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EDITORIAL

The war on Iraq has now entered the third week. Two things stand out with startling significance: the attack on Iraq without UN sanction, and a world-wide protest against the war. Public reaction against the war has been strong and nuanced. There has been fury and anger against a new form of imperial unilateralism that threatens more than fifty years of patient attempts by the UN to secure the cooperation of the world's countries in avoiding the curse of war. The protesters have generally distinguished between people and leaders, between soldiers and governments. They have emphasized that their anger is against governments, not against people. They have never defended Saddam but they have spoken for the people of Iraq. Faced with the dangerous possibility of the UN becoming irrelevant, of repeating the history of the League of Nations, an unexpectedly large mass of people drawn from all ages, cultures, and religions have shown remarkable maturity and hard determination. Behind these candlelight vigils and marches looms large the frail and yet solid figure of John Paul II praying for peace, denouncing war and showing infinite compassion for all those who are already victims of war and violence.

It is against this unprecedented background that this new issue of *Promotio Iustitiae* comes out. We have introduced a few changes in format so as to give more voice to Jesuits in social action all over the world. A new section "*Reflection*" will offer articles analysing contemporary issues. The section on "*Debate*" is intended to let the opinions of Jesuits from all over the world focus on a concrete issue. Given the increasing importance of "Social Movements" as a global response to neo-liberal ideology across the globe, we have initiated a debate on the pros and cons of a Jesuit involvement in these movements. The section, "*Experiences*," is a humble attempt to document faithfully the raw stuff that makes up the life of Jesuits involved in social justice: their experience of accompanying the poor and the marginalised. The "*Reviews*" section continues to offer our readers a critical appraisal of books that have a direct bearing on our ministry. I would like to remind our readers that the principle of giving adequate representation to Jesuits of all ages and from all over the world takes precedence over considerations of quality. I believe, however, that both can be effectively preserved in balance.

As we go into print we are in the midst of hectic preparations for the meeting of Assistancy Social Co-ordinators to be held in Rome (General Curia) from the 6th to the 12th of April 2003. We hope to offer you a summary of the conclusions of the meeting in our next issue.

Making *Promotio Iustitiae* a meaningful instrument to increase our apostolic commitment to justice and peace requires, more than ever, your collaboration. I welcome suggestions, articles, and, most especially, short pieces of about 1000-1500 words describing your experience of being involved in the struggle for peace and justice. The next issue will deal with ecological issues from various perspectives. Your collaboration is awaited and welcomed.

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REFLECTION REFLECTION

THE TRAGEDY OF SOCIETIES WITHOUT DIALOGUE¹

Violence, autocracy, and terror...

Bienvenu Mayemba, S.J.

So many current events have been disturbing the peace in numerous parts of the world, especially in Africa, that it seems our contemporary history is characterized by incessant violence and misfortune.² We are continually confronted with violence, war, cruelty, terror, and death. We need to recognize the horror of these realities in order to fight them in the name of the values of liberty and life. These realities mark us, interpellate us; they challenge and mobilize us to work for the survival of humanity, and for greater solidarity and harmony among the peoples of the earth.

In August 1998, the American embassies in Kenya and in Tanzania were trapped and bombarded. Many human lives were lost. In August 1999 and June 2000, two foreign armies, those of Rwanda and Uganda – which still illegally occupy with impunity a large part of the Congo – faced each other on Congolese territory, killing thousands of civilians. On September 11 of last year, the world witnessed yet another tragedy: the attack upon two American institutions, the Pentagon and the two towers of the World Trade Center. Thousands of people were killed, victims of a terrorist act. The Americans, along with the other countries, replied by launching Operation Infinite Justice³ a new war against terrorism which has killed numerous civilians in Afghanistan.

The thousands of these dead call to mind others in far-flung countries of the world where the instinct to destroy has prevailed over reason and a sense of humanity: the double genocide in Rwanda of the Tutsi and Hutus, the extermination of Albanians in Kosovo, the massacres perpetrated in the Congolese regions of Kasika (1998,) Makobola (1998,) Kahungwe (1999,) and Katogota (2000) by the Rwandan army supporting one of the rebel factions. All these thousands of innocents whose lives were arbitrarily wiped out were victims of madness and violence. They are sacrificial victims to a socio-political order that cultivates hatred and vengeance, an order in which blatant injustice, brutal oppression, summary arrests, executions, and poisonous and murderous ideologies reign.

In such a context marked by the logic that “might makes right,” the rights and the dignity of the person are continually scorned, and human life and freedom appear to lose their inviolable and irreducible value. It is important, therefore, to mobilize all persons of goodwill to come together to denounce terrorism, violence and war, and to promote a culture of life, of dialogue, of peace, of justice, and of respect for diversity.

¹ This article appeared in *Foi et Développement*, n. 303, May, 2002. Presenting the author, Albert Longchamp, S.J. notes that Bienvenu Mayemba is a Jesuit born in 1971 at Kinshasa. During his philosophical studies he spent some time reflecting on the thinking of Merleau-Ponty. Later he studied theology at Hekima College in Nairobi (Kenya).

² Though written before the war in Iraq, the article underlines some of the most fundamental ethical issues emerging from recent events (Note of the Editor).

³ First named ‘Infinite Justice’, the operation was later given the less controversial name of ‘Enduring Freedom’ (Note of the Editor).

Our reflection sets out an alternative to the terror of autocracy and the horror of war. It takes a stand against any social order that does not engage in dialogue, does not recognize rights or justice; it is against any act that attacks the values of democracy and the fundamental rights of the human person. This reflection comprises three sections: the first and second denounce violence, autocracy, terror, and war; the third section proposes dialogue as the foundation of peace.

Autocracy breeds totalitarianism⁴

By autocracy we mean any act or attitude on the part of either a person or a social order that sets itself up as a universal reference or an ultimate standard, imposing itself as absolute freedom and claiming a monopoly over justice and truth. Such a person or power is characterized by radical intolerance and a highhanded insistence on uniformity and conformity. Allergic to any creativity or questioning, autocracy exploits “coercive methods of conditioning” (Hannah Arendt) to ensure the conformity of all persons to a preconceived or pre-established ideological paradigm. In its excessive desire for totalization, autocracy exalts the “totality” or the violent imperialism of the “I,” denies to the Other the possibility of being other, and reduces it to a thing on which the imperial “I” exercises its will to power.

With this perspective, autocracy cultivates totalitarianism, that is to say, a policy that structures itself around violence. Mutilating reality by cutting off anything that resists it, totalitarianism seeks to manipulate and deaden memories and consciences. A totalitarian system, in effect, allows for neither debate nor the free participation of its citizens in politics. It aspires to a oneness that eliminates any and all choice, rejects any controversy, and considers contradiction a flaw that has to be suppressed.

Autocratic and terrorist each denies that “mutual exclusivity” between an “absolute and uncontested authority” and the “political domain” which calls for a “space of exchanged words” (Hannah Arendt), a space for dialogue and discussion. It encloses itself in a totality excluding any opposition and all multiplicity. It understands political principle as the re-absorption of differences and thus reduces the public space to a single entity. This entails the ruin of the City, for the City is made up essentially of the plurality of its citizens and of their mutual interactions.

Violence, the source of insecurity and war

While the system marked by autocracy represents a contempt for liberty, a negation of individual identities and a refusal of dialogue, it also incites tensions and leads to violence. And violence against life or human dignity is hateful, inimical to democracy and the State of law. The ground of insecurity and war, violence scoffs at human rights, destroys human lives, tears apart families, and destabilizes socio-political, economic and cultural life. Owing to autocracy, many people are deprived “unjustly and by force of the essentials of life and of life itself,” and find themselves bent under “the weight of existence in such a way that their main task is simply to survive,”⁵ with the right to neither dignity nor free speech, nor the power to make their rights count.

Violence and war have horrible consequences. They put us in contact with the intolerable. They engender massacres, entail enormous loss of human life, spread diseases, multiply lamentations, tears, frustrations, hatred, rancour, vengeance, annihilate the enemy, pillage and destroy economic infrastructures, and lead to ruin, indebtedness, misery, hopelessness, and overall material and

⁴ The French term *‘l’arbitraire’* has been translated as ‘autocracy’ in preference to the English word ‘extremism’ which does not convey the connotation of ‘arbitrariness’ included in the original French. (Note of the Editor)

⁵ Jon Sobrino, S.J., *La violence de l’injustice*, [The violence of injustice], in *Concilium*, n. 272 (1997,) p. 9.

spiritual desolation: in brief bring about a human and ecological catastrophe.⁶ In their wake, human values such as respect for life and for the dignity of the human person crumble and fade. In short, violence and war constitute an affront to the plan of God and a challenge for fully living the Gospel.⁷

Life, human freedom and human rights have an absolute and irreducible value, as set down in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. No person or social order has the right to kill or to submit any human being to servitude. Such religions, personalities or nations as support racism, slavery, terrorism, violence or war in any form in defiance of democratic values or the requirements of State law, are to be denounced and condemned.

If an attack on human dignity or integrity constitutes a violation to be denounced, then violence and war are flagrant and tragic expressions of this violation and must be condemned. “They multiply the numbers of our people who have died uselessly, and increase the flood of the unfortunate who have neither shelter nor housing, their ever growing number testing the patience of many and no longer rousing public opinion, since, astonishingly, it has become something the world expects.”⁸

War disfigures the human

Looked at from this perspective, the notion of a “just war” or a “holy war” makes very little sense. God cannot tolerate war. God is so full of care and compassion it would be a contradiction to imagine him approving of violence or crimes against the very beings he himself lovingly made in his image. War is always destructive; it defies the work of creation, disfigures the human, transgresses the law of love, and alters the likeness of God. No religion nor any political power should, in the name of God, attack life, the human person, or the well-being of any society. The friend of the poor and of the broken-hearted, God can only be for peace. He is the God of peace in justice. He is the God of equality, of fraternity, of reconciliation, of solidarity, of hope, and of a democratic order in which no one is thought to be without worth, or below the others.

It is easy to justify war, especially a “just war” when one is on the side of the more powerful, of the producers, sellers and exporters of arms, of the militarily powerful, of those who are spared from the horrible consequences of war. It is another thing to open oneself to the voices and experience of the victims, to realize the brutality, the tragedy, the trauma, the depersonalization, the violations and the psychological and socio-economic upheavals that war brings. Solidarity with innocent civilians and the principle of non-violence or peace exclude altogether the moral legitimacy of war.

War always has unforeseen consequences. We must go beyond fanaticism and incoherent ethical policies which pretend to justify the need for war as the only way to re-establish democracy, justice and peace. Reflecting on war, especially on a “just war,” calls for a spirit of rigorous analysis and a phenomenological-ethical approach. Ethical questions raised by war cannot be ignored. A sense of the humanity of the human, of the value of life, and of the horrors experienced by the victims are urgent and significant.

⁶ Cf. Bishops of the Congo, *Conduis nos pas, Seigneur, sur le chemin de la paix*, [Guide our steps, Lord, on the path of peace], in *Congo-Afrique* n. 330 (1998,) p. 582; *Bienheureux les artisans de paix. Les événements actuels et l'avenir du Zaïre*, [Blessed are the peacemakers. Current events and the future of Zaïre], in *Congo-Afrique*, n. 312 (1997,) p. 69.

⁷ Cf. Bishops of Central Africa, *Vous êtes tous frères (Mt. 23,8): Arrêtez les guerres!* [You are all brothers (Mt. 23,8): Stop the wars!], in *Congo-Afrique*, n. 340 (1999,) pp. 581-585.

⁸ Ntima Nkanza. *La paix se gagne . . .* [Peace is earned] in *Telema*, n. 4 (2000,) p. 2.

At the same time, the rejection of war and violence does not by any means signify an abstract pacifism that glosses over the welfare of a people or a destiny in peril. It is a question of a search, of a commitment to harmonious co-existence among humans. This search presupposes an opposition to any attack against life or the rights of the person; a firm resistance to anything that does not guarantee peace and to any form of defeatism in facing the challenges of a lasting peace; it refuses to be pessimistic about the chances of true dialogue or an authentic consensus.

Having said this, one needs to denounce strongly both, the terrorist attack of last September 11 against the United States, and the military attack on Afghanistan by the Americans and their allies. It is the same unbearable drama that is played out cruelly in the Congo where the Rwandan and Ugandan armies occupy land more than 1000 km from their borders and confront each other, causing havoc to life and property. No country can concede the legitimacy of the aggressor, or occupy or bombard another country, killing innocent civilians in the process. No population should be again refused the right of taking refuge in, or living on, the land which belongs to them, as, for example, the Palestinians.

Towards a culture of dialogue

Peace is a gift of God but the responsibility of cultivating it depends on human beings. The safeguarding of peace is important for the construction, stability, and prosperity of nations. Peace favours complementarity and induces harmonious communication between people. This communion is broken when extreme or totalitarian power emerges, scoffing at human rights and cultivating hatreds and divisions.

An imperialist attitude breeds revolts, seizes property, and causes miseries, rancour, conflicts, tensions, and wars, all of which disturb and dehumanize the social order and challenge any bright prospect for humanity. These negative possibilities must be prevented by educating people about the need for solidarity and peace in justice. We need urgently to promote a culture of non-violence, of consensus and of democracy.

A bird's eye view of the present times confirms that the world needs peace, justice, reconciliation, harmony and solidarity among nations, peoples, races, and among persons. That peace, rendered fragile by so much conflict, violence and wars, can only be strengthened if it is sought within the context of law and justice, that is, without complacency or hypocrisy, without vengeance or hatred, without wanting to crush nor put to shame the person one considers an adversary.

In a globalizing universe where the inequalities and realities of imperialism and dependence stand revealed, dialogue and negotiation are necessary to ensure that the law of the stronger is not institutionalized and the more powerful not able to crush, marginalize or oppress the weaker. Mobilization against autocracy, violence and war should imply the engagement for dialogue and peace in justice, for if autocracy and violence ruin a society, dialogue and peace build it up and stabilize it.

Dialogue is open to diversity, to a respect for pluralism and consensus; it favours reconciliation and harmony in diversity. For these reasons, dialogue constitutes the foundation of peace. But this peace cannot take root nor be consolidated without justice. In effect, to conform to "the requirements of solidarity and the promotion of human rights, the violation of which lead to war," is to fight for a peace which "is not only regarded as an absence of war, but as a work of justice (moral action) inscribed in reality (juridical action)."⁹ Peace is not merely the absence of war nor

⁹ J. Joblin, S.J., *De la guerre juste à la construction de la paix* [From the just war to the construction of the peace], in *La Documentation Catholique*, n. 2206 (June 1999), p. 593.

is it mere tranquillity. The latter could be merely superficial and conceal a profound malaise or a suppressed tension. We have in mind, as does Ntima Nkanza, the “peace” of those societies where the people, muzzled by fear of repression and of death, no longer cry out against their state of desolation or of their hunger for peace, preferring to resign themselves in silence and pass their existence in a condition of slavery to a handful of conscience-less and irresponsible politicians.¹⁰

Rights and duties of each

All this is to say that there can be no durable and authentic peace without a just social structure founded on a policy of good governance and democratic give-and-take. Such a structure guarantees peace in as much as it promotes the common good; protects the rights and duties of each; and respects, assumes and channelizes diversities, liberties and creative energies. An emphasis on Justice enables the struggle for basic conditions which alone assures to beings endowed with intelligence and freedom an existence worthy of those created in the image and likeness of God. It disposes us to organize our states as countries in which each citizen and all people live together in peace, harmony and prosperity.¹¹

The promotion of peace goes along with mobilization for the common good, that is, general conditions which permit the security and comfort of all in society, and at the same time helping each individual to pursue his or her own vocation. It creates among all a true solidarity in the realization of a common ideal in conformity with the end desired by God.¹² So understood, the common good can only be sought in a State of law, that is, in a state which favours the sense of the human and the mutual promotion of persons towards the fuller realization of their humanity. “The State of law puts in the forefront, not persons, but principles which express the moral will of the people. It avoids, in this way, the birth of regional or ethnic opposition. It permits administrative cohesiveness and economic productivity; it engenders social justice. One must fight for a State of law which alone can, independent of the identity of the persons who exercise power, guaranty public morality and, in this way, the common good and social equilibrium.”¹³

The State based on the rule of law¹⁴ places great value on the human person’s life and freedom which are “inseparable goods: where one is violated, the other also ends up being violated. There is no true freedom where life is not welcomed nor loved; and there is no fullness of life except in freedom”¹⁵ The State of law is, therefore, the only one capable of promoting the human according to the values of the Kingdom of God; this God who rejects all human sacrifice and who is opposed to war and to any form of violence. In effect, is not violence an evil and an unacceptable way of solving problems? Is it not unworthy of a human being, since it destroys what it claims to defend: the dignity, the life, and the freedom of human beings?¹⁶

¹⁰ Cf. Ntima Nkanza, *La paix se gagne . . .* in *Telema* n. 4 (2000,) p. 4.

¹¹ Cf. Bishops of the Congo, *Cain, qu’as-tu fait de ton frère?* [Cain, what have you done to your brother?] Message of Nazareth for the 39th anniversary of the independence of the country, in *La Documentation Catholique*, n. 2212 (17 October 1999,) p. 912; Bishops of the Ukraine, *La tâche des chrétiens dans la société moderne en Ukraine* [The task of Christians in modern Ukrainian society]. Letter of the Bishops of the Greek-Catholic Church, in *La Documentation Catholique*, n. 2206 (20 June 1999,) p. 581.

¹² Cf. Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes. Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, n. 40; M. Novak, *Democracy and the Common Good*, [French edition: Paris, Cerf, 1991, p. 11], St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II, Q. 90, a.2 [French edition: Paris, Cerf, 1984, see note of J.-M. Aubert, p. 551].

¹³ J.-M. Van Parys, *Pour un Etat de droit* [For a State of law], in *Renaître*, n. 11 (15 July 1994,) p. 3.

¹⁴ It translates the French expression ‘etat de droit’. For the sake of brevity we have also used the term ‘State of law’ (Note of the Editor).

¹⁵ John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae. On the value and inviolability of human life*, n. 96, St. Paul Books and Media, 1995, pp. 150-151.

¹⁶ Cf. L.S. Cahill, *Christian Just War Tradition: Tensions and Development*, in *Concilium*, n. 1 (2001,) p. 81.

Society is the place of pluralism

There is a deep-seated equality among all persons called to live in society. This rooted equality implies that no one can set himself or herself up as the standard of uniform liberty or as a unique will to which others must submit blindly or absolutely. Based on this equality, society becomes a place of pluralism and political participation. It is in this space that the human person can emerge in harmony and in solidarity with others, in security and freedom, with joy and the dignity of being created in the image of God. These crucial requirements find their full realization only in a social order that values the common good, life, and all the fundamental rights of the human person. The State of law is the incarnation of this social order. Only the State of righteous law favors the humanization of society, promotes democracy and cultivates an ethical sense.

The State of law recognizing that the human person has an inviolable value, allows the humanity in human beings to emerge. From this, it follows that all political power should be at its service and aim at the full realization of such an order. Thus, the struggle for human dignity is opposed to all that is arbitrary and totalitarian: terrorism, racism, discrimination, attempts on life and personal liberty, violation of national sovereignty, aggression against territorial integrity, illegal military occupation, massacres or extermination of populations, ethnicization of politics, politicization of conflicts, religious fundamentalism, war, or violence.

This engagement aims at the promotion of dialogue, of consensus, of reconciliation and of peace in justice. And “the construction of peace comes about through education for peace and through concord between people, between nations. It implies a will to make peace with other people, beyond sentiments of injustice and of suspicion, of resentment (which confuses justice and vengeance;) but, in truth, justice and the respect of the dignity of the human person in oneself and in the other.”¹⁷

Against autocracy, terrorism and war, our engagement for dialogue and peace in justice finds its inspiration and energies in the God revealed by Jesus Christ, a God of peace and of life. In solidarity with the poor and the broken-hearted, he is their refuge and their hope. He cannot tolerate violence or war.

These are the challenges which confront us and which demand of us to increase continually our awareness without complacency and to mobilize without hypocrisy. They need to be addressed if we want a renewed world where dialogue, peace, law and justice reign, and where all people struggle against the terror of autocracy, the drama of violence and the horror of war. Let us sensitize ourselves from this moment on, so that in our debates and our social and political forums, truth and objectivity may imprint themselves upon the spirit by the force of arguments and not by the arguments of force.

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¹⁷ Ntima Nkanza, S.J., *La paix se gagne . . .*, in *Telema*, n. 4 (2000,) p. 4.

THE PROBLEM OF POVERTY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A JUST SOCIETY FROM AMARTYA SEN TO JOHN RAWLS

Fernando Ponce, S.J.

This work¹⁸ sets out to study the way in which the problem of poverty can influence the formulation of a concept of the just society. Normally, the relationship between justice and poverty is established by starting with the first and then proceeding to the second: any concept of the just society, when applied to the problem of poverty, will maintain that the latter is an injustice. While concurring with this sort of relationship, our analysis proceeds in the other direction, starting from the problem of poverty so as to work out a concept of the just society. Our thesis is that poverty, to the extent that it is construed as an injustice, constitutes a valid, interesting and innovative perspective in the debate on the just society. This means two things: first of all, the phenomenon of poverty can play a role a priori in any investigation of the just society; in revealing what is unjust, it raises problems for, and challenges the fundamental elements of the concept of the just society in the very process of their being worked out. Next, and as far as Rawls' concept of the just society is concerned, poverty is a problem which the protagonists of the original position may not neglect; on the contrary, they must articulate a principle which guarantees equality in the exercise of the basic capacities, a principle which would trump the principle of equality of basic freedoms. Our paper will be governed by three consecutive and strategic arguments, each of which can be summed up in two statements.

1. **Analysis of the general relations between poverty and justice**, mediated by the idea of injustice, passing by the negative route from one concept to the other

a. *The unjust helps to think the just*

In the contemporary Anglo-American debate about the just society, the philosophical origins of the enquiry itself still remain to be explored. Every philosophical question has an origin, according to Karl Jaspers, and that of social justice is no exception. At a certain junction, any situation whatsoever, whether it be external to the philosopher or not, becomes the point of departure for her thinking, also furnishing her with a content for the "subject" to be thought through. The real injustices of our society, such as subjection or lack of recognition, can fulfil this function in the question before us; they have the wherewithal at once to scandalise thought and to raise questions for it.

b. *Poverty is an injustice which makes an a priori appeal ('interpellation') to justice*

Social sciences teach us that poverty has three formal characteristics: a) it consists of a lack which affects three important dimensions of any human life (material, relational and personal); b) this lack has a vital character, that is to say, the person's life is seriously prejudiced in one or in all its dimensions whenever external resources, integration into the social body or social recognition are

¹⁸ This is a (two-page) summary of a PH.D. in Philosophy submitted by the author to the University of Paris (France) under the guidance of Jacques Bidet.

missing; c) the lack of what is vital for living in the material dimension is at the origin of the deficiencies in the two other dimensions. For this reason, poverty can be a point of departure for philosophy, engaging it, in other words, through the scandal it provokes. When it comes to the content that it can provide for the question of the just society, the economic and philosophical thought of Amartya Sen, as well as certain elements of the philosophical tradition will be of use in discussing the question.

2. Identification of the philosophico-political stakes of poverty, with the aid of Sen's capability approach and the reflections of Aristotle, Spinoza and Locke

a. *Poverty, understood as a deficiency in basic capacities*, is also a radical lack of freedom. According to Sen's welfare theory, poverty consists in a deficiency of basic capacities. Persons who are poor are not in a position to exercise a range of fundamental capacities necessary to the realisation of their life project, and this is a result of their impoverished material resources. The deficiency in these capacities has something to do with the three dimensions of human life (material, relational, personal) and is registered at a level in such a way that the complete exercise of a life project in its three dimensions is jeopardised. In more philosophical terms, the deficiency of basic capacities means the radical lack of the fundamental freedom to act, and not merely a diminishing of well-being. Poverty is thus an attack on the person: at the very least she is rendered fragile, and, more often than not, her very freedom to act is annihilated. In other words, poverty threatens the exercise of personal autonomy. This understanding of poverty presupposes a positive notion of freedom which integrates the idea of an absence of obstacles but which goes beyond it.

b. *This lack of freedom* endangers the constitution of a city. What are the immediate consequences of a radical lack of freedom to act on the constitution of a political community? First of all, from the moment that certain members of a society no longer enjoy fully the freedom to act at a fundamental level, the constitution of the political becomes difficult, not to say unlikely. Next, poverty is a permanent source of instability and may possibly lead to the dissolution of the political community. When the necessary means to provide minimal welfare and the basis for a life project are lacking, the reactions of those who are concerned can range from political indifference all the way to disobedience and revolt. These two challenges suggest that the phenomenon of poverty puts into question not only the end but also the nature of any political community. Furthermore, guaranteeing the means of a decent living and conditions of freedom for all, makes the distribution of these means a major challenge for both the theory and the practice of a society which aspires to justice. Finally, the positive concept of freedom as power to act returns to the central ground of the democratic discourse on individual freedom.

3. The relationship between Sen's philosophico-political understanding of poverty and other philosophical reflections and the thought of Rawls

The exclusion of poverty from the original position is not justified. How are these issues related to justice as fairness (equity)? The latter's implicit understanding of poverty may be summed up in four points:

- a) Poverty is the way of life of those who find themselves below a minimal level of acceptable conditions of existence.
- b) This minimal level of life is attained once the fundamental human needs of the citizen are met.
- c) Poverty is a problem pertaining to the original position only in the case of a society that finds itself in an unfavourable context.

- d) These fundamental needs are already met in a favourable context, that of the particular concept of justice by virtue of the very definition of this situation. As a result, poverty is no longer a problem here; it represents no important challenge for the Rawlsian concept of justice. But this exclusion seems arbitrary for it relies on the debatable hypotheses about the person and economic development.

Justice as fairness (equity) must guarantee the exercise of basic capacities. Justice as fairness (equity) could thus be opened to the question of poverty according to the way it responds to three questions:

- a) What is the relevance of inter-individual differences (physical, intellectual, psychological, etc.) in the original position, once you assume ideological diversity?
- b) How are we to understand the elementary demands of citizens as human beings? Are they fundamental needs which must be met or basic capacities whose exercise must be guaranteed?
- c) What role should we grant to the positive freedom of action in a just society?

By opening up these questions, justice as fairness could articulate the problem of poverty in the original position under the form of a principle of priority in relation to the principle of basic freedoms equal for all. Taking our inspiration chiefly from Sen, we believe that a principle that proclaims the equal right of everyone to the free exercise of basic capacities responds to the philosophico-political challenges of poverty better than Rawls himself has been able to suggest.

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DEBATE DEBATE

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

The Problem of the Modern State in Poor Countries

Raúl González, S.J.

Those social and political movements which strive to transform societies as well the international order in favour of the poor majority usually concentrate in the course of their analyses on the antagonism between oppressor and oppressed. These analyses may be correct, and often actually are, but they veil other contradictions related to the persistence of poverty and the inadequate attention paid to the rights of the poor.

One of these contradictions is located in the gulf that exists between modern public culture and traditional cultures. A modern society works on the basis of abstract rules which determine the different institutions of the state of law: all men are formally equal in front of the law and relate to each other according to the terms which this law establishes. This understanding, which makes social behaviours predictable, constitutes an essential component in the efficient working of modern economies, be they capitalist or mixed.

In many countries of the Third World this set-up is a fiction. The reality is that those institutions which should be determined by the abstract norms of the state of law surrender systematically to bonds of family, friendship, clan, tribe, region, religion, etc. These bonds identify a person in public life as belonging first and above all to a particular group rather than as a citizen, a concept which then loses its significance. One has to distinguish this phenomenon from occasional or organized criminal corruption in modern societies. In culturally pre-modern societies, the person is convinced of acting morally and not badly when he or she refuses to respect a norm in order to sustain personal relationships. The person is thereby simply giving priority to what really matters in life, and disregarding abstract rules which not only are alien to that specific culture but which, to a great extent, are also incomprehensible.

While both the state and the economy of a traditional society may show a modern façade, this does not really mislead anybody. As a matter of fact, things are different, and anybody who wants to succeed in life has to be on the lookout for good relations, and to grant and seek favours. Any person sticking stubbornly to the law will certainly lose: he or she will have enemies instead of friends. Both poor and rich participate in promoting this astonishing 'operation' of 'the law.' The consequences however are awesome only for the poor: it is only they who have no high connections and who are most dependent on public services (education, health care, security, citizenship etc.) in order to live. These very public services do not operate efficiently because the laws are not fulfilled, and the state consequently acts too little and too late, and, when it does act, it acts badly.

How is the state to be made to work according to the law, creating a culture of citizenship if the law is not respected among neither the masses nor the elites? This is a crucial question for the

future of the poor, a question that rarely occurs to people involved in alternative movements. The discussion promoted by these movements between politics of the right and left wing in the Third World seems sometimes to be like a quarrel of drunken men about which of two directions to take with a car, when the fact is that its motor does not work and it cannot actually go in either direction.

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Social Movements in the U.S.: A Personal Reflection

James E. Hug, S.J.

As I begin writing this article, fifty thousand people are marching for peace here in Washington, D.C. Tomorrow the world will stage a rolling candle-light vigil for peace, more than 6,400 gatherings in 136 nations. Forty seven of these vigils will be within a 10 mile radius of George Bush's White House.

Just one month ago, on February 15th, more than 10 million people rallied in hundreds of cities around the world. Even small groups of demonstrators knew they were in solidarity with millions around the world in standing up for peace. They were not isolated or powerless. This is an extremely important development.

Political Promise

In North America, political apathy and alienation have grown in recent decades. In the U.S. it is not unusual to have less than half the eligible voters take part in an election. People have turned away from political involvement, feeling powerless against the corrupting influence of big money on the political process.

If the experience of national and global solidarity tapped by web-based organizers against war in Iraq begins to counteract the feelings of powerlessness and alienation and restore a sense of people's power in social movements, it could begin to transform contemporary politics. Indeed, it may be the only thing capable of counteracting the currently dominant corporate influence in this age of globalization.

For that to happen, however, the transitory, crisis-response nature of the current uprisings for peace must be transformed into more stable forms of national and international political will for systemic social change. Accomplishing that will be a challenging task, but some of the foundational elements for achieving it are already in place.

First, the technological and economic forces driving this historical period of globalization are providing vast numbers of people across all national boundaries with common, devastating social problems – and with the communications networks to know that and to respond to them together. Under the domination of the Neo-liberal Washington Consensus, government social programs are being cut back everywhere, in countries of the global North as well as those of the global South. Poverty is increasing and the middle class is shrinking everywhere. Basic essentials such as food, water, health care, quality education and sustainable livelihoods are becoming less available to people in poverty. The gap between wealthy and poor within nations is increasing everywhere.

Certainly there are generally significant differences in the degree of poverty and human suffering between people in wealthy nations and those in poor nations. But when millions of families across the U.S. have to turn to charities for essential food each month and one out of every seven does not have access to health care, these are millions who know in their own bodies what hunger and disease feel like for people in Latin America, Asia, Africa or anywhere else. Small farmers and business owners displaced by large corporations in the U.S. know what small farmers and business owners in Mexico have gone through from some of those same corporations as a result of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and they can empathize.

Second, there are some strong, more established and institutionalized social movement organizations that can serve, link and channel the growing international social unrest manifested in the more broad-based and fluid movements such as the current movement for peace. In the U.S., these more institutionally-based movements would include organized labour, the environmental movement, the women's movement, the civil rights movement and the faith communities. Bridges must be built so that the broad social movements gain stability and organizational resources and the more established ones gain new ideas and energy.

A Quick Survey: U.S. Based Social Movements

The major U.S. social movements are at quite different stages of development. **Organized Labour** emerged from bloody struggles of the 1920s and 1930s as a powerful social and political force. For many reasons, the labour movement of the 1950s and 1960s grew corporate, comfortable and in some cases corrupt. The oil embargoes and the globalization of production in the 1970s and a hostile Administration in the 1980s greatly weakened it. In recent years, good leadership has succeeded in reorienting and rebuilding some unions. But they too often still defend their members' jobs using strategies harmful to workers in other parts of the world. Global worker solidarity is very difficult to build.

The U.S. **Women's Movement** is less centrally institutionalized than organized labour, but its impact has been extensive. A profound cultural transformation of social roles is underway. Most intellectual disciplines have experienced strong, insightful feminist critiques and are struggling to incorporate them. Women are more active in leadership roles in business and politics, though they remain far from achieving gender balance or equity with men in those fields. The more progressive parts of the movement in the U.S. have moved beyond seeking equality between women and men within the established social systems and are working for a transformation of those systems themselves into societal forms more capable of meeting the full range of human and community needs globally.

The U.S. **Environmental Movement** has three strengths worth noting. First, it has had great success in educating children about the impact of lifestyles on the environment. Through the young, it has been able to touch adults' parental concern for their children's future. In addition,

the Environmental Movement has been able to translate its concerns into legislation and to use legislative and judicial systems nationally and internationally to fight pollution and to try to establish sustainable forms of development. Finally, by its very nature, the ecology transcends national boundaries. People working on environmental concerns understand the unity of the planetary system. They are primed for global solidarity.

The **Civil Rights Movement** in the U.S. has grappled most extensively with issues of black-white racial justice. It has been successful in challenging and eliminating many discriminatory legal and economic structures. It knows the burdens of discrimination, marginalization and oppression. There are natural solidarity ties and a number of organizational links between African-Americans and the peoples of Africa. In addition, in some places the Civil Rights Movement is building bridges to other ethnic minorities and embracing issues of justice in multi-cultural societies and movements. These are essential features for social solidarity movements.

Finally, any survey of organized U.S. social movements must include the **Faith Communities**. Churches, synagogues, mosques, temples, and ashrams, through prayer, teachings, worship and institutional networks, bind their members to people around the world in the solidarity of the one family of God. Faith community leaders have come together in communities across the U.S. in recent months to declare forcefully that all the major faiths reject war and affirm the unity of the human community. The potential of the world's faith communities and social movements to make significant contributions to creating a more just and peaceful world can hardly be exaggerated. That potential has barely been tapped, however.

Personal Reflections

As an activist working for global justice and peace, I am excited at the sight of social movements, energized by clear injustice and threats to global peace, facilitated by elemental organizing and global communications networks, coming together in global solidarity to demand peace.

This is the first broad manifestation of a reality that has been developing quietly for some time. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been using the Internet over the last 10 years to coordinate policy positions and advocacy strategies. Now these communications networks appear to be blossoming into what might be called "virtual solidarity movements." Building an integrated web of NGOs, institutionally organized social movements, and broad, spontaneous demonstrations of social unrest and longing into effective and transformative solidarity movements is a daunting mission. But the opportunities are many and rich.

For example, the Centre of Concern, a small NGO in the U.S., finds itself networked into several global social movements. Through our Global Women's Project, we are at the heart of the International Gender and Trade Network and taking leadership in shaping the directions of organizations like the Hemispheric Social Alliance that is active in directing the World Social Forum and in leading opposition throughout the Americas to the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA/ALCA). As an Associate Member of CIDSE, the umbrella organization for Catholic Co-Development Agencies, the Centre now has partners in more than 120 nations. We are working together to develop advocacy strategies serving the development needs of the social movements in these countries. Through the International Jesuit Network for Development (IJND), we are joining our work on debt, trade, governance and development alternatives with that of Ignatian partners on five continents to achieve higher quality, greater effectiveness for justice, and more extensive outreach. Through our Agribusiness Accountability Initiative, we are beginning a process that will link and coordinate movements working for corporate accountability around the world to bring more effective pressure to bear on global corporations. And through the Centre's web-based

Education for Justice Network, we are linking educators and making available high quality, easy-to-use educational materials for infusing social movements with Catholic social values and perspectives. These networks all have different characteristics. But they overlap in serving the growing social movements seeking greater justice in the processes of global integration. The potential is enormous.

Final Faith Reflections

As a theologian working in social ethics and spirituality and watching the spontaneous global peace movement and the other networks and movements I have described, I am reminded of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's reflections on the evolution of the Noosphere, a form of global consciousness marking the next stage of human evolution and transforming human life. Something is definitely building broader global consciousness and watering the sprouting seeds of human solidarity.

As a Jesuit who has both made and directed others in the Spiritual Exercises, I have been moved by the mysterious workings of God's Spirit bringing about healing and life changes in individual hearts. When I contemplate the amount of quiet interior activity involved in drawing tens of millions of people around the world to demand a more just and peaceful world order, I am in awe.

Forty years ago in *Pacem in Terris*, Pope John XXIII identified such shared visions and social movements as "Signs of the Times," revelations of God's Spirit at work in the human community, inviting our response. They confront us, in other words, with practical, living experience today of the meditations on the Kingdom and the Two Standards. God is actively engaged, leading campaigns for greater justice and inviting us to be part of the mission.

Interpreting the signs of the times and our personal and Societal calling within them requires prayerful discernment. But with God at work in these social movements and inviting us to participate, we in the Ignatian family cannot remain observers on the sidelines.

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The Globalised Response of Social Movements Encouraging Lessons for the Society of Jesus

Rafael Moreno Villa, S.J.¹

Towards a World Network of Social Movements

Many traditional popular movements and political parties are in crisis because they have not found the way to face a rapidly changing world. At the same time, an ever-increasing and diverse number of national and international networks are being developed to articulate the globalised response of civil society. This response seems to be the most adequate one with which to face the problems and progress of the 21st century.

An example of this network of networks is that which is coming into being within the World Social Forum (WSF), and calls itself the “world network of social movements.” The principal promoters of this initiative² characterize it as an alliance of movements in defence of democracy and peace, a description that indicates a broad, plural, and anti-neoliberal perspective. It wants to be a movement independent of political parties, one that respects the autonomy of the organizations which constitute it, and without ideological bias. Its objective is to develop conditions that will enable diverse social movements of the world to exchange analyses, opinions and information on the present day situation and establish some common priorities and necessary tasks, both before and after the meetings of the WSF. The intention is thereby to go beyond merely possible or casual encounters among the movements of different countries and continents; to generate a more profound political debate; to establish horizontal structures that facilitate exchange and common action, and to extend the importance and significance of the movements in all continents.

In order to give impulse to that network, the movements which participated in the Third WSF agreed to set up a contact group which will serve as resource and instrument for the international mobilizations through a web-site and lists of e-mail addresses. This contact group will be established for a period of 6 to 12 months and will be based on the experience of the promoters of the network of social and popular movements already existing in Brazil.³ It has a data bank of the organizations and networks which signed the manifestos of 2001, 2002, and 2003, and it is trying to identify other social movements, trade-unions, NGOs and organizations which should be included in this initiative.

A Network of Continental Networks

The constitution of this world network is possible thanks to the fact that in the different continents there exists a network of networks comprising themes and regions which form part of the WSF. One of these is, for example, the Continental Social Alliance, a network which includes labour

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² See: CUT – Brazil, MST – Brazil, World March of Women – Quebec, ATTAC – France and Focus on the Global South – Thailand, *Towards a World Network of social Movements*, in <www.movimientos.org>

³ See: Third WSF, *Call of social Movements*, January 2003.

organizations and city coalitions of all countries of America. Its objective is to facilitate the exchange of information and the joining together of strategies and actions with a view to oppose the signing of the treatise of Free Trade Area of the Americas, known as the FTAA in that hemisphere.⁴ At the same time, it seeks to design a model of alternative and democratic integration that will benefit our people.⁵ Social organizations participating in this Alliance are interested in seeing that the Jesuits of Latin America participate in the drawing up of the above mentioned design so that they can provide an ethical perspective.

Results of this World Social Articulation

The joining together of social movements has generated a synergy which is beginning to produce important results, as was evident on 15 February '03, when millions of citizens rallied in 30 principal cities of the world to oppose the war against Iraq and to declare ourselves in favour of a peaceful solution of the controversy between the United States and this Arab country. It is the first time that civil society has reacted in a massive international way in favour of peace before an armed conflict, which, if it breaks out, will have grave world repercussions. This was largely possible because during the Third World Social Forum it was decided to support this initiative.⁶

The fact of mobilizing such crowds from all parts of the world for the same objective is itself already a significant achievement. Besides, such a mobilization helped to raise the political cost of the military option taken by President Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair, and made it easier for the member governments of the UN Security Council to resist North American diplomatic pressure.

Some Lessons to be learned from this Dynamic of the Social Movement

Though not everything in the new social articulations is profitable and positive, this experience teaches us a number of lessons, some of which are listed below:

- 1) In keeping with the measure in which problems and social development transcend national frontiers, their solutions or impulses require joint and more globalized efforts.
- 2) Such a requirement calls for social institutions to form new structures, a new process for decision-making, new agendas and new forms to articulate and direct these. Those organizations which have not adjusted their structures and not modified their operational conception have, in general, been incapable of responding to increasingly dynamic and complex national situations.
- 3) The new structures in the form of a network of networks and the new process for decision-making are more and more democratic; the new agendas are more dynamic, the new forms of articulation are more and more flexible, plural and inclusive; the new forms of leadership leave greater space for exchange and initiatives from the grass-root level; the coordinators are more and more varied; their instructions or orders radiate greater hope that "a different world is possible";
- 4) In order to maintain constant communication, foster the development of that network and to strengthen its mobilization, it is sufficient to have a small contact team, a web site and a list of

⁴ In Spanish is ALCA (Área de Libre Comercio de las Américas).

⁵ For more information concerning the organizations which integrate the alliance and of its proposals and activities see <www.asc-has.org>

⁶ See: Third WSF. *Call of Social Movements*, January 2003.

e-mail addresses. This does not exclude the periodical or occasional realization of encounters and massive activities.

- 5) In order that this network may be effective it needs to be based locally and projected globally.
- 6) In the face of the excluding and dehumanizing dynamics of the neo-liberal model, the social movements are giving impulse to a dynamics which is inclusive and personalizing.

The Encouragement that comes from these Teaching for the Society of Jesus

The last General Congregations have underlined the universal dimension of our vocation and have stressed the importance of international collaboration.

As Father General reminds us in his letter of January 15, 2003:

“General Congregation 34 pointed out several intuitions closely related with one another:

- 1) that the Society of Jesus was already established or structured in such a way as to foment, even to require, networking in the carrying out of our mission;
- 2) that the Society’s very nature as an international (or “universal”) body represented an enormous untapped potential in this regard;
- 3) that the development of networking in the Society could not easily be foreseen and would inevitably proceed by trial and error, although there was already some accumulated experience to reflect on”.⁷

The same General Congregation 34 concluded that “we cannot be satisfied with what we have done up until now if we are to respond to the urgent challenges of our contemporary world in fidelity to our universal vocation. We have to deepen our universalistic spirit and strengthen the more formal structures as well as those of a more flexible type, in order to facilitate a global and regional cooperation.”⁸

In this same context, the Guidelines on Jesuit Network in the Social Area, recently sent by Father General, suggests the characteristics which a Jesuit network should have, and the mechanisms and support we should use to form such a network. Nevertheless, it does not treat of other similar, maybe more important aspects, such as the insertion of the Jesuits or of Jesuit networks in other networks of social movements.

The fact that we Jesuits recognize ourselves as “men for and with others”⁹ has to facilitate and give impulse to our insertion and collaboration as persons and as an apostolic body in these non-Jesuit networks, and not confine ourselves necessarily to ecclesiastical ones.

The way in which social movements have created new structures and new forms of articulation and direction has to stimulate and inspire us to create similar structures and mechanisms; it should motivate us to insert ourselves in, and collaborate more with, some of the network of networks of existing social movements.

The experiences of Jesuits or of groups of Jesuits who have participated in world or regional events of civil society and/or form part of networks with similar dimensions can help us to profit from them. They should therefore be improved and multiplied so that our universal sensibility is

⁷ Father General, *Networking in the Social Area, Circular 2003/5*, Rome, January 15, 2003.

⁸ GC 34, Decree 21, nn. 2-5.

⁹ GC 34, D. 13, n. 4.

carefully nourished and may express itself always in a more significant way in favour of an always more universal good.

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Social Movements in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Muhigirwa Ferdinand, S.J., Alain Dome, S.J. and Toussaint Kafarhire, S.J.

A large number of African nations are actually dictatorships marked by rebellion and conflict. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is no exception. The truth is that since 1965, the DRC has experienced 31 years of dictatorship under Mobutu, and in the last 6 years, wars of aggression have seriously damaged the social fabric of the country. Social movements began to take shape from 1990 onwards, a year which marked the shift from one party rule to multi-party politics. By “social movements” we mean movements of charitable local and international non-governmental organisations, of citizens, and of churches, directed towards the establishment of a civil society that respects the rights of all within it. These include women's movements (development as well as micro-credit co-operatives); human rights organisations (denouncing in particular, massacres, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and the Congolese genocide in which, according to Human Rights Watch, 3.5 million Congolese were killed); children's rights movements; movements for the promotion of peace, justice and democracy, and organisations which advocate the cause of refugees and displaced persons.

A critique of social movements

Social movements have equipped themselves with the tools necessary to express the voice of the people whom they seek to defend. Some of these are pacifist demonstrations, ‘dead-city’ days (*journées ville-morte*), civil disobedience and non co-operation, and the creation of means of communication to control and disseminate more accurate information in the papers, on the radio, through music and the internet. These have the opportunity to reach people in urban centres and rural areas at the national level as well as the international scene.

A critical analysis of social movements reveals three main factors that highlight both their weakness and the nature of the challenge they represent to Church and Society. These three factors are: leadership, agenda and financial resources.

Crisis of leadership

Leadership is the driving force behind a movement. A movement whose leader is determined and clear about the direction of change is more likely to achieve his/her goal; leaders also need to be

experienced and skilled. With such requirements it is obvious that there is a clear crisis in the matter of leadership among the social movements today. Leaders lack stature. Given the bleak economic scene they often seem to be more worried about their personal fates than about the causes they have espoused.

Crisis regarding 'agenda'

Many social movements have no clear objectives, agenda or specific programme. Often the members of these movements do not even know for which social project or plan they are being mobilised. The heart of the issue is the values on which these movements are based. It is fair to ask what the human, moral and Christian values are which some of these movement lay claim to. In order to be more credible and effective the leaders of these movements must live out the values for which they stand and ensure that all the members of the movement share these values.

Financial crisis

Many of these movements are almost entirely dependent on external funds. They are more accountable to foreign funding agencies than to the local population whose conditions, priorities and objectives are subordinated to the priorities of those who provide the money. It is hardly surprising that the principal activity is the writing up of annual financial reports and the preparation of budgets for project proposals.

If these three factors are clarified and challenges faced, then the social movements could give rise to dynamic change in favour of peace, justice and democracy in the social fabric of the DRC.

The Contribution of the Church and the Society of Jesus

Social movements, each in their own way, struggle to promote justice, peace, freedom and the development of humankind. In the DRC the Catholic Church plays an invaluable role through its evangelization and works (schools, universities, hospitals, social centres and media). But the Church can and must do more: the Church must aim for the *magis* and do more.

The Church being an “expert in humanity” must revisit and light the way for social movements. Taking the social teaching of the Church as a starting point, it needs to clarify the role of responsible engagement by the Christian laity in the sphere of politics in striving for a new political order of justice, peace and democracy, and thereby reinforce the option for the poor. There is no doubt that the “poor teach us about poverty better than any document can. They show us the way towards the inculturation of values of the gospel” (CG 34, D. 26, n. 13).

The Catholic Church in the DRC has borne prophetic testimony through the work of its lay people and pastors who struggle for faith and justice for the people whom they serve. Among the Congolese there are two “martyrs”: Mgr Munzehirwa Cristophe SJ, and Mgr Kataliko. These two Bishops of Bukavu (Kivu) gave their lives for Christ in their struggle for peace, freedom, rights, justice, and their stand against violence, injustice, alienation and absurdity.

What should the *minima Societas Iesu* do in the face of the challenges posed by the new social movements? It must take on its role of an apostolic international body. In this world, this “global village” dominated by globalised economics, the Church can and must make a contribution on the international stage. The Church can mobilise world solidarity, bringing to the task its own expertise in terms of leadership, objectives and financial resources. One of the

priorities of the Church, and in particular the Society, should be that of forming Christian leaders in the social-political sphere.

At a time when a world-wide civil society movement is forming, the Jesuits should reflect on their presence and their pastoral role in civil society, among international and national NGOs, media watch-dogs, and the World Social Forum; and also on its attitude towards sustainable development and the international criminal court. This presence and pastoral work in “frontier apostolates” call for solid human, scientific and spiritual formation, and above, all young Jesuits on whom the future of the Society depends.

The identity of a Jesuit is inseparable from the service of faith and promotion of justice. A Jesuit is “a man whose mission is ... to consecrate oneself entirely to the service of faith and the promotion of justice” (CG 32, D. 2, n.31). The Jesuits can do much through their social centres in collaboration with the social movements. Our centres must not limit themselves only to intellectual work, research and social analysis but also devise elaborate strategies for conscientisation, set up frameworks, and plan concrete social actions for the “development of all humankind and the whole human person”. The Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) in Lusaka (Zambia) has played an important role in social action in favour of fair salaries based on real market costs (of the basic daily food basket). In the Province of Central Africa, the end of the war of aggression and return to peace remain the top priority.

In this context “The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ” (*Gaudium et Spes*, 1), of the companions of Jesus that we are. The “fidelity of creation” in this context of crisis and war invites the servants of Christ to promote a pastoral of peace, truth, justice and reconciliation in order to become heroes in the struggle for values of love, truth, peace justice and democracy.

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New Social Movements in South Asia Issues and Direction

Prakash Louis, S.J.

Social Movements are integral and endemic to South Asian history for the reason that deprivation, discrimination and injustice are central aspects of Asian society and polity. It has been taken for granted that owing to a specifically traditional social order, revolt and movements cannot take place in South Asia, but those who propagate this viewpoint fail to see that frustration, aggression and anger are the outcome of discrimination and marginalisation and can generate revolt. These revolts and rebellions are against prevailing unjust social relationships and lead to the genesis of social movements. But the mere existence of deprivation, inequality and injustice does not by itself lead people to revolt against the system. Social movements begin to take shape only when people become conscious of these inequalities and injustices, aware that they can emancipate themselves from these structures, and then struggle to overthrow the exploitative social order.

It is an established fact among social scientists and activists that every social structure creates its own types of protest and the style to express them. This is due to the fact that the issues encountered by citizens of a country, and for that matter by communities within a country, are different. With regard to South Asia, some of the fundamental and central issues affecting the lives of the common masses are: caste system, feudalism, patriarchy, communalism, and privatization. Corruption, land alienation, poverty, illiteracy, alcoholism are only the symptoms of these deep-seated anomalies. When the politicization of those who suffer injustice and inequality as a result of the above-mentioned factors occurs, it leads to social movements.

The rebellion and revolt of the common masses of South Asia can be termed New Social Movements because these movements are guided by different ideologies. They also employ modern means of mobilizing and politicizing those who are subjected to violence and oppression. In the last three decades, the social movements of South Asia have engaged in both parliamentary and extra-parliamentary strategies. On the one hand, those who are the proponents of the movements uphold protest, dissent and even the use of violent means as legitimate. On the other hand, the opponents of the movements declare them to be illegal and describe them as being basically a “law and order problem.”

This is not surprising as social order, social movements and social change or resistance to change are integrally connected. Social movements are essentially related to social change and therefore to the social structure. For instance, Dalit movements have the fundamental agenda of restructuring the social order in South Asia. Further, social movements are products of a social structure, and emerge out of certain conditions in the social structure. The Naxalite movement or the radical peasant movement in some parts of India and Nepal are the outcome of the social conditions in these countries. And finally, social movements have consequences for the social structure which generated them. This is to state that these movements exert enormous pressure on the existing system and demand its restructuring.

In the South Asian scenario one can identify the following social movements: Dalit movements (the movements by the lower castes for liberation from the oppressive caste system); tribal or indigenous movements fighting for legitimate control over human and natural resources; women’s

movements demanding equal status and rights in the society and polity; peasant movements fighting against the national political establishment as well as global market forces; anti-liquor movements led successfully by women and civil society; environmental movements demanding immediate attention towards deteriorating ecological phenomena; landless people's movements; peace and reconciliation movements; fisher-folk movements; and labour movements, to name just a few. The freedom struggle that erupted in many of these countries could be termed a political movement but the movements mentioned earlier are markedly different in terms of issues, direction, the ideology followed, and the objectives in view.

One of the fundamental differences between the social movements of the past and new social movements in South Asia is that the struggle initiated by the latter is not only in favour of the marginalized and oppressed, but is under the leadership of the marginalized and vulnerable communities themselves. This is in a true sense a new historical development from the previous era when the exploited masses were beneficiaries of movements fought in their favour. Moreover, in earlier movements, reform dominated the agenda; in the new social movements, a search for alternatives has become the dominant thrust and objective.

The Asia Social Forum held in the southern India in the first week of January 2003 was another attempt to network, to organize the masses and their leaders engaged in various struggles and movements in such a way that together they could register their protest against the national and international forces of globalisation, liberalisation, privatisation and marketisation. The Asia Social Forum was a regional assembly of the masses, intellectuals, academicians and activists, and took place soon after the World Social Forum.

While the central theme of the World Social Forum was 'Another World is Possible', the principal theme of the Asian Social Forum was 'Another Asia is Possible'. Both these forums had one overarching objective which may be summed by the words 'let us all join together and build it'. It is significant to note that the globalising forces propagate the myth that 'There Is No Alternative' (TINA). Against this, the World Social Forum held in Brazil for the last three consecutive years has proposed 'Socialism Is The Alternative' (SITA). In the Asia Social Forum held in India, over 15,000 delegates from India, Asia, from practically all over the globe, delegates who represented various people's movements, human rights groups, trade unions, social and political organisations, non-government organisations, youth and women's forums, dalit and tribal organisations, all clearly and categorically stated that "Many alternatives to globalisation are possible."

The major themes and key issues identified for the ASF were: Peace and Security; Debt, Development, Trade, Finance and Investment; Nation State, Democracy and Exclusions; Social Infrastructure; Ecology, Culture and Knowledge; Alternatives and People's Movements. These themes were discussed during the six-day gathering at 8 conferences, 25 seminars and 50 workshops. The fundamental objective of ASF was to provide a space for all the struggling masses of Asia to assemble together and articulate their struggles and visions, individually and collectively, against the neo-liberal economic agenda promoted by global and national elites, an agenda which is tearing apart everywhere the very fabric of the lives of ordinary people. It may also be useful to indicate here that the World Social Forum and the Asia Social Forum raised questions about the very ideology of neo-liberalism and the rules of governance and investment set by the World Economic Forum.

One of the most important conclusion that emerged in the six-day Asia Social Forum was that globalisation impacts differently various sections of people in a country and various countries in the world. For example, the class struggle is becoming more crisis-bound in the agricultural sector; the caste system is raising its ugly head in different forms in a modern capitalist society;

religious fundamentalism has become the mainstay in all South Asian countries moving towards greater economic liberalization; ethnic conflict is eating into the very fabric of modern society; destruction of both natural and human resources threatens the very survival of these societies. Another resolve of the ASF was to highlight and multiply the success stories of local, regional, national and international initiatives that have been undertaken in fierce opposition to globalisation. A major preoccupation of the ASF was the plight of the excluded and marginalized communities of tribals, dalits, women, children and those in the unorganized sector; it found an echo in almost all deliberations. The drumming of dalit and tribal cultural troupes amplified their resolve to continue the search for an alternative social system, for an alternative Asia, and for another World.

For the Jesuits, in general, and for those in social action ministry in particular, the emerging new social movements pose a major challenge at the same time that they offer opportunities. They pose a challenge inviting Jesuits, their collaborators, and co-workers to take serious note of these emerging movements, the issues that gave rise to them, the direction they are taking, the ideology underscoring their actions, and their objectives. These movements present an open invitation to the Jesuits in South Asia to join their struggles for liberation and emancipation. Furthermore, these movements bring the Jesuits in direct contact with the struggling masses, the exploited citizens of this region. But much more important is the fact that these movements offer opportunities to the Jesuits of the region to move out of their minority complex, their trodden path of apostolic ventures, and to seize this important historical moment to enter the arena of civil society initiatives. These Jesuits, their collaborators and co-workers attending the Asia Social Forum witnessed these opportunities and challenges. Finally, these social movements pose this challenge: to be a Jesuit in general, or to be a Jesuit engaged in social action is not a privilege but a responsibility that Jesuits should undertake on account of their charism. This is a golden opportunity to be a part of these emerging social movements which are attempting to restructure Asia, and thereby laying the foundation for a new heaven and earth.

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EXPERIENCES EXPERIENCES

THE FEAR OF AIDS

Jack Doyle, S.J.

Today as I manoeuvred my old VW Golf down a potholed street in a Suburb of Lusaka, Zambia, I was reminded once again of the terrible scourge that is with us. The short street was the length of two city blocks. Yet on that one street alone there were two funerals at two different houses. My conjecture was that the deaths in both houses were the result of AIDS related diseases. As Chaplain at the University Teaching Hospital in Lusaka, I am confronted with the daily reality of this devastating scourge. Yet many of the deaths might have been avoided, or, at least, postponed. What I am advocating is a nation wide voluntary AIDS testing.

When I reflect on the trepidation with which I approached my own first AIDS test back in the mid nineties, I am aware of the reluctance with which this nation-wide testing would be viewed. I was pretty sure that I was going to be negative, but the fear was there that I would have difficulty coping with a positive result. Here in Africa there are added risks. To mention a few: there is the stigma that goes with the positive result. There is the fear of being treated as a pariah, and subsequently chased from the home after a positive result. There is the shock of a loved one suddenly being confronted with the grim reality which borders on a death sentence, and not just for the victim, but for the partner as well.

Yet, for me choice was an option. I could choose to live another ten to twenty years despite the positive outcome. Or I could do nothing, putting others at risk and take my chances of losing my life to the next serious illness contracted such as TB, malaria, or meningitis.

Any one AIDS test can have only two results: negative, or positive. If negative, I will say: "Thanks be to God. From now on, I will be very, very careful". If positive I will say: "Now I know", and if I live in Zambia I will go to a clinic, and I will get a scheme card. Next I will go to the UTH where I will be processed and sent for counselling and a determination of my viral load. Then with the prescribed medication and a proper diet I can face a different future. The seeming death sentence could be commuted to a life of rigid routine. At least, I will be still alive. Who knows, maybe in a few years a cure will be developed, and had I chosen to reject the test the cure would be of no avail to me.

Money is needed before any of the above can happen, but what donor nation would be so cruel as to refuse us the help.

Last week I was pleased to be able to talk by phone with Stephen Lewis (the special AIDS ambassador to Kofi Annan) and his assistant Paula Donovan, based in Kenya. Stephen said that

my ideas were not new, but that my voice could be added to the many other voices with the same message. I am thinking of South Africa where the mine administration weighed the consequences of paying the cost of all around testing and subsequent medical bills with the costs of enlisting new workers.

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“UNIVERSITY AND MISERY.” A REFLECTION CLUB AT THE GREGORIAN

Michel Kamanzi, S.J.

I would like here to share with you the experience of the reflection club “University and Misery” that works at the Gregorian University and in which I have been participating for the last two years. That group started as an initiative of Fr. Marc Leclerc, S.J., lecturer in the philosophy department, and Jean Tonglet, representative of the ATD Fourth World Movement in Rome. Our club is related to the latter founded in 1956 by Fr. Joseph Wresinski in the Parisian region with families living in total destitution. Through voluntary service, men and women of different cultural and spiritual backgrounds commit themselves so that misery may be seen as not inevitable. “Where people are condemned to live in misery human rights are violated. To unite so as to have them respected is a sacred duty.” These words of Fr. Joseph Wresinski, engraved on St John Lateran Basilica square to commemorate victims of misery throughout history, inspired us. Together with his conference held at La Sorbonne on June 1st 1983 on the theme “Failure to misery,”¹ it inspired our different monthly meetings as well as the prayer organised every 17th of the month at St John Lateran’s square in memory of victims of misery. Fr. Joseph blamed the university “for failing to open itself to the excluded and for having jealously kept the privilege of knowledge and culture the privation of which is more serious than material deprivation.” It is this challenge that our club wanted to address by organising monthly meetings open to the whole university with men and women from the Fourth World² living in Rome, and having university professors, voluntary workers and church-people as our guests.

The diversity of our club members, hailing from different cultures and different faculties of our university and elsewhere, enhanced the quality of our exchanges during our meetings. The multidisciplinary approach adopted was interesting indeed and provided us with a wide and deep outlook on the issues raised by different speakers. One of the meetings that moved me the most is

¹ An expression often used by the author in the sense of ‘a failure to face or tackle misery’ (Note of the Editor).

² The term ‘Fourth World’ is used to describe people living under sub-human conditions in the outskirts of First World’s urban centres. (Note of the Editor).

one in which we were addressed by a woman living in one of Rome's buildings for the homeless, beggars and families in need. The woman was filled with emotion when she found herself in a university Chair, speaking to students and lecturers in a room where theses are defended. "For once," she said, "and perhaps only once in my life, it is I who am lecturing to university people and they pay heed. And yet, I can't even write..." That may sound a little romantic, but I was moved by what she was saying about herself, of how she had never been ashamed of her condition living in the outskirts of Rome in a miserable state with other poor families until the day when she came into the city and met other ladies who could read, were clean and well dressed, who led another type of life, different from hers. Then she started feeling frustration and jealousy towards that world that had no consideration for her; she felt crushed by other people's lives... It was a sharing that was rich with life's experience, perhaps not systematically thought-out, different from masterly and well structured lectures; but a vision from below, another perspective which, to my mind, was important if our meetings were not to remain too theoretical. We too felt crushed and powerless in the face of accounts and situations that were brought to our awareness, adding to those of our own countries and homes which are already hard to bear. The question that kept emerging was "what could we 'poor students' do?"

Some of us felt the need to get closer to these Fourth World families, aware that we are not going to put an end to their misery. Thus we joined, apart from the reflection club, a lay and religious people's group which, for a few years, has been providing street library services in a building that the district council of Rome built for families at the bottom of the social scale. It is a demanding and thought-provoking apostolate. Those families, in addition to material poverty, have to face other problems too: violence, jail, begging, children who have dropped out of school, rejection from the people in the neighbourhood, etc. When you go to those buildings as someone from the "Third World," you wonder if you are still in Europe, in a world that claims to be developed, a society that claims to have high living standards.

Those Saturday experiences of the street library with those kids were tough, but taught us a lot about their families and allowed us to establish relations with the marginalized. Sometimes on Sundays, in an attempt to integrate the families in the neighbourhood where they were not accepted but were viewed as "zingari" (gypsies), we attended mass at a nearby parish with children who were willing together with some of their parents. The children's presence disturbed the parish a little, but that was a positive thing since it allowed the parish priest and a group of laypeople from the parish to establish links with these families, slowly but surely. Some families started giving evening courses in the residences of Valcannuta (a peripheral neighbourhood in Rome). Thus, our group also gave birth to something concrete, and every Saturday we were happy to share something of our culture and our experience with those children in the small library established in the basement of the building. Sometimes we also said an Ave Maria, after having pasted drawings onto the wall. With time we became accustomed to their "violent" way of expression...

That experience of the Fourth World helped to make our reflection more down-to-earth, even though the group's aim was not directly oriented towards action. But, in keeping with the method of the Church social teaching, we decided that after having observed, we had to act after all, even if only through a mere presence in a world so far removed from our world of learning. "We have to be concrete." That phrase kept coming up in our meetings. The aim was to put the poorest at the centre of our studies, of our theological, philosophical, social and economical reflection. It is true that thanks to our studies we, for our part, escape from misery... but we also have the duty to transform ourselves in order to transform that vicious circle of misery into a circle of well-being where misery is no longer inevitable. This can only happen through the promotion of more humane conditions for our marginalized brothers and sisters. That is why it was necessary for us to attempt a meeting with the world of misery, not as a laboratory where we would test the

accuracy of our theories, but as a place where, through established dialogue and trust, we were able to work out, together with those men and women, solutions to their situation. What could we bring them? Certainly not paternalist help that perpetuates dependency, but a friendship and a trust that helps the person to rise to their feet, to say, "Yes, I can make it out of this situation, even if my family always lived like this, that is history now, misery is not inevitable."

Perhaps we are dreamers, a little pretentious maybe. Some of our colleagues find us 'gauche' or extreme 'leftists' when we speak of 'under-proletarian families' (Fr. Joseph's phrase). That does not discourage us. Even if our meetings do not attract many people, we will carry on organising more of them this year as we try not to enclose ourselves comfortably in our world of learning. This year we have taken a more theological approach with our meetings on faith, hope and charity in the Fourth World. Our aim is to open ourselves to dialogue (even while aware of the ethical limits) because sharing will help us to learn to become people for others, better still, people with others. As Fr. Joseph Wresinski put it at his conference at the Sorbonne, "on failure to misery, the university itself has everything to learn. And it will not learn, if it does not invent new openings. I said that openness is indispensable. I would go further still: openness would be, in itself, failure to misery." Actually, it is concern for "a faith that promotes justice" that leads us forward, the concern to do studies that are incarnated in the reality of the poorest for whom the church has made a preferential option. May the Spirit enlighten us in that "incontro da non perdere."³

AMDG

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³ An encounter with the poor we should not miss (Note of the Editor).

REVIEWS REVIEWS

World Food Security

Alex Muyebe, S.J.

Martin M. McLaughlin, World Food Security. Catholic View of Food Policy in the New Millennium, Washington D.C., Center of Concern, 2002, 214 Pages.

Chronic hunger is one of the most persistent and yet remediable evils of the today's world. One wonders why the problem of hunger or food insecurity continues to haunt the human race in spite of the availability of unlimited agricultural capacity, advanced agricultural knowledge, and sophisticated agricultural technologies? Why are large numbers of people in the so-called developing countries undernourished despite abundant harvests worldwide? Why have those who control the global food system allowed the problem of hunger to remain amongst us when its negative consequences to human life, human dignity, and human welfare are very clear? From these few questions one begins to figure out that the whole area of world food security is shrouded with more questions than there are answers. The major preoccupation of *World Food Security* is to address such questions. The book specifically addresses the following systematic question: "Why does a global food system that produces enough food every year to feed everyone on the planet deny access to an adequate human diet to one-seventh of the human race" (p. vii)?

World Food Security is a unique contribution to the growing debate on food security. The uniqueness of this book lies in its methodological innovation: the author makes excellent use of the basic empirical data to conduct this unparalleled empirical and ethical analysis of hunger in the world today. *World Food Security* offers a very adept and powerful policy analysis, and a set of effective advocacy tools in the area of world food security. This book skilfully develops an awareness of the continuing problem of hunger and an understanding of its causes; it underscores its moral unacceptability, describes what is being done about it, and outlines some further steps that might be taken to reduce it.

To pursue these purposes the book is divided into seven chapters. In the first chapter the author discusses how the problem of world hunger has entered the agenda of the international community since the World Food Conference in 1974. In the second and third chapters, the author, making use of the 1996 World Food Summit's accepted definition of food security, analyzes the present food system, its structural and dynamic elements, and the limits they place on increasing food supply and meeting food demand. The factors analyzed on the supply side include land, water, energy, technology, science, research, environment, weather, and finance; and those on the demand side include population growth, consumption and nutrition patterns, and the way the global food system is organized and managed, that is, international trade.

In the fourth chapter, the author identifies the major actors in the food system; namely, the combination of corporate agribusinesses, rich individuals, large landowners in both industrialized and developing countries, and the financial institutions that guide and support them. He also goes on to describe the decisions and incentives behind this food cartel's operations, which are bent on driving smaller producers out of agriculture and taking over their markets and properties.

In the fifth chapter, the author assesses the justice of the system, including the issue of food distribution, reviews some of the efforts to improve the situation, and explores how Catholic social

thought evaluates ethically the prevailing thinking and practice of capital-intensive agricultural at almost every point. He also offers some thoughts on how to reduce or eliminate chronic hunger and achieve genuine food security. Highlighting the importance of deploying a development strategy that is the outcome of an inclusive political process, he indicates that that it should be a process in which the people who suffer food insecurity participate in providing ideas and making choices that will enable them to avoid poverty and the hunger that accompanies it.

World Food Security clearly exposes the impact of the global economy on the food and agricultural systems. Under this economic dispensation, food prices are set by a market regulated only for the benefit of the profit-making corporations. Most of the hungry, that is, one seventh of the human race, are locked out of the market and deprived of their land. Driven by profit motives, agribusinesses control land, seeds, and food, thereby holding at ransom the lives and livelihoods of the world's poor.

We are made to see clearly that persistent hunger in today's world is largely created by the operations of the food and agriculture sector of the global economy. Whatever the economic rationale, or the lack of it, of this situation, the author of this book argues that it is impossible to find any moral justification for such a situation. The global food system, like the overall global economic system, may have a logic, but it has not developed an ethic. By drawing on Catholic social teaching, the book is at its best when it introduces an ethical element into the analysis of the global food and agricultural system; it also offers practical and workable solutions at all levels to the problem of global hunger.

The author of World Food Security rightly admits in his "Afterword" that writing on a subject like this, one must "make an arbitrary decision to stop despite leaving many relevant subjects untouched, ambiguous, or mentioned in passing" (p. 181). While this is true enough, and the treatment of the subject matter is commendable, it remains to be said that the book has only mentioned in passing one of the highly contentious issues in hunger stricken countries: then relation of genetically modified food (GM) food to world food security. For instance, leading international environment and development groups have accused the US government of manipulating the southern African food crisis to benefit their GM food interests and using the UN Wood Food Programme to distribute domestic food surpluses which could not otherwise find a market. The US, the largest donor in a crisis affecting more than 14 million people in six countries, has tied its food aid to heavily subsidized GM food grown only in the US. The relationship between GM food and world food security ought to have received serious attention in this book, especially now that serious concerns have surfaced regarding the threat GM maize grain poses to the infrastructure of sustainable agriculture in the hunger stricken countries. Such an omission is a negative point in this otherwise relevant and thought-provoking study

That said, World Food Security is undeniably an important and timely contribution to the raging debate on the global food and agricultural system and its impact on the poor. This book is highly recommended to policy makers at all levels, academics, civil society groups, and all those engaged in sustainable human development. One cannot help but hope that the materials contained in this book would be helpful in bringing a much needed conversion of heart in policy makers at the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, the governments of the North, and the Transnational Corporations all over the world.

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"IN THE NAME OF GOD AND OF THIS SUFFERING PEOPLE"

JON SOBRINO, S.J.

Dear Monsignor,

With these impassioned words you ended your last homily in the Cathedral to "ask, plead, and order: let repression stop." These words have made history and they are today as appropriate as they were then. If you were to look at 23 million Iraqis who have suffered internal oppression, wars, distress, embargoes, and fears, you would say: "let bombing stop, let the war stop, let hypocrisy stop, let lying stop."

They did not heed you yesterday nor will they today, but your words were not uttered in vain. We are left only with the legacy of invoking you and the suffering people, as something final and beyond appeal. And this is necessary because in our world there does not exist an ultimate referent to which we can appeal without the need for a further appeal. Neither the United Nations nor the European Union can fulfil this function. They have neither the capacity to negotiate peace, nor, in the last analysis, the willingness to place peace as something really final, as something above their own interests. Some of those countries which began by opposing war have already started talking about things which are a 'greater evil': the weakening of these institutions or the setback in the construction of a greater Europe. What has become the ultimate referent is in itself selfish. The suffering of Iraq, of Afghanistan, of a tortured and silenced Africa (from which even water is being pillaged), returns to its original meaning: a far-away and faceless horizon. And something similar occurs when an appeal is made to democracy, liberty and international legality.

The security of self (but not that of my neighbour) has become the only final referent; the good life in wealthy countries, but not the victims' suffering; oil, the control and the impunity of the police, the unfair distribution of the planet, but not the human family.

It is good to remember, in the face of all this, that only God is final and ultimate, and not any kind of God, but the one you spoke about when you said: "the glory of God is that the poor may live." In front of this God there is no appeal, and as John Paul II reminded us recently: "the one who unleashes war must give an account to God". And before this God, now that it has become fashionable to discuss who is in favour and who against the war, it will be good to remember your theological words: "those who close the ways of peace are the false worshippers of wealth," those who hold money as their god.

During these days we have witnessed much labour and love. One does not remember such massive global manifestations against war. For the first time in history, all the Churches and their hierarchies in the United States have unanimously condemned the war. For ethical reasons and to ensure the fulfilment of international obligations, John Paul II and the World Council of Churches have condemned preventive war, but above all, they have emphasized that we cannot hurt even more a people that has suffered so much in the last twenty years.

This is what I wanted to tell you, Monsignor. You, the martyrs, must challenge us -- in the name of God and in the name of the suffering poor -- to compassion, justice, to regain our lost humanity.

(Extracts from the 'Letter to Monsignor Romero to commemorate the XXIII Anniversary of his martyrdom')

ECLESALIA, 24 March 2003