

# ONE COUNTRY

July-September 1997

Vol. 9, Issue 2 Newsletter of the Bahá'í International Community

*"The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens"—Bahá'u'lláh*

## Inside:



2

Perspective: how the negative effects of globalization might be ameliorated.



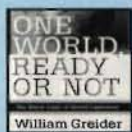
4

Around the world, Bahá'í Youth Workshops are promoting a new vision of tolerance and morality.



8

In Togo, an indigenous orphanage stands in testimony to individual effort and service.



16

Review: *One World, Ready or Not* — William Greider explains how globalization is remaking the world.

## In Cambodia, a literacy project aims to promote peace and empowerment

The "Hope for the Heart" project seeks not only to improve reading and writing skills but also to instill the values needed to create a nonviolent culture.

KANDAL KOHTOUCH, Cambodia — Un Sokhem and Chhear Sem are like eighteen-year-old girls almost anywhere in the world: they are somewhat shy, refusing at first to meet a stranger's gaze — but they also laugh easily, giggling between themselves over the simplest question or comment.

Their happy spirit is nevertheless tempered by a powerful sense of responsibility. In this picturesque but poor rice farming community some 40 kilometers southwest of Phnom Penh, they have many duties toward their homes and families, duties that often preclude regular attendance at school.

"Of course I know how to read and write, but not very well," said Ms. Un. "Because I have lots of work to do and little time for school. In our family, food is scarce, so I have to help with the farming most of the time."

Both young women, however, have recently attended special supplemental literacy classes offered in their village by the Bahá'í community of Cambodia. And both say that the classes have helped them greatly to improve their reading and writing — as well as to learn more about important moral principles.

*(Continued on page 10)*



Un Sokhem, left, and Chhear Sem, two young women who have benefitted from Hope from the Heart literacy classes.



## 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.

For more information on the stories in this newsletter, or any aspect of the Bahá'í International Community and its work, please contact:

ONE COUNTRY  
Bahá'í International  
Community – Suite 120  
866 United Nations Plaza  
New York, New York 10017  
U.S.A.

E-mail: [1country@bic.org](mailto:1country@bic.org)  
<http://www.onecountry.org>

Executive Editor:  
Ann Boyles

Editor:  
Brad Pokorny

Associate Editors:  
Nancy Ackerman (Moscow)  
Christine Samandari-Hakim  
(Paris)  
Kong Siew Huat (Macau)  
Gilda Walker (London)

Editorial Assistant:  
Veronica Shoffstall

Subscription inquiries should be directed to the above address. All material is copyrighted by the Bahá'í International Community and subject to all applicable international copyright laws. Stories from this newsletter may be republished by any organization provided that they are attributed as follows: "Reprinted from ONE COUNTRY, the newsletter of the Bahá'í International Community."

© 1997 by The Bahá'í  
International Community

ISSN 1018-9300

Printed on recycled paper ♻️

# The Exigencies of Globalization

Currently in international circles there is a great debate over globalization and whether it is a force for good or bad. That statement oversimplifies the matter, of course. But the issue of globalization and our collective response to it promises to define who prospers and who does not well into the 21st century.

As a term, globalization means different things to different people. To some, it is a purely economic trend, the result of the market system unleashed on a worldwide scale, a century-long process that has now been vastly accelerated by the fall of Communism and the relaxation of other restrictive economic practices.

To others, it defines the ever widening process of international interchange and interconnection that

can be witnessed in so many aspects of life, whether the casual observation that top musical artists draw increasingly on other cultures for their melodies and rhythms, the news that former enemies are now participating in joint peacekeeping missions, or the epiphanic realization that there are suddenly many more foreign faces and accents in your hometown than before.

No matter what the definition, globalization is dynamic and real, causing numerous and often radical changes in all but the most remote places. Depending on your point of view, circumstance and prospects, the process can be seen as hugely positive — or grossly negative.

Those who defend globalization say it is bringing prosperity to untold millions around the world, breaking down national and cultural barriers, and helping to speed the general process of peace-building.

Critics say that the chaotic manner in which market forces have scaled up to the global level has unleashed a destructive whirlwind that treats workers callously, serves too often to further impoverish the poor at the expense of the rich, and wreaks vast amounts of environmental destruction. They say that its side effects are equally horrific, ranging from the spread of AIDS

and drug abuse to the creation of a world monoculture that destroys local traditions and squelches diversity.

At the 1995 World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, nations of the world took note of this dualism: "Globalization, which is a consequence of increased human mobility, enhanced communications, greatly increased trade and capital flows, and technological developments, opens new opportunities for sustained economic growth and development of the world economy, particularly in developing countries. Globalization also permits countries to share experiences and to learn from one another's achievements and difficulties, and promotes a cross-fertilization of ideals, cultural values and aspirations. At the same time, the rapid processes of change and adjustment have been accompanied by intensified poverty, unemployment and social disintegration. Threats to human well-being, such as environmental risks, have also been globalized."

Inasmuch as the pain caused by some aspects of globalization is undeniable, the real issue is whether the negative effects of its sweeping processes can be ameliorated — and the positive effects enhanced. Because, without doubt, the forward march of globalization itself is unstoppable.

Both of these points — that globalization is inevitable and that we must now turn to managing it — can best be explored by considering the forces underlying it.

Here again, there is a debate. Some say that the motive power behind globalization is primarily economics, the result of market system forces operating on a global scale. Others point to technology as the driving force, arguing that the steady introduction of such inventions as the telephone, the television, the microchip, the computer and the Internet have burst through the barriers of time, distance and nationality. And then there are those who point to historical factors, suggesting that the catastrophic events of this century, from its two world wars to the rise and fall of Marxism, colonialism, and so on, have provided a vast crucible for the mixing and fusing of the earth's peoples.

Any analysis of globalization must

## Perspective



consider all these factors. In the Bahá'í view, however, there is yet another dimension, not so commonly considered, that nevertheless underlies all. It is the spiritual dimension.

Bahá'ís believe religion has been the motive force in human history, responsible for the ever increasing integration of human society and its advancing civilization. In this view, religion is understood as the successive and progressive revelation of God's will to humanity through the Messengers that have founded the world's great faiths.

Bahá'u'lláh, the most recent of these Divine Messengers, wrote a century ago that humanity has entered a new age of human oneness and interdependence. This has come about, He said, because God, "the All-Merciful, cherisheth in His heart the desire of beholding the entire human race as one soul and one body."

***Bahá'u'lláh warned that the dynamics of fusing the peoples of the world into one race would be cataclysmic.***

As Bahá'ís understand it, then, the development of a global civilization will be the result of this spiritual imperative, part of a process by which the Creator moves His creation toward higher levels of unity and advancement. And present processes of globalization are indeed breaking down many of humanity's outmoded concepts of particularistic separation and superiority, whether over matters of class, race or nationalism.

Yet Bahá'u'lláh warned that the dynamics of fusing the peoples of the world into one race would be cataclysmic. "The signs of impending convulsions and chaos can now be discerned, inasmuch as the prevailing Order appeareth to be lamentably defective," He wrote. "Soon will the present-day order be rolled up and a new one spread out in its stead."

Bahá'u'lláh also indicated that the negative effects of this revolution, which can be likened to the demolition of an old building in preparation for the erection of a new struc-

ture, can be mitigated. The key is for humanity to recognize, understand, and begin to live in accordance with the new spiritual laws and principles that govern our age.

Among such new spiritual laws and principles are: the necessity for trustworthiness and honesty as guiding principles in all human interactions; the need to recognize in all spheres fundamental human oneness, a oneness that requires the end of all prejudices over matters of race, class or nationality and that mandates full equality between women and men; and the importance of taking strong and meaningful steps to erase great disparities of wealth and poverty.

Bahá'u'lláh also called for the creation of new institutions at the world level — institutions that might be said to give "consciousness" to a rapidly unifying humanity. Among other things, He called for the creation of a new system of world governance, based on the principle of collective security, in which the nations of the world would unite against any and all aggression — and work together cooperatively to end poverty and oppression. He also emphasized the importance of local governance — clearing the way for the establishment of a system that will simultaneously address problems at both the global and local levels.

The negative effects of globalization can be softened only through new and higher levels of international cooperation and consultation, filtered through a new system of moral values that puts human welfare and social justice ahead of the predominantly materialistic paradigm currently in vogue. Call this global governance. Call it world government. But one way or the other, the forces of globalization will require the creation of some sort of international super authority, one that can ensure that human rights and workers' prerogatives are upheld, and that the environment is protected, as globalization proceeds.

This point becomes most clear if we return to the analogy of Bahá'u'lláh, that the human race is rapidly becoming "one soul and one body." To stop short of creating such a world authority, to say that the current loose association of nations can adequately protect the majority of humanity from the harsh side effects of globalization, is equivalent to suggesting that a body can function without a brain. ☉

**The negative effects of globalization can be softened only through new and higher levels of international cooperation and consultation, filtered through a new system of moral values that puts human welfare and social justice ahead of the predominantly materialistic paradigm currently in vogue.**



Members of the Diversity Dance Workshop practice at a dance school in Greifswald, Germany, in mid-September, near the end of a year-long tour that took them through 19 countries.



## Around the world, Bahá'í youth workshops promote tolerance

PLAU, Germany — After touring through 19 countries in 12 months, members of the Diversity Dance Workshop were used to surprises, from finding a planned border crossing through Croatia impossible because of a war to a quirky new minibus that had an unusual series of three flat tires.

But for many Workshop members the biggest shock of the year came when, during a visit to this small down-and-out agricultural village in the former East Germany, several avowed "skinheads" — reactionary young people who shave their heads to signal their belief in racial and ethnic separation — became fast friends with the theater group, whose main message is that diversity is good.

Following a performance in a high school, a group of skinheads began making fun of the group, whose dynamic music and dance routines carry a strong antidrug and antiracism message. The skinheads continued to heckle the theater group at a post-performance youth meeting, objecting to the fact its members come from many different races and backgrounds.

But later, after one of the theater group's members had approached the skinheads, and after the group's persistent warmth and openness began to have an effect, some of the skinheads let down their guard and began to engage in a dialogue.

"They told us how they don't like to see foreigners and immigrants coming into

Germany," said Diesel Schrader, the Workshop member who initiated the discussion with the skinheads. "They feel they are taking their jobs. But we had deep discussion about all of this, and then the next day they came looking for us, because they wanted to be together with us again."

Over the next few days, the skinheads became some of the group's biggest fans, showing up at many of their performances here, hanging out with them and generally reversing their initial attitude.

"At our last performance, they were the ones who put the audience on fire, and pushed for encores," said Vahid Khamsi, a 20-year-old Workshop member from Switzerland. "And at the end of the show when we said which countries we were from, they encouraged us, cheered after each country. They even liked our antiracism dance."

### A Transformative Process

This sort of enthusiastic and transformative reaction to the Diversity Dance Workshop (DDW), which is composed mostly of young Bahá'ís, is not at all uncommon — either for the DDW itself, or for many of the hundreds of other Bahá'í youth dance and theater groups that have been established in more than 50 countries around the world.

Founded in the United States of America in the 1970s to reach disaffected young people battered by racism, gang violence and drug

**Spontaneously and with no central plan or direction, Bahá'í youth in some 50 countries have formed dance and theater groups that promote a new moral vision for young people. Their enthusiasm has touched the hearts of many.**



abuse, Bahá'í youth workshops seek to touch young hearts with a message of positive values and spiritual principles.

They strive to do this through a two-step process. First, workshop members are encouraged to explore cutting edge social issues themselves through an intensive process of group consultation, combined with improvisational training in acting and dance. In the second step, which is sometimes nearly simultaneous with the first, the workshops begin to give free performances for their peers, offering up a self-realized message that stresses ending racial prejudice, freedom from substance abuse, the emancipation of women and other progressive social principles.

As a process for reaching youth with a constructive message, these workshops have been phenomenally successful. They have spread out organically around the world, without any central organization or direction, replicating as youth have been inspired by their peers.

And as the workshop concept has spread, new and constantly changing groups of young people have created a distinctive and ever-evolving portfolio of inspiring dance and music routines that borrow from cultures worldwide, from the "rap" and "hip-hop" styles that originated in the U.S. urban centers to traditional indigenous dances and songs from whatever nations a particular group's membership might happen to represent. With diversity as a watchword, the workshops all project a distinctive sense of world-mindedness that is reflected not only in their repertoire but in their composition.

"The number one message of the workshops is 'unity in diversity,'" said Oscar DeGruy, who started the first workshop in Los Angeles in 1970s and has since been involved in explaining and refining the concept around the world. "We are trying to say that all people, despite their differences, are created to give something back to the world and that the best way to solve problems is to work together," said Mr. DeGruy. "The workshop process itself is a multiracial, multicultural experience for young people."

Although almost all of the workshops are composed of youth with little or no formal training in the arts, a number have reached a high level of professionalism. Bahá'í youth

workshops have given performances as part of the cultural activities at major United Nations conferences, at regional arts festivals, and at various youth fora. But whether the performances are professional or amateurish, their reception has been almost uniformly positive, touching the hearts of audiences virtually everywhere. Consider:

- The Third Ocean Waves Youth Workshop, composed of 32 youth from 11 countries, toured four cities in China in July and August, aiming to establish bonds of friendship, brotherhood and love. "We have had special invitations by high government officials and been entertained by some of the most talented artists and singers in Northern China," said Dr. Firaydun Mithaq, the Workshop's adult director. "Most important, we have touched the hearts of the youth that we have shared so many inspirational experiences with and they have touched ours. As a small group of us shared a meal, a local Chinese youth remarked, 'I think if all people believed in these messages of unity in diversity, our world would be a very peaceful place.'"

- In Greece, the Dance Workshop Ablaze began as a local youth project in Thessaloniki and, with help from other youth in Europe, launched a two-week tour throughout Greece in June, drawing enthusiastic crowds and extensive coverage in the local news media. "Being with the group was an experience of spiritual upliftment and a kind of peeking into the near future when youth will change the world," said Jutta Strieth, an adult who helped drive the group's van. "The spirit of unity, love and understanding for each other, mixed with regular consultations, prayers and fun time, caught the adults quite often by surprise."

- In Ecuador, there are at least 11 Bahá'í youth workshops functioning in the country. Last February, 25 representatives from the vari-

**"The number one message of the workshops is 'unity in diversity.' We are trying to say that all people, despite their differences, are created to give something back to the world and that the best way to solve problems is to work together."**

**— Oscar DeGruy,  
founder of the first  
Bahá'í Youth  
Workshop**

In June 1996, the Singapore Bahá'í Youth Workshop gave an enthusiastic performance at the National Youth Carnival.







Bahá'í youth from around the world perform at the NGO Forum on Women during the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China.

**"With drama, you can solve problems that you might have to face. Like someone offering drugs. You can act out how you should react."**

**— Aixa Sobin,  
involved with Bahá'í  
youth workshops  
since 1989.**

ous workshops came together for a three week training course and then embarked on a seven-city tour, visiting not only schools but also a senior citizens' home and a youth correctional center.

#### **Roots in Racial Turmoil**

Mr. DeGruy and his late wife Freddie first started holding youth acting and dance workshops in their home in 1974 as an antidote to the turmoil afflicting young people in the Los Angeles black community. "Initially, it was geared toward youth in our neighborhood," said Mr. DeGruy, who is now 47 years old. "We had started out working with a neighborhood theater group, but gradually, because we were Bahá'ís, we found the kids were interested in the Faith, and, also, Bahá'í youth began to get involved."

They soon saw that the arts, especially when tempered with the moral and spiritual principles of the Bahá'í Faith, could have a powerful transforming effect. "With drama, you can solve problems that you might have to face," said Aixa Sobin, 26-year-old dance teacher of Puerto Rican background who has been involved with Bahá'í youth workshops since 1989. "Like someone offering drugs. You can act out how you should react. It also becomes a good way for youth to become enlightened and to learn more about social principles. And to learn to work in unity with others."

The early Los Angeles Workshops performed at various Bahá'í events and conferences, and soon the idea spread throughout the country. "It was self-replication," said Mr. DeGruy. "Other kids in other communities saw us and said, 'You know, why can't we do this too?'"

Because of the decentralized nature of the workshops, it is difficult to estimate exactly how many are in operation at any time. Mr. DeGruy said in 1995 he took a survey and found more than 100 in the United States and as many worldwide, established in at least 50 countries.

Over time, a number of standard dance numbers have evolved. One of the most powerful is called simply the "Racism Dance." In it, the dancers are divided into two groups, one group wearing all white and the other wearing all black, symbolizing the division between races. Most of the members of both groups are also wearing blindfolds. At the start, two young members from each group, too innocent apparently to be wearing blindfolds, come together in the middle and start to become friendly. They are then harshly dragged back to their own groups by the blindfolded adults, who communicate through gestures their mistrust of and hatred for the other group. And the youngest ones are given their own blindfolds to wear.

In the dramatic climax, however, the young ones shed their blindfolds, return to center stage, and demonstrate to all that the races can unite. At the end, their example leads everyone to remove their blindfolds — symbolic, obviously, of blind prejudice — and all come together in a final joyous dance sequence.

While the routine may sound simple — even melodramatic — on paper, when enacted by a group of sincere youth, it can have a powerful impact on an audience, as was clear when a workshop based in Springfield, Massachusetts, USA, performed for a group of public school teachers who were attending a multicultural training session just before the start of school there in September.

"If I had opened my mouth, I would have started crying," said Lola Conley, a second grade teacher in Springfield, whose comments were echoed by others. "They can teach us so much about where we should be today. It captured reality and gave us hope that this is the way the world could be."

#### **A Model for Moral Education**

At the 1995 NGO Forum on Women in China, the parallel NGO meeting to the UN Fourth World Conference on Women, a special six-member workshop from the United States performed five times and was selected to perform in the closing ceremony, before some 15,000 people.



"We performed two pieces: a dance on domestic violence showing women as peace-makers, and a rap on the nobility and dignity of women, showing and the importance of women and men working in partnership," said Leili Towfigh, a 27-year-old graduate student who participated in the China trip and is now secretary of the national Bahá'í youth committee in the United States. "Quite a few people seemed surprised at this way of presenting ideas. Some expected to be entertained by the pieces, but soon realized that they were seeing results of a long process. It was a challenge to stress the developmental purpose and thrust of the Bahá'í Youth Workshops, but once we did, our audience began to think about how they could apply these ideas at home.

"To name just a few examples, we were approached by people from Bougainville Island of Papua New Guinea who were trying to find new ways to stop gang violence. They said to us, 'your movement would be the only hope of eradicating gang violence on our island.' Another person from Pakistan wanted to address the role of boys in the self-esteem of girls. And we were approached by a woman from southern Sudan living as a refugee in northern Kenya who used the arts to address the trauma of children in refugee camps, and was interested in the Workshop as a holistic model of education," said Ms. Towfigh.

Ms. Towfigh also said the Racism Dance has been translated by a workshops around the world to address other forms of racial, national or ethnic prejudice. "Bahá'í workshops have used the black and white imagery of the dance to talk about wars over national borders in Cyprus; they have used it to talk about tribalism in Cameroon, and they have used it to talk about war between ethnic groups, as in Eritrea and Ethiopia," said Ms. Towfigh. "It has been animated by whatever culture is involved."

The workshops flourish with the help of local Bahá'í communities, who often give support by providing a place, chaperoning and/or helping to book performances, either for a local workshop or one that is touring. Local Bahá'í communities all over Europe, for example, served as agents for the Diversity Dance Workshop during its year-long tour, which ended in September. Not only did they obtain performance venues, often in local schools or

civic centers, but they would also provide room and board for the group, which traveled under the overall sponsorship of the Bahá'í community of Germany.

Local communities also help with the careful arrangements to ensure that the young men and young women in any touring workshops are housed in separate quarters, in line with the Faith's strict teaching that sexual relations are reserved for marriage.

Indeed, this provision highlights one aspect to the distinctive dynamism that seems to infect the workshops. Bahá'í youth strive to lead lives of high moral principle, eschewing drugs and alcohol and promising to lead lives of sexual chastity — attitudes that are often in sharp contrast to those held by youth in the world at large. At the same time, however, as many observers have noticed, Bahá'í youth manage to maintain a hip sense of "cool" that nearly always earns them the respect of their peers, as the incident with the skinheads in Germany suggests.

Fiana Keleta, an 18-year-old member of the Workshop, said at first the skinheads were wearing combat boots, leather jackets and T-shirts with Nazi slogans. "But, at the end, when they met with us, they would take off their T-shirts and turn them inside out. And they stopped drinking in our presence," said Ms. Keleta, who is from the United States. "And during our final performance, the skinheads were sitting in the front row. And one of the girls with them, while were doing our multicultural dance, she was crying. She was really touched." ☉

—Reporting contributed by Jessica Dacey

**"Bahá'í workshops have used the black and white imagery of the Racism Dance to talk about wars over national borders in Cyprus; they have used it to talk about tribalism in Cameroon, and they have used it to talk about war between ethnic groups, as in Eritrea and Ethiopia."**

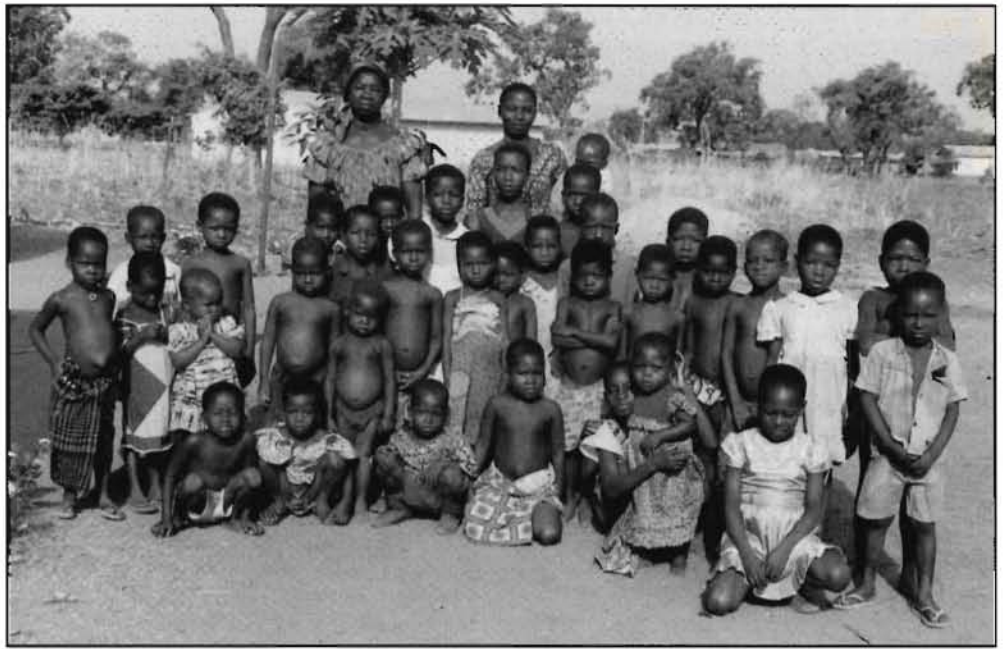
**— Leili Towfigh, long-time workshop participant**

In Massachusetts, USA, the Springfield Bahá'í Youth Workshop performs before public school teachers at a multicultural training session.





A group photograph at the "Orphanage Without Borders" in Sotouboua, Togo.



## "Orphanage Without Borders" in Togo is a testimony to individual effort

SOTOUBOUA, Togo, West Africa — Amgna Kotoko comes from a poor farm family, and, growing up outside this small agricultural town near the Mono River in Togo's heartland, his childhood was one of hardship.

In part because of what he experienced as a child, Mr. Kotoko established a small orphanage here five years ago, distinguished for its local ownership and its manifest willingness to accept children of any nationality or ethnic group.

"I suffered a lot in my own childhood," said Mr. Kotoko, who is still in his early 30s, a young man of obviously intense feelings. "Because of all the various troubles in Ghana and Togo, many children have become abandoned. And I feel their pain."

The story of Mr. Kotoko's efforts to found and nurture the Orphanage Without Borders ("Orphelinat Sans Frontières") is a tale of hardship and struggle. It is also a story of how a single but highly motivated individual can overcome seemingly insurmountable odds and, with a bit of training and community support, start and operate a successful and yet appropriately scaled indigenous development project.

At the present time, the Orphanage operates in a rented 16-room house, surrounded by a fenced-in courtyard. According to Mr. Kotoko, the project cares for

about 30 orphans, and it has another 30 day students. In all, he said, some 108 children have been served by the orphanage since its founding in 1992.

He employs about a half-dozen staff, primarily women whose children have grown and who are willing to work now to care for other children. Each orphan is assigned to one woman and is reared in an atmosphere as much like a "family group" as possible.

Mr. Kotoko, who has been a Bahá'í since 1984, was inspired to found the project after attending a spiritual training institute in Côte d'Ivoire in the early 1990s. "The Institute focused on practical things, like poultry keeping, as well as spiritual deepening," said Meredith Folley, an American educator who was living in Togo at the time. "Mr. Kotoko came back very inspired with the pure intention to help give an education to the children in his area."

He began running a simple day school, offering basic education and Bahá'í moral training, but he soon came to believe that the real need was to care for orphans. As he had little experience in such projects, his formal advanced education consisting mainly of a correspondence course in journalism, the process of obtaining proper government permission and certification for his goal was difficult — especially in a



Amgna Kotoko, director of the "Orphelinat Sans Frontières."



place where most other orphanages are run by overseas-based humanitarian groups or religious organizations.

"At the beginning, he had to struggle a lot to find a site for his orphanage," said Parvine Djoneidi, a Bahá'í living in Niger whose duties have taken her several times to visit the orphanage in Sotouboua.

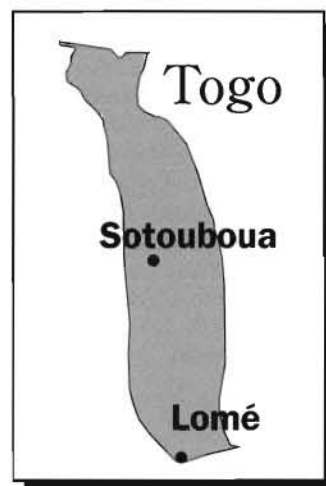
Early on, for example, Mr. Kotoko and his brother spent a year farming an extra plot of land to raise money to start the project, according to Ms. Folley. He also received a start-up grant of some \$2,000 from the Office of Social and Economic Development at the Bahá'í World Centre, although it should be noted that this project is an individual effort and is not sponsored by the Bahá'í community of Togo or other Bahá'í institutions.

Mr. Kotoko's persistence and his reputation as a man of good character eventually paid off. He has managed to put together an increasing budget each year based on contri-

butions from the government, various humanitarian NGOs, and individual contributions — some of which come from sympathetic Bahá'ís overseas with whom Mr. Kotoko has made contact. Last year, for example, he set for himself a budget of about US\$110,000, a very solid figure for a project of this type in West Africa. Much of this money, he says, will go to purchase a larger and more permanent building.

For his part, Mr. Kotoko takes special pride in the efforts he makes to receive without prejudice children from all backgrounds. There are more than 30 different ethnic and tribal groups in Togo, as well as various refugees from nearby countries.

"We receive children from all countries, from Ghana, from Togo and from Benin," said Mr. Kotoko, which is why he named it the "Orphanage Without Borders." "In this way, we believe that the Orphanage Without Borders is helping to build a new world order." ☉



## Retrospective exhibition on Mark Tobey opens in November at Madrid's prestigious Museo Nacional Centro De Arte Reina Sofia

MADRID — An international retrospective exhibition on the work of artist Mark Tobey is scheduled to open in November at the prestigious Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia.

Featuring some 130 works from more than 50 separate collections, the exhibition will be the first retrospective on Tobey in more than 20 years, said co-curator Matthias Bärmann. The exhibition is scheduled to open on 11 November and close on 12 January 1998.

"Mark Tobey is one of the most important artists of our century," said Mr. Bärmann, a freelance curator and a specialist on Tobey. "He was one of the first artists who did all-over abstraction in painting, and he prepared the path for abstract expressionism, especially for artists like Jackson Pollock."

Tobey, who was born in Wisconsin in 1890 and died in Switzerland in 1976, was known as a citizen of the world. He travelled extensively during his life and his style was influenced by a wide range of traditional styles, said Mr. Bärmann. Tobey

was also a member of the Bahá'í Faith, which clearly influenced his work, Mr. Bärmann said.

"He drew on the constellation of many cultures for his ideas, from American Indian art to East Asian," said Mr. Bärmann. "And, because he was a Bahá'í, he drew on art from the Middle East. But he found a very modern way of expressing all of that in his work."

Mr. Bärmann said the exhibition will cover a period of nearly 50 years, from the 1920s up to the early 1970s, and that it will include drawing, temperas, watercolors, works in mixed media, and oil paintings. The works come from museums, galleries and private collections in the United States and Europe.

The Museo Nacional Centro De Arte Reina Sofia is one of the world's top modern art museums. Other museums that are contributing paintings for this exhibition include the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, all in New York, as well as the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris and the Kunsthaus in Zurich. ☉



A photograph of the first group of village-level literacy facilitators, who were trained in early 1995. Of the 13 trainees, 12 are women. Members of the group successfully held classes in their home villages for about three months in early 1996, drawing up to 15 participants to each of the five classes that were held.



## In Cambodia, a literacy project works to promote peace and empowerment

**The Hope for the Heart project seeks to provide not only a much needed social service — literacy training — but also the foundations for a general rebuilding of society, emphasizing the teaching of virtues along with reading and writing.**

*(Continued from page one)*

"I feel I can read much better than before," said Ms. Chhear said. "And the class has helped me in my life in other ways, too." She said, for example, that because the classes also teach spiritual virtues, such as the importance of balancing harmony in the family with the principle of equality between women and men, she has been able to improve her relationship with her husband.

"One thing is I know how to think more clearly," she added, explaining how the emphasis on virtues training has made her feel more empowered. "I am thinking to do my work in the right way."

From an international perspective, the project here is instructive because of the degree it has flourished without large amounts of foreign aid and without overseas workers. Instead, the project relies principally on Cambodian volunteers, working in and around their home villages. Indeed, the bulk of the project's front-line workers are teenage high school students who, after an intensive

training course, offer literacy courses in their own communities.

The literacy project here is also distinctive because of the way concepts of moral education are woven into its curriculum. The goal is to go beyond the simple promotion of reading and writing to help inspire and revitalize project participants, giving them new "Hope for the Heart," as the project is called.

### **Toward a Peaceful Future**

In this way, Hope for the Heart seeks to provide not only a much needed social service — literacy training — but also to help provide the foundations for a general rebuilding of society. Although it presently operates on a small scale, serving a dozen or so villages in the Sa'ang District to the southwest of Phnom Penh, members of the Cambodia Bahá'í community who oversee the project are hopeful that its emphasis on teaching virtues along with reading and writing can help the citizens of this country enjoy a more peaceful future.

"I am involved in this project because I want to help people," said 23-year old San



Ngeth, a member of the national Bahá'í literacy committee. "Sometimes just a small problem gets magnified. And if people are angry, they are quickly ready to fight," said Mr. San.

What is needed, Mr. San said, is a moral and spiritual transformation. "When we teach people to think more deeply, and not to have prejudice, or not to backbite, they can change," he said.

The project operates in accordance with the strictly non-political nature of the Bahá'í teachings, seeking to make its contribution on a level that combines practical effort with spiritual principle. It does so by teaching both literacy and moral development using specially prepared workbooks that discuss virtues in the form of short stories and parables, written at appropriate levels of reading and writing.

The first level uses a book called "Flowers of One Garden." Its overall theme is that people are one interdependent race and, as such, in need of virtues. The second level works from a text called "Path to Freedom." In this level, the texts are accompanied by discussion questions.

"The questions move from mere comprehension to questions on the participant's thoughts, culture, habits, attitudes, and what they would like to see changed in their personal and community lives," said Sammi Smith, a Bangkok-based consultant to the project. "Then the question is



Ly Sita, a member of the Cambodian Bahá'í community's literacy task force. She volunteers for the project out of her desire to promote peace in Cambodia.

raised that if they want changes, how are they are going to go about it. So it all moves away from 'we should' do this or that to 'I am responsible' and 'I will do this.' It is not so much human resource development as the raising of human awareness.

"In some ways, it is probably better to call this a post-literacy course, as most participants know how to read and write a little," said Ms. Smith. "The real focus of the project has to do with empowerment, with encouraging people to express deeper thoughts and feelings, and

**"The real focus of the project has to do with empowerment, with encouraging people to express deeper thoughts and feelings, and being able to bring some analysis into their thinking skills."**

**— Sammi Smith,  
project consultant**



Ohm Sareth, left, volunteered as a literacy facilitator in the first round of classes, held in early 1996. His friend, Him Sophorn, has also volunteered as a literacy facilitator. Both young men are Bahá'ís. They are shown in front of Mr. Him's family home in Prek Thmey village.



**“Most people do not know how to read or write. I believe if they know how to read and write, they will think and reflect and then conflict will be reduced and it will bring unity.”**

**— Chheamg Makara,  
project volunteer**

being able to bring some analysis into their thinking skills.”

In addition to its innovative curriculum, the project is remarkable for the way in which it makes use of Cambodian volunteers instead of paid workers. In the project's first phase, for example, some 13 Cambodian youth in the Sa'ang District of Kandal Province received training as literacy facilitators. Those youths—of whom 12 were young women—then held daily hour-long classes in their villages for three months in early 1996. In all, some five classes were assembled, each drawing about 15 participants.

Nineteen-year-old Chheamg Makara is a typical project volunteer. A high school student in Prek Touch village in the Sa'ang District, Mr. Chheamg took a literacy facilitator's course last April and plans to lead a village level class in the project's second phase, which was to have begun in the summer but has been rescheduled for this fall.

“In our country, most of the young people don't have a chance to study,” said Mr. Chheamg. “Since I have a little bit of knowledge I want to share it. It is part of serving the community.”

And for Mr. Chheamg, as for so many of the other volunteers, the ultimate goal is to reduce violence. “Most people do not know how to read or write. I believe if they

know how to read and write, they will think and reflect and then conflict will be reduced and it will bring unity.”

Despite the enthusiasm of its volunteers, the project has nevertheless faced numerous obstacles—many of which remain. During the project's first phase, some volunteers were forced to curtail classes because their families needed them for farm work, or because upcoming examinations required intense study. And during periods of tension, it has been impossible to hold classes.

Most of the volunteers are Bahá'ís. And they say their sense of faith is an additional motivating factor. “Even before I became a Bahá'í, I had the idea in the mind to serve the community,” said Song Seng, who, like Mr. Chheamg, is 19 years old, from Prek Touch village, and attended a training session in April. “My teacher said when you have knowledge, you should not keep it to yourself. You should spread it. But since I became a Bahá'í I really saw the vision of how it is important to serve the people. And to volunteer without thinking about payments.”

#### **The Bahá'í community**

The project is managed by the Cambodia Organization for Research, Development and Education (CORDE), which was established in 1994 by the Bahá'í community of Cambodia for the purpose of pro-

Shown, left to right, are Song Seng, Chheamg Makara, Lunbun Thovern, and Rourn Sareth. All four are recent volunteers in the Hope for the Heart literacy project.





moting development in the country. CORDE also sponsors a community development project in Battambang, a city in Cambodia's northern region.

The history of the Faith in Cambodia dates back to the mid-1950s. Like other religious groups, however, the Community was scattered during the 1970s. It began to rebuild itself in the 1980s in refugee camps in Thailand. There, many Cambodians came in contact with Bahá'í development workers and embraced the Faith. By one estimate, upwards of 5,000 Cambodians became Bahá'ís in the camps, and virtually all of these individuals had been resettled in Cambodia in the early 1990s. Today there are an estimated 7,000 Bahá'ís in Cambodia.

Many of the Bahá'ís are quite poor, and the general rebuilding of life as a religious community continues. In this regard, it is even more remarkable the de-

gree to which volunteers have been found for the literacy project.

The Hope for the Heart project has received about US\$ 8,000 in funds from the Bahá'í International Community's Office of Social and Economic Development, which is its only source of funding. The money was used initially to supplement the income of two of the project's workers during the start-up phase; at the present time, however, none of the workers is paid. The money has also been used to cover some basic transportation costs as well as the printing of educational materials.

In material terms, the project provides very little to its participants. "That is one other reason our Bahai literacy project is different," said Ly Sita, a member of the national literacy committee. "We just give people training. We do not give any more than a workbook." ☉

## Review: *One World, Ready or Not*

(Continued from back page)

Muslim women are gradually introducing major changes in their cultural life. While describing how young women in ankle-length dresses and traditional headscarves don spacesuit-like overalls to begin the exacting, clean room routine necessary to the manufacture of silicon chips, Mr. Greider quotes an American manager, Roger Bertelson, who describes how the process of recruitment and training and motivation for this sort of work required certain changes in regional social norms.

"We had to change the culture," Bertelson said, "because the Malay home does not encourage women to speak out. The daughter is supposed to have babies and take care of her husband. The idea was to break down the resistance to speaking out. We use positive reinforcement, just like you would work with school children. First, convince them that you are going to listen to them. Then we have them stand up before their peers for recognition."

Or consider the changes in a remote Chinese village, where peasant farmers have been taught to produce world-class aircraft

parts for Boeing. Although many of the workers at the Hongyuan Forging plant in Shaanxi Province still live in houses with thatched roofs and keep goats for the milk they produce, and although the factory they work in is located in a series of caves — a site chosen in the 1960s as a shelter from nuclear attack — they are able to produce high-tech titanium-alloy support struts for the engine mounts on new 747s.

Again, as is frequently the case in the book, some of the keenest insights come from the people that Mr. Greider quotes. "Since we have business with Boeing," says Kang Feng Zio, the factory's general manager, "this makes us upgrade our forgings so our technology is very close to the world standards... We intend to develop our company as the biggest in China, the biggest in East Asia. I think in this way — the way of the market — it won't be long before China will have great changes."

These two scenes also illustrate a central point of the book: that modern industrial techniques have in some ways empowered people everywhere — again, illustrating that we are one world. As Mr. Greider writes: "The global system of production is teaching a powerful lesson: people everywhere are capable, everywhere in the world. Every nation, especially the wealthier ones, promotes its own version of national arrogance, a natural self-centeredness that is very difficult to



**Southeast Asia**





The Bahá'í Community of Spain celebrated its 50th anniversary on 25 July 1997. More than 1,500 people from some 44 countries gathered at Madrid's new Palacio Municipal de Congresos for the commemoration. Shown above is a photograph of some of Spain's long-time Bahá'ís.

set aside. But global commerce undermines — and perhaps will someday destroy — the ancient, nativist stereotypes by which different peoples are ranked and rank themselves."

One downside of all of this is that for many workers in industrialized countries, the availability of so many capable people around the world tends to push wages down, in many cases leading to the elimination of their jobs. Mr. Greider illuminates the quandary faced by high wage workers when he visited a meeting of the International Metalworkers Federation in Zurich. Delegates from some 90 countries had gathered to celebrate 100 years of solidarity and to adopt an "action program" to confront global capitalism. But, writes Mr. Greider, their "reunion seemed more melancholy than celebratory, for it mainly delineated how the globalization of production has dismantled a century's work, the collective mobilization of workers."

The problem, writes Mr. Greider, is that as much as the unionists want to support the idea of solidarity with fellow metalworkers around the world, the fact that Asian workers are able and willing to accept much lower wages than their European and American counterparts, and that multinational companies are accordingly relocating factories from Europe and America to Asia as a result, has virtually destroyed the leverage that unions once had in fighting for higher wages and better working conditions.

Mr. Greider quotes an Asian financial analyst, Rodney Jones, who observes:

"Where is it written that white guys in Britain are entitled to \$15 an hour and five weeks of holiday while Asians are supposed to work for \$3 a day... Asian workers are now part of the global economy and the West will simply have to adjust to this fact."

Mr. Greider also offers an extended economic analysis as to why and how these trends are happening. Some of this analysis is straightforward. Mr. Greider notes that investors and businesspeople, in their drive for an ever greater return on investment, have raced far ahead of governments and other regulatory institutions. Events ranging from the fall of Communism to the development of the Internet have opened new markets and accelerated the pace of business, and investors and corporations increasingly operate without regard to national borders or nationalistic loyalties.

But some of Mr. Greider's observations are more controversial. He argues, for example, that in their reach for global markets corporations may well have overextended themselves in many areas, building too many factories in the chase after too few dollars. The result of this overcapacity, Mr. Greider writes, could well be a global economic collapse.

In addition to the possibility of collapse, Mr. Greider finds other faults in unregulated global capitalism. He echoes those critics who say capitalists too often prosper at the expense of the poorest of the poor, those peoples and nations who have no hope of even getting into the race to make a high-tech aircraft part or a knock-off Walkman stereo tape player. And he is concerned that without consistent international standards for labor safety, the exploitation of workers on the next rung up will grow worse. In one chapter, he writes about workers in Thailand who, for \$2 or \$3 a day, make small stuffed toys for the American market in sweatshop conditions — conditions that in 1993 led to a horrific factory fire that killed some 188 people. Americans worry obsessively over the safety of their children, writes Mr. Greider, yet they took no "interest in the brutal and dangerous conditions imposed on the people who manufacture those same toys, many of whom were mere adolescent children themselves."

His prescription calls, first and foremost, for a general recognition that the world has



become one, not only in its markets but also in the social and cultural effects that stem from its interdependence. He then calls for increased regulation of international financial markets — although he stops short of proposing any specific new institution or agency to do this, other than urging national governments to “reassert” their power to “regulate players in the global market” while at the same time “embracing the internationalist perspective.”

He also calls for a number of specific measures, such as writing off entirely the debt that has been accumulated by poor nations, reforming central banks so that national monetary policy around the world emphasizes the needs of workers instead of “the prerogatives of stored wealth,” and refocusing “national economic agendas on the priority of work and wages, rather than trade or multinational competitiveness.” Mr. Greider also argues for a much increased push to “democratize” the ownership of corporations, principally through employee profit-sharing plans, which he believes could be a key tool for increasing worker involvement while maintaining international competitiveness.

From a Bahá’í point of view, Mr. Greider’s work is important on several levels. First, his recognition of the world’s oneness, and clearheaded argument that we must first and foremost recognize this fact, is an echo of what Bahá’ís have been saying for more than a hundred years.

Likewise, a number of his prescriptions parallel long-standing Bahá’í proposals. Bahá’ís have long promoted the idea of profit-sharing as a key tool for creating unity and justice between capital, management and labor. And his call for some kind of increased world governance or authority, halfhearted though it may be, is consonant with Bahá’í belief that our emerging world unity does indeed require equivalent structures for global governance at the international level.

At the same time, however, if there is a flaw to the book — beyond the various disputes over Greider’s interpretation of economic theory — it lies in his presumption that it is merely the unleashed mathematics of deregulated economics and the market system that are causing the profound changes known collectively as “globalization.”

From a Bahá’í point of view, this puts

the cart before the horse. Bahá’ís would assert that the engine of change is driven not by economics but by the reality of human oneness, which is itself a spiritual process that has gradually become manifest over the last century.

Yet, toward the end of the book, Mr. Greider does come close to identifying the role that ethics, consciousness and spirituality have to play in understanding and, ultimately, healing the effects of globalization.

“Traveling around the world, between moments of euphoric wonder and dread I began to sense that a new ideology is struggling to be born — a new global consciousness...that is still weak and unformed, too undefined to even have a name,” he writes. This consciousness, he writes, cannot be called socialism or even environmentalism, although it incorporates elements of both, nor can it be wholly expressed by the new ideas about justice emerging from feminist thinkers or the sense of global solidarity promoted by unionists. “The world’s great religions might contribute important elements to this new way of thinking,” he adds, “except their theologies still often reflect the tribalism that exalts faithful followers and demonizes nonbelievers.”

Rather, he writes, a new global ideology would start “by accepting that, ready or not, we are all in this together.” And, indeed, that is exactly right. ☺

**“Every nation, especially the wealthier ones, promotes its own version of national arrogance, a natural self-centeredness that is very difficult to set aside. But global commerce undermines — and perhaps will someday destroy — the ancient, nativist stereotypes by which different peoples are ranked and rank themselves.”**

**— William Greider**

In Mongolia, the Bahá’í-sponsored Erdenbulgan Community Development Project includes a vegetable growing component. Children participate in the use of a cold frame.





# From Asia to Zurich, there's no place to hide

## *One World, Ready or Not: The Manic Logic of Global Capitalism*

By William Greider

Simon & Schuster

New York

Question: What do metalworking unionists in Zurich, Muslim women in Malaysia, and peasant-farmers-turned-aircraft-parts-makers in China have in common?

Answer: Like the rest of us, they are being swept up in a powerful process of social and economic transformation unleashed by the globalization of capitalism — a process that, depending on our collective willingness to control it, could lead to a worldwide economic collapse or to new heights of global prosperity.

That is the general thesis, at least, of a new book by William Greider, entitled *One World, Ready or Not: The Manic Logic of Global Capitalism*.

A respected if somewhat iconoclastic journalist whose previous books on economics and politics

## Review

have won numerous awards, Mr. Greider traveled extensively to gather facts and details — and especially to talk with individual workers and managers — in an effort to understand and explain how the rapid expansion of world markets and finance are affecting people and communities in virtually every nation, at all levels of society.

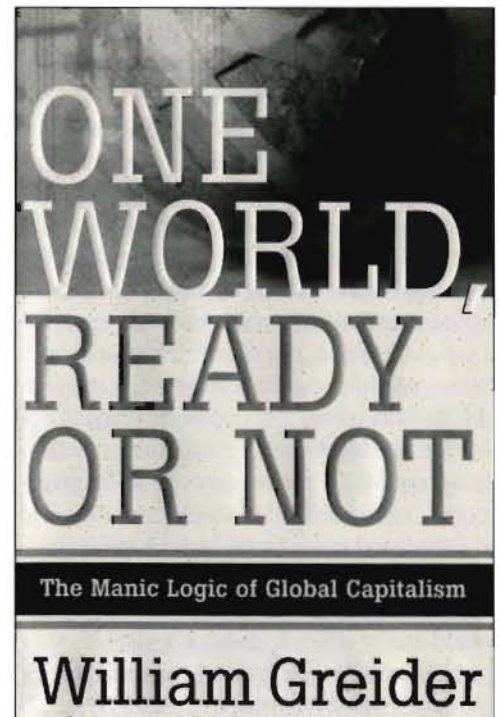
His conclusion (although no summary can really do justice to what Mr. Greider painstakingly lays out in 528 pages): that the globalization of business and enterprise is a revolutionary force — akin to the sort of transformations wrought in the past on a country-by-country basis by such developments as steam power, the assembly line, and/or the proliferation of the internal combustion engine — that is today remaking the world's entire social and political order.

"The essence of this industrial revolution, like others before it, is that commerce and finance have leapt inventively beyond the existing order and existing consciousness of peoples and societies," writes Mr. Greider, who is national editor at *Rolling Stone* magazine in the United States. "The global system of trade and production is fast constructing a new functional reality for most everyone's life, a new order based upon its own dynamics and not confined by the traditional social understandings. People may wish to turn away from that

fact, but there is essentially no place to hide, not if one lives in any of the industrialized nations."

Although many books in recent years have pointed to similar themes and trends, what makes Mr. Greider's book especially interesting is the way he brings a reporter's eye to the subject. By visiting factories, union halls and homes around the world, he explores what effect the globalization of industry is having on the lives of individual people, giving a human face to the processes that others mostly theorize about.

That reporting, coupled with a sharp eye for big picture trends, brings home the book's central message: that we are indeed rapidly becoming "one world" — "ready or not." Assuredly, if there are still serious thinkers who have doubts about this process, the concrete details and close-up observations provided by Mr. Greider in this book will go far to help them visualize the real world impact of globalization, and especially to see that economic globalization



cannot be had without similar transformations in the social, political and even spiritual realms.

Forexample, Mr. Greider visits an American-owned semiconductor factory outside Kuala Lumpur and observes how the surprisingly high technology jobs it has provided to

(Continued on page 13)