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A Call to Reconsider the New World Order

On the 50th anniversary of the UN, the Bahá'í International Community urges world leaders to hold a summit on global governance



"Turning Point for All Nations," a statement of the Bahá'í International Community for the 50th anniversary of the United Nations, is presented to UN Under-Secretary-General Gillian Sorensen, center, head of the UN Fiftieth Anniversary Secretariat. At left is Bani Gujral Dugal, alternate representative of the Community to the UN; at right is Techeste Ahderom, the Community's main UN representative.

NEW YORK — Declaring that the United Nations needs to be redefined and restructured to better meet the challenges facing the post-Cold War world, the Bahá'í International Community has issued a major statement calling on world leaders to take bold new steps to strengthen the UN's capacity for global coordination.

Issued for the 50th anniversary of the United Nations, the statement urges leaders to convene a world summit on global governance before the end of the century. Such a summit, the statement says, should have as its goal a broad-based examination of how international political order can be restructured to meet the needs of an increasingly interdependent and integrated global society.

"The Bahá'í International Community regards the current world confusion and the calamitous condition of human affairs as a natural phase in an organic process leading ultimately and irresistibly to the unification of the human race in a single social order whose boundaries are those of the planet," says the 22-page statement, titled "Turning Point for All Nations," issued in September in advance of UN 50th anniversary celebrations planned here for October.

"Historically, this process has been accelerated by sudden and catastrophic events," the statement continues. "It was the devastation
(Continued on page 11)

ONE COUNTRY

is published quarterly by the Office of Public Information of the Bahá'í International Community, an international non-governmental organization which encompasses and represents the worldwide membership of the Bahá'í Faith.

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International Community

ISSN 1018-9300

Printed on recycled paper ♻️

Turning Point for All Nations

The following Perspective has been adapted from "Turning Point for All Nations," a major statement of the Bahá'í International Community for the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations.

The 20th Century, one of the most tumultuous periods in human history, has been marked by numerous upheavals, revolutions and radical departures from the past. Ranging from the collapse of the colonial system and the great nineteenth century empires to the rise and fall of broad and disastrous experiments with totalitarianism, fascism and communism, some of these upheavals have been extremely destructive, involving the deaths of millions, the eradication of old lifestyles and traditions, and the collapse of time-honored institutions.

Other movements and trends have been more obviously positive. Scientific discoveries and new social insights have spurred many progressive social, economic and cultural transformations. The way has been cleared for new definitions of human rights and affirmations of personal dignity, expanded opportunities for individual and collective achievement, and bold new avenues for the advancement of human knowledge and consciousness.

These twin processes — the collapse of old institutions on the one hand and the blossoming of new ways of thinking on the other — are evidence of a single trend which has been gaining momentum during the last hundred years: the trend toward ever-increasing interdependence and integration of humanity.

As the twin processes of collapse and renewal carry the world toward some sort of culmination, the 50th anniversary of the United Nations offers a timely opportunity to pause and reflect on how humanity may collectively face its future.

Our perspective is based on three initial propositions.

First, discussions about the future

of the United Nations need to take place within the broad context of the evolution of the international order and its direction. The United Nations has co-evolved with other great institutions of the late twentieth century. It is in the aggregate that these institutions will define — and themselves be shaped by — the evolution of the international order. Therefore, the mission, role, operating principles and even activities of the United Nations should be examined only in the light of how they fit within the broader objective of the international order.

An evolutionary mindset implies the ability to envision an institution over a long time frame perceiving its inherent potential for development, identifying the fundamental principles governing its growth, formulating high-impact strategies for short-term implementation, and even anticipating radical discontinuities along its path.

Second, since the body of humankind is one and indivisible, each member of the human race is born into the world as a trust of the whole. This relationship between the individual and the collective constitutes the moral foundation of most of the human rights which the instruments of the United Nations are attempting to define. It also serves to define an overriding purpose for the international order in establishing and preserving the rights of the individual.

The human race, as a distinct, organic unit, has passed through evolutionary stages analogous to the stages of infancy and childhood in the lives of its individual members, and is now in the culminating period of its turbulent adolescence approaching its long-awaited coming of age. The process of global integration, already a reality in the realms of business, finance, and communications, is beginning to materialize in the political arena.

Since sovereignty currently resides with the nation-state, the task of determining the exact architecture of the emerging international order is an obligation that rests with heads of state and with governments. We urge leaders at all levels to take a deliberate role in supporting

Perspective

a convocation of world leaders before the turn of this century to consider how the international order might be redefined and restructured to meet the challenges facing the world. As some have suggested, this gathering might be called the World Summit on Global Governance.

Third, the discussions about the future of the international order must involve and excite the generality of humankind. This discussion is so important that it cannot be confined to leaders — be they in government, business, the academic community, religion, or organizations of civil society. On the contrary, this conversation must engage women and men at the grassroots level. Broad participation will make the process self-reinforcing by raising awareness of world citizenship and increase support for an expanded international order.

In devising a specific framework for the future international order, leaders should survey a broad range of approaches to governance. Rather than being modeled after any single one of the recognized systems of government, the solution may embody, reconcile and assimilate within its framework such wholesome elements as are to be found in each one of them.

One of the time-tested models of governance that may accommodate the world's diversity within a unified framework is the federal system. Federalism has proved effective in decentralizing authority and decision-making in large, complex, and heterogeneous states, while maintaining a degree of overall unity and stability. Another model worth examining is the commonwealth, which at the global level would place the interest of the whole ahead of the interest of any individual nation.

Extraordinary care must be taken in designing the architecture of the international order so that it does not over time degenerate into any form of despotism, of oligarchy, or of demagoguery corrupting the life and machinery of the constituent political institutions.

In 1955, during the first decade review of the UN charter, the Bahá'í International Community offered a statement to the United Nations, based on ideas articulated nearly a century before by



Bahá'u'lláh. "The Bahá'í concept of world order is defined in these terms: A world Super-State in whose favor all the nations of the world will have ceded every claim to make war, certain rights to impose taxation and all rights to maintain armaments, except for the purposes of maintaining internal order within their respective dominions. This State will have to include an International Executive adequate to enforce supreme and unchallengeable authority on every recalcitrant member of the Commonwealth; a World Parliament whose members are elected by the peoples in their respective countries and whose election is confirmed by their respective governments; a Supreme Tribunal whose judgment has a binding effect even in cases where the parties concerned have not voluntarily agreed to submit their case to its consideration."

While we believe this formulation of a world government is at once the ultimate safeguard and the inevitable destiny of humankind, we do recognize that it represents a long-term picture of a global society. Given the pressing nature of the current state of affairs, the world requires bold, practical and actionable strategies that go beyond inspiring visions of the future. Nevertheless, by focusing on a compelling concept, such as the overall goal of a united world, a clear and consistent direction for evolutionary change emerges from the mire of contradictory views and doctrines. ☉

Sir Julius Chan, the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, visited the Bahá'í International Community offices in New York on 2 October 1995, the day he was scheduled to address the United Nations General Assembly. Shown left to right are: Bani Gujral Dugal, the Community's alternate representative to the UN; Dorothy Longo, the Community's operations officer; Mary Power, director of the Community's Office for the Advancement of Women; Lawrence Arturo, director of the Community's Office of the Environment; Sir Julius; Techeste Ahderom, the Community's principal representative to the UN; and His Excellency Mr. Utula Utuco Samana, CMG, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, the Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea to the UN.

Beijing Conference approves “An Agenda for Women’s Empowerment”

Platform for Action asks governments and NGOs to commit to “the principle of shared power and responsibility between women and men”

“Equality between women and men is a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice and is also a necessary and fundamental prerequisite for equality, development and peace.”

— Platform for Action, Fourth World Conference on Women

BEIJING — Acknowledging that equality between women and men is an essential prerequisite for the creation of a “peaceful, just, humane and equitable world,” representatives of 189 nations at the Fourth World Conference on Women adopted a sweeping Declaration and Platform for Action aimed at launching a global campaign to bring women into full and equal participation in all spheres of public and private life worldwide.

“The Platform for Action is an agenda for women’s empowerment,” states the first line of the Conference’s main document. “This means that the principle of shared power and responsibility should be established between women and men at home, in the workplace and in the wider national and international communities. Equality between women and men is a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice and is also a necessary and fundamental prerequisite for equality, development and peace.”

Held 4-15 September, the Conference was reportedly the largest international meeting ever convened under United Nations auspices, with some 17,000 people registered. Its goal was to review progress on women’s issues since the Third World Conference on Women, held in Nairobi in 1985, adopted the “Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women” and to establish a new priority of actions for the next five years.

In this regard, there was general acknowledgment that the final version of the Platform for Action did indeed represent an advance in elaborating the major concerns of women around the world and in establishing new priorities and a consensus for action to promote their advancement.

“My dear sisters and brothers, we have made it!” declared Gertrude Mongella, Secretary-General of the Conference, in her closing statement on 15 September. “We have managed to transcend historical and

cultural complexities; we have managed to transcend socioeconomic disparities and diversities; we have kept aflame our common vision and goal of equality, development and peace. In a number of areas, we have significantly expanded the horizons of previous Conferences.”

The Platform for Action dealt with 12 critical areas of concern: poverty, education, health, violence against women, armed conflict, economic structures, power sharing and decision-making, mechanisms to promote the advancement of women, human rights, the media, the environment, and the girl child.

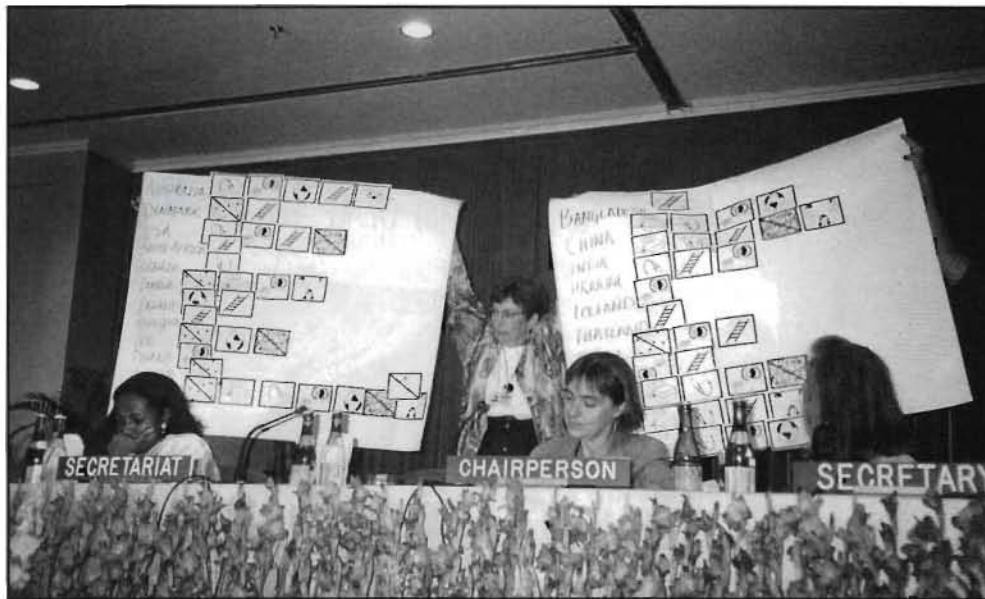
Taboo Subjects Addressed

In a number of these issue areas, the Platform confronts subjects which were previously taboo, in international discussions at least, such as domestic and sexual abuse, forced pregnancy and the role of degrading or pornographic materials in generating violence against women. These and other topics related to human rights, reproductive health and sexual orientation were often the source of much controversy prior to and during the Conference.

In the end, however, the governments of the world reached a high degree of consensus on all of these issues, creating what many observers hope will be a new international momentum to address not only these subjects but the issue of women’s equality and rights in general.

“The documents are a big step beyond the Nairobi document, which was itself a huge step forward for women worldwide,” said Mary Power, director of the Bahá’í International Community’s Office for the Advancement of Women. “And the fact that some 189 governments have agreed, after much contention and a thorough debate, to move forward with a document of this nature, setting a global agenda for women’s empowerment, must be considered as an historic action.”

Many of the action steps of the Platform were aimed at bringing women into



Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) at the Fourth World Conference on Women kept careful track of the commitments that were made by governments. Here, at morning briefing early in the Conference's second week, a chart of commitments made so far is displayed.

positions of power and influence, circles from which they have been largely excluded. The Platform notes, for example, that women represent only 10 percent of all elected legislators worldwide.

To redress this imbalance, the Platform urges governments to "commit themselves to establishing the goal of gender balance in governmental bodies and committees, as well as in public administrative entities, and in the judiciary, including, inter alia, setting specific targets and implementing measures to substantially increase the number of women with a view to achieving equal representation of women and men, if necessary through positive action, in all governmental and public administration positions."

NGOs Highly Involved

In both the Conference itself, and in the recommendations of the Platform for Action, the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has been highlighted perhaps more strongly than ever before. NGOs were key players in pushing governments to make specific commitments and in suggesting compromise language for the Conference's final documents; those same documents also look toward NGOs as key players in implementing the actions they recommend.

The Conference's Declaration, which exists as a sort of preamble to the Platform for Action, declares that: "The participation and contribution of all actors of civil society, particularly women's groups and networks and other non-governmental or-

ganizations and community-based organizations, with full respect for their autonomy, in cooperation with Governments, are important to the effective implementation and follow-up of the Platform for Action."

In virtually every section of the Platform for Action, a list of recommended "actions to be taken" includes not only steps which governments should take but also those to be taken by NGOs.

During the Conference itself, NGOs, following a suggestion made earlier this year by the Government of Australia, began to record the promises or "commitments" made by government delegations in their main speeches to the Conference plenary. A "commitments" board was put up in a main hallway, and a record of just what each government promised to do was posted. These extracurricular commitments, as recorded by NGOs, range from a pledge by Cote d'Ivoire to have 100% of girls enrolled in schools by the year 2000 to a promise by India to increase education investment to 6% of GDP (gross domestic product) with a focus on women and girls, and to set up a commission for women's rights.

"NGOs are having quite a position of importance and a lot of influence in this Conference," said Christabel Motsa, a member of the government delegation from Swaziland. "Governments need input from people who are out there working with the people, and the fact that governments are beginning to listen carefully to what NGOs are saying is a positive move." ☉

"NGOs are having quite a position of importance and a lot of influence in this Conference. The fact that governments are beginning to listen carefully to what NGOs are saying is a positive move."

**— Christabel Motsa,
Government Delegate
from Swaziland**

"A Quiet Space," a tent set aside as a place of meditation and quiet, offered an environment to escape the intense activity of the NGO Forum on Women. Shown is Rebequa Getahoun, United Nations Representative of the Bahá'í Community of the United States, who coordinated the space. Bahá'ís and Bahá'í communities from around the world sponsored or co-sponsored more than 25 activities and workshops at the Forum.



NGO Forum overcomes crises to become a global celebration of peace

HUAIROU, China — As portrayed by the world's mainstream news media, the NGO Forum for Women '95 was dominated by conflicts and crises. From misunderstandings over security arrangements to rainy weather, the problems that beset the world's largest ever meeting of women made good copy for journalists accustomed to covering contention and catastrophes.

But for the majority of the Forum's 30,000 participants, the 10 days spent in this working-class resort town some 50 kilometers north of Beijing were something quite different. From the perspective of the grassroots women who traveled here from virtually every country, the Forum was a celebration of the great and largely untapped potential for peace that the full empowerment of women might bring.

It was an instant community, a place where friendships, new and old, were forged and reaffirmed. It was, as one participant put it, an emergent university, where some 5,000 workshops, seminars and activities revealed the vast special concerns and knowledge held by the world's women. And it was also a place where formidable difficulties over weather, transportation and politics were, in the end, largely overcome.

"The NGO Forum marks a turning point in the women's movement, uniting women from all walks of life," said Supatra Masdit, convenor of the Forum, in a final

press conference. While acknowledging that there were "incidents and differences of opinion" at the Forum, she added: "Peace and friendships have become the mainstream — and this is the real Forum."

Such an assessment was shared by many. "It's been very good," said Rukmini Rao, director of the Deccan Development Society in South India, describing the instant bonds of friendship and community forged by the common purpose of advancing the cause of women.

"When you see that women from so many different countries have the same points of view, the same problems and concerns, it affirms what you are feeling and that what you are fighting for is right," said Ms. Rao. "We are all learning from each other's efforts. I work in a small city and it breaks the isolation when you see so many others trying to change the world."

Issues the focus

Held in parallel with the Fourth World Conference on Women (see page 4), the Forum marked the culmination of a two-year process of regional forums for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) which aimed at developing recommendations for presentation to governments on how best to advance the cause of women worldwide.

In this context, the focus of the Forum was the issues that were discussed in the more than 5,000 plenary discussions, workshops, and cultural events — most of which

"To the best of my knowledge, no war was ever started by women... The education and empowerment of women throughout the world cannot fail to result in a more caring, tolerant, just and peaceful life for all."

— Nobel Peace Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi

were organized by grassroots groups from around the world. Activities centered around 13 major themes: economy, governance and politics, human rights, peace and human security, education, health, environment, spirituality and religion, science and technology, media, arts and culture, race and ethnicity, and youth.

"It has been like an international university," said Maria Elena Del Valle of the New York-based Family Learning Center. "Now I know what it is like to go to school with the whole world."

Almost uniformly well-attended, the plenaries, workshops and seminars explored the serious problems that women face worldwide, from concerns over workplace discrimination to the way in which the burden of poverty worldwide falls vastly on women and girls.

"It is not acceptable for women to constitute 70 per cent of the world's 1.3 billion absolutely poor," said Noeleen Heyzer, the director of the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM), in a talk at the Forum. "Nor is it acceptable for women to work two-thirds of the world's working hours, but earn only one-tenth of the world's income and own less than one-tenth of the world's property. Many fundamental changes must be made."

Empowerment and Peace

The meetings also explored solutions, and especially alternative solutions, which might arise if women were given more power to act in the world's political arena. Indeed, the need to empower women and bring them into the inner circles of decision-making at all levels was a key point of many of the Forum's discussions.

"To the best of my knowledge, no war was ever started by women," said Nobel Peace Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi of Myanmar in the Forum's opening address. "But it is women and children who have always suffered most in situations of conflict. Now that we are gaining control of the primary historical role imposed on us of sustaining life in the context of the home and family, it is time to apply in the arena of the world the wisdom and experience thus gained in activities of peace over so many thousands of years. The education and empowerment of women throughout the world cannot fail to result in a more caring, tolerant, just and peaceful life for all."

In a workshop sponsored by the International Peace Research Association and the Bahá'í International Community, new models for solving conflicts were explored. Dr. Betty A. Reardon, director of the Peace Education Program at Columbia University, New York, and Dr. Hoda Mahmoudi, a peace researcher at California Lutheran University, said old paradigms that use force to solve conflicts must give way to new understandings that focus on common needs and values.

Dr. Reardon said the old paradigm is built on two ideas, now made false by the world's increasing interdependence: first, that it is possible to be separate, whether in terms of political parties, ethnic groups, or nations, and still remain "viable;" and, second, that "there really is not enough in the world — whether power or resources" — and so force must be used to keep it.

The experience of women, however, has been that the security systems intended to preserve such separations are in fact sources of insecurity, said Dr. Reardon. By focusing on consensus and cooperation instead of conflict, it will be possible to create sustainable development and a "culture of peace" which can provide for all without the necessity of resorting to force.

Dr. Mahmoudi suggested that consultation, a specific method of non-adversarial decision-making used by Bahá'í communities worldwide, offers a distinctive model for achieving consensus and cooperation.

Consultation relies on a step-by-step process of fact-finding, identifying common principles, open discussion, and finally a pooling of ideas, all with the aim of reaching a consensus position, said Dr. Mahmoudi. She suggested the key to peace lies in building community from the grassroots level, rather than in imposing it from above. "You can start tomorrow using this process in your workplace," she said. ☉



Bahá'í youth from around the world also gathered at the NGO Forum on Women. Shown above are two young women who performed in a play that explored how women are treated in traditional cultures in matters of love and marriage.

Margaret Mikisi Mungonye of Kenya has helped to organize a small enterprise group in Nairobi that aims to assist women from outlying villages sell handicrafts in the capital and overseas. During the NGO Forum on Women, she spent many hours in the "marketplace" selling such goods, hoping to take a small profit back to finance small-scale development projects.



From around the world, Bahá'í women converge on Beijing

Some 400 Bahá'í women and men traveled from more than 50 countries around the world to participate in the NGO Forum on Women. Many are involved in small-scale projects to uplift and promote the advancement of women

HUAIROU, China — Born in a lush rainforest village on a remote island in Papua New Guinea, Margaret Elias is today among the most successful women in her native land.

The country's first woman lawyer, a milestone she passed nearly 20 years ago when she took a law degree from the University of Papua New Guinea, Ms. Elias is a respected member of the national administration, having recently been appointed to the position of Secretary for the Department of Industrial Relations, one of 27 such department heads in the land.

A member of the Charamagheis clan, the 42-year-old Ms. Elias this year was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth for her record of public service. She is also the Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Papua New Guinea, the community's national governing council, which is headquartered in the capital, Port Moresby, where Ms. Elias resides.

Yet for Ms. Elias, who by no means disparages these accomplishments, what in many ways matters most is her identity as a village woman — and the work she continues to do on weekends and in her spare hours in outlying communities

to help uplift other women.

"I am a grassroots woman," Ms. Elias says emphatically. "I am a Papua New Guinean."

Ms. Elias was one of some 400 Bahá'í women and men who traveled from more than 50 countries around the world to participate in the NGO Forum on Women, held in the resort city of Huairou some 50 kilometers north of Beijing from 30 August to 8 September.

As a worldwide community, Bahá'ís accept the equality of women and men as a cardinal principle of their Faith, and the large turnout of Bahá'ís at the Forum reflects their commitment to this principle. Many of the Bahá'ís who attended the Forum came as members of various women's organizations or merely as concerned individuals, often financing their own travel.

And many, like Ms. Elias, are involved in grassroots projects to uplift and promote the advancement of women — and/or are themselves "grassroots" women.

Marilyn Enggol, for example, who is a member of the Iban people in Sarawak Province, Malaysia, works in her spare time to coordinate a literacy project for women and men in distant villages there. Margaret Mikisi Mungonye of Kenya has helped to organize a small enterprise group

in Nairobi that buys handicrafts from women in outlying villages and brings them to market. And Maryke Van Lith, after years of working with grassroots women in Suriname, has recently begun offering empowerment training in Leiderdorp, the Netherlands, where she now resides.

Ms. Elias, as secretary of the Bahá'í community of Papua New Guinea, spends a considerable amount of time seeking to promote the advancement of women. "In our plan for the current three years, we have set a goal — which we have already met — to have regional conferences on women and women's issues in the 17 regions that compose the country," said Ms. Elias during an interview in China.

Each of these conferences drew from 100 to 500 participants, she said, and the topics covered included the equality of women and men, the need for partnership between the sexes, and the role of mothers as the first educators of children.

But even before helping to launch that series of conferences, Ms. Elias spent many of her weekends traveling to villages and towns around the country to deliver talks on various Bahá'í principles including the equality of women.

"The beauty of Margaret is that at her level, she not only associates with diplomats and high government officials, but she is at the same time a very grassroots lady as well," said Mona Seddigh, 49, another member of the Bahá'í delegation to the NGO Forum from Papua New Guinea. "She travels to the villages and she works to strengthen the grassroots women. She is highly educated, but she can also talk at their level. She eats with them and she sleeps with them. This is remarkable."

Marilyn Madu Enggol

In Sarawak province, Malaysia, about half of the population of 2 million are from the Iban ethnic group. The Iban construct great "longhouses," accommodating an entire village of 30 or 40 families in one long building.

Since April 1991, Ms. Enggol has been working on a literacy project, aimed primarily at helping Iban women. Started with some \$3,000 Malaysian dollars from the New Zealand High Commission, the project is administered by a regional Bahá'í committee which seeks to promote social and economic development.

Ms. Enggol, who is a member of the committee, is chiefly responsible for the project. She travels to the countryside on weekends and holidays on a volunteer basis to hold training sessions for literacy facilitators — who then hold literacy classes in their own communities.

The literacy rate is low among the Iban people, about 37 percent according to the most recent statistics, Ms. Enggol said. Most of the illiterate are women, a fact which severely limits the control they have over their lives.

"When the women go to the town to sell their jungle produce, they can't give proper change to the customer," said Ms. Enggol. "And if they go to the clinic, they are embarrassed because they don't know which room to go into. Sometimes they take the wrong buses and can't get quickly where they want to go."

"But when they learn to read, they gain confidence," Ms. Enggol said. "They know they are getting the right amount of money when they sell their produce. And they pass this confidence on to the next generation. Once they are literate, they can give encouragement to their own children, even helping them with their school work."

Ms. Enggol has trained 104 facilitators in some 44 communities over the last four years. In turn, the local literacy facilitators, who hold classes three times a week in their own communities, have given literacy training to more than 800 people, mostly women.

Ms. Enggol, 44, does this work at a fairly high personal sacrifice. She has a full time job as a postal worker in Kuching, the provincial capital, and has three children. "I'm given 30 days leave a year, counting vacation time and public holidays, and I use most of this time to travel to the countryside," she said, adding that some of the villages are 12 hours



Marilyn Madu Enggol

away by automobile. "But everybody in the family is supportive. My husband helps with the travel money and my children help me by cutting out the alphabet letters that we use in the training."

Margaret Mikisi Mungonye

Born in the village of Kakamega, Kenya, Ms. Mungonye works today as an administrative secretary in the offices of the Kenyan Bahá'í National Center in metropolitan Nairobi. But like Ms. Elias, she has not forgotten her roots.

Recognizing that many village women in Africa have a hard time finding a market for their goods, she has formed a small enterprise group with five other Kenyan women. Members of the group travel to the countryside, buying handicrafts from grassroots women, and then reselling them in the city or, when they occasionally travel, outside the country.

"The women in the villages are very poor, and they don't have any way to get out of the country and sell their wares," said Ms. Mungonye. "So stepping in the middle and buying from them really helps them a lot."

Some of the fruits of the project were in evidence at the Forum. Ms. Mungonye had brought to China dozens of leather handbags and bead necklaces. Many days, Ms. Mungonye could be found in the Forum's "Marketplace" with her handbags and necklaces spread out on a table.

"Here my customers have come from all over the world," she said. By bringing goods to China, Ms. Mungonye's goal was to pay for her plane fare to China — and to take back a small profit that could be used as seed money for further ventures. She also plans to take back some of the ideas from various Forum workshops, such as methods for using income-generating efforts to help finance small-scale development projects. "I can see many possibilities for improving health and community development," said Ms. Mungonye.

In Nairobi, Ms. Mungonye also serves on the local-level Nairobi Bahá'í Committee on Women. In conjunction with the national-level National Committee on Women, they, too, are working to help grassroots women develop income-generating projects.

"We have some ladies who are doing tie and dye, and others who are doing

crafts," said Josephine Lutta, who is a member of the National Committee on Women and is also a member of the informal enterprise group with Ms. Mungonye. "And if they don't have money to do these projects, we are encouraging what we call 'kitchen gardens.' Because most of them have small farms and they can plant something and sell it to keep them going."

Maryke Van Lith

Maryke Van Lith's work to empower women seeks to help people at the opposite end of the economic spectrum. "The Western world does not need as much material help," she said during an interview in Huairou. "But it needs psychological and spiritual help. The media, for example, is so full of violent and degrading images that human beings, and especially women, feel they have no value."

As part of her own effort to combat these trends, Ms. Van Lith has recently begun to give workshops in empowerment training in her new hometown of Leiderdorp, the Netherlands, where she moved after living for 17 years in Suriname, where she worked in Bahá'í communities to promote literacy, basic health education and other small-scale development projects. The Leiderdorp workshops, which are given in a course of 10 two-and-a-half hour units, seek to promote self-esteem, self-knowledge and a greater capacity to love others.

"This sort of training is especially useful in promoting the empowerment of women," said Ms. Van Lith, who is 71. "Too often the schools and workplace — all of our society, really — are filled with fault-finding and criticism. The courses focus on seeing positive things in others, on encouraging and being encouraged. They seek to bring out the feminine qualities of cooperation and love and care that are much needed in today's society."

The content of the workshops has been developed in part from the spiritual principles of the Bahá'í teachings and the educational methods pioneered by Rudolf Dreikurs," said Ms. Van Lith. "It starts with the idea that a human being is like a mine 'rich in gems of inestimable value.' The training then focuses on reinforcing the value of the individual, on the beauty of the soul, and on the building up of a new society."❶

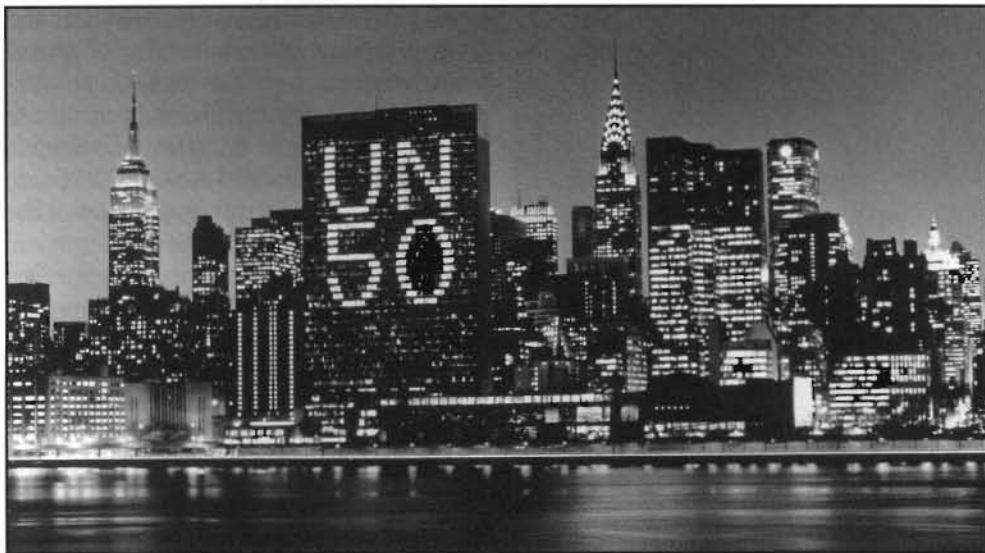


Margaret Elias



Maryke Van Lith

UN/DPI Photo by E. Schneider (50ANV)



The United Nations building in New York, illuminated in observance of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the organization.

A Call to Rethink the New World Order

(Continued from page one)

of World Wars I and II that gave birth to the League of Nations and the United Nations, respectively. Whether future accomplishments are also to be reached after similarly unimaginable horrors or embraced through an act of consultative will, is the choice before all who inhabit the earth. Failure to take decisive action would be unconscionably irresponsible."

The statement suggests a number of immediate steps which world leaders could take to reinvigorate the United Nations — such as limiting the "veto power" in the Security Council and giving the "force of law" to some resolutions of the General Assembly — while at the same time urging an "evolutionary" approach in considering how the international order might be revamped in the long run.

The statement also asks leaders to make special efforts to involve average women and men everywhere in this process. "...[D]iscussions about the future of the international order must involve and excite the generality of humankind," says the statement. "...it cannot be confined to leaders — be they in government, business, the academic community, religion, or organizations of civil society.

"On the contrary, this conversation must engage women and men at the grassroots level. Broad participation will

make the process self-reinforcing by raising awareness of world citizenship and increasing support for an expanded international order," the statement says.

In the coming months, the statement will be distributed to government officials, organizations of civil society, educational institutions and other prominent people by the worldwide network of some 172 national-level Bahá'í communities, said Techeste Ahderom, the main representative of the Bahá'í International Community to the United Nations.

"Our goal in seeking to make a widespread distribution of this document is to encourage a broad-based discussion of not only the need for changes in the international order, and the structures by which such changes might be effected, but also about the values which a new world order and especially its leaders must necessarily embrace," said Mr. Ahderom.

"While there are many contemporary calls and proposals for the reform and restructuring of the United Nations in this 50th year of its existence, you cannot really consider the means and structures for global governance unless you have set in motion the processes that will truly bring the generality of humankind into the discussion," Mr. Ahderom said. "Without broad and enlightened participation, you risk replicating on the international level the hollow and too-often-corrupt structures found presently at the national and regional levels."

As initial steps in strengthening the capacity of the United Nations, the Com-

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**— Techeste Ahderom,
Bahá'í International
Community, United
Nations Office**



The worldwide Bahá'í community has long worked closely with the United Nations, supporting many of its goals and programs. Shown above are Bahá'í representatives Ugo Giachery and Mildred Mottahedeh (third row from back, looking at the camera) at an early UN conference in Geneva, in May 1948.

munity suggests that world leaders might quickly adopt the following measures:

Quick Steps for Action

- Change the voting structure of the General Assembly so that it more accurately represents the people of the world and give its resolutions the "force of law," with provisions for both enforcement and sanctions, within a "limited domain" of issues.
- Establish limitations on the exercise of the veto power among the Permanent Members of the UN Security Council such that it can be used only for its original purposes: to prevent the Council from authorizing military actions against a Permanent Member or requiring the use of its forces against its will.
- Create an independent but "fully armed" international force, responsible to the Security Council, but under the command and control of the UN Secretary General, to give support to peace-keeping operations.
- Extend the jurisdiction of the World Court, looking toward a time when Court rulings will be binding and enforceable on states. A first step would be to allow other organs of the UN, and not merely member states, to bring cases before the Court.
- Establish a Commission to study borders and frontiers, so that national boundaries can be firmly fixed and outstanding irredentist claims cease to be a source of war and conflict.
- Commit to the acceptance of a universal auxiliary language, both as a

means of improving communication and saving money as the process of global coordination moves forward.

• Launch a determined campaign to implement Agenda 21 (the global environmental pact forged at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio) and the resolutions of the Social Summit, held earlier this year in Copenhagen. In part, this campaign should be given strength through a "wholesale reexamination" of the Bretton Woods financial institutions, as a means to begin to address deep issues of global economic security.

Such changes are necessary, the statement says, because "twin processes of collapse and renewal" — processes which can be seen in the spread of social disorder on the one hand and the rising hope for universal peace on the other — have lent a "new urgency to the need for global coordination."

"Although the United Nations has surely played a role in preventing a third world war, the last half decade has nevertheless been marked by numerous local, national and regional conflicts costing millions of lives," says the statement. "No sooner had improved relations between the superpowers removed the ideological motivation for such conflicts, than long-smoldering ethnic and sectarian passions surfaced as a new source of conflagration..."

Challenging Social Issues

With respect to social issues, the statement continues, grave problems persist. "The alarming spread of militant racialism and religious fanaticism, the cancerous growth of materialism, the epidemic rise of crime and organized criminality, the widespread increase in mindless violence, the ever-deepening disparity between rich and poor, the continuing inequities faced by women, the intergenerational damage caused by the pervasive breakdown of family life, the immoral excesses of unbridled capitalism and the growth of political corruption — all speak to this point."

The statement calls for any reexamination of the United Nations to take a long-term, evolutionary point of view. "Judged in isolation from the reality within which it operates, the United Nations will always seem inefficient and ineffective. However, if it is viewed as

one element of a larger process of development in systems of international order, the bright light of analysis would shift from the UN's shortcomings and failures to shine on its victories and accomplishments. With an evolutionary mindset, the early experience of the United Nations offers us a rich source of learnings about its future role within the international regime," the statement says.

Measures to strengthen the United Nations and the international order could be discussed and, it is hoped, ultimately adopted at a "convocation" of world leaders, the statement suggests. With the possible title "World Summit on Global Governance," such a meeting should be held before the end of the century.

To engage the generality of humanity around the world, leaders might focus on four major themes as a means of unleashing the "latent power in all people" to participate in the process of building a new international order, the statement suggests. These issue areas are identi-

fied as "promoting economic development, protecting human rights, advancing the status of women, and emphasizing moral development."

"The tasks entailed in the development of a global society call for levels of capacity far beyond anything the human race has so far been able to muster," says the statement. "Reaching these levels will require an enormous expansion in access to knowledge on the part of every individual."

The Bahá'í International Community is an international non-governmental organization that represents and encompasses the five million members of the Bahá'í Faith. This membership represents a cross section of humanity, including men and women from virtually every religious background, nation, class, profession, and ethnic group. Bahá'ís reside in more than 116,000 localities around the world, and the Bahá'í Faith is established in more than 232 countries and territories — making it the second-most widespread independent world religion, after Christianity. ☉

United Nations Sub-Commission calls for the "emancipation" of Bahá'í community in Iran

GENEVA — A panel of United Nations human rights experts, reviewing the situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran, has urged measures to promote the "emancipation" of oppressed Bahá'í and Christian communities there.

At its annual meeting in August, the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities adopted by secret ballot a resolution expressing deep concern over "extensive and continuing human rights violations" by the Government of Iran.

The resolution, approved on 24 August 1995 by a vote of 13 to 7 with 2 abstentions, listed "arbitrary and summary executions, torture and inhuman or degrading treatment and punishment, arbitrary arrests and imprisonment, unexplained disappearances, the absence of guarantees essential for the protection of the right to a fair trial and disregard for freedom of expression and freedom of religion" as among the major violations in Iran.

The Sub-Commission called on Iran to comply with all current international norms for human rights, and it requested

that the Secretary-General of the United Nations continue to keep it informed of "United Nations measures to prevent human rights violations," including those that deal with the "emancipation" of the Bahá'í and Christian communities in Iran.

In a prepared statement, the Bahá'í International Community told the Sub-Commission that "Since 1979, the Iranian Bahá'í community, the largest religious minority in Iran, has suffered intimidation, discrimination, violence and even death simply because its religious beliefs differ from those held by the authorities. The ultimate aim of the authorities has been the very eradication of the Bahá'ís as a viable religious community in Iran."

Techeste Ahderom, the Community's principal representative to the United Nations, said "the use of the word 'emancipation' is significant inasmuch as it underscores the lack of fundamental freedoms for the Bahá'ís of Iran — not to mention the fundamental freedoms that are being denied to other religious groups. The call for emancipation is appropriate and welcome." ☉

"The tasks entailed in the development of a global society call for levels of capacity far beyond anything the human race has so far been able to muster. Reaching these levels will require an enormous expansion in access to knowledge on the part of every individual."

— Turning Point for All Nations

Readers wishing more information on a *Turning Point for All Nations*, the Bahá'í International Community's statement for the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations, should write to: United Nations Office, Bahá'í International Community, 866 United Nations Plaza, Suite 120, New York, N.Y. 10017, USA

REVIEW: The Psychology of Spirituality

(Continued from back page)

"There is, however, a very fundamental difference between humans and animals," Dr. Danesh writes. "Animals do not deviate from instinctual laws. Humans, clearly, have a choice. Our response to basic instincts of hunger, pain, flight or fight, and sex are quite different from animals. We may decide to fast or diet rather than eat. Some may decide to fast until death to make a point, often to seek justice. Others do not eat even though hunger and food is accessible (as in anorexia nervosa). Still others do not share food with the starving masses even when they themselves have more food than they need. These are all unique to human behavior."

On a broader level, Dr. Danesh suggests, a purely materialistic view of human psychology is insufficient to explain the

progress of human civilization, whether in terms of the drive to create works of art, music and architecture, or in terms simply of the "spiritual qualities" of love, sacrifices and altruism that hold societies together. Or, conversely, how the absence of spiritual qualities and the resultant greed, corruption and egotism can lead to the downfall of a civilization.

But Dr. Danesh's theory is more than merely a criticism of materialism. It is also a full and distinctive exposition of an alternative theory of human psychology.

Three Basic Human Capacities

In brief, Dr. Danesh outlines three basic "capacities" of the human soul: knowledge, love and will. These capacities are what distinguish us from animals, and all human activities — beyond those associated with mere physical survival — can be understood in the framework of those fundamental capacities.

"Knowledge, love, and will have special, unique, and enormous powers. Knowledge has the power of discovering and demonstrating the realities of all things. It works like the sun, under whose rays the qualities of everything becomes obvious and understandable. Knowledge

Primary Human Concerns	Main Human Powers		
	Knowledge	Love	Will
<i>Self</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-experience • Self-discovery • Self-knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-preoccupation • Self-acceptance • Self-growth (development) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-control • Self-confidence • Self-responsibility^a
<i>Relationships</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sameness of people • Uniqueness of people • Oneness of people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance of others • Empathy with others • Unity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition • Cooperation and Equality • <i>Movasat</i>^b
<i>Time</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present (here and now) • Mortality • Immortality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary union • Separation • Secondary union 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desire • Decision • Action

In *The Psychology of Spirituality*, Dr. H.B. Danesh, M.D., develops a new theory of human psychology which plots the "main human powers" of knowledge, love and will, against the "primary human concerns" with respect to self, relationships and time to come up with "an integrated schema" of the main features of human psychology and development "under healthy circumstances." The above diagram is taken from page 81 of Dr. Danesh's book. In the text and in a footnote, Dr. Danesh explains that to identify the final step in the intersection of "will" and "relationships," he used an Arabic term, *Movasat*, which he says is broader than altruism, describing "the highest level of maturity in human relationships, a condition in which individuals would prefer others over themselves without any hesitation or hope for reward."

likewise gives us the power to discover realities. Love, in its turn, has the very remarkable power of attraction, that force which brings people, things, and ideas together. Indeed, what makes the physical world function is the power of attraction among the various parts of the atom. What makes families and societies work together is also the power of attraction. The same is true of ideas and views of the world. Attraction is the power of love and the thing that makes its activities possible. Will, the third attribute of the human soul, also has its own power: the power to choose, to decide, and to act. Finally, whenever we speak of love or knowledge or will, we should remember that they are ultimately most effective if employed together."

Elemental Human Concerns

These three capacities can be correlated with three elemental human "concerns," observes Dr. Danesh. He identifies these concerns as self, relationships and time. He then charts these three capacities with the three concerns and comes up with a model for their integration, showing how each cross-correlation has several stages — which in many cases correspond to stages of human development which have been previously outlined by psychological theorists — along with some new elements. Dr. Danesh uses a simple chart, shown on page 14, to illustrate this model.

As can be seen, each intersection on the table identifies several stages in human growth and development. Many psychological problems and illnesses, he writes, stem from the failure of an individual to develop beyond one or more stages.

The integration of self and knowledge, for example, takes place in three stages: self-experience, self-discovery, and self-knowledge. During childhood, Dr. Danesh writes, human beings are appropriately self-centered, then moving into self-discovery in adolescence and finally into self-knowledge as mature adults. But if this normal path of spiritual development is arrested, as perhaps when someone fails to grow beyond self-centeredness or simple self-discovery, problems result.

"It is through self-knowledge that we become aware of the fundamental



nobility of our being, begin to validate the spiritual nature of our reality, and give meaning and purpose to our lives," writes Dr. Danesh. "Without self-knowledge life becomes anxiety-ridden, confusing, frightening, and painful. That is why people who have not had the opportunity for healthy and integrated development with respect to their self-knowledge, become confused about themselves, the nature of their reality and the purpose of their existence."

Dr. Danesh goes on to characterize the stages of development that occur in each of the nine intersections between the capacities and concerns he outlines. He then develops this model into a therapeutic process for helping a person achieve integration across all of these areas, and he convincingly correlates these elements with the latest discoveries in body-brain-mind research.

Dr. Danesh, who served for some years as Secretary General of the Bahá'í Community of Canada and is currently director of Landegg Academy in Weinacht, Switzerland, indicates that the source for many of his ideas has been his private study of world religions — and in particular his study of the Bahá'í Faith.

Yet this book is by no means an attempt to preach or proselytize. It is rather, in the best tradition of Koestlerian creativity, a wholehearted attempt to combine the insights from a life of study in one field (psychiatry) with the insights from a life of service (religion) in another. ☉

In Mongolia, students and teachers of a Bahá'í children's class in Erdenbulgan, Kharsgal, pose with a visitor. Mrs. Lois Lambert, standing, second from left, visited the class in May.

Integrating the Ghost with the Machine

The Psychology of Spirituality

By H.B. Danesh, M.D.

Paradigm Publishing

Victoria, Canada

Arthur Koestler once wrote that the great breakthroughs in science and art stem from "the sudden interlocking of two previously unrelated skills, or matrices of thought." He defines this process as the "act of creation" and suggests that most great new theories and discoveries are born of this "bisociative pattern of creative synthesis."

Dr. H.B. Danesh may well have succeeded in achieving just such a creative synthesis in this new book, *The Psychology of Spirituality*, which seeks nothing less than to outline a ground-breaking new theory of human consciousness and psychology.

In line with Koestler's description, the book arrives at this new understanding by combining two allegedly antagonistic fields of thought: psychology and spirituality.

The result is what Dr. Danesh calls "the psychology of spirituality" (what else?). Its central objective is to "integrate the biological, psychosocial, and spiritual aspects of our reality into a fuller and more balanced understanding of human nature and human needs."

Dr. Danesh, a Canadian psychiatrist who has practiced and taught for more than 30 years, begins by tracing the development of psychological theories over the last several hundred years, pointing out that they have largely focused on a materialistic/mechanistic view of human reality. "This view of human nature holds that we are basically animals at the mercy of our instincts and that we are driven in our lives to obtain pleasure and avoid pain at all costs," he writes.

While many of these theories represent an advance over ancient concepts of human psychology, he argues, modern materialistic explanations have now reached a dead end. "The materialistic philosophy," he writes, "disclaims any purpose in life and encourages people to live according to their desires, feelings and instincts. This approach uses all human capacity in the service of self-gratification and self-aggrandizement. As a result, greed, injustice, extremes of wealth and poverty, aggression, and war are seen as inevitable

and perhaps even necessary."

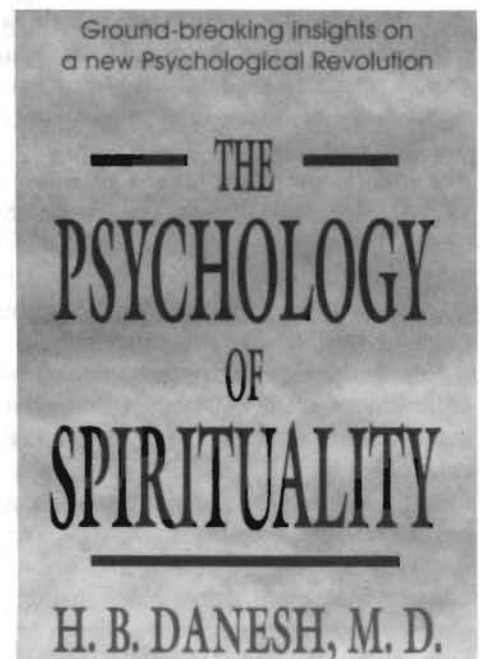
Dr. Danesh then poses an alternative explanation for the complex and dynamic state of being that we call consciousness: that the ultimate human reality is a spiritual one.

He acknowledges that many people will find this view difficult to accept. "To begin with, the very concept of spirituality is suspect," he writes. "We live at a time when many scientists deny or question the validity of such concepts as soul, spirit or spirituality. Furthermore, many religions have lost their respectability because of their reliance on blind faith and because many of their practices are (or seem to be) superstitious or prejudiced."

Yet, he writes, it is only through an exploration of such concepts as the soul and spirit that a number of fundamental problems with the material-centered psychological theories can be addressed.

At one level, he argues, a purely ma-

Review



terialistic model of human nature would seem to predict that humans would be happy when their material or "animal" needs—including here even such needs as freedom and intellectual attainment—are satisfied. Yet in Western societies, at least, it is often those people who should be most satisfied in terms of material wealth or attainment who find themselves looking for a therapist.

(Continued on page 14)