

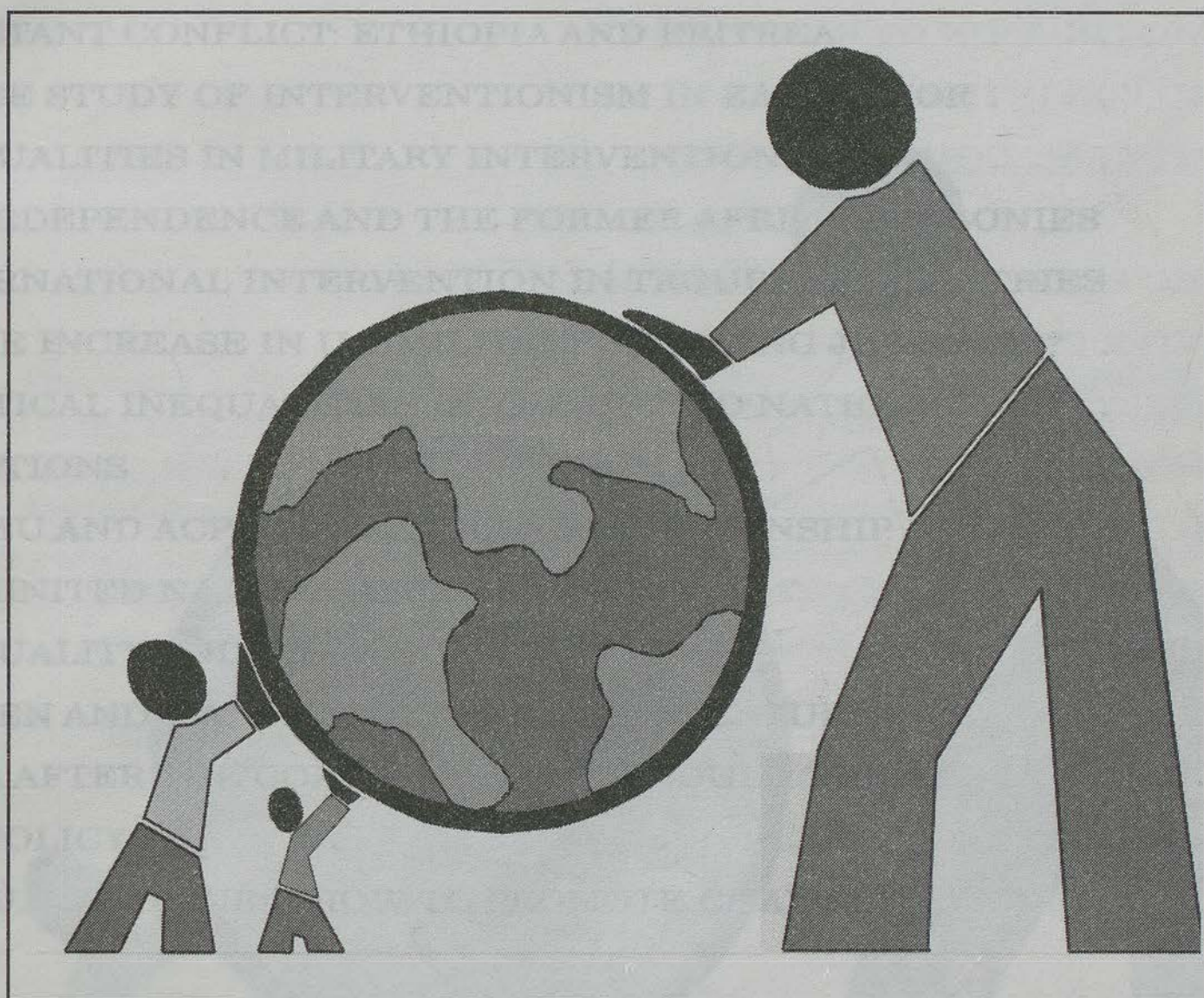
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Working Paper for the UNIS-UN Student Conference

A CHANGING WORLD:



EXAMINING GLOBAL INTERDEPENDENCE AND INEQUALITIES

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SOME DEFINITIONS OF INTERDEPENDENCE AND INEQUALITIES:

INTRODUCTION

This year's topic examines global patterns at a time of accelerating change. The articles in the working paper assess the growing interdependence and inequalities and their economic, political, social, and cultural implications. With the ongoing globalization trend, it is important to analyze how poorer and developing nations will handle the increasing economic and political dominance of larger, richer countries. The benefits of an interdependent world will only be achieved if the great disparities, economic and otherwise, that exist between developed and developing nations are eliminated.

SOME DEFINITIONS OF INTERDEPENDENCE AND INEQUALITIES:

The Oxford English Dictionary defines interdependence as :

The fact or condition of depending each upon the other ; mutual dependence. Webster's

Third New World Dictionary defines inequality as :

1) the quality of being unequal or uneven : lack of equality as

- a) unevenness
- b) social disparity
- c) disparity of distribution or opportunity
- d) variableness or changeableness

2) an instance of being unequal (as in position, proportion, evenness, regularity)

3) an irregularity or a deviation in the motion of a planet or satellite ; also : the amount of such deviation

4) a statement of inequality between two quantities usually with a sign of inequality (or signifying respectively *is less than, is greater than, is not equal to*) difference in height of successive high or low tides due chiefly to the moon's declination called also *diurnal inequality*

CONSTANT CONFLICT: ETHIOPIA AND ERITREA

Eritrea and Ethiopia, two neighbouring countries in the Horn of Africa, have had armed border disputes since May 1998. Their relations have been full of conflict for many decades. Eritrea fought a thirty year war against Ethiopia for independence, which they officially ended in 1993. After all the devastating wars they have already been through there seems to be no reasonable explanation for the fighting.

In 1935 Italy, led by Mussolini, which had already colonized Eritrea, invaded Ethiopia. As opposed to their failure to take over Ethiopia in 1896, on the second attempt they were successful. After World War II, according to the terms of the Allied peace treaty that Italy signed in 1947, agreement was to be reached within a year on the disposition of the former Italian colonies of Eritrea, Italian Somaliland and Libya. Because no agreement was made the decision was left to the United Nations. The UN General Assembly voted for the federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia, to be completed by September 1952.

Less than ten years after the federation, Eritrea began a thirty year struggle for independence. Ethiopia experienced several significant political changes as well. There were minor attacks in the beginning of the struggle, but following an increase in Eritrean terrorist activities by groups such as the Eritrea Liberation Force (ELF), and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), Ethiopia launched its first offensive in March 1967.

In 1974, Emperor Haile Selassie, the ruler of Ethiopia since the 1930s, was deposed. The Derg, or the military committee, took over. Three years later, President Mengistu Haile Mariam emerged as the Derg's leader. Many Ethiopians were

against the Marxist-Leninist economy set up by Mengistu. They wanted a democracy. Several members of the Derg were killed; some say it was the decision of Mengistu, some say it was the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Front (EPRF). The killing of these political figures was called the White Terror. The government countered with the Red Terror, in which suspected EPRF, ELF and EPLF members and supporters, especially students, were hunted down and killed.

In 1975, the Tigray people, an Ethiopian ethnic group, found mostly in the northern region of the country bordering Eritrea, started their own revolutionary group: the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). They teamed up with both the ELF and the EPLF, promising to the Eritrean groups that they would erect a democratic government if they prevailed in the revolution. The Eritreans trained the Tigray troops.

By 1978, ELF/EPLF forces had recaptured most of Eritrea; however they were unable to control all of the territory. Ethiopia launched its first major offensive in that year. By the fourth offensive, Ethiopian casualties totalled 25,000. During the fifth offensive Eritrea claimed to have inflicted 15,000 casualties. The 1982 Red Star Campaign, which was the sixth offensive, was a terrible loss for Ethiopia and a major win for the EPLF.

The biggest victory for the EPLF came in 1988 when they captured Afabet, the centre of Ethiopian military intelligence and their main supply depot in Eritrea. They stole fifty tanks and a number of Stalin Organs (multiple rocket launchers). For the first time, Ethiopia was judged to be at a disadvantage.

Eritrea cruised on to victory. They recaptured their main port city, Massawa, in 1990, and finally prevailed on March 19, 1991, taking control of the capital city Asmara. Three days later Mengistu fled to Zimbabwe. He is currently under house arrest. In order to provide a legal and democratic conclusion to the struggle of independence, Eritrea held a referendum on April 23

- 25, 1993, in which 99.81 % of the voting population voted for Eritrea's independence.

The Tigray people, the largest revolutionary group in Ethiopia, started to govern the country. They erected a democratic government, as they had promised the ELF and EPLF. However it is ironic that although Eritrea helped the Tigray take over the Ethiopian government, the Tigray and Eritrea are currently having violent disputes.

On May 13, 1998, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi declared war on Eritrea for occupying Badme, saying that it was "to protect the sovereignty of the nation." Three weeks later, he announced that he had given instructions to the armed forces to take the necessary steps. Before the battles began a newly-established organization called "The War Council," was used to plan the war instead of the Ethiopian Defence Ministry. The Council consisted almost exclusively of Tigrayans, most of whom are members of the TPLF or the Tigray Administrative Region. All others were effectively excluded from any decision-making positions and kept very much in the dark.

The Council supposedly did not want to engage in a long and expensive war like the previous one; rather, they thought their strategy of "quick in and quick out" could overcome the Eritreans in as little as two weeks.

What did Ethiopia accomplish in Round One? According to Professor Habtamu Bihonilign in his article about the conflict, "Nothing. Absolutely nothing is the unequivocal answer." Not only did Ethiopia not manage to recapture the region of Badme, but they also claimed to have lost Zalemessa and Bure to Eritrean occupation. While the War Council unleashed offensive after offensive on Eritrean positions from the Badme Plain, the Eritreans responded by controlling strategic areas. As Paul Harris, a military intelligence analyst, put it, "The Eritreans quickly overwhelmed the Ethiopians at Zalambessa and repulsed Ethiopia's drive for the Eritrean Red Sea port of Assab, pushing themselves around 30km into Ethiopian territory. "

The Council explained to the Ethiopians that Eritrea invaded Ethiopia to divert their attention from their internal problems and that with some more preparation, they could perhaps be more successful in a potential second round. Fortunately for the Council, most Ethiopians were convinced.

Between June 1998 and February 1999 the Council mortgaged the future of Ethiopia by acquiring every imaginable military weapon in the international weapons bazaar. A huge army, reminiscent of the Derg's era, was recruited and trained. As February approached, the Council was boasting that Ethiopia had made all the necessary preparation to "teach Eritrea a lesson it will never forget." The objective of this mission was a replica of the previous one: variegated and confused. The Council, this time as before, confidently believed that a quick and decisive military solution was within its grasp. Sadly, many Ethiopians had already forgotten the similar propaganda of the Derg, promising the Ethiopian people the stars. They had even forgotten the most recent propaganda line of "Round One."

What did Ethiopia accomplish in Round Two? Once again, nothing. Eritrea's strategic positioning did not move an inch since the end of Round One. To say that Round Two was another disaster is only an understatement. Now the Council wants a third round, trying to give an impression of victory to the Ethiopians, asking them, "Let us finish off what we have started."

Round Three is bound to have a different strategy. Instead of a blitzkrieg plan as in the first two attempts, Ethiopia may be looking for a prolonged war. Have they forgotten the three - decade - long war that brought massive death and destruction to both sides?

The War Council's decision to continue fighting seems even worse because there is a peace plan sponsored by the Organization of African Unity, fully supported by the United Nations, the United States, the European Union, and the rest of the international com-

munity. Eritrea has accepted the peace plan, but Ethiopia, at the last minute, did not. One of the Council's excuses for not accepting the treaty is because they say the conflict is not a mere border conflict, but something more. Some say that it is a retaliation against Eritrea for issuing their own currency, the *nakfa*, instead of staying with Ethiopia's currency, the *birr*. In reality, there is no legitimate reason for them not to stop fighting and sign the peace plan.

In fact, there are many reasons for Ethiopia to accept the plan. First of all, Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in the world (so is Eritrea). Out of Ethiopia's approximate 60 million population, 10 percent are facing starvation while 2.5 million are infected with the AIDS virus. Though it is the oldest free nation in the African continent, Ethiopia's per capita income is lower than that of Eritrea. Ethiopia is heading into severe debt problems because it is buying so much weaponry.

Secondly, Ethiopians and the international community do not want the war to continue. Developed countries are willing to stop supporting Ethiopia's arsenal if they continue the war. Though the Ethiopians supported the Council at first, now most of them are completely against the fighting.

Also, although Ethiopia's population is much greater than that of Eritrea, Ethiopia's military force is weaker than Eritrea's. This is because Ethiopia's army is traditionally the province of the poorest in the society, mostly from the rural areas.

Lastly, war is always devastating. This seems to be especially true when it is between Eritrea and Ethiopia. The wounds from the thirty year war have not yet healed, and the scars from the potential Round Three will remain a long time.

The government of Ethiopia has a choice. It can sign a peace plan and improve the quality of life for the whole country, or it can enter Round Three and get into another disaster. Because Ethiopia is so diverse, the latter option can lead to at least one of the many eth-

nic groups of the nation (most probably the ethnic majority Amharans) to revolt against the Tigray. It can lead to devastating wounds to both countries, adding insult to injury still felt from the thirty year struggle from which everyone should have learned.

This is no way to prepare for the huge changes that are now in process throughout the world.

A CASE STUDY OF INTERVENTIONISM IN EAST TIMOR

East Timor has been under the control of another power for many centuries. The Portuguese were the first colonists in Timor in 1520. The separation of East and West Timor came in 1849, when the Dutch, after many years of fighting took control of the West. East Timor remained under the control of the Portuguese until 1974, despite continuous rebellions. Civil war broke out over the control of the country. However this issue was resolved with the invasion from Indonesia, almost immediately after the declaration of independence, after the withdrawal of the Portuguese.

Indonesia was motivated by two principal considerations. Firstly, Indonesia's desire to discourage other peoples from seeking independence. It is beneficial to Indonesia to have East Timor under its control. Secondly, Indonesia knew that there would be interference from the international community had they postponed their invasion, as East Timor would have been accepted as independent. Due to the Cold War, western countries did not intervene, despite Indonesia's disregard for international law. The desire to establish a non-communist government in Indonesia, a country with major geopolitical position, was seen as a more pressing matter by the U.S. and its allies.

The invasion of East Timor brought Indonesia much international attention. There

have been many violations of human rights committed by Indonesia, including torture, execution and religious persecution (Indonesians are predominantly Muslim while the East Timorese are predominately Roman Catholic). The dramatic fall in the population is a clear indicator of the troubles under the Indonesian Government. According to Indonesian officials, between the invasion and 1980, the population decreased by 15%, although other sources claim that the reduction has been as much as 50%. The deaths are a direct result of famine, from the destruction of crops by Indonesians - in an attempt to starve the people into submission - and fighting, from the continuous rebellions and executions.

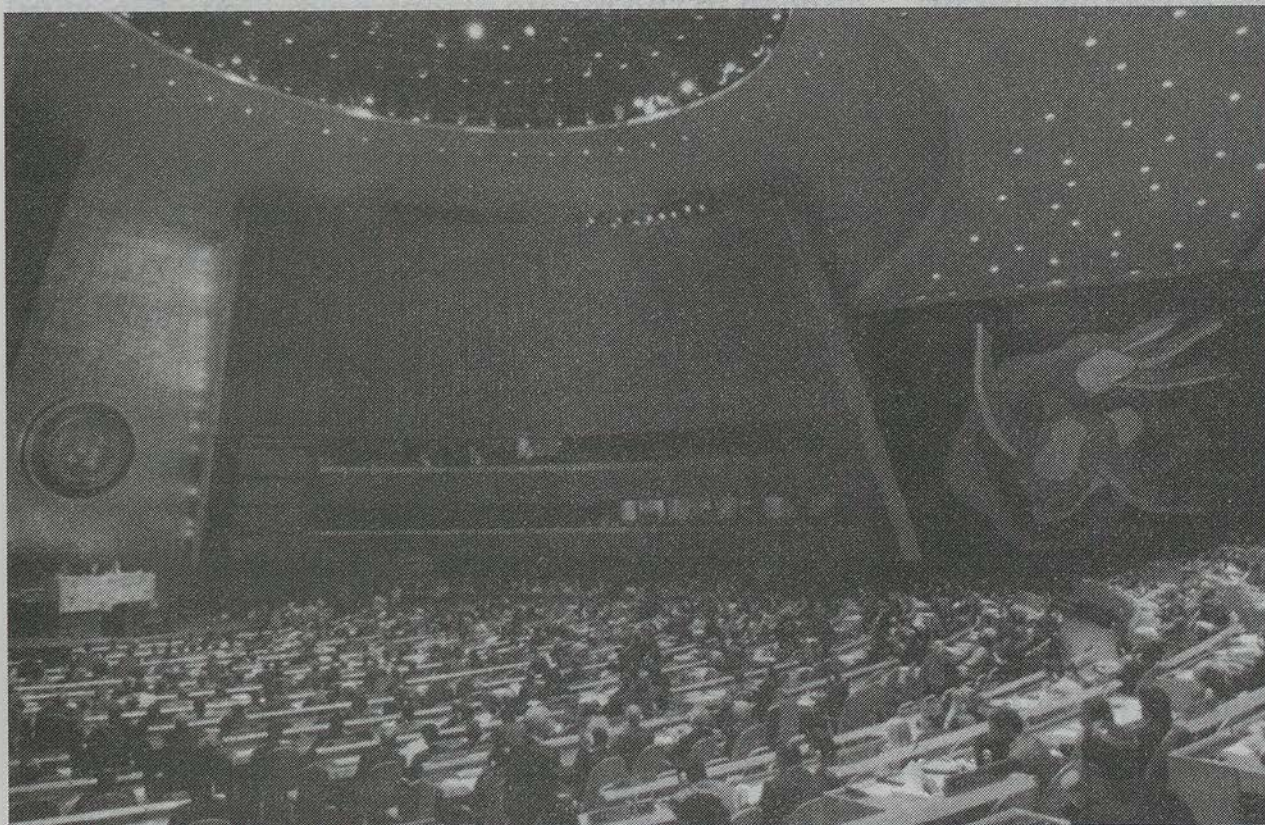
Efforts to pass a UN resolution criticizing Indonesia for its violations of human rights have been, until recently, blocked by Australia, Japan and the USA. These three countries all had economic interests in Indonesia. However, in 1993, the US shifted its position and began to support the European Community's efforts to pass a resolution condemning Indonesia's inhumane treatment of the East Timorese. This was achieved in March of 1993. Indonesia drew more attention from the international community after

the passing of the resolution, in the latter part of 1993 when security forces opened fire at the funeral of a Timorese man who had supported East Timor's independence movement. Consequently, many people were killed. Although the precise numbers are unclear - the Indonesian government's figures differ from the international community's.

For Indonesia, East Timor became a major problem. The military rule which they were imposing on East Timor was costly; this problem was unrelenting. A diplomatic solution was needed and Indonesia began conducting talks with Portugal. The UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, obviously representing the international community, was very involved with these discussions. It was resolved that the East Timorese would be given a choice between accepting autonomy from the Indonesian government or rejecting this and becoming an independent state. Once this decision had been made, the UN sent a mission to East Timor to educate the people on their choices, to organise the elections and to generally make sure that everything ran smoothly. This was a major undertaking, as the East Timorese had never before been given an option to express what they wanted politically. The vote

was a huge success for two main reasons; firstly it was a very democratic process and secondly because 98% of registered voters voted. These two accomplishments were due to the UN Mission in East Timor.

The East Timorese voted to become an independent state. The activities of the Indonesian military and militias after the vote led to the sending of a UN peacekeeping force. At



the time of writing, the UN peacekeepers, led by the Australian General Major Peter Cosgrove are a major presence in East Timor. They are playing the role of a transitional administration. One of their functions is to disarm all militias. They will stay there until East Timor is ready to assume control. Two important events in the process of East Timor becoming sovereign have recently occurred. Firstly, the return of Mausmo, a man who had spent many years in an Indonesian jail for speaking out against the atrocities Indonesia was committing. It is widely believed that Mausmo will become the first president of East Timor. Secondly, the return of many refugees from West Timor is also seen as a stepping-stone to beginning life in their own independent nation.

INEQUALITIES IN MILITARY INTERVENTION

Over the past year, the crisis in Kosovo has been at the front of world politics. Due to the violations of human rights, many different world peace organizations have been involved in the situation. This directed the attention away from other situations of human rights violations, where similar atrocities were being committed. NATO was the primary peace-keeping organization involved in the Kosovo crisis and was backed by its members, especially the United States and France. NATO's involvement in this crisis has created controversy. Why is it that they are involved in what is occurring in Kosovo but not with Turkey, where the Turkish Kurds wish to gain self-determination, exactly the same thing that the Kosovars wished for?

The Turkish government believes that the Kurdish nationalist spirit is threatening their sovereignty. To eliminate this problem the Kurds are being killed. The local media is

not allowed to discuss the situation because of the patriotism issue hence; the Turkish people seem to be unaware of this problem. Over 1700 Kurdish people have been killed and about 2.5 million people have been exiled from their homes. Over 2000 homes have been burned to the ground. There is an embargo on food imposed by the government on the eastern regions since it is believed that these people might be feeding the guerrillas.

NATO and its member states were determined to end the ethnic cleansing occurring in Kosovo. The concern for these abused people is warranted, but why just in Kosovo and not in Turkey? The U.S. did not support the Turkish Kurds, since Turkey is a NATO member state, while in Kosovo the U.S. supported the drive for self-determination because they wished to weaken Milosevic, as Yugoslavia is not a member of NATO. The only action the U.S. has taken to support the Kurds is on the Iraqi side. The U.S. has established a "no-fly zone" to help the Kurds. However, even this action has ulterior motives as the U.S. wanted Saddam Hussain to be weakened. Some of the occurrences in Turkey were seen also in Kosovo. However, because of the political scenario Turkey has not been reprimanded for these crimes in the same manner that Yugoslavia was. The difference in the U.S. approach to these two different countries can be seen in the media attention given to the countries. As Turkey is a NATO ally, there is very little media attention given to atrocities committed by the Turkish government against the Kurds. However, in the Kosovo crisis the media attention given to the situation was overwhelming.

Even though this article has focused on Turkey and Kosovo, these two areas are not the only places that suffer from civil unrest and war. Around the world there are many other cases of human rights violations. What occurred in Rwanda, during the 1994 genocide, is finally being recognized in the U.S. In the last five years alone over 820,000 people have perished in Rwanda and the intervention of peace organizations was a long and slow process since

Rwanda was not politically significant.

To attempt to remedy these problems, policies in the United Nations and other peace organizations should be revised and amended. There needs to be an international response to actions such as those in Rwanda and Kosovo. And the world needs to uniformly attack this problem. If there is no accountability by governments and their actions these atrocities will continue to be committed and will grow.

INTERDEPENDENCE AND THE FORMER AFRICAN COLONIES

Since the early 1980s, the economies of Sub-Saharan African countries have become increasingly weak. Eighteen of the world's 20 poorest countries are African, and per capita gross national product declined by two percent a year through the 1980s. The debt of these countries has tripled since 1980, and in 1994 amounted to \$180 billion. Just servicing the debt costs the countries \$10 billion every year—four times more than they spend on education. Africa's share of world trade has fallen below four percent, a figure that is dwarfed by the trade (share percentages) of Europe, North America and the Far East. This can be attributed in part to the colonies established by Europe in previous centuries.

Once a society is colonized and thrust into a position where it is dependent on an outside power for its economic and social



development, it is hard to imagine that the society will just as easily rebound once it has attained the victory of becoming independent. Personally, I have background knowledge on this matter, which is why I chose this topic. I am from Ghana, West Africa. In the early 1800s my ancestors were colonized by the British. The British came with new technology, a new religion, and new rules for social structure. The Ghanaian currency was the British pound; which was as stable and strong then as it is today. When Ghana gained her independence in 1957, the leaders of Ghana knew that they had a responsibility to preserve stability within their social and economic sphere. But babies have to crawl before they walk, and Ghana was a newborn baby, a new nation that needed to be guided to become strong. The new currency (called the cedi) was worth one British pound. Today, in comparison to the US dollar, the cedi is about 2,570. This just illustrates how far Ghana's economy had fallen in forty years. Because of development and technology investment in the late 60', Ghana's total external debt had risen from 38 to 378 million cedis. Ghana, and many other countries like her, continue to depend partially on the countries that had previously colonized them because they have no other alternative.

Perhaps the most obvious and devastating consequence of the worsening economic conditions in these countries is the spreading misery. In living standards, Africa is lagging farther and farther behind the rest of the world, and is now the only continent where most poor people are getting poorer, and where health and education are deteriorating. However, despite this situation, Africa has great riches. It has vast oil fields (Nigeria), rich agriculture (Ghana), copper (Zambia), and the beautiful diamonds of Angola and South Africa. It also has the world's largest reservoir of arable land; 2.5 billion acres, of which only 20% are cultivated. African governments have to

strive to pull themselves out of this pattern of declining growth, in order to become strong, powerful societies within the framework of this world.

Because of their weakened positions, most of the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa are increasingly being put under the influence of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, organizations founded at the end of World War II to serve the needs of the industrialized world, but have become dominant forces in the lives of developing nations.

In order to achieve her goal for autonomy, Africa must rise up from under the forces that in part remain her support. The dependence on foreign nations might be preventing Africa from taking more steps in the direction of total independence, and any possible chances of successful interdependence within the African continent itself.

INTERNATIONAL INTERVENTION IN TROUBLED COUNTRIES

Since the collapse of the USSR, the U.S. and its allies have an uncontestable position of worldwide superiority. The U.S. dominates the UN and has been more liable to intervene and impose its own concepts of social organization and behaviour on countries unfortunate enough to be involved in social, economic and political crises. Moreover, there is no group strong enough to counterbalance these tendencies.

In order to understand this phenomenon and analyse its effects, we first have to understand the causes of these recurring crises, which have become more frequent with the approach of the new millennium.

It appears that many of these crises are being precipitated in the more traditional societies; that is those societies that have existed for longer than others. Second, it is ap-

parent that most, if not all, of these crises, have economic origins. Almost always, these crises are caused either by economic conditions or by external forces producing critical situations. When analyzed together, economic crises by nature at the start, tend to bring about a humanitarian crisis also.

Human nature is such that when we find ourselves in difficulty, we tend to blame the most easily discernible target, even if that target may have never been an actual factor in the crisis. For example, the Germans blamed their defeat in the First World War on the Jewish citizens of Germany, Socialists and the Bolsheviks. This led to a general acceptance of the idea of Jewish guilt for Germany's defeat and subsequent economic chaos and resulted in Germans not opposing, but assisting in the Nazi-inspired extermination of the Jewish population.

As a result, groups within a society in crisis tend to attack first the minorities among them, and brutalize those weaker groups in a vain attempt to get rid of their feelings of hopelessness as well as to try to pillage the economic resources of those minorities. This is true for the smallest and largest human social units. A father who is having trouble will tend to brutalize the weakest members of his family as an outlet for his feelings of rage and helplessness at workplace conditions. Ghetto dwellers tend to brutalize the women and children amongst them, both as an outlet for pent up emotions and as a way of stealing money or goods. Powerful countries might brutalize weaker countries for similar reasons.

There is another reason that causes a more powerful social entity to attack and destroy a weaker one. And that is to maintain the status quo. If a more powerful entity feels that the current power structure is being threatened in any way, it may act violently to crush what it sees as a destabilizing factor.

In considering the period since World War II, foreign intervention in domestic crises has been a constantly ongoing occurrence. The U.S. and its

Western allies, under the UN umbrella in Korea; the U.S. and its allies (such as Australia) in Vietnam; the French and the Belgians in their former colonies; the Russians in Afghanistan and Chechnya; the Russians and Cubans in Africa; the U.S. in Chile, the U.S. in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Panama, Grenada, and other Central American States; the U.S. and UN in Somalia; the U.S. and UN in Iraq; NATO in Yugoslavia; the UN in East Timor; the list is long.

Taking the most recent of these humanitarian crisis interventions, and examining it further, the dubious character of these interventions is clearly evident. The latest humanitarian crisis in East Timor has long roots. In the 1960s, after the expulsion of the Dutch invaders, the late Mr. Soekarno, a leader of the Indonesian liberation movement, was the President of Indonesia. He was a left-wing socialist, in the mould of Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia, and a founding member of the Non-Aligned Nations movement, which sought to remove themselves from the sphere of influence of the major nuclear powers - the U.S. and the USSR.

Owing to his left-wing views, Soekarno was perceived as a communist ideologue, by both the U.S.A, and to a lesser degree Britain, which was still attempting to maintain its old, colonial spheres of economic and military control, under the guise of the British Commonwealth organization. Assisted by U.S. military aid, the Indonesian Army, in 1965, under General Suharto, brutally killed hundreds of thousands of Indonesian communists, and took total control of the country. General Suharto assumed a power and turned into a dictatorship. He installed his family members and friends from the armed forces in positions of power, and gained absolute control over Indonesia. This was the signal for U.S. and Western interests, in the form of multinational conglomerates and business interests, to come in and begin "economic investment".

Over a period of decades, the U.S. multinationals, using Suharto's family and friends as well-paid local partners, extracted Indone-

sia's natural resources, while the U.S. military supported Suharto and his army with equipment, supplies, and training, while U.S. businesses along with Suharto's clan plundered and pillaged it. And U.S. businesses were not alone; European, and especially Japanese businesses, went along for the ride. Indonesian oil was drained, and minerals were scooped from the Earth.

Suharto also took over half of the Island of Papua New Guinea known as Irian Jaya. Dealing with the indigenous people in the same way as his own countrymen, Suharto annexed Irian Jaya; and U.S., Japanese, Australian, and European interests, made sure that the world did not protest. The same scenario took place in Irian Jaya. Multinationals walked in and stripped the land. Whole ecosystems and self-sufficient indigenous communities and tribes were disrupted and disappeared. The World Bank, ostensibly in an effort to help, financed Suharto and his supporters. Wherever nature moved too slowly, with its law of survival of the fittest, the Indonesian Army made up the time, and got rid of any unwanted elements, human or otherwise. The U.S. Freeport McMoran Mining Company excavated the largest gold mine on earth, inside an Irian Jaya Mountain, leaving a hollow, volcano-like shell, as the result of their depredations. The tribes living in the vicinity of the mine were shifted into refugee status. And neither protest nor outcry was heard. Except for a few dedicated activists, the rest of the world kept its eyes, and ears, and mouth, shut to the plight of Irian Jaya.

Then, as the resources of Irian Jaya, like those of Indonesia, grew lean, Suharto and his family, and their business partners, turned their eyes on East Timor. Filled with the same oil and natural resources as the rest of the archipelago, it had no strong, established government. The Portuguese invaders were leaving. The liberators of East Timor were FRETILIN, a communist affiliated movement. That provided enough incentive to get the approval of the U.S., for any Timorese adventure. So, in 1975, Suharto in a blitzkrieg, moved in and

took over. Trained, equipped, and supplied by the U.S. war machine, they were far superior to the ragged band of local freedom fighters. The Europeans went along with their U.S. allies and the Australians went along because they wanted East Timorese oil for their consumption.

Then, in 1997, fate played a hand in the game. Indonesia went into a rapid economic crisis. The Indonesian people began to mobilize against Suharto, spurred by economic need. Seeing Suharto unstable, western and Australian business interests decided to cover both sides of the board, by outwardly supporting the Timorese people in their bid for freedom; while still covertly supporting Suharto and his Indonesian army.

This led to the evolution of the current International Peace Keeping Force, long after 200,000 or so East Timorese, one third of their population, had been massacred, from 1975 to 1999. Thus, it would be obvious to a careful observer, just what humanitarian intervention means - in practice.

Any intervention that is conceived and conducted by agents of military powerful regimes, is directed, bound, and biased towards the objectives of those regimes. The issue of "human rights" is only a catch phrase, designed to gain support and to deceive the world. In reality, it is pragmatic self interest that governs humanitarian intervention. If there is no economic, or other interest involved, as in the case of the Rwandan massacres, the leading powers will not interfere in support of human rights. Indeed, the leading powers themselves will not always guarantee human rights within their own countries.

In Britain, bias against British subjects of African origin is very commonplace. In the U.S.A, no redress has been ever given, either verbally, or materially, for the destruction of so many Native American people. The last remnants of these Native Americans live lives of apathetic desperation. The descendants of the African slaves are considered and treated as inferior by the whites. There is an inordinate bias against African-Americans on the part of

law enforcement officials. The criminal prosecution is heavily loaded against young African-Americans. The criminal justice and penalty system is also prejudiced against them. No reparations were ever paid to African-Americans for their slavery, or their contribution towards the economic prosperity of the U.S. During wars, African-American men bore a disproportionate share of the draft. In drug crimes, the types of crime involving African-Americans are subject to heavy punishments, far harsher than comparable crimes by whites.

In light of these and other glaring inequities, it is very hard to justify the ability, or the bona fides, of the leading military powers (with the U.S. at the apex), to provide a morally acceptable humanitarian intervention in crisis situations.

A further drawback is that of public opinion which is opposed to putting peacekeeping troops in the line of fire. This was clearly demonstrated in Kosovo, when the NATO air strikes pushed the Serbs into savage reprisals against the Kosovars. However, the NATO forces had no military or political will to send in their ground troops (at the risk of some troops being killed), to halt the post air-raid massacre of Kosovar civilians by the Serbs. Thus, they paid lip service to human rights, while being unwilling to take even the first step towards enforcing them.

IS THE INCREASE IN U.S. MILITARY SPENDING JUSTIFIED?

President Clinton announced recently that his February budget request will include a proposal to increase military spending by more than \$100 billion over the next few years. His plans for the year 2000 include a request to add another \$2 billion and to re-

direct \$8 million in Pentagon savings towards boosting military pay, buying new weapons and improving combat readiness. At a January 5 hearing, committee members made it clear that their defence authorization bill for the year 2000 will be a \$17.5 billion increase, which was suggested last September by the joint chiefs of staff. After years of high military spending and only modest to minimal reduction from Cold War heights, one can merely question how much the increase in spending will be this year.

The increase in military spending is due to perceived threats. The U.S. currently considers China a rival, even though the U.S. has 6000 nuclear weapons capable of hitting China, while China has just 20. The controversial issue that concerns all is whether a perceived opponent like China is really worth accelerating the U.S. spending. Another important issue is whether the U.S. is sending out the right message to other countries by increasing its military spending. Other countries' military budgets are declining, and the U.S. and its allies have no apparent rivals. There is some rivalry against countries such as Iraq, North Korea, India, and Pakistan, who own nuclear weapons at a smaller scale than the U.S., but such a tremendous increase in military spending may cause them to be even more cautious and wary of U.S. intentions.

For the past 15 years the expansion of the defense budget was made possible by taxing those obliged to pay taxes. This year, Congress is about to stop that and fund the defense budget through spending cuts. Excluding social security, the cuts will come from education, housing, public assistance,

health, natural resources etc. Two hundred years ago, Alexander Hamilton said that power "ought to exist without limitation, because it is impossible to foresee or define the extent and variety of national emergency." Such a statement is justified. Every country should preserve the means to defend itself, but in the process of building defence, does it have the right to build attack submarines and fighter planes? Should it equip itself with bomber aircraft with Star Wars-like capabilities?

Currently the Pentagon's investment is focused on building new platforms, and equipping the nation with newer, more advanced military capabilities. These mammoth plans are designed to deal with threats that have ceased to exist while new ones have not materialized. If the monies were transferred to upgrading rather than rebuilding, the military system would be equipped to handle any emergency situation.

During the Cold War, the U.S. had a legitimate reason to focus on military expansion because the Soviet Union was a major threat. Now that the Soviet Union does not exist and Russia is financially crippled, the U.S. has no major opposition. Regardless of this fact, the military spending has not been



reduced much since the 1980s. Times have changed. We now live in a world of nuclear warheads, biological weapons, weapons that can cause ultimate termination. In times of change, threats and reasons for animosity should be very carefully assessed so that tensions should not be increased.

POLITICAL INEQUALITIES IN THE UNITED NATIONS

According to its charter, one of the principal ideas that inspired the founders of the United Nations was "to reaffirm faith . . . in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small . . ." In paragraph 1 of Article 2 of the Charter, it states that, "the organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its members." This principle is reflected in the composition and methods of work of the General Assembly which comprises all member states of the United Nations, with one vote each. With the admission of Kiribati, Nauru and Tonga, in September 1999 there are currently 188 members.

However, the principle of equality was undermined by the creation of the Security Council, which was given primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. Because of the structure and procedural arrangements of this body, the United Nations's membership has been divided into three unequal categories: a) five permanent members of the Security Council-China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America-which have an exclusive right to veto any of the organization's decisions; b) ten non-permanent members which are elected for a 2-year term; c) all other member States.

The United Nations system, as represented by these two bodies, dates back to 1945,

when the world emerged from a devastating world war. The Allies that defeated fascism wanted to create safeguards against any recurrence of the bloodshed and, as victors, they were able to occupy a privileged position in this international system and also make sure that they had the means to block any decision that was unacceptable to each of them. Unlike the General Assembly-where a tiny Pacific island state has the same rights as, say, the United States of America-the Security Council allows the major powers which also possess nuclear weapons to exercise their right to veto. In fact, during the Cold War the mechanism of the veto helped to keep the balance between the two blocs.

Many states have claimed that the present system is inequitable and outdated. They rightly point out that the membership of the Security Council is in need of expansion if only to reflect the steady increase in the membership of the organization from 51 members in 1945, to 113 members in 1965 (also the year of the Council's only enlargement from eleven to fifteen seats), to 188 members today. These critics also stress that the five permanent members all belong to the northern hemisphere-four of them are economically developed countries, while one is rapidly approaching industrialized status. The majority of the states are not content with the situation of "eternal" privilege enjoyed by the five permanent members. Germany and Japan, former "enemy states" in World War II and now economic powerhouses that contribute greatly to the United Nations budget, no longer wish to accept their second class status.

As a result, in 1979-at the request of Algeria, Argentina, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Guyana, India, Maldives, Nepal, Nigeria and Sri Lanka-the General Assembly included in its agenda an item entitled, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters." Subsequently, an open-ended working group was created to draft appropri-

ate proposals, but this group is still at work because there is a conflict of views on how to proceed. What should be the right size for the Council to be truly representative, yet efficient? Should there be an increase in the number of permanent members? Should the new permanent members have the right to veto? Should the United Nations abolish this right altogether in the spirit of democracy at the start of a new millennium? Should new regional powers be represented?

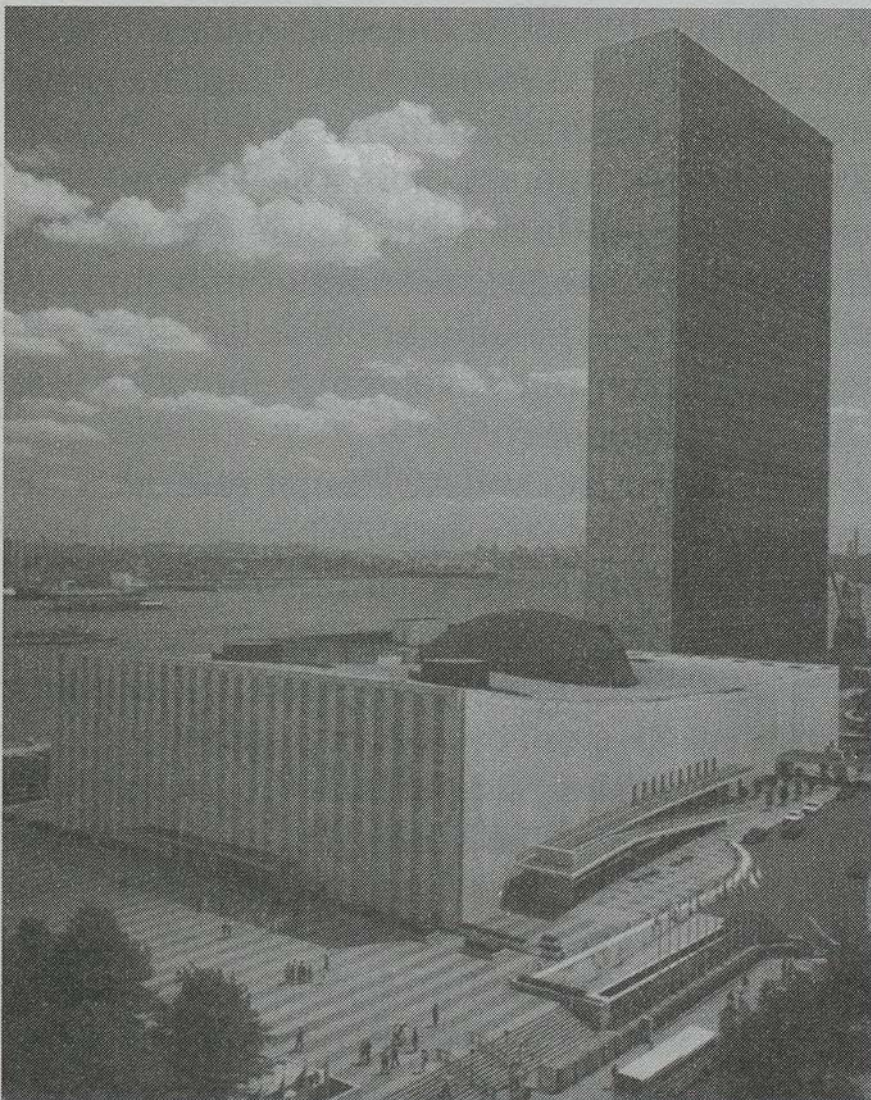
At present, nobody can oppose the principle of equality as proclaimed by the United Nations. It is clear that the system created over half a century ago under completely different conditions is in need of change. However, the current permanent members are not eager to rectify these inequalities. Instead, they are very reluctant to amend the United Nations Charter because they are afraid of opening up a "Pandora's box" and of losing their privileges as a result. Enjoying political weight and military and economic might, the permanent members demonstrate George

Orwell's statement: "All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others."

SANCTIONS

In Iraq many people are starving; many people are dying; many people are suffering, crying for comfort, for a piece of bread, for medicines, and for the better lives that they so desperately want and need. By pursuing this policy, the "aggressor" (the country or countries imposing the sanctions) seeks to make the government of Iraq comply with certain policies in the area of arms development.

More than any other country in the twentieth century world, the United States has used economic sanctions to a devastating though not always successful effect. Even now, heavy sanctions are in place against Cuba because of its communist government and the "dictatorship" of Fidel Castro, and against Iraq due to the totalitarian rule of Saddam Hussein (though the real incentive of the West can be interpreted as a way to reduce Iraqi strength, which is a threat to the price and flow of Middle Eastern oil). Both the economies of Iraq and Cuba have been crippled by sanctions, as can be seen in high inflation and shortages in many sectors. Both nations are desperately short of medical supplies and the shelves in many of their shops and stores are empty. The sudden halt to the import of foodstuffs has particularly hurt Cuba, which used to rely on the Soviet bloc countries for food imports. The average calorie consumption per day of the Cuban dropped from 2,800 in 1989, to 1,863 in 1993. The average Cuban consumes 40% less protein than needed. In Baghdad, in the famous book suk, people sell their libraries of books and magazines for a day's meal. Yet, these two figureheads of oppression, Saddam Hussein and Fidel Castro, are still in power, and their people are still suffering primarily because of the severe effects of the economic sanctions in place against them.



Is it just to cause the suffering of millions, regardless of their leaders? Is it just to maintain an ineffective economic policy that only serves to hurt innocent people? Therefore, should not these embargoes be lifted if, after all this time, their objective has not been achieved?

In a recent survey it was determined that only one-third of all economic and political sanctions are able to compel even minor change in a target country, but all of these sanctions create conditions of poverty, hunger, and misery. In addition, it enables the sanctioned country's ruler, such as Saddam Hussein, to point fingers at the West as the cause of his nation's internal problems. Perhaps sanctions accomplish the exact opposite of what they are intended for; they can be manipulated to secure Saddam Hussein's power. He can use nationalistic propaganda to create public Iraqi animosity towards the West and the US. And this can be justified: for the sanctions can be seen to be the cause of the Iraqi peoples' suffering and not the policies of Saddam Hussein himself.

Sanctions (in their impact on people) demonstrate a lack of humane consideration and they seem to be an ineffective way of transforming the political circumstances of the target country. In an international context, sanctions can be pictured as blows delivered by the "western bully" to its smaller, helpless opponent, for the "bill" is paid in the tears and misery of innocent people.

THE EU AND ACP: THE CHANGING RELATIONSHIP

Cooperation between the European Union (EU) and the Africa Caribbean Pacific (ACP) states was officially launched in 1975 when the first convention was signed in the city of Lomé, Togo between 46 ACP states and the EU states. Since then, the number of ACP

states has grown to 71 with the addition of South Africa in July of 1998. The Lomé Convention was established as an international trade and aid agreement to provide financial, economic and other support to developing countries and promote self-reliance and sustainable development in ACP states. The current convention expires in 2000 and negotiations for a fifth convention have been under way since September 30th, 1999 in Brussels. Has the Lomé Convention accomplished what it intended to? If not, what needs to be done to ensure that ACP countries find the economic stability they need to prosper? These are the questions facing the ACP and the EU at the beginning of the new millennium in a rapidly changing world.

Although conditions have improved for ACP member states since the signing of the original Lomé Convention, 41 of the least developed countries in the world are ACP countries. This factor has led to a widespread debate over the effectiveness of the four aid agreements made in the past 25 years. The EU faces many new concerns today such as the effects of a single currency (the Euro) on the economy of member states, and the growing membership as countries from the former Eastern bloc apply to join the Union. The major problem facing the Lomé Convention today is the changing economic environment, particularly as globalisation poses the problem of integrating developing countries into the global economy.

Both the EU and ACP must rethink their interests and roles in establishing greater global interdependence in order to accomplish what they originally set out to do. According to "The Green Paper," published by the European Commission, the EU has expressed concerns for creating a global development that is "more compatible with European political and social values," as well as a "quest for peace and stability," and "better management of global interdependence and risks." Changing attitudes among ACP countries will also have an effect on the process. These countries are

trying hard to create an environment for integration into the global economy and for sustainable development, as well as building strong democratic societies, while facing the problem of rapid population growth.

The effectiveness of the aid provided under the Lomé Convention is a subject of debate for the aid to ACP countries has had varying degrees of success in the past and has been frequently criticized in recent years. There is talk that financial and political bonds must be fortified to create a foundation for successful interdependence. There is also widespread concern that funds for emergencies and unforeseen crises are not readily available if a country were to need them. The groundwork, like general agreement on democracy and the development of a European conflict prevention policy, has been laid, but the Lomé Conventions have yet to build on this and create a more explicit political commitment between the ACP and the EU member states. There is also a growing need for the EU to invest more wisely in developing industries in ACP countries, in order that the ACP nations play a bigger role in international trade.

Since the ACP and EU include such a wide range of regions, the Lomé Convention should perhaps be split up into several regional agreements to better serve the needs of individual regions. These are just a few examples of the types of decisions that need to be made before the initiation of the fifth Lomé Convention in January 2000 which will remain in effect through 2005.

However, there seems to be a consensus that many aspects of the aid agreement between the ACP and the EU must be reviewed and altered to fit the ever-changing world where effective interdependence and equality is essential. Both organizations must rethink their strategies and new interests on the regional level as well as on the global level. As we enter the new millennium, there is an increasing demand for changes in the foreign, economic, political, social and cultural initia-

tives of many countries in order to facilitate advances in technology as well as globalisation and the emergence of developing countries into the global economy.

THE UNITED NATIONS AFTER 50 YEARS: INEQUALITY AND DISCRIMINATION

For over fifty years the Security Council of the United Nations has maintained the same organizational structure. The Security Council is composed of five permanent member countries - China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States - and 10 non-permanent members elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms. The countries that were victorious or on the side of allies in World War II became the veto power in the United Nations Security Council.

Since many of these countries have been transformed over the past half-century, the UN is dealing with an imbalance of power in the Security Council. Russia has gone through various stages of political and economic change. At present it is working towards a free-market economy and a more open society, but it no longer represents the "second or third world," although it was sympathetic to developing nations. In addition, the USSR was the original permanent member, not Russia. The former USSR was subdivided and the Russian Federation occupies its position. The other countries that resulted from the break-up of the former USSR have lost their original representation. The political and economic influence of France and the United Kingdom has diminished significantly in the past fifty years; they are no longer economic and political great powers. However, they will continue to hold their present power in the United Nations Security Council due to their power in the past.

While the European continent has three members, the continents of South America, Africa, and Australia have no permanent representation. This shows how much power is concentrated in the NATO alliance and away from other areas of the world. Of late, countries from Africa have been pushing for permanent membership for at least one African nation to represent the region. It seems only fair that an African country should be on the Council to represent the continent. In addition, Japan and other prosperous nations would like permanent seats on the Security Council. However, one problem is, having opened the door to one change, other countries will put their feet in the door, demanding permanent membership on the Security Council.

The question is: Are nations looking at what is good for the world as a whole, or are they looking at what is good for themselves? The whole political system of the Security Council was set up to perpetuate the power base of the five permanent members of the UN. In reality there will continue to be inequalities because these countries are not yet ready to relinquish their power. In the Security Council voting decisions on procedural questions require nine votes, but decisions cannot be taken on all other matters if there is a negative vote by a permanent member (known as the "veto").

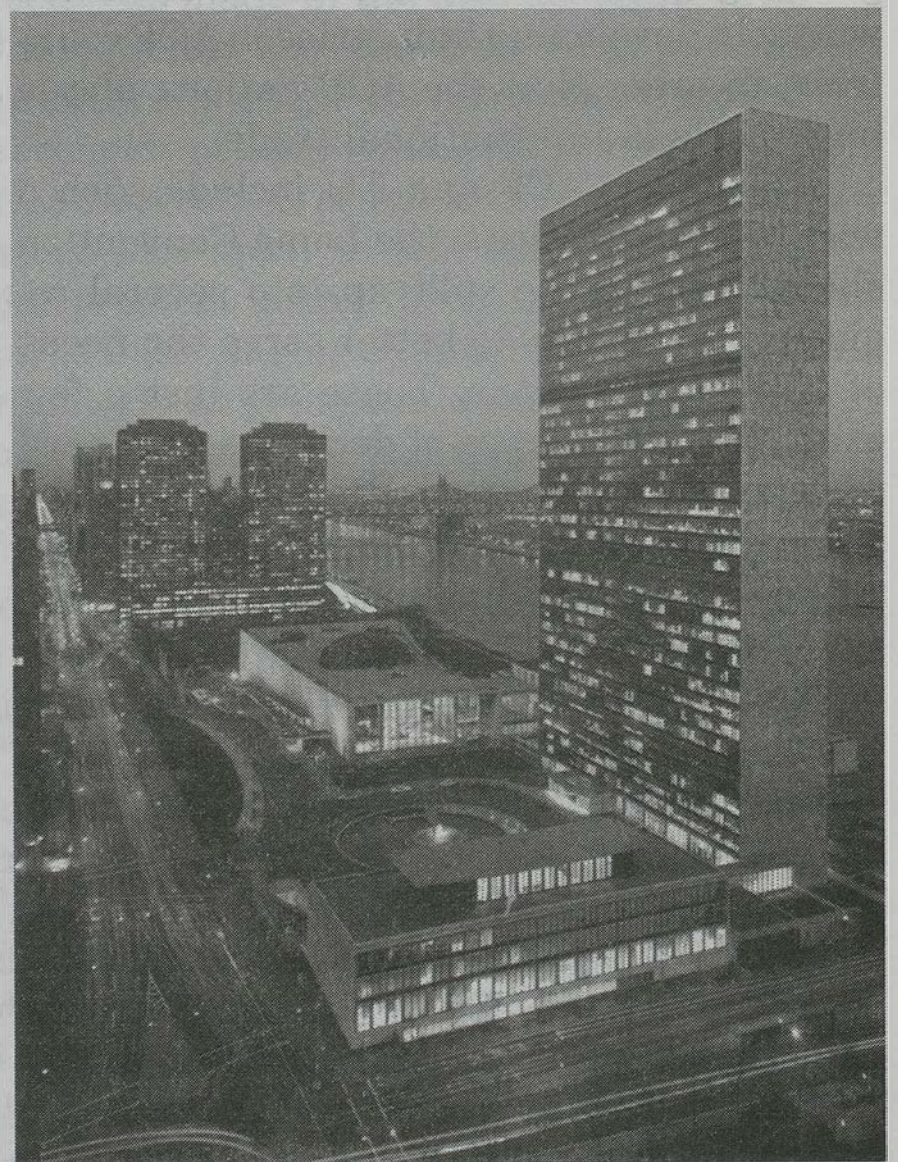
One of the largest inequalities within the Security Council involves the treatment of one country, Israel. Of all UN member countries, only Israel is ineligible to serve on the Security Council. In order to be eligible, a country must belong to one of the five regional groups. Israel should be a part of the Asian bloc, but Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and others have prevented its entry for decades. Of all UN members only Israel is denied the right to belong to any regional group. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has called for an end to this injustice and "the normalization of Israel's status within the United Nations."

As a temporary measure, Israel has sought acceptance in the West European and

Others Group (WEOG), which includes the nations of Western Europe in addition to Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States. Only the U.S., Australia, Canada and Norway have supported Israel's admission to the WEOG. The 15-member European Union, however, refuses to act, fearing increased competition for one of the Security Council's ten rotating seats and possible retribution from Arab nations.

Very recently, however, it has been discovered that Israel's long-sought goal may be realized. While it has been said that Ireland, Italy and perhaps a third European nation were refusing to support Israel's admission, the other nations of the European Union seem to have agreed to admit Israel.

Many countries want to expand the membership of the Security Council to include new permanent and non-permanent members; however no change has been made since 1965, when the number of non-permanent members was changed from 6 to



10. Finally this resistance to change in the UN structure seems to be lifting, and Israel's possible admittance into the WEOG may be just the beginning.

TO WHAT EXTENT HAS TWENTIETH CENTURY WAR CHANGED THE TRADITIONAL ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES?

Those twentieth century wars which have involved the United States of America have generated needs that have led to changes in the traditional role of women. These changes have been significant but the advancements have not, for the most part, been permanent. Throughout the history of the United States there have been deep-rooted cultural beliefs about the limited roles of women in society. Women's natural roles were believed to be those of wives and mothers. They were better suited for domestic duties rather than public or business positions. Since they were perceived to be intellectually inferior, women were only minimally educated, if at all. Men controlled most of the positions of authority and women were not given the opportunity to take the first steps to advance their positions in society.

During World War I, women, like men, participated in the war effort in jobs, as mechanics, munitions workers, truck drivers, and welders, which had previously been closed to women. An estimated 25,000 women served abroad. Of these, 10,000 served in the Navy Nurse Corps and the Army, often working in difficult and dangerous situations. One nurse described an underground, improvised hospital: "I have not seen daylight for eight days now and the stench in this cave is pretty bad: no air, artificial light, and the cots are so close together

you can just get between them. Side by side I have Americans, English, Scotch, Irish, and French, and apart in the corners are Boche. They have to watch each other die."

Women also served overseas in other capacities with the Army and American medical, welfare, and relief agencies. They relieved American Expeditionary Force (AEF) males as hospital aids, dieticians, cooks, assistants in relief projects, clerks, and telephone and telegraph operators. Others worked for the welfare of the soldiers under the auspices of the Red Cross, YMCA, Salvation Army, and religious organizations.

However, World War I did not have a lasting effect on the employment of women mainly because the war did not last long and did not demand much manpower. The draft never assimilated more than 2 million men, and the rest remained in their jobs. The war ended in 1918, and women workers relinquished their jobs to returning soldiers.

Although it was demonstrated that women could work as well as men and that they could make a meaningful contribution to the war effort, women had to continue to fight for the right to vote. Carrie Chapman Catt, leader of the drive for woman's suffrage, said, "It is doubtful if any man...ever realized what the suffrage struggle came to mean to women... How much of time and patience, how much of work, energy, aspiration, how much of faith, how much of hope, and how much of despair went into it. It leaves its mark on one, such a struggle."

The perception that it was not a woman's place to make political decisions was held despite the participation of women in the war. Only after pressure through marches, picketing, petitions, and hunger strikes, was the Nineteenth Amendment passed by Congress and ratified by the states in 1920 giving women the right to vote. However, the amendment did not have the desired impact. Meaningful advances for women in American politics would be denied for decades.

Similarly, World War II allowed women more job opportunities, but few of these continued after the war when the troops returned to civilian life. During World War II, women learned new skills and received high pay. The number of black women workers doubled. Married women and women with disabilities got jobs in record numbers. The US government launched an intensive media campaign to encourage women to join the workforce.

The Women's Airforce Services Pilots (WASPs) came under contract to the US Army in World War II. WASP was a group of civilian pilots, who served as test pilots, ran target missions providing training for anti-aircraft gunners, and ferried new aircraft to embarkation points around the country. Despite the unit's record, Congress refused to make WASP part of the regular military forces and finally disbanded it in 1944.

In 1942, the US Congress established the Women's Army Corps (WAC). It was organized as a noncombatant army unit in World War II. By 1945 more than 99,000 women had served in the WAC both overseas and in the US. With the passage of the Women's Armed Services Integration Act in 1948, the WAC was made part of the regular army. About 83,000 women were serving in the US Army in 1987.

World War II had the greatest effect on women's employment. The war lasted over four years and over 15 million men and women entered the armed forces from the work force, creating opportunities for women not already in the work force or in the armed forces. Many women used the goal of winning the war to justify their departure from traditional roles. During the post-World War II era, growing numbers of women took jobs to assist in supporting their families.

When the war ended, the government launched another campaign but this time it was trying to persuade women to leave the labor force. The campaign described a "normal" woman as devoted to her children, her husband, and herself. One who "stayed home"

and fulfilled herself by cleaning, baking, and keeping herself attractive for her husband. In the aftermath of World War II, a senator commented on the issue of women in the army, "Who will then do the cooking, the washing, the mending, the humble homely tasks to which every woman has devoted herself. Think of the humiliation! What has become of the manhood of America?"

The turmoil of World War II affected all aspects of American life and threw families into disarray. When the war ended there was the hope that lives could be resumed and life could be safe and secure again. It is not surprising then that women did not protest against the loss of their new employment or insist on equality in the workforce. It was often their husbands and sons who were returning and in need of jobs. Women may have acquiesced to a great extent, but the scope and magnitude of World War II created such an upheaval in American society that everyone wanted a return to normalcy even if it meant a step back for women.

The attitude of women during World War I and World War II was one of support and determination to help in the war effort. The efforts of women were appreciated and they worked for salaries and volunteered in war bond sales, Salvation Army drives, and the Red Cross. There was an atmosphere of patriotic participation and helping to defend the country against a common enemy. Starkly different from this was the attitude of many young women during the Vietnam War. The Vietnam War changed the traditional role of women to the extent that it changed the ideal model of the American woman as wholeheartedly backing a war effort. While approximately 10,000 military women and more than 13,000 Red Cross women served in Vietnam, at home many young women participated in demonstrations, riots, and protests against the involvement of the US in Vietnam. They were vocal and sometimes violent, rather than "pitching in" to help. Women were taking a political stand and this may have contributed

to later participation in political demonstrations for women's rights such as the march in 1970 by 50,000 women down Fifth Avenue in New York to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Nineteenth Amendment.

More recently in the war with Iraq called Desert Storm, one tenth of the US force was composed of women. Women filled traditional roles as cooks, clerks, and nurses, but also served as fire fighters, strategic planners, and intelligence officers, operating close to the fire zone. "Once you work with them enough, they realize that you're a soldier like they are," said Lieut. Lynnel Bifora of Mohawk, NY. The role of women in the military had already expanded by the time of the Persian Gulf War and women again demonstrated their ability to perform.

Under the demands of war, men have often been willing to break the mold of social custom and allow gender roles to shift. Lifting barriers during wartime became a pattern in the US, but it did not lead to the expectation of permanent jobs for women. More women did enter the workforce for the first time, but this was only temporary progress. Military service for most women ended, along with many factory jobs and other wartime positions. Many male workers often regarded women with hostility and prejudice and they feared for their jobs in the future if women were to become permanent employees.

The wars of the twentieth century had a significant impact on the traditional role of women in the US, but the extent of that effect was temporary. The ability of women to "fill a man's shoes" in industry and defense was encouraged only as long as it served the war effort. It was not supported in developed nations, where many jobs are lost.

Equality for women has had to come from more specific efforts by women such as the Women's Suffrage Movement and the feminist movement in the years between World War II and Desert Storm.

CUBA AFTER THE COLD WAR: WHAT SHOULD THE U.S. POLICY BE?

Cuba's place in the world has changed dramatically over the past ten years. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and most other communist states, it is now an isolated anomaly and a threat to no one. All its troops are out of Africa; it is no longer supporting revolutionary movements anywhere in the world; its military ties to Russia are dwindling and in any event are no longer in any way threatening to the United States.

What should U.S. policy toward Cuba be now that the island no longer constitutes a security concern — or even a foreign policy problem? People have been predicting the fall of Fidel Castro by year's end for the past three years or more. They have been wrong, but might Castro's collapse come soon, in that case, the U.S. government could logically argue that it should do nothing other than await the inevitable. Castro's fall does not appear to be imminent, so a more active policy might be in order. But should it be one of increased or reduced pressures, one of cautious detente or of hardened resolve never to deal with the Castro government?

Cuba has been a peculiarly emotional issue in U.S. foreign policy since the Spanish American war of 1898. Unfortunately, it seems to be no less so in this post-cold-war era; current U.S. policy is obsolete. Reducing pressures and trying to open a dialogue with Cuba would better serve the United States. Recent efforts to increase pressures, such as embodied in the Cuban Democracy Act, have been decidedly counterproductive, as pointed up by the U.S.'s isolation in the United Nations, which on November 24 1998 overwhelmingly passed a resolution calling for the lifting of the trade embargo.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Cuba lost its principal trading partner and source of economic assistance. As a direct result, its economy has contracted by some 40 percent since 1989. In 1992, moreover, it was able to import only half as much petroleum as it once did for its normal needs. Few manufactured goods are reaching the island these days. No one is actually going hungry. Free medical care and education remain available, and most Cubans, though not all, have adequate housing. But daily life has become an exhausting ordeal.

This, however, does not mean collapse is near. No matter how difficult the economic situation, the bottom line is that Castro would have to be removed by force of arms. He will not simply resign or scuttle off into golden exile. Who then will take up arms against him? There is no organized opposition in Cuba and not likely to be any. For one thing, it would be extremely difficult to mount such a force, for Castro's security apparatus is massive and effective. For another, whether they like him or not, Castro has dominated the political landscape for forty years and still has more of a psychological hold over the Cuban people than any dictator has had over his people at the peak of his power.

While many Cubans think of leaving, and some even risk the dangerous passage to Key West in rubber rafts, few, if any, think of changing the situation by force of arms. That includes the army.

Cuba has signed a new trade agreement with Russia, mostly at world market prices, has found some new trading partners and has tripled its trade with China. None of this comes close to replacing the massive trading arrangement it once had with the Soviet Union, but at least it will result in an increase in petroleum and other imports. Also playing to Cuba's advantage is the fact that world market prices for a number of its export commodities are on the rise.

Cuba is in need of reform because while the country is experiencing some economic

improvement, Cuba too must adjust to the world that has changed around it. In Cuba the process of change will be carefully controlled and will lead to neither a western-style democracy nor capitalism according to Castro. To meet its own needs, Cuba must at least move toward a mixed economy and a more open political system. The Castro government can survive, but only if it can restore the Cuban economy.

Change is indeed already taking place on the economic side, as evidenced by the Cuban government's willingness to begin mixed ventures with foreign private capital and to allow individual Cuban citizens to engage in private enterprise, at least in the service sector. Much more needs to be done. If foreign investors can organize private companies in Cuba, shouldn't groups of Cuban citizens be able to do the same? Cuba has a literate and industrious population. Foreign investors would be more comfortable with a mixed economy in which Cuban private enterprise, however limited, also played a role. The Cuban government has not gone far enough, but on the economic side, the Cubans are at least moving in the right direction and the process will almost certainly take on a momentum of its own, Castro's socialism or-harsh rhetoric notwithstanding. However, the Cubans (like the Chinese) have not been open to political economic reforms. Closed political systems simply do not provide the kind of foundation for a market economy. Hence, Cuba must open up its own market.

Cuba also needs to reintegrate itself into the inter-American family of nations. Most of the Latin American states are supportive, but they insist that Cuba must begin to give its people a greater voice in choosing their leaders. Mexico and Venezuela could be most helpful to Cuba in its present economic crisis by providing petroleum at lower prices. However to do so, they would have to defy U.S. pressures.

Prior to late 1991, the Cuban government seemed open to the idea of change,

though rejecting any move toward a western type democracy. It promised direct and open elections to the National Assembly and even suggested that a multiparty system was a possibility. Had the government continued in that spirit and come up with a credible electoral process, most Latin American governments, including Venezuela and Mexico, probably would have been satisfied. When the necessary electoral reform law was issued in late 1992, however, it had been reduced to near-farcical terms. But Cubans argue that continued U.S. pressure and hostility make electoral and other reforms less than likely. There seems to be a direct relationship between the level of tension between Washington and Havana and the degree to which there can be internal relaxation in Cuba. Castro is an authoritarian leader who wants to keep his power. The question is whether or not he is pragmatic enough to understand that it is only by opening up, that he can revitalize Cuba and turn it into an integrated and smoothly functioning member of the international community. Cuba's human rights activists call for a reduction of bilateral tensions as the best means of creating a climate in which positive change can take place. The Cuban Commission for Human Rights and National Reconciliation, for example, urges the United States to lift its trade embargo and

normalize relations immediately. What is needed is a more flexible policy better adapted to the post-cold-war period whose objectives would be: 1) to encourage movement toward a more open system and greater respect for human rights, 2) to improve the living conditions of the Cuban people, and 3) to make it easier for families to visit between Cuba and the U.S.

THE U.S. AND CUBA: HOW TO PROMOTE CHANGE?

What are U.S. interests? For almost thirty years, U.S. interests with respect to Cuba were of a security nature and had more to do with Washington's global rivalry with Moscow than with Cuba itself. Every Cuban action had to be analysed within a Cold War context, i.e., in terms of whether it advanced Soviet objectives or in some way undermined those of the U.S. Early on, U.S. officials even insisted that it was not Cuba's socialist system that concerned the U.S. Cuba's internal arrangements were its own affair but rather, its interventionist foreign policy and its military ties to the Soviet Union. Under the Carter administration, human rights were added to the list of concerns. The U.S. could move toward normalization, Carter indicated, if Cuba ceased its intervention in revolutionary situations in various parts of the world, and if it showed greater respect for human rights. U.S. officials were saying that the obstacles to a more normal relationship with Cuba had to do essentially with Cuba's foreign policy, not with its system at home. What now stands in the way of better U.S.-Cuba relations? It is no longer its support of revolutionary movements, and its military ties to Russia all virtually nonexistent. None of that has made any difference. Rather than



reducing pressures against Cuba, the Bush administration increased them. Security concerns are not the key.

What are the U.S.'s real interests in Cuba? What kind of outcome would best serve those interests?

1) Avoiding Damage to the U.S. International Image and to Relations With Developing Nations. First of all, since Cuba is no longer a security concern or a foreign policy problem of any significance to the U.S., it would not be logical to disrupt America's important relationships with other countries because of Cuba. Confidence in U.S. leadership is being undermined. Governments friendly to the U.S. elsewhere have regarded the U.S. obsession with Cuba as irrational. Especially troubling to them is the continued U.S. refusal to sell foods and medicines to Cuba, a position that is inhumane. To U.S. explanations that normal relations are impossible because Cuba does not have a democratic system and violates human rights, friendly governments note that the U.S. has normal relations with a whole series of countries that are no more democratic than Cuba and whose records on human rights abuses are far worse. It is not a reassuring performance, and does not reflect the kind of vision and seriousness of purpose one would expect of a world leader.

2) Encouraging a More Open System
The argument is not over whether to do it, but how best to do it. Most human rights activists in Cuba say that a more democratic form of government could best be achieved through reduced tensions and more normal relations. It has been precisely during periods of relaxation of bilateral tensions that the Cuban government has shown itself most disposed to move in the desired direction. During the inchoate Carter opening to Cuba back in 1978 and 1979, for example, the Cuban government released most political prisoners then held some five thousand, and allowed any who wished to leave the country to do so. And it was in 1987 and

1988, as the Reagan administration in its last two years negotiated a number of issues with Cuba and as the expectation grew that a Bush administration might be willing to have a more normal relationship with Cuba, that significant improvements were registered in the field of human rights. In its Human Rights report for 1988, the State Department acknowledged that there had been a significant improvement. The Bush administration, however, did not act on that basis; it circulated a memorandum indicating there would be no improvement in relations with Cuba because there had been no change in Cuban conduct.

3) Economic Benefits: The United States also has economic interests in Cuba. It is a relatively small market, but for certain regions and companies, trading with Cuba could be quite lucrative for the U.S.'s business. The United States wants to be compensated for the goods and properties nationalized by the Cuban government back in the late 1960s. Cuba has consistently acknowledged its obligation to compensate U.S. property owners and indicated its willingness to sit down at the negotiating table. Indeed, it has long since worked out satisfactory compensation agreements with all other countries that had claims against it. Cuban officials have consistently indicated that settlement of the compensation issue would have to be accompanied by a lifting of the embargo. They were not the first to link the two issues, however. In 1960, the United States imposed its embargo because Cuba had nationalized all U.S. properties. As the two sides began discussing a negotiating agenda in 1977, it was the United States that insisted the embargo could not be lifted until the compensation issue had been worked out. In now taking the position that the reverse is also true, Cuba is doing what the U.S. did to it. The United States could be compensated and renewed trade would be of economic benefit to both countries. The Cuban Democracy Act is only

a rehash of what the U.S. has been doing since the 'Bay of Pigs' in 1961. Its proponents described it in misleading terms and made false claims for it. Shortly after its enactment, the U.N. General Assembly, on November 24, 1992, overwhelmingly voted against the United States in approving a resolution calling for the lifting of the U.S. embargo. The year before, a similar resolution had not even made it to the floor. Thanks to its policy, the United States was isolated, with only Israel and Romania voting with the U.S.

An effective approach to the Cuban issue would begin by formulating policy measures that are carefully geared to the advancement of U.S. objectives. It is important to note also that achievement of those objectives does not hinge upon the fall of Fidel Castro, however viscerally pleasing that outcome might be to U.S. leaders. Those objectives of highest priority do not even require reciprocal measures on Cuba's part. If the U.S. wishes to protect its position with developing nations and erase the image of the United States as an irrational bully in its dealings with Cuba, it should immediately take measures to do so, irrespective of attitudes and actions on Cuba's part.

Those measures could include the following:

(1) Open the way for the sale of food and medicine to Cuba. Many Americans believe the prohibition of such sales should not have been imposed in the first place, that the United States should never be in the position of refusing to sell food and medicine to anyone. To maintain such a ban now, with the Cold War over and when it is clearly the Cuban people themselves who suffer the consequences, cannot but help appear inhumane.

(2) Lift all travel controls and encourage Cuba to do the same, so that Cubans and Americans, subject only to normal visa requirements, can travel freely back and forth. In principle if not in point of law, denying American citizens the right to travel to another country is an infringement of their fun-

damental rights that should not be carried out by a democratic administration sworn to uphold basic freedoms. Beyond that, allowing Americans to travel freely to Cuba would be an excellent way of increasing the flow of information and new ideas to the Cuban people. In fact, cultural and academic exchanges are an excellent means of increasing the Cuban people's access to information and ideas. Performers, artists and intellectuals from both countries should tour each other's country. Should Cuba respond positively to these steps on the part of the United States, the next step would be to begin negotiating the various bilateral issues that stand in the way of a more normal relationship. These would include, first and foremost, compensation for nationalized U.S. properties and the lifting of the U.S. embargo. Progress on compensation would be complicated by the U.S. position that in addition to the principal, Cuba should pay 6 percent per annum on that sum, and by Cuba's counter-claims stemming from the Bay of Pigs invasion and the thirty-year U.S. embargo. A formula informally discussed back in 1977, however, might offer a way around these complications: the United States would disregard its demand for payment of interest, while Cuba would drop its counter claims. The two sides could then get down to negotiating the principal to be paid in compensation, the lifting of the embargo and the establishment of a surcharge on Cuban imports into the United States, out of which that compensation would be paid. With that done, full diplomatic relations should be restored and the two sides could move on to the solution of other outstanding issues.

Relations between the two countries may not be cordial for a very long time even after 'normalization', and cannot be until Cuba has transformed itself into a much more open society showing full respect for the civil rights of its citizens. But it is through a process of engagement that the United States can do the most to encourage Cuba toward such a transformation.

CHILD EXPLOITATION: INEQUALITIES THROUGH GLOBALISATION AND INTERDEPENDENCE

In the present competitive international economy, both businesses and consumers are seeking cheaper and cheaper sources of goods, no matter who makes them. This competition stems from the global economic race that theoretically attempts to better the well-being of each country's people. Globalisation has had an enormous impact on the world economy, which has, in turn, had a large effect on each competing nation. Though there are a few countries that succeed in the global economy and accumulate an overwhelmingly large revenue, there are also dozens of countries that struggle with poverty, starvation, and overpopulation. Since these emerging countries rely heavily on agriculture as a major source of income, there are not enough jobs to support the millions of unemployed people. This forces children to work



in order to provide income for their families. Children's last resort is to engage in prostitution, theft, and the drug trade. In order to avoid these traps and still be able to support their families, they

work in factories in which they are deprived of their human rights, as well as being physically and emotionally abused, and are paid less than a fraction of the United States standard for minimum wage. This is the phenomenon known as child exploitation.

The nations which face these issues are now economically dependent on larger, more powerful nations as sources of capital, primarily the United States, the leading European nations and Japan who are in the driver's seat of the world economy. These powers have the freedom to take advantage of struggling countries' economic desperation. The economically powerful are aware of the developing countries' dire need of income; therefore global corporations competing in the capitalist economy seek the cheapest labour as possible, which can be found in the poorest countries. Not only are developing nations dependent on the great powers for any source of capital (regardless of minimal pay and conditions implemented), these great powers are dependent on the developing countries because the global economy has become a running competition. Each great power is striving to make as much profit as possible. This means that they must take advantage of the desperation of the less developed countries, in order not to fall behind in the economic race. Thus, if one country drops out of the race, the global economy changes and the withdrawn country loses strength and falls behind. Today it is vital to keep up with the global economy or stagnation occurs. Even economically stable countries have difficulty keeping up, therefore it is a necessity for developing countries to get income by any means. The governments of the developing nations are aware of the harsh conditions the workers are exposed to, but the need to generate income is so great that drastic working conditions are accepted. With the U.S. government ignoring a prevalent problem and various other leaders accepting the problem, it makes it difficult to determine

if improvement is possible with no one to implement necessary restrictions or working conditions. As the minimum age requirement for employment throughout the developing world ranges from as young as seven to as old as sixteen the problem is being compounded, not eliminated.

This situation is clear in various Latin American countries, such as Honduras, Brazil, El Salvador, and Guatemala, where factories are set up for the purpose of mass production, mass profit, and above all, to manufacture goods as cheaply as possible. An estimated 43% of children in the labour force in these countries are physically injured in their work. This situation occurs primarily in agriculture, because operating machinery without the required training results in injuries. The workers have no health care or insurance to compensate for their injuries, so they continue to work because of the demand for money. An estimated 84% do not have a lunch break or a mere bathroom break. Approximately 88% have been abused either verbally or physically, as well 10% of girls placed as servants in the workplace are sexually abused. It is estimated that of the fifteen million children working in the Latin American region, half range between the ages of six and fourteen.

The two main types of child labour exploitation are in agriculture and factory work, commonly referred to as sweatshops. A sweatshop is a large factory, which hires children to put in long hours for less than minimum pay. Both agricultural work and work in a sweatshop involves mistreatment and danger. However if a child does not work, he/she also faces exploitation. The poor children who do not work have one alternative: to live on the streets and survive off illegal activity. Theft is common as is prostitution, drug trafficking, and pornography.

Child exploitation has evolved into a tremendous problem. Children of various ages work in both formal and informal sectors for long hours without rest, under brutal physi-

cal and psychological conditions, all for minuscule pay which is much less than the minimum wage in the U.S. or the European nations. This issue's prevalence overlaps with the worldwide problem of poverty. With so many of the Latin American countries in foreign debt, economic mobilization has become impossible. When there is so little income, labour is vital, hence children enter the labour force under harsh circumstances. This problem of children forced into inhumane working conditions earning less than minimum pay continues to persist even though knowledge of the hazards are being exposed.

In 1996, TV celebrity Kathie Lee Gifford's clothing line was exposed as using child workers to produce clothes. Four tenths of a percent of the retail price of the item was the entire pay check of the child, not including daily transportation and food, at their own the child's expense. Three years have passed since this exploitation was confronted, and now the work - force only consists of people older than fifteen. Although this still seems absurd, it is a major improvement in such a short period, thus demonstrating that the problem is so severe that it would take extended amounts of time to create appropriate conditions for young workers.

Contrary to popular belief, banning the exploiting companies is not an effective method to solving this problem according to Barbara Brigs, senior associate from the National Labour Committee. "Banning the companies that take part in child exploitation is not an effective way to stop mistreatment. Developing countries can't afford to be isolated from the global market any more than they are. The sad truth is that every successful US company uses child labour, for the main reason that they can. There are no regulations that defend the rights of child workers, and it will only be a matter of time and global commitment to establish that children simply should not work, and that large companies simply can't take advantage of developing countries, it is just unacceptable."

“Global economic policies promote unemployment among adults,” Maria Estela Rios Gonzalez concluded. Rios is president of the Mexican National Association of Democratic Lawyers. “Child labour is cheaper, more docile, and easier to manipulate. Children demand less. But we cannot have unemployment for thousands of adults, and substitute for it the labour of countless children. This is a violation of all it means to be a human being.” The truth remains that child labour is the easiest, and more profitable type of work. The fact that the global economy is highly in favour of the several large countries, which are highly destructive to many others, shows how the economy needs a form of balance that will improve human rights as well as keeping the global economy intact. Profit has been a first priority over human rights, and it is evident that the time has come for change.

The global economy should offer children an escape from lives of forced labour. Instead, it is drawing more and more of them into various types of servitude. The larger, affluent companies take advantage of the economic inequalities without facing any consequences. The purpose of a global economy was once to keep countries in line with each other and to make worldwide trade profitable, but instead it has evolved into an economic competition where interdependency violates the physical and mental well-being of children, let alone, human beings. As Brigs said “Until a worldwide understanding can be established that child exploitation is the result of the global economy’s inability to maintain a healthy balance, it will continue to infest.”

CHILD LABOUR IN INDIA

Child labour stems from the simple financial goal of maximizing profits while minimizing costs. A growing number of children in developing countries are being exploited and forced into labour, often working twelve-

hour shifts at less than fifty cents an hour. Powerful corporations that have deemed quick production in mass quantities necessary, operate their factories in these countries. An example of a country where such child labour exists is India, which is a developing country with a high poverty rate and in its poor areas lacks a solid education system. Parents often rely on their children to bring in a large part of the family income. Child labour is, for poor families, an important source of income because there are no other alternatives; for in India there is no kind of welfare system or low interest loans for poor people. Children’s work is considered essential to maintain the economic level of households. UNICEF estimates that the current number of child labourers under the age of fourteen in India ranges from seventy-five to ninety million.

The 1981 Census of India divided child labour into nine industrial divisions. The divisions are: I. Cultivation II. Agricultural Labour III. Livestock, Forestry, Fishing, Plantation IV. Mining and Quarrying V. Manufacturing, Processing, Servicing and Repairs VI. Construction VII. Trade and Commerce VIII. Transport, Storage, and Communication IX. Other services

The majority of rural child workers, 84.29% of them, are employed in cultivation and agricultural labour (division I and II). Urban child labourers are distributed differently; 39.16% of them are involved in manufacturing, processing, servicing and repairs. Although more children are involved in agriculture related jobs, most children involved in manufacturing are bonded labourers. Bonded labour is the phenomenon of children working in conditions of servitude in order to pay off a family debt. It is estimated that one million child labourers are bonded labourers.

There is a direct connection between India’s high poverty rate (37% of the urban population and 39% of the rural population) and child labour. Many families need money to survive; and their children are a source of additional income. An in-depth study con-

ducted by the International Labour Organization Bureau of Statistics concluded that "Children's work was considered essential to maintaining the economic level of households, either in the form of work for wages, of help in household enterprises or of household chores in order to free adult household members for economic activity elsewhere." The study also found that a child's income could constitute up to 37.5% of the total family income, making children an essential key to a family's survival. Another obstacle families face comes from the lack of a social welfare system, as well as the difficulty in acquiring low interest loans. Extreme poverty, combined with this lack of social security can bring about the harshest type of child labour, bonded child labour. Local moneylenders take advantage of the lack of bank loans, govern-

mental loans or other forms of credit. Since the earnings of a bonded child are less than the interest accumulated on their loans, they are forced to work until their parents pay a lump sum to the moneylender. This payment is usually impossible to make. If the bonded worker is released, the conditions of poverty that were prevalent before bondage will return causing families to once again turn to the moneylenders and the process will repeat itself. In such situations, parents abandoning their moral and ethical values, sell their children for the hope of a better future and the chance to feed the rest of their family. The children in turn feel cheap and used, almost as if they have been abandoned by their parents, and that the monetary value they bring exceeds their value as people.

It has also become evident that child labourers are being exploited due to the low wages they receive. Often when children and adults engage in the same task, children's earnings are consistently lower. The conditions under which the children are forced to work are also atrocious. Most children work seven days a week, often past midnight, in small, crowded, filthy factories with little to eat or drink.

Poverty is not the only major cause of child labour; lack of education contributes to the problem as well. Some schools are simply inadequate, and the schooling expenses leave some children with little else to do but work. India's education system lacks effectiveness in producing basic literacy in the population. Therefore, the inadequate condition of the education system is a powerful influence on the supply of child labour. The overall literacy rate of 40.8% lags behind that of other developing countries, and the primary school dropout rate is 62.0%, which means that a large portion of the children are receiving no type of basic education. Few students even reach fifth



or sixth grade. Parents withdraw their children from school and deposit them in the labour force because of the pressing need for the child's earnings as well as the low perceived advantage of education. Poverty contributes to the high dropout rates, and thus, no matter how good schools are, school survival rates and literacy rates will still remain low. Stemming from both poverty and lack of education comes child labour. With nowhere else to turn, parents often forfeit their children's education for extra needed income. It has been observed that "the overall condition of the education system can be a powerful influence on the supply of child labour"

Child labour is a significant problem around the world, but more so in developing countries. The child work participation rates are higher in India than in other developing countries. The main factors that contribute to the rise of child labour are poverty and lack of education. The governments should focus on giving assistance to the poor before attacking child labour. If poverty is addressed, then the need for child labour will automatically diminish. Assistance, however, can only be offered if people are aware of the problem. Thus, the first step must be in providing information. Involvement will come as a result of the increased knowledge.

DISPARITIES IN HUMANITARIAN AID BETWEEN AFRICA AND EUROPE

In the heart of Africa Justine Kokolo and her seven children were barely surviving on a diet of roots and leaves. The family, fleeing from Brazzaville in the Republic of Congo in an attempt to escape the fighting between government forces and guerrillas, had found itself in the bleak and miserable swampy Pool region. Conditions were so bad that eventually her family moved back to Brazzaville, a decision she

now regrets. For families like the Kokolos, international humanitarian aid has not come through. In fact, in Africa there are many such horror stories. Even though brutal civil wars and increasing refugee populations dominate the continent, international attention and aid has focused on more recent and fashionable cases like Kosovo.

Most people are aware of the weak political and economic conditions in certain regions in Europe. In the past year the media has given widespread coverage of the Kosovo crisis. However, African nations that have borne more years of civil wars and human rights violations have not received any media attention. It has been reported that 118,000 Congolese (DRC) refugees receive aid and protection from the UN and about 415,000 refugees from the Great Lakes region in Africa. In the 1990s civil wars in this part of Africa have caused an influx of refugees seeking shelter in neighbouring countries. Yet hardly anyone is aware of the problems.

Conditions in refugee camps in Africa are at a much lower standard than those in the war-torn regions of Europe. Malnutrition is rampant, as in the Mtabila refugee camps in Kigoma, Tanzania, where refugees live on 975 calories a day in the form of maize and lentils provided by the World Food Program. The disparities in humanitarian aid distribution is evident in the UN statistic which estimates that 20 cents is spent for every African refugee compared to a whopping \$2.80 for every European refugee. The UNECR subtotal obligation level for Africa is \$12,4243,489 less than that of Europe and the combined subtotal obligation levels of Africa and Asia do not amount to the European subtotal. The refugees in Africa who have heard reports of the tremendous amounts of aid given to Kosovo wonder why their nations receive so little. Adam Kimbisa, Secretary General of the Tanzanian Red Cross asks, "Does a refugee in Africa need less calories, less vitamins, less clothes than a refugee in Kosovo?"

Why is there such a difference in the

amounts of humanitarian aid given to Africa and Europe? Much of the blame can be attributed to media exposure. When asked what was the largest war of 1999 or the most brutal war of recent times, many people would answer Kosovo. However, according to statistics, the true answers are the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia (where tens of thousands of people were killed, wounded, or captured and at least 600,000 citizens were displaced) and the war in Sierra Leone where for eight years much of the entire population has been uprooted. Generally the media focuses on countries that are of economic or political interest to superpowers like America. Humanitarian officials in Africa are disturbed by the effect of the 'glamour' crises, such as Kosovo, that take attention and aid away from the other hot spots. It is hard to tell whether racism or prejudice plays a role in the decision making of which nations get humanitarian aid. The fact is that when it comes to American aid and protection, America has a longstanding political and economic historical affiliation with Europe. This may make sense on a practical level, but the reasoning must be put in a global perspective. The fair distribution of humanitarian aid must transcend trade interests or political connections.

The most immediate effect of the unfair distribution of aid are the health risks it poses to the refugees in Africa. The food, clothing, and shelter they receive often do not meet basic standards of living. Malnutrition and disease is pervasive in African refugee camps. The large refugee population in Africa threatens the political and economic stability of the continent and the world. The unequal funding by large organizations leads to feelings of resentment and hostility. World relations, especially between African nations and superpowers like America, will suffer if the situation continues. With the advent of globalisation, large organizations and economic superpowers should pay special attention to establishing uniformity in aid and protection.

But most importantly, as mentioned above, refugees in Africa are suffering because of selfish economic and political motives and imbalances in media coverage. It is the situation that the refugees are in that should be held paramount.

GLOBALISATION AND WORLD INEQUALITY; OPPORTUNITY OR THREAT?

Some people view globalisation as an inevitable process. The average person be it in Beijing or in New York City identifies globalisation simply with the presence of 'McDonalds and Coca Cola'. Though this may appear to be a very unsophisticated view, to some extent it is very accurate, for it shows the increasing 'homogeneity' in the world. The fact that hundreds of countries around the world are now exposed to the same television programs, movies, and music greatly influences the individual cultures of those countries, often modifying them and changing their traditional values. This also may prevent diversities in global culture from developing further, as each individual culture becomes influenced by a more powerful one, and in the process loses its own identity.

Through the Internet a person sitting in Argentina can have a conversation with a child in Australia about the same television program or pop song. This has become possible as a result of the global impact of technology. Though these opportunities may appear to be beneficial, the reality is that inequality is enforced through these so-called 'progressions', as many people are denied access to new services and technology, and are not able to take advantage of the assets which have been promoted. This is significantly due to the tremendous disparities in the economic status of people around the world which have widened as a result of globalisation. Such in-

equalities are most clearly evident between 'developing' and 'developed' countries. The major driving forces behind globalisation are the information technology revolution, free trade policies, and the liberalisation of capital flows internationally.

The rapid advance in information technology is a very significant factor driving globalisation. Internet and computer facilities enable people to access information on a vast range of topics, and to communicate with people in many different countries, across continents, just with the touch of a button. Though this is impressive, it must be acknowledged that these opportunities are denied many people. In order to benefit from such things one must be privileged enough to be able to gain access to these facilities. A vast majority of the world's population is not so fortunate, and the knowledge and understanding that education technology provides are denied them for it is beyond their financial reach. Stop and think about how much the Internet can benefit the average person in rural India? The average person there most probably does not know of the existence of such a service. Surely this increases global inequalities. As a result of the increasingly globalised world, cultural insecurities are increasing rapidly. This is due significantly to the imbalance in what is projected through the media, for western cultures dominate, and the cultures of these 'dominating' countries are the ones which are mostly projected. This creates global inequalities, as some cultures are being promoted, whereas others are not.

As a result of the pressures of global competition, many countries have been forced to adopt more flexible labour policies, which are not always fair or humane. In Latin America, 85% of the working population falls under the category of the 'informal sector.' The new and more 'liberal' policies result in people not receiving living wages and being forced to work in unsafe and unhygienic conditions. This aspect of globalisation also affects children negatively. It is estimated that currently more than 250

million children are at work under child labour of all forms, including prostitution. Inequalities resulting from globalisation are most evident in developing countries, and there are numerous negative impacts on the people of such countries which fall under these categories. Is it justifiable that a child in West Africa is mopping the floors of a local corner store, when a child of the same age in the United States is playing with her favourite Barbie doll?

Another major cause for inequalities resulting from globalisation is the fact that countries have opened up to international trade, and that multinational corporations have been able to take advantage of this by investing in less developed countries. The liberalisation of capital flows is an important part of globalisation, and was a major reason for South East Asia's economic crisis, which has only increased inequalities. Due to the free flows of capital, and the ability to have investments in any country around the world, the rich get richer, whilst the poor continue to get poorer. This obviously creates huge inequalities and disparities between people around the world. This is supported by the following data, which shows the extraordinary results of globalisation through liberalisation of the world economy.

"The income gap between the fifth of the world's peoples living in the richest countries and the fifth in the poorest was 74 to 1 in 1997, up from 60 to 1 in 1990 and 30 to 1 in 1960."

"The world's 200 richest people more than doubled their net worth in the four years to 1998, to more than \$1 trillion. The assets of the top three billionaires are more than the combined GNP of all the least developed countries and their 600 million people."

There have been some positive results from globalisation. However it is clear that not everybody is able to take advantage of the changes, nor to benefit from them. In fact many suffer from globalisation, for it has had negative effects on the majority of people in developing countries, while it has been quite beneficial to many people in the developed world.

HOW DOES GLOBALISATION AFFECT THE WORKING PEOPLE OF THE WORLD?

Globalisation is a process that aims to unite individuals, enterprises and markets through economic, political and social interaction across national borders. In theory, the results of these interactions should benefit working people all over the world. However, due to the varying degrees of strength and development, not all economies are in the position to take advantage of this new economic order. Currently, one of the main concerns associated with globalisation is the growing economic gap between developed and developing countries as well as the social classes within them.

Just like the countries themselves, the enterprises that are most technologically advanced and economically powerful increasingly expand their activities across the global market. In doing so, they often relocate parts of their production to regions of low cost where they can obtain cheap labour through unregulated working conditions. In addition to this, they take over local enterprises in medium income countries, introducing new machinery and technology that reduce the number of working places available. All of these changes not only affect workers in less developed countries but also those of developed nations, where many jobs are lost.

In the job market there has also been a shift in the demand from less skilled labourers to more skilled workers who are either better educated or more qualified for the jobs. In many countries this shift is accountable for widening income inequalities between the more and the less skilled, in addition to increasing unemployment among the less skilled. Income gaps have not only grown in advanced economies but also in developing nations, suggesting that the labour demand in these nations too has also been geared to more highly skilled workers. For this reason workers in developing countries such as the Philippines, where the number of unemployed has risen in recent years, are threatened by the loss of jobs and are now forced to accept wages and conditions that are below the standards set by law.

Women, on the other hand, seem to be one of the few groups that have benefited from globalisation. The growth of industries that produce goods for external markets and the competition they are exposed to have caused many industries to expand and create more working spaces that are no longer predominantly occupied by men. Contact between cultures has increased with the globalisation



of business and it has changed the perception of women across the world. This is particularly valid in the case of women in developing countries who, after learning about other cultures where women have a more dominant role, have begun to raise their expectations concerning their position in the work place.

There is no doubt that globalisation has been successful in lowering prices, improving communication and enabling efficient exchanges between nations. However, while globalisation may have raised the living standards for some, it threatens to leave a large part of the world behind. The ones who benefit are those who have the resources to consume goods in developed and developing countries, who profit from the drop in prices and the technological advances that have come about as a result of globalisation. Members of the lower class in less industrialised nations continue to struggle, as they lack the skills and education and therefore the opportunities to rise in society and take advantage of the benefits of globalisation.

HUNGER AND INTERVENTION IN AFRICA

At the beginning of the 21st century, we are still facing problems of hunger around the world. Almost one in every six people is suffering from acute or chronic hunger and more than a billion face various forms of malnutrition. An approach to reducing hunger is to reduce poverty. However the elimination of poverty is an endless task. Notably the gap between rich and poor nations has been growing to new extremes over the past decade. "In 1981, the GNP per capita in the developed world was \$8,600, compared with \$700 in the poor countries. By 1990, per capita income in the developed world more than doubled to \$17,900, while in poor countries income rose only by \$110," reports the Population Crisis Committee.

During the 1980s, out of the seven million children who died each year of malnutrition or related causes throughout the world, five million of those children were African. According to the U.S. Agency for International Development, 75% of the world's hungriest nations are in Africa. The World Bank finds that African nations comprise more than 90% of the world's most indebted countries and they also represent 60% of those with the lowest incomes. There are various reasons for the steady decline in food production per person during the last two decades in Africa. War, unfavourable terms of trade, drought, misguided economic policies, mounting debts, overpopulation, ecological deterioration, and political upheaval are all factors that have reduced Africa's ability to feed itself.

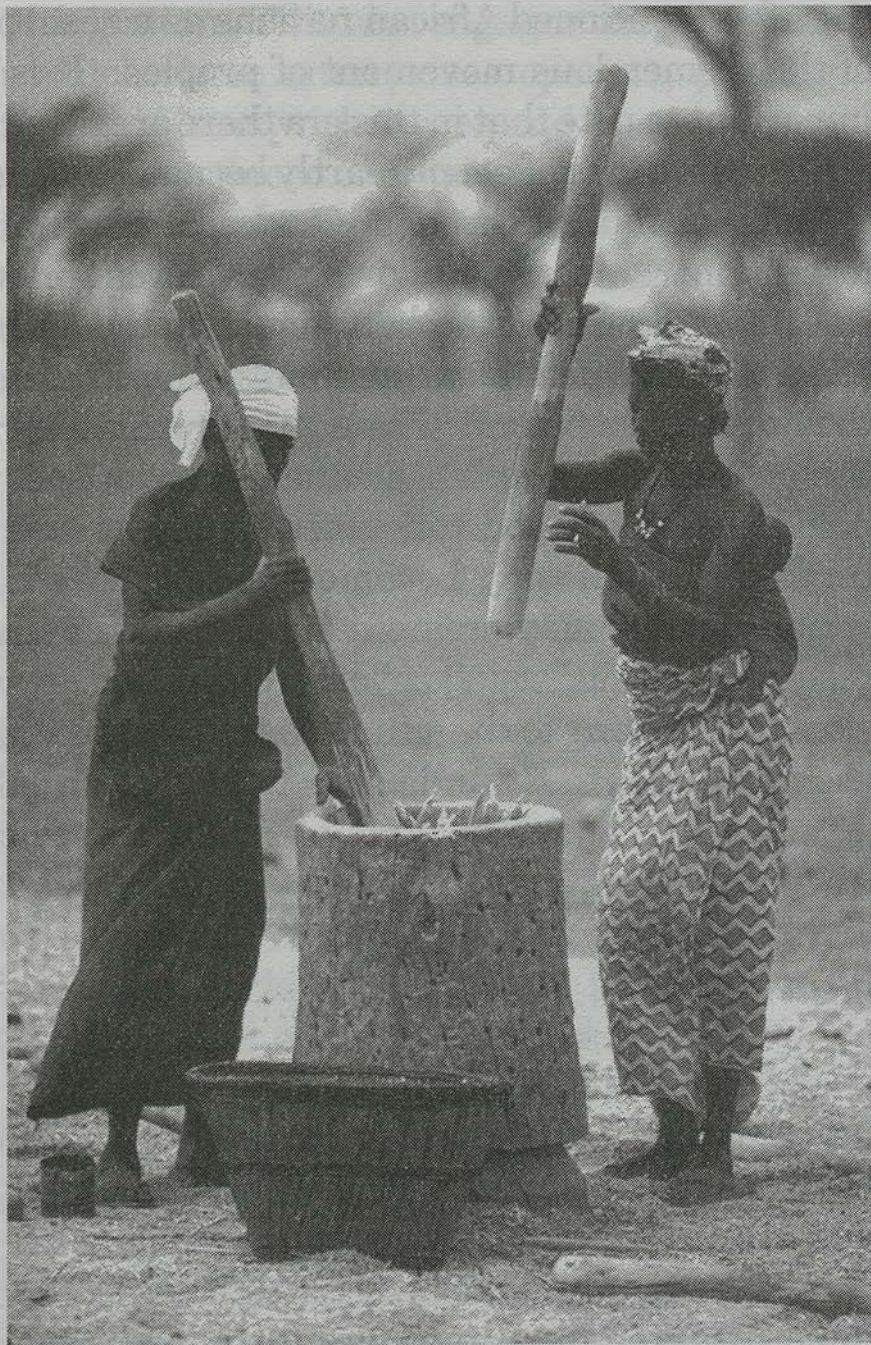
For four centuries Europe's colonial empires extracted raw materials (cotton, coffee, gold) and human beings (almost 23 million people were exported for slave labour). The only significant change in Africa's external relationship with big corporations is that dollars have replaced slaves as the most valuable export. The colonists concentrated on external demands rather than internal ones. Therefore, small farmers lost the control of their land and labour. Consequently, this has led to a reduction of self-sufficient farming which alternative sources of income have not been able to replace. Families who earn money rather than produce for themselves appear to have access to a much wider selection of goods which then leads to improved nutrition. But if there are any economic problems such as drought or conflict, families become unable to afford food as a result of inflation and disorder. They are then forced to sell livestock or borrow money from local lenders. The result is an increase in impoverishment and inequality.

Development assistance is essential for low-income countries to improve their farmers' capacity to produce food, to build the economy and generate more income, creating more opportunity for everyone. Consequently, a Decla-

ration on the Right to Food in all the countries of the world has been adopted by the United Nations. This Declaration states that a) the government of each country is obligated to ensure the right to food for all its citizens; b) the international community is obligated to ensure the right to food for people of all countries including times of emergency and non-emergency; c) each government is obligated to ensure the right to food during times of war or other conflicts and d) there should be sanctions against governments or armed groups that fail to take adequate steps to ensure the realization of the right to food by the people of the country.

However, food aid programs do not always reduce hunger. There are various problems with international intervention. Because aid is only a short-term solution, it does not change the basic conditions that

produced the need for the assistance in the first place. The country becomes dependent on the assistance and the aid cannot last forever. It is only when the poor can feed themselves and their children that there can be hope for improved health, increased agricultural production, literacy, economic growth, and environmental restoration and protection. Providing the poor with resources and information needed to make their own choices will steer them in the right direction in the process of eradicating chronic hunger. Unfortunately, poor countries are trapped in a vicious circle because "under nourishment brings listlessness, muscle wastage, and a reduced capacity for learning or work." Lastly, when free food is given to a country the market for locally grown food is undermined.



INTERDEPENDENCE AND CONFLICT AMONG AFRICAN NATIONS

"The growth in real per capita income in the countries of sub-Saharan Africa from 1960 to 1995 was only \$28.00". Today, more than ever, all countries are interdependent, as there is a continuing and unprecedented movement of capital, (commodities and products) from one country to another. Communications and technology also cross national borders around the world. This phenomenon is often more intense and concentrated in a regional or sub-regional context, as is the case in Africa.

"1.3 billion people don't have access to clean water." When speaking of interdependence in Africa, one must pay attention particularly to the interdependencies that inequalities in resources, due to overpopulation, bring about. The Great Lakes region in Africa, linking Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania and the

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), is an area with much tension when it comes to interdependence among nations. The region, which has been ravaged by both internal and international wars, is characterized by an enormous and ever-increasing population in certain areas and by copious natural resources in others.

Rwanda - which endured genocide in 1994 - and Burundi, (two nations, once a united country), are the homes of the Hutus and the Tutsis, who have been in conflict since the end of colonization. The world has struggled for years to understand the real root of ethnic tensions such as these that only result in violent death and destruction for those involved. Rwanda has an extremely dense population and is bereft of resources to feed that population, which has had the effect of creating a massive migration of people. This combined with an insistent hunger for power on the part of government officials, a refusal to distribute national wealth evenly and the lack of any democratic institutions has produced a climate where tensions easily degenerate into conflict and massacres.

So where does interdependence fit into all of this? With the invasion and colonization of Africa by Europe came the arbitrary drawing of borders to form African states. What colonialists failed or did not want to consider was that these newly separated states each contained ethnic groups from other neighbouring states, which were then affiliated with peoples other than their own. One could say that, in the name of learning to live in multiethnic harmony, this could have been beneficial to the people and groups of those African states, but unfortunately it did not work out that way. This arbitrary drawing of borders, and the consequent division of ethnic groups was instead a recipe for conflict that would continue after colonialism ended. As soon as there is a problem, be it famine, ethnic rivalries or overpopulation, thousands of families become refugees and internally displaced persons. History has never seen such displacement as it has in the latter half of the 20th century.

The DRC is a nation of immense natural resources and many ethnic groups and for years it has seen itself as a centre of economic, political and military development. Other major countries of the region, such as Rwanda and Angola have in turn seen themselves as militarily and politically involved in the DRC, as both friends and foes. This interdependent region cannot be stabilized unless the DRC, with its enormous influence over the region, solves the issues of conflict among ethnic groups, political opposition, and natural resources. Neighbouring Rwanda does not have enough resources and has too large a population to survive. The automatic economic interdependence that exists between the two nations due to their locations, combined with their unstable governments creates a spill over of people, and also of political conflict, into neighbouring countries.

There is economic interdependence among the aforementioned African nations as a result of the tremendous movement of peoples. It is important to note that in this era there are more mass migrations of people partly because of the globalisation of the economy and access to information, which now allows people from one country to know of the better resources and conditions in a neighbouring country more than they ever have before. The nation from which the people move loses a means of production, political support and consumers, and the "receiving" nation may become overpopulated, which in turn may create a further strain on resources, so increasing poverty and ethnic tension, and leading to the situation that produced the massacres in Rwanda.

INTERNET EQUALITY

Communication and information technologies today are very important, especially in developing countries. With the quality and availability of information that people of all countries can have access to, citizens could have a larger part in shaping the future of

their countries, including crucial elements such as voting. A great priority, therefore, is to get equal access for all people to this technology. So far, however, the advantages of this "information and communication revolution" have not been distributed proportionately.

The 1998 Human Development Report estimates that 88% of Internet users are from "developed" countries, which comprise only 15% of the world's population. This leaves only 12% of Internet users in "developing" countries.

Computer and Internet access today puts small enterprises on the doorstep of the rapidly evolving and powerful global market, allowing them to surpass developmental and infrastructural obstacles such as poor transportation and communication and lack of educational resources and information. They facilitate the modernization of businesses and governments and increase productivity and participation. This also engages the countries in which these enterprises operate, putting them on a level with larger and more technologically advanced countries. It is to be hoped that these technologies will allow the gap between developing and developed nations to be bridged. However this will not happen if the technology itself is stopping these poorer countries from gaining access.

Poorer regions that lack the ability to communicate in the new advanced world of cyberspace are not attractive sites for investment, as companies are increasingly putting emphasis on the availability of a telecommunications infrastructure. This prevents people from poorer regions from gaining the economic strength to improve their situation, trapping them in a cycle of poverty. According to the 1999 Human Development Report, 25% of the world does not even have one telephone line for every 100 persons.

Because of the novel nature of this technology, most of the world's economic activity will take place between the most electronically advanced of these countries, further inhibiting the less developed while widening the gap between well-informed

Internet users and the majority of the people in developing countries.

There are initiatives being taken to overcome these problems and make access to information more equal. The United Nations is seeking to promote the "information revolution" in underdeveloped countries by launching interactive programs such as long distance learning, telemedicine and telebanking. In India, a country with nearly 1 billion people, less than 2% of the population has access to personal computers and there are only 145,000 Internet connections. This is partly because of the high cost of the hardware, which is now being decreased under the Indian action plan. This plan has a "pro - people, pro - development" ambition that is meant to reach out to less privileged areas of the country.

THE UNION OF RELIGION AND THE STATE

The uniting of religion and state into one unit can be looked upon in several ways. In some cases it has been to the country's advantage to combine the two. In many situations this theocratic system of government leads to the suppression of groups and minorities, and discrimination against other religions, and also to political and military support of other countries of the same religion despite the sometimes-negative policies of the sister country.

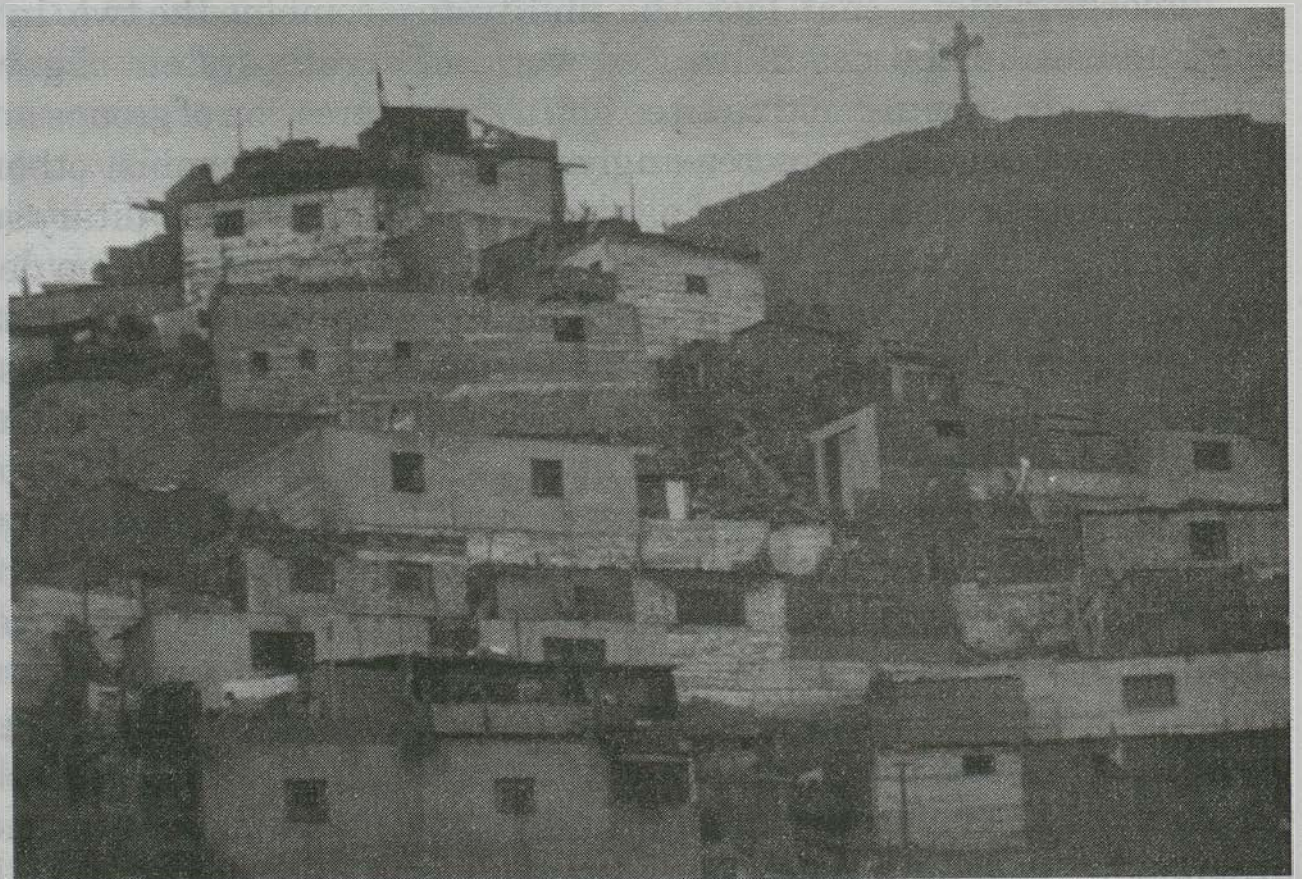
Most religions claim that they hold the absolute truth. This 'absolute truth' leads us into believing that every person whose ideas differ from our own is inferior to our own beliefs. Consequently, we can become dangers to our own kind. When we unite church and state, those who do not follow the set religion become outsiders in that state, as well as the religion. In some cases these people become the outsiders who must be converted or killed.

It seems that a country that unites religion and state is more likely to be involved in religious wars, which are usually fought more grimly, intractably, and brutally than wars detached from religion. In many religions there are scriptures with the intention of both peace promoting and peace-destroying. There are many examples of religious states that have engaged in wars relating to religion, such as the war between Yugoslavia and Croatia in 1991 where Serbian Orthodox Christians fought against Roman Catholic Christians. Another example was the war in 1968 between Israel and her Arab neighbors, where Jews fought against Muslims.

One of the problems of combining religion and state is that in some cases it results in the suppression of women. For example, in Afghanistan the Taliban, who are an extremely conservative Islamic political group, controls the country. In that country, women are not permitted to see a male doctor; women are also not allowed to obtain an education. Therefore there are few doctors in the country that a woman can consult. Women are required to wear a veil at all times when leaving the house, and if a woman commits adultery, the law states that she must be stoned to death. The Taliban maintain that they are following the beliefs of the Koran, but many people say that the Taliban are fundamentalists who are misinterpreting the holy book. In other countries such as Jordan, there have been reported cases of honor killings, which is when a family member kills a woman for supposed acts of dishonor. In many cases honor killings have gone unpunished because they are said to be part of the religion.

Another issue of integrating religion and state is political unrest within the country. This results from politicians who strictly interpret the official religion. Politicians who are more flexible about interpreting the precepts of the religion counter them. In Israel, more Orthodox politicians now hold political office, and there is an ongoing argument between the Orthodox, who have adopted a law, making marriages not officiated by an orthodox rabbi, illegal; and the non-Orthodox who do not agree with specific laws imposed by the Orthodox about observing the Sabbath. Another example of disagreement between fundamentalists and those who disagree was the war in Afghanistan in 1992, which was a war between fundamentalists and moderate Muslims. By imposing religious law upon a country, citizens who disagree are discriminated against and are forced in some ways to participate in religious patterns and acts that are not their own.

Although there is something to be said for countries united under one religion, such as the high spirit of nationalism, there are many negative aspects, such as suppression of women and other religious groups who are then imposed upon and in some cases deprived of their personal rights.



TECHNOLOGICAL INEQUALITIES

Developing nations do not always have the technology to conduct successful businesses. This gap is in great part covered by the United States, thus taking away many business opportunities from those nations, who suffer greatly from this, as they lose a large part of the economic activity that they so desperately need to grow and become technologically efficient. The United States tried on many occasions to aid those countries, but most of the time this has not succeeded. "The tools of progress" were often regarded as the guarantors of successful development. Indeed, if ever there was a single doctrine uniting the "North" and "South" it was that more technology is always better than less. The popularity of this doctrine derives from the tragic fallacy that modern technologies possess the innocence of tools. In reality, of course, a model of civilization follows hot on the heels of modern technology. Like the entry of the Trojan Horse into Troy in the ancient Greek myth, the introduction of technology into the developing nations paves the way like the Trojan Horse for a conquest of society from within. The "technical development" of a country demands putting into action a multitude of requirements that have to be fulfilled in order to set the interconnected system whirring. This amounts to taking apart traditional society step by step, in order to reassemble it according to the functional requirements of modern technology. Scientific and technological aid given in recent years may allow some countries to leapfrog their outdated industrial base, with the help of biotechnics and the new information technology. The western industrial countries still dominate the world economy. However, some newly industrialized countries in East and Southeast Asia have

experienced rapid growth. With few exceptions, growth in the highly indebted developing countries has remained weak. The poorest countries of Africa and Asia are victims of increasing marginalization. In Eastern and Central Europe the success of transformation is uncertain. Only a few countries were able to catch up with the industrial societies, after receiving considerable capital investment and open access to western markets. Most of the growth in the past decade happened in the services sector. The international transactions shifted from tangible goods to intangible trade in banking and finance. Direct investments - expanding greatly since the mid-eighties - are flowing increasingly into the tertiary sector. The ever-closer linkage of the world economy does not entail its overall globalisation. In trade, a trend to rationalization in major economic regions (for example, the North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA) and MERCOSUR in the Americas) is emerging, which might cause global regimes such as the World Trade Organization (WTO, formerly known as General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)) to lose importance.

THE GLOBALISATION OF INFORMATION FORMATION

The media is the main information force in today's modern world. It gives people a chance to learn about what is happening around the world as it happens. Through the information it conveys, the media often shapes people's opinions. Large international media companies, such as CNN, CBS, BBC, NBC, Time Warner Turner, have become very powerful and have a dominant position in the global community. The larger international corporations have begun the trend known as the "globalisation of information," which has led to the dissemination of formerly highly secret classified data

which is made available to anyone. Much controversy surrounds the issue of the power that the large international media corporations possess.

The media gathers information about most of the significant events and developments as they happen. The media uses television, radio, newspapers, magazines and the Internet to convey information to the public. Since the improvement of the Internet, that information has become easily accessible for people who live in developed countries. However, individuals in less developed countries do not have the opportunity to know much information because they do not have access to the Internet. However, many people in the developed world have the ability to gain access to information which the media presents to the public. This means that one can access global information by reading a newspaper, listening to the radio, watching a news program on the television or via the Internet. Having the freedom to learn about everything that is going on is a powerful tool, and some have argued that the media should be censored. Some people believe that certain information should remain classified. Yet an ethical question arises: what type of information should be revealed to the "global community?" Currently there is no answer to this question, because people want to know about everything that is happening in other countries as well as their own. However, over time we might realize that certain global information need not be exposed to the entire world.

The large international media corporations have stations throughout the world. For some individuals, these companies are a main source of information. The stories that the international media present are supposed to be objective and should favour no particular side. It is often difficult for the media to present information in a non-biased way. The media leads people to believe that the material they disseminate is being presented to the public objectively, when

actually much is presented subjectively. The manner in which a story is presented to the public shapes how the public will react to the information it is receiving. For example, during President Bill Clinton's hearings about the sexual harassment scandal, the media gave the public the impression that Monica Lewinsky was the "bad guy" in the plot versus Bill Clinton, "the good guy". It is important to notice how the media was originally presenting the public with the hard facts, but then managed to have substantial influence on the public's opinion of Ms. Lewinsky. The media informed the public about Ms. Lewinsky's personal history of frequently pursuing men who were already married, which was private information about Ms. Lewinsky. That information about her did not need to be exposed to the entire United States. Most of the information used in the hearings was brought to the attention of the public, and much of it was inappropriate. By exposing so much information about the President's relationship with Ms. Lewinsky, people started to have second thoughts about how appropriate a president, Bill Clinton was. Then again, some might argue that since he is the President of the United States, the people of his country have a right to know about his personal life.

Politicians are also often involved with large media corporations, and have the ability to control revealing information, which they do not want to be released to the public. The question becomes, does not the public have a right to know?

The media is a powerful force in today's world for it moulds the views of many people. Through the media, crucial information is able to reach people around the world through radio, television, newspapers or the Internet. Due to the Internet, one can get information with the push of a button and receive it in an instant. Large international media corporations have so much power because they control what kind of information the public knows. The media affects the world and has a deep impact on public opinion.

THE NEED FOR INTERCULTURAL SOLIDARITY AND COMMUNICATION

As we enter the new millennium, we leave behind one of the most violent and polluting centuries ever. Unless we learn from our mistakes and act to make them history, the new century will be no better. We, the human race, must realize what our problems are and act to change them. So many conflicts throughout the twentieth century were caused by inequalities: ones of technology, wealth, food, and power. And in a shrinking world which is becoming more technologically advanced and interconnected every day, the inequalities can also grow. As wealthy nations gain new technology, they have the ability to improve on old technology even more, and as a result they leave poorer, underdeveloped countries even farther behind. The only way to solve this broadening dilemma is for developed countries to reach out to those

who are in need. The only way to do this is to increase intercultural communication and reignite the flame of something that seems to have been forgotten in our contemporary fast-paced world: solidarity.

It is imperative that nations such as the United States, a world power with vast resources of all kinds and the ability to project its power worldwide, reject the notion of isolationism and extend a helping hand farther than it has ever been extended before. It is easy for wealthy nations to sit back and be complacent with themselves, not wanting to deal with problems beyond their borders. In this complacency it is easy — and foolish — for them to forget that there are billions of people around the world in need. In order to create a world where gross inequalities are non-existent, this complacency must be eliminated. Wealthy, developed, and powerful countries must assist those billions of people throughout the world who need the bare necessities for survival, even if it means sacrificing some of their own wants. If the people of the world want to see peace and stability, they must put aside their differences and unite as human beings. This is no easy task,



but the effort of worldwide communication and solidarity must start somewhere. To demolish the inequalities that set the developed so far apart from the underdeveloped, nations must start sharing and donating technology so that worldwide communication, and thus understanding, can be established. Until this happens, most of the world will be blind to the problems on other parts of the globe. Countries must help one another overcome their problems, by donating or transferring technology, raw materials, food, capital, or even military help when nations are being forcefully threatened. Democracy must prevail to ensure that the people of the world cannot only be free as individuals and societies, but also free from tyranny and war.

If we are to see our world improve, we must all make an effort to help. We must increase intercultural communication and understanding; and solidarity must predominate over isolationism and greed. Once this is done, the inequalities of the world can be reduced, and the peoples of the world can live more peacefully and be better off.

ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF GLOBALISATION

It is hard to go a day without hearing or reading certain catch phrases such as 'interdependence', 'globalisation', and 'global economy'. Our world, our societies, even our everyday lives are affected by these terms. And many people would envision a positive representation along with these words.

But often in those interconnected phrases lie inequality. Because two countries are interdependent does not mean that they have an equal relationship. As is sometimes the case, this interdependence can worsen the condition of one country, and sometimes, a country that is left

out of this tightly bound loop will find itself increasingly left out of world affairs, unable to catch up.

"When Asia sneezes the world gets a cold." This quote is indicative of our 'globalised' world. In 1997 there was a worldwide fright because of the economic crisis in eastern Asia. There was much effort, especially on the part of western countries, to stop the crisis lest the domino effect reach everybody. The many foreign investors who had invested their financial and economic resources in Asia were worried that their substantial assets would be negatively affected. There was much financial support by many countries and the I.M.F. in an attempt to put Asia back on a solid footing. This occurred not because of sympathetic concern for Asia's economic welfare, but because of the welfare of western countries who had invested and who worried that this would affect their own countries because of global interdependence. A hundred years ago this would not have happened. The countries of western Europe were concerned with western Europe, and did not have so much involvement in Asia, just as Asia did not have much influence in, say, South America.

This has all changed with the advent of various technologies like the telephone, the computer and the Internet, and other tools of instant communication. Now businesses in America can invest their resources into Honduras, or German finances in Namibia. But is there inequality in this interdependence? And what about those left out of this rapidly changing global economy? The rest of the world might have caught a cold when Asia sneezed, but not many people would raise a snuffle if a country like Congo, or Turkmenistan sneezed. Because those countries who have not entered into this economy find themselves being left further and further behind. When exchange of stocks and billions of dollars of capital and forms of assistance pass from one country to another, those who do not participate in this trade receive no benefits, and can find

themselves stuck in the past. Even nations who attract foreign investment often start in an unbalanced situation. A developing country will not be placed on the same footing if they deal with the U.S., and rather than this globalisation evening out the imbalance, it can perpetuate it. If the U.S. were to invest its large amount of resources into banana corporations in Guatemala, it would seem that this would help to boost the Guatemala economy. What can happen though, is that the money would be expected to be repaid in profits. Then, the profits the company makes do not stay in the country, where it is needed, but go back to the American investors, perpetuating the cycle of inequality. Though this relationship and its severity will naturally vary from country to country, there will often be varying economic inequality.

Should anything be done to prevent or change this process? Or should we say that it is an unfortunate but expected result of the world we live in today? Since we are on a path that no one can stop, there does not seem to be much choice but to realize that such a problem exists and hopefully organizations such as the United Nations (or perhaps the World Trade Organization) will be able to change this state of affairs.

NO COUNTRY CAN STAND ALONE OR BE COMPLETELY SELF-SUFFICIENT

Global interdependence is inevitable. No country is free of exports and imports on which it relies economically and socially. Many nations around the world rely on the global economy to provide them with sufficient food for their people, fuel for their industry, or work to fight their unemployment. As a result, the developing nations around the world attract foreign capital by

a low-cost work-force and the availability of natural resources. The developed countries get low-cost products and natural resources, while the developing nations obtain job opportunities and income from the investment of foreign capital.

One of the more controversial aspects of this trend is the number of jobs created by international corporations in the developing countries. Often called sweatshop companies, these corporations have created thousands of work opportunities in Bangladesh, Malaysia, the Philippines, and many Central American countries and elsewhere. The controversy concerns the working conditions within the factories, set up in the countries, which pay low wages and force the employees to work long hours. The question of how beneficial these corporations really are to those nations is now being asked.

It is true that such unacceptable working conditions occur far less frequently in developed countries. But it is equally true that developed countries generally do not have the problems of unemployment and import-export deficits. In fact, some economists argue that criticizing the employment practice of corporations in developing countries is biased. Guatemalan economist Lucy Martinez-Mont wrote: "It is true that thousands of children work nights.... But it is also true that there are no slaves in Central America. People choose to work in maquila shops, because those are the best jobs available to them. Given that unemployment compensation is unheard of in Central America, a low-pay, sometimes even degrading, job is better than none at all." With this in mind, one may be inclined to think that indeed the global economy is beneficial not only to the developed countries and their corporations, but to the developing nations themselves, who, thanks to this trend, may develop export industries and an income from foreign capital. On the other hand, this could also be seen as victimizing those countries. "To attract foreign investors or foreign corporate buyers, production costs have to be low enough

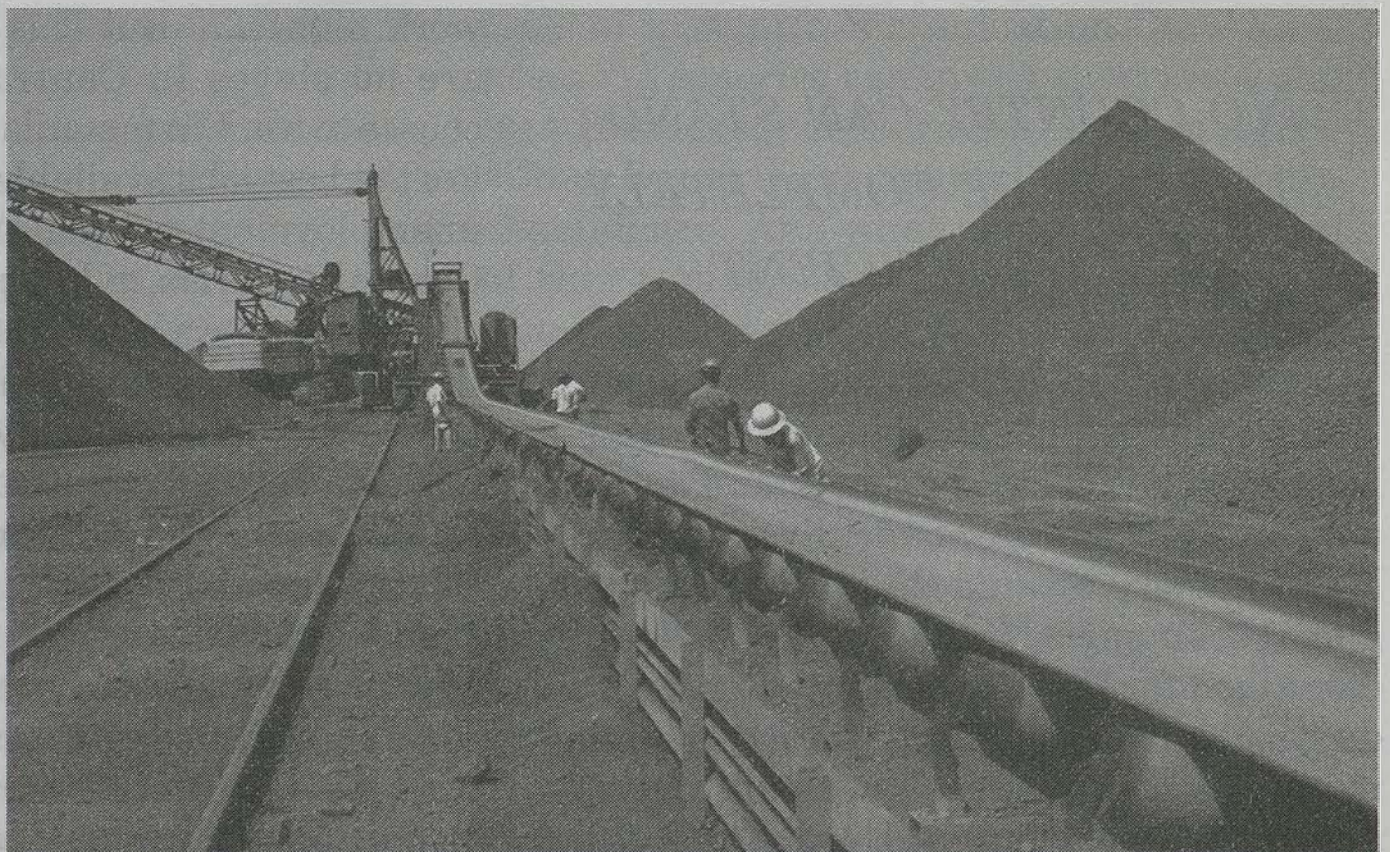
to compensate for lower productivity levels, ...poor infrastructure and transportation, shortages of water and electricity, and other hardships..."

However, the poorer nations are not the only ones dependent on today's global economy. Global connectivity can be seen through the actual pathways through which it operates - international trade. Exports are a nation's largest source of income, while most countries rely on imports in order to function. For example, the United Kingdom is nowhere near self-sufficient in terms of food and resources. It is dependent on many other nations from which it purchases food to feed its own population, and coal supplies have shrunk to such low levels that it too has to be imported. An even stronger example of such a case is Japan, arguably the world leader in electronics. It is also one of the world's largest exporters of electronics and automobiles, from which it derives tremendous income. However, the materials from which these products are made like iron ore, steel, rubber, and aluminium, do not come from Japan's soil - they all have to be imported along with food for its people. Japan is entirely dependent on both imports of food and raw material, from Australia for example, and on its exports of high-profit products, such as automobiles and computers exported worldwide. The United Kingdom and Japan are two of the richest countries in the world, members of the elite G7 group, and yet they are as dependent, if not more, on the global economy as the poorer nations.

Today, the United States is

economically the strongest nation in the world, nevertheless it is not independent either. Instead, the economic strength of the US is a result of the interconnectivity with other world markets. The global economy created global trade, through which the U.S. industries run. Manufactured goods aside, the U.S. is most dependent on other countries in terms of fuel. "Mineral fuels are the US's second largest import (import of goods is first), accounting for over 78 billion dollars - 58 billion for crude oil alone". Despite the vast oil fields in Alaska and the Gulf of Mexico, the U.S. itself is unable to supply all the demand for energy. "This dependence was already very evident during the 1973 oil crisis, when the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries denied oil to supporters of Israel in the Arab-Israeli war." In 1973, virtually all non-military traffic in the U.S. came to a halt.

The pattern woven by the global market connects practically all countries with all other countries. The growing 'needs' of today's modern populations have rendered nations incapable of supplying everything they need. Thus practically all nations are dependent on one another in various ways, for example, through a need for fuel or food. As a result, no country can enjoy what the



United States called "Splendid Isolation" at the beginning of the 20th century, and thus they cannot isolate themselves, socially, economically, nor politically from the rest of the world. The global economy can be used as a powerful tool: as a deterrent to aggression by means of economic sanctions, as in Iraq after the end of the Gulf War, as a persuasive factor by means of its benefits, as seen in the recent improvement of relations between the US and China with the latter's proposed entry into the World Trade Organization. It can also be used to prevent conflicts or to stop existing conflicts by economically starving the aggressor state.

However, these policies though often used in practice, are not as successful as one would hope they would be. The Iraqi leadership is still unchanged and may still poses a threat to the rest of the region, despite all sanctions. The global economy has many advantages, however it is not flawless. No nation is capable of satisfying all its needs from within, no country is capable of complete self-sufficiency and no nation can afford to disconnect itself from the world market. This can be seen both as an advantage and a disadvantage.

SWEATSHOPS

As the global economy improves, sweatshops are increasingly created and used by multinational corporations around the world. The National Labour Committee(NLC), an independent human rights organization dedicated to the protection of workers rights in the global economy, reports that Wal-Mart's annual sales of \$137.6 billion are larger than the gross domestic product of 155 out of 192 countries in the world. In a "Race to the Bottom," countries fight to keep the factories of major corporations in their countries by lowering the wages of local workers. The country offering the cheapest wages will get to

have the factory. By doing this the corporation will have low production costs for their product and will maximize their profits. However, the workers in the factories will only earn a few cents for countless hours of work.

Sweatshops are appearing all over the world as corporations seek to increase their profits. They are most common in developing countries in Central America and Asia where governments do not effectively mandate working conditions and wages for workers. Conditions at these factories are usually grim, as corporations have little concern for workers but only care about how quickly and how cheaply goods can be produced. In these factories, workers are usually stripped of their rights and female employees suffer the most. Their ages range from 16-25 and they usually do not know their rights. These workers are usually locked in factories that are barricaded like a jail with fifteen foot high cinder block walls which have rolls of razor wire on them.

The National Labour Committee (NLC) discovered a troubling situation in Nicaragua for workers were paid 23 cents an hour to sew a hundred pairs of Britannia jeans. The corporations argue that this is enough to support a person in Nicaragua, but workers still remain at the poverty level. They are also subjected to brutal 12-hour shifts in which they are forced to work in 100-degree temperatures. For each pair of jeans that are sewn, 14 cents of labour was required, for jeans that cost \$16.99. In factories in the US where these jeans are produced, workers are paid about \$8.03 an hour to sew 4 pairs of jeans. In every pair of jeans produced, there are \$2.08 of labour. What is disturbing about this is that there is no difference in the prices of sweatshop - made jeans and jeans made in America. By having this sweatshop in Nicaragua, this company was able to decrease its cost of labour from 11% in the U.S. to 8/10 of one percent in Nicaragua. The workers and the consumers gain nothing from sweatshops, only the corporations.

In these developing countries where

major corporations run sweatshops, women and children suffer greatly as they are the targets in factories. In factories women are fired if they are pregnant and are sexually harassed by the armed guards who monitor their arrivals and their departures. They are monitored and limited to only two bathroom breaks a day and are immediately fired if the factory suspects that they are trying to restore their rights. The NLC has reports of what women have suffered in several countries. In Bangladesh, young women working at a factory producing clothing for Wal-Mart are expected to work from 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. to earn their 9 to 20 cents per hour wages. In El Salvador, women are paid 3 cents for each 14.99 Yale University T-shirt that they produce. At this factory if they become pregnant or try to get rights or refuse to work overtime they are fired. At a Nike factory in the same country, women are paid 20 cents for every \$75 shirt or hat they produce.

Children also suffer as they are taken out of school and are forced to work these cruel shifts to support themselves and their families. With the starvation wages which are given to their parents, children have to go work. While Nike's Phil Knight is worth \$5.8

billion, the average hourly take home pay in El Salvador is 60 cents and the average in Burma is 4 cents. In this world it appears that the rich continue get richer while the poor continue to stay the same or get poorer, while the rich people sit back and enjoy their money.

THE EURO

The Euro is the new currency for the countries in the European Union (EU) who have decided to use a common currency. The EU and institutions throughout the monetary union agreed upon it. The blueprint for the monetary union was instituted by the Maasstricht Treaty. The treaty also outlined the guidelines which the EU countries and institutions would have to employ.

The requirements that a candidate must meet are as follows (may differ now but only slightly): the candidate's budget deficits must be below three percent of the GDP and the public ratio of debt to the GDP is required to be less than sixty. The requirements regarding inflation are such that the inflation rate of a candidate country must be no higher than 1.5 per-

centage points above the average of the three lowest inflation countries in the EU. Regarding long-term interest rates, they are required to be no more than two percentage points higher than the average of the three best performing countries. Countries who are candidates must not have experienced a devaluation of their national currency



for two years. This is done in order to ensure the success of the unified currency.

The treaty sets up the European Monetary Institute in order to prepare the candidates and the whole operation for the European Central Bank (ECB). The ECB is the independent bank that deals with a strict and rigid policy towards individual national banks. The ECB board cannot ask for, or take advice from, the national banks, nor can it bail out any nation. The ECB's mandate, which is narrower than that of the U.S. Federal Reserve, is price stability.

There are seven euro notes and eight euro coins. The notes will be in the following denominations: 500 euros, 200 euros, 100 euros, 50 euros, 20 euros, 10 euros and 5 euros. The coins will be in denominations of 2 euros, 1 euro, 50 euro cent, 20 euro cent, 10 euro cent, 5 euro cent, 2 euro cent and 1 euro cent. Forgery of the euro has been examined and analysed for the purpose of preventing it. Measures such as the use of fluorescent fibers, security threads, and machine-readable elements for reliable authenticity are being employed for the production of the currency.

The euro is a monetary unit that will be able to compete with the U.S., dollar and will, therefore, affect the global economy greatly. It lessens the difference between the U.S. and the countries involved in the Euro, and heightens the difference between some of the European countries and developing nations. It will also affect the European countries involved because of the difference in separate economies. For example, France will have positive effects, but Italy, with an undervalued currency, may experience problems.

THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND AND THE DEBT CRISIS

The International Monetary Fund

(IMF) was created by the major capitalist powers at the end of World War II to establish a postwar economic order. It would be a financial system where international trade and investment as well as stable convertible exchange rates would not conflict with high employment, progressive taxation and other elements of welfare capitalism. Controlling international capital flows was judged essential for this entire set of goals to be mutually attainable.

The international financial system was once again transformed when the price of oil increased in 1973 and 1974. From then on international debt rose continually up to the present. With this rise in oil tax, many developing nations had to give up between two and three percent of their gross national products, resulting in a decrease in the amount of goods produced which in turn meant fewer goods exported by these countries. Developing countries found themselves scrounging around for money to pay for the rising interest payments on their loans and to make up for the reduction of export earnings caused by industrial recession. Thus this international financial system was created after World War II and altered in the 1970s. Now, at the beginning of the 21st century, it is the focus for widespread criticism. The IMF has been transformed into an instrument for opening up the markets of developing nations to foreign capital and this transformation has increased costs to countries requesting aid from the IMF.

The 1970s and 1980s were very tumultuous decades for the IMF, starting with the Polish crisis and ending with the Latin American crises. During the 1970s, the Poles had borrowed extensively from the IMF. They had been trying to use consumer goods to pay off the debt; however, in their path was a series of workers' strikes throughout Poland. Soon, it became clear that Poland was not going to be able to repay its debt. Crises equivalent to the Polish

one occurred in the following years, in both Romania and Yugoslavia. In Latin America, some of the countries which the IMF has invested in have had economic crashes. The first example is Mexico which suffered an economic downfall in the early 1980s and is still recovering from its tremendous burden of debt. The same catastrophe that occurred in Mexico also occurred in Brazil and Argentina. Due to these crises, the IMF is skeptical as to whether it is in their best interest to loan money to Eastern Europe and to Latin America. Both of these series of incidents show that if the IMF has one dilemma in a certain region of the world, another follows almost immediately in a nearby region.

The debt crisis that now exists is based on the reliance and dependence of international debtors on American banks and funding. This crisis is not simply the result of the reliance on the United States for a constant supply of funds by countries such as Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, and Indonesia, but because of the reluctance of American banks to continue their loans. The reason that money has been loaned to countries worldwide is due to the fact that their economies looked to the

United States in the hope that they would grow and become profitable in the future. There was considerable investment but more recently a series of major financial crises.

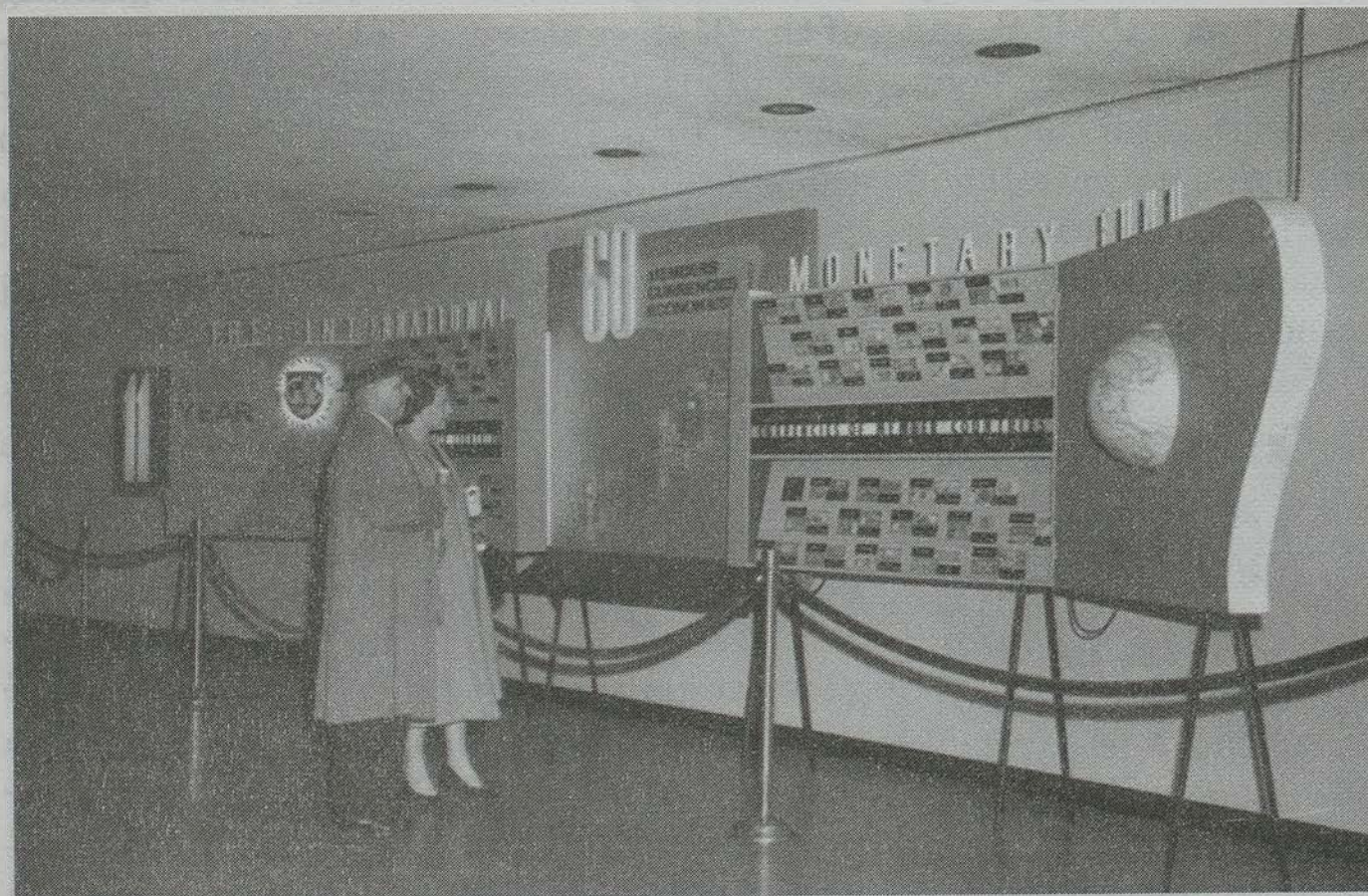
Looking to the future, there will probably be an increase in problems dealing with international finance, but the first and foremost item that needs to be accomplished is the decision as to whether or not there is still a need for an International Monetary Fund with the same structure and rules as in the past. It also needs to be determined whether some controls on international capital movements should be created and whether a system should be created which will stabilize currency rates in developing countries so as to aid the economies of those nations.

THE BANANA WARS

Attempting to comprehend the mechanisms of economic relations and the complex dynamics of commerce is not a simple task. When following what has been named "The Banana Wars" however, it becomes painfully

obvious that beyond the usual struggle for power are stronger underlying moral and ethical issues.

When Europe decided to favour bananas grown in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, (ACP), this was an attempt to simultaneously support their struggling economies and strengthen ties that had been created between these



countries and Europe during the colonial era. Preference for bananas from those countries was endorsed by establishing limits on bananas imported from South and Central America.

Needless to say this was not appreciated by the multinational corporations which controlled banana production in Latin America. Chiquita, Del Monte, and Dole are all North American multi-nationals whose monopoly on the European banana market had been abruptly interrupted by the newly imposed limits.

The European Union had partially closed the golden gates through which these companies were inundating the banana market, so as to regulate the import and favour the weaker banana producers from ACP countries. In response, the United States threatened to increase taxes on all European imported products by 100%. Such an increase in cost would restrict already expensive items to consumption by a limited elite.

An attempt to regulate and resolve the conflict was made by the World Trade Organization, (WTO). The main economic argument which emerged was that trade is based upon free-market exchange laws whereby Europe could not refuse to allow South American bananas from being exported to the EU. Such a conclusion nonetheless failed to satisfy the European Commission, which refused to comply with orders to cease all sanctions.

What is technically a conflict concerning the laws of free market economics actually contains certain deeper implications. Europe had promised to import 857,000 tons of bananas from ACP countries. In order for these bananas to be effectively significant in the European market they must be able to compete with the cheaper Latin American bananas. However, without any sanctions the multinational corporations easily overpower the smaller scale producers from Africa, the Pacific and the Caribbean.

The outcome of this tug-of-war thus affects the precarious economic balance of ACP countries which depend on the export of bananas. Somewhere behind the bureaucratic

complications surrounding the power struggle between Europe and the United States are those countries which simply rely on the opportunity of banana export.

If Europe were to submit to the WTO and the United States, ACP countries would not be able to impact the banana market. This would leave those countries with few alternatives. One of the most threatening possibilities is for those agricultural plantations reserved for bananas to be used for other more easily exportable products such as marijuana.

If such a case were to occur, the United States would be responsible for the failure of its own anti-drug campaign. The millions of dollars spent on educating farmers to plant alternative crops would be useless. Such a scenario demonstrates the interdependence existing among all of the countries involved.

Though market laws may be clear, the consequences of certain economic decisions have an impact far more than just on trade. The future of the different parties relies on the outcome of this complicated problem.

THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

The World Trade Organization (WTO) is the only international organization dealing with global rules of trade among nations. Its main function is to ensure that trade flows as smoothly, predictably and freely as possible, so that consumers and producers know that they can enjoy secure supplies and greater choice of the finished products, components, raw materials and the services that they use. Producers and exporters will also know that foreign markets will remain open to them.

The WTO should help create a more prosperous, peaceful and accountable economic world. Decisions in the organization are usually taken by consensus among the member

countries and later are ratified by the members' parliaments. The WTO's Dispute Settlement Understanding helps minimize trade friction by interpreting agreements and commitments and ensuring that countries' trade policies conform with the previously made agreements. This reduces the risk of disputes spilling over into political or military conflict. The goal of the organization is to ensure the welfare of the peoples of the member nations.

Currently the WTO has more than 130 members that account for over 90% of world trade and 30 others are negotiating membership. A majority vote is possible but has never been used in the WTO and was extremely rare under the organization's predecessor, General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). All the WTO's agreements have been ratified by the members' parliaments.

The Ministerial Conference, which meets at least once every two years, is the WTO's top level decision-making body. Then comes the General Council, made up of ambassadors, heads of delegation in Geneva (the location of the WTO's Secretariat) and officials sent from members' capitals. The General Council meets several times a year at the Geneva headquarters and it meets as the Trade Policy Review Body and the Dispute Settlement Body. Next comes the Goods Council, Services Council and Intellectual Property (TRIPS) Council which report to the General Council.

Many specialized committees, working groups and working parties deal with individual agreements and other areas such as development, the environment, regional trade agreements and membership applications.

The WTO helps trade flow smoothly so that both sides should enjoy a healthy commercial relationship, thereby avoiding political conflict. Smooth-flowing trade will also help the people of the world become better off. Satisfied and prosperous people are less likely to fight. The WTO is also a confidence builder. The trade wars of the 1930s demonstrated that competitive protectionism could easily plunge countries into a situation where no one wins and everyone loses.

It is beneficial to protect particular sectors of an economy from imports, but one should not forget how other nations will respond. The reality, in the long run, is that protectionist policies gradually lead to retaliation from other countries. The result might be a loss of confidence in free trade, and a slide into serious economic trouble for everyone. At the end, all countries lose. Confidence is needed to avoid such trade wars. When governments are confident that others will not raise their trade barriers, they will not be tempted to do the same. The WTO trading system attempts to ensure that confidence will be maintained among nations.

Freer trade is one of the goals of the WTO, but there could be a downside to trade liberalization and expansion. More trade means more opportunities for disputes to arise. These disputes might grow into serious conflicts. In reality, though, most trade tensions are reduced because countries can turn to organizations such as the WTO, to settle their trade disputes. Well over 100 disputes have been brought to the WTO since it was established in 1995. The WTO resolves the disputes by convincing the countries to comply with the rules of the organization.

The increasing number of disputes brought to GATT, and later its successor, the WTO, does not reflect the increasing tension in the world, but rather the closer economic ties between nations. It also shows the WTO's expanding membership and the fact that countries have faith in the organization to resolve their problems.

It has been shown that greater free trade has the potential to create jobs by stimulating economic growth. Protectionism hurts employment. A good example of this is the U.S. car industry. Trade barriers designed to protect U.S. jobs by restricting imports from Japan ended up making cars more expensive in the U.S., so fewer cars were sold and jobs were lost.

The importance of the WTO's role in the world economy becomes clear after examin-

ing some of its functions. It is a strong foundation for further economic progress in the new millennium.

TRADE LIBERALIZATION AND INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION

For the past few months, the World Trade Organization (WTO) has been struggling to enforce effective environmental policies at the national and international level due to increasing economic integration and growth. This goal is beyond the control of any individual nation and, therefore, it is necessary to obtain international cooperation in addressing these transboundary and global environmental challenges.

A report released by the WTO on October 14th, 1999 argues that there is no sound basis for the widespread generalizations often made in public debate that trade is either good or bad for the environment. The WTO Secretariat's Trade and Environment Report finds that environmental degradation results from polluting production processes and disposal of waste products and that trade as such is rarely the root cause of these problems—an exception being the pollution associated with the transportation of goods and the provision of services. These issues can furthermore be worsened as producers and consumers are not held liable for the costs of their actions and the environmental regulations enforced are minor for most industries across the globe. In the past, WTO member governments have attempted to oppose trade barriers—which generally make poor environmental policy—and environmental standards, which selected countries share. However, at the same time, evidence suggests that polluting industries often migrate from developed countries to developing ones so as to avoid paying high environmental compliance costs.

In order to ensure that economic growth by trade will help us move towards a sustainable use of the world's environmental resources, public accountability, good governance, and effective international cooperation are essential. If proper environmental policies are advocated and lead to improved industrial standards, trade will certainly raise overall standards. If the current mandate of the WTO is revised, the costs of investing in clean production technologies and environmental management systems can be reduced. The problem of environmental degradation may also be solved in regard to government subsidies that harm the environment, in areas such as energy, agriculture, and the fishing industry.

Acknowledging a few of the long list of findings by the WTO, it is evident that “win-win” outcomes can be attained by means of appropriate policies aimed at both the trade and environmental fields. The key aspect in approaching this issue is international cooperation, and without this fundamental element, the economic dimensions of trade and environment policies can never be explored.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THE ASIAN CENTURY?

In the past two decades the economies of various Asian countries have been rapidly developing. For example China's gross domestic product (GDP) rate has increased enormously in the last twenty years. Now the third largest economy in the world, confident assertions were being made that the value of Asia's financial output would exceed that of Europe and the United States, and surpass even the GDP of the United States by 2020. Unfortunately the straight line of progress that investors had imagined was hindered by a catastrophic unexpected

obstacle that came to be known as the 1997 Asian economic crisis.

The Asian economic crisis started in Thailand, the first of the Asian Tigers to collapse. It created a domino effect and spread to the Philippines, South Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Hong Kong.

Many countries view the crisis as a temporary condition but the crisis is still far from over. The political and social ramifications due to the economic crisis have been difficult to overcome. There has been an increase in the number of people falling below the poverty line as well as those who are unemployed; and so the crisis has been compounded. The crisis has directly led to political change in some countries.

The crisis affected each country in a different way. China managed to sidestep the bulk of the crisis for the first couple of years, but it now appears that some of the consequences are catching up with it. The official unemployment rate stands at 8%, or over 100 million people. China's banking system is now considered the most vulnerable in Asia. The Chinese government might even be forced to devalue its currency in an effort to make its economy more competitive. The de-

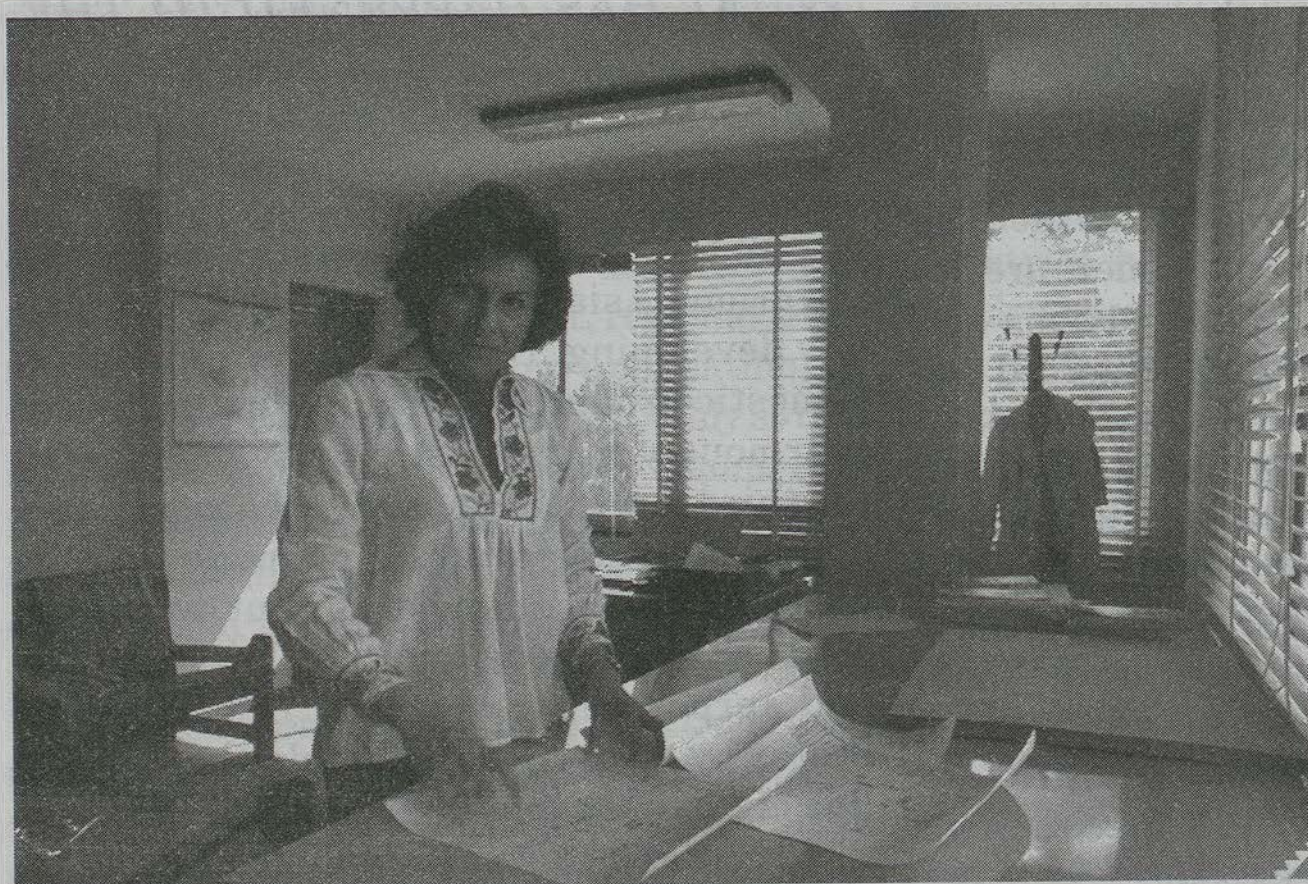
valuing of the Yuan could have serious consequences in other Asian economies already suffering economic instability. Economists are concerned that the financial problems facing China might ignite even greater economic trouble in Taiwan.

In South Korea, the crisis has spurred the government's attempt to reconstruct and reorganize the economy, in particular the enormous conglomerates or chaebols. They have also closed weak financial institutions, and consolidated others in an attempt to strengthen their banking systems.

Thailand's economy was hit particularly hard because of the way in which the government dealt with the crisis. Unemployment and public debt are on the rise. Sincere attempts at economic reform are being made but so far they have been ineffective because of political weakness. The Thai senate has proposed privatisation and legal regulation, which are considered essential to the reconstruction efforts. Recently the government released a report on growth, but speculations have been made as to the accuracy of the figures released. If the figures expressed in the report are incorrect, they raise questions as to the commitment of the gov-

ernment to openness and transparency in its economic reports, which are a necessity for political and economic credibility.

In addition to being struck by the Asian economic crisis, Indonesia's economy was further drained by the problem in East Timor, which poses a political threat that might have further destabilized the country, especially with independence movements on the islands of the archi-



pelago of Indonesia. The country is faced with the huge task of restructuring the economy, the government and society, before it can regain its former prosperity.

Though the crisis has posed great difficulties for all of Asia, some see a silver lining. The crisis has caused governments and banks alike to modernize their policies, and reorganize some business patterns, and also has encouraged Asian countries to become involved with each other's internal affairs. Asia has no pact like NATO or the European Union, so this concept is a relatively new idea amongst the nations of Asia, who just recently agreed to contribute troops to restore order in East Timor.

During the Asian crisis the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was crucial in helping to stabilize the chaotic economies. The IMF was established in 1945 with the purpose of safeguarding the stability of the international monetary system. Countries join voluntarily because they realize it is to their advantage to consult with one another to maintain a stable system of buying and selling, which will help international trade to grow and create more and higher paying jobs in an expanding world economy.

The goal of the IMF in 1997 was to restore confidence in the shaken economies of Asia. It arranged programs in pursuit of that goal with the three countries most affected by the crisis - Thailand, South Korea, and Indonesia. More than thirty-five billion U.S. dollars were used in these programs as well as seventy-seven billion U.S. dollars from multilateral and bilateral sources. The IMF intensified its consultation with its members, inside and outside of the region, that were affected. They established needed policies to make sure the crisis would not spread. They made structural reforms in the financial systems that blocked growth and improved the efficiency of financial intermediation to ensure that the crisis will not be repeated.

EFFECTS OF TOURISM ON DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Today tourism is one of the largest and most rapidly expanding enterprises in the world. For developed countries it is an increasingly major part of their economies and for several emerging nations it is considered the only way to bring in earnings and to establish jobs. However, not all developing countries can benefit financially from tourism and the few that do rarely prosper culturally or environmentally. In fact, most of the time tourism is more detrimental than beneficial for the economically less developed nations.

As mentioned, tourism is the main source of income for many developing nations and in some parts of the world (e.g. the West Indies) the income earned by tourism is altogether more than that earned from the export of raw materials. Income is, of course, beneficial for developing nations, but the benefits of the income depend upon what type of currency is obtained. Therefore, tourism is especially good for developing nations that have weak currencies because as most of the tourists who come are from developed areas, they bring their "hard" currencies with them.

Besides income and hard currency, tourism also creates many jobs; jobs that require the services of waiters and waitresses, room service personnel, gardeners, shopkeepers, bartenders, taxi drivers, entertainers, guides, and so on. It is clear why some developing nations see tourism as the only way to establish enough jobs for their people. Small side-businesses also originate from tourism, such as the production of souvenirs. In this there are also several job opportunities. Tourism requires the building of airports, roads and hotels. This extends the infrastructure and facilities of a developing economy, which in turn enhance

trade and commerce as well as the mobility of people for beneficial economic activities.

The overall financial profits of tourism can be very beneficial for emerging nations. Earnings can be used to improve local housing, schools, hospitals, electricity and water supplies. Besides all these gains, there is also the very important aspect of the interaction of different cultures, which contributes to the preservation of customs and traditions. "Racial and ethnic stereotypes can disappear as we find the riches of another culture ... People of other lands have challenged our thinking and life-style in a way which has been one of the most important growth points in our faith." Learning about traditions of different societies is not only educationally and morally beneficial for both tourists and the local people, it is also economically enhancing for the host country. As tourists discover and develop a taste for the delicacies of the host land there is an increased demand for their local produce, which creates a market for regional farm products.

There are many ways in which a developing country can benefit from tourism, starting from economic profits to maintaining cultural traditions. With such obvious advantages one would be inclined to think that tourism is advantageous for developing countries, but one must examine the issue in its entirety in order to come to a valid conclusion.

Tourism has disadvantages for developing countries. One example is the amount of money that "leaks" due to tourism. It is true that some nations base their entire country's income on tourism. However, though statistics vary, it has been observed that only 10-40% of the gross income earned from tourism stays within the host country. The rest of the profits go to developed countries. This is because the best hotels in the poorer countries - which are also the ones most tourists stay in because of better service and quality - are owned by multinational corporations based in western countries. Because they are of a better standard, most tourists limit themselves

to the specialized tourist facilities and do not go to the local ones. Most likely the airline taken by the tourists is also one based in a developed country. Since most of the vacation expenses are in the airfare and hotel, the country that actually gains the most is the developed one.

Often because it is so expensive to keep the industry running, hardly enough foreign cash remains in the country. Some developing economies even have a negative foreign capital balance. Tourism also increases the national debt of the host nation. For instance, the government borrows money to buy farmland which it wants to develop. This causes yet another problem, for because farmland is developed, food has to be imported from overseas and retailed at a loss because it is sold at local prices.

Another major disadvantage of tourism is the type and nature of the work it creates in the developing country. Although many emerging nations rely solely on tourism to provide a sufficient amount of labour, locals may not have jobs for most of the year. This is due to seasonal employment, which allows recruitment of local people only during peak seasons of tourism. As for the type of labour that is created, locals are usually employed in menial, low-paid jobs (e.g. waiters, cleaners, drivers). There is also a significant increase in prostitution. The more prestigious managerial posts, which are also the higher paying ones, go to foreigners from the multinational's homeland. Often the local people are thrown off their own land, which is bought from them. Next, something sophisticated is built there and the people are hauled back in to take up unskilled jobs. This happens frequently in Turkey, a major centre for tourism.

The side-businesses that originate due to tourism do offer more job opportunities. However, there is hardly any overall financial gain because local craft industries are not developed in order to manufacture cheap souvenirs on a mass scale.

Another drawback of tourism is the building of airports, roads and hotels, which are essential for the maintenance of the industry. Although this increases mobility for the locals and builds up local infrastructure, it often has negative effects environmentally and economically. The building of these necessities creates litter, noise and air pollution. Moreover, the electrification of villages is postponed because of the need to place air-conditioning, elevators and many other electrical requirements in hotels. Such "development" also destroys much of what it touches because it spoils the country's natural scenic beauty.

Though farmland is destroyed, tourism causes an increase in demand for certain foods since tourists prefer local delicacies. This elevates the market price of these products, which the locals can no longer afford. Sometimes there have even been shortages of food for the local people. For instance, in Tunisia it is said that the average food consumption of a tourist in a week is equal to the food consumed by two or three Tunisians in a year.

Local people are also unable to pay for tourist facilities such as tourist restaurants, health spas and other facets of tourism. This induces crime and crime-related problems (e.g. drugs, alcohol, prostitution) because for an emerging nation, western possessions - e.g. electronic gadgets - pose great temptations, particularly to the younger generation for they are luxuries that they cannot often afford.

Other social problems arise as the needy are yet again exploited. In Asian countries, such as Thailand, Korea, Taiwan and the Philippines, the growth of "sex tourism" is tremendous. This rapidly expanding enterprise brings in planes full of males from rich countries who are ready to dish out money for their own pleasure. The morality of prostitution is not the only worry. The ill treatment of the women involved is an even bigger concern. Besides prostitution as we know it, there is also the issue of cultural prostitution - i.e. commercialising customs in the name of "keeping the culture alive." For in-

stance, belly dancing in Turkey has become more of a "floor show" rather than a cultural dance. This commercialisation also affects local shrines and temples, which lose their actual significance when they become mere sightseeing stops for tourists.

Thus viewing all the advantages and disadvantages that tourism has on developing countries, one can conclude that, overall, tourism is detrimental because it distorts the nations' economies and cultures. However, one must keep in mind that tourism does have the facility to develop into a far better activity if it is organized and controlled properly. The current mode of tourism needs to be confronted. Already this is being done in the form of "eco-package tours" which confine tourists to a specified place in a country. If this is successful, tourism has the potential to be more beneficial for both the tourists and the host nations.

PRESERVATION OF LANGUAGE: WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF A UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE?

How is the spread of English affecting people in countries around the world where English is not the first language?

There are several forms of universal language. Several people might argue that universal language can only be found in terms of music, mathematics, or art. Though these are the true forms of universal language they do not help when dealing with world economies, trade, and politics. When we say language, we tend to mean the spoken and written words that express ideas and convey information to others. The question is whether having a universal language really is beneficial. Winston Churchill said in his speech advocating Basic English as a world tongue in 1943 "Here you have a very carefully wrought plan for an international language, capable of very wide

transactions of practical business and an interchange of ideas." A universal language would unify society and most of all enable people to express their views without translators or other fallible mediums. A uniform universal language would make trade and business much easier. After all, language is the primary border between cultures.

Despite all these benefits to having a universal language the consequences actually might be detrimental in respect of the preservation of cultures. Language is the most important part of a culture. Different languages and their dialects make cultures unique from one another. If we adopt a universal language we are enforcing linguistic globalisation among the nations. This might result in the extinguishing of unique individual cultures, thus a large 'melting pot' version of the United States would form. Some cultures already feel the enormous pressure to blend with the United States. For instance, in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium, influential people from different sorts of occupations have formed a committee to preserve the Flemish culture throughout the world.

If business and commerce were more important than culture there would still be a hindrance in having a universal language: the actual language. The question whether we need a universal language is debatable yet the fact is that increasingly English is becoming the universal language. It has practically become a requirement in the business world today to be fluent in English. No other language, with the exception of Chinese, has so many speakers, No other language, with the exception of French, has its speakers placed so strategically throughout the world. No other language has shown such a capacity for extension and growth. No other language has such a command of linguistic propaganda. English is the language used in one half of the world's newspapers, two-thirds of the world's radio and TV stations, and three-fourths of the world's motion picture indus-

try. With English being so prominent in today's world, it is hard to see any other language becoming universal.

That having been said, it must also be admitted that there would be objections and protests if English were to become the official universal language. Every speaker of every language insists that their language is at least equal to the others. No one would willingly abandon his or her language for English or any other established language, for that matter. If English were to become the universal official language it would be viewed as having over-powered other cultures and languages. The English speakers would be seen as superior to others, which of course is not the case.

Another possibility for universal language that would not cause an imbalance between the nations would be to create a new language; an additional language in which everyone in the world was fluent. This would establish equality among the nations because no established language would be more important than the others. But to establish a completely new language is nearly impossible. It is doubtful, even, whether people would be willing to learn a completely new tongue.

Whether a universal language is advantageous or not is still debatable. The possibility of a universal language is remote. For now we must be respectful of other cultures and languages.

SLAVERY IN THE PRESENT DAY

In today's highly industrialized world slavery plays a mostly hidden part. There are many different forms of slavery: domestic slavery, sexual slavery, bonded labourers, serfs and exploited child workers.. Despite the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights which decreed that "no one

shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms." There are an estimated 200 million slaves in the world today according to Anti-Slavery International.

Child labour is mainly concentrated in Asia and Latin America manifesting itself in cramped, overcrowded, unhygienic factories. Children as young as four are made to work sixteen-hour days, seven days a week, and only receive a few cents for their labour. Children such as these work in anything from carpet making to sneaker stitching to toy construction. The handmade carpet industry is one of the largest export industries in India and it is believed that between two to three hundred thousand children are involved in this industry. Children are made slaves in this and other industries in many ways: they can inherit a debt from their parents and become bonded slaves, they can be kidnapped, or they can be "sold" by their impoverished parents to earn a little money.

Another trade involving the exploitation of people, especially children, is the sex trade, where children as young as

eight are sold into prostitution. This trade flourishes in Southeast Asia and is extremely prevalent in Thailand. In Thailand several recent studies show that between 80 to 87 percent of Thai men have had sex with a prostitute, many being children. Hundreds of thousands of Asian boys and girls have been put to work in brothels, many of them sold by their parents so as to make enough money to live.

Household slavery is another form of slavery which is disturbingly common in the world today. In some parts of the Caribbean and western Africa children are sold into domestic servitude. They are sometimes known as 'retarecs'. Although ownership is not declared, the children are kept under strict control, which is often enforced by violence. These children do domestic tasks which, in the eyes of the owner, "repays" them for the expense of the child's "upkeep." Domestic slavery is a currently approved way of dealing with "extra" children. It is not only children that get sold into household slavery, however, as men and women have also been known to be domestic slaves.

Slavery is an astounding issue to have to deal with in this day and age. We are at the beginning of the 21st century and yet people continue to be held against their will in atrocious conditions, labouring for barely enough to feed themselves either making products, or selling their bodies or labouring as peoples' personal servants. This should no longer be a way of life endured by millions of people.



THE EFFECTS OF AMERICAN CULTURE ON EGYPTIAN LIFE

Networks, satellites, and other cross-boundary cultural tools are connecting humans all over the globe, threatening their long cherished traditions and deeply rooted cultures. In a shanty in one of Cairo's slums the satellite dish is a fixture just as it is on the roof of a house in an American suburb. The communications revolution is reaching all corners of the globe, ignoring government censorship and old methods of checking incoming information. In a world where media and communication are led by the West, what will be the future of the less developed countries? Nowadays, the dreams and aspirations of a villager in the smallest village in Africa are no different from those of an inhabitant in the inner city of a modern country.

TV shows are playing a leading role in creating models and ideals that people all over the world aspire to. Each evening in Cairo families gather around TV sets avidly watching 'The Bold and The Beautiful' or marveling at the cast of 'Baywatch'. They follow the news on CNN, ABC, BBC and other big networks that primarily broadcast for viewers in the West. At the time of the Egypt Air crash, people in Egypt were following the news minute by minute via western networks.

The Internet is now everywhere. People have come to the conclusion that in order to be part of the world presented to them in a colourful and promising vision, they have to use the tools of our time - the Internet. Slowly but surely, networking via the Internet is taking place at all levels: in schools, hospitals, factories, businesses and government departments. Recently Egyptians were discussing the success of a fellow countryman, Dr. Ahmed Zouil, who won the Noble Prize for chemistry. They were wondering how a person who had

spent his early life in Egypt was able to get to accomplish such unprecedented success in his field. They started thinking about the technology and research approaches applied in the West and how to bridge the gap between Egypt's limited scientific resources and the advanced world of science in the West.

With the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, people have come to realize that the world has only one superpower, the United States of America, which has the capability to dominate all other nations militarily, economically, politically and culturally. American culture is revered and idealized by societies around the world. The American way of life, extending from the democratic political system to everyday pop culture, is the hope of millions of people in all continents. Unfortunately this invasion is coming from one direction only, that of the rich and advanced societies. It is created by people who have the upper hand in technology and communications, control in the political process, and have the economic and military power to help those who are starting to build or rebuild their lives. With such imbalance between the two sides, the results will surely be the domination of the West and the erosion of the values and traditions of people who have kept and nourished their unique cultures over thousands of years.

Several months ago the government of Egypt issued a new law asking people not to name their shops and businesses using western names. Government officials decided to take legal action against Egyptians who are deserting their language, traditions, and cultures in naming their businesses with foreign names. This is a small but indicative example of how influences coming from the West go deeper and deeper into people's lives. In Egypt the government resorted to censorship for decades in order to prevent the 'harmful effects' of the West and to preserve the morals and traditions of an Arab and Muslim country. Now, realizing that there is no way to stop the wave of western cultural domina-

tion, the government is launching twelve satellite channels in order to reach out to its people in and out of Egypt. In the meantime the incoming flow of information, programs, and influences via satellite dishes and Internet is outside the government's control.

Is this a lost battle? Does this mean that people will lose their individuality, traditions, and ways of life to the character, traditions and ways of life of the powerful West? The issue is alarming and it can be felt in everyday matters — in homes, offices, classrooms and movie theatres. No longer does the average Egyptian Arab speak without flavouring his speech with elements of American culture from the Internet, movie stars, brand name clothing, and fast food franchises. While there is a positive side to cross-cultural interaction it can only be achieved if the interaction is mutual and balanced. Without this key factor, western domination will propel global inequalities.

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The authors of the articles in this Working Paper delved into various issues regarding the rapid spread of globalization and its resulting interdependence and inequality amongst nations.

As they delved into the entire body of work, the editors of this paper became very aware of the increasingly increasing role globalization plays in world economies and politics as well as in individual lives. The benefits and harms of globalization have created new opportunities and improved the standard of living for some while threatening the livelihood and welfare of others.

In a world where interdependence is unavoidable and increasingly a growing problem, world leaders and organizations must work together to create a relative balance amongst nations and individuals. This was pointed out by President Clinton at the Davos Forum, in Switzerland in late January 2000.

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