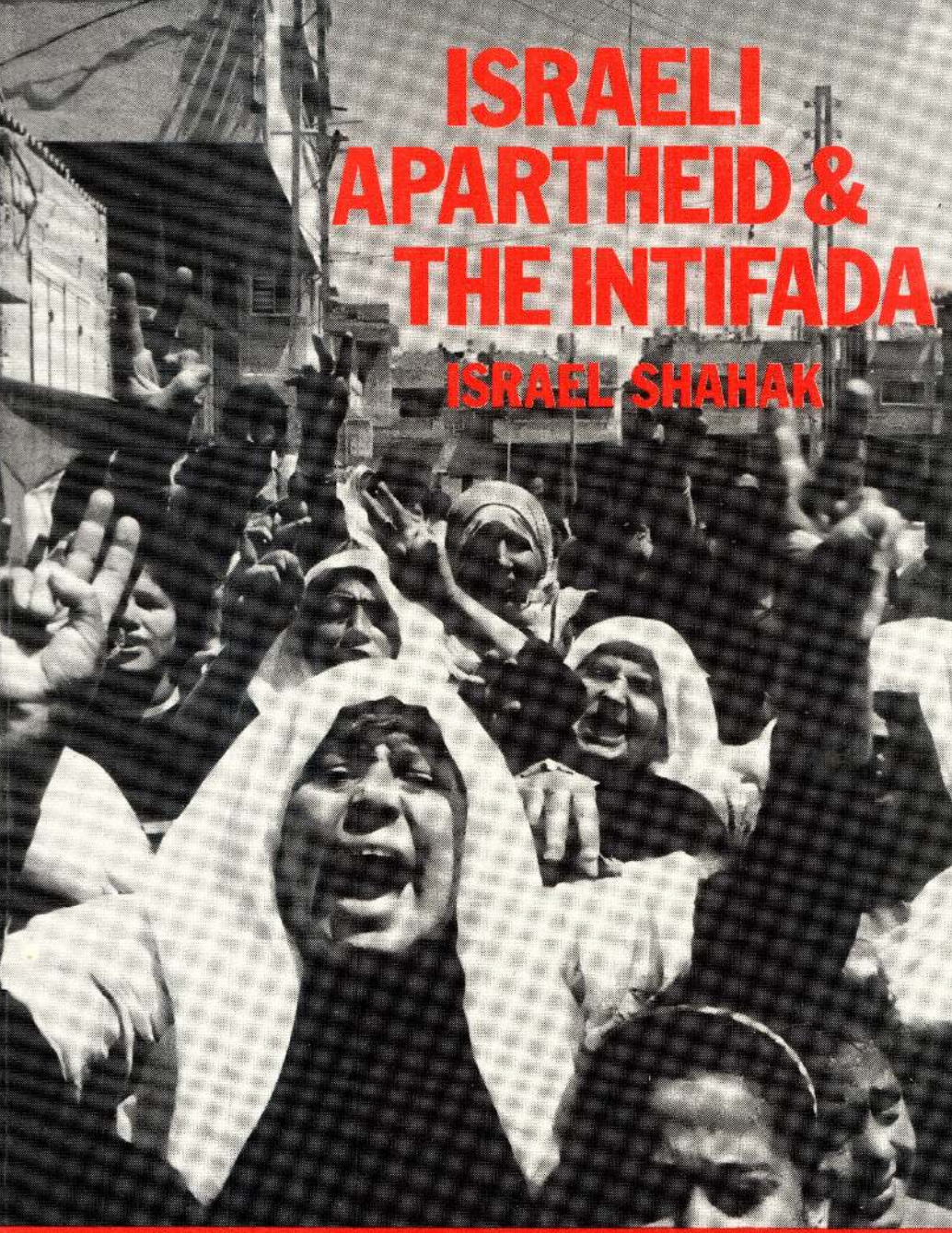

ISRAELI APARTHEID & THE INTIFADA

ISRAEL SHAHAK

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RACE & CLASS

Fenner Brockway
1888-1988

With Fenner Brockway's death on 28 April, just six months before his hundredth birthday, the last living link with the early British Labour and anti-imperialist tradition is gone.

Born in Calcutta in 1888 to a family of Christian missionaries that had worked in Madagascar, China and India, Brockway grew up speaking Bengali with his boyhood friends in a village by the Ganges.

Awakened to political life as a teenager through the Boer War and his early association with Keir Hardie and suffragettes like Sylvia Pankhurst, he adopted the broad socialist and humanist perspectives which caused him to spend a lifetime struggling in the world anti-imperialist, anti-racist and peace movements.

A fervent and pioneer member of the Independent Labou edited the *Labour Leader* until the outbreak of the 1914-18 w attacked, beaten up, taken to the Tower of London and imprisoned for his organised opposition to the war, he corresponded from his cell with Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxembourg and shared the condemned Sir Roger Casement's last night of life in Pentonville Prison.

More than any other socialist of his generation, his desire for justice for his fellow men and women transcended national boundaries. He was known to and honoured by millions the world over for his long, passionate and crucial fight against colonial rule. Ben Barka, Gandhi, Kenyatta, Nehru, Nkrumah, Jagan, Nyerere, Cabral – Fenner, from within the heart of imperialism, fought beside them all. And the immense practical value of his contribution was only matched by its symbolic significance, as an abiding inspiration to others. Chairman of the League Against Imperialism in 1927, one of the founders of the Congress of Peoples Against Imperialism in 1948, he was still president of Liberation (the former Movement for Colonial Freedom) at his death.

Fenner saw, too, the effects of imperialism at home in the racism endemic to British society; time and again, he attempted to bring in legislation against racism, and campaigned ceaselessly for the repeal of racist immigration laws. His reward in 1964 was to see his house monstrously daubed with swastikas, rabid racist insults and 'Keep Britain White' in huge letters.

'A voice may yet arise so powerful', he wrote in his autobiography, characteristically entitled *Towards Tomorrow*, 'that men and women everywhere will respond by demanding an end to the blasphemy which governments commit against creation.' And Fenner himself, in his life and work and friendship, stood relentlessly against that blasphemy.

CHRIS SEARLE

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ISRAEL SHAHAK

Israeli apartheid and the *intifada**

I want to say a few things about the origins of totalitarianism in Israeli society, its present nature and the religious/secular divide; the racism inherent in the occupation, and then what is, in my opinion, the key to the relative and very great success of the Palestinian rebellion.

Israel as a totalitarian society

Israeli society was founded before the creation of the state of Israel. All Israeli organisations go back at least as far as the early 1920s – for example, the Israeli Trade Unions' Association, still one of the most powerful organisations, was founded in 1920. All the political parties, without exception, date back to that period or even earlier, to the beginning of the twentieth century. Israel was founded by Jews from Eastern Europe in imitation of the climate that existed in countries like Tsarist Russia, Romania, and so on – countries which were absolutely dictatorial, in which every party, even if theoretically legal, had also to have a secret organisation, countries in which democracy and the rule of law as understood elsewhere were unknown. Because of this, when Israel was founded in the 1950s under the Labour Party, it kept many totalitarian features, at that time unremarked abroad. All the totalitarian laws which are now present in the state of Israel –

Israel Shahak, a professor of organic chemistry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, is Chairman of the Israeli League for Human and Civil Rights.

* An abridged and edited version of a talk given at the Institute of Race Relations, May 1988.

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and I'm not speaking about the occupied territories where the situation is much worse – have been passed or kept in force by the Israeli Labour Party. For example, there is a law – dating from the early 1950s and kept under Ben Gurion – that by a single order signed by the Minister of Defence, a lawyer can be prevented from meeting his client, which is now applied in the state of Israel to Jews too. There is also a law, which has not been invoked since the beginning of the 1960s, that people can, by special order of the Minister of Defence, be kept in prison with no contact even with other prisoners, for years. There was one case – late 1950s or early 1960s – in which one man, a supposed double agent of Mossad, was kept in prison for four years without trial, without anyone's knowledge, and with his jailers forbidden to speak to him, until one of them smuggled a note out to a journalist. Only then did the legal process begin. Such laws are on the statute book. They are not used because a body of opinion has been created, especially in the last fifteen years, which prevents the government from using all those laws.* But the government can, if it wishes, without any consultation with parliament, make all Israel at any time like the occupied territories.

Religion and Israeli society

I have already said that the vast majority of Jews came to Israel from countries in which there was no democracy, or even a minimal rule of law. I include the German empire, the Austro-Hungarian empire. The number of Jews who came from countries like Britain, France, Holland, etc., was extremely small – not more than 10 per cent. Thus, the Jews who came to Israel were not transformed by the influences of modern society (as Jews who came to Britain eighty years ago were transformed by the influence of British society). Hence, Jewish religion and its customs were much stronger in Israel. Because of this, and because of the nature of the Zionist movement, even the more socialist part of that movement didn't follow the customs of, for example, social democrats on the continent. All the socialist parties of Europe, eighty or ninety years ago, ruled that their members should not be married in church; Zionists, on the contrary, ruled that even atheists, in kibbutzim, say, fifty years ago, had to be married by a rabbi to keep national unity. Because of all this, the influence of religion on atheists, and, of course, on everybody in between, is far stronger in Israel than in any other society that I know of.

Israel is in many respects unique. It is both a settler society and more

* And it needs to be emphasised that all those totalitarian elements were and are actually stronger in the Labour Party than in Likud. Although Likud is absolutely awful on the question of the occupied territories, inside the state of Israel it was Likud which stopped most of the confiscation of the Palestinian land in 1977.

than that, for most settler societies are not so dominated by religion – South Africa, for example, invites in all the whites; it doesn't care what religion they are. Many concepts held by Israeli Jews, especially those I characterise as the traditionalists and the religious, can be compared with those of civilisations or cultures that did not undergo the fundamental transformation of, let's say, the age that was characterised by Buddha, Zoroaster, the Greek philosophers, the Jewish prophets – the age which first developed concepts of universality. In orthodox Judaism, the Jewish prophets have been to a large extent forgotten or completely misunderstood. The Judaism which now exists, historically the Judaism of the last 1,500 years, is really a reversion to pre-prophetical times. It is a throwback to a much older age. This absence of universalism implies also the reversal of all the enlightenment brought by the great civilisations of the ancient world. The Jewish religion exists in Israel – with very small exceptions – only in the most orthodox form. One part of the orthodox concept was the idea, which is very strongly expressed all the time, that the cosmos is divided into five parts: the inanimate; plants and vegetables; animals; human beings; and Jews – and the difference between human beings and Jews is as great as between human beings and animals. Take, for example, what a Rabbi Lichtenstein, head of a *Yeshiva* in the occupied territories and a moderate, said about the murders of Palestinian students carried out by members of the Jewish underground. They had to be punished, he declared, but should not receive the same punishment as a Jew convicted of murdering a fellow Jew, because the soul of a non-Jew has a different quality from the soul of a Jew. In that religious milieu, this was a moderate statement. Only last year, the religious parties in the Knesset proposed that an amnesty should be given to Jews who had murdered Arabs. All the religious Knesset members voted without exception for this proposal. Or take the statements of the fanatical chief Rabbi Lior of Kiryat Arba. When asked in 1985 why Israel had to retreat from Lebanon, he said it was obvious that God, by making Israel fail in Lebanon, was punishing it for the crime of returning Sinai to Egypt.

Such fanaticism is all-pervasive. A bus full of school children on an excursion collided with a train, and twenty-two children were killed. The very next day, a Rabbi Peretz, who was the head of a very orthodox party and, at the same time, the Minister of Internal Affairs, went on Israeli television to say that the children were killed by special punishment of God because in the children's home town a cinema was allowed to open on Friday night. This, because it was completely unconnected with anything to do with the Palestinians, caused enormous talk and enormous dispute.

The religious versus the secular

The dispute between the religious and the secular is the chief

characteristic that divides Israel between what I call Israel No 1 and Israel No 2. Most of Israel No 1 is secular, and much of it is actually opposed to religion. Demands to separate religion from the state, to limit the power of the Rabbis, etc., are extremely popular among about half of the population. The other half – Israel No 2 – are Likud followers and all the religious parties which are extreme by definition. Likud people are, in the main, what we call traditionalists. By this I mean people who commit all sorts of sins every week of their lives. The classic Israeli example is that every Saturday afternoon they go to watch soccer matches or they go to swim in the sea – according to Jewish orthodox religion, whoever goes to those soccer matches and does not repent afterwards goes to hell. And the same thing applies if men and women bathe in the sea together. Traditionalists are those who pray in the synagogue in the morning, but in the afternoon commit a mortal sin.

Religion is not only part of Jewish chauvinism, but it also separates the people into two politically. In terms of politics, Labour and all the Left parties are Israel No 1, while Likud, the religious and the extremists are Israel No 2. Israel No 1 looks to western models, at least in terms of power. It understands that without American support and Common Market support, Israel will not survive. The religious and the traditionalists, on the other hand, believe that with God's help Israel will survive in spite of everything – and God's help, of course, can be obtained by following Jewish laws. For the orthodox, God will only support us if we follow him totally, but for the traditionalists God will help us enough if we support him half and half, and sin again.

The second division is in terms of culture – what I mean here is native, Hebrew, Israeli culture. Funnily enough, this culture is flourishing, specially in the last few years – Hebrew theatre, music and so on. Important books are being published. The culture is to a great degree oppositional on the Palestinian issue as well. But only Israel No 1 goes to the Hebrew theatre. Israel No 2 does not go to theatres, doesn't buy very many books, and doesn't even read very many papers, except the sports pages. Israel No 2, therefore, only watches television, although it curses it all the time for not being stupid enough – but since the TV is state controlled it becomes more and more stupid. I mentioned before the murderers in the Jewish underground. Well, the television is forbidden to call them murderers; even though they were convicted by an Israeli court of murder, they can only be called prisoners. Part of Israel No 2 – the traditionalists as opposed to the religious – can be influenced by non-moral arguments, by arguments about power. The fanatics cannot be influenced at all, because they know God's will – or the Rabbis do. In fact, I don't know of any important Israeli rabbi who has had high school education, let alone gone to university. I don't know of many Israeli rabbis who follow modern Hebrew literature or Israeli theatre, or are familiar even with secular, older, Hebrew

literature. These are people whose concepts are exactly as they were in, say, the small cities of Poland some eighty years ago.

Israel No 1, at least on cultural issues, is in growing opposition to Israel No 2 – over religion, over the structure of the state, about democratic rights inside the state of Israel, about a thousand and one issues – but *not* those that affect Palestinians. If it had not been for the Palestinian rebellion, I would have predicted that the religious question in Israel would have been the most important. All the polls predicted, even in November 1987, that most Israelis regarded the religious issue as the most important. And even after the Palestinian rebellion, this is still going to be a major issue.

I shall conclude by quoting a national poll – those who *agreed* with government policy in the occupied territories were asked: 'Would you persist with this policy if there were to be important sanctions from abroad which affected your pocket?' Half of them answered yes and half answered no. In other words, half would revoke the oppression, or part of it, if it were to hurt *them*. Despite its lack of morality, this division is extremely important.

Israeli apartheid

Now let me go straight to the biggest feature of racism in the occupied territories. Conditions are actually, theoretically and officially worse than in South Africa – and I don't want here to defend South Africa, but it can be proved so by facts and figures.

Land

Let me begin with what is, as in South Africa, a basic question – the question of land. The state of Israel is confiscating land in the territories – I will not go into the legal tricks by which it does this, that is recorded elsewhere – and this land is officially being made into the property of the state of Israel, devoted exclusively to Jewish benefit. The use of terms here is extremely important – Jewish, not Israeli benefit. So, Israeli Palestinians who serve in the army, police, or the prison service – there are now two or three Palestinian colonels in the Israeli army – cannot benefit from one square yard of the land in the territories, which is the property of the state of Israel. Just as in South Africa, those blacks who serve the regime, cannot, whatever they may do for it, ever gain the right to live in Johannesburg. You have to point out this difference, because it is the difference between the two apartheid regimes and a country like Chile. A person who keeps his mouth shut in Chile, or who says every morning, 'God Bless you Mr Pinochet', can enjoy the right to live in Chile wherever he wants.

Now numbers. In the West Bank the proportion of the land which had already been confiscated by the beginning of 1987 was, according

to official Israeli figures, 52 per cent and according to Meron Benvenisti's figures, 59 per cent – in either case, more than half. Jewish settlers number 60,000; the Palestinians officially number 850,000 – according to Benvenisti's more realistic figures, one million. Take out your pocket calculators; you will see the proportions. As for the Gaza Strip, it has a higher human density than Hong Kong. 39.5 per cent of land there has been confiscated for exclusive Jewish use. And 28 per cent – not of the 39 per cent but of the whole area – has already been given to the settlers. Jewish settlers in the Gaza Strip number 2,500 and the Hebrew press suspect that of these a few hundred are temporary residents – students, religious Jewish academics of *Yeshivot*. Let us compare this with South Africa (and, of course, again you will understand I am not praising the devil), if you take the 13 per cent allocated for the blacks and the 80 per cent for the whites and compare it according to population, you will see that Gaza Strip is infinitely worse in terms of apartheid than South Africa.

South Africa invites any white person to emigrate to the country and to join in the benefits of the apartheid regime. Israel invites any person who can prove that he or she is a Jew, either by descent or by converting to Judaism. If someone converts today, then tomorrow they can go to Israel and demand all the rights, in this case to land, which are denied to Palestinians under this allocation. Now, in theory, a Rabbi can decide to convert a Palestinian – but before proceeding to convert anyone he must first obtain a certificate from the secret police. Only when permission is given can the process begin. And the secret police refuse permission for conversion not only to Palestinians but to Arabs, except in the case of retired Mossad agents. Imagine being in a country in which half, more than half, of the land is denied to your use because you happen to be such and such a person, and this is intended to be forever. Whatever political solutions the Labour Party or Likud thinks about, they will not think – unless they're forced to – about any change in this situation.

Water

Now, together with land, under Middle Eastern conditions, goes water. One of the first acts of the Israeli government after the conquest in 1967 was to check on all the water consumption of Palestinians, whether from wells or from springs, to install meters on all the sources, and to prohibit Palestinians, and Palestinians only, from drawing more water than they did before that date except by a special licence (very rarely given). At the same time, settlers receive almost unlimited permission to draw water, dig and drill new wells. Now there are two ways of looking at this situation. We can concentrate on the isolated cases in which villages were completely dried up by the settlers. This is not, I think, a good approach; firstly, because it can be answered that these are only

one or two villages, and anyhow some of the water was bad. It is far better, in my opinion, to take up the whole question of prohibiting more use of water. And control is very strict: buying new pumps is prohibited – even spare parts – registering power pumps needs a special permit and so on. By autumn 1987, according to official Israeli data, the 60,000 settlers in the West Bank were using more water than the 850,000 or million Palestinians. Again, this is a clear case of apartheid which everyone can understand, and, of course, the ratio changes all the time for the worse.

Economic exploitation

There are two basic facts. Everything in the occupied territories needs a permit. When I say everything, first of all I mean agriculture. Literally, to plant one orange tree, any fruit tree, or one tomato plant on one's own property (this only applies to Palestinians, of course) needs a special permit from the military governor. A special unit composed of settlers is supposed to check these things. What is more, this order is being specially used to ruin the more fruitful forms of Palestinian agriculture: citrus trees need to be replaced every twenty to twenty-five years, so the obvious way to ruin the Palestinian orange plantations in Gaza is not to give permits for replacements. In addition, all imports from Israel are allowed into the occupied territories, not only without customs barriers but without any licence, without any limitation. Imports from the occupied territories to Israel, however, are strictly prohibited, except by special order, which is only given if there is a scarcity of a particular item in Israel. Let me give you an example. Palestinians often ask for permission to produce construction materials – building blocks, cement and so on. This has always been denied, most recently about two years ago. This was even taken up by Mr Schultz, the US Secretary of State, who was appealed to by some Palestinian moderates in the United States. But, on his visit to Israel, Schultz was persuaded that the only basis on which permission could be given for a factory to produce cement blocks for house-building was on the strict condition that they would all be exported to Arab countries. So, of course, Palestinians' houses would still have to be built from Israeli materials supplied by Israeli factories. Until recently, the Israeli government has also prohibited Palestinian exports to other countries if these compete with anything that Israel could export. For example, Palestinian oranges from the Gaza Strip could not be, and I think, are still not allowed to be imported to Britain, so as not to compete with Israeli oranges.

I want to introduce another subject, also connected with racism – what is happening to the Palestinian workers who work in Israel? You will understand that by such means as I have described the economy of the Palestinians has, over the last twenty years, been almost completely destroyed. Income on the Gaza Strip – again I'm quoting official data

– is almost solely derived either from work within Israel, or from the salaries of relatives working abroad. Palestinians are forced to work in Israel, and they can do this in two ways. First of all officially. This means that they register with their military governor, who then, through his labour bureau, sends them to an Israeli employer. The employer doesn't pay them directly, but through the military governor, who deducts a third of their salary. Thus, the Israeli employer pays the same salary as to Israelis, so there will be no undue competition; but the military governor takes a third of the money, puts it in the Bank of Israel, where it sits – I don't know what happens to it. Through the military governor the worker obtains the rest of the salary. Given this situation, many Palestinians don't want to work in Israel through the agency of the military governors, so they go to Israeli towns and hire themselves direct, in places which are called, not only by the Hebrew press but by everybody in conversation, 'slave markets'. If you ask anybody in Jerusalem, 'Where is the slave market?' – you don't even have to specify 'slave market for Palestinians' – they will say, 'In Musrara. Go over there . . . '

Pass laws

Under Israeli law it is a crime for any Palestinian from the occupied territories – but not for a settler in the occupied territories – to be inside the state of Israel at night between 1am and 5am. Even if during those five hours he is in bed, he commits a crime for which the usual punishment is several months in prison and a stiff fine. But the Israeli economy has become so dependent on Palestinian labour from the territories, that if all were made to obey the law, it would interfere with the Israeli economy. So there is a system, unofficial but nonetheless carried out by the Israeli police, that if those Palestinian workers who stay in Israel illegally have been locked in from the outside between 1am and 5am, the police will not molest them. But the police have to know exactly where they are, so a system of nightly control has grown up, carried out both by police and by volunteer bodies called civilian guards, manned in many cases by teenagers under military age. This is particularly horrible because there is a very strong cruel streak at that age, and in any case people, if they are not cruel, will not volunteer for such work. This system, in addition to its apartheid nature, provokes an enormous amount of cruelty – of beatings up, of harassment etc.

One of the forms of control invoked is that Palestinians always have to have their identification on them. Anyone caught without an identity card is not only arrested and heavily punished, but is also beaten on the spot. To be without an identity card is like being under fascist or nazi occupation without papers – or like being in South Africa. One guard, stationed outside the French embassy, would, when he saw Palestinians from the territories, stop them – and don't ask me how he used to spot

them; our Israeli answer would be that just as anti-Semites used to spot Jews, and quite often they were not wrong, so these Jewish racists can spot Palestinians. This guard, because he was stationary within the French embassy gates, didn't beat people, but he would take their identity cards, and say: 'Run to this mark on the seashore, and if you run quick enough you will have your identity card back, if not you will run again.' Only when we finally got the French ambassador to intervene was the guard removed from this duty to another. But he wasn't punished – the official response being that he had done nothing wrong, he hadn't beaten anybody, he had only asked them to run. I mention this not only because of its apartheid nature, but also because such cruelty became greatly intensified in connection with the general rise in Jewish racism and chauvinism during the summer of 1987. In addition to the basic reasons, it was the massive intensification of Jewish Israeli racism, the greater suffering and cruelty inflicted on Palestinians, and the proposals made for expelling them that was the catalyst for the Palestinian rebellion which began in December 1987.

Palestinian resistance

I want to deal now with what I think is the biggest and the most significant victory of the Palestinians, the victory over the Israeli secret police. One important reason why there were so few Israelis up until December 1987 who tried to oppose the conquest regime is that, in pragmatic terms, it was cheap and easy from the Israeli point of view. The number of troops and of 'border police'* actually employed before December 1987 was, at any given time, rather small, because most of the control was exercised, apart from in the big cities, by Palestinian collaborators. In a regime where everything – even planting a tomato – needs a permit, a person needs favours all the time. The Israeli government made it a rule that favours can only – apart from in the big cities and for very rich people – be obtained from a local collaborator, either someone nominated as Mukhtar which means a clansman, the head of a village or a man officially known as a collaborator. Say that a Palestinian farmer has harvested grapes and he wants, not to export them to Israel or Jordan, but to sell them in the neighbouring city. What is the process? Or what was it before the *intifada* (uprising)? First, the farmer goes to the collaborator, to obtain a blank piece of paper stamped with the collaborator's personal stamp. He then takes this to the military governor or civil administration office. The first stage in the procedure is to hand over the stamped paper, which is torn and thrown into the basket – and then he receives his permit. The bribery and everything else involved I leave to your imagination, but for a time the system was

* Special military police force used often against the Palestinians.

successful. The people were afraid to boycott the collaborator and his family. The collaborator knew who was speaking out and so on. Initially, the Palestinians' fight for freedom took place either in the bigger towns or in the camps – because there are no farmers there, they didn't have anything to sell, and the people didn't need collaborators. A casual and very poor labourer doesn't need a collaborator for any permit. He doesn't have land to plant tomatoes. And the very few rich people had protectors, they were connected with consulates, with embassies, etc. But for everyone in between, the system worked. When the rebellion spread in December from the refugee camps and big cities to every Palestinian village – it was only after twenty-one years of conquest that there were such strikes, such national demonstrations, in which every single Palestinian village joined together; previous rebellions were not universal, and often many villages did not participate at all – the very first thing the Palestinians in villages did was to organise a boycott, not only of the collaborators but of their whole families. Not only were the collaborator's mother, his wife and his children boycotted, but every cousin as well. The collaborators immediately became blind and deaf. They didn't know what was happening in the village. You will have heard about ceremonies where former collaborators swore on the Koran or on the New Testament that they were ceasing their collaboration and returning to the people. This was not so much because of the threats, but because of the social isolation – even if the collaborator himself could go into town and speak with his Israeli 'superiors', his wife and children could not do so.

Let me show you how the Palestinians defeated the Israeli secret police in this. Up to now, fifteen national leaflets have been distributed through all the occupied territories and obeyed – in other words, if a nationally-issued leaflet calls for a national strike, there is a complete national strike. Second, there are enormous numbers of local leaflets. Under what conditions are these local and national leaflets being distributed? All the photocopying machines in the Gaza Strip have been confiscated, all the printing establishments closed. So the leaflets cannot be printed in the Gaza Strip – maybe, or maybe they come from underground establishments. Not one author of any of those national or regional or local leaflets has ever been found during the past six months. What is more, the Hebrew press itself admits that when the authorities arrest people in a village, they don't know who they are arresting, because they don't have the information. It is strongly suspected that they arrest people on the basis of old information, and since the present leadership is new they don't know what is happening. In my opinion, this is the first and the most important condition for Palestinian success. And because of this, the first and the most important thing that the Israeli authorities want to do is to restore the role of the collaborator.

The main method of oppression now employed against the Palestinians is starvation. A curfew is imposed on whole villages and towns, and official food deliveries are stopped, or are very rare. For instance, in Qalqiliya, which was under curfew for around twenty-five days, food distribution was only allowed on every third day for two hours. After such a long time the stores run out of food, and, since Qalqiliya is on the plains, it was more difficult to smuggle food in than into villages which are surrounded by hills. A Palestinian member of Knesset, Abd al-Wahhab Darawsha, a former member of the Labour Party, testified to the hunger and starvation among children during that time. In addition to the starvation caused by curfew, there is what I call limited starvation, or malnutrition. The village may be open; people can go in and out, workers can go to work in Israel. But everyone is searched at road blocks, including those workers returning – supposedly freely – from Israel. The food in their bags, every last piece, is taken and smashed before their eyes. As a matter of calculated cruelty this is worse, in my opinion, than shooting people. At the same time, in both towns and villages under curfew, and in the free villages where food is confiscated, the Israeli government is handing out food to its former collaborators. But the people are so united that they refuse to accept food from collaborators.

In addition to the problem of food, there is also the problem of water. The Israeli government has, through the years, compelled most of the Palestinian villages to take water from a centralised supply. Before, they had water, piped water, which came from their own wells, pumped by their own generators. Now they can get water only from the main. Then take, for example, a village in which a council of collaborators has been deposed or has resigned – when the newly elected council or committee wants to pay the water charges, the Israeli government says we will only accept payment for water from collaborators; we are cutting off the water. There are now two villages in which the water has been cut off in this way for more than a month. They are using old cisterns, and I suppose will have water for some time, but depriving villages of water in this way will become a very serious problem as summer advances.

The collaborators are also used in the daily humiliation of Palestinian people. Take, for example, the case of a Palestinian from Gaza who wants to reach Tel Aviv to work there. (Incidentally, the national Palestinian leadership in the occupied territories encourages the Palestinians of Gaza to work in Israel, because otherwise they would starve. They are given Palestinian permits for two or three weeks so they can earn some money; then a national strike is imposed for one or two days to show that the national movement is in control.) On the days he goes to work, he has to pass twelve road blocks to reach Tel Aviv. At each road block the person in authority, even the youngest soldier, can simply order, 'Sit here until the evening.' The soldier takes away his permit,

and the Palestinian worker sits there until the evening. But a collaborator can obtain an additional piece of paper which protects the worker from such humiliations. Palestinians don't take those certificates; they prefer not to, and say they will suffer whatever comes.

In conclusion, let me say that the next six months are going to be crucial. The priority for all those who oppose racism is, first of all, to understand the basic nature of the apartheid regime in the occupied territories and also in Israel itself, and to use this as a potent weapon to help the Palestinians during this summer. Because for important reasons, if they survive this summer, and are not broken, the situation will change for the better. I am telling you this as a person who is not in danger of having his water cut off. How can I say whether this human endurance will be balanced by this horrifying daily oppression or not. I don't know. I cannot tell you. But our duty is to help these people now. For the moment, we should not concentrate on high-flown political discussions, on ultimate solutions, however important, but rather help – during the summer months – those people who are so heroically suffering every day, and resisting so much.

A mother's shame

Her child
will spend the night in jail.
My child
is well and safe.
Her child
has been beaten by a soldier.
My child
will be a soldier.
Her child
is inspired to defy.
My child
will be required to obey.

Nancy Nachum, Jerusalem

ROSEMARY SAYIGH

Palestinians in Lebanon: status ambiguity, insecurity and flux

During the first Arab/Israeli war of 1948, some 100,000 Arab inhabitants of Palestine fled or were expelled into Lebanon, where, clustered in the south, they awaited the end of the fighting to return to their homes in Galilee and the coastal cities. As the scale of the exodus became apparent, emergency relief organisations were set up in Lebanon and elsewhere, leading in 1950 to the establishment of a special UN management agency, UNRWA. Although the exact size of the Lebanese population at that time is not known, a generally accepted estimate of the ratio of 'refugees' to host population is 1:10, a heavy burden for any country, particularly one with Lebanon's underdeveloped economy and delicate sectarian 'balance'.

Before 1917, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon and 'Jordan' were closely linked administrative units within the Ottoman Empire; thus the borders between them were recent ones produced by Anglo/French occupation, and had no historic depth for the people of the area. In moving across them, the Palestinians had no sense of moving from one nation-state to another, nor any premonition that flight could lead to permanent exile. Both they and their involuntary hosts understood their movement as an emergency measure, not as an abandonment of residence and citizen rights in Palestine/Israel.[1] A central element in the Palestinians' first struggle after exile was to reject the refugee designation, and redefine themselves as Palestinans.

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From the outset, the situation of the Palestinians in Lebanon differed from that in the other host countries, and this difference has increased with time. The decisive factor has been the inability of the Lebanese state, rooted in its sectarian origins and structure, wholly to control the refugee population, or prevent it forming political and social relations with segments of the Lebanese population. Erosion of state power combined with regional pressures to give the refugee community under the leadership of the Palestinian Resistance Movement (PRM) a degree of autonomy unparalleled elsewhere, encouraging close ties with some segments of the Lebanese, while arousing violent hostility from others. The appearance of anti-Palestinian militias and vigilante groups is a phenomenon not entirely confined to Lebanon, but pushed further here than elsewhere.

The history of the Palestinians in Lebanon so far falls into three distinct periods. The first, from 1948 to 1969, was one of a slowly developing system of state control, mainly directed at the camp population. Little overt hostility was expressed by the host population towards the refugees; attitudes ranged from sympathy to indifference to latent antagonism. The second period, from 1969 to 1982, was ushered in by a revolt of the camps against Lebanese control, with the PRM emerging as a power centre within the Lebanese political system, and a sharp polarisation of the Lebanese into pro- and anti-Palestinian segments taking place. The third period, beginning with the Israeli invasion of 1982 and PRM withdrawal, has brought a higher level of insecurity for Palestinians who remain. New sources of hostility have appeared, notably the Amal Movement, the Shi'ite militia formed in 1974 by Imam Moussa Sadr, and sometime ally of the PRM. The PRM cannot but be involved in the Lebanese conflict, as enemy or ally of factions in continual flux. Yet, as a self-defined *national* movement, it is fundamentally alien to a sectarian system; hence, it is bound to be viewed as an obstructive element in any new sectarian arrangement. This article will deal mainly with the first period; it was then that the major 'givens' were laid down, and it still constitutes a basic point of reference for Lebanese in discussing Palestinian status, rights and obligations.

In spite of its specificity, the situation of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon must not be viewed as sui generis, unable to illuminate their situation in other regions of the diaspora, nor other refugee situations. On the contrary, the Lebanese case is useful in illustrating two possibly universal principles: that the refugee label directs a group into subordinate positions in host political and economic structures, even while designating such groups as 'outside' them and inessential to their functioning; and second, that once a refugee group has been created by a particular power imbalance, it will be reproduced in a new environment. In other words, the production of refugees is seldom a one-time historical event, with consequences limited to the immediate victims,

but rather a continuing process of power asymmetry which is liable to lead to further victimisation. When Bashir Gemayel described the Palestinians as 'a people too many'[2] he offered a striking example of what may be termed the 'institutionalisation of the refugee'.

First reception

The Lebanese reception of the refugees is reported by several observers to have been sympathetic, certainly more welcoming than that given in Britain and the US to refugees from Nazi persecution. There was an outpouring of aid from public and private sources; even before the arrival of the International League of the Red Cross, a number of local social institutions began distributing food and organising shelter. President Bishara al-Khoury assured the refugees that 'our house is your house', and he and Premier Rashid al-Solh toured refugee concentrations in the south. This warm reception arose out of a mood of Arab fraternalism generated by anti-colonialist struggle; it took many forms, from donations and voluntary work, to free accommodation, loans and help in finding employment. Within this overall welcome, however, certain patterns of discrimination can be discerned that sorted the refugees on a sectarian and class basis. At the same time, a mixture of motivations underlying the government's open-door policy pointed to future problems..

It has been suggested that the decision to allow unrestricted entry to the refugees was part of President al-Khoury's policy of attracting Lebanese Muslim support.[3] No open opposition to the move was expressed at the time, even by politicians or population sectors known to be hostile. Yet the President's calculations indicate the extent to which Palestinians were involuntarily involved in Lebanese politics even before their settlement, and foreshadows the polarising effect their presence would have on inter-sect relations.

Lebanese sectarianism was also quickly evident in the distribution of aid: Christian charitable associations helped Christian Palestinians, while Muslim associations, more recently formed and less well endowed, helped the far more numerous Muslim Palestinians. This sectarian sorting led to the setting up of three small Christian camps – Mar Elias (Greek Orthodox) in Beirut and Jishr al-Basha and Dbeyeh (Catholic) in Metn – with religiously endowed secondary schooling. With many Christian Palestinians settling in Lebanese Christian areas, there was some sectarian divergence in what had been until then a strongly national struggle. Most visible in residence patterns, this divergence was expressed by Christian Palestinians in efforts to assimilate, and in some support for Maronite leaders and parties. Later, acutely anti-Palestinian Palestinians would appear, such as Etienne Sacre, founder of the Guardians of the Cedars. But for the majority, such

assimilationist trends were terminated by the civil war of 1975/6.

The reception of urban middle-class Palestinians differed widely from that of the rural and poor urban strata. The main cause of difference lay in the connections formed between Lebanese and Palestinians of urban background before 1948, through trade, travel, intermarriage, educational and work migration. Such connections were a form of capital that helped urban middle-class refugees to tide over the first years of exile, linking them to accommodation, jobs, government officials and politicians, and familiarising them with the workings of the host system. Deprived of such connections, and without easily marketable skills, the rural and poor urban masses swarmed on streets and in public places. Even after their partial segregation in camps, their destitution was a source of embarrassment to the Lebanese around them, often arousing reactions of contempt or ridicule. Such class-based sorting led to a dichotomy in the refugees' initial experience of the Lebanese: whereas middle-class Palestinians recall many acts of kindness, camp Palestinians were treated as vagrants and strangers. They recall having to pay for water, being chased away as thieves if they gleaned fields or picked wayside fruit, and being avoided as carriers of bad luck, or a source of pollution.[4] Such differences help to account for the almost universal support given by camp Palestinians to the PRM, compared with the more cautious attitudes of the middle classes.

Given that 80 per cent of the incoming Palestinians were Muslims, the size of the refugee influx threatened the political ascendancy of the Maronite sect, which with the other Christian sects had held a slim majority over the Muslims at the time of the 1932 census. Lower Maronite birthrates and higher rates of out-migration added to their fears that they would lose the demographic margin that supported their claims to political ascendancy. Even though the Palestinians were, as refugees, outside the polity, over the long term their presence was likely to tip the demographic and political balance towards the Muslims. This likelihood struck western diplomats stationed in Beirut as early as 1949;[5] but as long as the refugee presence appeared temporary, it aroused little open Maronite protest. As debate over repatriation in the UN dragged on, and return appeared ever less likely, Maronite opposition to Palestinian 'implantation' became more vocal and more organised. Among other Lebanese sectors, the first fraternal sympathy for the refugees soon faded.[6] Except for a small politicised minority, most Lebanese forgot about the refugees, until the issue of *feda'yyeen* operations from the south in the mid 1960s brought them once more into the political arena.

The legal and management framework

One of the basic problems of Palestinian existence in Lebanon is that no

clear definition of their status and rights, no comprehensive body of law governing their residence, has ever been drawn up. Arab League resolutions advocated that the host governments should not offer nationality to the refugees since this could weaken their right to repatriation, but that all other civic rights should be given them, including the right to work. Each host government interpreted the League's resolutions according to its own interests. Lebanon ignored the advice concerning the right to work, just as Jordan did concerning naturalisation. While many Lebanese admitted that Palestinians should not be classified as 'foreigners', failure to create a category for them with specific rights meant that, in practice, laws applying to foreigners were applied to them. This was most damaging in relation to work rights, since there were several kinds of employment from which foreigners were excluded, particularly in the public sector, banks, concessionary companies and transport. Foreign workers are further required to obtain permits for all types of work except in agriculture and construction. A second aspect of Lebanese law from which Palestinians have suffered is the principle of reciprocity, which means that foreign workers are to be treated in the same way as Lebanese workers are treated in their country. Applied to Palestinians, this ruling is used to exclude them from social security benefits, even though contributions are deducted from their salaries.

Restrictions on professional workers and businessmen were initially less penalising than those affecting manual and clerical workers. The practice of the 'free professions' (medicine, law, engineering, pharmacy) is conditional on membership in syndicates limited to Lebanese nationals, but middle-class Palestinians could obtain nationality relatively easily until the mid-1970s.

The law governing naturalisation made this conditional on presidential decree. Under President Chamoun (1952-8), naturalisation was greatly facilitated for Christian Palestinians, but by the mid-1960s the authorities were becoming more restrictive. However, even Muslim Palestinians have been able to gain nationality if they have connections and can pay lawyers' fees. Ease of naturalisation was one element in rousing Maronite hostility towards Palestinians, as well as to the state, which they increasingly saw as corrupt and unable to defend 'national' (i.e., Maronite) interests.

In relation to ownership of property and businesses, Lebanese law was initially extremely liberal, in line with its policy of encouraging foreign investment. Unlike most Gulf countries, where the state facilitates capitalist enterprise, in Lebanon there was no obligation on foreign businessmen to seek a Lebanese partner (there is, however, a legal obligation to employ a majority of Lebanese workers). Land ownership by foreigners was initially unrestricted, but increasingly came under limitation caused by political fears. However, it was

deteriorating political conditions rather than legal restrictions that pushed Palestinian capital out of Lebanon from the late 1960s onwards.

The general point to be noted concerning refugee rights in Lebanon is that whatever laws existed were less important than ministerial decrees and the goodwill of important officials, both of which reflected the political conjuncture. All Palestinians officially designated as *lajji'een* (refugees) depended on the issuing of official documents such as work permits and laissez-passers, and this dependence became the basis for financial exactions and political control.

The government set up a Central Committee for Refugee Affairs as an official management agency within the Ministry of Interior in 1950. This body, which was upgraded to a Directorate in 1959, issued identity cards and laissez-passers and registered refugee life events. A second main government controlling institution was the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, which issued work permits. However, after the civil war of 1958, real control of camp Palestinians passed into the hands of the Directorate of General Security and the army's intelligence branch. This change began during President Chehab's rule (1958-64), a period which saw the rise of the *mukhabarat* (intelligence agents), and growing concern of the political elite about the potentialities of the Palestinians for 'de-stabilisation'.[7] The camps began to be kept under oppressive surveillance.

While the state controlled all aspects of refugee life related to national security, UNRWA (established in May 1950) took charge of its maintenance. Issuing from the US-inspired Clapp Mission of 1949, UNRWA's original mandate went beyond the immediate relief of the refugees to their ultimate integration in the host countries, an objective that was rejected equally by the Arab League, the host governments and the refugees. Thus UNRWA's role was limited to the provision of basic maintenance and social services. One of the Agency's first tasks was a 'final' registration of legitimate refugees, aimed at eliminating false and double registrations. After 1953, registration required exceptional procedures, even for new deportees, a point that later acquired significance, when registration with UNRWA came to be viewed as the only legitimate basis for Palestinian residence in Lebanon. A second primary task for UNRWA was the organisation of camp sites, many of which were already in de facto existence. Refugees were divided into several categories, according to which rights to rations, medical and educational services or special hardship allowances were allocated. Such categories created inequalities and resentments between the refugees, and also became a basis for a patronage system among Agency employees.

Although UNRWA was a large employer of Palestinians, refugee demands were not represented at the Agency's decision-taking levels until 1973, when the UN General Assembly recognised the PLO as representative of the Palestinian people. Before then there was no official

channel of communication. Further, UNRWA's structure closely reflected colonial models, being composed of two separate hierarchies, one 'international', the other 'local', each with different status, conditions and pay levels. Thus the Agency served to reproduce colonialist attitudes towards the refugees, the more so as it initially employed a number of former Mandate Government officials. Some local staff reflected such attitudes; a number used their position for personal advantage.

Unlike the other host countries, Lebanon was the scene of a major Palestinian attempt to ameliorate their civic status, the Cairo Agreement of 1969, negotiated under the auspices of President Nasser. The Agreement did more than legitimise *feda'yyeen* operations from South Lebanon, it acknowledged the national identity of the Palestinians, and affirmed their rights to residence, work and free movement. For the population of the now autonomous camps, the Cairo Agreement marked a new epoch, one of renewed national struggle and consciousness, a weakening of the power of the state and a lessening of dependence on UNRWA. Though the Cairo Agreement should have led to clarification of work rights, no progress was made on this point by PLO negotiators, and it was through the expanding structures of the PRM that camp Palestinians found new employment possibilities. Similarly, it was the de facto power of the PRM rather than the Cairo Agreement that gave camp Palestinians normal rights to change residence, repair their homes and enter or leave the country.

Zoning

Little initial effort was made by the authorities to control the distribution of the refugees. The majority stayed near the border for the first two years, expecting imminent return. The eventual siting of camps was decided less by government policy than by the availability of cheap or donated land, abandoned barracks or earlier refugee installations. Clustering near the coastal cities (mainly Tyre and Sidon at the beginning) was due partly to the location of relief centres, but also to the eagerness of Lebanese employers for cheap labour.[8]

Eventually, however, two main lines of government zoning policy appeared. The first was to reduce refugee concentrations near the southern border, viewed as dangerous because it encouraged 'infiltration' and smuggling. Thinning out concentrations in the south was implemented in the early years by forcible transfer to the Beka',[9] and in the 1960s by declaring the south a military zone, and restricting Palestinian entry to it. Eventually, lack of employment in the Tyre region produced its own pressure towards northward migration; yet, even as late as 1983, 48 per cent of all registered refugees were still living in the southern provinces of Tyre and Sidon.[10]

The second government zoning principle was to reduce refugee concentrations around the capital city of Beirut. Until the construction boom of the late 1950s, there was little refugee pressure to settle in the Beirut area, nor had the siting of seven camps within a 16-kilometre distance of the capital roused opposition, except in one case.[11] But by the early 1960s, the authorities began to be concerned by the build-up of population in the Beirut camps, caused by greater employment and educational openings there. At the same time, a flood of poor, mainly Shi'ite Lebanese rural migrants, pushed off the land by state neglect and consolidation of large land holdings, added to the spread of slums around the capital. The authorities feared a revolutionary symbiosis between Palestinians, poor urban Sunnis and Shi'ite rural migrants. Traditional Sunni and Shi'ite leaderships began to feel the challenge to their influence, as sectarian boundaries began to be eroded by new political formations, aided by common residence in Beirut's 'poverty belt'.

One sign of the authorities' fears was a plan to transfer the populations of two Beirut camps (Tell al-Zater and Chatila) to some other area. Discussed by UNRWA and the government in the early 1960s, the move never took place. Cheap state land was not available, but, more than this, there was already the possibility of political disturbances. Just as the state wanted to remove Palestinians from around the capital, opposition parties wanted to keep them there. However, other methods were found to reduce migration, such as instructing UNRWA not to transfer ration rights, combing the camps for 'illegal' residents and arresting Palestinians found far from the zone of their original registration. Building homes outside camp boundaries was forbidden; fines were imposed for home expansion or repair; water and electricity supplies were withheld. Surveillance was applied more oppressively to the Beirut camps than elsewhere.

In fact, Palestinians formed a small proportion of migrants to the 'poverty belt', the large majority being Lebanese Shi'ites, while others were migrant workers from Arab and non-Arab countries. But after 1969, autonomous and armed, the camps formed the political and defence shield to this migratory mass. For the elite, the camps were a 'choker around our necks', a 'string' set close to strategic routes joining Beirut to the provinces, as well as to the International Airport.[12] The Beirut camps thus formed the main target of Maronite militia attack during the civil war of 1975/6, leading to the mass expulsion of Palestinians and Lebanese Muslims from East Beirut and Metn. Over time and in relation to Lebanon's sectarian map, Palestinians have been 'sorted' into areas of Sunni and Shi'ite predominance, around the major coastal cities, in South Lebanon, and in the Beka', a situation of seemingly greater security that the rise of Amal and Hizbollah, the Shi'ite militias, has belied.

The position of the Palestinians in the Lebanese economy

The economic policy of all Lebanese governments since the establishment of the state has been one of extreme laissez-faire, marked by openness to world market forces, low taxation, minimal spending on infrastructure and public services, and neglect of the productive sectors of the economy in favour of banking, trade and services. The crisis-proneness of such an economy was already evident to foreign and local economists by the mid-1960s. These early predictions need to be set against later Lebanese accusations against the Palestinians that they 'ruined our country'.[13]

State neglect of the sectors that could have generated employment for Palestinian as well as Lebanese workers – agriculture, industry and public construction – meant low growth rates for these sectors between 1948 and 1975, with war-caused regression afterwards. The only expanding sectors of the economy – trade, banking and services – offered little scope to Palestinians, except for a brief period between 1948 and 1966. Lebanon has been an exporter of labour for the whole period under consideration, a trend affecting Lebanese workers, but even more Palestinians. Yet even though unemployment and labour migration have remained high, the Lebanese economy traditionally encourages the entry of non-national workers – Syrian, Kurdish, Egyptian, Indian – who have done work rejected by Lebanese labour, particularly in construction and domestic services. As well as building up pressure towards migration, the structure of the Lebanese economy has pushed unskilled Lebanese and Palestinian workers into the informal sector that proliferated with the rapid growth of Beirut, and of the services centred on it.

The work permit requirement, mentioned above, had the effect of pushing 'unskilled' Palestinian workers into the sectors where permits were not required (i.e. agriculture and construction). From the beginning, the Ministry of Labour under its Lebanese nationalist director Emile Lahoud set a restrictive policy on the issue of work permits to Palestinians.[14] The highest number ever issued, in 1968, was 2,448, at a time when the number of economically active Palestinians was around 19,000. After this date, the number and proportion relative to other foreign workers dropped.[15] It is, therefore, not surprising that, in 1971, the majority of camp-based workers were daily paid (11,145 compared to 2,715 on contract), while nearly a quarter (3,585) were self-employed.[16] As late as 1980, a report estimates that the 'occupational distribution of the camp labour force exhibits overwhelmingly "blue-collar" characteristics'.[17]

Political/sectarian rigidities played little role in restricting the employment of Palestinians in the early period. Maronite employers were as ready as others to employ cheap refugee labour. If there was opposition, it came from segments of the Lebanese labour force

threatened by the effect of low refugee wages on their own employment and wages. Increasing discrimination against Palestinian labour is attributable to a number of factors: economic crisis and unemployment, rising educational and technical/professional qualifications of formerly 'backward' segments of the Lebanese labour force, hostility towards the PRM, and a general intensification of sectarianism. Of the sectarian-based parties, the Maronite militias were the first to campaign against the employment of Palestinian workers, expelling them en masse from East Beirut and the industrial zone of Mkalles in 1976, and using intimidation and assassination in West Beirut and around Sidon in 1983 to prevent their employment. Since 1982, political tension between the Shi'ite-based Amal Movement and Palestinians has had a similarly disrupting effect on economic relations.

Lebanon offered the children of middle-class Palestinians excellent educational facilities for career advancement, whereas the education and training of camp Palestinians was greatly restricted. Free schooling provided by UNRWA (from 6 to 16 years) enabled a small proportion of camp youth to enter 'white-collar' occupations (e.g., as accountants, teachers and clerical workers), while UNRWA's vocational training programme produced an even smaller number of highly skilled technical workers, who mainly emigrated. But the structural limits to occupational mobility are demonstrated by the fact that, as late as 1979, 25 per cent of the camp workforce was illiterate and 35.9 per cent semi-literate, while only 23.8 per cent had finished primary school, and 0.4 per cent had a vocational training diploma.[18] Thus, while the Palestinian workforce in Lebanon has lost its predominantly agricultural skills (only 11 per cent of camp workers were still employed in agriculture at the time of the PLO census of 1979), it has not acquired technical and professional skills to replace them. The profile is clearly one of an 'ethnic proletariat'.

The three main components of the Palestinian labour force – businessmen, professional workers and unskilled workers – have had different histories in terms of the receptiveness of the economy over time, and in terms of reactions from the Lebanese population. Taking capital and businessmen first, initially no obstacles were placed on the transfer of capital from Palestine, nor on the establishment of businesses. Beirut attracted the largest number of medium-sized Palestinian businesses, and though the total value of capital transfers is not known, it is estimated to have been considerable. As well as capital, Palestinian entrepreneurs brought their stock of foreign contacts, and forms of business organisation new to Lebanon, such as insurance and the joint stock company. They rapidly entered into banking, tourism (e.g., hotels and bathing establishments), new types of manufacture and imports (e.g., chemical fertilisers), as well as cultural institutions (publishing, film-making). The adventurousness of Palestinian capital gave it a

conspicuousness out of proportion to its real power. One venture, in particular, Intra Bank, exemplified its brashness and ambition, extending its operations to the Gulf, Europe and the US, and thus arousing 'the envy and hostility of the older-established Lebanese political and financial bourgeoisie'.[19] In 1966 Intra Bank crashed in circumstances that have remained mysterious, but which were widely believed to have been the result of Central Bank manipulation. The crash marked the end both of Palestinian businessmen's confidence, and the economy's boom phase. From this date, political and economic crisis fed into each other, creating a hostile climate for Palestinian business. Many enterprises were destroyed during the civil war of 1975-6; others moved out of Lebanon, fearing further insecurity. Legislation put new obstacles in the way of non-nationals buying land or property, and establishing a business required higher-priced permits and heavier guarantees. By 1982, Palestinian businesses that remained were those without the capital or contacts to establish themselves elsewhere.

Beirut also attracted a high proportion of Palestine's professional workforce. They arrived at a moment when many large new foreign and national companies were being launched, requiring skills in English language and methods of administration that Palestinians possessed, whereas their Lebanese counterparts, trained in the French system, did not. The number and level of Palestinian appointments in what constituted an elite sector of the economy irritated Lebanese nationalists, and the practice of hiring Palestinians came under attack in the National Assembly as early as 1953. Adoption of Lebanese nationality did little to protect Palestinian professionals from resentment caused by their too rapid success, and as the economic crisis intensified in the 1970s, such resentment became one strand in a generalised anti-Palestinianism not limited to Maronite regions. Rising professional qualifications among disadvantaged Lebanese sects (Sunnis, Druzes, Shi'ites) combined with increasing sectarianism to restrict the employment of Palestinians. As an example, the main Sunni cultural institution, the Maqassad, which readily offered employment and training to Palestinians in the early period, reversed this policy in the mid-1970s. Palestinian employees increasingly encountered hostility in the workplace, often expressed in terms of criticism of the PRM, but undoubtedly owing much to their originally favoured position in the job market. With the rise of the sectarian militias, the practice of sectarian appointments became even more strongly entrenched, affecting all kinds of work from university teaching to small crafts and trades.

Unlike businessmen and professional workers, unskilled Palestinian workers were disadvantaged at the outset by the nature of the economy, and the labour law restrictions outlined above. Low wage levels and seasonal fluctuations made agriculture an occupation of last resort, most prevalent in the rural camps. Workers in urban camps moved into

the building trades, technical occupations and small commerce in, or on the edge of, camps; a high percentage of the workers of Tell al-Za'ter were classified as 'sub-proletariat', engaged in occupations such as street vending. Lebanese employers used Palestinian workers' need for work permits to drive hard wage bargains, and to refuse improvements in working conditions (e.g., accident indemnities and sick leave). As a result, refugee workers changed jobs frequently. Migration levels were also high, especially from the Beirut camps, but many migrants returned because of poor work conditions or difficulties with work permits.[20]

Potential conflict between Lebanese and Palestinian labour was thus reduced by the disadvantaged position of the latter, and by the tendency of the Lebanese economy towards sectoral and regional segregation. In the early period, some tension arose from Palestinian workers' readiness to accept low wage levels, made possible by UNRWA rations and services. Shi'ite agricultural labourers are reported to have protested against the employment of Palestinians on citrus plantations in the 1950s,[21] and some of the animosity behind Shi'ite attacks against Palestinians after 1982 arises from a perception of them as a *privileged* sector. A study of Koura in the 1970s notes clashes between Palestinian and Lebanese workers in Tripoli.[22] However, such incidents seem to have been relatively rare, probably because pressures towards political alliance between disadvantaged sectors intervened. Another reason may be found in the exclusion of Palestinians from the public sector (army, police, government service), which constitutes for Shi'ites, in particular, an important source of jobs and income.

The emergence of the PRM after 1969 slowly gave rise to a 'separate' Palestinian economy, at first limited to a small number of political cadres and fighters, but from 1976 developing a large administrative apparatus, along with social and productive institutions, employing an estimated 65 per cent of the Palestinian workforce.[23] From the preceding review, it will be seen that while Palestinian support for the PRM was primarily political and national, there was also a substratum of economic motivation arising from exploitation, discrimination and bad life and work conditions. There was also, by 1969, a certain convergence in the interests of the three main sectors of the Palestinian workforce, due to the worsening climate for businessmen and professional workers described above. While the PRM-based economy primarily benefited those whose position in the Lebanese economy had been most marginal – that is, the population of the camps – it also attracted into its ranks a substantial number of skilled Palestinian workers (e.g., doctors, engineers, journalists and academics). Whether out of nationalism, or because they were meeting discrimination in the Lebanese private sector, many highly qualified workers preferred to work for lower salaries in the institutions of the PRM. The PRM also generated

openings for Palestinian capital, especially in building, real estate and the provision of a wide range of supplies (arms, equipment, medicines, foodstuffs, clothing and raw materials for PRM workshops). Many fortunes were made out of 'national work'.

To what extent can Lebanese anti-Palestinianism be attributed to economic causes? The answer depends on the period and on which population sectors are in question. Further complexity arises from the fact that a single phenomenon, say PRM affluence, has generated contradictory reactions in the same population segment. On the one hand, many Lebanese benefited from the PRM economy, whether as suppliers of goods and services, employees or receivers of welfare. Collective and individual Palestinian prosperity during the era of the PRM removed the stigma of poverty, and encouraged normal social relations. On the other hand, stories of ill-gotten wealth generated hostility, especially among Shi'ites from South Lebanon who had borne the brunt of Israeli devastation.

Although there is evidence of resentment against Palestinian businessmen and professional workers and a gradual closing of the economy against them, only Maronite propaganda accused them of abusing Lebanese generosity; other population segments were much more tolerant of Palestinian competition, acknowledging their 'need to live'. However, not only Maronites blamed the Palestinians for Lebanon's economic ills, and for the destruction caused by Israeli attacks. The accusation of *'kharabu beladna'* ('they have ruined our country') is the most serious ever brought against the refugee community by the host population. First formulated by the Maronites, it spread to other population sectors from the time of the civil war of 1975-6. However, this accusation is aimed less at the Palestinians' role in the economy than at the PRM's use of Lebanon as a base of struggle against Israel. In general, we can say that political motives predominated in Lebanese anti-Palestinianism, but that economic competition played a role which, while not expressed at the level of public discourse, was nonetheless real, and was intensified by economic crisis to a point where it became natural to scapegoat a non-Lebanese group.

Further study would probably show that the economic status of camp Palestinians had different effects for different segments of the Lebanese people. For some, it was the *poverty* of the camps that formed a strand in anti-Palestinianism, rousing fears of crime and communism, while for others, particularly poor Shi'ites, it was the Palestinians' relative prosperity that fuelled hostility. In common with other refugee communities, Palestinians in Lebanon have been seen by the host population predominantly as recipients of aid, free shelter and schooling rather than as producers. Their real contribution to the economy, whether in the form of labour, savings or consumption, is discounted.

Social relations

Both the early Arab and later Ottoman empires built strong states upon highly heterogeneous populations, without any drive to create a 'national' popular base, leaving groups of different origin scope to order their internal affairs and inter-relations. Further, the frequency from ancient times of population movement has produced cultural practices for establishing social relations between 'strangers' (clientship, fictive kinship, alliance, etc.), without any pressure towards ending group specificity. The question of Palestinian 'integration' in the Arab diaspora needs to be put into this historical and cultural framework before coming to specific regions or periods.

In Lebanon, there was the problem of the impact of the refugees on what one writer has aptly termed a 'stratified mosaic society'.[24] The threat posed by the Palestinians as mainly Muslims to the 'balance' between Lebanon's sects was immediately obvious. Less obvious was the threat the refugees posed as a pauperised mass to an emerging class structure masked by the sectarian organisation of state and society. Lebanon's stratified sect/class structure provided an innate pressure towards politicising the Palestinian presence even before the emergence of the PRM, and it is through this lens that we must look at the question of social relations between Palestinians and Lebanese.

In spite of the importance of sect in Lebanese politics and relations between people, there is little evidence of homogeneity within sects in attitudes towards, or dealings with, the Palestinians. Even in the case of the Maronites, the sect with the highest degree of internal organisation and of anti-Palestinian mobilisation, we find diversity; many Maronites fought with the Lebanese National Movement and the PLO during the civil war; others have remained in predominantly Muslim West Beirut after the sectarian division of the capital city. Social relations have been influenced by other factors as well as sect: period, political orientation, class, educational level. Evidence from the early period suggests that sect was less important than it became later. Where Palestinians and Maronites shared the same neighbourhood or workplace, normal relations were established; it was only after 1969 that Palestinians living in Maronite milieus were ostracised, and eventually expelled. As to Sunnis, Palestinians recall that their initial welcome was not much warmer than that of the Maronites, in spite of their common sect; it was later, in response to Nasserism, that Sunni attitudes became more enthusiastic, and even then there was a difference between the Sunni bourgeoisie and the 'street'. Social relations between Palestinians and Druzes were slow to develop, less because of sect per se than as a result of Israel's recruitment of Palestinian Druzes during and after the war of 1948. Lebanon's other major sect, the Shi'a, provides the strongest evidence of fluctuation over time in stands towards the Palestinians, and of intra-sect

polarities. Shi'ite Palestinian relations have swung between extremes of solidarity and antagonism; more than for other sects, the Palestinian presence has been both a mobilising issue and a divisive one. Sect is always an important factor in Lebanese politics, but generalisations that assume sectarian homogeneity are misleading.

Evidence of change in the degree of mobilisation of sects for or against the Palestinians makes clear how much social relations are influenced by particular periods, and by developments outside Lebanon. The strongest illustration is offered by Nasserist Arab nationalism, which laid a basis for political alliance and social exchange between Palestinians and Arab nationalist Lebanese, mainly Sunni. With the waning of Nasserist and Egyptian influence in Lebanon, bourgeois Sunni opposition to the Palestinian factor re-surfaced. Rightist Maronite leaders' search for external allies (Israel, the US) emerged out of fear of the Palestinians as stiffening the Muslim/Progressive opposition, and became an implicit condition for these allies' support. The rise of Khomeynist Iran has influenced Shi'ite stands towards the Palestinians, though in less clear-cut ways. Since most external support has been directed towards sectarian leaders and parties, it has had the effect of strengthening sectarianism, and weighting the sectarian factor in attitudes towards Palestinians. Secular parties have not received the same degree of external support, and it is the secular parties that have been most consistent in their support for the Palestinian cause and people.

Political orientation and party membership have probably had a stronger influence than sect on Lebanese-Palestinian social relations. Palestinians remember that Lebanese with Arab nationalist leanings were initially more welcoming than others, regardless of sect or class. Membership in any of the secular, anti-imperialist parties (Parti Populaire Syrien, Ba'th, Lebanese Communist Party, Arab Nationalist Movement) encouraged support for the Palestinian struggle; political support built social relations. This trend was carried forward by the formation of the Lebanese National Movement which grouped all the opposition parties and sects except Amal. It was during the period of the LNM/PRM alliance, from 1969 to 1982, a period of daily confrontation with Israel and the Lebanese armed forces, that social relations between Palestinians and Lebanese were least disturbed by barriers of sect or nationality. Different types of parochialism certainly existed within both the PRM and allied Lebanese parties, but the slogan of *sha'b waheid* (one people) was given reality at the mass level, especially in the areas of greatest residential mixing, the popular quarters of Beirut and Sidon. All forms of social exchange could be found, from routine visiting to matters requiring basic trust and respect, such as marriage, which in most social strata is still negotiated by families, and is thus the strongest indicator of good relations. Though marriage between Palestinians

and Lebanese Sunnis was the most frequent, intermarriage with Shi'ites and Druzes also occurred.

Most writers on Lebanon see class structure and consciousness as weak in comparison with that based on sect, yet class needs to be invoked to explain intra-sect differences in stands towards the Palestinians. If we exclude the Maronites, among whom anti-Palestinianism is strongest at the working-class and petty-bourgeois levels, we find that with the other sects social relations with Palestinians are stronger at the base of the class pyramid than at other levels. Middle- and upper-class Sunnis were as disturbed as Maronites by the squalid refugee camps around the coastal cities that form their demographic/political base. Landowning and mercantile Shi'ites have never supported the PRM as the Shi'ite masses did between 1967 and 1978.[25] Traditional Sunni and Shi'ite leaders have feared the radicalising effects of the Palestinian presence even while supporting the Palestinian cause. Further study would probably show a connection between the degree of development of a middle class inside each sect and attitudes towards the Palestinians, based on this class's interest in a Lebanese entity and a strong state. It is equally likely that a common sense of class deprivation vis-à-vis the Lebanese ruling elite and the Maronite sect cemented relations between camp Palestinians and lower Sunni, Druze and Shi'ite strata.

The development of social relations at the mass level is clear through comparing the first and second period. Between 1948 and 1969, camp residence, poverty and dependence on UNRWA rations had a ghettoising effect, and there was little contact with surrounding Lebanese. In the early days of Bourj al-Barajneh camp, youths from the neighbouring suburb used to walk through the camp making loud comments on women, the clearest indication of the Palestinians' loss of honour and status. The fact that some women from the camps were forced to work as domestic servants (a type of work that women of the peasant class never undertook in Palestine) added to barriers at this class level before 1969. Several changes broke down such barriers: camp Palestinian income levels improved; geographic overlapping increased as better-off Palestinians moved into near-camp suburbs; finally, the PRM became a source of influence, jobs and subsidies, so that Palestinians could now offer *waasta* (connection to a source of power) to Lebanese friends and neighbours.

It must be noted, however, that just as social relations between Palestinians and Lebanese have flourished under certain conditions, and in certain periods, they have also been very vulnerable to sectarian mobilisation. A Palestinian teacher from a mixed neighbourhood near Tell al-Za'ter camp recalls how he formed relations of daily visiting and mutual help with Maronite neighbours; yet it was these neighbours who looted his home during the siege of the camp in 1975-6. Close ties with Shi'ite neighbours in Beirut's southern suburbs were similarly

disrupted by clashes with Amal in 1985-6. The speed with which social relations change in Lebanon, the product of factionalism and crisis, differentiates this from other regions of the diaspora, where relations with host populations have been more stable, and adds a special quality to Palestinian insecurity here, summed up in their saying, *'Sadiq hal-yawm, bukra adu'* ('The friend today is the enemy tomorrow').

In other parts of the diaspora, the main discrimination to be made is that between government policies towards Palestinians (close surveillance and control) and population attitudes which are generally supportive. But in Lebanon, social relations between Palestinians and Lebanese were early sifted through a sectarian/class framework that produced polarisation between one part of this structure (the Maronite sect and ruling elite) and the opposition sects and parties, producing extremes of popular support and hostility not found elsewhere. Support led to a closeness of social relations symptomised by frequent intermarriage, while hostility produced a 'cleaning' of Palestinians from Maronite areas similar to their 'cleaning' from Palestine in 1948, along with campaigns to reduce or eliminate them from Lebanon.[26] On the one hand, the refugees have met with a high level of political and social acceptance, on the other hand, almost total rejection.

Epilogue

The Israeli invasion and PRM withdrawal of 1982 ushered in a new phase of insecurity for the Palestinians remaining in Lebanon. The Habib Accords negotiated between the US and Lebanese governments during the invasion supposedly guaranteed their status as 'law-abiding noncombatants', but the massacre of 16-18 September in Sabra/Chatila demonstrated the hollowness of this guarantee.[27] With Lebanon divided into zones controlled by different armies and militias, Palestinians have been subjected to arrest, kidnapping, assassination and intimidation, forcing most back into the relative security of the camps. Movement between one zone and another, involving passage through militia roadblocks, became hazardous. The few PLO institutions that remained were closed, harassed, and in one case blown up. To insecurity was added unemployment due to the loss of PRM-generated jobs, deterioration of the Lebanese economy and discrimination against Palestinians in the labour market. The slight improvement in security produced when the Lebanese Army withdrew from West Beirut in February 1984 and the Israelis from most of South Lebanon in March 1985 was offset by conflict between the Amal Movement and the Palestinians, and a series of devastating attacks on the camps that lasted from May 1985 to early 1988.

Amal and Shi'ite hostility has more serious implications for Palestinians than that of the Maronite militias since all but a few remaining

camps are situated in areas of Shi'ite predominance. Amal casualties from the attacks on the camps have left a heavy residue of blood vengeance, leading to acts of individual retaliation in the margin of the fighting, breaking pre-1982 political and social ties. Caught in a system of conflicting sectarian militias, the insistence of the camps on keeping defensive weapons is understandable; without them, they risk repetition of the 1982 massacres. Yet armed, they present an obstacle to Amal's ambitions to control its 'canton', as well as to Syrian-sponsored steps to solve the Lebanese crisis. With the Lebanese National Assembly's annulment of the Cairo Accords in June 1987, the situation of the community has become more threatened than at any time since 1948.

The insistence of the Palestinians on carrying on their struggle against Israel has been seen by some observers as the primary cause of their insecurity in Lebanon. If they had remained inconspicuous refugees, it is argued, they would have avoided the hostility and attacks to which they have been exposed. While the PRM has undeniably had a destabilising effect on the Lebanese political system, it was the sect/class imbalance embodied in the state, a colonial legacy, that was the primary cause of crisis. In the words of one historian, 'The Lebanese Problem was brewing long before the armed presence of the PLO became a factor in Lebanon's delicate sectarian balance ... What the armed presence of the PLO did was to accelerate an already existing process and bring it to explosion point earlier than would otherwise have been the case.'[28] Even before the rise of the PRM, camp Palestinians were the object of oppression and exploitation. All that changed after the armed struggle revolution of 1969 was the degree of violence against them, and the addition of paramilitary forces to those of the state. Their only real choice, then and later, has been between bearing the blows passively or bearing them while resisting.

The close focus required to present the complexities of the Lebanese arena introduces its own kind of distortion, by blurring the dominant role of external powers in producing events and influencing the reactions of local actors and groups. The point to be stressed in conclusion is that refugee situations do not originate in the countries where we examine them, but in wider regional and international asymmetries. The Palestinian refugees were produced, and have been maintained, by such an asymmetry between Zionists and indigenous Palestinians, and between Israel's backers and those of the Palestinians. It is this power asymmetry, unparalleled even in the case of South Africa, that permits Israel to refuse solutions based on Palestinian national rights, to attack the Palestinians in the host countries and to attack host populations as well. Such a regional/international power imbalance has its own dynamic, and cannot be abstracted from discussion of the fate of Palestinians in individual host countries. It is especially important to recall this point in the case of Lebanon, where the combined playing out

of internal and external crises has caused immense losses and suffering to both Lebanese and Palestinians.

References

1 The Palestinians' right to return was consecrated in their eyes by UN Resolution 194, which specified that 'the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live in peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return'.

2 Bashir Gemayel in J. Randall, *The tragedy of Lebanon: Christian warlords, Israeli adventurers and American bunglers* (London, 1983), p. 17.

3 W. Khalidi, *Conflict and violence in Lebanon* (Cambridge, Mass., 1979), p. 37.

4 R. Sayigh, *Palestinians: from peasants to revolutionaries* (London, Zed Press, 1979), p. 104.

5 The US Legation in Beirut reported in 1949, 'The absorption of an *alien* population amounting to as much as 10 per cent of the native population ... would create a Moslem majority and turn the entire political complexion of the country' (author's italics). Quoted in B. Morris, 'The initial absorption of the Palestinian refugees in the Arab host countries, 1948-49', paper for the Workshop on European and Middle East Refugees in the 20th Century, Oxford, August 1985.

6 The only Maronite figure to protest against the refugees in 1948 was Bishop Ignatius Mubarak. Another early opponent was Naim Mghabghab, deputy and prominent member of Chamoun's National Liberal Party. But with secret contacts between the Israeli government and the Kata'eb Party developing after 1948, Maronite anti-Palestinianism acquired a political focus.

7 See K. Salibi, *Crossroads to Civil War* (New York, 1976), p. 10.

8 This motive was raised in a discussion between three leading Maronites in 1975, one of whom remarked, 'It is we who deliberately put them near urban areas and not on frontiers, in response to the wishes of our businessmen for cheap labour.' (In 'Arab reports and analysis', *Journal of Palestine Studies* (No. 17/18, Autumn 1975/Winter 1976), p. 221.

9 R. Sayigh, op. cit., p. 106.

10 *Map of UNRWA's area of operations*, 30 June 1983 (Public Information Division, UNRWA, Vienna, 1983).

11 This was Tell al-Za'ter located in East Beirut, near the industrial suburb of Mkalles and the elegant suburb of Sin al-Fil. The largest, poorest and most heterogeneous of all the camps, Tell al-Za'ter became a special target of Lebanese Front hostility.

12 J. Randall, *Going all the Way* (New York, 1983), p. 165. See also K. Salibi, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

13 The French IRFED mission predicted crisis in its report, *Besoins et Possibilités de Developpement du Liban* (Beirut, 1960-61).

14 In 1951 UNRWA reached an agreement with the government to employ refugees on construction projects. Lahoud immediately protested, even though Lebanese workers avoided such labour, for long left to Syrian migrant workers.

15 TEAM, *Characteristics of the Palestinian Labour Force in Lebanon*, SDI/WP6 (Beirut, 1983), p. 11.

16 See B. Sirhan, 'Palestinian refugee camp life in Lebanon', *Journal of Palestinian Studies* (No. 14, Winter 1975), p. 101.

17 TEAM, op. cit., p. 76.

18 Y. Sayigh, *Implications of UNRWA operations*, (MA thesis, American University of Beirut, 1952), pp. 22-8.

19 K. Salibi, op. cit., p. 29.
20 H. Mundus, *Work and workers in a Palestinian camp* (Arabic) (Beirut, Palestine Research Centre, 1974).
21 K. Salibi, interview, 15 September 1985.
22 L. Mailloux, 'Peasants and social protest: 1975-1976 Lebanese Civil War', in S. Joseph and B. Pillsbury (eds), *Muslim-Christian Conflicts: economic, political and social origins* (Boulder, Colorado, 1978), p. 113.
23 This estimate was given by a researcher who worked with PLO research and planning institutions before 1982, and on the TEAM Survey.
24 H. Barakat, *Lebanon in Strife* (Austin, TX, 1977), p. 24.
25 When the camp of Nabatiyeh was badly damaged in an Israeli air-raid in 1973, it was not rebuilt because of opposition from the nearby, mainly Shi'ite city.
26 All the groups in the Lebanese Front call with varying degrees of explicitness for a reduction in the numbers of Palestinians in Lebanon, or for their complete removal. See Khalidi (op. cit., pp. 70-72) for membership of the Front, and listing of its militias.
27 'Law-abiding Palestinian noncombatants left behind in Beirut ... will be subject to Lebanese laws and regulations. The governments of Lebanon and the United States will provide appropriate guarantees of safety ... ', quoted in Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organisation* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 124.
28 Khalidi, op. cit., p. 145.

JAN CAREW

Columbus and the origins of racism in the Americas: part two*

With Columbus' journey to the Americas, a new ethic evolved into full flower. The ideology of the Church, with its theoretical postulate that all true believers were equal in the sight of God (and this included the new convert as well as the person born into the faith), gave way to the ideology of capitalism which turned human beings, particularly those whose labour was in demand in newly discovered lands, into commodities, chattels and so many faceless ciphers in a juggernaut of production and profit. Usury, a practice excoriated by the medieval church for centuries, was transformed, expanded and legitimised, as feudalism, wilting at its roots, lost ground to an ineluctable and predatory capitalism. This new and seemingly invincible system was sustained by a hitherto unsurpassed greed for gold and a passion for discovery, empire-building, slavery and profit-making.

With the Renaissance came great scientific advances, changing patterns of production and a plethora of new ideas which were systematically dispelling the more blatant myths, superstitions and bigotries left over from the Middle Ages. They were also creating new and insidious myths through a theology of racism, sexism and national chauvinism. A few of these myths, and by no means the most savoury of them, influenced the half-educated Columbus profoundly. Nowhere were these insidious influences more evident than in his attitude to

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European and Indian women, both of whom he treated as peripheral entities always secondary to the great enterprises on which he had set his heart. His marriage to Felipa Moniz, according to records Las Casas kept, was one of convenience. He had met her 'at mass in the Convent of All Souls at Lisbon'.[1] Charles Duff, writing about her, says that she was 'the granddaughter of a man who had been secretary to a close friend of King John I of Portugal, and whose uncle had been Governor of Porto Santo in the Azores. This uncle is said to have possessed a considerable collection of books dealing with navigation and geography, and it has been assumed that Columbus by his marriage gained access to this collection. Was the marriage, if it took place at all, a cynical act by the man of one idea to gain access to further knowledge in support of his theories? The sole reference to this lady in all that survives of his journals and other writings is in his will in which he merely mentions a wife.'[2] She also bore him a son named Diego. This marriage opened up new opportunities for him in Portugal, and he was able, as will be detailed later, to captain a ship in Admiral Azumabaga's venture to the Ghana coast. Columbus wrote about his sons (one by marriage and the other born out of wedlock) in his journals, diaries and letters, but one searches in vain for a word about their mothers. He mentions kings and queens, with a devotion bordering, more often than not, on sycophancy, but only in passing does he pen a few offhanded remarks about ordinary women. On 12 November he wrote in his *Journal*:

> Yesterday a canoe came to the ship with six young men ... whom I ordered to be kept ... Afterwards I sent ashore to one of the houses and took seven head of women small and large, and three children ... This evening the husband of one of the women came on board ... father of the three children (a boy and two girls). This man besought me to let him accompany them ... he is a man of about forty-five years of age.[3]

Seven head of women and three children! The Admiral was equating human beings with livestock or domestic animals. A month later, on 12 December, he gave us a further revealing insight into his attitude to women when he wrote: 'The sailors ... captured a female, very beautiful and young. They brought her to the ship where [Columbus] the Admiral spoke to her through *his own Indians* ... This woman wore a piece of gold in her nose, an indication that gold was to be found in the island' (emphasis added).[4] The gold this young woman wore was obviously far more important than her beauty or the fact that she was a human being taken by force and treated atrociously. This contemptuous attitude was legitimised and grew into a genocidal zeal when Nicolás de Ovando, who had succeeded Bobadilla as Governor of Espanola in 1502, continued the pacification of the island that the Admiral had initiated. Bobadilla had been appointed Governor of Espanola and had arrived

from Spain with peremptory orders to take over the reins of government from Columbus. He had arrived in August, and in October Columbus was sent to Spain in chains. Las Casas tells us that of the five kingdoms of Espanola, two of them were

> Xaragua, on the south coast and west of the province which had belonged to Caonabó. The people of this province were the most civilised on the island. The king's name was Behechio, and his sister was called Anacaona. This princess became ruler when her brother died. These Indians had always been kind and generous to the Spaniards since their first coming. One day, the Governor (Ovando) ... with 600 horse and 300 foot, sent a summons to about 300 of the great Lords of the country. The Indian nobles, not at all suspecting any treacherous design (therefore coming unarmed) were by the Governor's orders brought into a house covered with straw, which he commanded to be set on fire, where they perished miserably. Those ... who attempted to escape were pursued by Spanish troopers and killed without mercy. They also killed a vast multitude of the common people. *The same Governor caused Queen Anacaona, who had sovereign authority after the death of her brother (as has been said) to be hanged, that he might disgrace the memory of that princess as much as he could by so vile and ignominious a death.*
>
> The fifth kingdom was called Higuey ... Its queen was an aged woman, Higuanama by name, and her the Spaniards also hanged, while an infinite number of her people were tormented and put to death. Some were burned alive, some had their legs cut off that they could not walk and others their arms that they could not work or gather food ... Such as were reserved as beasts of burden or to work in the mines were fed for the most part on herbs and seldom had food which nourished them, so that the milk dried in the breasts of the women and the strength of the men faded away for ever (emphasis added).[5]

So Columbus had set the precedent whereby native women of colour would henceforth be accorded even less in the way of human rights than their male counterparts, and Ojeda, the Admiral's military commander, Bobadilla and Ovando, Governors of Espanola, and a host of others who followed in their footsteps outdid him in their sexist, racist and ethnocidal practices. But if native women were treated as if they were mindless, sexual playthings, breeders of slaves, household and field labourers and beasts of burden, women in Spain hardly fared much better. Spanish writers, and in particular those of the Golden Age of Spanish literature (the seventeenth century), showed an obsessive concern with women as glorified chattels and property. The theme of wife murder threaded its way through an infinite number of stories and plays. Males, who by law (and this was a law made by men) had the

right to punish a wife for her real or imagined infidelities by killing her, were portrayed as aggrieved gentlemen of honour redeeming their family names. The fact that women in Spain were victimised to the point where their husbands had the power of life and death over them made the lot of conquered women in the Americas and slave women from Africa all the more terrible, and the need to resist all the more urgent. And the women did resist, although the story of their resistance has seldom been recorded. When Columbus set foot on the beach at Guanahani and found the Lucayos to be gentle, hospitable and unarmed, he immediately decided to enslave them. Thus, he managed to create an inadvertent alliance between the conquered, the enslaved, the colonised and women of all races, colours and creeds who were sexual objects, chattels or idealised creatures like the Arawaks, whom he had described in his *Journal* on 16 December as 'the best and gentlest people in the world'.[6] But because Queen Anacaona represented all that was noble, upright, civilised, honourable and compassionate, she had to be disgraced and subjected to a vile and ignominious death to prevent her from becoming a symbol of resistance for all women. The legends still live, however, of how Anacaona died shouting defiance at her executioners and condemning Ovando's treachery. In the legends about her that have been preserved through an oral tradition, there are tales about how all those who took part in her betrayal and execution met untimely deaths and their descendants were cursed.

Shakespeare, who was the ultimate symbol of the creative spirit of his age – the same age in which he wrote his plays and poetry was that in which Anacaona was betrayed and hanged – as a practical man running a successful theatre, and as a writer of genius, understood intuitively that once a nascent racism and capitalism became bedfellows, the glorious Renaissance could produce a brood of deformed progeny, who, side by side with the release of an ineluctable creative spirit, would also send horsemen of the apocalypse on a grisly rampage. The Renaissance glorified the achievements of white European males and pushed the achievements of women, Jews and all peoples of colour into a limbo of anonymity. The Jew was falsely upheld as the archetypal symbol of the usurer. Jewishness became the ultimate racist metaphor for greed, cunning, superhuman sexual prowess and the malevolent Christ-killer who was for ever damned by a God of Wrath.

After visiting Brazil and other countries of the Americas, Vespucci, writing about his voyages, borrowed from the venomous pool of Jewish stereotypes and attached to these borrowed grotesqueries new racist configurations of the savage, the infidel, the cannibal, the Indian male endowed with an enormous phallus and unbridled sexual energies, and the Indian female, a mindless, sexual object and a sensuous plaything exciting the basest of men's orgiastic passions. These distorted images, which had previously been used to portray Jews and conquered Moors

in Spain and Portugal, and assorted infidels, were deftly readjusted to include Indians, and, immediately afterwards, Africans. Once one group of people had been successfully demonised, it became easier to demonise others. In Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, Shylock, the Jew, is more of a caricature than a believable character. But Shylock, quite inadvertently, was also an archetypal symbol of the outsider, the marginal being inhabiting a limbo world. By insisting on his pound of flesh, he was boldly affirming the ethic of a new and ruthless era in which profits and not a sentimental preoccupation with the 'quality of mercy' would be the central concern. The only significance of Shylock's Jewishness was that, as a pariah in Christendom, he had been freed from many of the lingering superstitions and constraints of the Middle Ages. He could, therefore, articulate unabashedly for the Venetian merchant-prophets and bankers the new doctrine of an ascendant capitalism.

Once the era of discovery, colonial expansion and slavery had begun, an ideological justification for the exploitation of millions of people of colour had to be created. Slavery, forced labour and the destruction of non-European cultures and civilisations were subsequently described as the inevitable consequence of a 'civilising mission'. At the heart of this concept was a manicheistic philosophy, in which all colonisers, no matter how atrocious their deeds, were portrayed as culture-bringers and the divine instruments of a Christian God. At the same time, the colonised were depicted as infidels, pagans, savages and what Kipling termed lesser breeds beyond the law. Therefore, all colonisers were 'superior', while all of the colonised were 'inferior'. Implicit in this ideology of racial superiority, too, was the conviction of the coloniser that the only valid partnership he could have with the colonised was that of a horse and rider. Tolstoy described the relationship between coloniser and colonised, oppressor and oppressed, Prospero and Caliban very wittily when he said that he could sit on a person's back and persuade himself (and his victim) that he was willing to do everything possible to alleviate his victim's condition – everything, that is, except get off his back. Aimé Césaire, the doyen of modern poets from the Antilles, points out that in order to deal objectively with what colonialism is, it is necessary

> to agree on what it is not: neither evangelisation, nor a philanthropic enterprise, nor a desire to push back the frontiers of ignorance, disease and tyranny, nor a project undertaken for the greater glory of God, nor an attempt to extend the rule of law. To admit once and for all without flinching at the consequences, that the decisive actors here are the adventurer and the pirate, the wholesale grocer and the ship owner, the gold digger and the merchant, appetite and force, and behind them, the baleful shadow of a form of civilisation

> which, at a certain point in its history, finds itself obliged, for internal reasons, to extend to a world scale the competition of its antagonistic economies ... I find that hypocrisy is of recent date; that neither Cortez discovering Mexico from the top of the great teocalli, nor Pizarro from Cuzco (much less Marco Polo before Cambaluc), claims that he is the harbinger of a superior order; that they kill; that they plunder; that they have helmets, lances, cupidities; that the slavering apologists came later; that the chief culprit in this domain is Christian pedantry, which laid down the dishonest equations Christianity = civilisation, paganism = savagery, from which there could not but ensue abominable colonialist and racist consequences, whose victims were to be the Indians, the yellow peoples, and the Negroes.[7]

Césaire then argues further that cultural cross-fertilisation is a good thing, that 'a civilisation that withdraws into itself atrophies; that, for civilisations, exchange is oxygen; that the great good fortune of Europe is to have been a crossroads, and that because it was ... the receptacle of all philosophies, the meeting place of all sentiments, it was the best centre for the redistribution of energy'.

Modern colonialism, which began with the European rediscovery of the Americas, de-civilised vast areas of the world. It began with a holocaust against Native Americans, twelve million of whom died in the first forty years of the Columbian era, continued against Africans, two hundred million of whom were estimated to have died in the Atlantic slave trade, and then there were countless deaths of Asian peoples as colonialism gained momentum.

The debate between Bartolomé de Las Casas and Juan Gines de Sepulveda in 1550 on the 'Intellectual and religious capacity of the American Indians' took place at Valladolid, in the immediate wake of the holocaust against the Indians that Columbus initiated and other Spanish colonisers continued. Retamar described that holocaust as 'one of the worst instances of ethnocide in recorded history'.[8] To view that officially sponsored debate at Valladolid objectively, one could say that it was analogous to a learned 'Council of Fourteen' being convened ten years after the end of the Second World War to debate the pros and cons of whether the millions who had been exterminated by Hitler had, in fact, been endowed by the Almighty with the intellectual and spiritual capacity to be considered human. But this after-the-fact debate did take place and one is yet to come across a work by a European historian in which the macabre and grisly background to that debate was fully researched, analysed, explored, acknowledged and then put into the correct perspective – a humanistic and honourable one. If those responsible for that grisly and unconscionable act of ethnocide had first been tried for crimes against humanity, then the debate would have

been far more meaningful. But those genocidal gentlemen had, in fact, been honoured with aristocratic titles, estates and the right to own slaves. Thus, ethnocide was rewarded in the name of conquest, plunder and self-aggrandisement. If Hitler had been victorious in the Second World War, we certainly would have been treated to a replay of that cruel farce, the only difference being that some elements from the European perpetrators of genocide against the colonial peoples had, perhaps for the first time, because of Hitler's racist delusions about a 'pure Teutonic master race', also become its victims.

It was ironical that Columbus should have died on 20 May 1506 in that very city of Valladolid in which the debate between a defender of racism and an advocate of equal rights for all peoples was to take place some forty-four years later. He, the initiator of the racist policies that made the debate necessary, had died, carping and aggrieved that his royal sponsors had cheated him out of the fortune that should have been his because of his 'discovery', and cast him aside. But that was the 'cold-blooded' Ferdinand's style.

Emperor Charles V, with whom Las Casas had pleaded the Indian cause very persuasively, had convoked a Council of Fourteen eminent theologians and sent his son and heir (who later became Philip II) to represent him at that historic debate

> with [Sepulveda] the most famous Latin scholar in Spain on one side and [Las Casas] an ordinary monk whose life had nearly all been spent in the wild regions of the New World, who lacked all the graces of the polished courtier ... [but] some discreet friend might have whispered [to] the great Sepulveda to beware of this antagonist ... [Las Casas, who] was dealing with his favourite theme. He knew it by heart ... He had heard the moans and dying cries of hundreds of Indians. He had sworn to enter any field, to meet any knight, to accept any condition of mutual combat for the sake of the great cause to which his soul was anchored.[9]

The learned Sepulveda, the official biographer of Charles V (who had sworn that he would never read a word that his court historian wrote about him as long as he lived), had written, prior to the debate, that Indians were 'born to obey and to serve others like beasts and fierce animals whom they resemble'.[10] Pontificating from his academic ivory tower, and blind to the consequences of his racist theories, Sepulveda reiterated in his *Democrates Alter* what he had said in the debate, that there were four reasons why it was lawful to make war upon the natives of the New World:

1 For the gravity of the sins which the Indians had committed, especially their idolatries and their sins against nature.
2 On account of the rudeness of their natures, which brought upon

them the necessity of serving persons of a more refined nature, such as that which the Spaniards [sic] possessed.

3 In order to spread the faith which would be more readily accomplished by the prior subjugation of the natives.

4 To protect the weak amongst the natives themselves duly considering the cruelties which the natives exercised upon one another, slaying numbers in sacrifice to false gods and practising cannibalism.[11]

Las Casas, reading every word of his lengthy treatise, entitled *Defence Against the Persecutors and Slanderers of the Peoples of the New World Discovered Across the Seas*, for five days tore Sepulveda's specious arguments to shreds. He had described his *Defence* as a rebuttal which flung back Sepulveda's poisoned darts, and, indeed, that was what it was. Sepulveda was a classical example of one of Césaire's slavering apologists who emerged in the wake of the conquistadores. He fawned on the Emperor, and shot his latinised poison darts at the colonised to placate the bankers, the merchants, the adventurers and the pirates. Having seen an exhibition in Brussels of works by Aztec, Mexica, Olmec, Toltec and other Indian artists and craftsmen and craftswomen (they were mostly gifts presented by Montezuma to Cortez which were then sent by the conquistador to his sovereign Charles V as a demonstration of the riches to be found in the conquered New Spain), Albrecht Durer, one of the great painters of his age wrote:

> I saw the things which were brought to the King from the New Golden Land: a sun entirely of gold, a whole fathom broad; likewise, a moon, entirely of silver, just as big; likewise sundry curiosities from their weapons, armour, and missiles; very odd clothing, bedding and all sorts of strange articles for human use, *all of which is fairer to see than marvels ... these things were all so precious ... I have never seen in all my days what so rejoiced my heart, as these things. For I saw among them amazing artistic objects, and I marvelled over the subtle ingenuity of the men in these distant lands. Indeed I cannot say enough about the things that were brought before me* (emphasis added).[12]

These were the words of a great artist, but when Las Casas testified at Valladolid about the great creative gifts of the Indians, the 'learned' Sepulveda declared that insects also created works of art. So away with Rembrandt, Michelangelo and the great Chinese, Japanese, African, Amerindian masters; let us abandon art to insects, while we glorify ethnocide and slavery in the name of profits and religion! Many centuries later, Frobenius, writing about the creators of the West African art he had discovered, seemed to echo what Durer had said of the Indians of Mexico, that they were 'Civilised to the marrow of their

bones! The idea of the barbaric Negro is a European invention.'[13] After that historic debate, the son and heir of Charles V 'forbade by a Royal order made at Valladolid in 1550, the circulation in Mexico or the New World of the work of Sepúlveda and its pernicious doctrines'[14] on his father's behalf. But these pernicious doctrines were subsequently published in Rome and circulated in many parts of Europe; and the chances of copies having been smuggled into different regions of the far-flung Spanish Empire were very good. Las Casas died sixteen years after the debate had taken place, and his *Defence*, his *History of the Indies* and other works were suppressed for 311 years. Thus, Sepulveda and his mentor Oviedo were able to set the tone for a racist ideology for which Columbus' and Vespucci's writings and deeds had provided the seminal material; and their racist ideology lodged itself at the heart of colonialism like a cancer that has yet to be cured. Chekhov, in one of his bitingly satirical moods, once declared that it is often easier to unite mankind under banners of hatred, malice, deceit and greed than under those of love, compassion and kindness. Sepulveda, appearing on the scene almost five centuries before Chekhov, had dedicated his life and scholarship to validating that theory.

* * *

One of the iniquities of dishonest scholarship that is used to further the cause of racism is that it tells us very little about the resistance of the victims of that pernicious blight. But, inevitably, there was resistance. Columbus, and others coming after him, vilified the Caribs because they fought with an epic heroism against European intrusions into their homeland. Columbus' initial encounters with the Caribs filled him with dread. At a time when he knew that his enemies at court were poisoning the minds of his sovereigns against him, the indomitable fighting spirit of those men and women of the Caribbean Saga left him heavy with forebodings. On his first voyage the Caribs had attacked him on the way to what was eventually to become the site of La Navidad, the first European settlement in the Columbian era. His caravels were greeted with a storm of arrows when they had sailed too close to the shores of the Golfo de las Flechas – 'Gulf of Arrows' (he had named the Gulf to mark the event, and it bears the name to this day). Those Carib arrows marked the first armed encounter between Prospero and Caliban in the Americas, and it took place in the narrow straits that separate Cuba from Haiti. Columbus had built a fort at La Navidad, and left thirty-nine of his officers and crew to man it. Charles Duff said of that initial European bridgehead, that the first step the colonists took

> was to torment and maltreat the inoffensive natives [these 'inoffensive' beings were the first folk who had welcomed Columbus and his

> men and treated them with great hospitality, feeding and housing them after the Santa Maria ran afoul of the shoals and had to be abandoned] from whom they took gold ornaments and other valuables. Then they set about seducing their wives and daughters, Gold and women soon caused bickerings and jealousies which developed into bloody quarrels.[15]

But Duff would have us excuse those intemperate intruders because they were 'ex-convicts, rascals and lawless fellows, most of them'.

Columbus's diary dated 2 January 1493 tells us, however:

> He left on the Island of Espanola [which the Indians called Bohio] a fortress and thirty-nine men whom he said were great friends of King Guacanagari, and over these he placed Diego de Arana, a native of Cordova, Pedro Gutierrez, Butler to the King's household, and Rodrigo de Escovedo, a native of Segovia and a nephew of Fray Rodrigo Perez ... He left them also seed for sowing, his officers, secretary and *alguacil* [constable] among them, a ship-carpenter, caulker, a good gunner who understood engineering, a cooper, a physician and a tailor, all being men of the sea.[16]

Contrary to what Duff has claimed, a significant number of the thirty-nine were respectable servants of the Spanish court, hidalgos with administrative training and highly trained technicians and craftsmen. Therefore, had these elite elements been so inclined, they could easily have disciplined the wrong-doers and brought them to heel, but they obviously had sanctioned the excesses against their Indian hosts, and most likely had taken part in them. Indeed, Duff should have known that the Spanish hidalgos or any of their European peers, suddenly released from the checks and balances at home, and armed to the teeth, would have become afflicted with a surfeit of freedom and their conduct towards unarmed Indians and Africans would be no less abominable than that of felons, rascals and lawless fellows.

The peaceful Arawaks who had welcomed Columbus and his men, goaded to breaking-point by their lascivious and brutal guests, sent messengers to Caonabó, ruler of the kingdom of Maguana, the richest of the five kingdoms on the island of Espanola, asking for help. Caonabó, Las Casas tells us, surpassed all other rulers on that island 'in power, wealth and courage.'[17] After the messengers were dispatched, the squabbles amongst the Spanish settlers escalated to the point where one of them was killed, and a dissident group left for the Golden Mountains of Cibao. This was the first mention of European adventurers in the Columbian era setting out to chase a mirage of Eldorado. An important factor to bear in mind is that this myth was passed on to white settlers by Indians who had every reason to want to see them vanish from the face of the earth. The Barima Caribs of Guyana, those

indomitable remnants of great sea-rovers and wanderers, 1,000 miles south of Espanola, still tell in their oral histories of how they used the Eldorado myth to send European explorers to their death. It was Caonabó who sent word through Guacanagari's messengers that rumours should be spread that there were riverbeds strewn with gold in the mountains of Cibao. In describing the fate of the unruly adventurers, Duff wrote:

> The cacique or chief who rules over the territory in which these mountains were situated was the fierce Caonabó [Indians marked down for ethnocide always have the label 'fierce' or 'savage' pinned upon them, while the most bloodthirsty of Spaniards are never described in this fashion] a man who had risen by courage and cunning from the status of a simple adventurer to that of a chief whose influence was paramount over the whole of Espanola. He was of Carib origin. He regarded with jealousy and distrust the arrival of the Spaniards [Would any ruler have felt otherwise if aggressive, greedy, arrogant and well-armed intruders had built a fort in his domain? The answer is pretty obvious.] and even his otherwise unsqueamish feelings [Was Ferdinand, with all his ruthlessness and Machiavellian guile, more tenderhearted than Caonabó, one wonders?] must have been turned into a bitter hatred of them as accounts reached him of the cruelties and tyranny practised upon the peaceful coast Indians by the handful of rascals whom Columbus had left at the fort. Into the territories of this *fearsome* [For fearsome we can substitute, in the name of objectivity, *courageous*] chief, Gutierrez and Escovedo and their followers had ventured to intrude. They were all immediately *put to death* [and for this one can substitute, *they were killed in a skirmish* with Caonabó's warriors] (emphasis added).[18]

Caonabó and his Carib warriors were our first freedom-fighters, our vanguard independistas. In their initial and decisive encounter with the first European settlers in the Columbian era, it is noteworthy that they fought to defend the freedom and integrity of a peaceful Arawakian coastal people who were not exactly brimming over with friendship towards them. Caonabó understood that if they (the coastal people) were threatened, then all Indians of Espanola were. He was able to see, very clearly, the dangerous political and military implications of allowing the Spanish intruders to establish a bridgehead on the coastal perimeter of his domain. He, therefore, warned Mayreni, another powerful chief, about the danger, and Mayreni gave Caonabó's troops rights of passage through the territory he controlled so that a common enemy could be surprised and wiped out. In order to neutralise the rifles, cannon, swords, pistols and armour of his enemies,

> Caonabó ... executed his military movements with such skill and

> speed that he and his army arrived close to the village of Guacanagari without being observed. In league with him was his ally, Mayreni ... the attack was made in the dead of night. So complete was the surprise of the Spaniards, that the fort was captured before the least resistance could be attempted. The houses of the village where the others were sleeping were soon surrounded and set on fire ... eight fled in despair, only to take refuge in the sea and be drowned.[19]

The battle of Navidad was fought by heroic Caribs armed with spears, bows and arrows and blow-guns against Spaniards with enormous fire-power at their disposal. Columbus had made sure that the Indians should know about the thunder and destructive power of cannons by demonstrating it to them, and Caonabó had heard about this. Caonabó neutralised the odds against him by seeing that the enemy forces were divided – one group was lured into the mountains by the promise of a bonanza of gold and another was induced to sleep with women collaborators in the houses in Guacanagari's village, leaving only a small and undisciplined force to man the fort. When Columbus returned to La Navidad in 1493 he found the fort apparently intact and, as his ships approached, he expected to see the thirty-nine men he had left to man it rushing down to the beach. Instead, there was a deafening silence. Later, when Fray Bernardo Buyl (one of the first Catholic priests to set foot in the New World) was told that Caonabó had wiped out the fort's defenders to the last man, that Benedictine man of the cloth, 'who had come to capture the souls of the natives for the Church, began his labours of peace and charity in the Americas by urging Columbus to make a holy example of (the innocent and unarmed) Guacanagari by putting him to death immediately'.[20] Columbus, however, spared Guacanagari. He wanted the king's subjects to work in mines and fields as slaves. Because of this, whether the Cacique and his followers were guilty or not, they would wait their turn for a journey into oblivion. In fact, Guacanagari's turn came a few years later. Ovando's rampaging troops, in their arduous labour of 'pacification' of that which was already at peace, exterminated the Cacique's subjects, and he, hunted down like a wild beast, died of a broken heart. The Admiral's concern was not with the peaceful Arawakian peoples, but with the Caribs, who had had, according to his way of seeing things, the malice to fight back, and for this, he never forgave them. He saw Espanola as an important stepping-stone to the Kingdom of the Great Khans, and he was not going to allow Caribs or any other enemies to cheat him of the greater glory he sought to win for himself. He understood only too well that so long as a Carib leader like Caonabó was alive, no Spanish settlement on Espanola would be safe. He went to sleep at night with voices declaiming inside his head 'Caonabó delenda est!'

Columbus is one of those figures in history whose name has remained on every tongue for centuries and yet we know little about him. We know of his deeds and accomplishments and many of the legends he invented about himself (which others have duly repeated ad infinitum), but in the midst of all this, the man himself seems likely to elude us for ever. 'The only thing of which we can be certain', Duff tells us after his exhaustive search through primary documents, 'is that he must have been alive, for it must be acknowledged at the outset that Columbus was a colossal liar.'[21] But, liar or not, he always triumphed in the end over his enemies and detractors by concentrating on the almost impossible goals he had set for himself with a fanatical zeal. Land to the west, wealth, glory for himself and his heirs for all time – these were the objectives he had set his heart on, and what he did not achieve in his lifetime, his descendants did in theirs. He would not have been amused if some soothsayer had told him that the arc of islands and the sea they encircled would eventually be named after his formidable and implacable adversaries, the Caribs. The Caribbean Sea – the Sea of the Caribs! The Caribbean Islands – the Islands of the Caribs! It is almost as though those great fighters had reclaimed the whole elliptical circle of emerald-green islands, mainland littorals and blue-green waters from their uneasy graves; as though they had snatched them back from Columbus. The verbal poisoned darts he rained down upon the heads of the Caribs, long before he met them, gave the Spanish and other colonisers the spurious justification for ethnocide and slavery. But inside that great elliptical circle of islands and mainland littorals into which Columbus had intruded four times, and once, having crossed the Atlantic, in which he seemed to have been trapped, the centres of resistance have remained constant after five centuries. The Golfo de las Flechas still stands like a sea of resistance with the shores of Cuba and Haiti pressing down upon it, for in those two territories, epic revolutions were fought and won against slavery and colonialism.

In 1493, on Columbus' second voyage, he had recorded: 'The Jamaicans were not only of a more warlike nature than those of the other islands (excepting the Caribs) but also more advanced in matters of Industry ... one of their fine canoes [was] found ... to be ninety-six feet long and eight broad. It was formed of the hollowed trunk of one great tree.'[22] And, today, Jamaica remains a centre of resistance to colonialism and neo-colonialism. In San Juan de Puerto Rico, the Indians and Africans had joined forces in 1502 to resist forced labour, enslavement and the ousting of the Tainos by Spanish settlers, and today, rebellion in the name of freedom and independence still agitates the hearts of that island's inhabitants. In Trinidad, the warlike Injera Arawaks, allying themselves with the Caribs of Grenada, held back the tide of European settlement for a century, and there, today, the resistance to colonialism and neo-colonialism continues. In the Central

American Republics of Guatemala and Nicaragua, those lands of the great Tezulutlans and Quichés, echoes of past resistance are amplifying themselves and reverberating across the mountains, forests, valleys, lakes and plains of that region. It was in the historic province of Tecolotlan that the conquistador Pedro de Alvarado was thrice defeated by indomitable Indian fighters, so that their province was renamed la Tierra de Guerra, the Land of War. The spirits of those renowned fighters are once again alive. At the beginning of the Columbian era, the Spaniards were only able to enter after Las Casas, Luis Cancer, Pedro de Angula and Rodrigo de Ladrada, all Dominican priests, had learnt the Quiché language and with patience and compassion had converted the Cacique of Utatlan, who was christened Don Juan. Las Casas was the moving spirit behind the conversion of Don Juan and his people, and because of the heroic resistance of those Indians and their voluntary acceptance of the faith, Pope Paul III had declared in a letter that Indians were 'veritable men, not only capable of receiving the Christian faith, but, as we have learned, most ready to embrace that faith'.[23]

* * *

Ironically, it was the very Las Casas, an implacable enemy of those who sought to enslave the Indians, who was later to become the instigator of the hideous, immoral and inhuman Atlantic slave trade which was to cause the death of millions of Africans. It was his idea that the Indians could be saved from ethnocide if Africans were enslaved instead. He later regretted it, after this barbarous and inhuman idea was already being acted upon. It would be ridiculous to suggest that but for the pernicious Las Casas formula, there would have been no Atlantic slave trade, but his unquestioned moral authority gave the formula the kind of weight that must surely have delighted the hearts of the bankers, land-owners, merchants and colonial proconsuls who pounced upon it and used it for four centuries to accumulate the kind of riches that would have made Croesus envious.

Columbus' second voyage to the New World tested his patience, skill and cunning to the limits. The crossing itself was uneventful – the Guinea current and the Trades brought him to the islands of the Eastern Caribbean. But the real trouble began when the hidalgos and adventurers he brought with him turned out to be more undisciplined and unruly than the felons, rascals and lawless fellows who had served under him on his first voyage. Those newcomers came for gold, not to till the land, and when they discovered that they could only survive by the sweat of their brows, they carped and grumbled and sent messages back to Spain declaring that the Admiral was a fraud. Columbus was a great sea captain, but an indifferent administrator. The mundane and demanding business of establishing and running a frontier settlement was too

much for him, and he found himself drowing in a sea of banalities. He became the victim of the great expectations he himself had created. Thousands, all starry-eyed with dreams of gold and glory, had clamoured to get places on his seventeen ships. But once arriving in Hispanola, they were called upon to work from dawn to dusk like common labourers. Columbus knew that once news of his disastrous colonising venture reached the ears of Ferdinand and Isabella, he could only defend himself against slanders if he poured wealth into the royal coffers. He therefore despatched 'twelve ships ... to Spain, whither they carried specimens of gold from Cibao, also of unknown plants and fruits, *and Carib natives*' (emphasis added).[24] The captives, in fact, were not Caribs, for these warrior-people believed that it was always nobler to die fighting than to be enslaved. Columbus, therefore, had rounded up friendly, unarmed Arawaks and 'packed his ships with about five hundred samples of this most profitable merchandise'.[25]

After taking this fateful step to initiate the Atlantic slave trade, he then proposed in a letter to the queen that 'the savage and cannibalistic Caribs should be exchanged as slaves against livestock, etc., to be provided by merchants in Spain'.[26] He underlined this brutal and mendacious suggestion by adding his usual pious nostrum: 'The peaceful inhabitants of the New World, would be relieved of having such fierce and formidable neighbours, and heathen Caribs themselves would be snatched from the jaws of damnation and perdition, and by conversion to Christianity be led into the way of salvation.'[27] There was also an interesting postscript to the account of Columbus' return voyage when we are told that, 'To demonstrate his success over the natives, Columbus also took with him the sullen captive, Caonabó. They arrived in Cadiz after a difficult voyage during which Caonabó died.'[28] Caonabó, great Carib leader that he was, took his own life rather than face being put on display in Spain as a kind of New World oddity. In order to capture him, Alonso de Ojeda, Columbus' military commander, an aristocrat and a mass murderer, had tricked him into coming alone and unarmed to arrange a truce. He was then summarily seized, bound and gagged. This act of treachery was one that would be emulated again and again by colonisers in their dealings with leaders of the colonised. Columbus' slave-trading scheme was rejected by Isabella, and she ordered that the Indians who had been shipped to Cadiz (the remnants who had survived the cruel uprootment, and Atlantic crossing) should be repatriated forthwith. Perhaps she had had her fill of warlike dark-skinned peoples after seven centuries of Moorish occupation of the Iberian Peninsula. On the other hand, she might have balked at taking this step because of her religious convictions.

Columbus invariably found a pious rationale for the most hideous of his actions in the New World. In 1496, when he had tried to convince Isabella that 'the savage and cannibalistic Caribs should be exchanged

as slaves for livestock', he had blended the sacred and the profane unabashedly in his suggestion: 'We can send from here in the name of the Holy Trinity all the slaves and Brazil wood which could be sold ... we can sell 4,000 slaves who will be worth, at least, 20 millions.'[29] Richard Moore, the Afro-Barbadian scholar, in his illuminating and meticulously researched essay, 'Caribs, cannibals and human relations', quotes from the actual proclamation of 1503 issued by learned Catholic theologians who had never set eyes on an Indian nor set foot anywhere in the New World. This document either overruled Isabella's prohibition of 1500 or, in the three years that had passed, she had been persuaded that whereas slavery in Spain was not feasible, it was all right in the New World. The pompous language of the 1503 document hardly belied the fact that it was the New World's first ecclesiastical licence for ethnocide, slavery and racism. It proclaimed that:

> Being as they are hardened in their hard habits of idolatry and cannibalism, it was agreed that I should issue this decree ... I hereby give licence and permission ... to capture them ... paying us the share that belongs to us, and to sell them and utilise their services, without incurring any penalty thereby, because if the Christians bring them to these lands and make use of their service, they will be more easily converted and attracted to our Holy Faith.[30]

But for Las Casas, the results of this licence for ethnocide would never have been truthfully recorded with the thoroughness and detail that he brought to bear in his voluminous writings. He wrote that the Indians 'had a greater disposition towards civility than the European people', and that it was

> upon such people the Spaniard fell as tigers, wolves and lions fall on lambs and kids. Forty years they ranged those lands, massacring the wretched Indians until in the land of Espanola, which in 1492 had a population estimated at three millions of people, scarcely three hundred Indians remained to be counted. The history of Espanola is the history of Cuba, San Juan [Puerto Rico], and Jamaica. Thirty islands in the neighbourhood of San Juan were entirely depopulated. On the side of the continent, kingdom after kingdom was desolated, tribe after tribe exterminated. Twelve millions of Indians on those continental lands perished under the barbarous handling of the Spaniards. Their property was no more secure than their lives. For greed of gold, ornaments were torn from neck and ear, and as the masked burglar threatens his victim until he reveals the hiding-place of this store, the Indians were subjected to the most cruel tortures to compel the disclosure of mines which never existed and the location of gold in streams and fields in which the Almighty has never planted it. Obedience secured no better treatment than sullenness, faithful

service no better reward than that which followed treachery. The meanest Spaniard might violate the family of the most exalted chief, and home had no sanctity in the bestial eyes of the soldier. The courtiers rode proudly through the streets of Isabella Vecchia and in those of the New Isabella, their horses terrifying the poor Indians while their riders shook their plumed heads and waved their glistening swords. As they rode along, their lances were passed into women and children, and no greater pastime was practised by them than wagering as to a cavalier's ability to completely cleave a man with one dexterous blow of his sword. A score would fall before one would drop in the divided parts essential to winning the wager. No card or dice afforded equal sport. Another knight from Spain must sever his victims' head from the shoulder at the first sweep of his sword. Fortunes were lost on the ability of a swordsman to run an Indian through the body at a designated spot. Children were snatched from their mother's arms and dashed against the rocks as they passed. Other children they threw into the water that the mothers might witness their drowning struggles. Babes were snatched from their mothers' breasts, and a brave Spaniard's strength was tested by his ability to tear an infant into two pieces by pulling apart its tiny legs. And the pieces of the babe were then given to the hounds that in their hunting they might be the more eager to catch their prey. The pedigree of a Spanish blood-hound had nothing prouder in its record than the credit of half a thousand dead or mangled Indians. Some natives they hung on gibbets, and it was their reverential custom to gather at a time sufficient victims to hang thirteen in a row, and thus piously to commemorate Christ and the Twelve Apostles. Moloch must have been in the skies ... I have been an eye-witness of all these cruelties, and an infinite number of others which I pass over in silence.[31]

Charles Duff, in his *The Truth About Columbus*, added a short postscript to La Casas' description,

> Under these conditions the race of Indians dissolved. Even before twelve years had elapsed after the discovery of Espanola several hundred thousand of its original inhabitants had perished, victims of the cruelty of the white man. Its population, estimated in 1492 at three million, had dwindled to about three hundred. Of the six hundred thousand people in Puerto Rico and Jamaica scarcely two hundred remained half a century later. The same tragedy is to be recorded of Cuba and other islands. It is estimated that in this terrible episode of human history about twelve million Indians disappeared for ever from the face of the earth.[32]

It was in the wake of this cataclysmic erasure of the Indian presence that African slaves made their appearance in the Americas of the

Columbian era by the hundreds of thousands to fill the vacancies left by the depleted and sometimes completely annihilated Indian labour force.

Columbus never produced a shred of valid evidence to support his vilification of the Caribs as cannibals. On his second voyage he had visited Dominica, Guadeloupe and other islands in the eastern Caribbean, and on Guadeloupe he had come across Carib settlements where his men found human bones and skulls hanging about in the huts. These relics of ancestor worship were cited by Columbus as evidence of Carib anthropophagism. It was as fatuous to come to this conclusion as it would have been for Caribs to have visited the catacombs of Rome and, finding piles of human bones that certain Catholic Orders keep as sacred relics, concluded that the Pope and his followers were cannibals. The other basis for Columbus' racist slander was even more flimsy and unconvincing. He claimed that the Arawakians had told him repeatedly that when the Caribs captured their people those unfortunate captives never returned. They, therefore, concluded that Caribs ate their captives. But Africans and Indians felt the same way about European slave-catchers. Since these violent white strangers captured so many of their kith and kin who never returned home, they were convinced that Europeans were cannibals. By the time the slaves from Africa began arriving in the Americas, the European coloniser's appetite for untrammelled cruelty, individual and collective sadism and unbridled greed for gold had already been titillated by the extermination of twelve million Indians. The practice of racism and its moral justification had already evolved to the point where the two could be synchronised to convince millions of people about the efficacy of enslaving 'all those who are not us'. Slavery was essentially a business enterprise. Columbus understood this very well when he suggested sending Carib slaves to Spain. The Admiral, having introduced it, died in his early 50s and left it as a heritage to others. His son, Ferdinand, wrote his biography while living on the proceeds from his estates in Hispanola where 600 slaves toiled under the whip. The Sepulveda-Las Casas debate in 1550, therefore, was in a very real sense an academic one. The protector of the Indians did his best to bring that debate down to earth, to tear it from its ivory tower, but he really did not succeed. Slavery lasted as long as it was profitable. When it became unprofitable (and it lasted for four centuries), it was abolished. Perhaps, Las Casas knew that this would be the case, and that is why he asked that his works should not be published for a century after his death.

* * *

But independent of Columbus and the other European players in the drama of colonisation, conquest, ethnocide and slavery, there were

cultural interrelationships between Africans and Indians that were of great significance. These were far more profound than scholars studying the Columbian era have deigned to acknowledge. Columbus had learned his lessons in race relations in Spain and on the Guinea coast before sailing to the New World. In the decades he had spent in Spain and Portugal after leaving his native Genoa, he had met both Jews and Africans – the Jews balanced precariously between the corridors of power and a wilderness of the persecuted, and the Africans (Moors), both slaves and freemen, faring rather badly after the fall of Granada on 2 January 1492.

It was Santangel, a *marrano* (a Jewish convert to Catholicism), a learned man and one of great wealth and influence, who had helped to convince Isabella that the 'Enterprise of the Indies' which Columbus had invited her to sponsor was one that should be taken seriously. And at court, Queen Isabella's secretaries, confessors and privy councillors, some of whose acquaintances Columbus had studiously cultivated, were all either Jews or *marranos*. The most trusted of her confessors, Hernando de Talavera, the grandson of a Jewess, was a friend of Columbus' mentors at the La Rabida monastery. Columbus, penniless and hungry, after leaving Portugal secretly with his young son, Diego, to escape his creditors (perhaps his wife had grown tired of his obsession and, encouraged by her family, had refused to subsidise him any longer), had rung the convent bell at the Franciscan monastery of Santa Maria de la Rabida to ask for a crust of bread and a drink of water for his little boy. It was a cold night in January in the year 1485. The monks gave him shelter, and there he met the remarkable Fray Antonio de Marchena, 'a man reputed to have great knowledge of cosmography and astronomy, and who took a keen interest in all matters of discovery and navigation'.[33] It was a stroke of luck for Columbus to have met this extraordinarily intelligent, compassionate and influential man who introduced him to Queen Isabella a year later. A tragic postscript to Columbus' relationships with his Jewish mentors was that for his second voyage to the Indies there was 'no question of a shortage of money: Jewish property from one end of Spain to the other had been efficiently pillaged, and the Royal coffers were full'.[34] It was also ironic that when Columbus' fleet of seventeen ships was sailing out of the Bay of Cadiz on 25 September 1493, they sailed past vessels crowded with destitute Jews bound for the Guinea coast. It was the practice of holy inquisitors to sentence these unfortunates to seizure of their property and banishment to inhospitable stretches of the African west coast.

The Admiral's first encounters with people of colour had been in Spain and Portugal, and this had included both free persons and slaves. The historian Peter Martyr wrote that the Pinzon brothers were known everywhere in the Mediterranean world as the Negro Pinzons. But this did not bother Columbus when he had to plead with Martin Alonso

Pinzon to join his 'Enterprise of the Indies', for in this instance questions of class, enlightened self-interest and expediency overrode those of skin colour and race. This same enlightened self-interest seemed to render him momentarily colour blind when Columbus, in 1481, commanded a ship in the expedition which the Portuguese government had sent to the Guinea coast under Admiral Azumabaga.

> The ... expedition was to establish trade, and every effort was made by the Portuguese to do so. They established contact with the Negro King and exchanged presents with him. Furthermore, they negotiated a treaty which gave the Portuguese exclusive right to exchange their goods for gold. At Elmina the Portuguese built a fort as a stronghold for their merchandise; it survives to this day under the name of Fort St George. The voyage was in every way successful.[35]

When gold was involved and the Negro-African king had armed followers, Columbus had treated him with the greatest deference – in glaring contrast to his treatment of unarmed Indians in the New World. He had, in addition, met ordinary black and brown seamen, beggars, toughs, sailors of fortune, merchants, visiting dignitaries and the other polyglot types frequenting Mediterranean seaports in that age of adventure. Ortiz de Zuniga, a historian from Seville (a city Columbus had visited on several occasions on his way to Cadiz) writing in 1474, said that many black people from the African west coast had entered Spain during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries:

> since the time of King Don Enrique III, the blacks [in Seville] were treated with kindness. They were allowed to gather for parties and dances on their holidays and this made them more inclined to work and more tolerant of their slavery. Some among them were outstanding in their ability and were consequently given the title of overseer which meant that they would watch over the others together with their masters, and with the representatives of the law to settle the quarrels. This was recorded in very old documents and was endorsed by a royal decree issued at Duena on November 8, 1474, the year which the title of *portero de camara* was given to Juan de Valladolid.[36]

This is one of those romantic and racist statements disguised as liberal and enlightened scholarship. It implies that blacks took to slavery like birds take to the air. On the other hand, perhaps Don Enrique III *was* considered *kind* in an age that was notable for the aristocracy's mindless brutality towards serfs and slaves. Michelet, the nineteenth-century French historian, tells us that up to the time of the French Revolution there were still medieval laws in the statute books giving a nobleman the right to disembowel two serfs after a hunt in winter, so that such a civilised Christian gentleman could warm his cold

hands and feet in the hot entrails of the unfortunate victims. The apologists for slavery and ethnocide created their own perverted myths and trumpeted the lies, one of which (and this was the one to which Las Casas unfortunately subscribed) was that Africans made 'better' slaves than Indians, since they were 'hardier'. Contrary to this notion, the Indians of the Caribbean were, in fact, the healthiest people who have ever inhabited the island archipelago. Living in harmony with nature, afflictions like the common cold, measles, chicken pox, syphilis, malnutrition and obesity (the banes of our contemporary world and common afflictions of fifteenth-century Europe) were unknown to them. Thus, they had no antibodies to combat the diseases the Europeans brought with them and were easy prey to those diseases. In addition, slavery and ethnocide were hardly designed to improve a people's health and wellbeing. Another myth that Ortiz de Zuniga among others unabashedly embraced was that Africans, by keeping essences of their culture alive through music, dance and song were thereby providing proof that they were 'happy' in their slavery. The third and most insidious myth was that slaves could be 'civilised' by whips, chains, forced labour and racism.

The victims of the European zeal for colonisation and conquest in the Caribbean and the rest of the Americas have very little to celebrate five centuries after Columbus made his doomsday entrance into this hemisphere. Columbus' voyages gave the European the symbols he needed to define a vast pool of labour that happened to be predominantly brown or black. The concept of the 'white man' came into being simultaneously with that of the 'black man'. Both were part of an ideological accommodation that the Columbian era made necessary when the central focus was on Europeans exploiting Indians, Africans and Asians. That concept of white or black, with its clarity and oversimplification, redefined the role of master and slave, coloniser and colonised, Prospero and Caliban, white overlords and black subjects. Ironically, the 'white' beings in Indian legends were invariably portrayed as devil-apparitions the colour of snow or of tiger orchids. White was never conceived of by them, or by any other Third World peoples, as the skin colour of human beings.

* * *

After five centuries of struggle we can at last resurrect true images of ourselves. For us, the Carib is no longer the demonised cannibal/Caliban creature, but an archetypal freedom-fighter who takes his rightful place with Caonabó, Paramakoni, Anacoana, Caracas, Kaieruanne, Higuey, Nanny, Boni, Toussaint, Zam-Zam, Acabrea, Bolivar, Baracal, and a host of others who resisted Prospero's bid to enslave and dehumanise millions of people of colour in the Americas.

Marx has said that no social system departs from the arena of history before exhausting its creative potentialities, and those of the Indians and Africans in the Americas, after five centuries of cataclysmic encounters with Euro-American civilisation, still possess a limitless potential for creativity, humanism and life.

Gilberto Freyre, whose work *The Masters and The Slaves* romanticised slavery in Brazil, glorified Indian, and to a lesser extent African sensuality, and left us with the implicit suggestion that in exchange for this surfeit of the sensual, Indians and peoples of African descent could not also aspire to have a 'European-type intelligence'. Therefore, his inverted racism hides behind a smokescreen of romantic cliches. If people are sensual, it is because they are fully alive and their senses are attuned to appreciating all of the positive experiences in the human and natural world. Intelligence and sensuality are, therefore, organic parts of the human personality, and no race of people has a monopoly on one or the other. The significance of Freyre's work is that, despite its romantic wanderings, it nevertheless acknowledges very clearly that Brazilian civilisation was built upon foundations of Indian and African cultures. He tells us:

> The peculiar predisposition of the Portuguese to a hybrid and slave culture in their tropical colonies is partly explained by their own ethnic past and even more by their cultural past as an undefined people oscillating between Europe and Africa. They belong definitely to neither one nor the other but exist through both. The African influence that boils underneath the European gives mordant ardour to his sexual life, his cuisine and his religion: the Black or Moorish blood that runs through sections of its partly white population is sometimes predominant in regions that are even today inhabited by dark-skinned people; the warm and oleous air of Africa softens the Germanic harshness of the institutions and culture, undermines the rigidity of the morals and the doctrines of Christianity, Feudalism, Gothic architecture, canonic discipline, Visigothic law, Latin, and even the character of the people. It was Europe that governed, but Africa that ruled.[37]

George Lamming, the gifted Barbadian poet and novelist, in describing Columbus' arrival in the Americas and the events that followed, also gives eloquent testimony to the mixing of bloods of all the races in the Caribbean melting-pot when he writes:

> First Columbus, coaxing and bullying his crew to find India by a western route, choosing that name from his mistake and a legend of his time: for that land, known as Antiglia or that Antilles, which ancient charts show in the region of Azores was still a legend. Next the full European descent, urged both by adventure and greed; Spain,

France, England, Holland as well as the Danes and Swedes, and a tiny, almost forgotten rockpool of Germans! All arrived in this Caribbean sea like an epidemic ignorant of its specific target: human heroes and victims of an imagination and a quest shot through with gold. And all have remained in the complexions of their descendants who now inhabit these lands.

The indigenous Carib and Arawak Indians, living by their own lights long before the European adventure, gradually disappear, in a blind wild forest of blood. That mischievous gift, the sugar cane, is introduced, and a fantastic human migration moves to the New World of the Caribbean; deported crooks and criminals, defeated soldiers and Royalist gentlemen fleeing from Europe, slaves from the West Coast of Africa, East Indians, Chinese, Corsicans and Portuguese. The list is always incomplete, but they all move and meet on an unfamiliar soil, in a violent rhythm of race and religion.[38]

These two marvellously evocative pieces by Freyre and Lamming, however, need an explanatory postscript. The mixing of races does not by itself alter the economics of exploitation or class structures. Therefore, with the vast majority of offspring of powerful white masters and impoverished slaves and servants, although their skin colour might have changed, they were simply cast adrift in a sea of the poor with darker complexions. The handful who escaped this fate were the exceptions to the rule. Freyre, actually, is propounding a pan-miscegenation theory, and if the dark victims of capitalist exploitation embrace this theory uncritically, they are liable to become afflicted with the following irreconcilable contradiction: love and glorification of the coloniser and hatred of self. José Martí, in redefining what we are as a people in this hemisphere, does not bob and weave down paths of pan-miscegenation, instead he asks boldly, 'Do we not see how the same blow that paralyses the Indian paralyses America' and then he affirms that 'not until the Indian is made to walk tall, will America'.[39]

The Indians, through their folk myths, their song poems, rituals and histories recited from generation to generation by the shamans, rememberers and storytellers, believed that the human world was one surrounded by auras of stillness that were often invaded by violent rhythms of death and resurrection. They were convinced that time emptied itself from a gigantic cosmic container in cycles of forty-one years. The Aztec priests believed that the European explorers of the Columbian era had made their violent appearance into their midst during a period of stasis when the cosmic container had been emptied and was about to be refilled. The Indian shamans say that the 500-year cycle of violence and terror which the Columbian era brought into play will end when all of the oppressed peoples of the Americas rise up and defeat their tormentors. Martí challenged us to make a choice between

our America or theirs; the America of the usurper or that of the freedom-fighter resisting the usurpation of his land, the destruction of his culture and the slow death that servitude imposes! He underlined the fact that he had chosen to stand shoulder to shoulder with the victims of oppression rather than with the oppressor when he wrote: 'One comes from Fathers of Valencia and mothers of the Canaries and one feels the burning blood of Tamanaco and Paramaconi running through one's veins, and one sees as our own blood that which the heroic and naked Caracas spilt over the craggy hills of Calvary, breast to breast with the "Gonzalos" of iron armour.'[40] Martí also posed this question of choices very explicitly when he declared: 'With Guaicaipuro, Paramaconi (heroes of Venezuela, probably of Carib origin) with Anacoana, with Hatuey (heroes of the Antilles, of Araucan origin) we should be, and not with the flames that burnt them, nor the ropes that bound them.'[41]

In this hemisphere we cannot just claim that by mingling our blood with that of the destroyer of the Indian, the enslaver of the African and the exploiter of peoples of a rainbow array of races, colours and creeds, we do not have to acknowledge the roots of our existence in the human world. For us, the sons and daughters of the New World diaspora, our ancestors are those who struggled most valiantly, paid the highest price in blood and suffering and who, generation after generation, pick up the fallen standards from those who fought for freedom before them. This does not isolate Africans, the people of the African diaspora and Indians in some exclusive racial club, we have had enough of racist humbug, but it defines for us what we are in a very concrete fashion and leaves for all others the option of fighting shoulder to shoulder with us to ensure that in 'our America' there will no longer remain a single vestige of racism. We could then declare, as Melville has done, that we are the heirs of all time and with all peoples we share our inheritance.

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MADHU KISHWAR and RUTH VANITA

The burning of Roop Kanwar*

On 4 September 1987, 18-year-old Roop Kanwar was burnt to death on her husband's pyre in Deorala, a village in Sikar district, Rajasthan. In a physical sense, there is not much difference between the death of Roop Kanwar and the deaths of thousands of women burnt alive in their own homes in many parts of the country. But her death was significantly different in its social and cultural resonance.

Wife-burning, like many other acts of violence, occurs with the tacit consent of society, but it incurs public disapproval. Therefore, it is perpetrated secretively, behind locked doors. The woman's husband and in-laws invariably claim that her death was a regrettable suicide or accident, and that they made every attempt to save her. Modern day Sati, on the other hand, though rare, is a public spectacle, conducted with the approval and applause of the local community. It is this aspect that is particularly alarming. If the widespread implicit acceptance of wife murder in our society today expresses the low value set on women's lives, the public burning to death of a woman is an open endorsement of that devaluation. And when parents advise their daughters to endure maltreatment by husband and in-laws, and 'adjust' at all costs in the marital home, they are also endorsing the norm that a woman's life is worthless except as an object of use or abuse by her husband.

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In most ordinary wife murder cases, the husband and in-laws of the woman try to defame her after her death, as an unstable woman with suicidal tendencies or a bad character. But Roop Kanwar's past is being recreated to mythologise her as an embodiment of all womanly and wifely virtues. In a culture where a woman is considered a burden, easily dispensable and replaceable, it is a rare woman who is honoured in her death. No wonder, then, that so many women are awe-inspired by the new Sati cult.

The case has sharply polarised public opinion. Those who are glorifying her death are trying to project it as part of a 'glorious tradition' of Rajput and Hindu culture. Unfortunately, those opposed to it have inadvertently strengthened this myth by their inaccurate descriptions of the phenomenon and the forces behind it.

Most reformers have attributed the Deorala episode to the 'ignorance and illiteracy' of the rural masses, described as prone to 'blind superstitiousness and excessive religiosity'. The phenomenon of Sati was seen as an indication of 'how backwardness and primitiveness has been preserved in our rural vastness ... We are paying the price of neglect of our villages ...'. This kind of characterisation of the Deorala episode assumes that it is a tradition of the masses to which the modern and the educated supposedly stand opposed. But the fact is that Deorala is not a neglected village, nor are its inhabitants illiterate rustics. Nor are leaders of the pro-Sati campaign mainly rural-based people. They are in large part urban-based politicans who are not excessively religious but excessively greedy for power of a very 'modern' kind.

Thus, what was essentially a women's rights issue has been distorted into an issue of 'tradition' versus 'modernity', a struggle of the religious majority against an irreligious minority.

The people of Deorala

In an attempt to understand the context of Roop Kanwar's death and the forces behind its subsequent glorification, we visited Deorala and Jaipur in the last week of October 1987.

Deorala is about two hours' drive from Jaipur, the capital of Rajasthan and about five hours' drive from Delhi by another route. It is an advanced prosperous village by Rajasthani and even by all-India standards. Its initial prosperity may have been based on agriculture because this part of the state is well irrigated by private tubewells. But today its prosperity is entrenched in its intimate connections with employment in the urban sector. Almost every family in Deorala has one or more male members who hold jobs in nearby towns. Most of these men are in government employment. A large majority of them are in the police or army. Deorala has many schools, a very high literacy rate (about 70 per

cent) and has produced many matriculates and graduates. Roop Kanwar was a city-educated girl, her husband a science graduate, her father-in-law a school teacher and her brothers well-educated men, running a prosperous transport business in Jaipur.

The village has a population of about 10,000 – the dominant castes being Rajputs and Brahmans. Almost all the houses are brick and cement structures. There is a market where a wide variety of consumer goods are available. The village has electricity and tap water. Many people own TV sets, cycles and motorcycles. We saw hardly any visibly poverty stricken people. Most of the young people were dressed in fashionably tailored clothes. The men all wore western dress – trousers and shirts, and the young women wore Punjabi or Rajasthani dress tailored in an urban style, probably inspired by Hindi films.

The Sati Sthal (site where the sati was committed) is situated at one end of the village, in open ground. It is a temporary structure, a platform topped by a pavilion. When we reached there, four schoolboys, who looked between 7 and 15 years old, were walking round and round it with sticks in their hands, chanting slogans. They wore shirts and shorts with outsize turbans perched incongruously on their heads. Nearby, a group of young men were selling coconuts and distributing *prasad* (offerings). At a little distance, another group of young men were selling reprints of the now famous photo collage showing Roop Kanwar on the pyre with her husband's head in her lap.

Clusters of women sat around talking, among them a number of schoolgirls. They were very different from the film stereotype of the village woman as a shy secluded belle. They assumed we were journalists and kept staring at us. Since we refrained from asking any journalistic questions or taking photos, they called us and began cross-questioning us with great confidence. Their hostility melted into the warmth and hospitality characteristic of an Indian village only after they had been assured that we were not seeking to extract any statements from them. None of the women were veiled and they talked, joked, teased and laughed unabashedly in the presence of men.

Most of the slogans being shouted at the Sati Sthal were clearly modelled on electoral slogans and had not the remotest connection to any kind of religious chant. Indeed the entire exercise had the flavour of a political rally, a show of strength vis-à-vis a political adversary rather than devotion to a deity.

We also attended the daily evening worship. The ground was floodlit. The schoolboys were replaced by young men with naked swords in hand. The *arti* (worship ritual) sung was *Om Jai Jagdish Hare*, an *arti* of recent origin in modern Hindi which has been popularised by Bombay cinema to the extent that it has now assumed the status of a sort of national *arti*, sung indiscriminately on all occasions. It has nothing at all to do with Sati, and certainly is not of Rajput or

Rajasthani origin.

A majority of those gathered at the worship were young men and women, most of them educated. That the *arti* was a recent imposition on village culture was evident from the fact that most of those who sang it had no notion of the tune and only a few of them knew the words. The *arti* was performed by educated youths whose idea of religious ritual seemed influenced by Hindi films rather than by any local religious tradition. The fascination with the Sati cult has been attributed to the superstitious ignorance of illiterate village women, but it is noteworthy that the entire cult being created at Deorala is in the hands of men. Women participate by standing at a respectable distance, and joining in the singing.

The pro-Sati campaign, however, is not the indigenous product of Deorala, but is, in fact based in Jaipur. The leaders of the campaign are urban, educated men in their 20s and 30s, with landed property and family connections in rural areas so their influence extends over urban and rural areas. Some have government jobs; others have political power. The two networks are closely connected through kinship ties and also have contacts in New Delhi. Thus, they constitute a powerful regional elite, projecting themselves as representatives of rural India.

The lifestyle of this urban-based elite is far removed from any traditional rustic lifestyle. It has little understanding of tradition. This was evident from the phoney ritualism that surrounds the Sati Sthal in Deorala. Several Rajputs from traditional families told us that Satis in the past were never worshipped in the fashion that is being institutionalised at Deorala today. There was no tradition of offering *prasad* and singing *artis* to worship a Sati. People would silently fold their hands before a Sati Sthal. Families who had a Sati in their ancestry would invoke her blessings but there was no big ceremonial cult around the Satis.

The Sati cult in its present day form is primarily the product of a phoney religiosity that is the accompaniment of new-found prosperity, harnessed by political leaders for their own vested interests. This religion-politics combine is being imported into villages from cities. It is not a traditional residue from the rural backwaters of the country. It is no coincidence that the largest number of new temples are springing up in cities, built by big businessmen. The dozen or so big Sati temples in urban and semi-urban areas that have become centres of a cult have been built in the last decade by rich Marwari businessmen. The phoney revival of this cult is more a creation of the Marwari than the Rajput community.

Hindu custom?

Proponents and opponents of Sati have embarked on an examination

of ancient texts to establish whether or not these texts 'sanction' Sati. This search for a sanction or prohibition of various practices is an empty exercise that nineteenth-century British administrators began and that Indian social reformers picked up. The British assumed that every religion would, like Christianity, have one book which all believers would accept as the 'gospel truth', and began the search for such a book in Hinduism. The search is a futile one because Hinduism is not a closed body of doctrines, nor does it treat any text or set of texts as the final truth. In different times and places different Hindu communities follow widely different social and religious practices.

In Rajasthan, women who became Satis were not the only ones traditionally glorified and revered by Rajputs or by Rajasthanis in general. Mirabai, too, was a Rajput woman (born circa 1512 AD) who has been deeply revered over the centuries and whose songs continue to be sung today with love and devotion by Rajput and other Rajasthani women and men. She did not spend her life serving her husband, let alone giving up her life for him. Her songs openly proclaim her determination to undertake a spiritual quest, resisting the opposition of her husband and in-laws. Mira lived a highly unconventional life, breaking out of seclusion, travelling widely with a following of women, and singing and dancing in temples. In many songs she stresses her defiance of social opinion:

> Mira dances with bells on her feet ...
> 'Mira is mad' people say
> 'Destroyer of family' kindred call me
> Mira dances with bells on her feet ...

In one song she even states: 'I will sing of Girdhar/I will not be a Sati' (*Girdhar gasya Sati na hosya*). Mira represents a powerful tradition in Rajasthan – evidence of this includes the fact that, over the centuries, more and more songs have been added to the body of her work, and scholars have difficulty sifting them. Women add to and change the songs as they sing them. Her songs are in Rajasthani, the people's own language, unlike the songs being sung in the worship of Roop Kanwar today. The urge towards self-definition and freedom that Mira represents is much more integrally a part of Rajasthani traditions relating to women than is the cult being created around Roop Kanwar today.

Many politicians used the Deorala episode as a pretext to attempt to unite the internally divided Rajput community and capture it as a vote bank. Many other leaders of Hindu revivalist organisations are trying to use the issue as a symbol of Hindu unity. The call to boycott Diwali celebrations if the government did not release those arrested at Deorala was first issued to Rajputs but later extended to 'all Hindus'. At the rally organised by the recently founded, pro-Sati Dharm Raksha Samiti in

Jaipur, the call to save religion was issued in nastily communal terms. What this portends can be gauged from the fact that burning a woman to death has become the symbol of this unity.

Fortunately, the diversity of Hindu society still lends it strength and sanity. The Sati symbol is not likely to carry much weight beyond certain parts of the Hindi belt. It is important to remember that many Rajputs are also totally opposed to Sati. But those who took a public stand had to face considerable hostility. Rani Chuhrawat, a well-known public figure, expressed her opposition to Sati on public platforms. She was *gheraoed* and abused and is being defamed by many pro-Sati elements, in an attempt to silence her.

She pointed out that Sati cannot be equated with the right to suicide because even where the right to suicide exists in law, suicide is not a socially encouraged act. One's family members would try their best to dissuade one from committing suicide and would certainly not help in any way. If one still wanted to commit suicide, one would do it privately, in solitude, not as a public spectacle. Even technically, Sati is not suicide since someone else lights the pyre, not the woman herself. Second, and most important, she asked: 'How many women have the right to decide anything voluntarily?' If a woman doesn't have the right to decide whether she wants to marry, and when, and whom, how far she wants to study, whether she wants to take a particular job or not, how is it that she suddenly gets the right to take such a major decision as whether she wants to die? Why is it that her family meekly acquiesces in her decision, when they, in the normal course, would not scruple to overrule decisions she made, of which they did not approve? Given women's general powerlessness, lack of control over their own lives, and definition of their status by their relationship to men (as daughters, wives, widows, mothers), can any decision of theirs, particularly such a momentous decision, really be called voluntary and self-chosen?

Women's groups in Rajasthan made an effort to work as a concerted lobby. They conducted a public debate on the issue, and mobilised women from different strata of society to protest the Deorala incident. A large rally was held in Jaipur. Many organisations from outside Rajasthan supported these efforts in various ways.

The police and the government

However, it is unfortunate that opposition to Sati took mainly the form of seeking government intervention. Our government, by its skilful use of progressive rhetoric, has convinced reformers that even though it may be weak and ineffective, it is ultimately on the side of progress. But in fact, the government machinery, far from being progressive, is not even neutral. It is not only corrupt but often outright murderous,

witness the Indian police record of atrocities, ranging from the Arwal massacre, to innumerable rapes in custody, to the PAC killings in cold blood of arrested Muslims in Meerut.

Deorala has become a police camp; police are actively obstructing journalists and anti-Sati campaigners from investigating the case. It is likely that the actual facts of the case – whether it was murder or suicide – would have come out, were it not for the heavy police presence in the village. Under the ordinance, anyone who admits to having witnessed the Sati is liable to prosecution. Most villagers are afraid to say anything for fear of being implicated by the police. Those who are determinedly pro-Sati are camping at the Sati Sthal under police protection.

Any attempts to challenge the cult are prevented by the police. The march by anti-Sati Hindu religious leaders, led by Swami Agnivesh, from Delhi to Deorala, was prevented from entering Deorala, and the marchers were arrested. Women activists of Jaipur also say they are not allowed to enter the village in groups. About two kilometres from the village a police picket stopped us, saying no journalist was allowed in. When we tried to take photos, some men aggressively forbade us. We thought they were villagers, but they turned out to be plainclothes policemen. We were told there were 'orders' forbidding the taking of photographs but no one could explain why.

The ostensible reason for the police presence was to implement the ordinance forbidding glorification of Sati. But they were quite as involved in the worship as other villagers. One policeman reminded us to take off our shoes when aproaching the Sati Sthal and another cheerfully advised us to attend the *arti* at 7pm. We saw many jeeps and bullock carts full of worshippers from other areas coming to the village. Not one was stopped by the police. Yet, the villagers claim the police victimised them. They claim that press publicity has led to police repression and that indiscriminate arrests have been made.

The government and the police failed to prevent Roop Kanwar's death, yet there is no way local government and police personnel could have been unaware of what was about to occur. There was a two-hour gap between the announcement that Roop was to become a Sati and the actual immolation. People gathered from surrounding areas to witness it, and it took place in broad daylight. No special anti-Sati law was needed to prevent Roop Kanwar's death. Both murder and suicide are illegal, punishable offences under the Indian Penal Code. The police are duty bound to prevent their commission.

Where a whole community chose to collude in a woman's being murdered or pressured to submit to immolation, the local government and police, which are after all part of the same society, are also implicated in the crime. The upper levels of government, at state and central levels, reacted with delaying and evasive tactics, succumbing to

different pressure groups, and did not investigate the crucial question of why the local police had not intervened. Instead, the same local police were posted in the village to create an atmosphere more intimidatory than conducive to investigation. Yet, the anti-Sati campaigners assumed that a stringent law was all that was needed to solve the problem. If Sati is just a cover used to get away with hounding a woman to death, why is a special law needed to deal with such incidents? Does this not amount to conceding the view that Sati constitutes a special category distinct from murder or suicide?

The anti-Sati ordinance passed by the Rajasthan government, with its vague definition of 'abetment of Sati' as including a person's presence at the site, has ample scope for misuse. The police can easily pick up anyone from the area whom they wish to harass. It is alleged that they have arrested several innocent, poor people from Deorala already. The person has to prove that he or she was not present, since the ordinance, in violation of the principle that a person is innocent until proved guilty, lays the burden of proof on the accused. It prescribes the death sentence for abetment of Sati and it also has a ridiculous provision for punishing the victim. A woman who attempts Sati is to be imprisoned for one to five years and fined Rs5,000 to Rs20,000. Central legislation along the same lines is now being drafted.

Failures and lessons

Somewhere along the way the anti-Sati campaign became somewhat counterproductive. The campaigners became characterised as a handful of anti-Hindu, anti-Rajput, anti-religion, pro-government, anti-masses, urban, educated, westernised people, and the pro-Sati lobby as those sensitive to the sentiments of the rural, traditional poor. This completely false polarisation occurred because:

1. The reformers wrongly characterised the Deorala episode as the product of illiteracy and backwardness of the rural poor, whereas it was the product of a modernised, developed, prosperous combine.

2. The reformers saw the Deorala episode as the product of an old tradition, whereas in its present form it is a new, created cult, organised by political, not by religious, leaders.

3. The reformers entered into a debate on the religiosity or otherwise of the Deorala Sati. It is important that we demystify it and see it as a case of a woman being hounded to death under a specious religious cover, and of her death being made a symbol by certain power groups to demonstrate their clout.

4. The campaigners' action took the form of petitions to government authorities asking for more stringent laws. This gave the government the opportunity to pose as progressive by introducing a repressive law, and let the government off the hook for its complicity in Roop Kanwar's death.

5. The reformers asked for the police force to be used as an agent of social reform, forgetting that it is incapable of performing this role. Police acquired more powers which they used to aid and abet pro-Sati forces and to prevent the reformers and the press from purveying information about the case.

We have to consider what course of action could create a state of affairs wherein people could not get away with burning a woman to death in public. To prevent any more such incidents from occurring must be our main concern. Any course of action that has the negative unintended consequence of heightening the aura around the Deorala episode and of arming with more arbitrary powers those who colluded in Roop Kanwar's death – namely, the local government and police – should be avoided.

Alternative courses of action that are being pursued, but unfortunately with much less vigour than the course of demanding more legislation and more police, are:

1. Indicting the local police for not having intervened to save Roop Kanwar. All the local police officers who failed to stop the burning should be treated as abetters of Roop Kanwar's murder, immediately suspended, and tried under the Indian Penal Code.

2. Monitoring the case against Roop Kanwar's in-laws to see that all the facts are uncovered, that it is not simply dropped.

3. Instead of relying on ordinances, stay orders and the police to prevent glorification of the Deorala episode and the construction of a temple, it would be better if local human rights and women's organisations mobilised all concerned persons to offer indefinite *satyagraha* at Deorala.

4. Some laudable attempts have been made to engage the wider public in a debate that goes beyond the pages of newspapers. One such attempt was the march led by Swami Agnivesh and other Arya Samaj *sanyasis*, from Delhi to Deorala. This is an important symbolic statement that anti-women forces do not have the monopoly of defining Hindu traditions and do not represent all Hindus.

The women's development programme and other social work organisations in Ajmer district, Rajasthan, have organised a *padyatra* through villages, with plays and songs that raise questions of concern to people including the drought, women's issues and Sati. More such efforts could mobilise a broader social consensus in Rajasthan against maltreatment of women, and provide an atmosphere conducive to expression of dissent from amongst local communities themselves.

That a woman could be burnt to death in public is a stark indication of women's vulnerability in our social system. Roop Kanwar's death was only one expression of the general devaluation of women's lives. Unless the consensus within our society changes in favour of a more dignified and self-sustaining life for women, any number of repressive laws and policemen are not likely to preserve women's lives.

Notes and documents

UK commentary

Left, Right and Burnage*

On 17 September 1986, 13-year-old Ahmed Ullah was stabbed to death at Burnage High School, Manchester, by a white schoolmate. The local education authority commissioned an inquiry, under Ian Macdonald QC, but refused to publish its findings on grounds of defamation. In April 1988, some of its conclusions were leaked to a local paper. These included, among other things, a strong criticism of the way the school had applied its anti-racist policies. And it was this aspect of the report alone that was seized upon by the right-wing press to mount an attack on anti-racism.

Racism killed Ahmed Ullah on the playing fields of Burnage – not anti-racism, if by 'anti' we simply mean 'opposed to', 'against'. But anti-racism as practised in Burnage was, on the showing of the Macdonald Report,[1] an accessory before and after the fact – merely by virtue of failing its own purpose. That it did so, however, owes not a little to the confusion and bewilderment of the Left as to the nature of racism and how to combat it, on the one hand, and to the sustained attack on anti-racism by the New Right, on the other.

The fight against racism is, in the first instance, a fight against injustice, inequality, against freedom for some and un-freedom for others. But because racism is inextricably woven into hierarchies of power, of exploitation, and in some instances (as in South Africa) determines those hierarchies, the fight against racism is, in the final analysis, a fight against such exploitative power.

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* First published in *New Statesman*, 27 May 1988.

Both power and racism, however, have personal connotations, are easily reducible (and in everyday living are so reduced) to individuals, the positions they hold, the roles they fulfil. And so the fight against racism sometimes takes on the dimension of a personalised fight against an individual – as though to change the person (or his or her personality) is to change the office, the institution. When such confusion is carried over into policy, it tends not so much to alter the course of racial injustice as to damage the larger fabric of natural justice. Ms McGoldrick, for instance, was suspended from her headship by Brent Council on suspicion of being a racist (on the basis of a remark she is said to have made in a telephone conversation) and therefore in contravention of the anti-racist policies that the Council wished to carry out in education. At no point prior to suspension was she afforded a full hearing or accorded the benefit of her past record. And however much the issues might have been muddied by the yellow press or muddled by a reactionary teachers' union, the fact remains that the Council, in its anxiety to do right by black children, did wrong by Ms McGoldrick. Whereas, the fight for racial justice, if rightly fought, must of its very nature improve and enlarge justice for all.

It is also a fact – and a sad one – that black councillors and officers who know how the 'sus law' has been used against their young should themselves administer 'sus' by some other name. They had, in Eliot's grand phrase, had the experience but missed the meaning.

As a result, Ms McGoldrick was handed over as a casus belli to the genuine racists in our midst and to the racist media in particular, who were only too willing to espouse her cause in order to discredit the cause of anti-racism – as they now do over Burnage.

It was left to the 'thinkers' of the New Right, however, to mount a 'considered' attack on anti-racism by weaving together – with slovenly scholarship and consummate humbug – its foibles and its failings and presenting these as the fabric of its philosophy. A whole book, *Anti-racism: an assault on education and value*, was directed to this exercise, and a biased programme in 'Diverse Reports' 'examined' the subject so 'critically' as to still the voices of those, like myself, who tried to say that there was no body of thought called anti-racism, no orthodoxy or dogma, no manual of strategy and tactics, no demonology. What there was in our society was racism, in every walk of life, and it had to be combated – in every conceivable way. And because racism was hydra-headed, and reared its different heads in different ways in different times (prosperity and depression) and in differing areas (employment, housing, schools) and different places (inner city, suburbia), the ways of combating racism were also different and legion. Nor were there any short-cuts to its demise. Racism had been a long time in the making and would take a long time to die. 'Anti-racism', therefore, was a portmanteau word meant to carry all these differing ideas and ways of

combating racism. The important thing, however, was to keep racism from corrupting society to decay.

If anti-racism for the irredentists of the New Right was an assault on *their* education and values, it was for the New (Social Forces) Left an essay in cultural politics, personal politics – which, in practice, descended into culturalism, ethnic politicking, inter-personal relations, identity-seeking. The fight against racism became a fight for culture, and culture itself was evacuated of its economic and political significance to mean life-style, language, custom, artefact. And black from being a 'political colour' was broken down into its cultural parts of West Indian, Asian, African – and these in turn reduced to their ethnic constituents. And since local authority funding was largely geared to 'ethnic need', there was a sudden flowering of a thousand ethnic groups. Everybody was ethnic now – Irish, Italians, Rastas, Sikhs, Chinese, Jews, Bengalis, Gypsies – and they all vied with each other for 'ethnic hand-outs' and 'ethnic positions' and set themselves against each other, politicking for 'ethnic power'.

But, curiously enough, where this credo of ethnic need first arose was not in the ante-chambers of socialist local authorities but in the liberal pages of Scarman's report on *The Brixton Disorders*. The evidence before Lord Scarman – the police force were battering down the homes of black people in Brixton with sledgehammers as he sat – pointed implacably to institutional and state racism. But, like so many adjudicators before him, so unquestioning was Lord Scarman's belief in the fairness of British institutions that he set his face resolutely against any criticism of them. Instead, he leant over backwards – and you need such a mixed metaphor to convey the contortions of his lordship's position – to restore the balance of justice against 'racial disadvantage', by means of 'positive action' in terms of 'ethnic need'. The idea was to help racial or ethnic minorities to overcome their specific disadvantages so as to bring them up to the same level as the rest of society – and then leave them, like everyone else, to the vagaries of market forces.

But, in absolving the state and its institutions of racism, the burden of 'racial disadvantage' was passed on to the minorities themselves – as though it were they who were wanting in something. An infliction had become an affliction, a disadvantage a disability – and passed under the rubric of 'ethnic need'. The remedy, therefore, was to be sought in ethnic programmes and ethnic policy, not in dismantling racist structures and outlawing racism.

It was, at best, a laissez-faire view of racism which brooked no state intervention, least of all in its own affairs and institutions, except in the lesser matters of administration such as recruitment and training, say, of police officers.

But for left-wing councils, casting around for anti-racist policies in the wake of the inner-city 'riots' of 1981, Scarman was a godsend.

'Positive action' and 'ethnic need', besides, seemed to have a socialist ring to them – holding out the prospect of socialist planning without detracting from the morality of socialist caring. Having themselves failed to incorporate or relate to the struggles of the black working class in the post-war years and see how they advanced the struggle of the class as a whole, the white Left had no socialist frame of reference to fight racism and, by default, turned to Scarman. Fighting racism the way that blacks had fought it, besides, looked like bucking the system, whereas upholding 'ethnicism' was a safe bet.

In the process, the fight was taken out of the streets and the communities and into the town halls – to be played out in committees and cabals. And racism itself became personalised to individuals, white individuals in power, in the institutions of the local state. Scarman, in denying the existence of institutional racism, had shifted its centre of gravity to the individual. The town hall socialists however, applying a corrective to Scarman, kept institutional racism but changed its definition to mean 'prejudice plus power' – i.e. personal prejudice plus the power she or he has as a white official to translate that prejudice into (racist) practice. So all you had to do was to make him or her aware of his or her racism – through RAT (Racism Awareness Training) classes – and prejudice, discrimination, would go out of power and make things fairer for blacks. Power, that is, was a matter of inter-personal relationships, and by changing individuals you changed the relationships that determined the power structures. Conversely, and this was not so much in the original RAT writ as in its codicil, if black people were to challenge such power effectively, they should become aware of who they were and what they could do – find out what their real identity was in terms of race, class, gender and raise their particular blend of consciousness.

The workings of RAT – born in a military base in Florida, reared at the University of Oklahoma by Judy Katz (see her *White awareness handbook for anti-racism training*) and officially held up in this country a year before the 1981 disturbances by the Race Relations Advisor to the Home Office – and its subsequent spread all over Britain have been examined in these pages before.[2] What is important to note here, however, is the imputation of guilt that underlined its philosophy and informed its every practice. White people, RAT held, were by virtue of their history and up-bringing guilty of racism. And, even when they fought their racism, they were still no more than anti-racist racists – because racism was immanent in the white psyche, part of its collective unconscious ... in the blood perhaps? ... or it was original sin. The argument bordered on the genetic and blended the religious with the socio-biological.

But even after RAT was killed off by black activists and buried – with a memorial service held appropriately enough at the GLC in its

dying days – it got reincarnated as ART, Anti-Racist Training, and continued to purvey guilt under other guises.

And it is that sense of guilt, of personal guilt, which marked the events at Brent and at Burnage – the one inflicted by the authorities, the other self-inflicted.

But then guilt itself has begun to replace shame as a moral value in society at large. Guilt, as Helen Merrell Lynd has pointed out, closes one down on oneself, internalises one's inadequacies, breeds a sense of helplessness. Above all, it tries to live up to the standards set out by others for one. Shame, on the other hand, sets one's own standards for oneself, opens one out to one's own possibilities and those of others. To be guilty of racism is to have transgressed someone else's standards, to be ashamed of it is to fail one's own.

Shame, however, has gone out of Thatcherite Britain – the shame of being a racist, of being a capitalist, of getting power, making money, regardless of all else, everyone else. We have been taken over by the morality of grocer capitalism, merchant capitalism, buy and sell capitalism where profit is only tempered by Calvinist moralism – and it is the same set of values that has trickled down into the race relations industry.

Of course, there is a morality involved in the fight against racism, but it refers not to the morality of individuals but to the morality of social justice. It is the prosperous, sanctimonious Right that prescribes morals to people and, from the height of its smug conceit, ordains how people should think and behave. It is a moralism that reflects a mean, narrow, closed-down, ungenerous view of life – one that does not take risks with people, with human relationships, enlarge human creativity, 'exhaust' in Pindar's phrase 'the realm of the possible'. It seeks, instead, to gather up all the infinite variety of human experience and force it into the ungiving mould of its own righteousness.

And it does it in the name of the individual, as though the individual grows in solitary confinement, removed from the collective good, in competition with everyone, trying to do the other in, instead of raising the other up and oneself with it.

The Left's mistake was to accept this spurious equation of individual growth with individualism and confuse personal moralism with socialist morality – both (individualism and moralism) potent ingredients in the witches' brew of right-wing fundamentalism.

It is such a fundamentalism that informs certain aspects of the proposed Education Bill – in particular, its national curriculum which not only narrows the focus of the subjects that it prescribes as core, such as History, to a one-dimensional nationalist perspective but actively discourages at the same time the study of international subjects such as Peace Studies or Black Studies. Children are not to be put at risk to the

world outside, opened out to the experience of other races and peoples, or encouraged to look at themselves and their histories from the vantage point of such experience. On the contrary, they are not even to be taught to relate healthily to the different experiences and cultures of the fellow students around them through an education in other cultures and in the racism of their own – which renders those other cultures inferior. Instead, they are, if the New Right continues to have its say, to be afforded a 'colour-blind', conflict-free education in a world replete with colour and conflict.

A. SIVANANDAN

References

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2 A. Sivanandan in *New Statesman* (7 and 14 June 1985), abridged from 'RAT and the degradation of black struggle', *Race & Class* (Vol.26, no.4, Spring 1985).

The meaning of Halabja: chemical warfare in Kurdistan

On the afternoon of Tuesday 16 March 1988, waves of Soviet-built Sukhoi fighter-bombers flown by Iraqi pilots attacked the large town of Halabja. But this was not just another ordinary day in the seemingly endless Gulf War. For Halabja is not in Iran, but is in northern Iraq. And the attack involved poison gases. Halabja is a Kurdish city with, normally, a civilian population of some 30,000, swollen by refugees to more than twice that size and recently captured by the Iranians. By Tuesday evening some 4000 of the citizens of Halabja were lying dead where they had fallen, struck down by the chemicals; another 6000 were injured – injuries that developed slowly over the next couple of days – severe burns to face, thighs, arms, stomach; sickness and blurring of vision, weeping eyes and chest pains that made breathing difficult.

The Iranians were not slow to see the significance of what had happened, and quickly brought western journalists to the site of the attack; their accounts of those struck dead by the gas filled the quality British papers for the next few days. But western governmental responses have been astonishingly muted. For to acknowledge the event must be to censure Iraq and raise questions about the nature and direction of the war the Iraqi government is waging. Yet such silence implicitly tolerates a most dangerous military escalation which must not go unchallenged.

Even in this grim and bloodstained century, there are certain events which mark turning points in the history of the uses of military and civil

technologies of oppression. Guernica, the first air bombing of a civilian population; Auschwitz; Dresden, the fire bombing of an open city; Hiroshima. Now Halabja, the first major use of chemical weapons against a civilian population, must rank with these.

The First World War, with its hundred thousand deaths and million casualties from gas warfare in the trenches, resulted in the Geneva Protocol of 1925 banning the use in war of 'asphyxiating and poisonous substances'. It has become one of the most durable of conventions regulating the conduct of war and controlling the weapons used. The Protocol has been almost universally ratified - Iraq itself did so as early as 1931 - and it has been almost universally respected.

The Italians used chemicals against Haile Selassie's forces in Ethiopia in the 1930s, to widespread international criticism. In the 1939-45 war, the allied forces manufactured and stockpiled slightly updated versions of the First World War gases - notably mustard. And the Germans invented a whole new class of chemicals, the nerve gases. Much more poisonous than anything that had gone before, they had one other deadly significance. You can protect yourself against the older weapons, like mustard, by breathing through a filter in a gas mask, and with various types of skin creams. But you don't have to breathe the nerve gases for them to kill; they can be absorbed through the skin, and a minute quantity - a pinhead - is enough to paralyse the junctions between nerve and muscle, leading to almost instant death.

In the years since 1945, newer and even deadlier nerve gases have been developed. The use of harassing substances - tear gases like CS - has become widespread. The Americans used vast quantities both of CS and of chemical defoliants in Vietnam to devastating effect, but argued that because these substances were not directly poisonous to humans they were not in breach of the Protocol. The fragile 1925 accord appeared to be holding, and formed the basis on which a tortuous set of negotiations in Geneva have been under way for some years aimed at going further and banning research, production and stockpiling of the chemical weapons too.

Nonetheless, against a constantly reiterated suspicion of Soviet intentions and chemical weapons capacities, the Reagan administration has embarked on a massive chemical rearmament programme, with some $8 billion set aside over the decade to replace existing stocks with a new generation of so-called binary nerve gases, intended for stockpiling and, if necessary, use in Europe. The Thatcher government keeps dropping dark hints about the need for such weapons; the French seem quietly to have restarted their own development programme.

This is the background against which the mass poisonings at Halabja must be set. Despite initial Iraqi denials,* it is not in doubt that

* Documents seized in January 1988 by Kurdistan Democratic Party guerillas from the Iraqi base at Deralok showed that chemical and gas weapons were held by the Iraqis, and intended for use.

chemicals were used. What needs to be ascertained – and fast – is exactly *what* was used. A captured Iraqi pilot has confirmed on Iranian television that the Sukhois were loaded with canisters of gas which were unloaded on the population below. The accounts given by the injured evacuated from the town speak of an initial bombardment with ordinary explosive bombs which destroyed buildings, including some occupied by the Iranians. There was a brief pause in the bombing, during which those sheltering in their cellars from the attack tried to escape towards the nearby hills. Then the planes came over again, flying low, 'like silver fish', as one elderly woman put it. This time there were no explosions, only clouds of smoke from the planes.

As evening fell and the planes left, the civilians of Halabja once more came out of hiding and began to move towards the hills. As they did so they began to feel the sickness and burning. Their flight was through fields, ditches and roads littered with the dead bodies of those caught in the gas. The symptoms experienced by those who survived and fled are characteristically those of mustard gas poisoning. Most of them – especially those who were quick enough to make improvised masks with wettened clothing or breathe through the charcoal in which the area is abundant – will probably now live, though the long-term consequences of such exposure can be severe.

But what killed those who did not escape? The speed of their deaths makes it clear it was not mustard. The Iranians have spoken of cyanide – another First World War agent which is very deadly in high concentration. However it is light and disperses fast – scarcely appropriate for dropping out of planes. It looks much more likely that this was a nerve gas attack. And if so, the implications are very grave indeed.

This, of course, is not the first time that the Iraqis have used chemical weapons in the Gulf war. A UN investigation team described the use of mustard – and possibly nerve gas – against the Iranian Revolutionary Guards a couple of years back.* But this is the first use on such a scale against civilians – Iraqi civilians at that. For it seems clear that the target in Halabja was not so much the Iranian troops, who now have some protective clothing, but the Kurdish population. This fits in well with what now seems to be the characteristic use of poison weapons – not in conflicts between two well-equipped conventional armies, but by a technologically advanced force against civilian populations or guerilla forces. This is the history of such chemicals since the 1930s.

The deaths at Halabja are thus more than an isolated incident in the

* The US, in March 1984, also accused Iraq of using mustard gas against Iranian troops. The export to Iraq and Iran of certain chemicals that could be used in the manufacture of chemical weapons and nerve gases has been banned by both the British and US governments – by the British in 1984, and by the US before that. Nonetheless, Iraq has been able (as was demonstrated in *New Scientist* and on a BBC TV Horizon programme) to construct a giant chemical weapons plant, largely with the help of European firms.

long-running and bloody Gulf conflict; more even than the latest of atrocities against the Kurdish population by the Iraqi regime. There is a danger that they will provide the green light for the widespread use of chemicals in other simmering conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere, justifying the Israeli nuclear strategy as a deterrent, and sabotaging the Geneva disarmament negotiations.

Much attention has been focused on where the Iraqis obtained their chemical weapons. The truth is that, granted the technical skills and the chemical production plants otherwise used, for instance, for pesticide production, they are not hard to make. Kurdish groups, in Britain and elsewhere in Europe, have protested at the doors of the multinational companies believed to have supplied the precursor substances to the Iraqis. They are right to do so, for if the supply lines can be cut, production is bound to be limited, but the routes of chemical synthesis are so varied, and the international sources of the chemical ingredients so many, that such protest is likely to be at best a symbolic act.

What *is* needed now is a war crimes tribunal to hear and judge evidence on Halabja and other genocidal acts against the Kurdish population, and unequivocal international legal action to condemn the flagrant Iraqi breach of the Geneva Protocol before that fragile restraint on even greater horrors is finally discarded.

London STEVEN ROSE and ABRAHAM BARAVI

The Kurdish-British Scientific and Medical Support Group has been set up, prompted by the sense of urgency felt within some scientific quarters over the Halabja tragedy.

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The Palestinian uprising

Ansar 3 *

'Ansar' is one of the many new detention centres opened by the Israeli authorities to hold the large number of prisoners of the uprising. Because of its size, and the conditions there, Ansar 3 has become a symbol of the Palestinian uprising and the Israeli repression.

* From *News from Within* (Vol. IV, no. 5, 10 May 1988).

The camp, which was opened on 22-25 March this year, is at Ketziot in the Negev desert, some 70 kilometres south of Beersheba and close to the Egyptian border. It should be noted that, under the Geneva Convention, it is forbidden to transfer prisoners from occupied areas to the territory of the occupying power. The camp is situated in a military area, and is surrounded by military bases. It is divided into two sections, 4 kilometres apart, one for detainees from the Gaza Strip, and one for residents of the West Bank. Each section is about 5 square kilometres. From what the detainees say, it appears that the camp is divided into twelve quarters, each of which is surrounded by a barbed-wire fence. It is estimated that more than 3,000 prisoners are held at Ansar 3.

Testimony

The following personal testimony of Hazim Abu Hassan provides an example of the treatment of Palestinian prisoners and of conditions at Ansar 3.

> The first few hours of my detention were the harshest. I was arrested at 3.00am from my house in the old city of Nablus during a house-to-house search and arrest raid by the army. I was handcuffed and blindfolded, and taken to a military bus. Two hours later I found myself at Nablus Military HQ, and was led to a tent in the yard. There I joined a group of twenty-six detainees, one of whom was a man of 55 years who had been arrested when the soldiers failed to find his son.
>
> We were ordered to kneel, and a group of soldiers came into the tent, introducing themselves as the 'Golani Brigade'. They began kicking us with their heavy army boots. They were manic and excited as they attacked, kicking us on all parts of our bodies, shouting:
>
> 'We aren't scared of your uprising!'
>
> 'Palestine is for us, we will make you leave, you are foreigners here now!'
>
> 'Your stones don't scare us!'
>
> The kicking and beating continued for a long period until one of the detainees fell unconscious to the floor. Later they chose one of the detainees and ordered him to stand next to the excreta bucket in the tent. He was made to take each prisoner in turn, remove their trousers, then to hold their penis while the prisoner urinated into the bucket.
>
> At 8.00 that morning we were all moved to a larger tent where we stayed for three days before being moved to Atlit prison near Haifa, where I stayed for five days before being moved again to the Ansar 3 prison.

Living conditions

Accommodation at Ansar 3 is in tents, and there are no buildings. The West Bank section was divided into four parts, each consisting of eight tents and each tent containing twenty-eight to thirty people. The tents were 5 metres wide and 10 metres long. When we arrived, we were made to stand for hours with our heads enclosed in a sack before being shown to our tent. Each of us was given a number, and from then on our names were never used. At night we slept on foam mattresses with five blankets; in the freezing desert nights these were not enough, and it was hard to sleep. Our tent was supplied with four barrels of water per day which were used for drinking and washing. There was an outdoor latrine which could be used during the day, and a bucket in the tent for the nights.

The food was the same every day: Breakfast: five olives, a spoonful of jam, a slice of margarine, a slice of bread and half a cup of tea. Lunch: a cup of thin soup and half an orange. Dinner: as breakfast. The worst was that the food was normally full of sand, blown in by the desert wind.

Medical treatment was provided once a week by a visiting military doctor. He normally didn't have time to see everybody asking for treatment, and anyway, he only prescribed Acamol for most cases.

Prisoner counts were conducted four times a day, during which prisoners had to sit on the floor of their tents with their hands on their heads. When the officer read out their number (in Hebrew), they had to stand up, turn their face away from the officer, and state their name.

Any prisoner who broke camp regulations was tied to a post and beaten severely.

After five days, at seven in the evening, they took a group of us to a place in the desert several kilometres away from Rahat, and left us to walk to the town where we stayed the night. The next day I travelled back to Nablus.

Health situation

Various sources have confirmed the testimonies of released prisoners from Ansar 3. Lawyer Muhammad Na'amneh, who managed to get permission to visit a number of prisoners in this camp, also pointed to the insufficient amount of water available. According to him, the prisoners had not washed since their detention a month or more earlier. Nor had they been able to change their clothes since their detention.

Dr Ibrahim Sulhan, who is detained at Ansar 3, confirmed that the health situation is deteriorating. He reported that many detainees are suffering from skin diseases, such as scabies, and stomach diseases, due to the quality of the food and the terrible hygienic conditions for storage and serving. For instance, on 19 April it was learnt that about

200 prisoners in Ansar 3 were suffering from stomach diseases after eating rotten cheese and margarine. *Hadashot* (25 April) quotes 'military sources at Ansar 3', who tell of dozens of cases of food-poisoning from rotten food, and of fifteen cases of dehydration due to lack of drinking-water. In a letter which the administrative detainees sent to the commander of Ansar 3, Colonel Tsemach (*Hadashot*, 19 April), they complain that 'we are being given worm-ridden "matza" because there is not enough bread'. They also complain that the toilets are blocked and flooded with excreta, so that it is impossible to use them. In addition to an improvement in food and health conditions, they demand to be allowed to receive daily papers and to watch television, an increase in drinking-water, and the provision of water for showers. They also demand to know what has happened to three administrative detainees from Gaza, whose location is still not known, and to be allowed to receive visits from lawyers.

Punishment

Hadashot (29 April) also gave details about punishment at Ansar 3:

> Because of the lack of cells for solitary confinement, collective punishments are sometimes used ... The standard collective punishment, according to testimonies, is lying down on the ground with the hands bound behind the back. In the sun of Ketziot this is a very questionable pleasure.

Great difficulties are placed before lawyers who want to enter the camp. By the second week of April, only one lawyer, Muhammad Na'amneh, had managed to enter the camp. Members of the Red Cross have also been there a number of times, but it is Red Cross policy not to publish their findings.

In the last week of April, Knesset member Dedi Zucker (Citizens Rights Movement) also visited Ketziot. According to *Hadashot* (29 April), he found Ansar 3 'not as terrible as it sounds. The conditions of imprisonment are tolerable, the accommodation is tolerable, the shortage of food is the result of a mistake, not of evil intent'. By contrast, it was Tamar Peleg, the representative of the Association of Civil Rights, who, speaking on Israeli television the same day, summarised conditions at Ansar 3 as 'inhuman'.

Sometimes, if the prisoners are lucky and are released, they are likely to suffer what Mehrez Menmen from the Gaza Strip suffered. He was released from Ansar 3 a month ago, with his eyes blindfolded, and his hands tied behind his back. He was thrown into the desert 5 kilometres from the Egyptian border and was picked up by a shepherd. He wandered for twenty-four days until he reached his home in Gaza.

Appeal by Palestinian women*

As the Palestinian people in the Palestinian occupied territories wage their most intense and widespread popular resistance since the occupation began in 1967, we call on the international community and all people of conscience to lend us their support in our struggle for self-determination and for an independent state under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, the sole and legitimate representative of our people everywhere.

Now in its eighth week, the uprising has continued to escalate and become more widespread in the form of continuous commercial strikes in towns, villages and refugee camps; organised demonstrations carried out by youths, women and professionals; the boycott of selected Israeli products; and a workers' strike against day labour in Israel. The Israeli response to the uprising from the very beginning has been brutal as usual and in arrogant defiance of internationally accepted humanitarian principles, and has included virtually every oppressive measures used against Palestinians throughout the course of the occupation.

Hundreds of people of all ages were wounded and maimed either by live ammunition used indiscriminately or from the effects of rubber bullets, tear and poisonous gas and severe beatings with batons at the hands of Israeli soldiers. The number of persons killed during the uprising, from 8 December 1987 to the end of January 1988, totals close to fifty men, women and children.

Another immediate response to the uprising was the expulsion orders issued against a number of Palestinians from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and the actual expulsion of four of these men in mid-January. The outrage expressed by the world comunity at the expulsion of people from their homeland seems not to have deterred the Israeli government; the expulsion of another five Palestinians seems imminent, and is certain to give a further impetus to the uprising of our people.

A further aspect of the Israeli response has been the detention of close to 2,000 young men and boys at hastily assembled detention camps and at other detention centres in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, where all forms of torture are practised. World attention was focused on the manner in which Israeli military justice was being meted out in summary trials, each lasting not more than a few minutes, and where charges against defendants are compiled in secret files to which neither lawyers nor defendants can have access. It was these flagrant violations of due process, and the principles of justice, which led all West Bank and Gaza lawyers to declare that they were unable to represent the detainees in court, since they were not able to provide the kind

* From *Khamsin Bulletin* (No. 2, May-June 1988).

of defence they were professionally obligated to conduct. Hundreds of young people have already been 'tried', sentenced to long prison terms, and have had heavy fines imposed upon them.

Israel has also implemented, along with expulsions, another administrative measure based on the British Mandate's Defence (Emergency) Regulations of 1945. A large number of individuals have been placed under administrative detention, and official Israeli information indicates that since early December 1987, 129 persons have been placed under administrative detention in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It is needless to say that both expulsion and administrative detention are administrative and extra-judicial measures and are contrary to any concept of human rights.

The latest Israeli tactic in confronting the ever-expanding uprising has been as ruthless and violent, although less exposed to the cameras of the international press. Ever since television screens the world over began transmitting daily reports of Israeli repression and violence, the outrage of the world community grew, making Israel realise that its policy of using live ammunition and indiscriminate killing was damaging its international, as well as domestic, standing. It was this realisation that led the Israeli government to adopt another, less public, means of violence, namely the use of brute physical force against Palestinians. The results of this new tactic are evident all over the occupied territories: children, men and women with broken limbs, bruised bodies and black eyes. Hundreds of reports confirm that this policy is aimed primarily at innocent bystanders, and even persons sitting inside their homes. And as TV and press agencies are being barred from entering tension areas, we are witnessing tales of horror where young men are being secretly subjected to severe beatings and poisonous gases in closed rooms away from the public eye, after which some have been carried away and deposited in deserted and remote areas with no first aid or transportation; some mothers are still searching for their missing children.

The Palestinian response to those Israeli measures has been marked by unified work encompassing all sectors of Palestinian society. Nationalist institutions, labour unions and mass organisations have collaborated in setting up popular committees that have been working around the clock to organise medical and food relief to villages, towns and refugee camps suffering from sieges and curfews. Every means is being used to pressure the Israeli authorities to allow relief supplies and personnel into those areas. However, when pressure has not succeeded, people have been willing to take the risk of smuggling supplies into these areas. A centralised fund-raising campaign has also been organised to collect donations.

Jerusalem
1 February 1988

The Palestinian Women in the Occupied Territories

Yesh Gvul appeal

In Hebrew, yesh gvul, *means 'there is a limit'; it also means 'there is a border'. A protest group by this name came into being in Israel following the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Its members pledged themselves to refuse to do military service in Lebanon. More recently, during the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories, the group extended its pledge and it now covers refusal to take part in the Israeli repression in those territories.*

As this letter goes out to you, nine reservist members of Yesh Gvul are in military prisons after refusing to take part in the campaign of repression in the occupied territories. The Palestinian insurgency is being met with brutal counter-measures which have claimed over 150 lives and left thousands injured and maimed; thousands more are under detention, many of them without trial. Flouting all standards of humanity or morality, the Israeli occupation authorities have adopted a systematic policy of collective punishment, penalising entire Palestinian communities – men, women and children – in the hope of breaking their resistance.

The government's rejection of negotiation in favour of untrammelled force represents precisely that philosophy against which Yesh Gvul has always campaigned. In its unique spearhead role in the Israeli peace movement, Yesh Gvul is joining with other groups in a continuous campaign of protests against this policy. A Yesh Gvul-sponsored declaration by reservists proclaiming their refusal to take a hand in suppressing the uprising has collected over 400 signatures. In response to the illegal means employed by the army, Yesh Gvul volunteers have distributed thousands of our booklets reminding soldiers – regulars and reservists alike – that it is their legal and moral duty to disobey unlawful orders: we are now preparing a second edition with information about *selective refusal of service*.

The 'refusenik' movement, which had such a startling impact during the Lebanon war, is indeed reviving rapidly, and we expect the weeks to come to bring a continuing sharp upturn in the number of soldiers who heed conscience in preference to the commands of their military superiors.

As the only group to offer refuseniks moral and practical support is Yesh Gvul, its slim resources are overtaxed. In particular, we are rapidly exhausting our support fund which aids the families of jailed refuseniks. On conviction, a refusenik is denied the official allowance for his family, which is often left without means of support. In such cases, our support fund helps with a modest grant. The current rise in the numbers of refuseniks is bringing increasing calls on the fund; without its constant replenishment, we will soon find ourselves unable to give the required aid.

Equally urgent is our protest campaign, whose needs are numerous and costly, e.g., paid advertisements listing names of refuseniks and reservists committed to resisting participation in repressive acts: experience shows that such publicity encourages other soldiers to do likewise.

Accordingly, your financial help is crucial.

Your moral aid too has a role to play: your message of support, your protest to the nearest Israeli legation, your efforts to publicise our campaign – all these are of great significance to the refuseniks as they defy the enormous social and legal pressure to which they are subjected.

You live thousands of miles away, but you cannot help being aware of events here. The current situation is grave, and it is deteriorating daily. The government is set on a reckless course whose only outcome must be continued suffering and bloodshed for both peoples, Israelis and Palestinians alike. As we saw in the case of Lebanon, nothing will ultimately deflect the government from its savage policy other than resistance from within – above all, from soldiers condemned to enforce that policy.

It is the mission of Yesh Gvul to foster that resistance. Your help will be invaluable.

PO Box 6953 Jerusalem 91068
PO Box 4172 Tel-Aviv 61041

Yesh Gvul

Book reviews

Arthur Jensen: consensus and controversy

Edited by SOHAN MODGIL and CELIA MODGIL (Brighton, Falmer Press, 1987). 420 pp. £35

What might one expect from a book which describes itself as one of a series of 'Master-Minds Challenged' – especially when the list of other such 'Masters' includes Hans Eysenck and B.F. Skinner? Leave aside for a moment the slightly dubious assumptions underlying the very concept of a 'master-mind', and concentrate on that subtitle – 'consensus and controversy'. Well, Professor Jensen has certainly been a controversial figure for the last two decades, ever since his article in the *Harvard Educational Review* in 1969 reopened an old argument about the reasons for the differences in school attainment and IQ scores between blacks and whites in the US. And there is certainly a broad consensus, amongst geneticists, neurobiologists, developmental psychologists and sociologists of education, that Jensen's view – that the origins of such differences lie in the genes – is deeply flawed, the product of typological thinking, statistical artefact and biological naivete. Virtually the only (academic) dissent comes from amongst certain psychometricians and New Right philosophers.

So if a book was going to retread the well-worn ground of this 1970's debate, you might have anticipated that it would have brought these minority dissenters face-to-face with the consensus which so robustly dismisses Jensenism. But you would be wrong. The editors make it clear from the outset that this is not their intention. Their first sentence states: 'During the last thirty years, Arthur Jensen's brilliant

contribution to knowledge has been well-known world-wide.' Their world, admittedly, has narrow horizons; I suspect it is largely confined to that small portion which subscribes to a peculiarly Anglo-Saxon psychometric tradition in educational psychology, which believes that to measure all is to understand all ('pseudometrics', as one of the few critics permitted to appear within this book describes it). It is indicative that of the twenty contributors to the book, fifteen are from North America, the others from the UK and Australasia. There is rather more to the world than this. And 'brilliant' seems a little over-strong for someone whose main contribution to thought has been a certain dogged persistence in burying himself in elaborate statistical reworkings of often more than a little suspect results, and a smart about-turn when the man he once described as his ideal scientist and perfect English gentleman, Cyril Burt, was caught with his hand in the data-till. Jensen's theoretical contributions, even on the strength of the most sycophantic of the contributors to this volume, are:

(a) a claim, that he himself retracts in the present book, that one might be able to use the presumed genetic inferiority of women on spatial perception tasks to ascertain the extent of the contribution of 'black' genes to other aspects of test-inferiority,

(b) a claim that one can divide intelligence into two 'levels' – a mechanical, rote-learning type, at which blacks are not inferior to whites, and a really creative ability, at which whites excel; and

(c) a claim that bias, in the strict mathematical sense of the term, does not occur in IQ testing.

Such theoretical claims go almost without challenge in this largely deferential text. Could this be because, as the editors themselves somewhat naively explain, their selection of contributors is being 'restricted to those who are objectively critical and who are knowledgeable ... some of the most publicised critics tend to have non-scientific axes to grind and their polemics are well-known'. It is thus scarcely surprising that the concluding chapter, by Jensen himself, falls over itself to return the compliments of the preceding ones; 'wise', 'thought-provoking', 'extending my theories in ways I had not myself fully thought out' – it is hard entirely to shake off the sensation of mutual back-scratching.

The editors' claim to the objectivity and value-neutrality of critical endeavour (whilst some of us would doubt that such value-free science exists) is laudable. Odd, then, that their choice of 'objective' authors permits Robert Gordon to link low black IQ with 'pro-Marxism', urban riots and 'participation in ... left-wing dictatorships' and to dismiss Bernard Coard's work on racism in English schools by remarking that Coard was later charged with conspiracy to kill Maurice Bishop in Grenada, or Robert Nichols to assert: 'Blacks are disproportionately responsible for a number of social problems that may at least in part result indirectly from the mean difference in ability.' Clearly, Sohan

Modgil and Celia Modgil are working within what Stuart Hall once referred to as the 'BBC sense' of the concept of balance. It all depends on where you put the fulcrum. As Hall went on to point out, one can have a perfectly balanced discussion about the deportation of blacks from Britain: on the one hand, an argument for deportation by boat, on the other, for deportation by air ...

To let in the critics would have been to begin by challenging the concept of intelligence as a reified object, the fixed property of an individual, and to counterpose instead the understanding of intelligence as a process, the product of dialectical interaction of individuals with their natural and social environments. It would have been to avoid the crassness of the contributor who offers us the view that, whether or not we believe that intelligence is differentiated by class or race, at least we must all concede that children get more intelligent as they get older (we concede no such thing; we recognise that the development of any child – or other animal – involves a changing range of competences. Babies are very 'intelligent' at being babies, but not at generating statistical artefacts. So intellectually culture-bound is this text that only one contributor even mentions Piaget, and that disparagingly.) To let the critics in would also have prevented many of the contributors from so far missing the point that they imagine that the alternative to 'Jensenism' is some equally naive environmentalism, which looks for single 'factors' in the environment that could, rather than genes, result in IQ differences. The main critics of IQ-theory specifically reject such dichotomising of genes and environment, but instead attack the monumental weight of statistical artefact which has been assembled on foundations so precariously anchored to the real world.

The result of such conspicuous avoidance of debating most of the real issues is to leave much of the text of this book reading like the merest scholasticism. Imagine that in the late seventeenth century a debate had been called for amongst the few astronomers who still believed that the sun rotated round the earth as to whether its fiery chariot was best described as being pulled by stallions or oxen, while quite ignoring the fact that Galileo's telescope and Newton's gravitational theory had made their musings obsolete, and you have a feel for the quality of much of this discussion – but one should remember that where the church which denies the earth goes round the sun also controls the teaching, the debate is not *purely* academic.

There is, nonetheless, *some* freshly iconoclastic air in the book. Peter Schonemann elegantly knocks the numerological nonsense of test gerrymandering on the head with a neat demonstration of the fact that the statistical manipulations of 'pseudometrics' do not imply biological realities. And James Flynn applies what should be the coup de grace by reporting the recent observations, from New Zealand, Holland, Japan and the UK, of dramatic rises in average population IQ scores over the

past twenty years or so. These several longitudinal studies provide direct evidence that, in absolute contradiction to any possible prediction from genetic theory, but using the methodology that lies at the heart of psychometry, population IQ measures are highly labile. Whatever is the explanation of these dramatic rises in measured IQ, they cannot be accounted for within the confines of Jensenism; the gaff has finally been blown.

So striking are these findings that in recent letters to the scientific journal *Nature*, one of Eysenck's keener students and contributor to this book, Chris Brand, has essentially recanted. By contrast, Jensen, on the evidence of his final chapter here, still refuses, like Galileo's opponents, to put the telescope to his eye. He dismisses the Flynn data on the grounds that, as they cannot be explained within his theory, they must be an artefact, and ends, a trifle unguardedly, by simply regretting that, within the present political climate, the eugenic prescriptions he would clearly like to use to regulate the excessive breeding of those of low IQ are unacceptable, but who knows what the next century may bring? Who indeed? Not Jensen or the Jensenites, nor on this showing, the editors of the present book.

Open University STEVEN ROSE

Fragile Victory: a Nicaraguan community at war

By ALISON ROOPER (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987). 229 pp. £6.95

As I was reading Alison Rooper's *Fragile Victory*, the news came through that President Reagan had failed to secure more official funding for the Nicaraguan contra, the counterrevolutionary army created and sustained by the United States. Will this ease the pressure on the fledgling revolution, providing a space for the threatened social and economic programmes that Rooper chronicles? Or will life continue as before? As she reminds us, when Congress cut off aid in 1984, right-wing private sources took its place. Now, individual US conservatives, Republican politicians, business interests and evangelical churches are already pledging their support.

But Rooper also charts the people's will to survive, a will born out of a long history of resistance. One of the main strengths of her book is an awareness of the Nicaraguan project of discovering a national identity hitherto obscured by the distortions of US domination. 'It is my belief', she writes, 'that no one can fully comprehend the spirit in Nicaragua today – the speeches of President Ortega, the defiance of a 17-year-old soldier, the determination and pride of a woman who works the fields with a rifle at the ready – without understanding this history.' Her

study focuses on one community, Condega, and through unearthing individual biography and local memories, she introduces the different stages in the revolution's past. Particular experiences fill out the story of the Sandinista Liberation Front (FSLN) from its inception in 1961, its perseverance as a tiny force of some one hundred guerillas in 1975, to the national insurrection which toppled Somoza only four years later.

Condega, lying on the Pan American highway near the Honduran border, is a small northern town surrounded by mountains. Its geographical position accounts for its past importance to the FSLN guerillas hounded by Somoza's National Guard, and, since their victory, to the contra bands which slide in from their Honduran camps and hide up in the hills, devastating the small isolated communities surrounding Condega. The book's subtitle is *A Nicaraguan community at war*, and Rooper describes, from individual testimonies and from personal observation of the charred remains of homesteads, schools, and cooperatives, the sickening atrocities of what Reagan chooses to call 'freedom-fighters'. She hears of the terror they inspire, comparable only to that inflicted by the National Guard whose leaders and methods they inherit. She has vivid material on forcible recruitment to contra ranks, and on the bitter experiences of those who have managed to escape. The awareness of danger and readiness for defence permeate the book.

Rooper correctly points out that in its dedication to defence of the revolution, Condega is not typical. But in spite of her visit to a pro-contra village, she does not remind us enough that many other areas are characterised by apathy, or by suspicion of all things Sandinista. It is striking that communities most harassed by the Guard in the past are now those most committed to the FSLN. Condega's humming activity around revolutionary projects is a natural continuation of the town's struggle against Somoza, when today's workers', women's and neighbourhood associations were first founded to organise resistance. This activity is conveyed in the book through portraits of community organisers, union leaders, health and education volunteers, fighters, farmers and priests.

The role of the radical church, as well as a conservative Catholic hierarchy, with its direct contra links, run through Rooper's account. The importance of religion in the formation of political consciousness from the 1960s to the present is something that a predominantly secular Brtish Left finds hard to appreciate. I was once at a meeting billed to show a film on women in Nicaragua. When it was announced that the film had not arrived, and would be replaced by another on the church and revolution, half the audience left the hall. This ethnocentrism makes it impossible to understand one of the mainsprings of the anti-Somoza struggle and the nature of the revolution it achieved.

Nicaragua's religious culture, however, also assists the contra in their ideological campaign. Contra radio programmes funded by the CIA

beam their poison from Honduras into isolated areas. Communists will take your land, your children, and your religious freedom; communist equals Sandinista equals Antichrist. Particularly hot on these themes are the North American fundamentalist sects springing up around Condega, as elsewhere, urging a rejection of the revolution of the military service it demands.

Religious and military structures, especially those of the opposition, are male-dominated affairs. But the role of women in the revolution is reflected throughout the book not only in the chapter devoted to this subject, but also as a formidable presence in community activity, accentuated by the absence of young men fighting at the front. In their own words, women tell of their personal transformation through their involvement, their capabilities and strengths expanding with their widening horizons.

Rooper combines her personal account of her meeting with these women, and men, of the community with extensive background research. The result is not only a comprehensive review of many aspects of the Nicaraguan experience, but also a valuable insight into national policies and projects, such as those of health, education and land reform, by watching their implementation and impact at a grassroots level. Despite this, however, the book often fails to come to life, and some of its strengths – comprehensive coverage, attention to history – have their drawbacks. The leaps between past and present, between local and national history, prevent our absorption into Condegan life, and Rooper's own narrative is flattened by the weight of historical material already available elsewhere. In the interests of providing a thorough context, she leaves too little space for what is unique – her own insights, her impressions of events and the particular experience of the people she encounters. The untidy reality of a revolution, therefore, comes out too neatly packaged. Individual portraits are often used to illustrate points rather than portray living human beings with their personal quirks and complexities. Dedication to a revolution does not necessarily resolve personal inconsistencies, and I wanted more of the loose ends. Similarly, the problems facing the Sandinistas are well drawn out, but the conflicts and contradictions inherent in what Nicaraguans call 'the process' emerge less clearly.

What does come through about Condega is 'an incredible optimism in the air, the feeling that people were making changes to their lives, that life was progressing, things were improving or going to improve'. Now, three years on, I wonder if she would say the same. Rooper has given us a testimony of the courage and endurance of a people in struggle. But the escalation of the difficulties she details, the collapsing economy, the demands of defence, have left many Nicaraguans exhausted and disillusioned, with little energy left to spare from trying to survive. This is the real cost of the war, and the reason why President Reagan and US

conservatives will continue to support the contra.

London HERMIONE HARRIS

Israel's Ayatollahs: Meir Kahane and the far right in Israel

By RAPHAEL MERGUI and PHILIPPE SIMONNOT (London, Saqi Books, 1987). 203pp. £7.95

To call Knesset member Rabbi Meir Kahane 'an Israeli ayatollah' is to utter less than a half-truth; for he is not just a religious fanatic, but a proponent of a Nazi-style ideology. An unabashed racist, he proposes that all Arabs be deported ('transferred') from Greater Israel, which should become a fully and officially theocratic state. He also advocates an Israeli version of the Nürnberg Laws, according to which a Gentile man would be committing a criminal offence if he has sexual relations with a Jewish woman.

Half of *Israel's Ayatollahs* is taken up with a brief biographical sketch of, and an extended interview with Kahane. This is the interesting and valuable part of the book. The authors, two French journalists, have to keep their own boringly unoriginal opinions in the background, and allow the rabid rabbi to rave unrestrained. He turns out to be extremely shrewd, much more intelligent than he appears when glimpsed on Israeli TV. (This former FBI agent has an unfortunate facial tic and speaks Hebrew with a funny American accent.) In fact, he proves to be considerably more astute than his interviewers, around whom he runs rings.

At least two important points are made in this interview. First, that Zionism is incompatible with democracy: 'For me that's cut and dried: there's no question of setting up democracy in Israel, because democracy means equal rights for all, irrespective of racial or religious origins. Therefore democracy and Zionism cannot go together.' Unlike most other Zionists, especially the so-called left-wing ones, the rabbi can be honest on this point, because for him democracy is a foreign idea, alien to the true spirit of Judaism.

The second important point – indeed it permeates the interview – is that the racism practised by Zionism (which Kahane merely proposes to bring to its extreme logical conclusion) is ideologically nourished and sustained by the Jewish religion, in its Orthodox rabbinical version. The authors do not quite know what to do with the insight that Kahane forces upon them. So they turn it into a means of obfuscation: 'Therefore to call Kahane a racist would be tantamount to saying that Judaism is racist.' The implication here is that as the Jewish religion

cannot possibly be racist, neither is this rabbi.*

The second half of the book is a long anti-climax. It consists of an exceedingly superficial survey of the parties and groups that constitute Israel's right-wing fringe, with thumbnail sketches of some of their leaders, such as the nuclear scientist sometimes called Israel's Dr Strangelove, Professor Yuval Ne'eman, who receives very flattering treatment.

No serious attempt is made to dive beneath the surface and to uncover, in the midst of 'respectable' Zionism, the large iceberg, of which Kahane, Ne'eman & Co are merely the visible tip. What is revealed though, in small glimpses here and there, is the shallowness of the two journalists, and indeed the racist notions with which their own mental world seems to abound. Thus, for example, one of their arguments against Jewish colonisation of the Occupied Territories is that it might encourage Jews to move out of areas inside 'lesser' Israel, such as the Galilee, where half of the population is Arab. This, they tell us, woudl be a 'detrimental consequence', because it might lead to 'demographic imbalances' in 'lesser' Israel. In other words, colonisation of the West Bank is undesirable because it might come at the expense of the racist plan of Judaisation of the Galilee.

Throughout, the authors try to create the impression that the position represented by Rabbi Kahane is merely that of a bizarre lunatic fringe, of little importance in Israeli politics. Thus, they tell us that his programme of deporting the Arabs from Israel and the Occupied Territories has no chance of being adopted by the Israelis. Alas, since the original French version of the book was published (1985), many other public figures in Israel, some far from marginal, have come out in support of that same programme. The danger is very real indeed.

London MOSHE MACHOVER

The Way of the Black Messiah: the hermeneutical challenge of black theology as a theology of liberation

By THEO WITVLIET (London, SCM Press, 1987). 332 pp. £12.50

The aim of *The Way of the Black Messiah* is to explain Afro-American black theology to a European audience. Based upon the assumption that white theologians do not understand (rather than understand only too well) the implications of black theology, Witvliet attempts to explain how black theology came to be and also to indicate how it might

* As an antidote to this nonsensical conclusion, the reader may consult I. Shahak, 'The Jewish religion and its attitude to non-Jews' in *Khamsin* (Nos 8 and 9, 1981).

challenge Eurocentric theology in terms acceptable to European sensibilities.

In order to identify the origin and development of this particular theology of liberation, Witvliet engages in an extensive review of the literature and the debates that have emerged from it. Following accepted opinion, he locates the beginnings of a self-conscious academic black theology in the crisis of faith suffered by the civil rights movement when the soul of America refused to be saved. As Martin Luther King's dream crumbled before the harsh reality of the government's campaign against black protest, and with the growth of Black Power and the murder of the Dreamer, black Christians were forced to question their role in the march towards freedom. How were they to live in a land that seemed hell-bent on destroying their hopes of a better tomorrow? How were they to relate to a white church and liberal opinion that mourned the death of King yet drew back from black people as they put aside the tactics of self-sacrifice and 'soul-force' to take up armed self-defence and the rhetoric of black revolution? Witvliet argues that black theology was born when black Christians and their theologians publicly broke faith with the white church to side unequivocally with the aims and demands of Black Power.

Central to an understanding of this theo-political break, Witvliet suggests, is the work of James H. Cone, who in 1969 published a theological defence of the right of Afro-American Christians to think and act for themselves. In *Black Theology and Black Power*, Cone not only argued that the Black Power movement was nothing less than the Spirit of God challenging capitalist America to repent, but that, in the context of racist North America, Christ must be seen as a black man. Cone reasoned that where there were black people there was oppression, and where there was oppression there was God who identified with the oppressed and their efforts towards liberation. Therefore, in America Christ identified with the oppressed blacks by taking on blackness and inspiring Afro-Americans to struggle for their freedom and all Christians to choose whether to support the movement towards liberation or the forces of exploitation. *Black Theology and Black Power* presented a theological and political challenge to the people of God to follow the Black Messiah in combating the racism of white America. However, in the application of that challenge to the European situation, Witvliet phrases the struggle in significantly different terms:

> Confrontation with [sic] this Black Messiah is a confrontation with the darkness of barely conscious anxiety and guilt. But anyone who sees the confrontation as a challenge to enter the world of blackness and to listen to the stories that are told there will discover, surprisingly, that there is still room at the table of the beloved community.

In his attempt to present black theology as a personal challenge to white

theologians, Witvliet shifts the emphasis of blackness and the Black Messiah so as to encourage a change in attitude rather than theological and political commitment. The Black Messiah is separated from the strident politics of Black Power and interred in the seminary as a colourful, albeit mummified, addition to ecumenical theological discourse, whilst blackness, divorced from the fight against racism, becomes a means for indifferent intellectuals to attain spiritual comfort and mental health.

In a profound sense *The Way of the Black Messiah* is Witvliet's intellectual response to the challenge of blackness levelled by the likes of Cone. That he has read widely in the areas of black religion and politics is unquestionable, as is his personal integrity in wrestling with prejudices. Ironically, though, it seems to be this very intimate involvement that has allowed Witvliet to present the task for white theologians in terms of entering some idealised notion of blackness, rather than the more difficult and necessary task of de-nigrating the white church and all that it stands for.

Birmingham PAUL GRANT

Towards a Jewish Theology of Liberation

By MARC H. ELLIS (Maryknoll, Orbis, 1987). 147pp. £7.50

The Jewish people, contends Ellis, are at a crossroads between fidelity to or betrayal of their values.

> To be faithful to our ancestors, particularly those who have struggled, suffered and died in the Holocaust, is to be attentive to their cries, which must guide us. But fidelity to our own values and history is intimately connected to the struggles for liberation of others; the brokenness of our past is betrayed, our political empowerment made suspect, when others become our victims.

The author has a very simple message: the reaction to the Holocaust was the creation of a secular state, Israel. But this 'empowerment' of the Jewish people has in itself become another idol – and one which in its impact and influence goes against the values and ethics which naturally spring out of the Jewish inheritance. The consequences of such empowerment, Ellis takes pains to point out, are the invasion of Lebanon, the occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, support for reactionary, racist and authoritarian regimes world-wide. To be true to the spirit of Jewish history in the post-Holocaust world, however, means to extend solidarity to those who suffer.

It may not be a new message but the context is important. For it expresses in theological and spiritual terms the political dilemmas which have been facing Jews, and it does so whilst stressing the political

climate in which Jews are today trying to assert their values. The rise of neo-Conservatism in the USA has, for example, made for new definitions and alliances. On the one hand, 'the fundamentalist Christian groups that have long held anti-Semitic views are now in the vanguard of pro-Israel sentiments' and are being courted by Jewish organisations. On the other, anti-Semitism itself is being redefined as anything in the area of realpolitik which appears to be inimical to Zionist Jews in the USA or to Israel.

Ellis develops his argument by examining a whole spectrum of Jewish philosophy and theology – from Irving Greenberg, for example, who believes in 'empowerment almost without restraint' to Roberta Strauss Feuerlicht who believes that 'what binds all Jews from antiquity to the present is not statehood but the burden they placed upon themselves and posterity when they internalised morality and gave the world the ethical imperative'. Hannah Arendt, Martin Buber, Elie Wiesel, Walter Benjamin and many others are all grist to Ellis' moral mill.

Finally, he draws up his blue-print for a new (post Holocaust) Jewish theology of liberation. It has to be distinctly Jewish, yet universally humanist; has to take account of history; has to be all inclusive (of the religious and the secular, the male and the female); has to balance the survival of the Jewish people with the preservation of its message of community; and has, above all, to recover the prophetic and liberation themes. Anti-Semitism must be confronted at every opportunity but never used as an ideological weapon to instil fear and counter legitimate criticism.

The Jewish tradition 'struggles within the dialectics of Holocaust and empowerment, survival and ethics, exile and renewal', writes Ellis. But where, he asks, can we move to? Solidarity must become the watchword, concrete acts of justice are needed. In theological terms that means recognising that the Palestinian people have been deeply wronged. 'We must repent our transgressions and stop them immediately.'

Ellis is at his weakest when he looks for specific movements of Jewish renewal. He can only suggest the New Jewish Agenda (in the USA), Oz VeShalom (in Israel), and feminist consciousness within Jewry. And he has a tendency both to get carried away with his own love of words and to become repetitious. But he is easy to read, never preachy nor patronising. An enthusiasm runs through the book and the tone rings with genuine commitment and concern. Would that more Jews could hear him.

Institute of Race Relations JENNY BOURNE

Cathedral of the August Heat: a novel of Haiti

By PIERRE CLITANDRE (translated by Bridget Jones) (London, Readers International, 1987). 159 pp. £4.95

Recent events have brought Haiti on to our front pages and TV screens, but apart from magazine features on its popular painters, or the occasional documentary on voodoo that is not merely touristic, we remain mostly ignorant of material that could show us the reality of this, the poorest state in the western hemisphere, a free-fire zone for United States capital, and home of some of the most exploited of its recent immigrant proletariat. Maurice Lemoine's *Bitter Sugar* (1985) and Jacques Arcelin's film, *Bitter Cane* (1984), describe the political economy: small farmers forced into seasonal work for the big sugar companies, driven into servitude in the Dominican Republic, to the city and marginal labour or unemployment, or into the undocumented emigrant boats. The sight in Arcelin's film of drowned men lying like logs on the Florida shore, and the testimony of a garment worker who accepts sexual abuse as the price of keeping her sweatshop job, stay vividly in the mind. Pierre Clitandre's novel is the story of people like them, but told very differently.

The subtitle, 'a novel of Haiti', confirms that its protagonist is as much the community of a Port-au-Prince shanty-town, with its shared dreams and nightmares, stories, visions and melodramas, as it is any one of the individuals around whom the plot is elaborately structured. John, the driver of the *tap-tap* bus, the prostitute Madeleine, mother of his son, Johnny Dove (later christened Raphael), Passiona, 'the mint-scented woman', and the workers Dinombien and Dorisme are like figures who emerge in close-up from a crowded painting, rather than characters developed in depth. They grow and change as their world of shacks and graveyards survives catastrophes and makes sense of its seemingly chaotic experience.

The novel presents a difficulty in that events may be referred to before they are told at length, and recalled elliptically, until they have for the reader the same allusive force they carry for the 'dispossessed' themselves. Such incidents include the story of twenty men drowned in a flooded sewer from which floats the body of a 'hag', which is then stoned and crucified to avert her obeah powers. The men who carry out this duty are called the 'mosquito-hunters', from the smoke rising from their swampy and excrement-laden corner of the settlement. To ease the problem of public defecation they build a line of latrines, planted with 'rose laurels and yellow leaf shrubs where the mud had dried'. Rose laurels are a frequent symbol of tenacious life, whether out of control, engulfing a priest's house overnight and turning his bones into branches, or symbolising resistance, when children are battered to death for singing about their sudden abundant flowering. Sweet-smelling

plants – citronella, mint and lemon-balm – flowers, butterflies and stars are elements of a mythology that nourishes the inhabitants of a prison-slum who slop out every morning into the channels between their 'box-houses'. Stench and disease (flu, plague, cholera, typhoid, measles and 'blue fever'), the smells of 'ram-goat', engine-oil, sex, sweat and faeces are the dark and inescapable background to whatever is sustaining to the denizens of 'Death's Door', 'Sorrow Alley', 'Jesus Grave' and 'Seven-Dagger Cut'.

Almost hidden by the wealth of detail – the procession of Vivi, the menacing Carnival doll, the bedroom where the Colonel keeps the 'Brown-skinned girl', Passiona's trinket stall – are three distinct themes. The first is the inextricable synthesis of Catholicism and the religion of Ogun, *veve* signs and libations of rum, milk and water; an obeah-man prays to St James the Great, and Raphael is baptised only when the goddess Erzulie-the-Great, who 'resembled the Virgin of Guadelupe', gives an auspicious dream-sign. The second theme is the folkloric one of the Wanderer, Diamond-Rivermaid with her stolen comb, and the long-haired, brown-skinned girl in the white dress. The third is the slow building of political consciousness by a process of accretion that mirrors the form of the narrative. All three strands subtly inter-connect, and the antitheses of individual and collective, passivity and action, obscurity and clarity, work dynamically throughout the book. As the action moves towards a climax on the Feast of the Assumption (the anniversary of L'Ouverture's revolt), the author, through the character of a Profession Belbonjour, comments on the role of intellectuals like himself in struggle.

Pierre Clitandre's usually well-judged tone sometimes wavers into sentimentality, and the translation of dialogue is not always consistent, but the novel repays close and repeated reading. It reveals why Haitians are ready to face being shot down while demanding their democratic rights, and how deeply rooted is their urge towards liberation.

Thames Polytechnic IMOGEN FORSTER

Gunnar Myrdal and Black-White Relations: the use and abuse of an American dilemma, 1944-1969

By DAVID W. SOUTHERN (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1987). 341 pp.

In 1944 a seminal book about black Americans was published. *An American Dilemma* by Gunnar Myrdal caused a storm of controversy and had far reaching repercussions. It had been envisioned and funded by the Carnegie Corporation and was essentially a functional, rather than a scholarly piece of work. Myrdal was a Swedish economist who

believed that the American creed enshrined the principle of equality and that racial discrimination was an anomaly that the system could absorb and correct. Using a team of seconded United States scholars of varying colours and creeds, *An American Dilemma* set out to describe and analyse the existent condition of black Americans. The causes and consequences of this condition were evaluated from the optimistic perspective that racism was a problem that time and government intervention could swiftly solve. Myrdal saw the inequality and poverty of black America as the country's greatest failure. He also saw an unparalleled opportunity for positive social engineering to change dramatically the entire situation.

The book received a mixed reception when it was first published. According to David Southern, 'no group reacted more favorably to the *Dilemma* than blacks'. Yet even among the black community there were harsh critics. Ralph Ellison found much to admire in the study, but he strongly rejected Myrdal's dismissal of black culture as 'pathological'. He knew that black culture had a unique dynamic and he also knew that the changes Myrdal sought could only be accomplished through 'a change of the basis of society'. Carter Woodson was one among others who found the book seriously flawed. White criticism came from the Right and the Left and from sociologists who felt their territory had been disastrously invaded by a foreign economist.

Nonetheless, this was a book that influenced government policy. The battle against segregation and inequality that began in the Truman era was openly linked to Myrdal's findings. Indeed, the survey was quoted in the government report, 'To Secure These Rights'. The author further argues that it helped create a climate of opinion where the *Brown v The School Board of Topeka* decision could be taken and could seriously begin to establish educational integration in the recalcitrant South. According to Southern, 'In straining the multitudinous racial facts through the American ethos, Myrdal created a classic synthesis and an environmental paradigm that, for good or ill, dominated liberal thinking on the race issue after World War II'. He also acknowledges that the book owed a great deal of its sympathetic reception and functional impact to a pre-existing shift in the public conscience over the immorality of racism.

This lucid, well-researched and logically written account makes it clear that Mrydal's work was meant to make a real difference to the extent of racial prejudice and discrimination in the United States. It was intended to lead to fundamental change. Southern is under no illusions about the failure of this aim. There were improvements but they were limited, and in some instances have even been reversed in recent years. The fundamental causes of black poverty were never explored by the book or by the government. Neither questioned the basic structure of the economy or society and any transformations were more cosmetic

than real. *The American Dilemma* provided no blueprint for a non-racist America, but it did describe the racism that existed in the early 1940s and exhorted the government and society to end this anomaly. That exhortation still needs to be heard.

Department of American Studies,
University of Keele

MARY ELLISON

Fighting apartheid: a cartoon history

By INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE AND AID FUND and UNESCO (London, IDAF, 1987). 76 pp. £3

From the irony of 'discovery' to the confidence of victory, this cartoon book sweeps through the history of South Africa in just seventy-six imaginative pages. Not for the well-read critic or academic this journey. The words and pictures streak violent and enraging scenes across the pages, too absurd merely to be mulled over, too painful to be cast aside. The drooling caricatures play out the inverted logic that is South Africa – the massacres at Kassinga, Sharpeville, Maseru shown as its bitter end. The rough sketches unceremoniously expose the ridiculous absurdity of the apartheid laws in the creation and reinforcement of ethnicity. Nat the magician:

> 'First we separate the whites from the rest of the population. But look! there are more of them than of us'.
> 'So we divide them. But now there are still more Bantu than whites!'
> 'So we divide the Bantu groups into groups based on language!'
> 'Hey Presto! we whites are in the majority and are safe to run the show . . . '

Even the old pictures, familiar from the turn of century and once sacred as records of noble conquest, are rudely subverted. Scathingly frank 'thought bubbles' reduce greatness to greed, might to savagery, and history is brought refreshingly to life. What is for the most part a success in the book is the fusion of the concepts of struggle, growth and development with the images and text. The bold message provides the initial background for young people and those who want to understand the basic challenge posed by South Africa. However, the very success of that over-simplification of ideology, politics, economics and racism into visual concepts somewhat weakens the book. Nevertheless, given the paucity of books available here for young people, on South Africa, this is a welcome addition.

Institute of Race Relations

BUSI CHAANE

Social Work in a Multi-racial Society

By PETER ELY and DAVID DENNEY (Aldershot, Gower Press, 1987) 231 pp. £24

Social work, much maligned and attacked by both left and right, has become a rather timid and conservative profession, lagging behind in whatever the current fad in research or concern may be. But what it lacks in responsiveness it makes up in the sheer quantity of policy documents and reports once it feels the coast is clear. Consequently, over recent months, there has been a constant stream of documents all trying to include the ethnic or (if they feel political) race dimension, each regurgitating the ideas of its predecessors. These mainly centre on the need to make social work more sensitive to the different cultural needs and cultural preferences of black communities. Superficially, *Social Work in a Multi-racial Society* seemed quite promising with its introductory chapters on race and ethnicity, the post-war development of immigration controls, and an analysis of race relations legislation and discrimination.

Unfortunately, the reader is soon disappointed with the uncritical reproduction of much of the literature already available. References are made to the work of Stuart Hall and A. Sivanandan, but are so peripheral that the emphasis of these authors on the way in which the state (including its welfare side) has shifted towards greater authoritarianism, especially over race, is totally ignored. Such superficiality again emerges in the authors' acknowledgement that there has been a shift from 'assimilation' and 'integration' to 'pluralism' within the discourse on race, yet the implications of this as they affect professional social work are neither explored nor analysed. They miss the point that this 'ideological' shift has laid the basis for the development of Racial Awareness Training and 'multiculturalism', which have in turn depoliticised the whole question of racism and anti-racism. And it is this decanting of the political aspect of racism and the failure to analyse social work as a form of control within capitalism which ultimately leads to the weakness of the book.

The authors proceed to look at social work with black people with the keen eye of latter day anthropologists wading, khaki-clad, through the urban jungle and spying out our run-down social services shacks. In their descriptions of the exotically different behaviour of the black community they reintroduce probably the worst aspects of race relations 'thinking'. All the old stereotypes pop up to support the 'new', liberal, racist thesis – that it is the preferences, weaknesses and contradictions *within* black communities that somehow encourage racism, or allow it to be successful.

For the West Indians, it is the rather loose family structure split asunder by the long suffering stoicism of the elderly and the rebelliousness

of the young.

> The looser ties may contribute to feelings of loneliness (elderly). There may be generational differences in reactions to the attitudes of the host society, the younger generations being less inclined to accept their difficulties with the equanimity of the elders.

As for the Asians, their culture, we learn, is caught between the old and the new: the patriarchal, gerontocratic and overbearing family structure of the elderly in conflict with the liberating forces of modernity lodged within the second generation.

> Those men who arrived as dependants have to rely on their children for advice and pocket money and are unable to occupy their culturally preferred patriarchal role. Elderly women who expected to rely on the services of a devoted daughter-in-law may find instead that she is at work, so they are expected to help out. There may be tensions with more anglicised grandchildren.

Or again, the reason why so many black youth are criminalised, our authors feel, is not so much the systematic racism that pervades the police and judiciary but rather poor communications and the inability of young blacks properly to express themselves:

> Black parents and children are less likely to have access to good legal advice and more difficulty in exercising their rights and understanding the proceedings. In a tense, embarrassing situation, Afro-Caribbeans may smile, laugh or look away which could make a poor impression on the bench.

Ah, so now we know why black youth tend to get greater custodial sentences.

The failure of the welfare services to meet the needs of black clients is seen as residing within the cultural differences that are presumed to exist between the expectations of black people and those of the welfare services. So, all that is required is to spell out where these differences exist and drop in a dose of cultural and race awareness training. The whole question of the relationship of professional social work to the poor, the homeless and the unemployed, the hand in glove relationship it has with the police (especially over mental health sectioning) are never seriously addressed. There is also no debate on the implications of attacks by the central state on local authority funding and how these affect conurbations where there are large black communities. The book calls not for any major changes within social work theory and practice but instead for additional resources to cover the 'race-dimension'. This sounds increasingly hollow now that many social service departments are having to implement sizeable cuts. Furthermore, for a book that proclaims its democratic and anti-racist intentions, it is odd that there

is no discussion of how privatising the social services will affect the black community. All in all it feels curiously out of date – like much of the literature already collecting dust in the offices of our overworked and harassed social workers.

Haringey SHAHID TILLY

Hogarth, Walpole and Commercial Britain

By DAVID DABYDEEN (London, Hansib Publishing, 1987). 167 pp, £15.95

Somewhat like a second novel, this book suffers by comparison with the author's first work on Hogarth. In *Hogarth's blacks: images of blacks in eighteenth-century art* Dabydeen had something new to say about Hogarth, and said it well. The message in this second book is more diffuse. Nonetheless, there is much to interest the student of eighteenth-century life and art, and many comparisons to be made with our own times.

Dabydeen's stated aim is to reinterpret some of Hogarth's early works (in particular 'The South Sea Scheme' (1721) and 'A Harlot's Progress' (1732)) to show that they contain satirical elements directed against the commercialism and corruption of Walpole's regime – the consensus of established opinion seeing Hogarth's early works as a series of moral rather than political satires.

It is difficult to disagree with the author's analysis. As he himself points out, one of the enduring strengths of Hogarth's art is the wealth of detailed symbolism, which has been open to interpretation and re-interpretation by scholars and observers since the moment the paint dried on the canvas. By design, his political satire was subtle, so much so that he was favoured by the prime minister himself and given a commission to engrave the 'Walpole salver' (now in the Victoria & Albert museum).

Some of the most fascinating aspects of the book are the striking and possibly unintended parallels with events and personalities from our own political era. Dabydeen plunges us into the cauldron of the 'South Sea Bubble', a time of mad speculation when fortunes were made and lost almost overnight. The parallels with 'Black Monday' are obvious now, but must be fortuitous, since this book was published before the stock market crash. Money made corruptly out of the South Sea Company went to enrich a few at the expense of the many. This new money was spent on luxury items: 'There has appeared in London 200 new coaches and chariots'. There follows a description of the frenzied buying and selling of South Sea stock, how it became a national obsession, and a contemporary account of the jargon used – 'like a tower of

Babel' – incomprehensible to outsiders. Britain under Walpole was now an 'asylum for publick plunderers'. Industry and commerce had become the sacred ideal – the poor must work hard and be honest, while the rich could be dishonest with impunity. Today, an ex-Cabinet minister can ignore the irony in criticising the nurses for 'moonlighting' to make ends meet, while drawing fat fees for directorships on top of his MP's salary.

Tradespeople, 'sons of grocers and cobblers', rose to positions of eminence. An MP, John Ward, was expelled from Parliament for fraud and forgery and imprisoned, but his sentence was not repealed – he whiled away the time in gaol by torturing cats. Financial swindlers were arrested in Europe and extradited. Walpole used the Bank of England in a deal with the South Sea Company. A prison warder who had murdered a prisoner was acquitted, while at the same time thousands of the poor were sentenced for petty crimes. Through Hogarth's prints march a cavalcade of corrupt characters, their misdemeanours exposed. Dabydeen guides us through the complexities.

Hogarth was interested in hospitals. He was a governor of St Bartholomew's in London and gave paintings to this and other hospitals. He did, however, have a healthy distrust of doctors and used the quack as a traditional symbol of deceit (Walpole himself was commonly satirised as a quack). Perhaps in a post National Health Service era we can look forward to a return to the image of doctors as the 'embodiment of riches got by humbug and deceit'.

Censorship was also an issue in the eighteenth century. Walpole disliked opposition and in 1737 the Theatre Licensing Act censored playwrights and curtailed productions hostile to his administration. Walpole rewarded philistinism while neglecting genuine literary talent.

This book has been carefully researched, presentation is crisp and the prints are well reproduced in black and white – though I cannot understand why the same print of the South Sea Scheme should appear on page 20 and again slightly enlarged on page 33.

Walpole served continuously as Prime Minister for twenty-one years, the longest period in British history. Mrs Thatcher has recently become the longest continuously serving prime minister of this century, and aims to 'go on and on'. We need a Hogarth to catalogue the ills and outrages of our own corrupt society and to prick the bubble of pride and folly of our rulers.

Clent, Worcs ROSLYN ZALIN

Anti-racist Science Teaching

Edited by DAWN GILL and LES LEVIDOW (London, Free Association Books, 1987). 323 pp. £8.95

Pity the poor scholar, doomed in his formative years (girls rarely figure in the scenarios of today's educational reformers) to a diet of schooling made relevant to his experience, curiosity, or the world in which he lives. 'True education in the humanities', says Roger Scruton, one of the most notorious of right-wing educationalists, 'is a kind of extended war against relevance'. And, it seems, if teachers simply take on the present realities of that pupil's life – whether of nuclear power in whose shadow he lives, the dereliction of his own inner-city environment, or the poverty and violence whose images flicker across his tv screen – they close that pupil's mind, leaving him prey to every impulse and, in Scruton's words, fit only for 'a life of wretchedness and opposition, a helpless anti-social element, with neither the capacity nor the desire to accept the world that he finds'.

But, if the humanities are, in today's educational climate, to be taught and transmitted in a way that denies and rejects actual human experience, how much more likely is it that the sciences will continue to be purveyed in an abstract, rarified manner, and, correspondingly, how much more difficult the task of those teachers who are struggling to render the teaching of these subjects in the context of human, social values.

For 'science', as it is commonly understood, represents the pursuit of an ideal truth, unaffected by considerations of economics, politics, power or resources. Its neutrality, beneficence, and all-powerful nature are part of the cultural baggage even of our hapless and alienated pupil – though it may be the 'scientific approach' (of IQ testing) that has relegated him to the ranks of the stupid. (I once carried out one of Professor Eysenck's IQ tests on myself, but, fortunately, discovered I was below normal after, rather than before, taking my degree.) Credit, then, to Gill and Levidow, and their contributors for the attempt to challenge and change all that – and encourage others to do so – not at an abstract level, but at the level of children's consciousness and understanding.

Racism, it is hammered home, has been integral to the way science has been practised in western societies, from the racist grading processes of the nineteenth century to the identification of 'overpopulation' as the cause of the Third World's ills. And, just as in the nineteenth century, black slaves in the US suffered a dread disease, drapetomania, characterised by an incorrigible desire to run away, so, in the late twentieth, 'the term "Puerto Rican syndrome", used to describe these people's emotive protests against degrading treatment, actually found its way into a paediatrics textbook, describing suicidal adolescents'.

The essays themselves range from informative discussions on the

nature and funding of science and its (mostly military) priorities, through case studies (Bhopal, sickle-cell anaemia, conservation) to discussion of IQ and assessment procedures. The sheer variety of topics covered gives, at times, a somewhat unwieldy and disparate feel to the book, which is not entirely mitigated by the linking commentaries. Absorbing as some of the individual studies are, the collection would have benefited from a sharper focus. What teachers, though, will probably find most useful in stimulating their own ideas are the discussions on classroom practice. One honest account in particular stands out, of an attempt to change round the whole method of science teaching at the fourth year level, but rather too quickly and ambitiously for pupils already accustomed to a more traditional and passive method of working. What the attempt demonstrated above all was that such a radical change of approach has to be developed from the very beginning:

> By the time the present first year reaches the fourth, their education experience will be very different from that of the original 'chemistry from issues' group ... Already this year group is confident and capable: pupils do not constantly look to the teacher for a 'right answer'. They are prepared to research 'answers' for themselves; they accept that, for many complex questions, there is no single 'right' answer – though some solutions to a problem may be better than others.

Occasionally the contributors over-reach themselves; the criteria developed for an anti-racist biology, for example, are extremely general (concerned with exposing 'racist sexist and imperialist ideology' in traditional curricula and fostering 'solidarity between boys and girls and black and white working-class students by challenging the uses of IQ ... ') and only the last, which is to 'expose the concept of "race" as a fiction devoid of scientific validity', has to do directly with biology. Compare this with the more modest – but perhaps more meaningful – statement from those involved in the attempt to restructure their teaching of science:

> Of course, the school system cannot solve the problems generated by the social structure it exists to serve. ... As teachers we must not delude ourselves into thinking we can do any more than educate – but it is in the struggle to do this honestly and fairly that we are faced with enormous issues of inequality and all its manifestations.

Such roughnesses are perhaps inevitable in what is a pioneering attempt to help those involved in education understand not only the centrality of racism within scientific practice, but also how, in practical terms, to tackle it in the class room. And the book's very unevennesses may be more useful in generating discussion, ideas, analysis, than a more

polished and complete discussion.

Yet, one wonders, given the speed with which the restructuring of education is being forced through, how much opportunity will be left for even the most limited anti-racist initiatives by teachers, the most limited attempts to extend their pupils' thinking. Scruton's 'mediocre pupil', whom the 'pursuit of relevance' has left devoid of 'resource' is to be swiftly processed into a right (non)thinking model citizen through the application not merely of Victorian values but, it seems likely, Victorian methods too. Gradgrind, the schoolmaster of *Hard Times* could have been speaking for today's Tories:

> Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else and root out everything else!

Institute of Race Relations HAZEL WATERS

Memory of Fire by EDUARDO GALEANO

Genesis, volume 1 (London, Methuen, 1987). 291pp. Paper £3.95
Faces and masks, volume 2 (London, Quartet Books, 1987). 276pp. Cloth £14.95

In the trilogy *Memory of Fire*, the revolutionary Uruguayan poet, historian and political commentator, Eduardo Galeano, vividly brings to life the history of the Americas and the Caribbean from the time of the indigenous Indian civilisations to the present day. The two volumes published to date defy categorisation. They are a unique fusion of direct quotation, from exhaustively researched original historical documents, and Galeano's poetic but precise evocation of moments in the lives of those who, through the ages, have made American history.

The interactions between oppressed and oppressor, famous and hitherto little-known, and the clashes between indigenous and imperial cultures are brought into sharp focus by being presented as if they are happening now before our eyes. The skilfully extracted speeches, writings and observations of the protagonists send resounding echoes through the centuries to inform our understanding of present-day Latin American struggles.

The result is a literary kaleidoscope, portraying simultaneously the immense scale and variety of the suffering of ordinary American, Indian and Caribbean people at the hands of European imperial power, alongside their endless reserves of creativity and courage in the corresponding struggles for self-determination and social justice. In the process, Galeano gives a renewed voice to countless rebels, like Artigas, Tupac Amaru and Jose Galan, who are virtually unknown figures in Europe. Many of them, I suspect, are names rarely evoked in conventional history books in Latin America either.

The first volume, *Genesis*, begins with a collation of Indian legends ab out the origins of the natural world, and the ominous prophecies of their poets, prior to European colonisation. Chief Cáicihu predicts: 'Men wearing clothes shall come, dominate and kill.' Waterdrinker, priest of the Sioux, dreams that 'outlandish creatures are weaving a huge spider's web around his people who ... shall live in grey square houses, in a barren land, and beside those grey square houses they shall starve.' Galeano lets these ancient civilisations speak for themselves, free from romantic or idealised commentary – indeed references are made to the authoritarian nature of Aztec and Inca empires.

Columbus and the conquistadors burst in on these complex societies with a chilling combination of childish incomprehension and brutal lust for gold, which over the decades becomes increasingly couched in the dogma of religious justification. But it was precisely because they were unable to understand the world they claim to have 'discovered' that they set about destroying it with so much cruelty and forging a new order, based on the primitive rules of greed, self-interest and craving for power. Galeano reminds us, however, that always and relentlessly behind the horrors perpetrated by men such as these stands the agency of duplicitous European governments, who continue to profit from their plunder even as they are absolved from its burden.

This theme is taken further in *Faces and Masks*, which covers the years between 1700 and 1900 – a period marked by a change of emphasis in European imperialism, from the political to the economic and cultural. The Central and South American nation states emerge, but are born into debt and dependency on one or other of the European states (a dependency later to be extended to the United States). From the point of view of the Europeans, of course, this was a calculated strategy – for, as Galeano points out: 'The patience of the cat is more effective than the fury of the tiger.' Bolivar, for instance, was forced as early as 1825 to sell the Potosi mines to the British as the price of protection from Spain, even as he deplored, 'I abhor the debts more than the Spanish.' The current Latin American debt crisis is over 250 years old.

The other main theme, continuing from *Genesis*, is the enduring power of the class patterns established by the colonialists, in tandem with the Roman Catholic church, and based on degrees of European blood and whiteness of skin. Galeano describes the legacy of the continuing and protracted genocide of Indian populations in North and South and Central America, but he never portrays them as passive victims. He allows them to speak for themselves in response to the cruel stupidity of colonial religious dogmatism. 'You Europeans are the most unreasonable people in the world', a North American Indian tells Francis Brooke, an early British explorer novelist. 'You laugh at our belief in dreams, and yet you expect us to believe things a thousand times more incredible.'

The reproduction of minutiae – from the colonial edicts on the sale of 'whiteness certificates' to small ads from a Havana newspaper offering the sale of a black woman, a mule and leeches in the same breath – testifies to the ferocious aplication of theories of racial superiority bequeathed by European 'civilisation' more effectively than the dry, academic, generalised analysis of so many history books.

Despite the epic nature of Galeano's project, he never loses his grasp of human scale, his sense of humour, or his wonderment at everyday things. The cries of eighteenth century street-traders, or the sentiments of popular rhymes are unearthed with as much care and affection as the actions of the leaders of revolutions. This is what is so fresh and original in his approach, for it allows history to inform the lives of ordinary people while bearing witness to their 'ordinary' contribution to change. It is an approach to history which makes no assumptions, except in the need to keep asking questions, such as those posed in the preface from the popular verses of Boyaca, Columbia.

> I'm a piece of fallen tree
> where it fell I do not know.
> Where can my roots be?
> On what sort of tree did I grow?

Sheffield STEVE WINGATE

Books received

This listing does not preclude subsequent publication of reviews.

Aborigines today: land and justice. By Julian Burger. London, Anti-Slavery Society, 1988. Paper £4.95.

Across seven seas and thirteen rivers: life stories of pioneer Sylheti settlers in Britain. Edited by Caroline Adams. London, Tower Hamlets Arts Project, 1987. Paper £4.95.

African perspectives on colonialism. By A. Adu Boahen. Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1988. Cloth

The Afro-Nicaraguans: the revolution and autonomy. By Rick Congress. Atlanta, Atlanta Committee on Latin America, 1987. Paper

Arab and Jew: wounded spirits in a promised land. By David Shipler. London, Bloomsbury Publishing, 1988. Paper £5.95.

Black Africans and Native Americans. By Jack D. Forbes. Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1988. Cloth £35

Black voices: an anthology of ACER's black young writers competition. Edited by Paul McGilchrist. London, ACER, 1987. Paper £5.95

Blaming the victims: spurious scholarship and the Palestinian question. Edited by Edward Said and Christopher Hitchens. London, Verso, 1988. Paper

Charting the journey: writings by black and third world women. Edited by Shabnam Grewal *et al*. London, Sheba, 1988. Paper £7.95

The culture of terrorism. By Noam Chomsky. London, Pluto Press, 1988. Paper £8.95

The dangerous doctrine: national security and U.S. foreign policy. By Saul Landau. Boulder, Westview Press, 1988

A dictionary of modern Indian history: 1707-1947. By Parshotam Mehra. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1987. Cloth Rs250

Dumba nengue: run for your life: peasant tales of tragedy in Mozambique. By Lina Magaia. Trenton, Africa World Press, 1988. Paper $6.95

Educational attainments: issues and outcomes in multicultural education. Edited by Gajendra Verma and Peter Pumfrey. Lewes, Falmer Press, 1988. Cloth £17.95, paper £8.95

Enough is enough: Aboriginal women speak out. By Janet Silman. London, Women's Press, 1987. Paper £7.50

Europe and the international division of labour: new patterns of trade and investment with developing countries. Edited by Christopher Stevens and Joan Verloren van Themaat. London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1988. Paper

From Raj to Rajiv: 40 year of Indian independence. By Mark Tully and Zareer Masani. London, BBC Books, 1988. Cloth £10.95

Gatsha Buthelezi: chief with a double agenda. By Mzala. London, Zed Press, 1988. Paper £7.95

The Harlem renaissance: a historical dictionary for the era. Edited by Bruce Kellner. New York, Methuen, 1987. Paper £12.95

The IMF and Ghana: the confidential record Edited by Eboe Hutchful. London, Zed Press, 1987. Cloth £30.95, paper £9.95

If this is treason, I am guilty. By Allan A. Boesak. Trenton, Africa World Press, 1987. Paper $7.95

Is God a racist? The right wing in Canada. By Stanley R. Barrett. Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1987. Cloth $40, paper $16.95

The long silence. By Shashi Deshpande. London, Virago, 1988. Cloth £11.95, Paper £4.50

Male daughters, female husbands: gender and sex in an African society. By Ifi Amadiume. London, Zed Press, 1987. Cloth £28.95, paper £8.95

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While welcoming contributions, particularly on Third World problems and realities, we would like to remind our contributors that manuscripts should be short (ideally, 5,000 words), clear (as opposed to obscure) and free of jargon. Typescripts should be double-spaced.

Following comments from a number of our readers, please note that, as from this issue (Volume 30, number 1), the method of dating *Race & Class* has been changed from Summer, Autumn, Winter, Spring to, respectively, July/September, October/December, January/March, April/ June.

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