but use mediation to resolve cases. In spite of some flaws, the informal courts are a good alternative to the lengthy and expensive procedures of the official courts – they receive local support and funding from the Indian government.

Initiatives that emerge from the cultural communities themselves are likely to be more sustainable and effective in the long run, than changes imposed by external actors or by the state. These systems that serve to protect communities need to be taken into account.

Different forms of thinking

Seventy years ago, UNESCO was saying exactly that, when it stated: “Such a Declaration (of human rights) depends, however, not only on the authority by which rights are safeguarded and advanced, but also on the common understanding which makes the proclamation feasible and the faith practicable.”



© posterfortomorrow 2018 - Sarah Hartwig

This excerpt comes from the report submitted on 31 July 1947, under the title, *The Grounds of an International Declaration of Human Rights* (p. 1), by the committee of experts that UNESCO had convened to participate in the process of drafting the UDHR. To this end, the Organization had launched a global survey on the philosophical principles of human rights [which is the topic of the main section of this issue of the *Courier*], in order to include key elements from various traditions and worldviews in the debate.

This document also affirmed the Organization's conviction that "the deeper the re-examination of the bases of human rights, the greater are the hopes that emerge as possible" [p. 3]. It also cautioned against the risk that differences in interpretation, linked to the diversity of cultures, could hinder the agreement and the implementation of the rights set out in the UDHR.

A poster by German artist Sarah Hartwig, one of the participants in the One for all, all for one! competition, organized in 2018 by the non-profit, 4tomorrow, to celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

As evidenced in an earlier document, the Human Rights Memorandum of 27 March 1947 [p. 6], UNESCO believed that "We must not... neglect the fact that in other parts of the world other human rights theories have emerged, are emerging, or are destined to emerge".

After citing fascism as the perfect example of a political system that is theoretically unsustainable and has been completely discredited and defeated in practice, the Memorandum suggests that "a quite new formulation of human rights would be required to embody the views of a man like Mahatma Gandhi, or those numerous Indian thinkers who believe in the social importance and individual value of meditation and mystical experience."

The document concluded that "we can be reasonably sure that the ferment of thought now apparent in the peoples of black and brown and yellow skin-colour, from Africa to the Far East, is destined to result in still other formulations."

In spite of UNESCO's efforts to expand cultural horizons, Asian or African traditions and philosophies were not taken into account when the UDHR was formulated. Although cultural differences were on the agenda, it was the Western perception of human rights that finally prevailed. It is based on the political philosophy of liberalism and focuses on the natural rights of the individual rather than on society and culture. Moreover, the process of claiming and implementing these rights is rooted in Western legal culture, in which states and legislators play the leading roles.

Over the past seventy years, cultural diversity, the influence of non-state actors and legal plurality have received increasing attention. This evolution must be taken seriously, so that the philosophy of the UDHR can be transmitted to local communities and be effective in their contexts and culture.

The current debates on the virtual absence of non-Western ideas in human rights standards – which indicate the unease felt by a part of the world's population – illustrate that the discussion, initiated by UNESCO in 1947, was prematurely dismissed, and that it deserves to be reopened today.

Human Rights Ambassador for the Netherlands from 2010 to 2014, **Lionel Veer** is a senior diplomat. He was the Netherlands Ambassador and Permanent Delegate to UNESCO from September 2014 to September 2018.

Specializing in Human Rights and International Politics, **Annamarie Dezentje** currently works for the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations of the Dutch government.



Zoom



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Under the pretext of helping 20-year-old Gisèle get rid of an evil eye, a friend of her parents took her to a deserted place and raped her. "I know he's done it before," she says. He had already raped two girls aged 12 and 15, whose parents are afraid to take action. Their parents don't dare to do anything as they're scared of what might happen. But Gisèle wants justice to be done.



Gisèle, Marie, Viviane

and millions of other women

Photos: Bénédicte Kurzen / Noor

Text: Katerina Markelova

This photo-reportage is published by the *UNESCO Courier* to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, 25 November.

The names of the women who participated in the photographic project have been changed for their protection.

Haiti, 2015. In the streets of Port-au-Prince, a 20-year-old student is looking for work. Let's call her Marie. A young man offers to help her. "He said I should accompany him to his home to pick up some documents. When we got there, he pulled out a gun. That's when it happened," she recounts. Marie was raped.

The story of this young Haitian woman, is, unfortunately, only one illustration of a much greater scourge. Violence against women knows no borders. Women across the world are being crushed under the weight of the suffering and stigmatization it causes, regardless of their culture, religion or socio-economic status.

Considered taboo in most societies, violence forces many women to remain silent about their ordeal, and is often not reflected in statistics. Surveys among these women are often the only way to get an idea of the extent of the malaise. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), one in three women in the world is exposed to physical or sexual violence during her lifetime.



Fortunately, more and more women are raising their voices to break the silence, overcoming feelings of shame and guilt – and often the fear of reprisals. Like four other Haitian women – one of them only a teenager – Marie chose to join this fight by participating in a photographic project. "Against Their Will" was launched in 2016 by Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders (MSF) in collaboration with the French photographer Bénédicte Kurzen.

"Let's take the car, leave Port-au-Prince. Let's go to Source Zabeth. I want to be photographed in traditional clothes, in the water, as if I were doing laundry."

For her photo session, Marie chooses a setting that symbolizes purification. She wants to be rejuvenated, to free herself from the horrible experience and to make a fresh start. "I'm going to move on. I want to become a journalist," she declares.

"It was impossible for me to approach these women solely from the point of view of the tragedy they have lived through, because they all sought to overcome it," explains Kurzen. "That opened up new perspectives to the photographic narrative."

In Haiti, where rape was recognized as a crime only in 2005 (it was considered indecent assault until then), twenty-eight per cent of women aged 15 to 49 reported experiencing some form of physical violence, and more than one woman in ten said they been subjected to sexual violence.

According to *The New York Times*, following the earthquake that hit the Haitian capital in 2010, the rates of sexual attacks in the city's makeshift camps was twenty times higher than in the rest of the country. MSF has pointed to inadequacies in the treatment of victims of sexual and gender-based violence, including a lack of institutions offering medical and psychological support, and the almost total absence of social and legal protection.

To draw attention to this neglected problem – grossly underestimated in official statistics – the humanitarian organization launched its photographic project a year after it opened the *Pran Men'm* ('take my hand' in Haitian Creole) clinic in Port-au-Prince. In two years, the clinic has treated more than 1,300 victims of sexual aggression. The vast majority of these were under the age of 25. What is particularly disturbing is that fifty-three per cent of the victims were minors.

For UNESCO, educating young people is the only long-term solution to gender-based violence. In spite of the alarming figures – about 246 million children are subjected to various forms of gender-based violence each year – there are too few children and teenagers who receive a comprehensive sex education (learning the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of sexuality) as part of their regular curriculum. Yet the benefits of such an education are undeniable – not only do young people learn to refrain from all forms of gender-based violence, they also learn to prevent it, recognize it and find help.

UNESCO published a revised edition of its *International technical guidance on sexuality education* in 2018, produced in collaboration with UNAIDS, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Women and WHO. The guide is aimed at education and health officials and other competent authorities, to help them develop and introduce sex education programmes and materials.





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In a makeshift camp in Port-au-Prince, a man sneaks into a torn tent. Sarah's alone, with no one to protect her. "He was someone we knew. He lived in the same area as us in the camp," says the 13-year-old girl's mother. Now she doesn't want Sarah to do what the little girl has always loved doing: dancing. "I feel she is too visible when she dances," she explains.





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"I met this guy on the street. We started to chat. I told him I was looking for a job. He said that one of his friends was looking for someone like me. He said that I should accompany him to his home to pick up some documents. When we got there, he pulled out his gun. This is when it happened," recounted 20-year-old Marie, who was raped at gunpoint.



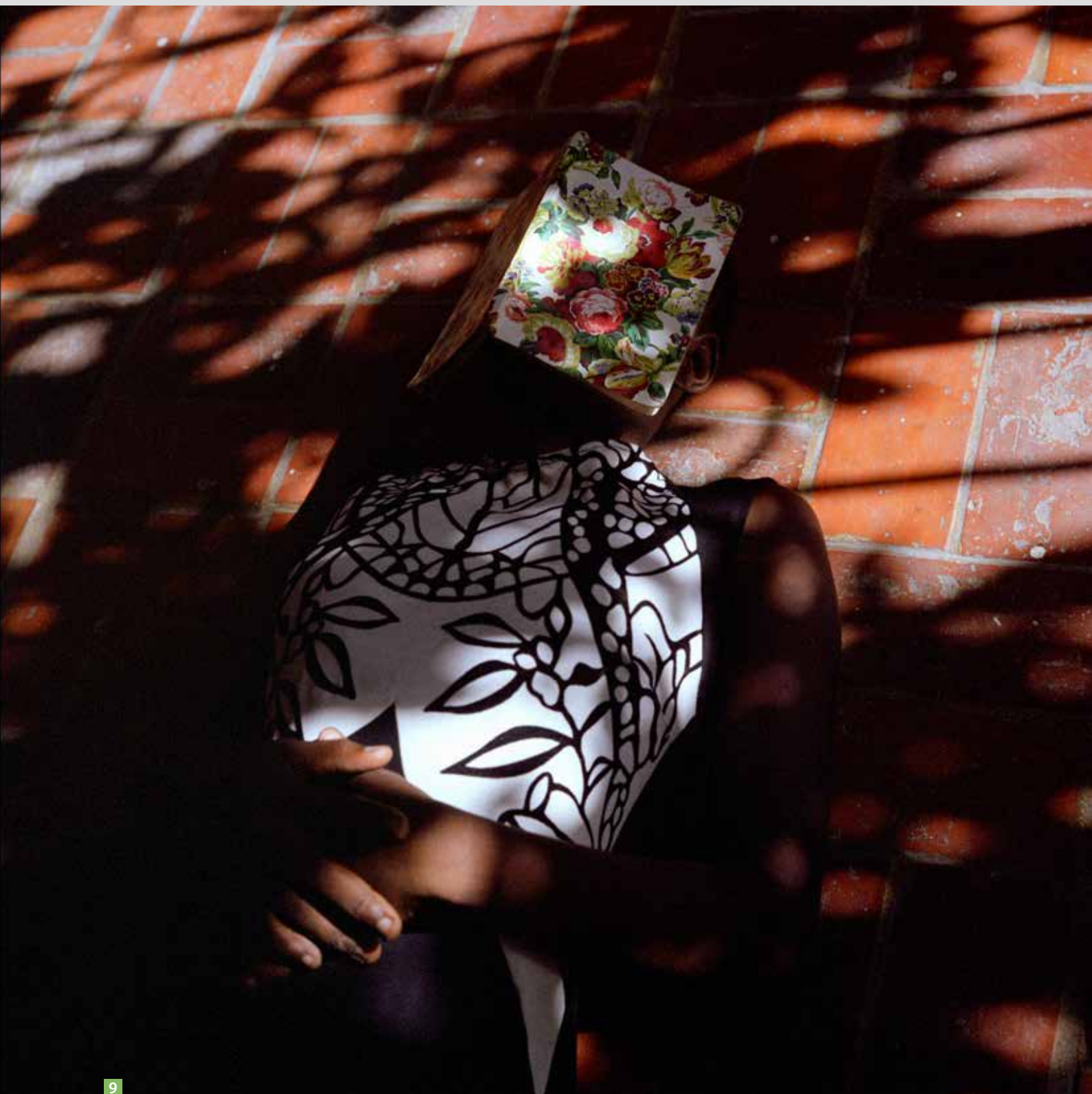
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Advertising for a beauty salon in the streets of Croix-des-Bouquets, twelve kilometres from Port-au-Prince.



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The boy was a school friend of 22-year-old Viviane. He invited her to his house, saying he would lend her a book. "I kept asking if his dad was there. He said yes. When we got there, the house was empty." The rape was premeditated.



Ideas



Luminous hearts symbolizing the 171,635 migrants who crossed the Mediterranean Sea in 2017. Detail from the installation The Heart Full of Hope (3 x 3 metres, 2017) by French photographer Patrick Willocq. Media: black Pyrenees slate, makeshift boat made of plastic bottles, red neon hearts.

© Patrick Willocq

Education for migrants: an inalienable human right

Fons Coomans

The right to education is often taken for granted – until it is taken away. An indispensable tool to protect the freedom and dignity of all migrants, education allows them to fully integrate into their new societies. This legitimate aspiration, however, faces obstacles on the ground.

With its Ideas section, the *UNESCO Courier* marks the celebration of International Migrants Day on December 18.



A young migrant waits to be registered after arriving on the Greek island of Samos (2016).

© UNHCR / Aikaterini Kitidi

Enshrined in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, education is an essential tool for the protection of human dignity. Human rights become even more meaningful when their realization is at risk – as when people are forced to flee from armed conflict or persecution, or simply because they want to improve their socio-economic condition. When they arrive in their new countries, their educational situation could be uncertain.

For refugees, receiving an education is the best way to become full members of their host countries. Regular migrant workers and their children benefit intellectually and socially from attending school, where they learn about the society in which they are living.

Asylum-seekers, awaiting a decision about their future, need basic language courses – especially if they are unaccompanied minors. For undocumented migrants, access to a basic education provides stability and a semblance of regularity in their lives, besides increasing self-esteem. The right to education requires states to provide access to educational services and financial resources, so that no one is deprived of basic schooling, at the bare minimum.

The educational situation of asylum-seekers and refugees in temporary reception camps across the borders of countries where conflicts occur (for example, Lebanon, Jordan, Greece and Turkey), is likely to be even more precarious. This could be due to a shortage of facilities such as buildings and school materials, a lack of qualified teachers, and scarce financial resources.

Who, in these cases, should be responsible for enforcing their right to education? The international community, of course, but that requires a determined commitment and a strong political will to protect those in vulnerable situations. Often, additional financial resources are required to meet the educational needs of these groups. UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, relies heavily on special donations for its educational programmes in refugee camps. If these children are denied a good basic education, an entire generation may be lost.

What the law guarantees...

International human rights law guarantees an education for all, without discrimination. This principle of non-discrimination extends to all persons of school-going age residing in the territory of a state, including non-nationals, irrespective of their legal status. Irregular or undocumented migrants can therefore invoke the right to education. This right creates immediate and unequivocal obligations – the state has no margin of freedom in this area. Discrimination on any ground is prohibited, because the very essence of the law is at stake. This implies an equal right of access to educational institutions, which can be described as the core, or minimum content, of the right.

This follows from the universal nature of human rights. Special measures for the protection of the right to education can be derived from the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. Article 22 provides that states “shall accord to refugees the same treatment as is accorded to nationals with respect to elementary education” and “in any event not less favourable than that accorded to aliens generally in the same circumstances, with respect to education other than elementary education and, in particular, as regards access to studies, the recognition of foreign school certificates, diplomas and degrees, the remission of fees and charges and the award of scholarships.”

To this, Article 3(1) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) adds that “the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration” in all actions concerning children. This includes the provision of educational services for all migrants.

The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990) guarantees that migrant workers, their children and members of their families, have equal treatment with nationals of the state of employment.



© Geuer & Geuer Art (www.geuer-geuer-art.de)

Quality Education, by German artist Leon Löwentraut, part of the #Art4GlobalGoals initiative, launched by Ute-Henriette Ohoven, UNESCO Special Ambassador for the Education of Children in Need.

Concerning the education of children, Article 30 stipulates that “Each child of a migrant worker shall have the basic right of access to education on the basis of equality of treatment with nationals of the State concerned. Access to public pre-school educational institutions or schools shall not be refused or limited by reason of the irregular situation with respect to stay or employment of either parent or by reason of the irregularity of the child's stay in the State of employment.” The problem with this Convention is that it has not been widely ratified by the states of employment – probably because it contains very strong obligations.

At the regional level, the European Convention on Human Rights (1950) contains a clear-cut provision: “No person shall be denied the right to education”, (Article 2, of the first Protocol).

Under European Union (EU) law, minors seeking asylum and refugees have access to education under the same conditions as nationals of EU member states. This right may be invoked by any person within the jurisdiction of a state party to the convention, therefore including irregular migrants. However, it is limited to education only at the primary and secondary levels.

...and the problems on the ground

The implementation of the right to education for migrants poses a number of challenges and dilemmas for the governments of host countries.

It may be in the public interest to prevent irregular non-nationals from becoming a part of society through education. This could be to limit the allocation of scarce resources only to those who have obtained a residence permit, or to ensure that migrant labour would be available in the future, as populations age.



On the other hand, newcomers have a legitimate interest in becoming full members of society, through participation and progressive inclusion. Education plays a pivotal role in this. States are free to decide how they allocate their financial resources, but while doing so, must respect the obligations of assistance and protection to which they have voluntarily subscribed by becoming parties to human rights treaties.

For example, the public interest may require the state to deter irregular migrants from leaving their country and undertaking a perilous journey to Europe. However, once these migrants have arrived, fundamental human rights must be respected. This does not mean that they should be given access to all services on the same basis as citizens of the host country. States may have a legitimate interest in restricting free access to higher education if that has the effect of attracting more irregular migrants. But states cannot restrict access to elementary or basic education. This right must be guaranteed in all circumstances.

We know that some refugees will probably stay permanently, because it is impossible for them to return to their country of origin. It is therefore essential that national and local authorities anticipate and design educational policies that are culturally appropriate – enabling those who are interested to become integrated, with access to the labour market.

Above all, a balance must be struck between the educational needs of young migrants and the differential treatment of citizens and non-citizens with respect to access to education. For instance, language instruction is recommended for migrants as soon as they arrive.

Ensuring access to education, housing, social and healthcare services and jobs for refugees is bound to impose a financial burden on governments. However, since a generous policy to welcome migrants can sometimes lead to misunderstanding, uneasiness and discontent among some citizens, governments must explain the reasons for their choices and justify them in light of other budgetary priorities, political interests and their international human rights obligations.

To conclude, it is important that the rights of migrants to an education are widely recognized as inalienable human rights, and not merely as goals to be achieved through public policy measures. National, local and school authorities must be aware of this, and act accordingly.

Head of the Department of International and European Law, **Fons Coomans** (The Netherlands) holds the UNESCO Chair in Human Rights and Peace at Maastricht University. He is Director of the Maastricht Centre for Human Rights, and a member of the Netherlands Network for Human Rights Research.

Building bridges, not walls

With more people than ever before on the move – either voluntarily or forced from their homes – there are enormous implications for education, that require flexible and innovative solutions. This is the central theme of UNESCO's 2019 Global Education Monitoring Report, *Migration, Displacement and Education: Building Bridges, Not Walls*. It analyses several tried and tested solutions – with varying degrees of success – and concludes with a set of recommendations for policymakers working on the issue.

Education has a direct or indirect influence over whether people move and where they move to. It affects their resilience, attitudes, aspirations, beliefs and sense of belonging. Yet, for many on the move, especially the displaced, the administrative or discriminatory barriers they face often impede their access to education entirely, even though it can provide a safe haven.

The annual report makes the case for education of migrants and refugees to be given priority in their host countries' plans. Most migrants are talented and driven; many have overcome huge challenges in their bid to do better. Expanding access to quality education for people on the move improves their lives.

Ignoring education in the response to migration is a failure to recognize its power to address diversity and promote inclusion. Through effective teacher training and teaching materials, a good education can provide people with the skills to engage with different cultures and challenge their own stereotypes. It can build much-needed bridges across cultures and divides, and forge a path towards a more cohesive and just world.

Helping teachers to help refugees



© UNHCR/Anthony Karumba

Jacqueline Strecker

Fifty million displaced children worldwide! This was the alarming figure released by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on World Refugee Day, 20 June 2018. Faced with the trauma and interrupted education of these children who are victims, teachers find themselves ill-equipped to deal with these challenges – especially since many of them have little or no qualifications themselves. Now, several institutions in different countries are stepping up with initiatives to help teachers give their best.

Teachers in schools that host refugees often walk into the toughest classrooms in the world, day after day. A single classroom could contain many learners who have seen their homes destroyed and their relatives injured or killed. Some may have disabilities, either from birth or as a result of the violence in their home countries. They could be former child soldiers, survivors of sexual abuse, or children whose siblings were not lucky enough to escape to a safe place like they did. Their education may have been interrupted for weeks, months, or even years.

The United Nations Refugee Agency, UNHCR, estimates that on average, refugee learners miss out on at least three to four years of education because of forced displacement – making their re-entry into school a persistent challenge for education systems in general, and for teachers in particular.

In 2016, there were 6.4 million school-aged children and youth among the 17.2 million refugees under UNHCR's mandate.

In Kenya's Kakuma refugee camp, the scale of the challenge for teachers is daunting. Classes of ninety or a 100 students are common, and classes with 200 children are not unusual. But help is at hand, with a programme that trains refugees to become teachers.

Almost 3.5 million of these remain out of school – the 2.9 million who are able to enrol, often end up in overcrowded and poorly-resourced classrooms. At least 20,000 additional teachers and 12,000 more classrooms are needed each year to address the gap for the world's displaced students alone.

The experience of Chaltu Megesha Gedo is inspiring. When she arrived for her first day of teaching in the Kakuma Refugee camp in northern Kenya, she was assigned a first-grade primary class. "These were children aged between 5 and 10 years," she recalls. "I entered the class and I was mesmerized – I did not know where to turn because there were 250 of them!"



But even environments that are not optimal still present the best opportunities for refugee children and youth to transform their lives. Teachers remain the most likely catalysts for that transformation, and require targeted support that takes local realities into account.

Teachers in these schools may themselves be refugees, and have often experienced the same types of trauma as their students. This is why training programmes must address the psychological needs of teachers to help them grow professionally.

Innovative initiatives

A series of joint initiatives and innovative pedagogical approaches to support the preparedness and well-being of teachers working with refugees have been implemented.

The *Teachers in Crisis Contexts Training Pack* (TICC) is an inter-agency initiative that synthesizes existing resources into a single comprehensive resource to encourage harmonized programming between partners in emergency settings. The resulting open-source teacher-training pack covers five areas – the teacher's role and well-being; child protection, well-being and inclusion; pedagogy; curriculum and planning; and subject knowledge. Each domain focuses on building the skills required for unqualified or under-qualified teachers.

While the TICC was an important step towards establishing the minimum skills and classroom content needed, its development also underlined the ineffectiveness of stand-alone training. This awareness led to the launching of innovative initiatives like the *Teachers for Teachers* and the *Borderless Higher Education for Refugees* (BHER) programmes.

Global mentors

Teachers for Teachers is a joint initiative of Teachers College, Columbia University (United States) and Finn Church Aid, a Finnish non-governmental organization (NGO), in partnership with UNHCR and the Lutheran World Federation. It provides teachers with continuous professional development, using an approach that integrates training classes, peer coaching and mobile mentoring.

The training is based on the TICC, with teachers following two concurrent tracks – a short-term session of four days, and long-term training spread over several months. In addition, teachers are placed into small groups and assigned a peer coach who facilitates the learning circles and conducts classroom visits to aid each teacher.

Mobile mentoring is perhaps the most innovative aspect of the programme, providing teachers with a “global mentor” available to them via WhatsApp and a private Facebook group. These exchanges help teachers feel they are part of a wider community of practitioners with whom they can share their experiences and obtain teaching advice.

Intercultural exchanges

The BHER programme provides refugees and local teachers residing in and around the Dadaab Refugee Complex (in Kenya, near the border with Somalia), an opportunity to acquire recognized teaching diplomas and degrees from Kenyan and Canadian universities. This unique consortium programme brings together Canada's University of British Columbia and York University with Kenya's Kenyatta University and Moi University, through a blended learning approach – combining online learning with face-to-face instruction provided by professors who visit Dadaab during school breaks and holidays.

A compelling aspect of the programme is that it enables intercultural exchanges. For example, some courses offer refugee students in Dadaab the opportunity to participate in virtual seminars together with students from Mae Sot, Thailand or Toronto, Canada. Through these cross-cultural dialogues, students and teachers alike are able to question local teaching norms and gain new perspectives and ideas from other contexts.

While further efforts are required to ensure that all teachers working with refugees can be trained, these programmes are important examples – demonstrating effective and innovative ways of supporting teachers, even in the world's most remote corners.

Connected Education Officer at UNHCR's Division of Resilience and Solutions, **Jacqueline Strecker** (Canada) has been with the refugee agency since 2012. She has extensive experience in the provision of education in refugee contexts.

Providing education in crisis contexts

For millions of children across the world, going to school is sometimes interrupted by humanitarian emergencies, such as conflicts, natural disasters and disease outbreaks. One in six school-age children are in a country experiencing conflict and protracted crises, according to the Global Partnership for Education (2016). In order to ensure that the – often life-saving – human right of education is protected during these difficult times, the International Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) is dedicated to providing quality, relevant and safe education to children impacted by crises.

Comprising a global network of over 14,000 individual members and 130 partner organizations in 190 countries, INEE's members are practitioners working for national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and United Nations agencies, government officials, donors; students, teachers, and researchers – many of whom are from the affected communities – who voluntarily join in the work related to education in emergencies. Using a strategic plan to guide priorities and actions, the network provides support through community building, convening, knowledge management, amplifying and advocating, facilitating and learning.

The International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), established by UNESCO in 1963, has played a key role in the development of INEE and the establishment of its internationally-recognized INEE Minimum Standards, which are now leading the way in coordinating quality education interventions before, during and after emergencies and during reconstruction.

IIEP is a founding member of the INEE Working Group on Education and Fragility and also a member of the INEE Education Cannot Wait Advocacy Working Group, to ensure prioritized, protected and planned funding for education in emergencies.

Forging new lives, using mobile technology

Christoph Pimmer and Fan Huhua

The case of Moujahed Akil, a Syrian refugee in Turkey, highlights the fact that innovative mobile learning practices are best driven from within the communities to address real needs, sustain development, empower members and maximize impact.

When Moujahed Akil fled Syria in September 2012 for fear of being arrested, one of the biggest challenges he encountered in Turkey, his host country, was not being able to communicate with the people there.

“Not knowing the language was very hard, because I could not even discuss the most basic things needed to start a new life in Turkey,” he recalls. “For example, I went to the government building where nobody spoke Arabic, and we had to use our hands and feet to understand each other.” When Akil later obtained a mobile phone, he started using a translation app to find information relevant to his situation, and to fill in forms that he had previously photographed.

Akil, who was a computer information science student and an Information Technology (IT) freelancer in Aleppo, used his coding skills to find a job at a tech company. With the help of his Turkish colleagues and friends, he learnt the language before too long. He also learnt programming for mobile phones. His own early experience as a refugee inspired him to start working on a smartphone app to help Syrians to obtain all the practical and legal information they needed about resettlement issues and to build new lives in Turkey.



© Edel Rodriguez

The cover of UNESCO's A Lifeline to Learning: Leveraging technology to support education for refugees.

In January 2014, Akil established his own business, Namaa Solutions, with a friend. Based in Gaziantep, Turkey, about twenty-five miles from the Syrian border, the startup harnesses his technical and entrepreneurial skills to develop digital and mobile solutions to address the needs of other Syrian refugees.

Addressing needs is key

Establishing the business posed its own difficulties: “The lack of funding and a sustainable model were major challenges,” Akil explains. But, he adds, “addressing needs is a key success factor. Syrian refugees in Turkey want this information, and now they have it at their fingertips.” The small business has grown rapidly, and employs a staff of twenty-five – the number of downloads of the app continues to grow. With 3.5 million Syrian refugees in Turkey, according to figures released by UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency and the Government of Turkey in 2018, this is hardly surprising.

About ninety-four per cent of these refugees live outside refugee camps, fending for themselves, mostly in big cities. Namaa Solutions' Gherbtna ("our expatriates" in Arabic) app helps them navigate the hurdles to access basic facilities such as healthcare and education. The app has several tools, including Video, Laws, Find a Job, Alerts, and "Ask Me", providing answers to everything from legal advice and how to open a bank account, to housing, job listings, and even a directory for medical specialists. "Our ultimate goal is to reach all refugees around the world with the app," Akil says.

According to June 2018 figures released by UNHCR, the world is witnessing the highest levels of displacement on record. Out of an unprecedented 68.5 million people who have been forcibly displaced worldwide, there are nearly 25.4 million refugees, over half of whom are under the age of 18.

"Many Syrian people are students who wish to continue their studies in Turkish schools and universities, and this is why education is the most relevant category on the Gherbtna app," says the 29-year-old entrepreneur. The app provides information about schools and universities in which Syrian refugees can continue their studies, and lists the requirements and certifications needed to enrol. The second most popular category is information about the laws and rules to be followed during the integration process. After these two categories, the most popular app element is the "My story" feature, which is a platform where personal stories about Syrian refugees and their daily lives can be shared.

Bridging a barrier

Sensing the giant barrier caused by language, and having experienced it first-hand, Akil launched Tarjemly Live ("Translate for me" in Arabic) in 2016. For a small fee (one Turkish lira, or \$0.21 per minute), the app connects the user to a live human translator, who are often Syrian refugees themselves, with more advanced Turkish language skills. In this way, Namaa Solutions is also generating jobs for Turkish people with Arabic language skills. Online usage statistics in the first year of operation showed that seventy-seven freelance interpreters translated more than 37,000 words for 17,000 minutes, using calls and texts. Over time, more than 1,500 text and video entries have been developed for the app, covering a wide range of topics.



© Ediel Rodriguez

Mobile learning to address individual challenges, an illustration by Cuban-American artist, Ediel Rodriguez.

To complement the app, Gherbtna has a website and a Facebook page. "The Facebook page is a very strong component of the app, allowing us to directly interact with our users," Akil explains.

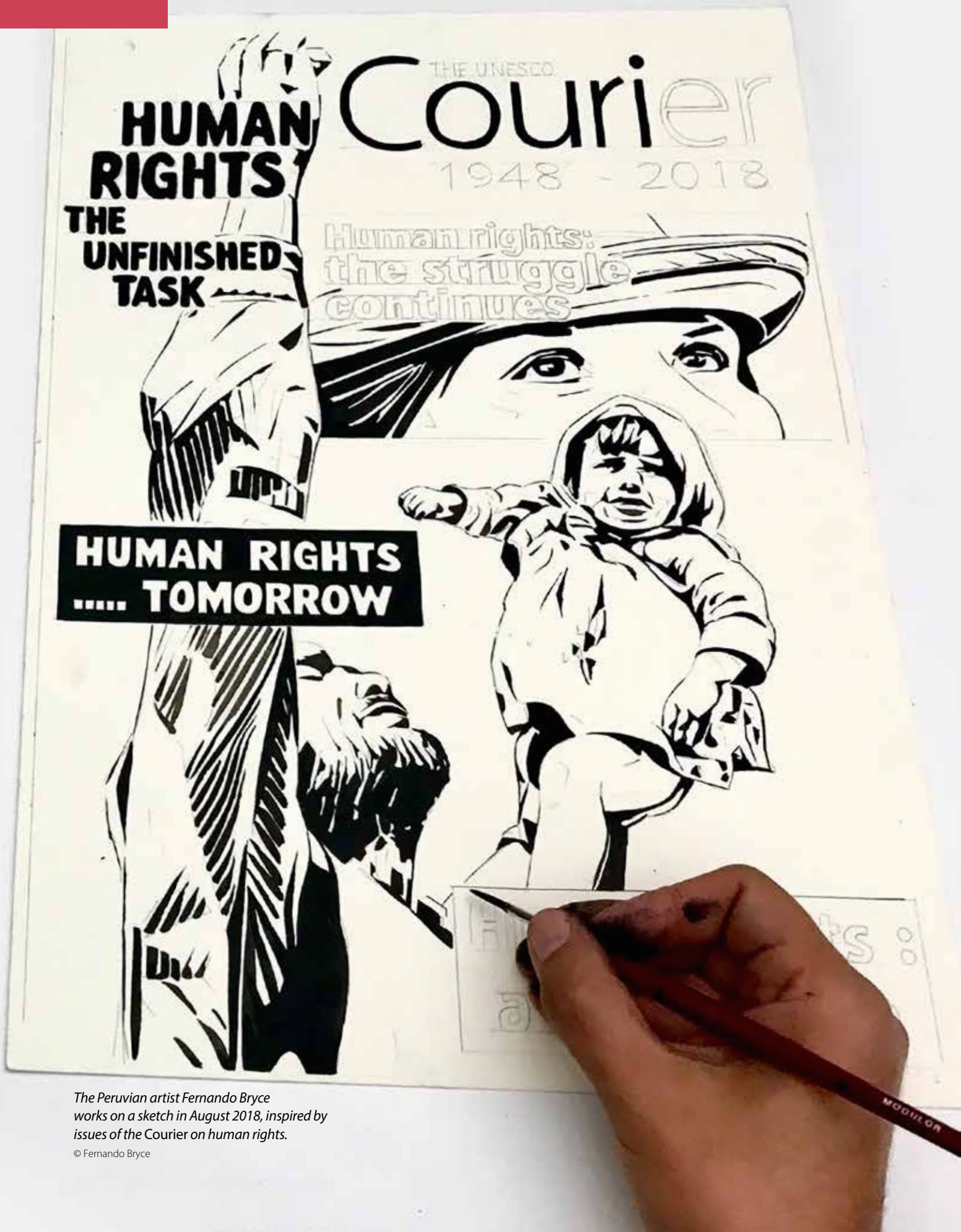
Akil's innovative spirit has not waned. New projects planned include a learning management system and interactive learning content for Syrian refugees. Another project is buy4impact.com, a trading platform that helps Syrians to sell hand-crafted products to an international market.

A researcher and lecturer at the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland FHNW, **Christoph Pimmer** (Austria) specializes in digital learning and knowledge management in education contexts. He has co-authored the UNESCO publication, *"A lifeline to learning: Leveraging technology to support education for refugees"* in 2018.

An associate project officer at UNESCO's Unit for ICT in Education, **Fan Huhua** (China) facilitates the implementation of the UNESCO-Weidong Group Funds-in-Trust project on leveraging ICT to achieve Education 2030.



Our guest



The Peruvian artist Fernando Bryce works on a sketch in August 2018, inspired by issues of the Courier on human rights.

© Fernando Bryce



Fernando Bryce:

History in the present tense

Interview by Carolina Rollán Ortega and Lucía Iglesias Kuntz (UNESCO)

“Mimetic analysis” is how Peruvian artist Fernando Bryce describes his work process. It involves using ink on paper, and meticulously copying by hand, texts and images taken from magazines, political pamphlets, posters and old newspapers. Using this technique, he has captured moments from recent history, like the Cuban revolution, the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War, in his work. In 2015, our magazine was the source of inspiration for a series of drawings called *The Book of Needs*, to which a supplement of this issue of the *Courier* is dedicated. Let's find out what it's all about.

© UNESCO / Danica Bijelić



Fernando Bryce in front of UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, June 2018.

Could you tell us about the work that you produced using the UNESCO Courier?

It is a series of eighty-one drawings that depict the work of the *UNESCO Courier* – from its founding in 1948, to 1954 – based on images of its covers or on its articles. The series is part of a whole cycle which I have been working on for several years, with the iconography and representations of the twentieth century. These show temporary advances and setbacks in the world, and each series is constructed differently, with different types of images. I have just finished a series on the Second World War, using archival material that I found – in this case, film posters and newspaper headlines – that reported on war events. After that series was completed, in 2015 I decided to approach my work from

a more cultural point of view, both in my discourse and in my subject matter. UNESCO provided me with the theme of the United Nations, founded on the fundamental idea of human rights and its universalist discourse – with all its ideas of progress and its future prospects, at a time when everything was yet to be constructed.

Where does the title of the series, *The Book of Needs*, come from?

The Book of Needs was published by UNESCO in 1947 to highlight the immense educational, scientific and cultural losses and needs in the world in the post-war period. In (March) 1948, the *UNESCO Courier* wrote about this, and I found it so emblematic that I used the same title for my series.

How did you access material from the UNESCO Courier?

I had already gathered a lot of material on UNESCO in the process of researching my previous work. I also had access to the digital resources of the *Courier* archives and the Berlin State Library.

I must say that the magazine is fascinating – a fabulous historical document that deals with a very special moment, when the idea of progress was genuinely linked to a whole new perspective. A striking contrast between the convictions at the time and the state of the world today.

What surprised me, when going through issues of the *Courier* between 1948 and 1954, is the observation that many of the problems afflicting the world and humanity at that time remain the same today, and have not been resolved at all. Although the world has changed a lot, the issues that concern us remain the same.



“What I’m trying to do is a second-hand job, turning the document into a work of art”

What, according to you, are these concerns?

Anti-humanist tendencies are the real political challenge facing an international organization like UNESCO. There have always been differences in worldviews and representations of the world, but the criticism of a certain universalism, which is too Eurocentric, or the current crisis of multiculturalism, cannot undermine the foundations of, and respect for, human rights. And, justly, human rights are a doctrine of faith for the United Nations and UNESCO – whether they are respected or not.

As with your work with the UNESCO Courier, it is a constant in your repertoire to work with historical material and archives, which you transform into art. Could you describe this process?

To begin with, there is always an interest in history, both in the sense of the event and in that of its writing. An archive is organized from the present and history is also in this present. The point of my work is to rescue this history and update it. I convert a documentary universe into a new reality, through drawing. In this new context, these creations can be viewed in a different light, in which documents are perceived as images. What I’m trying to do is a second-hand job, turning the document into a work of art.

In addition to the series inspired by the Courier, I have worked on ARTnews, an American visual-arts magazine founded in the early twentieth century; Arte Nuevo, a Latin American art journal based in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and other magazines and publications.

© UNESCO



The cover of the Courier, February 1951 and its artistic interpretation by Fernando Bryce in 2015.

Pictured on this page are some of the 40,000 Palestine refugee children attending emergency schools set up originally by Unesco in co-operation with voluntary aid organizations. The work of providing educational assistance for these children began two years ago and was maintained through the generosity of organizations and men and women of goodwill in many parts of the world. Help of this sort for the Palestine refugees is essentially part of a peace endeavour of the United Nations, which acted as mediator in the Middle East and also saved hundreds of thousands from starvation. Today, the United Nations continues to help the refugees through its relief and works agency (UNRWA) which is putting into effect a rehabilitation programme aimed at making them self-supporting. Unesco is working with UNRWA to continue the existing educational programme and extend it to more of the 200,000 Palestine refugee children. On their behalf, it has asked a question of the world—"Are these children to be condemned to ignorance, idleness and the subservience that accompanies illiteracy?" Unesco is confident of a re-assuring answer. (For a report and photographs of some desert schools near Gaza recently visited by M. J. Torres Bodet, Director-General of Unesco, turn to page 2.)

More recently, in May and June 2018, I have exhibited the Freedom First series in Berlin, Germany, inspired by the publications of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, an association founded in Berlin in 1950 to campaign against totalitarian regimes. It is a retrospective look at the start of the Cold War.

When did you come up with the idea of drawing inspiration from archives?

Twenty years ago, I moved to Berlin. The city was going through a very significant period of transition at the time, and I was very inspired by the place – where there was a great debate about the concept of memory. At these historical moments, the notion of archives acquires its full meaning.



Courier

FEBRUARY 1951

PUBLICATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL
UNESCO SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

A CHALLENGE TO HUMANITY



Pictured on this page are some of the 40,000 Palestine refugee children attending emergency schools set up originally by UNESCO in co-operation with voluntary aid organizations. The work of providing educational assistance for these children began two years ago and was maintained through the generosity of organizations and men and women of goodwill in many parts of the world.

Help of this sort for the Palestine refugees is especially part of a peace programme of the United Nations, which acted as mediator in the Middle East and has saved hundreds of thousands from starvation. Today, the United Nations continues to help the refugees through its relief and works agency (UNRWA), which is putting into effect a rehabilitation programme aimed at making them self-supporting.

UNESCO is working with UNRWA to continue the existing educational programme and extend it to more of the 700,000 Palestine refugee children. On their behalf, it asks a question of the world: "Are these children to be condemned to the violence, ill-health and the subservience that accompanied illiteracy?" UNESCO is confident of a reassuring answer.

(For a report and photographs of some of these schools, see *UNESCO* recently visited by M. J. Torres Borda, Director General of UNESCO, this, to page 2.)

© Fernando Bryce

Also, I was not satisfied with the artistic work I was producing at the time. It was then that I discovered the technique of ink drawing, which takes me back to writing without abandoning painting. This discovery, together with the notion of archives and visits to real archives – where the encounter with the past raises all kinds of questions – inspired a new artistic approach in me that has determined all my later work.

Why did you select images particularly from those eighty-one pages and covers of the Courier and what did you want to draw attention to?

My work is a permanent process of selection. In this case, I chose images that seemed to me the most relevant to UNESCO's mission, namely the fight against racist doctrines and the anti-racist discourse launched by the *UNESCO Courier*, starting with the writings of Claude Lévi-Strauss, for example. I would like to refer here to the idea of the equality of peoples and cultures and the oneness of humanity.

I also found vintage material related to decolonization, represented both by countries newly liberated from colonial rule and by the terminal efforts of a so-called liberal colonialism that, until the mid-1950s, still believed that it could maintain its empire. And, of course, the question of so-called "primitive" peoples. In this respect, Claude Lévi-Strauss made a great contribution by stating that these peoples were not backward, but that their thinking was complex. Broadly speaking, I am interested in the correlation – highlighted in the *Courier* – between scientific progress and human progress.

After the great catastrophe of the Second World War, there was a conviction that everything was possible and that the world would be a better place. Do you think this belief still exists?

No, this faith no longer exists. We find ourselves at some sort of dead end, and we have to look for some. There is a sharp contrast between that period of optimism after the Second World War and the situation we find ourselves in today. Updating that material in the way I've tried to do is perhaps the mission of my work. From the territory of art and at a necessarily symbolic level where reflection and experiment go hand in hand, we artists may not have the power to change much, but we can, I hope, point out possible horizons.

Born in Lima, Peru in 1965, **Fernando Bryce** began his studies in the plastic arts at the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru, before moving to France to continue his studies at Université Paris 8 and the École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts. In the 1990s, he moved to Berlin, where he learnt the ink and paper technique and discovered the newspaper archives of the Berlin State Library. He now lives between Lima, Berlin and New York, where he recently exhibited his *The Book of Needs* collection. Completed in 2015, it can be viewed online on the websites of the Harvard Art Museums and the Alexander and Bonin gallery in New York.



Current affairs

Tahany, one of the organizers of the book-saving team, which rescued books from the ashes of the Central Library of the University of Mosul in Iraq, photographed by Ali Al-Baroodi, who chronicles daily life among the ruins of this city ravaged by ISIS.

© Ali Al-Baroodi



Mosul,

the city with two springs

Inaam Kachachi

Iraqi novelist Inaam Kachachi describes the city she loves – Mosul the austere, Mosul the convivial, Mosul the contradictory, Mosul the wounded, bleeding to death. She tells us of her deep attachment to the ancient city of Nineveh, ravaged by history.

With this article, the *Courier* joins the initiative launched by UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay in February 2018, to revive the spirit of Mosul. This initiative aims to participate in the social and economic renaissance of Iraq and to contribute to sustainable development and intercommunity reconciliation through the safeguarding and appreciation of cultural heritage.

© Ali Al-Baroodi



The remains of the Central Library of Mosul University's book collection, after it was ransacked by ISIS.

During a visit to the United States a few years ago, I remembered an Arab joke. A man sentenced to death was asked what his last wish was, before the rope was put around his neck. "I'd like to learn Japanese," he replied. We, the people of Mosul, are in a somewhat similar situation. Condemned to exile, we dream of a return which is impossible.

On the same visit, I was invited by a local Detroit radio station – run by the Iraqi community, which is quite significant in that city – to participate in one of its broadcasts. I was surprised to find that all the programmes on the radio station were in Chaldean, and I was therefore asked to speak in that language!

I then had to explain that although my mother and father were Christians, they were from Mosul and, as city-dwellers, they spoke Arabic at home. Chaldean, a recent variant of Aramaic – the language of Christ – was reserved for the inhabitants of Christian villages on the city's outskirts.

As a journalist, I have always written in Arabic. I know a smattering of Chaldean, just a few phrases and verses from songs sung at ceremonies. I grew up in Baghdad and was educated there. But it is Mosul that I love the most, that I consider home. A city surrounded by vast green plains, where we went for our Easter holidays – to enjoy the gentle climate, to savour the beauty of the gardens dappled with red poppies and yellow chamomiles. I had learned from early childhood that Mosul was a city with two springs, because autumn was like a second spring.

What I also learned was that Mosul was a conservative city, whose inhabitants distinguished themselves by their sense of seriousness, effort and rigour. There was no room for nonchalance. This is probably why we rarely hear the Mosul accent in Iraqi music. With the exception of the great nineteenth-century composer, Molla Uthmân al-Mawsili and the Bachir family – notably Mounir Bachir (1930-1997), one of the greatest lute-players of all time – most of Iraq's singers, composers and songwriters come from the country's south. These artists are recognizable by their rural accents. And though recordings of a few songs from Mosul can be found on the internet today, they can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

“Mosul was both conservative and tolerant”

Was it the conservative nature of the Mosulites that made me the target of a little boy one day, who threw a stone at me, probably because I was wearing a short dress? It was a dress that my mother had made for me, especially for Eid – a red dress with a white Peter Pan collar, or a *col Claudine*, à la Française. And when I called a passer-by for help, the man scolded me, saying, “Go cover your legs, little girl!” The little girl in question was 7 years old and her dress was two centimetres above the knee.

But Mosul was both conservative and tolerant. Let me tell you a story from when my father – to whom I owe my love and great passion for the Arabic language, its poetry and literature – was a teenager. It is a story that illustrates just how civilized and tolerant Mosul used to be.

Two stories of the Koran

Of all the students at his high school, my father was the best in the Arabic language. It was customary to offer the winning student a luxurious edition of the Koran. A few days before the awards ceremony, my father found the headmaster, sitting in a horse-drawn carriage – a common means of transport in the 1930s – waiting for him in front of the school. He beckoned my father to sit beside him and they went to the town’s main bookstore. “You can choose any book you like as a prize, whatever the price,” the headmaster said. For the Christian student, the message was unambiguous. He refused the offer. The principal tried again: “Abdel-Ahad, you are a Christian, and Mosul is a conservative city. We cannot give a copy of the Koran to a student who is not Muslim.”

© Ali Al-Baroodi



Since ISIS was defeated, music is no longer forbidden in Mosul. Khalid was the first musician to play publicly in the streets of this city, which rises again from the ashes.

My father refused to budge, saying that he would not accept any other prize. The headmaster finally gave in, after making my father promise that he would accord the same respect to the holy book as it would get in a Muslim home. In the 1960s, the same scenario was repeated with my elder sister, but this time with a different outcome.

A student in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Baghdad, she obtained the highest marks for her exegesis of the Koran. The head of department summoned her and asked her to renounce the prize, in order to save him from considerable embarrassment. How could he announce that a Christian student had surpassed her Muslim classmates in this discipline? This teacher clearly did not have the same courage as the headmaster of Mosul High School, thirty years earlier.



The 1948 war between Arabs and Jews triggered the departure of tens of thousands of Jews from Mosul (who, even today, have kept their very particular Mosul accents, wherever they moved).

The Republic succeeded the monarchy in Iraq, against a backdrop of rivalries between political parties, and Mosul was not spared the bloodbaths caused by the fights between nationalists and communists. Then came the Gulf Wars and the American occupation. The entire country fell into chaos. But the worst was yet to come, with the occupation of Mosul by ISIS and what followed – particularly the expulsion of Christians and their exodus. The whole world watched helplessly as museums, ancient statues and monuments, bearing witness to nearly seven thousand years of civilization, were destroyed.

On that day in June 2017 as I watched the destruction of the iconic Al Hadba (the hunchback) minaret of the Great Mosque of al-Nuri, on TV, I could not hold back my tears. This minaret, leaning like the Tower of Pisa, was the symbol of the city – it was on postcards, like the Eiffel Tower, the Statue of Liberty, or the Egyptian Pyramids. I remembered a poem written in dialectal Arabic by my former professor, the poetess Lamiâa Abbas Amara, the day that Baghdad's suspension bridge, the most beautiful in the capital, was bombed by American warplanes. "It's my rib that is breaking, not the bridge", she wrote. That's exactly how I felt when Al Hadba was destroyed.

But above all, it is human beings, who matter more than stones, who are the victims of dispersion, of extermination. It is with immense sadness that I realize, day after day, that I had anticipated this in my novel, *Dispersés* (2013). The exodus continues, and Iraq, particularly Mosul, is being emptied of its Christians.

The girls wore white shorts

Throughout my 60 years, I have considered myself an Iraqi. I have always refused to be called Christian, to be confined to a single community. When my books were translated into French, journalists asked me if I was a Shia or Sunni Muslim – I mocked their naïveté and refused to answer.

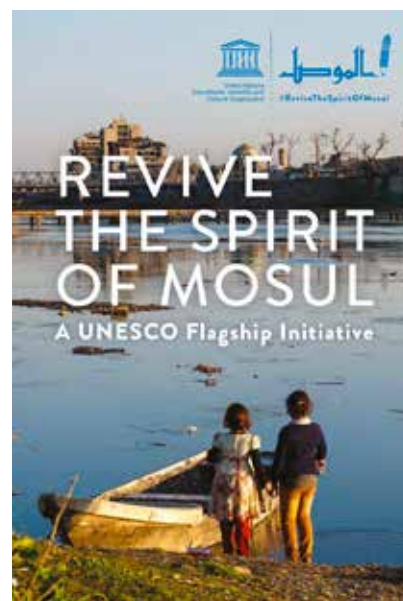
But today, I proclaim my identity loud and clear – both in the interviews I give, and in my writing. Not in a communitarian spirit, but to testify to the luminous period during which I lived in Iraq – the country where I was born, where I studied, loved, where I started my family, where my eldest son was born – without anyone ever thinking of asking me what my religion was.

Today, in Paris, my adopted city, I take great pleasure in reminiscing about Iraq with Safiya, a writer from Mosul who is over 80, and who emigrated like me. She tells me about her incredible life in Mosul in the last century. Although she was the daughter of a prominent imam, she dressed like her city friends in the latest Parisian fashion and had a full social and intellectual life. As female students attending a medical school founded in the 1960s, they played tennis with their male classmates and wore white shorts. Who could imagine such a scene today?

Novelist and journalist **Inaam Kachachi** (Iraq) has lived in France since 1979, when she came to the Sorbonne to study for a PhD. She is the author of several novels, including *Dispersés* (originally published in Arabic, 2013), the French version (published in 2016) of which won the 2016 prize for Arabic literature, awarded by the Institut du Monde Arabe and the Fondation Lagardère; *Si je t'oublie, Bagdad* (2003) translated into French (in 2009); *Paroles d'Irakiennes: le drame irakien écrit par des femmes* (originally published in French, 2003).

"It's my rib that is breaking..."

Mosul is on the Silk Road – and I am proud to tell my French neighbours that muslin (mousseline), the fine cotton fabric, originated in my hometown. In this city, the children of three great monotheistic religions, from many ethnic communities from Armenia, Turkey and the Balkans, lived together for a long time, in peace and harmony. But then, political strife began to poison the city's atmosphere.



© UNESCO

Heritage for hire: a good idea?

**Alfredo Conti, interviewed by
Frédéric Vacheron**

Several high-profile sites on UNESCO's World Heritage List can now be hired by the wealthy for a wedding or a private party. Does this trend risk tarnishing these places of great cultural value? "No," says Alfredo Conti, Argentinian architect and heritage conservation specialist. According to him, it could even be a way to initiate a new section of the public into the cultural fold.

Some monuments inscribed on the World Heritage List are now being rented out for private events. Is this acceptable?

The question of how heritage sites should be used, merits some thought – considering that their original purpose may have been lost or changed over time. For example, railways stations have been transformed into museums, while convents and historic houses have been converted into hotels.

A heritage building is steeped in historical and cultural values. The attributes that transmit these values may be tangible – such as the building's design, its form or construction elements – or intangible, such as its different uses over time, or the traditions associated with it. The basic principle for the current uses of properties is that their new functions should be compatible with the preservation of their attributes and values.



© Observatorio UNESCO Villa Ocampo

There was a time when heritage sites were seen as sacrosanct, especially those sites that were most significant from a historical or artistic point of view. They had to remain frozen in a given moment of their history – their only possible use was to turn them into museums.

But not all historical buildings can be converted into museums, not least because heritage conservation is very expensive. Most of the time, the funding for conservation, maintenance and repair comes from the state. Admission tickets, the sale of souvenirs and catalogues, or providing cafeteria services can be a source of revenue, but as a rule these are not sufficient to cover costs. Government agencies often don't have lavish budgets.

Hence this new trend, all over the world, to make available sites and monuments for private events. There are always, as there should be, restrictions about the types of events allowed, the areas that are authorized for use, the number of guests and the hours of opening.

There are many examples of this trend, worldwide. Weddings are held at the Royal Palace at Caserta, north of Naples, an Italian monument inscribed on the World Heritage List; at the Schönbrunn Palace, also protected by UNESCO; at the Belvedere Palace and Museum in Vienna, Austria; and at the Rodin Museum or the house of Victor Hugo, in Paris. You can even rent the Palace of Versailles, the iconic French World Heritage site, for specific types of events.



An evening of jazz at Villa Ocampo, 2016.

In the Americas, we have the case of Bogotá, in Colombia. The Manzana cultural district in the historical centre, includes several important museums housed in colonial buildings that can be hired for private events outside of museum opening hours. In the United States, Mount Vernon, the residence of George Washington, near Washington DC, has a very special place in the country's history – but it can easily be booked on the internet for an evening.

Are there other advantages to renting out these spaces, besides fundraising?

Opening up these spaces for private events can be beneficial at a cultural level. These events often serve to attract a different kind of public unfamiliar with heritage sites – allowing them to discover the place, which may encourage them to return to explore the site more deeply.

Several international documents stipulate that heritage must fulfil a function of public utility. The Norms of Quito, formulated in 1967 by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), emphasize the economic value of heritage, suggesting that historic monuments can be considered tourist attractions and like natural resources, can contribute to a nation's economic development. This was the first major document on Latin American monumental heritage. We have therefore known for over fifty years that heritage is not just a cultural resource, but also an economic one. It generates income that should contribute to its own conservation.

The UNESCO Villa Ocampo Observatory allows some of its facilities to be hired. What do you think of the way we manage this activity?

Villa Ocampo has a very effective protocol for the use of the place – a zone system defines which areas can be used and under what conditions. For instance, private events are not permitted in the heritage rooms.

The Argentinian writer Victoria Ocampo did not see her house as a museum, but as a place that was full of life, where she received guests and held meetings and receptions. Today when the site is rented, a piece of this history is being perpetuated.

An architect and urban planner, **Alfredo Conti** (Argentina) was Vice-President of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) from 2010 to 2017. He is currently Academic Director of the Post-graduate Course on Heritage and Sustainable Tourism, UNESCO Chair for Cultural Tourism in Buenos Aires. Conti is also a researcher on the Scientific Investigations Commission of the Province of Buenos Aires, and director of the Institute of Research on Tourism at La Plata University.

Frédéric Vacheron is the director of UNESCO Villa Ocampo.

“Heritage is not just a cultural resource, but also an economic one. It generates income that should contribute to its own conservation”

Villa Ocampo, or UNESCO in Argentina

In 1947, Julian Huxley, UNESCO's first Director-General, was received by the Argentinian intellectual and philanthropist Victoria Ocampo (1890-1979). This meeting allowed her to see just how much her opinions on women's rights and her openness to the ideas of others were in harmony with the ideals promoted by UNESCO. In 1973, she donated Villa Ocampo, her house in San Isidro, near Buenos Aires, to the Organization.

Today, Villa Ocampo is the Argentinian office of UNESCO's Regional Bureau for the Sciences in Latin America and the Caribbean, a place for study and debate, and a museum and documentation centre, with a collection of over 11,000 books, 2,500 journals and 1,000 photographs. In 2017, it was inscribed on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register, a programme for the preservation of documentary heritage.

The Transatlantic Dialogues in Villa Ocampo programme, which began in 2015, contributes to Villa Ocampo's role as an observatory and laboratory for ideas.



SESAME:

Scientific excellence in the Middle East

With this article, the *Courier* marks the celebration of the World Science Day for Peace and Development, 10 November.

The Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications (SESAME), is the first international centre of its kind in the Middle East. It is a powerful, high-precision research microscope. In it, the electrons accelerate very rapidly up to the speed of light in hollow and magnetized rings. The acceleration of these electrons produces packets of concentrated intense light. These beams are stored and directed to research samples because this light reveals new and deep dimensions in the researchers' samples. Research areas range from physics to molecular chemistry and nanoscience – with applications in archaeology, environmental sciences, agriculture, engineering, pharmacology, medicine and industry. Crystallography studies of synchrotrons have contributed to the award of five Nobel prizes in recent years.

Scientists from the Middle East – regardless of their speciality, nationality or religious belief – will no longer have to leave their own regions to carry out research in major centres abroad, or abandon their research interests because of a lack of advanced facilities at home.

Anoud Al-Zou'bi

The SESAME international centre for scientific research, a competitive synchrotron light source and the first in the Middle East and neighbouring countries, was inaugurated in Allan, Jordan, on 16 May 2017. This pioneering project, established under the auspices of UNESCO, is the result of fourteen years of hard work, uniting eight countries around a twofold goal – to consolidate scientific excellence in the region and to build cross-border collaboration, dialogue and understanding between scientists with diverse cultural, political and religious backgrounds.



A 360-degree view of the Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East (SESAME), Jordan, December 2017.



At the SESAME centre, they can use synchrotron radiation to study samples, make new discoveries in different areas of science, analyse their results, and exchange data. The centre will enable them to establish research networks with other researchers in the region and with those working in over sixty synchrotron facilities in twenty-five countries around the world. About 50,000 researchers worldwide use synchrotron facilities for their work.

SESAME is an intergovernmental centre with eight Member countries: Cyprus, Egypt, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Pakistan, Palestine and Turkey. Observer countries include Brazil, Canada, China, the countries of the European Union, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research, on which the centre is institutionally modelled, is also an observer. The total cost of the project, as of May 2017, is nearly \$90 million.

The SESAME centre is a remarkable achievement for several reasons. First, it marks a return to the exact sciences in the Middle East, after a long absence stretching back to the thirteenth century. It enables a ray of hope in this region, recently marked by chaos, political conflicts, terrorism and economic gloom. Scientific research, cooperation and joint achievements can now claim the spotlight again.

An exceptional success story

Let us begin with a scientific fact: at 99 degrees, water is hot; it does not boil or produce steam until it reaches 100 degrees. This steam is used to power trains and factories, which laid the foundations of the Industrial Revolution. One little degree extra made all the difference and led to a massive revolution.

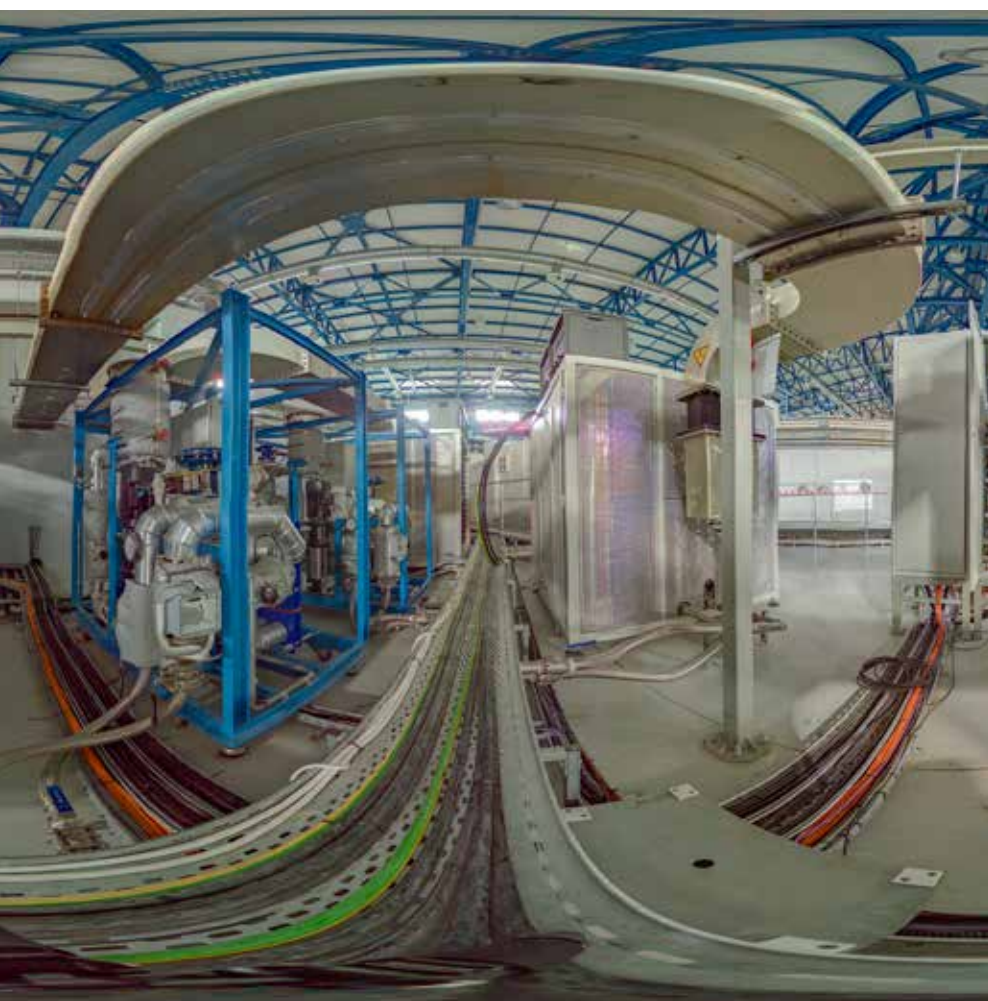
The same principle governs our lives – success alone is not enough; a further degree of performance is needed to make a real change and achieve excellence.

In the traditional equation, success comes from a mix of patience, good preparation and determination. But in the merciless context of competition for scientific excellence, it also needs something extra – creativity, or the ability to go beyond the ordinary. It is this degree that makes the difference between work that is satisfactory and work that is excellent.

That is the story of the SESAME synchrotron. From the moment the idea first entered the minds of the researchers who supported this dream, they put their energies into its realization, every step of the way. They raised the necessary funding, built the infrastructure, trained staff, developed work plans and carried them out – right until the day of the inauguration. Without these extra steps taken by all the participants, from individuals to States and institutions, this pioneering scientific achievement would never have been completed.

From the time they realized that the Middle East needed its own advanced research centre, the scientists started working in earnest to make it happen. In 1997, Herman Winick of the SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory (operated by Stanford University for the US Department of Energy Office of Science) in California, United States, and Gustav-Adolf Voss (1929-2013) of Germany's Deutsches Elektronen-Synchrotron (DESY) Research Centre, suggested that the German Bessy I accelerator, when it was decommissioned in 1999, be donated to provide the nucleus of an electronic accelerator in the Middle East.

This proposal was enthusiastically received by the scientific community. The director of the Middle East Scientific Cooperation group, Sergio Fubini (1928-2005) and Herwig Schopper, a former director-general of CERN, proposed the project to the German government. The government agreed, once UNESCO provided the assurance that SESAME would be established under the auspices of the Organization, and that the financing of dismantling the facility and its transportation from Germany to Jordan would be taken care of.



© CERN/Noemi Caraban

UNESCO launched the project in 1999. Three years later, the Organization officially announced that the accelerator would be built under its auspices, as the project served its own objectives – namely, to reinforce security, peace and international cooperation through education, culture and science.

Divisions give way to humanism

Under the leadership of the then president of the SESAME council, Chris Llewellyn Smith, and the centre's director, Khaled Toukan, seeing SESAME through to completion has required a continuous effort by all those involved – including participating countries, observers and donors – from the start of construction work in 2003 to the inauguration in 2017.

Jordan donated the land and covered the cost of construction of the building. The International Atomic Energy Authority (IAEA) offered specialized high-level training and scholarships for researchers and staff. The European Union provided funding worth \$18 million. CERN shared its wealth of experience during the construction of the magnetic system for SESAME's storage ring. Other partners – organizations, States, and synchrotron centres around the world – provided advice and expertise, plans and equipment; perfectly illustrating the spirit of solidarity, cooperation, generosity and creativity.

On 16 May 2017, inauguration day, there was an atmosphere of joy, enthusiasm, pride and optimism – but it was also tinged with apprehension. Had all the obstacles encountered during fourteen years of hard work really been overcome? The answer could only be positive – yes, science has the power to unite and transcend divisions in the service of humanity.

Powered by solar energy

The SESAME synchrotron centre does not just owe its exceptional character to the fact that it is the first in the Middle East, or that it has succeeded in getting citizens interested in science while they were preoccupied with the ongoing conflicts in the region. It is also the first science laboratory anywhere in the world to be powered by solar energy.

Besides, SESAME has benefited around 750 researchers and engineers in the Middle East, who have followed specialized training courses in research centres and laboratories in countries that are considered to be scientifically advanced. In this way, the centre helps to safeguard the scientific capital of the region, while curbing the brain drain and strengthening the participation of these researchers in the scientific and economic development of their respective countries.

Gihan Kamel, a researcher at SESAME, analyses particles at the infrared beamline lab.

It has helped raise the level of scientific teaching and research in universities and research centres in the region, by building their scientific capacities, multiplying the number of active research projects – all at a low cost. The centre also serves as a bridge between the cultures of East and West and North and South, over and above strictly scientific matters.

The centre has received fifty-five proposals in response to its first call for applications for the use of its beamlines. Researchers from the region will now be able to make discoveries in scientific areas as varied as the early diagnosis and treatment of illnesses; the identification of plant diseases to save crops, and the analyses of ancient manuscripts without damaging them.

Some challenges still need to be overcome, however. These include the further development of a user community, the development of new radiation packages, and the consolidation of the centre's facilities, including an administration building. The running costs for the centre also need funding. But none of these challenges will discourage those who believe in the project and its objectives, as it represents both a victory for science and the embodiment of the idea of a common world and humanity.

A journalist and communications expert, **Anoud Al-Zou'bi** (Jordan) is a specialist in audio-visual information. She is also a producer and presenter of several programmes on Jordanian national television, and was awarded the Cairo Arab Media Festival gold medal in 2014.



CC BY 2.0 photo: Dean Calma / IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency)



UNESCO, on Lake Chad's side



© Aboukar Mahamat

The Dagalou community fishery in Sara-Sara on the Waza-Logone flood-plain, Cameroon.

Agnès Bardon (UNESCO)

In February 2018, UNESCO launched a major project to strengthen the resilience of people living in the Lake Chad basin, who have been affected by a devastating drought for the last four decades.

The BIOSphere and Heritage of Lake Chad (BIOPALT) project has set itself an ambitious objective – to enable local inhabitants to live and work peacefully on the shores of Lake Chad. Presented by UNESCO on 26 February 2018 at an international conference in Abuja, Nigeria, the project aims to take stock of the region's natural resources so that they can be managed more sustainably. Pilot actions to restore various ecosystems and foster the development of a green economy will also be carried out.

The challenges are enormous. The Lake Chad basin is a freshwater source for over 40 million people.

Reduced rainfall between 1960 and 1985 caused the surface area of the lake to shrink by more than ninety per cent. This dramatic drying-up of the lake has had major consequences for the environment and the economy, plunging thousands of people into poverty and forcing them into exile to escape the region, which is also plagued by conflicts and insecurity.

To cope with the scale of this ecological disaster, BIOPALT has a budget to match. Nearly \$6.5 million have been allocated by the African Development Bank, over a three-year period, for the five countries involved – Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Niger and Nigeria. The project is being implemented by UNESCO, in partnership with the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), the body that coordinates the actions of States that are stakeholders in the basin's water resources.

BIOPALT plans to map the water resources in the region and rehabilitate wildlife migration corridors – especially for elephants – between Cameroon, Chad and Nigeria.

It also aims to restore wetlands to combat the drying up of water sources and to encourage income-generating activities, such as the cultivation of spirulina – a green algae traditionally harvested by women in the region. Other actions include the protection of the Kouri cow, a species endemic to Lake Chad.

The project is also designed to encourage countries bordering the lake to work together so that Lake Chad can one day be designated as a trans-boundary biosphere reserve. It also intends to strengthen local skills, so that these countries can nominate sites for inscription on the World Heritage List and help identify their Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Social cohesion is another key issue that the project will address. A series of annual meetings – or lake chats – will allow residents of all ages, ethnicities and religious affiliations to meet and express their different points of view.

Remembering **Sandy Koffler**, my grandfather



© Archives Sandy Koffler

Sandy Koffler, photographed in his office at UNESCO, in the 1970s.

Aurélia Dausse

Seventy years after the first issue of the *UNESCO Courier* was published, we pay an intimate homage to its founder, Sandy Koffler (1916-2002), inviting his granddaughter, Aurélia Dausse, to share some of her memories and excerpts from his notebooks.

The image I have of my grandfather is of a man surrounded by books. He always had a dictionary at hand. In fact, he was a polyglot – he had a perfect command of English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Hebrew and Mandarin. I often saw him making notes in a big, black dictionary, his Chinese dictionary – the language he liked the most and ended up speaking seven dialects of! Amazingly, in his house, we were allowed to write in the dictionaries. With him, the book became a living thing. Much more than just something to be used, a book was like a member of the family, inviting itself to our table at any moment during the meal.

Sandy was quick-minded, enthusiastic, imaginative and curious. He was always learning something new, and loved to share with his family – and as many others as possible – the pleasure of studying.

This is what he did throughout his life as a journalist, and particularly during his time at the *UNESCO Courier*.

Sandy passed away in 2002. He left behind a treasure-trove, which I recently discovered when I started researching my family history – his personal war diary, his letters, notebooks, photos and a complete, bound collection of the *Courier*. It includes many snippets of life that describe the remarkable journey of an exceptional man. I am deeply moved to be able to render homage to him, in the pages of the very journal he founded and edited for thirty years, from February 1948 to January 1977.

New York to Paris, and back again

Sandy Koffler was born in New York, the son of immigrants originally from the town of Chernivtsi, in Bucovina, Romania (now a city in western Ukraine). Like many other immigrants, they arrived in the United States via Ellis Island, the small island (in New York Harbor) that housed the federal immigration station. His father, Berl Koffler, after a modest start selling soda water on the street, became a well-known rabbi in the city. He moved to Williamsburg, in Brooklyn, where Sandy was born on 24 October 1916.

After attending New York's City College, Sandy won a scholarship to study at the Sorbonne in Paris. In 1940, while he was studying in Bordeaux, the American consulate advised him to leave France because he was Jewish. Passionate about French culture and language, he was reluctant to go, not least because his love life also tied him to Bordeaux. He was also sure that his American citizenship would protect him. But when the Nazis invaded France, he finally went to Marseille to board one of the last ships leaving for the US. During a lengthy stop-over in Portugal, Sandy seized the opportunity to learn Portuguese.

Life in New York

Back in New York, Sandy became a part-time columnist for the weekly magazine *America*, and also learned the techniques of printmaking. Around that time, he attended seminars by the French anthropologist, Claude Lévi-Strauss, at the New School for Social Research. Lévi-Strauss had also left France just before the Occupation, and the two men became friends.

Several years later, they would meet up again in Paris – one as Editor-in-Chief of the *Courier*, the other as one of the authors of the first UNESCO Statement on Race (1950), and the author of *Race and History* (1952), one of the great classics of anti-racist literature. Koffler would regularly invite Lévi-Strauss to contribute to the *Courier* during the 1950s, so that many of the fundamental articles on anthropology were first published in the *Courier*, before being reprinted in books. [Editor's note: a special issue of the *Courier* with most of Lévi-Strauss's articles was published in 2008, with the title *Claude Lévi-Strauss: The View from Afar*.]

The climate of war motivated Sandy to sign up and work for the US Army's Psychological Warfare Branch (PWB).



© UNESCO

Sandy Koffler (second from left) with the *Courier* team, at UNESCO's first premises at the Hotel Majestic in Paris (1946-1958).

He trained at the Office of War Information (OWI), a US government information agency, which used modern mass-propaganda methods to disseminate pacifist ideas. He was sent to Rabat (Morocco) aboard an American (naval cargo) Liberty Ship, which was delivering supplies to the Allied Forces during the Battle of the Atlantic. There, he worked as a correspondent and information director for *Voice of America* radio, developing a round-the-clock programme of world news broadcasts. In 1944, he wrote in his diary: "I can't tell you how much I love this work, I find it useful and feel it's worth it."

Sandy was then sent to Italy, where he set up a newsletter to inform people of the advance of the Allies and to promote peace. It was called *Corriere di Roma*, *Corriere di Venezia*, *Corriere Veneto*, or *Corriere dell'Emilia* (Bologna), depending on which liberated city or region it was published from.

The *Courier* is born

At the end of the Second World War, Sandy returned to France and became interested in this new international organization which aimed to foster peace through science and culture in a traumatized world, and which was causing a stir in intellectual circles all over the world – UNESCO. Its headquarters were in Paris, at the Hôtel Majestic, 19 avenue Kléber.

The Organization published a two-page monthly black-and-white broadsheet, *The Monitor*, in English, French and Spanish. The young journalist and columnist offered his services and started work on 26 October, 1947, days after he turned 31.

It was no later than 19 November the same year, that he submitted a proposal for a journal – with its editorial line and periodicity, an outline of its different sections, the number of columns on a page, the length of the articles, the typeface – to Harold Kaplan, the first Director of UNESCO's Bureau of Public Information. In short, a complete project, which was to become yet another "*Corriere*" – that of UNESCO.

"The work of UNESCO is so varied, its programme includes such a vast number of vitally important subjects in all the fields of education, science and culture, that it should be no difficulty at all to gather lively, interesting articles," he wrote. Ambitiously, he did not want to limit the journal's content to UNESCO's actions alone, but to offer readers a review of the international press, interviews with leading figures from the Organization and the worlds of culture and science, and in-depth articles written by experts from all over the world.

He suggested employing qualified editors for the French and Spanish editions, so that they would not just be simple replicas and the poor relations of the English edition. He undertook to “make sure that the journal meets the high standards for it to be sold to the general public”.

Sandy succeeded on all fronts, in record time. The first issue of the *UNESCO Courier*, an illustrated journal with eight well-filled pages, rolled off the presses of the *New York Herald Tribune* in Paris, in February 1948. A six-monthly subscription was offered to an international readership through agents in fifteen countries in Europe, Asia and America. One of the world’s first international journals was born.

The Courier proliferates

In 1957, the *Courier* confirmed its international reach with the appearance of its first “field” issue, published in Moscow. The path was clear for other countries to follow. In 1960, a German edition was started in Bern (Switzerland). In 1961, an Arabic edition was launched in Cairo (Egypt) and a Japanese edition in Tokyo. In 1963, an Italian edition followed, in Rome. In 1967, two editions, in Hindi and Tamil, were launched in India. Between 1968 and 1973, editions in Hebrew, Persian, Dutch, Portuguese and Turkish were added. When Sandy retired in February 1977, the *Courier* was being published in fifteen languages. In 1988, the magazine’s editions reached an all-time high, appearing in thirty-five languages.

For Sandy, multiplying the number of language versions of the *Courier* was a way of building bridges between people. This is what he said in Madras (now Chennai), India, at the launch of the Tamil edition: “In the past, nations were self-centred. In the past twenty years, we have witnessed an astounding phenomenon of countries looking far beyond all borders to the horizons, to every corner of the globe, to work together for peace and understanding. This is the message that UNESCO and all the United Nations family is trying to achieve. This afternoon, I had the privilege to see the Chief Minister [of Tamil Nadu state]. He informed me that Madras is prepared to go ahead and has given us the green light for the production of a Tamil edition of the *Courier*. As the Editor-in-Chief of the *Courier*, my blood tingled when he said that, because this is an achievement.”

On Sandy’s loyalty

Sandy Koffler was indisputably a great professional, gifted with solid interpersonal skills. A close friend of leading figures who have marked the twentieth century – such as the Swiss ethnologist Alfred Métraux and the American engineer and painter, Frank Malina, both colleagues at UNESCO – he was much appreciated by the first seven directors-general of the Organization. One of them, René Maheu (1961-1974) would say of him that his “talent was never separated from his convictions”.

Determined and charismatic, a tireless worker in the service of UNESCO’s ideals of peace, always watchful to remain politically neutral – even as international tensions mounted during the Cold War – Sandy Koffler had an inflexible character. “He never accepted orders, even from the highest diplomatic and political American officials; he was intransigent, and unshakeable and that posed some problems for him,” said Pauline Koffler, his second wife.

A citizen of the world

In a UNESCO administrative document dated 1959, I read about Sandy that his “professional competence, his technical qualities, his creative faculties, his initiative and his imagination make him a journalist and chief editor of exceptional calibre. He possesses an acute sense of responsibility, a profound professional conscience, undeniable qualities as organizer and leader, and the necessary capacity to be a director”.

Another, much less formal, archive document, which is neither dated nor signed, reveals another aspect of Sandy’s character: “It is true that Sandy’s loyalty towards UNESCO, the United Nations and their ideals was obvious and unshakeable. I remember that every year three colleagues – Émile Delavenay, Thor Gjesdal and Sandy Koffler – who were rarely seen together in town, got together on 24 October, around midday, in a Parisian restaurant to celebrate their respective birthdays as well as, in a special toast, the anniversary of the entry into force of the Charter of the United Nations.”

For my part, I have always admired my grandfather, his intelligence and his character. I am grateful to him for having passed on his attachment to humanist values, his love of books and his fascination for cultures of the entire world.

Delving into his personal and professional archives has made me want to recount, in a documentary that I am working on at the moment, the enthralling story of this American who loved France and who always told me: “I am above all, a citizen of the world”.

Aurélia Dausse is a French-American director, screenwriter and actor. She studied at Harvard University.

The Courier in thirty-five languages!

You should have seen the wave of happiness that lit up Édouard’s face the day he learned that the *UNESCO Courier*, of which he was editor-in-chief at the time, would be published in yet another language! You should have seen that wave of joy on his face, heard it vibrate in his voice: “Thirty-five different languages, can you imagine!” Only then could you understand, not only how important the ideals defended by the Organization were to him, but also the decisive role this magazine – which he so passionately directed from 1982 to 1988 – played in the evolution of his thought and work.

May 2017, Interview with
Sylvie Glissant,
wife of Édouard Glissant (1928-2011),
Editor-in-Chief of the *Courier*
(1982-1988)



The cover of the Sinhalese edition of the *Courier* on Minorities, June 1993.



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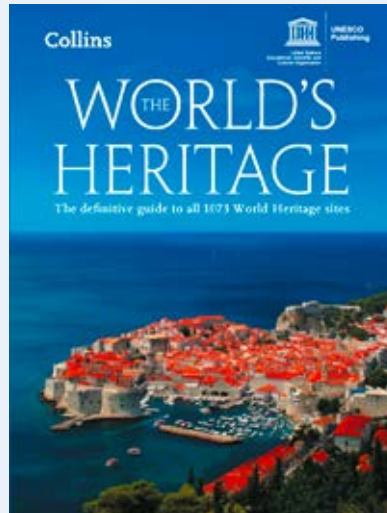
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ERRATUM

An error had inadvertently occurred in our July-September 2018 issue. On page 9, the numbers should read: 10^{12} and 10^{15} bytes, instead of 1012 and 1015 bytes.

The Courier is 70!

Celebrating human rights through its pages

