

# International Peace Update



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## Racism: The Modern, Developed and Scientific Way

By Deborah L. Toler

The overt racism of the colonizers and of the 19th century social Darwinists is widely condemned today. In fact, the term "race" is rarely used by scholars, policy makers or the media in general analyses of Latin America, Asia and Africa. Instead, we speak of ethnic groups or religions or, another problematic term, tribes. Failure to recognize the political, social and economic reality of capitalism's racial constructions obscures the racism inherent in the exploitation of peoples of colour. Racism is not only prejudice or bigotry. Here racism refers to the institutionalization of differential life opportunities, of a vastly poorer quality of life for peoples of colour - in Africa, Asia, Latin America as well as in Western countries. Capitalism - or its contemporary international version, globalization, cannot continue its rapacious exploitation of Latin America, Asia or Africa outside of relying upon fundamentally unaltered 19th century constructions of race. The reality is that globalization's "success" is built on racial constructions of the peoples of the South.

The central way race is deployed in the service of the global political economy today is through the related concepts of 'modern', 'development' and 'science'. Conventional wisdom dictates that these are neutral, positive objectives holding the promise to eradicate poverty in Africa, Asia and Latin America. But all three concepts start with the premise that these societies lack something and are inferior to the West. *Modern* is a concept 19th century social scientists tied to European superiority and the growth of capitalism. *Development* established economic growth as the sine qua non objective to be pursued. Both modern and development embody evolutionary understandings of South societies dating from the nineteenth century. Black Africans then as now rank lowest in policy and media portrayals precisely because their cultures are most unlike European cultures. Indeed the notion of unilinear development - there is only one direction, leading to the creation of European like societies, has been a major organizing factor for South societies ever since colonialism. As for *science*, it refers not to some objective and neutral episteme of knowledge, but to a field which reflects both the capitalist and racist societies and institutions in which it developed. What we call 'science' ignores the fact that prior to colonialism there were thousands of "sciences"<sup>1</sup>. The hegemony of Western Science is a function of the fact that it served as an associate of colonialism. The genius of these terms, however, is that their racial histories remain overlooked and that it has been South leaders and South intellectuals - including most revolutionary leaders - who have clamoured most to obtain science, to be developed and to become modern.

What specifically do these racialized notions of modern, development and science do to generate today's poverty in Africa, Asia and Latin America? First, they result in incorrect analyses of the causes of poverty and its associated problems. On a macro level they erase the role of the colonial past in generating today's poverty, hunger and conflicts and integrating the South into a global capitalist economy at a dependent and extreme disadvantage. Instead they promote "blame

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The aims and principles of WILPF are to bring together women of different political and philosophical convictions united in their determination to study, make known and help abolish the causes and the concept of war. WILPF works toward world peace, total and universal disarmament, the abolition of violence and coercion in the settlement of conflicts and the substitution in each case of negotiation and conciliation. It also seeks to strengthen the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies, and the institution of international law. WILPF strives for political and social equality, economic equity, cooperation among all people and for sustainable development with environmental protection.

WILPF is conscious that under systems of exploitation and oppression these aims cannot be attained, and that a real and lasting peace and true freedom cannot exist. WILPF aims to facilitate by non-violent means the social transformation to permit the inauguration of systems under which social and political equality and economic equity for all are attained without discrimination on the basis of sex, race, religion, or on any other grounds.

WILPF sees as its ultimate goal the establishment of an international economic order founded on meeting the needs of all peoples and not on profit and privilege.

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*Opinions expressed in signed articles are not necessarily endorsed by WILPF.*

## About This Issue:

The question of racism and discrimination based on race, colour or ethnic origin is the subject of this issue of *IPU*. The articles in these pages cover different aspects of the question and aim to inform, stimulate thought and mobilize for action. Much has been said and written on race and racism. What is it, where, when and how did it begin? What are its roots? What makes it so pernicious, so pervasive and so difficult to uproot? There are as many answers as there are efforts to rid our societies from this evil.

The crimes committed by Germany under nazism, a doctrine based on the supreme superiority of the white, caucasoid race (but in Hitler's terms limited to the Germanic people) went from the early 1930s through a devastating six-year world war, until the final defeat, in 1945, of the fascist alliance that had been out to subjugate the world. The anti-fascist alliance of nations which gave birth to the United Nations as the nightmare of fascism and nazism was brought to an end, were highly conscious of the need to pay particular attention to curbing and eliminating racism and all forms of discrimination. One of the purposes of the UN as proclaimed in Article 3 of its Charter is "To achieve international cooperation...in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion..." The adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as a number of other UN, ILO and UNESCO Declarations, and the coming into force of the international human rights covenants and conventions adopted in the early 1960s and 1970s, are aimed in part or in entirety - as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination - at eradicating racism and discrimination based on race, colour or ethnic origin.

The dismantling of the *apartheid* system in South Africa motivated the declaration of three consecutive decades to combat racism and racial discrimination. We are more than halfway through the third decade and have to admit that discrimination based on race and ethnic origin remain critical issues. *Apartheid* as a system has been dismantled, but this has not ended racism and racial discrimination anywhere, including South Africa.

This issue of *IPU* tries to capture the presence of racism in its various forms and intensities, and link the threads of the past, the present and the future. Deborah Toler in the lead article links the past of colonialism to poverty today, and shows that the very rationale which legitimized colonialism lies behind the current global political economy. Racism in one of its contemporary forms - xenophobia - is examined by Maitet Ledesma and Sasha Khokha in their contributions on the situation of immigrants and migrant workers. The past and the present come together in the contributions on South Africa and Germany - two countries where the legacy of racism has been a painful part of their history, yet in spite of active measures to eradicate it, continue to be haunted by its persistence. And what of the future? Our contributors put



forth various visions to heal the damage done and move towards racial justice. Derald Wing Sue sees the overcoming of personal bias and the ideal of multiculturalism as critical. Adjoa Aiyetoro highlights the potential of reconciliation through reparation, restoration and compensation. Laura Partridge stresses the importance of rewriting the history books to tell the truth about the injustices of the past. The interview with Gay Mc Dougall, expert member of the Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination throws light on the upcoming World

Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, to be held in South Africa from 31 July to 7 September 2001, with a connected NGO Forum from 27 August to 1 September. The World Conference will be an opportunity to take these visions forward and mobilize with renewed energy for action.

Eliminating racism was also the theme of WILPF's four-day seminar held in Helenau-Berlin this year. Silvi Sterr gives us a brief review here; the full report

will be issued before the end of the year, as a contribution to the World Conference. The International Executive Committee meeting which followed the seminar, decided to make the preparations for and participation in the World Conference and follow-up to it, one of its three main priorities for the next years. The struggle against racism continues, and WILPF will take an active part in it as it has in one form or another since its foundation in 1915.



(...Continued from page 1)

## *Racism: The Modern, Developed and Scientific Way*

By Deborah L. Toler

the victim" explanations - corruption, "lack of transparency", failures to adopt "free market" economic liberalization policies and so on, all of which are Western derived terms and all of which place the causes of poverty within South societies and governments. This process continues at the micro level where often farmers, nomads and poor people in the informal sector are blamed for the damage globalization and neoliberal policies are wreaking. The end result is ineffective, or even damaging policy responses.

Second, equating modern with Western generates the TINA (There Is No Alternative) effect. Analyses have frequently focused on the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc as creating TINA. But the Soviet model of development was every bit as rooted in a devotion to being modern and to Western science. It is true that today instead of mimicking one of two models of planning and governing, the South appears to have accepted that there is no alternative to "free market democracy" - whatever that is. The creative energy that could go into formulating and trying South-South regional and local solutions to their economic and political problems tends to go instead to implementing market solutions, configuring their political and legal systems to meet Western

(corporate driven and defined) demands for transparency, privatization and even liberal democratic political institutions - i.e., institutions that look like the West, instead of revisiting pre-colonial systems of governing and conflict resolution which might resonate far better with their citizens.

Third, and related to TINA, the racially derived concepts of modern, development and science create more opportunities for capitalist exploitation of the South and of peoples of colour in the West. Under the guise of establishing "modern free market systems," the structural adjustment programs demanded by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank put into motion a process whereby South governments are transforming themselves from protectors of their people into protectors and facilitators of capital, particularly international capital. Most continue to believe science offers a way out of their countries' poverty and continue to pursue, with the West's encouragement, expensive, capital intensive corporate controlled technologies such as biotechnology. These are technologies which have increased economic disparities and caused massive dislocations throughout the world.

Fourth, the notion that the South remains poor because they have failed to "modernize" and therefore are in need of "developing" blinds the majority of people in the West to the fact that

the poverty and hunger in their own societies derives from exactly the same source - a profit driven, not human driven, economic system. Ending poverty globally will necessitate that the majority of citizens in Western countries also learn to see that their situation, including their comfortable lifestyles, is at the expense of the suffering of the world's majority.

There are scholars, policy makers and politicians all over the world who have a similar analysis to this. Grassroots groups of all kinds in the South and the North are organizing to address poverty and retain what remains of indigenous cultures and values and knowledge systems. These struggles begin with countering the notion that racism is only about bigotry or prejudice. Racism has become institutionalized on a global level and is determining the life chances of three-fourths of the world's population. As false a concept as race is from a biological point of view, it is a very real concept in capitalism's history and in the way it enables the West to continue its hegemony over the South.

\* Deborah Toler, Ph.D. has worked for many years in Africa and is currently completing a book on poverty, capitalism & racial constructions of Africa.

<sup>1</sup>Claude Alvares makes these and other excellent points about the relationship between science and capitalism in "Science", pp. 219 - 232, *The Development Dictionary*, Wolfgang Sachs ed. London: Zed Books. 1993.



## The Post-Apartheid South African Experience

By Advocate Tseliso Thipanyane & Mothusa Lepheana

The history of South Africa is one of a long, bitter and sometimes bloody struggle for human rights, freedom and human dignity. The elimination of institutionalized racism and racial discrimination that characterized colonialism and the apartheid system of government were central to this struggle. While this eventually led to the end of the apartheid system of government and the advent of a new society based on human dignity, equality, non-racialism and non-sexism,<sup>1</sup> much needs to be done to ensure that these hard earned democratic values are made meaningful for the people of South Africa. This would then give effect to the aspirations reflected in the Preamble of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa:

- To heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights;
- To lay the foundations of a democratic and open society in which every citizen is equally protected by law;
- To improve the equality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person;
- To build a united and democratic South Africa.

Racism and racial discrimination are deeply embedded in South Africa and have affected all sectors of its society - the economy, administration of justice, politics, media language, culture, gender equality, class and sports. The struggle to eradicate it is not an easy one. Justice Arthur Chaskalson, the President of the Constitutional Court, noted in a landmark decision: "We live in a society in which there are great disparities in wealth. Millions of people

are living in deplorable conditions and in great poverty. There is a high level of unemployment, inadequate social security, and many do not have access to clean water or to adequate health services. These conditions already existed when the Constitution was adopted and a commitment to address them, and to transform our society into one, in which there will be human dignity, freedom and equality, lies at the heart of our new constitutional order. For as long as

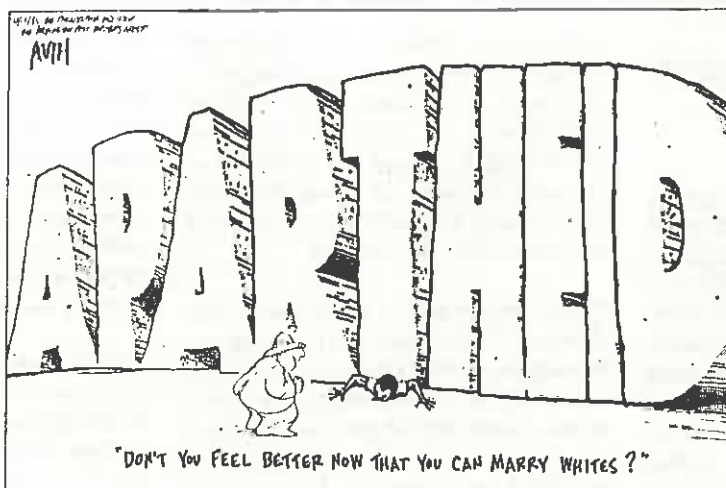
Commission, the Public Protector and the Commission for Gender Equality.<sup>3</sup>

In meeting its constitutional obligations, the government has enacted legislation to redress the effects of racism and racial discrimination. The most significant pieces of legislation are the Employment Equity Act<sup>4</sup> and the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act. The Employment Equity Act recognizes that inequalities of the past may not be corrected by simply repealing

past laws and obliges all employers not only to ensure there are no racial discrimination practices in the workplace but also to "take steps to promote equal opportunity by eliminating unfair discrimination in any employment policy or practice" (Section 5). Section 20 of the Act requires the employer to prepare and implement an employment equity plan which includes objectives and goals that are recognizable within a

certain period of time. Section 28 establishes the Commission for Employment Equity, one of whose functions is to advise the Minister of Labour on codes of good practice.

The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act is particularly important in as far as it deals with the transformation of attitudes and behaviours in our society. The preamble of the statute states that "this Act endeavours to facilitate the transition to a democratic society, united in its diversity, marked by human relations that are caring and compassionate, and guided by the principles of equality, fairness, equity, social progress, justice, human dignity and freedom". To achieve the prominent objectives of eradicating racism and to monitor the observance and compliance thereto, the statute



these conditions continue to exist that aspiration will have a hollow ring."<sup>2</sup>

What follows is a brief outline of some of the key developments to realize these aspirations.

In terms of Constitutional provisions, the Bill of Rights of the South African Constitution is regarded as one of the most advanced in the modern world. To address the effects of unfair discrimination in all its forms, particularly racism and racial discrimination, the Bill of Rights provides for affirmative action measures to be adopted. The Constitution also provides for the establishment of independent state institutions to strengthen constitutional democracy in South Africa such as the South African Human Rights



provides for the establishment of the Equality Courts and the Equality Review Committee.<sup>5</sup> One of the most important functions of this committee is to advise the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development on the operation of the Act and to report on whether it is succeeding in achieving the objectives of the Act and the Constitution as well as "to make recommendations on any necessary amendment to the Act to improve its operation".<sup>6</sup> Another notable feature of this Act is section 34, which provides for the inclusion of HIV/AIDS, nationality, socio-economic status and family responsibility and status as prohibited grounds of discrimination.

Among new policy measures adopted by the government is the National Action Plan (NAP) for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. The NAP moves from the premise that "democracy is irreconcilable with racial inequality and social injustice" recognizing that "racism is a major problem affecting the development of a human rights culture" and that it manifests itself by "numerous violent acts motivated by racism" especially in educational institutions and farms. The state must be applauded in as far as it has succeeded in implementing most of the recommendations of the NAP.

Despite these constitutional, legislative and policy measures, racism continues to affect and ravage the South African society. It continues to constitute a threat to peace, stability and hard won democracy, manifesting itself in the administration of justice, distribution of wealth, the media<sup>7</sup>, education, employment and other sectors of the South African society. Racial crimes in schools, farms and in other areas and sectors of society still take place and the South African media is full of such incidents. There are still deep racial divisions in the South African society and that will take long to eliminate. While institutionalized racism and racial discrimination are slowly fading away,

their effects will continue to haunt the new South African society for a long time to come. The new South Africa, despite being a one united state, is still a racially divided society in many respects such as income distribution, housing, sports, religion and so on.

To address these challenges, the South African government called for a National Conference on Racism held on 30 August to 2 September 2000, organized by the South African Human Rights Commission\*. The statement adopted at the end of this, the South Africa Millennium Statement on Racism provides :

- That Government and parliament are hereby petitioned to declare the period 2001-2010 as the Decade for National Mobilization against Racism;
- That 16 December 2000, National Day of Reconciliation, be devoted to activities to promote reconciliation among all the people of South Africa.
- That the South African Human Rights Commission develop a strategic plan of action to combat racism as well as activities to mark the Decade for National Mobilization against Racism;
- That the South African Non-Governmental Organization Coalition and other agents of civil society are urged to establish and spearhead a national anti-racism forum which will develop into a movement against racism at all levels of society;
- That during this International Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004), anti-racism education and training be provided in all educational institutions, especially at primary and secondary school levels. Anti-racism training be made available to public service officials and other service providers, like professionals, business, hospitality as well as leisure and entertainment industries, who interact with the public in the course of their duties;
- That government should speedily address the question of provision of reparations for victims of racism as recommended by the TRC Report (1998).

The issue, however, should be considered holistically, taking account of appropriate intervention measures to redress the effects of apartheid.

The invitation by South Africa to host the Third UN World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in 2001 reflects the determination of the new South African society to combat racism and racial discrimination and related intolerance. The united spirit of determination and unqualified commitment to the cause of combating racial discrimination that was displayed by the ordinary South Africans during the National Conference on Racism marked our country's rejection of the evil of racism and racial discrimination. The conference pledged that no South African shall ever again be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content and strength of their character. It is this spirit that we wish to instill in the hearts of all those men and women who will converge in our country for the World Conference in 2001.

\* Adv. Tseliso Thipanyane is Head of the Research Department, South African Human Rights Commission. Mothusi Lepheana is Senior Legal Research Officer, South African Human Rights Commission.

\* For further details visit [www.sahrc.org.za](http://www.sahrc.org.za)

<sup>1</sup> Section 1 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 provides that South Africa is a "sovereign, democratic state founded on the following values: human dignity, the achievement of equality, the advancement of human rights and freedoms and non-racialism and non-sexism".

<sup>2</sup> *Soobramoney v Minister of Health, KwaZulu-Natal* 1997 (4) BCLR 1696 (CC) at para 8.

<sup>3</sup> Section 181 and 184 of the Constitution

<sup>4</sup> Act 55 of 1998

<sup>5</sup> Section 16 and Section 32 respectively

<sup>6</sup> Section 33(c)

<sup>7</sup> The South African Human Rights Commission received a request, under Section 7(1)(c) of the Human Rights Commission Act, 1994, from the Black Lawyers Association and Association of Black Accountants to investigate allegations that the South African media promotes racist stereotypes. In its final Report of the Inquiry, *The Fault Lines*, it reported that the South African media was still very racist.



## The Philippine Experience Of Racism In Europe

By Maitet Ledesma

*"We are moving from an ethnocentric racism to a Eurocentric racism, from the different racisms of the different member states to a common, market racism.."*

A. Sivanandan, "The New Racism", *New Statesman and Society*, 4 November 1988.

For migrant peoples from the "Third World", the project of a unified Europe has also meant the development of a "common policy, a common set of rules, a common administrative apparatus, informed by a common market racism," - to keep them out.

In this context, images transmitted to European living rooms depict the Filipina (Filipino woman) as quiet, docile and submissive women who blend easily into the background of wallpapers and rugs as they clean houses or make up hotel beds; of beautiful and young women walking arm in arm with their big-bellied and balding husbands; of articulate, well-educated and intelligent young women who have become surrogate mothers in European homes, working in low-paid, unskilled and menial jobs not commensurate to their level of experience, education and skill. European media has effectively stereotyped Filipinos as domestic workers, "mail-order brides", prostitutes and entertainers. Not surprisingly, Filipinas have been accosted on the streets by strangers and asked how much their husbands paid for them, or invited to go to bed with them. Filipinas attending social gatherings are often immediately asked if they are domestic helpers or if they are married to a European. Many have been asked to facilitate introductions to other Filipinas interested in finding a partner or a husband.

Many Filipinas are bringing up the second generation of European-Filipino children in highly industrialized, urban, multi-racial and multi-cultural societies. However, the mass media's projection of stereotyped images of the country and of Filipinas has made it more difficult for such children to identify with their migrant parent, making them more resistant to integrating Filipino values and traditions into their culture and way of life. As mothers, many Filipinas have experienced discrimination within their own homes, from their partners and spouses, their husband's family, even their own children. The European husband's culture, values and traditions, usually deemed superior, dominate most bi-cultural marriages and also define child-rearing practices within the home. Filipino culture becomes second-class and inferior, resulting in the children being unable to recognize and appreciate it. Children have been known to be critical of "old-fashioned" Filipino values, traditional food and other social practices. They have expressed shame and embarrassment at their Filipina mothers' inability to speak the language fluently.

In the workplace, as professionals, Filipinos are rarely promoted. Despite usually being over-qualified for the job with several years of experience and training in the Philippines, their qualifications are deemed inferior. Less qualified candidates are promoted over them. Many Filipinos have stagnated at the lowest rung of the professional ladder, giving guidance to more senior staff, albeit less skilled and experienced than them. Filipino workers are known to managers and supervisors as hard-working, easy to handle, who "don't complain". In cases of emergency, lack of personnel and overtime requirements, they are the first to be requested to come back to work. Likewise, they are usually given the last choice when taking days off for holidays. In a survey of 247 domestic workers carried out by the Center for Filipinos in London, 89.1% of the respondents were verbally abused - being called names, constantly shouted at and threatened, physically and sexually abused, spat on, made to sleep in the garage, on the kitchen or bathroom floor; 61.3% were regularly denied food and given only leftovers or scraps from the table.

In the streets, Filipinos have been verbally and physically harassed, shouted at and told to go back to the boondocks, where they naturally belong. In shops, restaurants and supermarkets, they have been ignored, given rude and inadequate service or not served at all. In modes of public transport, they have been told off by other commuters to give up their seats. Some have not been allowed to occupy empty seats and sit beside white people. Drivers have passed them by as they waited for a ride at bus and tram stops.

Filipino migrants share their experiences with an estimated 16 million non-EC migrants, immigrants and refugees in Europe. The institutionalization of racism in the highest policy-making bodies of Europe has cleverly sanitized the infamy of racism, giving it an acceptable face.

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## Hands That Shape The World : Immigrant Women Of Colour

By Sasha Khokha

*This delegation has come together to advocate for the inclusion of immigrant women within national and international forums for women's rights, where our voices have traditionally been ignored or denied....This delegation, which includes women who engage in domestic work, agricultural labour, and other low-wage jobs, calls on representatives from the U.S. to draw attention to the distinct issues that we face. We are not official representatives of government organizations, but we are accountable to our communities, and the struggles of our families in a country that increasingly blames immigrants, and particularly immigrant women of colour, for economic and social problems.— (From a statement of NNIRR Immigrant Women's Delegation to "Beijing+5")*

Libertad Rivera never thought she would see the inside of the United Nations headquarters. Meeting and talking with hundreds of other women around the world, she always introduced herself as "Super-Domestica," the leader of the Domestic Workers' union of Los Angeles. Libertad and other immigrant women from around the United States joined representatives from around the world as they convened to assess the progress of women's rights five years after the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing, China. The group brought their concerns to the UN "Beijing+5" review in New York in early June, when they released *Hands That Shape the World*, a report detailing the challenges immigrant women, particularly women of colour face.

In a climate of increasing xenophobia and setbacks to the rights of people of colour in the US, the women had plenty to share. Most worked in sweatshops, as domestic workers, or in other low-wage industries, where environmental regulations, overtime pay, and other



rights were frequently ignored. Many had been afraid to seek medical care or other assistance for their children based on fears that they would endanger their family's chances of permanent residency. According to data from the US Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), about 85% of women migrants to the US come from countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. These women face discrimination based not only on gender, class, and immigration status, but also on account of race and ethnicity.

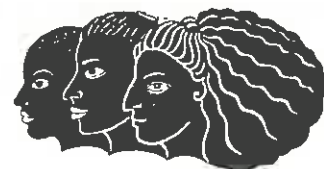
Since 1995, a series of anti-immigrant laws have been passed in the US compounding existing discriminations. Welfare legislation undermined the well-being of poor immigrant women by undercutting access to those in need, and neglecting to provide childcare, English-language courses, and transportation as part of welfare-to-work programmes. Harsh immigration laws have led to family separation as avenues for political asylum and deportation defense have been eroded. Those seeking to stand up for their labour rights have been subjected to employers who call immigration authorities when they hear about a union-organizing drive. Substantial budget increases have exponentially amplified the firepower of the INS, which has been repeatedly criticized for its abuses of civil rights, particularly the targeting of women for questioning and harassment based on race.

The increasing presence of immigrants has not gone unnoticed by conservatives and anti-immigration forces. Population control advocates, citing the "high fertility rates" of immigrant women of colour, raise the alarm that they will drive up population

numbers and wreak havoc on the environment. Welfare reduction proponents portray immigrant women, particularly Latin American women, as "welfare queens" who cross the Mexico-US border to take advantage of public benefits. These arguments are reminiscent of the not-so-distant history of immigration policy, which purposely excluded immigrant women to circumvent the growth and permanent settling of immigrant families - perceived as a racial threat to the Euro-dominant population of the US.

In spite of the powerful dynamics of immigration restriction, institutionalized racism, cultural alienation, and a sometimes-hostile public, immigrant women are becoming a visible and active force in cities and rural areas. While their efforts do not always receive public recognition or charitable, governmental support, the challenges migrant women of colour pose to global structures are formidable. At Beijing+5, the immigrant women's delegation participated in four lively days of events, and hosted a special migrant rights caucus attended by women from around the globe. The groups intend to network amongst themselves and others to ensure inclusion of migrant women in the forthcoming UN World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in 2001.

*Sasha Khokha is Communications Director at the National Network for Immigration and Refugee Rights (NNIRR), an alliance of 250 grassroots immigrant rights and human rights groups in the US. 'Hands that Shape the World: A Report on Conditions of Immigrant Women in the US Five Years After Beijing' is available from the NNIRR for \$10 USA + shipping. Please contact NNIRR at [nnirr@nnirr.org](mailto:nnirr@nnirr.org) or visit [www.nnirr.org](http://www.nnirr.org)*



viva, Volume 4 (1993)



## An Interview With Gay Mc Dougall

Gay Mc Dougall has been a strong voice at national and international levels against racism and racial discrimination for over 25 years. As Expert Member of the Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, former UN Special Rapporteur for Contemporary Forms of Slavery and former alternate member of the Sub-Commission on Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, as well as the Executive Director of an NGO - the International Human Rights Law Group - she is an inspirational and highly respected figure in the anti-racism struggle. Manjima Bhattacharjya spoke to her when she was in Geneva recently. Below is an excerpt from the interview, where she speaks about the changing face of racism, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and the forthcoming UN World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance 2001.

*You have always been a significant, influential voice against racism and racial discrimination. How and when did you become so politically involved in this issue?*

I'd say that it is in part an accident of my birth. I was born in the late 1940's just before the Civil Rights movement started to gain momentum in the south of the United States. I grew up in Atlanta Georgia, which was a totally segregated society; I couldn't go to restaurants the Whites went to, couldn't shop in stores, drink at the same water fountain, go to the same ladies room...so I grew up in an apartheid society. At the same time, while I was growing up the resistance movement was gaining speed, and it was, if you will, 'headquartered' in Atlanta. Opposing racial oppression was very much the centre of concerns in my community as I was forming my sense of 'who I am'.

*What in your view makes racism so pernicious, so tenacious that it continues to exist, in so many different 'new' forms?*

It is an insidious sort of 'infection', racism, as it is passed on to us. It is most tenacious when embedded in the structures of society-as structural or institutional racism. Earlier, it had to do with someone treating another person badly, but we are now in an era where our political and economic structures have been formed around racist exclusions and people feel that they have no responsibility because they actually treat everyone nicely. But yet they are living and benefiting from a system built on racism.

*What are the changes that the Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) has seen over the years?*

CERD was drafted and put into force in 1960's, when the major issues in terms of racism internationally were

decolonization and apartheid. Most governments approached it as a 'foreign policy' issue; as something 'over there' which we can agree to boycott or not. Now it is very much a domestic issue and one that has to be grappled with by every single country in the world. And that makes a lot of governments nervous.

*What are the obstacles that CERD faces in reaching its aims and objectives?*

The primary obstacle we face is the question of denial. Governments deny either knowingly, deliberately or out of ignorance that racial discrimination exists in their country. If we cannot get that realization, we cannot help them resolve their problems.

*Do you think the definition of 'racial discrimination' in the International Convention for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination covers all aspects of 'racism'? There has been criticism that its division of 'public' and 'private' does not allow for addressing 'personal' everyday 'racism'...*

I think the definition is a very good one as it talks about race, colour, descent, national and ethnic origin.. so it is very broad. The Convention divides public and private life as it does in its terms, in a way that is more helpful than you might think. Because public life winds up being a broad range of issues, and the concept of public life has been expanded significantly especially in the last decade, by the women's movement. So the global understanding at this point of what is public life, what is private life is expanding, and in a very helpful way.

*On the issue of restoration, reparations, reconciliation, and compensation where are we at now in terms of understanding, action and commitment?*

As a matter of International Human Rights Law, we are very clear of where we are, which is that people who have suffered human rights abuses are due compensation, are due reparations. The idea of reparations includes restoration and compensation, it is the broader term. In fact, in its last session CERD passed a general recommendation - those are sort of authoritative interpretations of the Convention - that said: just because the 'injury' to a person because of the deliberate act of violation of the Convention cannot be calculated per se in monetary terms, that person is still due compensation because of the impact of racist behaviour on their psyche. In the law of compensation around the world, in many legal systems, the idea is that you calculate exactly what the injured party has lost, in monetary terms, and that is the basis for determination of compensation for that injury. In the US, we have another concept that is companion to



that: the Concept of Pain and Suffering which is an intangible injury to the victim which also must be compensated and this is the idea behind our interpretation of the Convention.

*Why do you think there was such a storm kicked up on the issue of 'compensation' at the PrepCom for the World Conference earlier in May this year?*

I have to admit that 'compensation' came to the PrepCom largely from the Bellagio document\*, so I feel some responsibility for it. But I think the problem at the PrepCom was that 'compensation' was raised as a slogan. I think few people knew what exactly other people had in their minds when they said 'compensation'. There are several possibilities for what people had in mind but none of them were made clear and put on paper. So the first thing with respect to the next steps to the World Conference is that we have to put on paper what it is we are talking about, when you say 'compensation' and I say 'compensation', so that we're on the same page. Then let us decide whether this is something, a concept that will break-up progress to the conference.

*What role would CERD play in pursuing this issue?*

I think CERD is going to put in a paper that addresses the reparation and compensation issue. It is not in now; it won't be, if you will, a 'scholarly paper' as the one on affirmative action is, but more of a position paper.

*What role do you think NGOs have in pushing this issue forward?*

My view has always been, over the 25 years or so I've been doing work in association with the UN, that the thing that makes everything move at the UN is NGO activism. I think at the PrepCom it was very much the issue, it was very much the high, the momentum on compensation. But largely, I would say, driven forth by NGOs from the United States, so I think that the NGOs could very much assist in clarifying as well, what it is we are talking about and in developing the idea to its logical end. If we get to that point, we will have cleared away a lot of underbrush that's causing the fire around this issue.

*You have been the force behind the introduction of gender into the CERD deliberations only as recently as last year...why did it take so long for gender to be included in CERD's analytical framework?*

Well, I think that it did not have a champion in CERD until I came on and I think that is necessary for anything to move. There was no one there who cared enough about this issue to move it forward. I must say that there were, and are,

several people who questioned the importance, well let me say questioned the relevance and then the importance, of that kind of analysis of racial discrimination. The success of that 'project' can't be determined now. It is there, the general recommendation is there in black and white. But now, we need to see how in practice it is applied, what kind of questions we ask of the states parties, what new information we get back from them in their reports to us and how we analyse that data and information.

*Which is why you had to give 60 pages of 'background' justification for 3 pages of recommendations to include gender in the analysis...?*

YES ☺

*What do you think the World Conference could accomplish?*

I think that it could accomplish quite a bit but this will depend on the significant actors in this project- from NGO's all the way to the UN Secretary-General. It is a very important statement that the first UN World Conference of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and third millennium is on this subject. It is very appropriate timing because now that the world has finished with Apartheid, there is no global agenda on racism, no direction; states do not quite know what to do with the capacity they earlier put into opposing apartheid. So it is time, it is the right time, for the world to come together and say what is the system now and what is it that we are going to do about it now? So I think that the most important thing would be if out of this conference we conceptualise what is this animal 'racial discrimination' and what we can do to rid ourselves of it. The other thing is understanding what exclusion costs the world, what it costs countries, what it costs neighbours, so that the anti-racism movement in the future is not about what people are not allowed to do. It is not just about prescriptions but about something that is pursued positively because communities, nations, and global entities understand what they can benefit from striking out racism.

*Do you think there is a divide amongst different groups affected by racism, such as in the USA amongst African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos and so on? How is this created?*

Well I think that they're not united, although I think that it's improving, because they're all different categories. In any place that immigrant groups come into a country, they tend to take a separate identity, in their struggle to become integrated in the country, politically, economically, and socially. The immigrant population in the US evolves like immigrants in Europe, so it's a pattern. The extra bit of the puzzle in  
(Continued on page 10...)



(...Continued from page 9)

the US is the extraordinary way that the African Americans got there; they are not an immigrant group. The length of time that they have been there and the relationship between African Americans and the USA is very different from the relationship between the Asian immigrants or the Puerto Ricans, Mexicans and the USA; there is a vast difference between the two. In many respects the native Americans and African Americans have much more closer identifications vis-à-vis the country. There was a long time when the two communities were so close we mixed constantly, there was a lot of inter-marriage. It has been the sort of 'deportation' of Native Americans out to the West, using some very brutal mechanisms and the detachment of the reservations that has split that identity. American Indian and African Americans were much more integrated communities but the political, economic history of immigrant groups is quite different. We all say 'people of colour' as one category, and let's all consider ourselves alike and so on, but we have to see that it is a very different analysis and relationship. Perhaps a generous interpretation is that this is really what's keeping us from making stronger bonds of alliances.

*You are a woman of colour but also in a position of power...*

*...Am I? I don't think I've ever thought of myself as being in a position of power...*

*Has this changed anything for you?*

I think that the only change I feel is more responsibility, and not always being clear that I've got the tools at my disposal to meet this added responsibility. I think there is far less power in places that you think there is power, and you realize it only once you get there! But it's very important to keep a clear focus on what you're trying to achieve and not spend too much time,

being glad that you are where you are. I would say that the thing that most diverts people in this building, in the UN, is the desire to be re-elected to a Treaty Body...you get there and say "oh I want to be here the next time"! And you start calculating what you can and cannot do, what positions you can and cannot take if you want to come back. ... So I think that's the number one thing that I keep in my mind: that I'm only going to be here once in this position and I'll do what I can; if I wind up here again that would be lucky and unexpected. It is important to keep a sense of how you define your constituency; I define my constituents - if you will, the 'customers'- as the people in these countries looking for justice.

*\* Interview by Manjima Bhattacharjya, WILPF International Human Rights Intern 2000. Thanks to Aileen Umali for transcribing assistance.*

*\* For more information on the Bellagio document visit [www.hrlawgroup.org](http://www.hrlawgroup.org); for information on CERD and other UN instruments visit [www.unhchr.ch](http://www.unhchr.ch) or [www.un.org](http://www.un.org)*

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## Support WILPF's Campaign Against Racism

### Contribute to the WILPF Racial Justice Fund

Your contribution will help us carry out WILPF's campaign against racism and actively prepare for and participate in the UN World Conference against Racism...

Contributions can be sent to the WILPF International Secretariat, UBS account no: 277-C8766173, or (tax free for the USA) Jane Addams Peace Association, Geneva Fund, 777 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017 USA. Please mark 'WILPF Racial Justice Fund'.

(...Continued from Page 20)

## WILPF In A Changing World By Michaela R. Told

distribution of benefits, to implement Agenda 21, to agree on international labour regulations and binding codes of conduct for international investments, to demilitarize the planet, to reorganize and democratize the organs of the UN, and to protect national and local cultural productions (Amin 2000, Houtart 2000).

The programme, adopted by WILPF's International Executive Committee in Helenau, Germany this August, reflects these visions and acknowledges these developments in a changing world through its reaffirmed commitment to work for economic justice, against weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons, eliminating racism, broadening the scope and practice of human rights and the democratization of the UN. Our challenge will be to evolve strategies responding to these new conditions and continue resistance in proactive and creative ways all levels, placing women at the centre of the new multipolar system.

*\* Michaela R. Told is the Secretary General of WILPF*

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## Reparations, Restoration and Reconciliation

By Adjoa A. Aiyetoro

Reparations is an internationally accepted principle of justice. It is the theory upon which the German government, Swiss banks and corporations paid significant sums to survivors of the Jewish Holocaust and upon which the United States government, pursuant to a 1988 Congressional Act, paid \$20,000 to each Japanese American survivor of the concentration camps it established in World War II. It entails repairing the damage done to a group of people, based on their group identity, by a government or corporation in violation of fundamental human rights. It is more than a cheque to the victims, although because of the history of reparations worldwide, it has come to be viewed as such. Reparations may also include the development and implementation of ways to correct the harm done to the group that will have a lasting effect on the group as well as society as a whole. Part of the reparations given to Japanese Americans, for instance, included an educational fund for developing museums and multimedia programming to tell the truth about their internment.

The overriding issue for all communities of colour in the USA is ending white supremacy in its many forms. The most insidious are the institutional barriers posed by educational, economic, health and punishment systems, that prevent these communities from participating on a "level playing field." Institutional barriers thwart the ability of people of color to thrive. Exposing and removing these barriers, and repairing the damage done are essential in restoring what has been taken from these communities and moving towards reconciliation.

Reparations for African Americans in a practical sense means repairing the injury inflicted on African Americans as a group, beginning with the Trans Atlantic Slave Trade and continuing to the present day. First and foremost, it requires telling the truth about a more than 400 year history during which the colonies, as predecessors to the USA, and the USA and many of its states, participated in the kidnap, rape, maiming, murder and cultural and social deprivation of African peoples.



This task is not as mammoth as it seems; many scholars have written about this history from the perspective of the African rather than from the state of abject denial and distortion presented in many depictions by apologists for this history. These stories must be told in a public forum, preferably the halls of Congress, and include the vestiges of slavery: the continuing systemic racism faced by African Americans in most areas of life including health care, economics, police protection and punishments, education and the right to self determination. A classic example is revealed in studies of the USA's criminal justice system which practices a dual system of punishment, one for African Americans who disproportionately get the most severe punishments, and one for whites. African Americans are far more likely to be charged with a capital crime (one for which the death penalty is the

punishment if convicted) than similarly situated whites; and, that murders of white people are far more likely to be charged as a capital crime, particularly when the person charged is African American.

Reparations for African Americans can and should take a number of forms based on the harm done over the centuries: financial compensation, particularly to those who have been unable to surmount the obstacles to financial security - according to economists, one-third of the African American population; systemic changes to eliminate institutional racism; and, funds for individuals and communities that would provide grants to close the gap created by harms suffered by African Americans in education, health care, community development.

How does this relate to other racial groups? We must articulate and develop a comprehensive understanding of the form that white supremacy takes in each community and identify solutions embraced by respected progressive racial justice groups in each community. The development of education and mobilization strategies that respects the similarities and uniqueness of each group would further contribute to this process.

If done with integrity - allowing the full story to be told and remedies developed and implemented that will correct the injury - restoration of what was taken, to the extent possible, will occur. Reconciliation between whites and people of colour will flow from this process.

*\*Adjoa Aiyetoro is a member of WILPF USA and active in their Uniting For Racial Justice (UFORJE) Campaign. She is legal counsel for the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N'COBRA).*



## Multiculturalism: A Solution to Racism

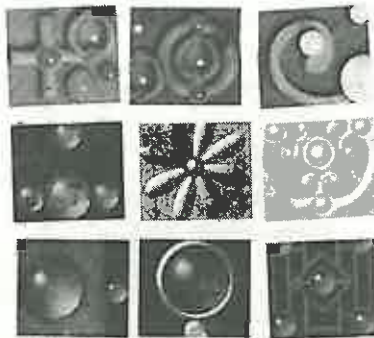
By Derald Wing Sue

Throughout life, I have been frequently reminded that my racial and cultural heritage is quite different from many in this society. Some of these reminders have been pleasant and validating; many, however, serve to invalidate, diminish and strike at the core of my racial identity and self-esteem. The well-intentioned high school counselor who tracked me into math/science courses because "you people are good at that", classmates who teased me by making fun of my "slanted eyes", or the taxi driver who complimented me for "speaking good English" are constant reminders of my 'minority status' in USA. Most racial/ethnic minority groups have been exposed to many forms of prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination; some overt, intentional and hurtful, but most what psychologists now call 'micro assaults'. Any single act alone may appear quite benign, but collectively, over an extended period of time, they can do much psychological harm to marginalized groups.

When I was invited to testify before US President Clinton's Race Advisory Board in 1998, I shared with them the results of my research and work on race relations. Among the points I made were the following: the need to address issues of race, culture and ethnicity has never been more urgent; most citizens of this nation seem ill-equipped to deal with these topics; racial legacies of the past continue to affect policies and practices of the present, creating unfair disparities between racial/ethnic minority and EuroAmerican groups; such inequities are often so deeply ingrained in American society that they are nearly invisible; and that our greatest hope toward solving the problems of prejudice and discrimination lies in multiculturalism. The challenge confronting us is not an easy one. It means major changes at the individual level where each and every one of us needs to confront our biases and prejudices. It means major changes in our institutions and organizations where current policies,

practices, programmes and structures serve to deny equal access and opportunity. It means major changes in our society where policies which promote multiculturalism are instituted, such as affirmative action, bilingual education, legislation banning racial profiling and so on, and eliminating those which block multiculturalism.

It is clear that no one is born with the desire or intention to be biased, prejudiced or bigoted. Misinformation



related to culturally different groups is not acquired by free choice, but imposed through social conditioning; people learn to hate and fear others who are different from them. These biases and prejudices are often expressed unintentionally and at an unconscious level.

In my work on the etiology of racism, I have found four major obstacles, which seem to block the path toward overcoming biased cultural conditioning. First, one barrier to realizing biases is that most of us perceive and experience ourselves as moral, decent, and fair people. It is painful to realize we have biases because it threatens our self-image of being someone who believes in justice and democracy. Second, most of us operate from a politeness protocol and are disinclined to honestly examine, explore and discuss in public unpleasant racial realities like prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination. Third, realizing our biases requires accepting responsibility for any action or inaction, which may directly or indirectly contribute to oppressing others. The implication is that we can no longer

escape personal responsibility for the pain we may have caused others. Last, it is important to note that the eradication of bias is more than an intellectual exercise. It involves dealing with 'embedded emotions' (fears, guilt, anger,) often associated with painful racial memories and images. Most of us avoid unpleasantness and are tempted not to face the reality of our fears. While many individuals are willing to acknowledge that racism must be addressed at an institutional and societal level, they often avoid addressing these on a personal level, and fail to identify personal growth as a necessary element. Overcoming our biased cultural conditioning means conquering the inertia and feeling of powerlessness on a personal level.

Four principles can be helpful in our personal education.

- We must experience and learn from as many sources as possible to check out the validity of our assumptions and beliefs.
- A balanced picture of any group requires that we spend time with people of that culture.
- We must supplement our factual understanding with the experiential reality of the groups we hope to understand.
- We must be constantly vigilant of manifestations of bias in ourselves and in people around us.

Race, culture and ethnicity are functions of every person's development and not limited to "just minorities". We need to recognize that culture is central to everything, which we do, and that we are all carriers of our own culture. Producing a multicultural society and world, which values diversity, is our greatest challenge. Let us meet the challenge honestly not only because it is good for our society, but also because it is the right thing to do.

\* Derald Wing Sue is an academic specializing in race relations and multiculturalism. He teaches at the California School of Professional Psychology and California State University, Hayward.



## The True Story

By Laura Partridge

Does undoing racism require re-education of the world? Yes. Obtaining peace through education requires starting all over again. It requires writing and sharing the factual, true history of the world.

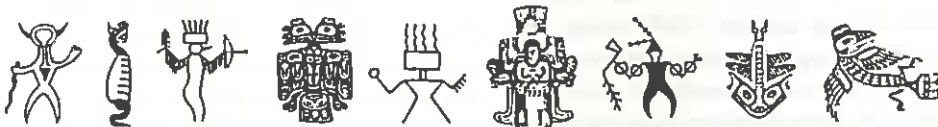
The very core of education is the telling of stories. Maps are drawn to define space and size based on the perceptions of the one making the map. The margins of defeat and victory are created from the viewpoint of the one writing the story. The oppressor defines through eyes needing to validate the oppression. And thus 'history' creates images of places, events and people. When taught to later generations, it can be a powerful tool of manipulation and distortion. This is the material that turns humans to chattel. This is the privilege that creates 'second-class citizens'. This historical twisting justifies the world's most brutal acts, and rewards the brutal actors with notions of superiority and actual privilege and power over those defined by the oppressor as 'less than'. This lays the foundation of white supremacy and white privilege which serve as the basis for and outcome of racism.

Centuries later, lies - now clearly known to be lies - continue to be taught and promoted as the truth. Those who wrote and published this history of lies and distortions were invested in building institutions. Today invisible writers, publishers and teachers are invested in maintaining the status quo. These lies are embedded in every country's governing laws and rules. These lies continue to vibrate through the halls of justice where guilt and innocence are determined, where life and death are debated. All these lies must be dismantled. The fields of falsehoods in which superiority and privilege were seeded must be uprooted. There will be no justice, no peace without truth.

And what of the damage done to the soul and psyche of those whose stories go untold? Whose oppressors would have the world believe have no history? Author Randall Robinson in 'The Debt: What America Owes the Blacks' published this year, states, 'From the time of ancient scribes, history has been written and studied, traditions studied, gods worshipped, monuments to the greater glory erected, institutions sustained in countless cultures coursing

humanity's mosaic of peoples across the millennia like life-giving rivers. They are essential to the health of any people's spirit. They are givers of self-worth, cheaters of mortality, binding frail short lives into a people's ongoing, epic cumulative achievement.'<sup>1</sup> Robinson's statement sums up the impact of this lack of shared history.

WILPF's Pre-IEC Racism Seminar held near Berlin in July 2000 called on directors and ministers of education around the world to recall the curriculums of falsehoods and begin the process of gathering and/or writing the truth of the world's story. Peace Education is educating from the TRUTH. It is telling peoples' stories as accurately as possible and acknowledging a world collectively built and sustained by people of various colours and geographic locations. It is teaching respect for cultural differences and knowing that this respect has been earned throughout time. What we need, as Carter G. Woodson - known in the US as the Father of the Study of Black History - said in 1927, "...is not a history of selected races or nations, but the history of the world void of national bias, race hate and religious prejudice."



\* Laura Partridge is Board Campaign Organizer of WILPF US Section's Uniting For Racial Justice (UFORJE) Campaign. For details visit [www.wilpf.org](http://www.wilpf.org)

### Announced! Jane Addams Children's Book Awards 2000!

Winner, Writing category: *Through My Eyes* by Ruby Bridges

Honor Books: *The Birchbark House* by Louise Erdrich and *Kids on Strike!* by Susan Campbell Bartoletti

Winner, Picture Book category: *Molly Bannaky* written by Alice McGill, illustrated by Chris Soenpiet

Honor Books: *A Band of Angels: A Story Inspired by the Jubilee Singers* written by Deborah Hopkinson, illustrated by Raul Colon and *When Sophie Gets Angry - Really, Really Angry...* written and illustrated by Molly Bang

The awards ceremony will be held on Friday October 20, 1.30-3.00 pm at 777 United Nations Plaza (2nd floor), New York City. All are welcome! Please notify Jane Addams Peace Association, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 777 United Nations Plaza, 6th Flr, New York, NY 10017-3521; Phone 212-682-8830, E-mail: [japa@igc.apc.org](mailto:japa@igc.apc.org)



## Neo-Fascism in Germany and the Media

By Monica Nur

Fifty-five years ago the survivors of Buchenwald, one of the notorious Nazi concentration camps in Germany, near Weimar, swore "Never again fascism! Never again war!" Yet at the end of July 2000, while WILPF met in Berlin at a seminar on ending racism and racial discrimination, Russian immigrants in Düsseldorf were severely injured from the explosion of a bomb thrown on their home. The act set off a shock wave through the country. Media and leading politicians took better note of this last in a long series of vicious and fatal acts against human beings who had fled desperate situations of hunger, torture, war or persecution.

The media has always been present to report on demonstrations by right extremists and neo-fascists, well-protected by police against so-called left extremists. But the neo-Nazi acts against citizens or the desecration of Jewish cemeteries and monuments to victims of fascism have gone unreported by the mainstream media and without reaction by leading politicians, or were simply dismissed as juvenile hooliganism which would pass. Now, no day passes without a prominent politician condemning "right extremism", but in the same breath condemn the "left extreme street terror".

There are many reasons for the growing neo-Nazism/neo-fascism and xenophobia in Germany. The introduction in the early 1980s of high technology in industry and the growing competition on the globalized market place have led to fears of unemployment. In addition, the "intellectual moral change" proclaimed by Helmut Kohl, the new law-and-order rhetoric, public debates by conservative historians attempting to revise the history of fascism, honouring German WWII soldiers in Bitburg by Kohl and

Reagan, the increasing xenophobic calls for migrant workers to go back to their countries of origin, the negative stereotyping of non-Germans, not only feed xenophobic ideas, they play into the hands of the neo-Nazis. They developed new strategies to permeate all spheres of society, and established organizations and political parties, and promoted a modern 'German national socialist' programme.

When it finally became impossible for the media and politicians not to react to the bomb attacks on homes, as in Rostock, Hoyerswerda, Mzlin and Solingen, killing and injuring many, they expressed their sorrow and deep-felt sympathies with the families of the victims, but in so many cases the culprit could never be identified and prosecuted. The juridical institutions showed reluctance in tracing them. Now, more and more often, the victims or witnesses are held liable for slander. No matter which government, the constitutional rights were changed, limiting the granting of asylum. Under the new restrictive laws, many applicants, among them persons who have lived in Germany for many years, are refused asylum. While cases are pending, applicants are kept in special homes without permission to work. If they are refused asylum they are taken to special prisons near certain airports from which they are sent back, often to torture and misery from which they had fled.

The double standard of politicians, and the complicity of the media fuel this development in giving wide coverage to election campaigns by conservatives against dual nationality, creating enemy pictures of the Serbs, comparing Milosevic with Hitler and Kosovo with Auschwitz, appealing to the German conscience to gain popular consent for Germany's participation in the NATO war against Yugoslavia, and so on. The

list of public controversial statements by prominent persons in politics, economy, culture and science is endless. Combined with growing unemployment and constant cuts in social welfare provide fertile ground for the recruitment of neo-Nazis.

Especially since 1990, neo-Nazi parties have cleverly adjusted to the specific social, political and historical conditions in both East and West Germany. In East Germany (the former GDR) the unemployment rate is 18%, twice that of West Germany. In some rural areas the unemployment is even 30 to 40%. There is a tendency among teen-aged Germans to absorb racist, xenophobic, anti-semitic, homophobic and anti-fascist views propagated by neo-Nazi literature, pop concerts, CDs and 800 or so websites on the internet.

The German secret service has registered 117 persons killed and many more seriously injured as a result of right extremist acts committed in the past ten years.

Important social projects - too few in any case - which are intended to show young people alternatives to hopelessness, violence or neo-fascist ideology are constantly threatened to be stopped because of lack of funding. Some have only recently been informed that their public funds are running out by the end of this year.

Many voices, including that of WILPF, are protesting. Unfortunately, they are not helped by the media to bring them to public attention.

\* Monica Nur is a member of WILPF Germany.





## Toward a Culture of Peace

By Silvi Sterr

WILPF's International Seminar on "Eliminating Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance – Essential for a Culture of Peace", held in Helenenau-Berlin from 26-30 July 2000, met with an overwhelming response. One hundred and twenty women from 40 countries and all continents met to look into the causes of racism and discuss the contemporary forms of racial discrimination and xenophobia, as well as decide on strategies to eradicate them. Through presentations by a wide range of speakers and intense panel discussions, first-hand experiences and a store of knowledge were shared. In workshops, the women examined racism in the context of globalization, the media, education, violence, the environment, indigenous communities, armed conflict, nationalism, ideologies, migration and so on. The seminar made us reflect on our own negationism and talk about racism within our own organization. It is impossible to give a comprehensive summary of the rich exchanges and recommendations for action made. However, a few glimpses will show the important contributions women can make to the preparations for the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, to be held in South Africa from 31 August to 7 September 2001, the results of which must contribute to the development of a culture of peace in the coming decade.

The examples given from many countries showed that racism is a growing problem all over the world and governments are not too much interested in fighting it. Analyzing different situations, such as Burundi, Colombia, the Balkans, the Gulf or Palestine, it was agreed that "ethnic conflicts" do not arise naturally, as an inevitable consequence of 'ethnic difference'. Such differences are social constructs, created and used by groups

to come into power and make maximum profit at the cost of the people. Invariably the control of resources, the chase after diamonds, oil, water, genetic resources and geo-strategic influences are found in the background.

Gloriose Nzinahora described the appalling situation in Burundi, which resembles that of Rwanda before the genocide. Patricia Guerrero warned against the 'Plan Colombia' which, if carried through, will destroy the living grounds of indigenous peoples and whole ecosystems, and will drive even more people into the ranks of internal refugees, poverty and misery with women paying the heaviest price.

The seminar called on WILPF to use the time before, during and after the World Conference to hold discussions on the roots of racism; organize anti-racism training and training in non-violent conflict resolution, and workshops on 'overcoming racism' and on peace education; urge governments to support grassroots initiatives; campaign for all countries to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. WILPF, with its experience and outreach, should focus especially on the double and triple discrimination of women. It must also stand with the victims in their demands for reparations, including compensation.

It was stressed that women must take their place in the peace processes from which they are still kept out, even though many are engaged in initiatives for peace, dialogue and survival, and it is they who are holding their families and communities together. WILPF was also urged to continue to work for the inclusion of an equal number of women in government delegations and missions and generally in the decision-making forums. The need for adequate funding and training for conflict prevention and for the development of national action



plans against racism and racial discrimination were underlined.

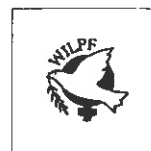
The workshop on media recommended the establishment of an international award for best anti-racist journalism. Another recommendation was to set up a global anti-racism website to strengthen networking, and to campaign for 'racism-free zones'.

The seminar increased awareness of how growing racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia undermine the stability of societies and peace and prevent local and global development at a high cost. It also stimulated and strengthened the commitment of WILPF to make the struggle against racism and its involvement in the World Conference and after, one of its priority areas of work.

\* Silvi Sterr is a member of WILPF Germany, and was the Coordinator of the Seminar.

*'From the viewpoint of world peace, the most dangerous people are not the bad ones but the good ones who remain indifferent and passive when meeting with violence and injustice.....'*

Martin Luther King



## The Pool Of Opinion

By Deb Powell

*"The time is drawing near when women will be called upon to do their share in the reconstruction of the world. Thorough study and discussion of the many involved problems is necessary... Having followed with the greatest attention the many interesting post-war proposals that have been discussed by you we believe that the time has come to collate them in order to bring out the measure of agreement and disagreement on some of the crucial issues under discussion... There are issues that demand fresh discussion, decisions and formulation, some of which are controversial in nature. In the hope of preventing waste of energy and time if and when we meet, after such a long enforced period of separation and varying tragic experiences we suggest already now getting a pool of opinion on issues we have selected for the enclosed questionnaire. We do not expect long treatises on each question. Neither do we want a mere "yes" or "no" reply. We do want a POOL of CONSIDERED OPINION from you enabling us to collate proposals and to keep track of the trends of discussion in Sections outside our own."*

The Pool of Opinion Questionnaire was appended to International Circular Letter No. 1/1943. The questions were tough and one can imagine the lively debates which must have taken place within branches and sections whose distance from the war afforded them the luxury of discussion time. What follows are a few highlights taken from the responses contained in No. 4, 1943, and in No. 3, 1944, of the International Circular Letters.

We must remember that at the time, India was in a struggle for independence, and numerous other colonies existed in Africa and elsewhere. The survey queried sections about their views on economic imperialism and colonialism, specifically which colonies should be given their independence immediately, how were "peoples to be protected from exploitation and helped forward on the path to economic, political and social freedom", and whether "direct international

The International Circular Letters were born of the need to maintain communication among WILPF members during the war years when holding international meetings was impossible. Through these letters many issues of policy and organization were discussed. As the war dragged on, Gertrud Baer, the initiator and author of these letters, and Emily Greene Balch, International President, decided to give more structure to the discussion, particularly in looking toward the reconstruction of the post-war world. This is the second part of a retrospective of WILPF's activities at that time, in celebration of WILPF's 85th anniversary this year.



administration should be provided especially in the case of indisputably primitive peoples such as tribal communities of New Guinea and Africa".

Prophetically, one Section answered: "None of the branches that dealt with the question envisaged an immediate ending of the colonial system. All felt that ending the political control would not in itself ensure freedom from exploiting and that this would only come when the entire economic system is brought under social control both nationally and internationally..." Another Section questioned the very basis on which one would assume that any group had the right to rule another: "In view of the present war, it is idle to pretend that the white peoples are in any true sense of the word more "advanced" than the dark. The primitive peoples were better off when let alone than under 'advanced' administration. This is true of the Australian Aborigines as it is of the North American Indians. But since contact has been made and cannot be reversed, the only way to mend the evil seems to be constant pressure to secure the recognition that (a) Natives do not

exist to provide the cheapest labour for lazy and greedy whites; (b) in lands where nature did not require them to work for a living there is no reason why they should work now, the climate and soil being the same as formerly; and (c) all peoples are quite able to govern themselves according to their own standards if allowed to do so."

On the question concerning the form of world organization, and whether such an organization should be all-inclusive or conditional, one Section replied: "Indispensable reforms are the limitation of the sovereignty of the member states and abolition of the unanimity rule. Delegates should be elected directly by the peoples and pacifists must be represented among them". Another Section echoed this last sentiment saying, "But the crux of the matter was seen in making a world organization represent the people rather than the governments". Yet another section was adamant on the question of inclusion and candid in its analysis: "Yes, inclusive from the outset to all who are willing to join. No criteria for membership except that of willingness, coupled of course with knowledge of the rules of the League. If certain nations are considered below standard, the surest way to raise their standards is to bring them into free and equal association with their superiors. Incidentally, the superiors (or those who imagine themselves to be so) might learn something useful themselves from this free association...at present all nations in practice fall far below the standards of such a Charter, consequently all would have to be educated up to it".

Never content to merely discuss, the vision of these WILPF women was transformed into action when the war was over and contributed to the progress made in the last 50 years in such areas as peoples' right to self-determination and anti-racism.

\* Deb Powell has been a member of WILPF for more than 20 years. She wrote her Honours thesis on the history of WILPF in Canada to 1960, and contributed to the development by WILPF of a women's budget for Canada.



## Human Rights and Human Development

By Krishna Ahooja Patel

The launching of the UNDP Human Development Report 2000 was an international event which attracted enormous interest in various capital cities. In Geneva it was introduced in a big way in the presence of representatives of governments and NGOs attending the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives (26-30 June). Crowded in a small hall they heard a quote from Mary Wollstoncroft, the heroine of the feminist movement who said 200 years ago, "it is justice not charity that is wanting in the world".

Published annually by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) since 1995, this year's edition focuses on the interlinkages between human rights and human development and provides a very useful background to the current international scenario in which globalization predominates and human rights are all pervasive on international agendas. These two concepts have become part of the knowledge base of the decade of the 90s, during the UN series of conference on various aspects of economic and social development. The outcome of these conferences was clear and precise: that processes of globalization have increased disparities among countries and deprive an increasing number of people all around the world, particularly women, of their minimum needs of survival.

The authors of the report recognize that the 21st century has opened with new threats to human freedoms and that the number of major armed conflicts have increased, resulting in more than 50 million migrants, 10 million refugees

and 5 million internally displaced persons. These human tragedies are a reflection of the processes of development which have sacrificed human welfare and well-being. The report quotes a recent study of world income distribution among households which shows a sharp rise



in inequality and clearly indicates that economic growth has stagnated in many developing countries. It is also recognized that laws alone cannot guarantee human rights...and for democracy to be "inclusive", as suggested in the report, elections alone are not enough.

Among various solutions offered to improve the political situation, two have been considered important by the UNDP: the system of global governance to be transparent and fair, and mechanisms to give voice to small and poor countries. The challenge is to build a culture of human rights awareness and commitment. But how? In the face of so much political conflict, social chaos and economic competition, "feeling good" is not enough.

The first of the six chapters of the Human Development Report 2000 provides a conceptual framework on "rights" and "development" by

Professor Amartya Sen who was on the eminent panel of consultants to the team preparing this report. He poses two fundamental questions: How compatible are the normative concerns in the analyses of human development and human rights? Are they harmonious enough to be able to complement rather than undermine each other? Are the two approaches sufficiently distinct so that each can add something substantial to the other? Are they diverse enough to enrich each other? Professor Sen believes that the promotion of human development and the fulfilment of human rights share a common motivation. He connects his *capabilities* approach with human development, suggesting that the Human Development Index (HDI) should incorporate the most elementary capabilities, such as living a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and enjoying a decent standard of living. His conclusion is that "the human rights approach may offer an additional and very useful perspective for the analysis of human development.

Reading through the other chapters it can be easily discerned that human rights and human freedoms are also directly connected. The new definition of this conviction is "inclusive democracy". For example, chapter five proposes that for better perception, policies and practices, it is advisable to develop and use statistical indicators for human rights. The advantage of indicators is that they can be used for giving early warning of potential violations, prompting preventive action and enhancing social consensus on difficult trade-offs to be made in the face of resource constraints. For example, if only 77% of girls are in

(Continued on page 18...)



(...Continued from page 17)

schools compared to 97% of boys, it should be clear that the difference amounts to discrimination at all levels of the family and community. Looking at the encyclopedic nature of the information in the HRD 2000 report, several gaps appear. Human rights commissions across the world have reported a tendency that between policy and practice, there is a big problem. There is no doubt that millions of people in the world are excluded from the benefit of economic growth. What is also missing in the report is the link of human rights to environment, i.e., the right to safe water, livelihoods and biodiversity and the link between development and peace.

There are other problems not examined in the report. In the broader sense, the definition of the right to development includes civil, political and economic rights. This concept is not considered adequate by some political scientists as it does not include accountability and does not tackle the incentive gap, the jurisdictional gap and participation gap. This big question is: how will the economy function? For example, who will benefit if textiles are liberalized?

There were several significant conclusion on the complexity of using human rights as tools of development (as suggested by the High Commissioner for Human Rights). First, the gap between law and reality must be closed. Human rights are larger than legal rights. Second, given competing visions of the future and conflict between economic groups and democracy, the conceptual divide between human rights and human development needs to be bridged. Third, elimination of poverty is a major challenge when 40 million children are hungry and public

services favour the rich countries and peoples rather than the excluded.

HDR 2000 is a major event in the realm of ideas and concepts. For the first time, UNDP has linked development with freedom, which is the intellectual contribution of Professor Amartya Sen. For a long time to come, this report will remain a reference guide on human rights across countries. Its brief message is that empowerment of people and accountability of governments are essential to human development. However, the analysis does not go far enough towards symptoms and diagnostics of the malaise in the process of development. There was a general consensus among critics that implementation of the right to development begins by the protection of the state of the right to food, right to health and right to education - three basic rights without which development is in jeopardy.

However, as Mark Malloch Brown, UNDP's Administrator, states in his Foreword, the report "is intended primarily to help promote practical action that puts a human rights-based approach to human development and poverty eradication firmly on the global agenda".

\* *Krishna Ahojja Patel is WILPF's international representative to the UN and ILO. The above article is a shortened version of a longer, more detailed review of the HDR 2000 Report. The full text is available on request from the WILPF International Secretariat, Geneva.*

*HRD 2000 is published for UNDP by Oxford University Press and can be purchased from the United Nations in New York and Geneva and all Book shops handling UN publications.*

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## Country of My Skull, Antjie Krog

By Cate Buchanan

Antjie Krog is an award-winning South African journalist, poet and broadcaster. Krog is Afrikaans and originally comes from a farming community in the Orange Free State. In her capacity as a journalist for the South African Broadcasting Corporation, she covered the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) from its inception. This book is based on that experience.

A year after the first free elections in the history of South Africa in 1994, the TRC was established to investigate gross human rights violations committed between 1960 and 1993. It was composed of seventeen Commissioners led by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, received 20,000 statements from victims - 2000 of these in public hearings, and received nearly 8000 amnesty applications.

The TRC was based on a model of reconciliation through truth emphasizing two key concepts. Firstly, perpetrators of human rights violations taking into account their actions - with the assistance of the contentious amnesty system. Secondly, victims seeking compensation in several ways; the extension of dignity and survival by giving voice to experiences of torture, oppression, murder of family and colleagues and systematic humiliation as well as granting of minor reparations.

The book charts some of the complexities surrounding reconciliation processes highlighting the transformative potential of ordinary people speaking about the extraordinary experiences of apartheid. It also examines some of the cultural and political obstacles from diverse actors to stall, undermine or destroy attempts to investigate the past. Krog recalls in compelling terms the politics, revelations, testimonies and outcomes of the TRC through

detailed accounts of political intrigue, the occasional poem and heartfelt observations of her personal challenges and journey of coming to terms with her own place in the history of South Africa. The book concludes with an epilogue about the drama associated with the final report of the Commission and its presentation to the then President Nelson Mandela in October 1998.

It is easy to romanticize the transition process in South Africa. Krog clearly had this in mind and manages to avoid it. *Country of My Skull* is written with an engaging mixture of compassion, humour and honesty. For anyone interested in South African politics and history, nations in transition or processes of reconciliation, this book is highly recommended.

\* Cate Buchanan is the WILPF International Disarmament and Economic Justice Intern for 2000.

*Country of My Skull* by Antjie Krog, Vintage, 1999. For more information on the TRC visit: [www.truth.org.za](http://www.truth.org.za)

### International Women's Day Disarmament Seminar

March 7, 2001  
United Nations, Geneva

*"In the Line of Fire: A Gender Perspective on Small Arms Proliferation, Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution"*

A seminar examining the production and transfer of small arms and light weapons and the effects of the proliferation of these weapons on human rights, sustainable development, peace-building, disarmament and women's rights...

... followed by...

March 8th - Statement to the Conference on Disarmament & a one-day workshop on small arms in preparation for UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects in 2001.

To register interest please email:  
[wilpf@iprolink.ch](mailto:wilpf@iprolink.ch)

### Change In International Treasurer

It is with great regret that the International Executive Committee (IEC), at its meeting in Heleneau, Germany in August, accepted the resignation of Ms. Aiko Tokosue, from the position of WILPF International Treasurer. Ms. Tokosue requested that she be allowed to resign from her post for personal and family reasons. The IEC expressed its deep appreciation for Aiko's contributions, wisdom, and true dedication which will be deeply missed, even though it fully counts on her continuing involvement in the Japanese section and as an advisor to WILPF International. Aiko was given a standing ovation for her dedicated services to WILPF.

The Leadership Committee approached a number of Sections and individuals to find a person to assume interim charge of International Treasurer until the next elections at the Congress in 2001. With generosity Ms. Mans Van Zandbergen has accepted this charge, with the full support of the Dutch Section. The IEC expressed its gratitude and warmly welcomed Mans Van Zandbergen as the new treasurer.

The work of the WILPF International Treasurer is onerous and important. Since the money is never sufficient for the amount of work that is required by the dire situations we live in, this position becomes a difficult one. It is made somewhat lighter by the strong collaboration offered by all WILPF members and the staff. It also counts on the generosity of all the WILPF members and friends to continue to provide the financial support that is needed. Please join me in expressing our gratitude to Aiko and giving a warm welcome to Mans.

Bruna Nota  
WILPF International President



## WILPF In A Changing World

By Michaela R. Told

International politics is marked by continuity and change. While the cause of peace, justice and social change continue to guide WILPF's work today, we are also guided by the tremendous changes the world has gone through. One of the most fundamental changes in the last decade has been the breakdown of the Cold War bipolar system. Following the collapse of the Warsaw bloc, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), under the leadership of the USA, appeared 'victorious' and assumed a stellar position in international politics. Understanding the dynamics of this condition is essential, as after 85 years of working for social change, it is within this context that WILPF moves into the next century.

The change from a bipolar to a unipolar system has resulted in changes in international relations at the military, political, economic, and cultural levels. At the military level, a shift in the nature of wars has taken place: from the threat of global war there is now an increase in intra-state armed conflicts. The breakdown of the bipolar system should have smoothed the dynamics of international politics, yet, the nuclear arms race continues with other countries joining in. On the other hand, despite an initial post Cold War reduction in global exports of major conventional weapons, business is booming for small arms and light weapons suppliers. Cold War 'imperatives' of controlling weapons transfers no longer exists, this increase also reveals that regional powers other than the largest arms producers became more self-reliant and acquired the know-how of making their own arms, particularly light weapons. Moreover, the excess production capacity following the end of the Cold War paved the way for a larger diffusion of these weapons. (ICRC,

1999). All these factors facilitate the escalation of conflicts which obstruct political consensus and hit hard against the limited resources necessary for social and economic development. This process threatens with more escalation of conflicts and maintains the military arsenal instead of decreasing it.

At the political level, similar dynamics made 'liberalism' to appear victorious.

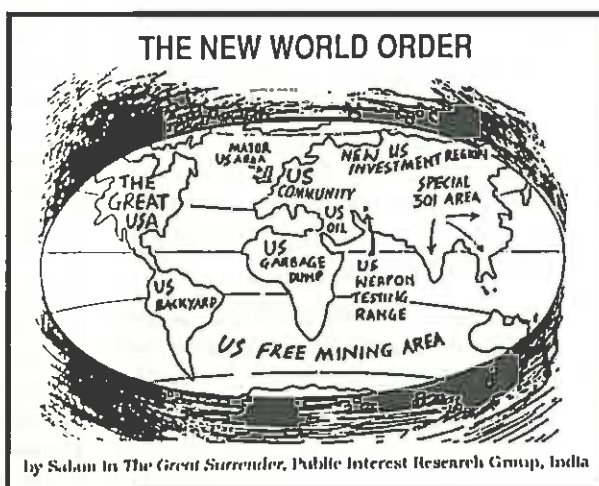
modalities (Luttwak 1998). Global financial institutions and multinational corporations are taking over the power of national decision-making. The illusions of the neo-liberal utopia have been shattered by the realities of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), which have only created economic imbalances inhibiting investment, generated social and political conflicts (Bienfield 1994) and led to economic marginalization and impoverishment.

Changes at the political and economic levels have in turn defined cultural dynamics. The increased demand for collective rights of nations and peoples (Galtung 2000) allowed for the rise in identity politics and nationalism. The different forms of nationalism are a clear expression of the new cultural atmosphere paving the way for culturally hegemonic, racist and even genocidal regimes. At the international level, despite the

claims of a 'global village' that seemingly promises equity and participation, there is a threat of severe cultural conflicts manifesting in racism, increasing polarization rather than opening up the cultural sphere.

The pressures that the above changes exert affect nations, groups and individuals, but even more so marginalized and vulnerable segments of societies. In most societies, women undergo the worst aspects of these changes. The disparities and contradictions of the unipolar system make it more fragile and its alternative – a multipolar system that respects and responds to the needs of all – is required. The fact that the consequences of the unipolar system are more visible than ever allows space for collective action. The aim is among others to achieve a financial system based on a fair

(Continued on page 10...)



by Salam In *The Great Surrender*, Public Interest Research Group, India

In many countries, a process of democratization took place dominated however by a Western understanding based on a majority decision-making (Galtung 2000). Remaining communist states are undergoing severe pressure from 'victorious' liberalism, only increasing states' insecurity and leading to a decrease in the margin of freedom in those states. The logic of the unipolar system actually undermines democracy at all levels (Amin 2000) and increases political exclusion rather than achieving democratization and participation.

At the economic level, the transition to the market economy and neo-liberalism was introduced as solutions to chronic economic problems. Economies steered by market mechanisms have assumed a prominent position where the geopolitical modalities of the Cold War is giving way to 'geo-economics'