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A DECADE FOR CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

The United Nations has designated the ten years from 1988 to 1997 as a World Decade for Cultural Development. In so doing it affirms the central role of culture in shaping the development process. UN Secretary-General, Perez de Cuellar, describes the Decade as "an appeal to the reason and to the heart of each and every one. Reason, because we can no longer afford to squander this incalculable source of creativity and invention that lies unused within each society. Heart, because in it resides the true, great and inexhaustible wealth that is common to us all . . ."

For too long the creative force in society has been limited by a vision of despair and materialism and by an immersion in the lower levels of the mind and feelings. This has helped us to face up to certain aspects of human nature. But the hope of anchoring the universal vision, and of saving humanity, depends upon our success in transforming this creativity of darkness into a creativity of light.

Just imagine what it will be like when the creative force in our global society is driven by a profound intention to create forms and relationships that express justice, compassion and a reverence for life. It will be a new renaissance that involves everyone. We will see painting, sculpture, dance, drama, film, music and poetry that will come from all lands and that will take our breath away with its infinite variety and its radiant light. It will be a time when special groups of artists will create those new forms of sound, rhythm, movement, colour and shape which will perhaps become the new talismans "points of anchorage for the universal spirit and power points in the creation of the new culture. We can imagine that the work of the new masters in the arts will be accompanied by a wider flowering of the creative spirit in individual and community life as an increasing number of people become absorbed in the work of creating forms through which the one life can breathe and reveal itself.

We have not yet reached that time, but we are on the way. Certainly in the arts there is a new spirit "and it is not just to be found in the areas that self-consciously describe themselves as the "new art. There are occasions when that which claims to be "new, "inspired" and "universal" lacks the very qualities of freshness, vibrancy and depth that are needed if the form is to communicate anything other than a set of rather didactic, rigid and intellectual ideas.

The new culture is emerging in all areas of thought and activity, not just in what we tradi

tionally label the arts. It is coming to birth in the hearts, minds and lifestyles of the people of goodwill in the world. Its spirit lives in the new view of life that is shared by the millions of individuals, worldwide, who have awakened to a global vision and feel within the fire of loyalty and belonging to the family of humankind. The new culture is taking form in the myriad of ways in which this sense of belonging, of unity and oneness is finding expression in all societies.

Dramatic and far-reaching changes are taking place in our world today. Old forms of living are breaking down and our task is to cultivate a deeper, more subjective culture, where reason and heart hold sway.

Some initial concepts and links do, of course, exist. There is, to begin with, the idea of cultural development. This came into being as a result of two observations. On the one hand, it was realised that culture cannot be dissociated from the life, thinking and activity of individuals and communities, since culture represents the living sum of everything that has been done in the past and is being done in the present, fashioning

throughout the centuries a system of values, traditions and tastes and a way of being in which the individual genius of a people finds itself. Understood in this sense, culture necessarily leaves its mark on the productive effort of men and women and establishes the specific strengths and weaknesses of a society's development.

On the other hand, it has been realised during the past decades that when the aim of economic growth is set with no reference

to the cultural environment, grave imbalances result, both economic and cultural, and the creative potential of a people is seriously weakened. If the aim of development is to bring more life, and a better life, to each and every person, development must be founded on the optimal deployment of the human resources and material wealth of each community through the free expression of the talents and interests of all its members. This means that, in the final analysis, it must draw its priorities, motivations and objectives from culture.

A source of inspiration

Culture then becomes not only the area in which individual and collective creativity is constantly being manifested, in total freedom, but also a direct source of inspiration for the development process. In return, development imparts to culture a generative strength and confers on it a role of permanent social revitalisation.

It so happens that these two observations can be verified not just in one or two countries but in every country, in the north as in the south, in the east as in the west. Increasingly, the vital link between the processes of cultural creation and those of economic production is coming to be something of importance for mankind as a whole.

The continuing globalisation and acceleration of the pace of social life are producing two complementary yet contradictory phenomena. On the one hand, there is the growing communication and exchange of ideas, goods and persons, a gradual drawing together of people and of nations, an opening of intellectual and cultural horizons, and the first intimations of interdependence at the level of mankind as a whole. On the other hand, there is a steamroller effect towards uniformity of values and standards which is in

danger of impoverishing creative diversity, that factor essential for the long-term survival of mankind, and which is in danger of imposing, everywhere, the sway of those who define those values and standards.

Linking culture with development can make it possible, at one and the same time, to give more depth to creative identities by inhibiting the phenomena of standardisation, and to promote increasingly fruitful exchanges among all cultures. This will be so provided that such a link is based on the rejection of any exclusivity or discrimination between cultures, nations and people, and is based on the assertion of the universal humanist values without which no dialogue is possible. It must be based on the encouragement of freedom to search, invent and innovate, which is the prime condition for any cultural life.

All of us together must therefore employ all of our resources in the coming years so that creative diversity can prevail over the dead hand of standardisation, so that the essential ambitions of mankind can prevail over the conflicts of interest of groups and nations and so that the interdependence of all mankind can prevail through the free affirmation of each and every person.

A diversity which unifies

The aim of the World Decade for Cultural Development is to spread awareness of this need and to foster among decision-makers, creative workers and, on the broadest scale, world public opinion, a new attitude of mind leading to the emergence of a whole host of proposals and activities which will foster a diversity which unifies, a creativity which brings people closer to each other and an interdependence which sets people free.

The four aims of the Decade clearly provide a focus for thought and are markers, each of which, in the light of the experience of past decades, points to dangers to be avoided and paths to be explored.

Acknowledging the cultural dimension in development: we have to go beyond the economic approach and find the hundreds of possible ways in which industry and creativity can be tied together, and economics can be rooted in culture.

Affirming and enhancing cultural identities: this calls for a rejection of the temptations of standardisation and its attendant dangers of dependence and alienation. It calls for encouragement to be given to the blossoming of all individual and collective talents.

Broadening participation in cultural life: this objective requires us to call on the focus of freedom and creation possessed by individuals, groups and communities, by making clear the vital link which exists between culture and free will, independence of mind and opposition to conformism, and between culture and human rights – the rights of people who are free and responsible and who are indivisibly citizens, creative workers and producers.

Promoting international cultural co-operation: this final aim requires us to oppose the tendency to turn in on oneself or the tendency to champion one's national culture, which becomes depreciation of the culture of other people. It calls on us to seek, to increase and to strengthen all the links through which a culture freely draws sustenance from others and gives sustenance to them in its turn; all the links through which a kernel of universally accepted truths is ceaselessly shaped, and above all that simple and shining idea that all men are equal

and that every one of them is unique.

It is hoped by UNESCO that a thousand different projects will blossom throughout the five continents as part of this ten-year focus on culture and development and towards this end governments, communities, organisations and individuals are being encouraged to prepare their own projects. Two hundred and thirty-one of these have already been recognised as Decade Activities. These include: a long-term project with seminars, publications and festivals to trace and document the influence of African civilisation on Caribbean societies; a Nigerian exhibition on indigenous technology; a travelling exhibition, conceived in Belgium, that will feature art that can be appreciated by blind people; a co-operative project linking universities in India, Argentina and Australia in an investigation of the way in which cultural traditions have shaped the living environment of the past and cultural identities have shaped modern urban environments. Out of the study it is hoped to develop a deeper understanding of the role that cultural aspirations can play in the rehabilitation and development of inner city areas; a symposium on African dance in the Ivory Coast that helped to alert Africa and international public opinion to the contribution of African dances to all the dances practised elsewhere; an international symposium in Kiev on the importance of Folk Art and Creative Performance Tradition in the modern world.

It is hoped to elicit the widest possible participation in the Decade. If you would like to contribute, or find out more, contact UNESCO in Paris, or your local UNESCO National Commission. A Practical Guide to the World Decade for Cultural Development 1988-97°, suggesting how activities can be organised, is available at no charge along with an informative newsletter, Culture Plus.

UNESCO, Secretariat of the World Decade for Cultural Development, 7 Place de Fontenoy 75700 Paris, France.

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Cooperative goodwill is all that can, at this time, be expected from the masses, and this is the sublimation of the forces released through civilisation. Loving understanding should be the hallmark of the cultured, wiser group, plus an ability to correlate the world of meaning with the world of outer effects. Ponder on this sentence. Group love is, and must be, the outstanding characteristic of the Illuminati of the world.

Alice A. Bailey

ART AND THE RENEWAL OF SOCIETY

John Lane

John Lane is a painter and author of the book *The Living Tree: Art and the Sacred*. He has founded an arts centre and theatre in Britain, is a trustee of the Dartington Hall Trust and art editor of *Resurgence* magazine. Last year John Lane spoke at the World Goodwill annual seminar in London and the following is an extract from the talk he gave on that occasion.

To create a new myth, a new sense of human destiny, a new dream, humanity must have recourse to great powers. What powers are these?

The answer lies, I believe, somewhere in the province of an ageless process as natural, ubiquitous, and, yes, painful, as the birth of a child. I refer, of course, to the way of the deep Artist, the way of the feminine, the way of creation, in which, by abandoning ego, moralisms, dogma, presuppositions, all control, we may become the vehicle of a new life clamouring for release at the deepest level of the soul. History, no matter how remote, examined with this understanding, will show the decisive role the archetypal world of the collective unconscious has played in the formation and the downfall of every civilisation. And so it is today; the environmental crisis is as much a crisis of soul as it is of physical means.

To exorcise the spell of progress that has seized us, to activate the primordial energies which will be required for the task of renewal, we will need to lie very still: to listen and to prepare ourselves before we plunge into the abyss of darkness out of which, perhaps, the very cosmos itself first emerged. For the pattern of renewal shows again and again that this is the manner of transformation; it also reveals a principle of counteraction: the renewal of life comes from what we have consciously despised. Thus, after alienation we may anticipate a new intimacy; after the profane, a regenerated spirituality; after the mechanistic, a greater biological sensitivity; after damaging the earth, a healing; after insolence, humility; after the male, the female or rather, both male and female together. A long, long winter lies ahead of us but a generous flowering lies dormant in the cold earth.

Without the evocation of our own mythic vision, a vision that we really are from one body with heaven, earth, and all the myriad things a vision to replace the industrial illusion I cannot believe we will succeed. For to restore its purity a new mystique of the rain will be needed, technology by itself is not enough. To remedy the devastation, a new mystique of the land will be called for, one which reveres the earth. To rescue the seas, the air, the rivers, the animals, the birds and fish, our brothers and sisters, a new kind of psalm to life must be composed but one written not on paper but on the planet itself. By going deep, by being devoured into this energy with which we have kept no reckoning, we may yet build a more intimate and sacred empathy with the natural world.

Everyone an artist

James Joyce, in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, has something valuable to say about the wise use of the imagination, a process, I suspect, of which he could speak with the utmost authority. He says, or rather he has his young

hero write in his diary, the following deeply significant and beautiful words: "Welcome, O life! I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the

smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race.â\200\231â\200\231

I like this, I like the sense of gratitude and courtesy, even reverence, with which the author addresses the teeming world: â\200\234Welcome, O life!â\200\235â\200\231 I like the suggestion that every encounter, however seemingly trivial, may be creative; that every moment, even the millionth, requires an effort of self-abnegation, another assertion of courage. I like, too, the suggestion that, as he puts it, â\200\230â\200\230the reality of experienceâ\200\235â\200\235 is the basis of the creative life, one rooted in the here and going on all the time â\200\224 after all it is not necessarily in the studio but on the kitchen table, in the crowded compartment or the queue for a bus that the creative encounter occurs. This is an important perception. Joyce is saying that every one of us is, in their soul, an artist; is creative not by choice but by nature. Creativity, he tells us, is the condition of our existence; if you like, the genetic coding of our human portrait and our human destiny. Of this, there is no escaping, but the task of creation remains nonetheless an arduous one, as difficult, may be, as the blacksmithâ\200\231s task of bending cold iron in his smithy.

But, in the light of what I have been trying to say, I would ask you to pay especial attention to the last words: â\200\234â\200\234To forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race.â\200\235â\200\231 Joyce is telling us that right conduct, wisdom, is not something handed down to us by the great sages, valuable as their guidance on occasion can be. He is telling us that it is created anew for each one of us out of the free, moist, fermenting, sappy inspiration always bubbling in the soul â\200\224 its archetypal symbols, its primordial myths; its hints, impulses, intuitions; its joy in beauty; its sense of a numinous presence throughout the cosmic order. These precede; religion, philosophy, science, the arts, follow as consequent modes of thought and action. Shelley spoke of the poet as the â\200\230â\200\234â\200\230unacknowledged legislator of the raceâ\200\235, Joyce of an â\200\230â\200\230uncreated conscienceâ\200\231â\200\231. It is not, they are each saying, the politician, the functionary, the economist, the advertising agent, the general, the school teacher, the prison guard, as such, who is the conscience of the race, the one, that is, who can renew society and give it form. It is the deep artist, the shaman, the divine ventriloquist. And when we too have the courage to create, it can be every one of us, you and I included.

It was no accident therefore that led me to unearth the paragraph from Joyce; it speaks to and for us all. It acknowledges, I believe, that we are all creative and that, as such, we have a responsibility for the greatest issue of our time; the creation of a new mythic vision with its all pervasive numinosity alive. Each one of us, then, has a responsibility not only to give expression in poetry, dance, painting, theatre, music making, cooking, home and family making, dress, our work, but in the art of our own lives. â\200\234The artist,â\200\235â\200\235 as Coomaraswamy said, â\200\230â\200\230is not a special kind of man, but every man is a special kind of artistâ\200\231â\200\231.

But in spite of what Coomaraswamy believed there are those,

I suggest, whom we call genius, whose abilities are of an exceptional order. Like the shaman, the deep Artist enters naked into the unfathomable abyss, to return if that is how fortune so favours the journey with at best a handful of tiny seeds the seeds of insight, ecstatic transformation and new levels of integration the forms of things unknown so radical as to be completely beyond anything that had previously entered the heart of humankind.

Van Gogh, Messiaen, Henry Moore

To conclude I should therefore like to mention a few such Artists, three in number, whose contribution reaches far beyond our current and very limited conception of Art. In Van Gogh, for example, a man of infinite generosity, humanity possessed a soul which flowed so freely into the world around him its starry nights, its waving cypress trees, its sunflower plants loaded with heavy, yellow blooms that he could apprehend these things as they were; he could see them through the veil of appearances and rediscover stars and cypresses and sunflower blooms in their original, virginal state. In him then the observer and observed, subject and object, were unified. This intimate communion with the depths of his own psychic structure links Van Gogh with some of the advances made in Quantum theory during the first three decades of this century. In the music of the composer, Olivier Messiaen, we may also discover the outlines of what might be described as an integrated ecological philosophy.

Messiaen, his gaze fixed on eternity, gives contemporary expression to the moment of creation when, as the Book of Job says, the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy. Each of his works is, in fact, an act of praise, an ecstatic contemplation of God as manifested in the grandeur of nature and in God's special representatives on earth the birds. In his music the divine, the human and the natural world are one; dynamically alive, fluid and interconnected. Try to bring back the god in us to the divine in the All, said Plotinus. Messiaen has.

Finally, I would draw your attention to an artist of a different temper, whose art likewise prefigures aspects of the emerging human age. Henry Moore sculpted reclining figures half human, half landscape, at once anthropocentric and biocentric, earth goddesses and earth formations, in their

own way reminiscent of Silbury Hill. These sculptures blend a sinuous, organic language of form, very modern in their time, with something of the bare, ageless, presence of boulder or cliff. They suggest, too, a will to endure, as if their thoughts had slowed to a more natural rhythm. We are, they suggest, returning to the primordial community of the universe, the earth and all living things. Their message is one of human-earth synthesis. With uncanny foresight, Moore experienced that until the human is understood as a dimension of the earth, we have no secure basis for understanding any aspect of the human. We can understand the human only through the earth and the earth only through the human.

To believe in life

To be an artist, he wrote, is to believe in life. As artists ourselves, let us follow his dictum. Let us have the courage to create. Let us celebrate the universe, in itself a single gorgeous celebratory event. Let us be the instrument of the new revealing experience which even now is stealing over us, the new myth of a new civilisation, without which humanity will

exterminate itself and put an end to 20 billion years of planetary history.

On his death-bed the Austrian psycho-analyst, Otto Rank, wrote the following prophetic words: "The new meaning of the soul is creativity and mysticism. These will become the foundations of the new psychological type and with him/her the new civilization."

What kind of psychological type did Rank have in mind? Surely the type of person who does not merely contemplate, merely stand apart as a bystander and intellectualise, order, devalue and exploit the universe, but engages with it in a passionate, personal empathy. The type that does not speak a language of dualistic aggression but a language of living relationships that extend throughout the universe. The type that does not regard creation as peripheral, as unnecessary, as wasteful, but as service, as meditation, as spirituality, as expression, as the art of our lives.

Otto Rank died in 1939; fifty years later his words retain their beckoning call. Let us heed them. Let us live them. For in living them, only in living them, can we regain our natural place on earth, can we regain what we have lost or are fast losing "our planet homeland and soul."

A SCIENCE OF CREATIVITY

Alice Bailey has made the suggestion that a study of the nature of genius will provide evidence of the existence of the soul and will also lay the foundations of a science of creativity that can be used in the upbringing and education of human beings. She writes that the recognition of the fact of the soul's existence "will be the result of the study and analysis, by the psychologists of the world, of the nature of genius and the significance of creative work.... The work of creative artists, the intuitive perception of great scientific investigators, the

inspired imagination of the poets of the world and the vision of the illumined idealists, have all to be accounted for and explained, for the laws under which such men and women work have yet to be discovered."

The challenge contained in these words lies in the use of the word "laws" to describe the processes of human creativity. Is there any evidence, since the writing of this passage in 1936, that we have come any closer to discovering these laws of

creativity, and is there any sign that, as we approach the end of the century, a practical science of creativity is being developed and applied?

Where the theory of creativity is concerned there has been much progress, and it is significant that, in many cases, it has been felt necessary by researchers in this field to introduce the idea of a higher faculty of inspiration or intuition comparable to the ancient idea of the human soul. Carl Jung, for example, accepted the existence of a superconscious state with which the limited personality could be integrated, and which was the source of any human being's endeavour to become whole and fully creative. The idea of a higher creative centre in the human being is also central to the psychology of Roberto Assagioli, and has been implemented in the work of the Institutes of Psychosynthesis in various parts of the world. The same idea is found, too, in that profound and lucid work of practical spirituality, *A Guide for the Perplexed* by E. F. Schumacher. An important contribution has been made by the humanist psychologists, some of whom were closely connected with the Esalen venture in California. Carl R Rogers, for example, in his influential work on the goals of enlightened education, *Freedom to Learn*, dreamed of an educational system that would allow the following type of individual to develop:

With his sensitive openness to the world, his trust of his own ability to form new relationships with his environment, he would be the type of person from whom creative products and creative living emerge.

Rogers believed that the fully functioning person would be free from defensiveness, since fear is constrictive and is a barrier to psychological transformation. This vision of a freely functioning and creative human being was shared by the humanist psychologist, Abraham Maslow. His *self-actualising person demonstrates diminished aggression as openness and creativity increase. Practical ways of achieving this flexible creativity are taken up in Maslow's *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature* and by Isaac Brown in *Human Teaching for Human Learning: Confluent Education* where he describes a system of education in which the cognitive and affective sides of a human being are cultivated and co-ordinated.

The divinely abnormal

One of the primary achievements of these thinkers is to direct attention away from subnormal human behaviour and pathological states to what Alice Bailey has called divinely abnormal behaviour in a human being. Here the person reveals states of mind, beyond the ordinary state of awareness, which are actualised in the great artists, musicians, dramatists, writers, and the many other types who have been the glory of the human kingdom down the ages. The exceptional achievements of such human beings convey the hope that this creativity is potentially within the grasp of all human beings if properly and scientifically cultivated.

Another pioneer in this field of cultivated creativity is Edward de Bono. Through such books as *Lateral Thinking* he has presented strategies for breaking rigid patterns of thought so that new ideas can spontaneously surface. The belief that creativity can be cultivated has spread to the business world, and there are now many courses available in the art of brainstorming, mind-mapping, creative thinking, along with relaxation and meditation techniques, all aimed at enhancing the creativity of executives and other employees. In schools,

universities and adult education classes in many countries there has been a marked increase of courses in creative writing and expressive drama. In Britain a major initiative in this direction has been taken by the Verbal Arts Association which is working for the inclusion of creative writing at all levels of the education system.

The developing countries of the world are faced with enormous problems of high levels of illiteracy, poverty and lack of resources for education. These very problems have stimulated gifted educators to insights on the cultivation of creativity and led to many pioneering initiatives. In Columbia, for example, a New School Programme is now operating in nearly 18,000 rural schools. The programme integrates the school into all areas of the daily life of the community, and fosters full creative participation of the children in the education process. An experiment in India, launched in 1989 by the State Resource Centre for Non-Formal Education in an area of high illiteracy, involves 150 villages near Pune on India's west coast. In regular evening classes, the focus is upon people's participation. Drama, art and story telling play a vital role in awakening the creativity and interest of the villagers. All subjects taught address their needs and environment. In a very short time the classes have yielded promising results and especially noted is the way that singing, dancing, participation in discussions . . . has fostered a degree of self-confidence and self-respect.

(UNESCO Sources No. 12, 1990)

There are many similar projects being taken up in economically deprived countries as they struggle to awaken the potential of their peoples. In this World Decade for Cultural Development all nations need to face up to the challenge of cultivating creativity as an essential ingredient for a spiritual culture.

Carl Rogers, *Freedom to Learn*. London, Columbus, 1969.

G. I. Brown, *Human Teaching for Human Learning*. New York, Penguin, 1971.

E. F. Schumacher, *A Guide for the Perplexed*. London, Jonathan Cape, 1977.

Edward de Bono, *Lateral Thinking: A Textbook of Creativity*. Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1977.

Abraham Maslow, *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature*. New York, Penguin, 1976.

Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on the Seven Rays: Esoteric Psychology*, Vol. I & II. London, Lucis Press & New York, Lucis Publishing, 1936 & 1942.

There is a growing awareness that modern culture is approaching a severe crisis and that sooner or later it will have to undergo a ruthless revaluation. That revaluation must reveal the cause of the disorientation of contemporary culture which for so long now has been made a virtue of, or has been accepted without intelligent criticism or questioning. This revaluation will quicken the realisation of the necessity to focus man's consciousness upon the creative centre of Life, which the great cultures of the world have named the Sacred. And with all its urgency, it is in this act of orientation towards the Sacred centre of Life that contemporary culture will find confirmation of that universal Reality, the rediscovery of which, alone,

will save our civilisation.

Cecil Collins

1990 INTERNATIONAL LITERACY YEAR

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It comes as something of a shock to learn that, in our modern world, one adult in every four can neither read nor write and that there are 130 million children between the ages of 6 to 11 who have never attended a school. Given these shocking statistics, we should not be surprised to learn that women are worse off than men. Sixty percent of the primary school age children who do not go to school are girls. On a global level just over one woman in three is illiterate, compared to less than one man in five.

Almost 95% of those who are illiterate live in the developing world. Their inability to read and write makes them victims in so many ways. UNESCO tells a typical tale of a young Indian woman who, as a farm labourer, signed a piece of paper with a thumbprint. When she learned to read she discovered that the paper authorised the foreman to withhold part of her salary. A young mother in Ethiopia nearly lost her sick child because, in her anxiety, she forgot the instructions given to her about administering the medicine, and she could not read the prescription on the medicine bottle. A farmer in India lost his ancestral lands because he could not read the document he signed with his thumbprint. There are millions of such stories of personal tragedy. The greatest tragedy, however, is that, without literacy, a solo mother or a family or a community in the slums or rural villages of the developing world has even less chance than they would otherwise have of exploiting the options that are open to them to improve their situation. Those who do learn to read and write report that an entirely new world, a new range of options, is opened up to them. It is as dramatic a means of personal transformation as we can imagine, so it is perhaps not surprising that adults who have been through the experience of becoming literate often use the metaphor of light to describe it. As one woman is reported to have said: â\200\234â\200\230It is as if suddenly the world around you lights
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Illiteracy is not by any means confined to the developing world. Many of the wealthiest industrialised countries have recently discovered, to their horror, that significant proportions of their adult populations experience what is termed â\200\234â\200\230functional illiteracyâ\200\231â\200\231. They may be able to decipher a text, or to read the name of a railway station, but they are not able to understand or make sense of a paragraph of writing, or to use a map of train or bus routes. There is no certainty as to how many people are functionally illiterate but the estimates that have been made suggest that the number is much higher than might be expected. A survey in Canada, for example, estimated that 22% of all non-immigrant Canadians suffered from functional illiteracy. A 1987 survey in the U.K. suggested a figure of some 6 million, while in France observers estimated that 15% of the population is affected.

Towards 2000

Whileâ\200\230 the proportion of the worldâ\200\231s population that is suffering from illiteracy (in the industrialised and developing

One adult in every four can neither read nor write

countries) is declining the actual number is increasing and it is in order to stop this growth in the number of illiterates and, ultimately, to eliminate the problem that the UN has declared

1990 as International Literacy Year. An enormous effort is being mounted in all continents to help more and more children and adults develop the ability to read and write. The goal is to achieve universal literacy by the year 2000. It will be impossible to achieve unless governments increase the portion of the national budget that is allocated to education, and unless new creative, informal approaches to literacy training are taken up. There are some signs that International Literacy Year may be the start of a new global effort to give education the priority it deserves.

It is estimated that over half of India's adult population of 773 million is illiterate and the country has responded to the challenge of 1990 by announcing a \$2 billion programme to help 80 million adults to become literate. Canada is investing \$110 million (Canadian) in a five year campaign and China's national literacy campaign in 1990 will seek to reduce the rate of illiteracy in the country to around 10%. In Senegal where 94% of all women are unable to read or write a project has been launched to provide literacy courses for between five and six thousand women in selected rural villages in all parts of the country.

Education for all

In the first week of March, 1990, the effort to initiate a massive global campaign to fight illiteracy and provide good quality primary education got underway with an international conference in Jomtien, a centre on the outskirts of Bangkok, in Thailand. It's too early to be able to report on the results of the World Conference on Education for All, but it is worth noting that it was expected by many to be the most important gathering that has ever been held on educational matters. Organised jointly by the World Bank, UNICEF, UNDP and UNESCO, it brought together around 1,500 representatives of governments, UN agencies, people's organisations, educators and members of the media in an effort to resolve the crisis afflicting basic education and to forge a global commitment, in the form of a world declaration and a framework of action, to fight illiteracy, to provide good quality primary schooling for all children around the world, and eventual knowledge and skills for adults to cope with the demands of the modern world.

UNESCO, which is focalising the campaign for International Literacy Year, has produced an informative, readable and highly practical range of literature which is available to anyone who wants to know more about the problem of illiteracy and what is being done to solve the problem, and who would like to be involved in local efforts to teach literacy. Write to: International Literacy Year Secretariat, UNESCO, 7 Place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris, France.

MOSCOW GLOBAL SURVIVAL
CONFERENCE
Wilfrid Grenville-Grey

Wilfrid Grenville-Grey was the British Director of the first Global Conference of Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders on Human Survival that was held in Oxford in 1988. The Oxford conference was featured in an earlier issue of the World Goodwill Newsletter. The second Global Forum of Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders was held in January this year, in Moscow, and Wilfrid prepared the following report specially for this issue of the Newsletter:

While 1000 delegates from 83 countries to the Second Global Survival Conference were gathered at the Sovincentre in Moscow this January, a huge dragon-fly with bulging black eyes, constructed out of plastic and wooden struts, hovered over them. This insect, together with other creatures, symbolised our kinship â\200\224 a strange and perhaps rather frightening kinship â\200\224 with the whole of creation.

Besides sculpture, ceramics, painting, acting, and the cinema were all invoked to enhance our speeches and discussions. Every session began with the S.O.S. signature tune of the Global Survival Conference, composed by Byron Janis. A Nigerian woman poured a libation to a plant on the stage. A huge picture of earth seen from space dominated our proceedings. This cultural endeavour was admirably orchestrated by Naj Wykoff from the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York. Could we now say that, as you cannot have a revolution without a song, so today you cannot achieve global consciousness without performance art?

The religious dimension, too, is fundamental to the unfolding culture of global consciousness. It is religion that provides â\200\224 in Rabbi Soetendorpâ\200\231s memorable phrase, â\200\230â\200\230the sense of mystery and commandment to our enterpriseâ\200\231â\200\231.

It was remarkable that the Russian Orthodox Church in partnership with the Supreme Soviet worked with our Founder, Akio Matsumura, to plan the Moscow meeting. Crucial support was given by Academician Velikhov, the eminent Soviet scientist, who spoke movingly of the need for all schools to teach the non-violent tradition embodied in our century by Tolstoy, Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Sakharov. It was even more remarkable that the final meeting was actually held inside the Kremlin under the quizzical eye of a full-length statue of Lenin. President Gorbachev addressed us all and spoke of the moral imperative that is at the heart of the Global Conscience Movement. Our meeting had begun with an invocation by a Hindu Swami and afterwards the Rabbis present gathered inside the Kremlin to pray. The UN was represented by the Secretary-General, Perez de Cuellar, who called for a new global patriotism, and by the Heads of the UNDP and UNESCO.

The Conference produced a long and useful programme for follow-up action. I will concentrate on the recommendations

linking the issue of Poverty and the Environment. We were told that 40,000 children under five die every day in developing countries. â\200\230â\200\230Poverty is the greatest polluterâ\200\231â\200\231, said ex-Prime Minister Gro Bruntland of Norway. The Conference urged the right of all women to have access to safe and effective family planning; it called for relief of the international debt burden on the poorest nations, and for â\200\230â\200\230adjustment with a human faceâ\200\231â\200\231; it urged support for a ne
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fund to make it possible for poor nations to purchase pollution-free technology; and supported the Children's Summit to be held in New York in September 1990.

As the Conference ended, a special TV programme was beamed from Moscow, with the help of a Russian satellite, to a potential audience of two billion people.

So often at conferences, one picks up insights in conversation that make the strongest impact. I learnt from an authoritative American that the cost of cleaning up pollution caused by the manufacture of fuel for atomic weapons and nuclear reactors is estimated at \$180 billion. This year Congress in the United States is set to provide just \$5 million for that pressing task. There is fortunately an unusual amount of goodwill about in the world today, but if the leaders of the rich nations continue to press for lower taxes and an excessive reliance on market forces, we will remain on course for global disaster.

A SONG OF HOPE FROM THE HEART OF AFRICA

In June last year peace activists from all parts of the world gathered at Yamoussoukro, in the Ivory Coast, to participate in an International Congress on Peace in the Minds of Men. Organised by UNESCO, the Congress provided an opportunity for a global reflection and dialogue on all aspects of peace, including the threats to peace that are posed by drugs, third-world debt and humanity's pollution of the environment. The participants recognised that one of the greatest needs of our time is to generate new, universal visions of the future in which all can have faith. At the end of their discussions they issued the Yamoussoukro Declaration on Peace in the Minds of Men. The Declaration addresses many key issues concerning peace, including the need to spread awareness of the teachings on peace, tolerance and fraternity that are available in the literature of all cultures. The Declaration also endorses the Seville Statement on Violence. This Statement by leading scientists was included in the World Goodwill Newsletter 1988, No. 2. It affirms that violence is not biologically determined and that humans are not predestined to be violent in their behaviour. The congress ended with an address by Federico Mayor, Director-General of UNESCO: "From the heart of Africa in Yamoussoukro," he said, "there rises today a song of hope that understanding and agreement tirelessly sought will take the place of violence, hate, and rancour."

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