

PART 4: A BRIEF HISTORY OF HUMAN RIGHTS CONSCIOUSNESS

a) PAULO FREIRE AND POPULAR EDUCATION IN THE 20TH CENTURY

By Kathleen Modrowski

Background

For a number of reasons, the contribution of the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire has come to stand at the center of a worldwide movement in education, which is identified as critical pedagogy. Human rights educators frequently refer to Freire's as a methodological framework and as a source of philosophical inspiration. For some, he is the inventor of an exceptionally successful literacy technique. Others see him as a developmental theoretician in the field of adult education as a whole. Others yet have focused on the political dimensions of his educational philosophy and process. One way and another, the vocabulary and methods he created, sometimes in much diluted form, have come to constitute a *lingua franca* of literacy and development work all over the world.

Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed

*Since Freire's book was first published
In English in 1970, it has been
Translated into scores of languages and
has sold over 500,000 copies worldwide.
He proposed that freedom is the
concrete realization of one's humanity.
Through use of personal narrative and
dialogue, people become conscious of
the
world and their place in it.*

*Freire's experience in adult literacy
programs led him to develop an
educational philosophy and
methodology based on the conviction
that all human beings are able to
Live in dignity
Understand Their Social reality
And Transform the World through a
Critical Encounter with it.*

**CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS MAKES
TAKING ACTION AGAINST
THE OPPRESSIVE ELEMENTS
POSSIBLE**

THEORY AND APPLICATION

In his work Paulo Freire used the Portuguese word

conscientização

LEARNING TO PERCEIVE SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC CONTRADICTIONS, AND TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST THE OPPRESSIVE ELEMENTS OF REALITY

This is likewise the case in human rights education where the change must first occur in the consciousness of people whose rights are chronically violated. Only in this way may they become actors in their own destiny. If human rights education is to result in meaningful social transformation, it is essential to recognize that education must, in itself, be an act of freedom. Freire's insistence that "*educational change must be accompanied by significant changes in the social and political structure in which education takes place*" alienates defenders of mainstream educational programs: It is not in their interest to question power relations maintained within the dominant culture. Their response has been to reject Freire's approach altogether, or reduce it to methodological gimmicks.

The revolutionary message in Freire's educational philosophy must infuse projects in human rights education. As long as human rights educators are content to disseminate knowledge of human rights instruments without creating the space for transformative action within a society, then human rights education will remain merely informative. Freire adamantly states that all education is political. True human rights education must recognize the political dynamics inherent in education and be acutely aware of the fact that there is no such thing as neutrality in education: *what is learned and how it is learned can serve either the oppressed or the oppressor.*

In the same way that Freire developed a pedagogy of critical literacy that enhanced consciousness, so must human rights educators enhance human rights literacy. Freire's educational project allowed the oppressed to engage in the analysis of their social location and construct strategies for escaping from the seemingly endless cycle of social reproduction that made of them *the project of the dominant class*. Using the powerful vocabulary and analytical tools Freire developed allows participants in popular programs of human rights education to analyze their social condition and the power relations that dominate their existence. Rather than, as Freire would say, "dream the dreams of the oppressor", those on the margins of culture must recognize their exclusion from the human

rights guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and Conventions. They must use the authority of these instruments to become subjects of their own history. While Freire's life was firmly anchored in the material and social culture of the middle class, it is useful to study the way in which he took narratives from his own experience to develop and illustrate the theoretical dimensions of a critical pedagogy.

Freire's Life as Critical Reflection

Paulo Freire reflected upon his own personal narratives as a means of understanding the world and arriving at conscious ways of being and acting in the world.

Human existence cannot be silent, nor can it be nourished by false words, but only by true words, with which men and women transform the world. To exist humanly is to name the world, to change it.

Submitting to his own theory, Freire employs personal narrative in his theoretical writing as a vehicle for his ideas. Although Freire's writing is often criticized as being inaccessible to those he hoped would be liberated by critical pedagogy, he still set himself apart from other theoreticians because his educational philosophy is born of his own experiences. Through this example Freirian educators learn to value their own stories as well as those of others.

One of the advantages I have had over intellectuals who are intellectualists is that certain ideas were never poured into me as if they came from nowhere. On the contrary, my knowledge came from my practice and my critical reflection, as well as from my analysis of the practice of others.

The notion of freedom is fundamental to Freire. Recalling ghost stories he heard as a child in Jabotao, Freire reminds us that the punishments bestowed by storytellers upon the wandering, tortured souls of the cruel foreman or the brutal landowner were the mechanisms of consolation used by the poor. However, he does not treat the stories from a distance as ethnography or folklore, but says instead:

These tales may have operated through me, without my knowing it, in shaping my comprehension of struggles in history.

He foresees that the transformation of the oppressed will lead to the creation of a new history and culture. In a movement towards freedom the oppressed will adopt another ideal and no longer abide by the oppressors' myths.

The ideal is in overcoming our weakness and impotence by no longer concerning ourselves with punishing the souls of the unjust, by making them wander with cries of remorse. Precisely because it is the live, conscious body of the cruel person that needs to weep, we must punish them in society, which reinvents itself to humanize itself.

The relationship of action to reflection is one in which thinking does not separate itself from action. To reflect without action is verbalism; to act without reflection is activism. Praxis, in his sense, is the union of action and reflection.

Throughout Freire's work runs the major theme of the central role of dialogue and the spoken word as a means of understanding one's own reality. All his major decisions and formulation of new ideas are born from personal experiences and developed through speaking about them. His personal experience of dialogue as a vital day-to-day problem-solving technique matured while working on rural literacy campaigns, and led him to the idea of education as a process of problem-posing that begins with the vital concerns of the student. Student and teacher engage in dialogue, defined as a mutual process of learning whose goal is the liberation and transformation of both sides.

Development of Critical Pedagogy

In 1947, Freire was asked to become a part of the Industrial Social Service (SESI), Regional Department of Pernambuco, which had been set up to provide social services to workers. This returned Freire to direct contact with peasants and workers to a degree and intensity that he had not known since his youth in Jaboatao. The work required that Freire travel throughout Brazil, but especially in northeastern Brazil where he worked with the peasants to launch literacy programs. He has described these ten years as ***“the most important political-pedagogical practice of my life.”***

His teaching was the reflection of his own experience and not theirs.

Initially Freire met and spoke with people from the position of his university education, thus playing one of the ***traditional*** roles in Brazilian culture, that of the ***expert***.

Freire describes the long learning process he undertook in order to arrive at a position in which the learners could name their world so that he could understand them, rather than insisting

He expected the people to adapt to his reading of the world and not theirs.

that the learners understand him, which is the usual relationship between teacher and student and what Freire later termed the banking *concept of education* "...in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor."

During his time the SESI, Freire observed that the goal of the programs - to ease class conflict rather than alter the power structure - was at the heart of government-sponsored education. The educational programs were supposed to maintain a separation of the political from the purely instructional. In fact, in order that the working class reproduce itself, political preparation needs be entirely absent from education. In progressive education, on the contrary, education and politics cannot be separated.

Once Freire comprehended that all education is by nature political, he sought to reverse the power structure in the classroom. To arrive at that point, students and teachers needed to be co-learners. The co-intentionality of student and teacher begins when the teacher introduces problem-posing methods into teaching. The problem must be introduced from the students' experience and in that way, the students see their own ideas and their own learning process as the essential part of the instruction. The teacher must make a choice with regard to his or her political position and this position must extend to the relationship with students.

...The teacher works in favor of something and against something. Because of that she or he will have another great question: How to be consistent in my teaching practice with my political choice? I cannot proclaim my liberating realm and in the next day be authoritarian in my relationships with the students.

A FRAMEWORK FOR THE LITERACY PROGRAM

1. *Literacy education is an act of knowing, an act of creating, and not the act of mechanically memorizing letters and syllables.*
2. *Literacy education must challenge learners to take on the role of subjects in learning both reading and writing.*
3. *Literacy education must originate from research about the vocabulary universe of the learners, which also gives us their thematic universe ... Learners need to understand culture as a human creation, an extension of the world by men and women through their work, helps to overcome the politically tragic experience of immobility caused by fatalism...*
4. *Literacy education must be characterized by dialogue as a path to*

knowledge, which does not invalidate informative discourse, without which there is no knowledge.

5. *Literacy education must codify and read generative words, allowing for the creation of a number of sentences with the words.*
6. *Literacy education must not dichotomize reading and writing. One learns both at the same time which, in turn, aids oral expression.*
7. *Literacy education must be premised on remembering what it means to be a thirty or forty-year-old adult [who is more accustomed to the weight of heavy labor rather than pushing a pencil.*
8. *Literacy education must also be premised on remembering the insecurity of illiterate adults, who will become upset if they feel they are being treated like children. There is no more effective way to respect them than to accept their experiential knowledge for the purpose of going beyond it...*

Whereas the eight points refer specifically to adult literacy programs, the dignity, respect and shared sense of equality that characterizes the teacher/co-learner experience applies to all instances of human rights learning.

Towards a Human Rights Literacy

Freire's critics are many and their thoughtful work merits close attention. However, Freire's pedagogical approach has more to offer human rights education than any other methodology. It is in the spirit of 'reinventing' the pedagogy of the oppressed that human rights educators must work.

Literacy per se has never been the principal objective of Freire's critical pedagogy, but rather, a vehicle for common practice through which the oppressed arrive at a critical consciousness. Through the literacy project, those engaged in learning, in the teacher-student/student-teacher dialogical process, are able to confront and analyze the social, political and economic structures that prevent them from writing their own history. They gain knowledge of their position in the world and derive the generative themes to be studied from the narratives of their own experience.

Literacy education allows people to become fully human and to understand the structures and functions in society that limit them in their movement towards liberation. Any human

rights literacy program needs to be examined from the perspective of those whose interests are being served by it.

The Place of Narratives in Human Rights Education

To many people, the term human rights is only associated with a system of legal bureaucracy that is located within the state machinery and therefore irrelevant or inaccessible to ordinary people. Human rights must be approached through people's understanding of their own experiences, needs and projected desire for a life of dignity.

By beginning with their own experience, learners will see that history and culture are rooted within themselves and therefore subject to action that can lead to transformation. The transformation of relations of power is one of the major goals of human rights education. The human rights instruments must be perceived by the learner as tools that will validate their claims in the struggles for cultural meaning and oblige the dominant class to treat seriously the demands of the oppressed for a redistribution of resources. Through narrative and dialogue, learners will make the connections between their own struggle and the events that affect their condition. In the dialogue centered around their own narrative, the learners develop generative themes that become the basis for action. In other words, the Freirian idea of *praxis, reflection and action* upon the world in order to transform it is supported by a human rights framework.

The use in human rights education of codified instruments such as The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Conventions, along with the system of human rights fact-finding and monitoring through national and international committees and the network of Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), allow for the pragmatic movement from reflection to action. Insistence on Article 30 of the UDHR that *no single interpretation of the rights may be used to deny the other rights and freedoms set forth in the Declaration* is supported by the Freirian premise that the oppressed must not use the internalized system imposed by the oppressor. Freedom must be part of the collective experience. By naming one's experience and analyzing these narratives, the learner arrives at an understanding of history. By reflecting on the present and the weight of history and culture on that present the learner gains knowledge to create a narrative for the future that will not reproduce the oppression of the past and present as would be the case if one simply exchanges the roles of domination. The process whereby this occurs and the role of critical consciousness are necessary if the guarantee of freedoms assured in Article 30 are to be more than a utopian scheme.

The Importance of Dialogue in HRE

In order that education be transformative the traditional teacher/learner relationship needs to be radically changed from Freire's *banking system* in which the teacher presumably owns all knowledge and students are told what they are required to know. It is a system in which the teacher, rather than the students, is the subject of the learning. No matter how pertinent the subject matter, nor how well-meaning the teacher, imposition of a repressive, hierarchical structure will only serve to underline the contradiction between the theory expressed in the lesson and the mode of its delivery.

For HRE to be transformative, the teaching method and the learning process need to be thoroughly democratic. Freire says that:

Dialogue is the encounter between men [and women], mediated by the world, in order to name the world.

Unless both teacher and student are willing to engage in this naming of the world, dialogue cannot occur. The teacher needs to recognize that teacher and student are both actors, co-learners in a process of dialogical learning.

Freire emphasizes that: "Here, no one teaches another, nor is anyone self-taught." The teacher presents her naming of the world, her knowledge, on the same plane as the learners present theirs. In the dialogical classroom, discussion is neither controlled nor mediated by the teacher. And when the authority of the teacher is invoked, then those instances cannot be masked in the rhetoric of authoritative learning that is superior to that of another, but rather, recognized as a replication of another and more repressive system. The history of HRE is unfortunately filled with stories of experts giving knowledge to the unknowing and the privileged providing for those in want. It is extremely difficult to escape the dichotomy of learning as a transaction between those who have something directing that something - whether it be knowledge or aid - towards those in need.

Authentic help means that all who are involved help each other mutually, growing together in the common effort to understand the reality they seek to transform. The act of domination is an all too frequent occurrence: the teacher, expert or founder is considered to be *giving the people their human rights*. This concept is just as erroneous as that of *giving a people their freedom*. The goal of HRE is to facilitate the process by which people know their human rights and claim them. To understand the full extent to which the dialogical relationship must permeate the place of learning necessitates going beyond Freire and recognizing that his language and notion of freedom are derived from a patriarchal context. Likewise, HRE needs to allow the fullness of the mind, body and spirit into the dialogue among co-learners. The gendered body, the colonized language, the impassioned spirit, all need to be recognized and given voice in the classroom. Only through stating the unsaid and recognizing

the invisible will the emergence of human rights that are named and part of the cognitive existence of the learners become the basis of authentic human rights education.

Allowing this learning to take place is risky business. Moving from critical reflection to critical action can destabilize the social order. How many governments, communities or even families are ready to take on a human rights agenda that would go beyond the carefully choreographed entry of human rights into practice and law? Given the role of culture to conserve and preserve, it would be difficult to find a group that would easily accept the shifts in power engendered by changes towards human rights behaviors, which is the meaning of true transformative education:

By the same token, HRE programs which do not go beyond the transfer of information cannot be considered programs of learning. They do not engage the learner in the process of education. In order for such learning to occur it, may be necessary for HR educators who use a Freirian model to work outside the arena of public education (as is certainly the case in the United States and other nations which subscribe to the hegemonic vision of development). From within the margins of society they can offer alternative ways of learning which will provide the spaces in which the nuclei of authentic human rights communities can develop.

Recognition of the Spirit the Authentic Virtues of Revolution

While many thinkers have found it inappropriate to speak of deep emotions in the context of theory, Freire has, on the contrary, emphasized the need for love, as well as humility, faith and hope, in the realization of any revolutionary project which he sees as an act of creation. Freire sees domination as the opposite of love. He fiercely defends the idea that love is essential for all who are committed to working for social change because,

No matter where the oppressed are found, the act of love is an act of courage, not of fear, love is commitment to others. I am more and more convinced that true revolutionaries must perceive the revolution, because of its creative and liberating nature, as an act of love.

Humility is also essential in order to enter into the dialogue that is, according to Freire's meaning, revolutionary. He does not see how the dialogue that is co-learning and co-creation, can occur without acknowledging that one does not possess all knowledge, without the openness that is implicit in creation of new ways of being, without recognition of the others naming of the world.

Along with love and humility, faith in humankind needs to be the foundation of dialogue. It is faith that something authentic can come out of the learning process, and faith in the creative possibilities of women and men that counters sentiments of cynicism and paternalism that can permeate a situation in which one is obliged to recognize the destructive power of oppression. In equating hopelessness with silence, Freire underscores the need for hope so that inaction may not be the result of empty dialogue.

If the dialoguers expect nothing to come of their efforts, their encounter will be empty and sterile, bureaucratic and tedious.

LOVE HUMILITY FAITH HOPE

are all related to the political in that, if each were to remain a solitary virtue, disconnected from the rest of humankind, then the power they provide to men and women who animate the dialogue which is action and reflection would be lost.

Alongside these virtues, Freire places critical thinking. Critical thinking is the element that allows the learner to conceive of transformation, as opposed to naive thinking, which regards maintaining the status quo as the object of the learning process.

Doesn't authentic human rights education likewise involve all these elements – love, humility, faith, hope and critical thinking? Because these terms have too often been manipulated and used as terms of oppression, there is often a hesitation to refer to these qualities of the human spirit because in so doing one would detract from the logic of an argument or the seriousness of a position. Yet, reclaiming the real meaning of these qualities and placing them squarely at the center of the humanizing and emancipatory project that is human rights education would strengthen the bonds of the history of struggle to be nourished not only by the intellect but also by the spirit.

Conclusion

The poor and illiterate, without influence, wealth or institutional backing, have only the shared power of organization to support their struggle to gain control over their world. When literacy is conceived as a communicative tool for empowering groups, rather than individuals, and for mobilizing collective action, then astounding results occur. The decisive factor in mobilizing a campaign for literacy is not pedagogical or even educational; it is political. Literacy is not an end in itself. Its value is not self-contained, but rather derived from social relations which literacy makes possible. For southern Blacks, the value of literacy was the value of self-determination and the collective right to vote. For peasants in Nicaragua, the value of literacy was the value of participation in land reform and the organization of cooperatives. In each instance, the development of literacy skills was linked, indeed was identified, with organization for social change.

By the same token, developing the context for human rights literacy is not an educational task. It is the principal political task of any society committed to equal participation and democracy.

Paulo Freire and popular Education in the 20th Century

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b) HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN UN PEACE-BUILDING: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

By Stephen P. Marks

Introduction

United Nations peace-building operations offer new and promising opportunities to develop and apply a general approach to human rights education. An example of this potential is the education, information and training program of the Human Rights Component of the United National Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). The peace plan, under which the UN went to Cambodia in 1992-1993, provided a broad mandate that called for a concentrated and intense effort to carry out human rights education at all levels and of all types.

This is a new dimension of UN peacekeeping since human rights was absent from peacekeeping as traditionally practiced before the late 1980s. Peacekeeping operations did not include either monitoring human rights or informing populations about these rights.

There are three recent examples where education about human rights was given an explicit place in the mandates of UN operations, namely those in

EL SALVADOR CAMBODIA HAITI

The framework for UN peace operations is set out in *An Agenda for Peace*, produced in response to the historic summit of heads of state and government on January 31, 1992. The report defines and reviews the traditional areas of:

preventive diplomacy
peacemaking
peace-keeping
post-conflict peace-building

Peace-building includes disarming the previously warring parties and the restoration of order, the custody and possible destruction of weapons, repatriating refugees, advisory and training support for security personnel, monitoring elections, advancing efforts to protect human rights, reforming or strengthening governmental institutions and promoting formal and informal processes of political participation. This function also can entail support for the transformation of deficient national structures and capabilities, and for the strengthening of new democratic institutions, in short, the construction of a new environment.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Anan

UNTAC was an experiment in implementing a broad mandate to reach all levels of society during a brief period. The official duration of the transitional period was just under two years, but the effective period for implementing this mandate was approximately one year.

It was an impossibly short period in which to transform a society; yet, a degree of democratic empowerment occurred and is continuing to affect the political process in Cambodia.

UNTAC's Human Rights Education Mandate and Strategy

The mandate of UNTAC's human rights education program is set out in the Paris Peace Agreement of October 1991 and the Report of the Secretary-General of February 1992, which states that *the development and dissemination of a human rights education program is foreseen as the cornerstone of UNTAC's activities in fostering respect for human rights*. This statement is based on UNTAC's responsibility as set out in Article 16 of the Paris Agreement for *fostering an environment in which human rights shall be ensured* and Section E of Annex I, which says that UNTAC shall make provision for *the development and implementation of a program of human rights education to promote respect for and understanding of human rights*.

EDUCATION IMPLIES TEACHING TRAINING INFORMATION

UNTAC will work closely with existing educational structures in Cambodia to ensure that human rights education is appropriately included in the curriculum at all levels, including children, adults and special groups. Cambodians must fully understand both the content and the significance of human rights and freedoms in order to be in a position to know when and how to protect them properly. This is especially important in an environment in which the framing of a new Cambodian Constitution containing human rights guarantees will be on the national agenda. ... Such a civic education program would be developed in a manner that is culturally sensitive and accessible to Cambodians. Its dissemination would rely upon all channels of communication available in the country, including printed materials, cultural events and presentations, radio and television media, video cassette distribution, mobile teaching units, and other methods.

UN Secretary-General's Report

TRAINING = IMPARTING SKILLS NECESSARY FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF SPECIALIZED TASKS.

...complementary training to civic education

...some training in the application of guidelines and materials targeted to civil servants

...supplementary training for law enforcement officials and the judiciary, especially in the areas of fundamental criminal procedure

...training of UNTAC personnel in the areas of law enforcement and judicial functions.

STEP ONE

To identify target groups to whom educational activities would be directed, on the basis of studies of Cambodian society made by Specialized Agencies and programs (such as UNESCO, UNICEF and UNDP), consultations with international NGOs with experience in Cambodia, and Cambodian staff members and indigenous NGOs. The fifteen groups thus targeted included two from UNTAC (UNTAC Civil Police and electoral staff), seven from the Existing Administrative Structures (police, teachers, university students, ministerial officials, other civil servants, political party representatives, judges and prosecutors), and six from the civil society (defenders, human rights associations, women's associations, journalists, monks, and health professionals).

Notably absent from the target groups were **trade unions**, which were neither independent nor sufficiently organized to provide a context for learning activities. The **military**, both UN forces and those of the existing administrative structures, were initially included, but the failure to implement the demobilization and cantonment phase of the peace plan excluded this possibility. Nevertheless, in cooperation with the dissemination unit of the local delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross, several provincial human rights officers set up ad hoc training for the military.

STEP TWO

To determine the specific expectations with respect to each group and in light of the Secretary-General's report. In most cases, the main goal was a basic understanding of the concepts of human rights, the content of the international standards, their applicability in Cambodia and their relation to lives and work of the learners.

STEP THREE

To assemble the necessary human and financial resources beyond the initial staff of four in the Education, Training and Information Unit in Phnom Penh. A major staffing addition, not foreseen in the Secretary-General's report, was the appointment, in late 1992, of 21 Provincial Human Rights Officers, whose responsibilities included education, training and information, and 21 Training Assistants Khmer-speaking educators, trained by the Component and assigned to each Provincial Human Rights Officer, working full-time on training at the provincial level.

To supplement the financial resources, UNTAC launched an appeal to governments in October 1992, which resulted in a Trust Fund for a Human Rights Education Program in Cambodia, with about \$1.8 million eventually expended to contract services among local and international NGOs having specialized staff and experience to target groups that Component staff were unable to train directly.

STEP FOUR, STEP FIVE

Setting a timetable for each of the projects and implementing them. There was a sense of urgency to proceed with the implementation because of bureaucratic delays, the extremely short time available to the mission, and the conviction that such resources and political will were not likely to be found again.

STEP SIX

Project evaluation, which varied from one project to the next and often took the minimal form of questionnaires completed by participants or a self-evaluation session. Evaluation was more systematic with the police training, law school, health professionals, teacher training colleges, and women's groups. Statistics were maintained of the various training activities although this should be done more systematically in future operations and outside evaluators should be employed.

Formal education

When UNTAC arrived, education in Cambodia was at a virtual standstill, 75% of the teachers, about 67% of primary and secondary level students and almost 80% of higher education students having been eliminated or fled the country. Formal education facilities had all been closed down or put to other use.

Even where formal education is grossly deficient, the development of HRE requires working through existing structures. Thus UNTAC obtained from the Ministry of Education a decree making human rights part of the official curriculum of civic education in the primary and lower secondary schools and in instruction to the provincial education directors to cooperate with provincial human rights officers in setting up programs in the schools. UNTAC printed teaching materials, conducted briefings and courses for teachers in the schools and in the Teacher Training Colleges, sent mobile teams to the various provinces to give courses of one-to-two weeks to various groups and supported several projects directed at primary and secondary education through the Trust Fund.

The university audience, focused primarily on law and medical students, was highly receptive to human rights teaching. At the country's only law school, UNTAC prepared and taught a four-hour-a-week course for a three month period for some 242 students, culminating in an examination.

-Student motivation and learning curve were both remarkably high, in spite of their low level of preparation.

-Students were particularly receptive to teaching methods that employed critical thinking (not typical in the university) that they could apply to other subjects in the law school. To succeed, this method has to place the academic value of free inquiry ahead of the diplomatic propensity to avoid controversial political issues and must link human rights concepts to real life situations.

-By taking on an issue on which passions run high in Cambodia (such as the presence of ethnic Vietnamese), students were trained in a four-step mode of analysis:

- a) establish the facts impartially and thoroughly
- b) identify the human rights issues involved
- c) analyze each human rights issue in light of the fact situation
- d) make appropriate policy recommendations

The most difficult step was the first, since Cambodian students have very little experience with critically assessing sources of information, in part because impartial and reliable information is scarce and in part because "facts" are often created to fit pre-conceived conclusions.

Informal education

Part of the training, especially in the first months of the mission, was directed at UNTAC itself, through briefings for civil police and district electoral supervisors. However, the Component's main HRE effort was directed toward the Cambodian population. In particular, efforts were made to reach the key categories of the emerging civil society and public officials and through the media to reach all segments of the population.

The *Buddhist clergy* constitute a particularly effective vehicle for reaching the public at large, especially in remote areas. During the Khmer Rouge period, the population of monks was reduced from about 60,000 to less than one thousand. The Vietnamese-installed government in Phnom Penh tolerated the monks, although the National Front for Construction and Defense,

During his lifetime, the Buddha lobbied for peace and human rights. We can learn much from a lobbyist like him. Human rights begin when each man becomes a brother and each woman becomes a sister, when we honestly care for each other. Then Cambodians will help Jews, and Jews will help Africans, and Africans will help others. We will all become servants for each other's rights. ... Any real peace will not favor East, West, North, or South. A peaceful Cambodia will be friendly to all. Peace is nonviolent, and so we Cambodians will remain nonviolent toward all as we rebuild our country. Peace is based on justice and freedom, and so a peaceful Cambodia will be just and free.

Venerable Maha Ghosananda, the Supreme Patriarch and co-founder of the Inter-Religious Mission for Peace in Cambodia

Religion is a vehicle for reaching widely and deeply into society.

an organ of the party, supervised them closely. After the arrival of the UN, Buddhism flourished and several monks who returned from exile became leaders in the human rights movement. They found full compatibility between the teachings of the Buddha and international human rights. Through marches, teaching, lobbying with governmental and parliamentary leaders and spiritual guidance to the population, which is 90-95% Buddhist, the clergy has popularized constitutionalism and human

rights, even in remote areas. During the first year of UNTAC, the Phnom Penh authorities resisted the Component's attempts to set up systematic training for this category. The active participation of monks in the human rights associations, including regularly providing meeting and office space in the Wats (pagodas), nonetheless allowed the Component to work with them in HRE. In early 1993 it became possible to implement a more systematic strategy through a Trust Fund project that has trained master trainers who in turn prepared hundred of monks to teach human rights to their congregations. With the exception of societies where organized religion is subservient to repressive government, the main religions provide both a source of understanding of prevailing values and a cultural context which must be integrated into teaching.

Journalists were already receiving HRE training through a UNESCO program, funded by the Danish government, as well as through the University at Phnom Penh under an arrangement with the French government. The most common theme of their sessions was human rights, including issues of freedom of expression and human right aspects of current events in Cambodia. Some 20 newspapers are published in Khmer, English French and Chinese, some of which criticize the government and its leaders freely. Subsequent developments, relating to a new press law, the closing of a newspaper and the murder of a journalist, have placed these accomplishments in jeopardy. Nevertheless, the international and domestic preoccupation with such incidents is a sign that serious debate over freedom of the press is taking place.

It is essential that HRE activities focus attention on the distinction between PROTECTED and PROHIBITED speech, and on the RIGHTS and RESPONSIBILITIES of journalists. In this field, the accusation of imposing Western values should be a matter of open discussion rather than an inhibiting factor. Examples abound to illustrate how, in non-Western societies, a free press can be the rampart of civil society against authoritarian rule and a critical element of democratic empowerment.

Cambodian journalists have much to learn about how to report a human rights story. Their persistent lack of professional ethics and skills demonstrates the need to sustain this effort well beyond the short duration of the peace mission. A comprehensive HRE program should not tell journalists to preach human rights but should rather equip them TO IDENTIFY the rights and remedies relevant to a story.

THESE ISSUES ARE LITERALLY
MATTERS OF LIFE AND DEATH
IN MOST COUNTRIES
WHERE PEACE-BUILDING TAKES PLACE

Five human rights groups were functioning in Cambodia during the transitional period, with combined membership claimed to be in the hundreds of thousands. The key organizations were allocated substantial grants from the U.N. Trust Fund to organize their own education and training programs and to send delegations to the UN Commission on Human Rights and the Bangkok preparatory conference for the World Conference on Human Rights.

A major objective of this support was to mobilize international and regional NGOs to work with their Cambodian counterparts. One of the Trust Fund projects, the Human Rights Task Force for the Cambodian Elections, was under the responsibility of one US-based and six Asian-based human rights groups. The Task Force prepared human rights activists from each of the main indigenous human rights associations to monitor human rights during the election. As a result, these associations provided by far the largest numbers of election observers registered by the Electoral Component. The Task Force facilitated planning and coordination of activities of these groups and was so successful at this effort that it was continued after the elections as the **Cambodian Human Rights Task Force**, with additional funding from the Trust Fund.

Women constitute over sixty per cent of the Cambodian population, as a result of mass murder and civil war. The lack of equal educational and employment opportunities had deep cultural roots, which required special efforts in HRE. Courses were run by the Component in Phnom Penh and in the provinces providing both basic education (introduction to concepts) and in-depth training-of-trainers for these associations. They were also provided with Trust Fund grants to conduct their own HRE activities or to work with international NGOs.

Since UNTAC's departure, seven more human rights NGOs have emerged. UNTAC had supported the creation of a coalition of 14 human rights, women's and development NGOs, called *Ponleu Khmer*, which was particularly active during the drafting of the Constitution and which continued to educate the population about participatory democracy and to push for a sense of accountability on the part of elected officials and civil servants. In June 1994, nine human rights NGOs founded the **Cambodian Human Rights Coordination Committee** in order to strengthen links and improve exchanges of information. In 1994, the Cambodian Institute of Human Rights finalized and obtained official approval of the new human rights curriculum for grades 1 to 11 and organized four month-long constitutional workshops for professors at the law school, government leaders, members of the Assembly, persons trained in law and judges in an effort to help them better understand and take more seriously the Constitution.

The first objective: to make officials aware of the obligations the parties had accepted in the peace process and their specific responsibilities as public servants.

The second objective: to prepare them for a more responsible and accountable public service under the government to be created following the adoption of the Constitution.

Judges and *prosecutors* were trained by Component staff that took part as instructors and developed a special series of judicial training activities. In July 1993, a three-week, all-day program on the judicial functions and independence of the judiciary was organized by the Center for the Independence of Judges and Lawyers of the International Commission of Jurists, supported by the Trust Fund. The learners were judges who had been or were likely to be appointed to the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court.

Complementing the training of judges was the preparation of *persons to represent the accused* in court. The near total elimination of all lawyers during the 1975-1978 period and 13 years of one-party rule from 1979-1992 left Cambodia without anything resembling a bar association. No private attorneys or public defenders had practiced in the country in any capacity since 1975. The Transitional Provisions guaranteed the right to legal assistance for any persons accused of a crime or a misdemeanor and stipulated that anyone with a secondary school diploma, or a family member of the accused, regardless of level of education, may represent the accused in court. In order to provide a minimal level of competency for these potential "defenders," the Defenders Training Program was created, which has continued as a project of the International Human Rights Law Group

Civil servants participated in the two-week courses run by the mobile teams. Many were employed by the local administration without being party members and, in fact, were sympathetic to indigenous human rights NGOs, although they did not reveal this fact to their employers. Separate and specialized courses were developed for the *police*, who were surprisingly receptive to the training. Interactive and student-centered teaching methods worked well with this group.

1. Local authorities are likely to accept training of their officials only if it is handled by international officials. Trainers should be UN staff, even if on temporary status.
2. Civil servants relate human rights to their professional work when there is an official code of professional conduct. Of course, the *UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials* is the appropriate reference for police training. Other codes should be used for other categories of public officials, such as *The Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary* and similar texts for prosecutors and the legal profession.
3. In societies that have undergone years of civil war and political repression, HRE education during the presence of a UN mission can only be the first step in a much longer process of systematic training. Therefore, HRE should seek support for the planning and financing of training institutes, in particular a Judicial Training Institute and a Civilian Police Academy.

A common feature of human rights training in both the civil society and among public officials, was a hunger for knowledge about human rights. Past experience with violent conflict and a genuine conviction that the peace-building will bring about a more just society undoubtedly contributed to this enthusiasm.

Moreover, a clear mandate and a minimal amount of deference contributed to the ready acceptance of local officials to major HRE initiatives. These conditions, which are likely to exist in other peace-building operations, suggest that those in charge of implementing HRE should act rapidly and develop ambitious projects that take full advantage of the opening provided by the existing administrative structures.

The Component's task was also to develop a culturally relevant human rights information campaign using all possible *media*. Cultural relevancy meant that the message to be disseminated would be consonant with concepts and principles of Cambodian society today. These concepts and principles were found in the Buddhist religion, which provides a spiritual basis for human rights action.

Print media

Khmer artists were used to develop a logo representing a Cambodian landscape with the sunlight of human rights illuminating all aspects of Cambodian life in peace. It was used on T-shirts, posters, and book covers, such as the cover of a special Khmer edition of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Several items were used for teaching, such as the 400,000 training leaflets. The compilation of Khmer translations of official UN texts, a 400-page book of which 100,000 copies were distributed, served as legal reference for NGOs, defenders and public officials. Most of the materials were aimed at creating a positive image of the expression "human rights" in Khmer and relating it to the peace process, including 500,000 basic leaflets, 200,000 stickers, 100,000 copies of the Universal Declaration, 100,000 balloons, and 82,000 posters. Specifically, the message of these materials was that peace in Cambodia must be built on respect for human rights.

Broadcast media

The strategy covered both television and radio, which are particularly important in light of the low level of education and literacy in Cambodia. The human rights "message" was simplified as much as possible and made attractive by using symbols, stories, and popular actors. The dissemination of audiovisual materials was done through all existing channels. Video and audiocassettes were offered to all Cambodian broadcast authorities as well as those outside Cambodia with Khmer programs directed at Cambodia. In addition, 500 cassettes with a Human Rights video were distributed through district electoral supervisors, provincial human rights officers and indigenous human rights groups. Feedback from these circles indicates that frequent showings were organized even in the remotest areas. UNTAC's radio and television production units ran into numerous delays but eventually had considerable reach. Radio UNTAC, for example, began in October 1992 producing only one 30-minute program of "news" (i.e., excerpts from the UN spokesman's daily briefing) but by election time in May 1993 managed to broadcast 15 hours a day for seven days a week. Remote areas were reached by twice daily transmission from Voice of America from Bangkok and by distribution by the Electoral Component in the provinces of 100 copies of each Radio UNTAC program.

The presence of a peace-building mission generates high expectations among the *general population*, virtually guaranteeing enthusiastic participation in special events organized for them. International Human Rights Day offers an ideal opportunity for massive public participation, as was the case on December 10, 1992, when the Component organized celebrations throughout Cambodia, with songs, drama productions, speeches by human rights

organizations, and distribution of Khmer-language banners, stickers, posters, leaflets and the brochure containing the Universal Declaration. A poster contest was organized for children under 15 on **What Human Rights Means To Me**, resulting in ten thousand posters, the best of which were published, along with selected texts in English and Khmer on children's rights, in a book called *A Dream of Peace*. The role of culture is essential to transmission of knowledge and understanding and traditional means of cultural expression should be a part of a human rights education strategy. UNTAC, with UNESCO, produced a series of traditional musical performances, a comic book and a series of posters.

Evaluation

The impact of informal training activities and of the mass distribution of printed materials and of television, video and radio productions has not been tested scientifically. UNTAC estimated that approximately 120,000 people directly benefited from education and training and that the figure for mass communication, considering the population of over 9 million, the wide availability of radios, the area covered by transmission and the dissemination of cassettes of the programs, is probably several million. There are many signs that the basic message that people in Cambodia have certain rights that must be respected by all has penetrated. One year after UNTAC's departure, observers in Cambodia note that the concept and the primacy of human rights have become part of the public discourse in Cambodia to a degree previously unknown.

Lessons Learned

These lessons concern primarily

- (a) *the definition of target groups*
- (b) *the relationship between human rights as taught and practical realities of daily life*
- (c) *relations with the existing administrative structures*
- (d) *methods of teaching*
- (e) *administration of extra-budgetary funds for educational projects*
- (f) *long-term impact of education and training.*

The strategy described proved to be successful insofar as the principal elements of Cambodian society were identified and constituted the major transmitters of knowledge and understanding. What is important to consider in developing strategies for other contexts is to persevere whenever a key target group has been identified but program actions have been difficult to implement. For example, it was not until fairly late in the mandate of UNTAC that the Component found appropriate implementing agencies to bring HRE to health professionals and the Buddhist clergy on a significant scale. Had this not been done, there would have been major gaps in the program.

Teaching, especially at the beginning of UNTAC's human rights program, tended to describe the relevance of Buddhist principles and then explain the content of the Universal Declaration and the International Covenants.

-Students' questions led the instructors to realize that effective education must be linked to the lives of the learners.

-The brevity of the courses meant that this newly acquired knowledge had little chance of being consolidated and transformed into appropriate actions to protect and exercise those rights.

-Real case studies of violations, for example, have a greater impact than abstract examples. The Women's Training Project, in which training was based on women using drawings and drama to bring out aspects of their daily lives, was the prototype of this approach. In the defenders' course, students were exposed to real courtroom situations.

The local authorities manifested a general willingness not to interfere with practically any educational plans the Component. The Component was perhaps not fully prepared for such openness and similar operations should be prepared to move massively into intensive educational activity. In practice, the opportunities were limited by the availability of staff and funds. Had these two matters been resolved earlier, greater advantage could have been taken of this openness.

There is no doubt that this Component's program and other similar ones conducted by the Cambodian human rights associations were successful in that they introduced large numbers of people for the first time to basic human rights concepts. Support for these groups and retraining of their trainers are essential to the long-term effectiveness of their efforts. The use of mobile teams is an effective mechanism for mass education at a basic level, but they did not have a systematic in-built mechanism for ensuring that the critical follow-up work with course participants took place. Video should be used more frequently, especially in villages, where literacy is low. The most important lesson is that interactive methods work best. This requires more preparation by the teachers but the results are worth it.

The availability of resources through the Trust Fund was a vital element in the effectiveness of the program. It would have been considerably more effective if funds had been available sooner and if the administrative procedures were not as heavy as they were. The availability of such a fund at the beginning would have made a considerable difference.

Finally, HRE, like all other aspects of peace building, is primarily a means of laying long-term foundations for humane governance. The concept of democratic empowerment is helpful as a criterion for conceiving and implementing human rights education projects. This concept is based on a concern for the degree to which the beneficiaries of the project acquire knowledge and skills they can use to participate effectively in decisions affecting their lives.

Democratic empowerment of indigenous human rights associations requires the constant improvement of their educational programs and protection from harassment and abuse by the authorities. Democratic empowerment of the new government requires assistance in the preparation of key legislation and development and strengthening of national institutions. This has been the direction of the successor to the Component, the Phnom Penh Office of the UN Center for Human Rights.

c) FROM KURU KAN FUGAN TO THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Empowerment through Human Rights Education in Mali

By Kathleen Modrowski

The Republic of Mali is at a critical and very promising point in its history. Under the leadership of President Alpha Konare, who came to power after the Malian people threw off a long and oppressive military dictatorship, the government has established programs intended to further strengthen and enhance the role of civil society in participative democracy. Decentralization is moving into gear. It is generally acknowledged that Mali's civil society became a major actor, on quite a unique scale, in a process of reconciliation and peace throughout the country to end a protracted and draining war in the Northern territories, having previously played a key role in ending military rule.

While there are regional variations in the intensity of the phenomenon, it is generally true that Malians as a group have a strong sense of belonging and long histories of consensus building in the search for solutions to problems, whether related to their social or to their natural environment. Adherence to local NGOs, associations, unions, cultural associations, etc. has long been a means for people to make their voice heard in democratic society. According to the UNDP Human Development Report 2004, Mali ranks among the poorest nations at 172 out of 175 countries. It has one of the lowest literacy rates with adult male literacy at 26.7 per cent and adult female literacy at 11.9 per cent.

Programs using the Freirian approach were established as far back as the early 1970's, piggy-backing on what was a very active movement of Freire-inspired rural animation, neighborhood organizations and women's cooperatives during the first years of independence. With a government intent on social transformation, decentralization and ambitious education programs, the Freirian approach has much to recommend it. Considerable creative energy was released when civil society mobilized to remove the Traore government. The challenge of the democratic successor has been *how to maintain and nourish this formidable power within the people while maintaining the equilibrium of the majority party's vulnerable position*. As Freire emphasized, the leaders of a social movement have a commitment to those who began the process of transformation, in this case civil society as the leaders of the movement for change, to continue to be actors in the process.

Both government and civil society are aware that each must act within the space that acknowledges the imperfect ability of either entity to carry out the promise of social transformation without the dilution of some element of power. The human rights framework provides the space in which this dialogue can occur. Dialogue and collaboration between civil society and government were an important element of Mali's Third Republic, and both claim a keen interest in using the Human Rights framework as a means of guiding rights and duties of

all people as members of society. HRE, they feel, is an absolute necessity if all people at all levels of Malian society are to become actors in their country. There is a particular emphasis on an equitable interchange between Malian culture and the programs and vice versa.

The Ministry of Basic Education (MBE) and two local NGOs, the recently founded PDHRE-MALI and the well-established Institut Pour L'Education Populaire (IEP), proclaim similar goals. Whether or not the projects can be complementary and attain the desired outcome will depend on their ability to collaborate and adopt an effective methodology for HRE.

PDHRE-MALI is the offshoot of the international NGO PDHRE and has, over the past three years, been associated with both the MBE and IEP. PDHRE originally helped initiate the national program for HRE through the Ministry of Basic Education. PDHRE has also participated in training workshops with IEP. Both organizations closely identify with the methods of Paolo Freire. A study of the experience of PDHRE- Mali and the organization's need to work with both government and grassroots organizations reveals the strengths and weaknesses of an either/or (government or grassroots) approach to carrying out HRE learning and whether or not real collaboration between the two types of organization can be achieved without loss of either autonomy on the part of the NGO or effective loss of control on the part of the government.

Background

In 1992, Alpha Oumar Konare was elected president of the Third Republic of Mali. His election followed the twenty-year dictatorship of Moussa Traore. The political space for democracy opened with a call for a national conference and the adoption of a new constitution. Within a year democratic elections were

*Since independence in 1956, Mali has ratified all the major human rights instruments and conventions. This lays a foundation for the implementation of a human rights framework to guide policies and regulate practices. On December 11, 1998, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mali, signed a decree that established a steering committee for a National Program of Education for the Culture of Peace and Human Rights. The program was called, **From Kuru Kan Fugan to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Mali - a Human Rights Nation**. A year later, President Alpha Konare officially decreed the participation of all Ministries in the program. In the summer of 2000, Mali saw the birth of the independent African Institute for the Learning of Human Rights Education with workshops slated to begin in the Fall of 2000.*

held resulting in Konare's winning the vote. Political repression, two cycles of droughts in the 1970's and 1980's, the brutal reforms imposed by the IMF structural adjustment policies (SAPs), a large youth population with a sense of entitlement to political participation derived from its front-line role and bloody sacrifices in the democratic uprising, and a fragile peace accord with the Peuhl, Songhay and Tuareg in the North were part of the legacy left to the new government.

The Heritage of Kuru Kan Fukan

Over the last few years, as part of the return to peace and democracy, *Kurukanfugan*, due to the efforts of the association by that name, has become a unifying theme with very positive potential. The name designates an area on the outskirts of Bamako traditionally used as a site for negotiation. According to tradition, this is the historic cradle of Mali, where Sundiata Keita promulgated the Manden Political Charter, providing the glue between all the ethnic groups present on Malian territory, as well as prefiguring modern democracy and the decentralizing model currently underway in Mali.

The Charter is said to have defined the goals of the new political unit as universal (Mande) peace and mutual respect, in a society defining value by physical labor (agricultural or craft work) rather than by military force or money.

Mission to Mali

PDHRE was invited to work with the Ministry of Basic Education (MBE) to help launch a national program for HRE. PDHRE applied to and was granted funding from Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) to realize the first phase of the project. Representatives Shulamith Koenig and Kathleen Modrowski, the author, began the PDHRE program in Mali in November, 1997 and continued to work closely with the MBE through December, 1998. Initially PDHRE saw its goal as bringing together a wide representation of organizations and individuals from civil society and from the nine official administrative regions of the country. With a team of technicians from the MBE, the group was expanded to include members of local NGOs, unions, professional associations, students, women, religious leaders, media and *griots* (traditional story holders). From this group a Steering Committee emerged that has functioned since then for the purpose of carrying out the National Program. A series of six open meetings aimed at involving various constituencies were held over a period of two years. The purpose of the meetings was threefold:

to allow people to broadly define human rights according to their own perception and in relation to their daily lives

to learn where they felt there was a need for human rights education

to introduce the major international human rights instruments and conventions and discuss effective ways to use a human rights framework to promote social change

Mali still enjoys a strong oral tradition. Any open forum is an opportunity for lively debate and an often eloquent synthesis of ideas.

Narratives as knowledge

In a society of oral tradition, narratives are accepted as a legitimate source of knowledge. Sessions with women, young people and those whose identity was still in the life of the community (as opposed to government officials, educational and other professionals) relied on a discourse of personal narrative. The legitimate use of these narratives permitted all participants, regardless of their level of education and social status to exercise their authority. This was particularly meaningful when it came to making human rights relevant to daily life and identifying areas urgently in need of HR protection.

In order that human rights become a sustainable factor in the moral and political life of a community, those who have not suffered the injustice must be as indignant as those who have been the victims of it.

Koenig and Modrowski were warned by many people from the MBE team not to bring up the subject of female excision (female genital cutting (FGC) when meeting with women. It is estimated that approximately 90% of Malian women are excised and in a number of areas, this takes the form of pharaonic excision, the most radical form. The practice has a negative effect on a woman's health, including retention of urine and menstrual blood, heightened infant and maternal mortality rates and sometimes, lethal infections. Mali has ratified the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Nonetheless, many members of the ministries and the government believe that the topic is too volatile and should not be aired in public debate. However, because excision is a real issue in women's lives, it emerged immediately when the women's forum entered into open discussion.

Kadiatou A'oudou Sidibe, a schoolteacher from the northern region of Timbuktu, opened Pandora's box when she told of watching helplessly as one of her young lycee students died as the result of infibulation. The incident determined the course of Sidibe's life. She founded a local association through which she works tirelessly for the elimination of excision. Many women were moved to tears as they listened to the tragic story. Others added their own experiences. Despite the consensus that something needed to be done about the effects of excision on women's health (and thus a violation to the right to health), the open forum format could only air the issue for discussion. In order to raise the issue beyond the level of a narrative that identified the problem, it needs to be taken through the process of analysis before possible solutions can be envisaged.

Limits to Action

The case of excision is a dramatic illustration of the short-circuiting that took place in the discussions and in the subsequent work of the Steering Committee.

- *The open forums awakened the enthusiasm of the participants.*
- *They were allowed to identify their problems.*

- *Through shared narratives they learned that they were not alone with these problems and realized that most of these issues were, in fact, acknowledged in the major international human rights instruments and conventions that Mali had ratified and was therefore committed to their realization.*

The participants' expectation that they - along with the government - would be mobilized to examine solutions remained unmet because the problem-solving phase of the program was never carried out. PDHRE and the MBE team had written into the original project plans for a national consultation. This plan called for a two-week inter-active workshop that would focus *on analysis of urgent problems, creation of field projects and production of educational materials* based on local languages and cultures. HRE was to be fully integrated into all the workshop activities.

While the forums were taking place, a meeting was held with the MBE, PDHRE, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and UNESCO in order to harmonies programs in HRE and peace education (PE) being carried out by each organization as separate projects. As a result of these discussions, a formal workshop was held in March 1998, following which the Steering Committee was asked to coordinate an action plan that would include all the HRE and PE programs.

The initial plan called for a core group consisting of one project director from the MBE and three members of local NGOs to lead the Committee that included 25 members. In this way civil society would be a major participant. After the first meeting the NGO coordinators complained that the MBE committee member insisted on maintaining control of the portfolio and thus stalling the time frame for implementation. The committee's functions were further undermined by outside events in the larger political situation. These included nearly three years of student and teacher strikes, municipal elections that mobilized many government administrators and the need to avoid launching the national consultation at a time when other political events, such as municipal elections, took place.

In addition, because the HRE program was under government sponsorship, all funders required that requests for funding came directly from the government rather than from the NGOs associated with the Steering Committee. Outside funds were needed for the National Consultation and there was no way of speeding up the government's action in this area. Another shortcoming was that in resisting shared administration of the program, the MBE failed to utilize the capabilities of local NGO representatives in the core group to raise funds, mobilize their constituencies and move towards problem-solving. These concerns were rebuffed by the MBE representative when raised by the local NGOs. The Steering Committee was successful in certain areas. When the Committee presented its report in February 2000 they had accomplished the following:

- * Translation of the UDHR into the eleven national languages
- * Revision of the action plan for Education in Human Rights and the Culture of Peace
- * Realization of a study on Malian perception of human rights and the culture of peace
- * Revision of the Military Code of Conduct including references to human rights.

Three years after launching From Kuru Kan Fugan to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - Mali a Human Rights Nation, systematic use of the human rights framework to strengthen participatory democracy had not penetrated Malian culture in depth. PDHRE determined that in order to take advantage of the historic moment to realize a national human rights movement in Mali, action needed to be taken beyond the Plan of the Steering Committee. PDHRE registered the organization in Mali so that in March 2000, PDHRE-Mali began operating in Bamako, the capital, with a local Malian team.

***Transformation Education at the Grassroots:
The Institute for Popular Education***

(L'Institut Pour L'Éducation Populaire - IEP)

In addition to collaborating with the MBE, Modrowski and Koenig also developed ties with IEP. A stable institution with a solid track record in Freirian education, the Institute was an appropriate partner, having recently incorporated HRE into their community development field projects and experimental school. Maria Diara Keita, Cheikh Oumar Coulibally and Deborah Fredo are the active founders of IEP, which has its headquarters in the town of Kati, fifteen miles from the capital, Bamako. IEP applies a holistic vision of community development. Its activities include:

- * The Ciwara (chee-wahr-ra) Community School, an alternative pre- school and elementary school that is taught by community educators with a curriculum in Bambara, one of the national languages.
- * The Kanaga Program of Education for Empowerment, a training program for youth, adults, educators, facilitators and activists.
- * University Without Walls, a program for educators and activists in non-formal learning and literacy programs to reflect on and improve their efforts in educational reform.
- * Movement Building, dialogues with "co-visionaries" for the purpose of building a reform movement in education throughout West Africa.

Each program is linked with the other community programs and, in Freirian terms, grew out of generative themes.

AN ALTERNATIVE IN COMMUNITY EDUCATION THE CIWARA COMMUNITY SCHOOL

In 1994, IEP began facilitating adult literacy courses. As a proactive program it aimed at reaching community women and creating awareness of critical issues that would lead to action in the community. The community women identified six critical areas:

EDUCATION GENDER DEVELOPMENT HUMAN RIGHTS ECONOMICS
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

The first cohort class consisted of about 150 women between the ages of 9 and 25. Because their experience in the literacy program had changed their lives, many of the women wanted to offer the same kind of program to their own children. They asked IEP for help in opening up a kindergarten that they called SIGIDOLO. After two years, 70 children were regularly attending the kindergarten, which was held in the courtyard of one of the women's homes. The women themselves became the educators. When the Sigidolo children were old enough to attend the regular school the mothers were concerned. They did not want their children to revert to the meaningless, rote education in the French-speaking national program. They saw how their youngsters were thriving in Sidigolo where Bambara was the language of instruction and communication and they asked IEP to help them create a primary school. In the fall they opened the Ciwara School for the first graders. Today, six years later, Sigidolo and Ciwara are an important part of the community. They are among the few schools in Mali that use the national language for instruction, with French taught as a second language. A major objective of the program is "to bring the school into the community and the community into the school". The curriculum is organized around the main themes of:

CULTURAL IDENTITY ACTIVISM JUSTICE
PHYSICAL, ACADEMIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COMPETENCY

Parents and visitors are always welcome as participants and observers. Sensitive subjects that run deeply in the life of the community are explored in the school.

Boys as well as girls cook meals and bring their laundry to school. It is uncommon for men and boys to engage in domestic work at home, so this action provokes shock (among the parents) and thus discussion on issues including gender equality, the role of men in the community, girls' education, the right to work, the right to choose a partner in marriage, and the right to health. Since several students had friends or relatives stricken with the AIDS virus, this also became a topic of discussion. Eventually, the children went to stores around the market place, distributed information and answered questions. Rather than object (teachers in regular schools thought children incapable of becoming actors in community life because they lacked knowledge and because of their youth) the shopkeepers of Kati were pleased to have the information.

Impact on the Community

The founders of IEP believe that the Ciwara and Sigidolo schools and their adult literacy programs have an immediate and a long-lasting impact on the community.

- The programs are part of Malian culture.
- The language of instruction is the national language.
- Facilitators are from the community. Trainers come as resource people, for example, to provide input into problem-solving around health concerns, agriculture, financing, etc., rather than as experts who have come to tell the people what they must do and how to do it.
- Methods used by IEP affirm the intelligence of the people they work with. Simple innovations can create greater equity in the neighborhoods or villages.

Similar changes can be seen in the seven villages surrounding Kati where IEP is carrying out community development programs based on a human rights framework. For all the discussion among sociologists and government spokespeople that change needs to come slowly and that the rural community is very conservative, it has been IEP's experience that people in the villages understand very quickly the relevance or the irrelevance of a program to their lives and concerns.

Assessing the Outcomes

IEP's actions are solidly based within the community. Its school program, unlike the official educational system inherited from the French colonizers, is part of local culture. The official system runs parallel to the local culture and is viewed as an entity quite apart. There the language of instruction is French, which few students and even their teachers, let alone the parents, use for communication, already forming a significant barrier. However, government and parent organizations have proven themselves resistant to the idea of relinquishing the favored position of French as the language of knowledge.

The Ciwara model responds to the educational reform recommended by the new government program PRODEC, launched in 2000. The question remains whether the Ministry of Education will be able to apply the model and example of Ciwara schools to the national system.

IEP programs are effective in the communities as long as there is continued support through training and information. This does not mean material support since IEP has no funds to disburse directly into communities. However, funds are needed to run training programs and produce educational materials. Lack of funding and the related problem of maintaining sufficient staff hinder IEP in their effort to sustain a countrywide network of trainers. This limits the extent to which IEP can carry out its programs effectively.

Working Within the Culture

In a number of ways, IEP and The Ministry of Education (ME), would be excellent partners. Each organization has a mission that will be difficult to realize in the present context. IEP cannot act alone if it hopes to reach a wide segment of the population. Given Mali's inadequate system of communication and general level of poverty, only the national government can coordinate an extensive program in HRE and obtain sufficient funds to run such a program. Equally important is the need for the government to sanction the use of human rights as a general guide for enacting policies and laws.

The ministry of education is hindered by continued reliance on the present educational system inherited from the French and on projects conceived largely by "experts" from agencies outside the country. The result will mirror the profile of the present education system, i.e., a program that runs parallel to Malian culture but has very little to do with it.

Mistrust of local languages has other far-reaching implications. While inclusive democracy is the expressed desire of the government, in practical application there is a lack of confidence that people are capable of deciding and acting upon their own knowledge to direct their lives. The national program for de-centralization also paves the way for great autonomy at the local level. Clearly it is very difficult to undo an administrative model and social hierarchy that is sustained by that model. Yet the recent legislation on educational reform and decentralization has created the window of opportunity within which steps can be taken towards ensuring that decisions can be taken at a local level. However, it also signals the fact that programs will be planned by individuals from the educated elite who are no longer immersed in Malian culture or who oppose human rights programs on the same grounds as the cultural relativists.

IEP's success in navigating sensitive subjects within Malian society such as excision, gender equity and children's rights can provide the ME with a model created in local practice.

- ❖ IEP and the Ministries of Education have acted together on a number of occasions. In discussions with the PDHRE representatives, both sides have expressed respect for each other but are ambivalent about the possibility of extended collaboration. Many well-meaning government administrators still suffer the trauma of French culture. The comment of one high level official seems to echo the opinion of many when he said, "It's fine to use the national languages for very young children, but how will our children have access to higher education if they do not learn to think in French!"

When debates arise the intentions of the IEP facilitators are not questioned because they are already trusted members of the community. . The facilitators take their cues from the local population with whom they live and work, as to when a subject is introduced - the progression is organic and holistic. In this way, facilitators are able to plunge into sensitive areas and keep an issue going through the full process of analysis. Strategies for resolving conflict that may arise are imbedded in Malian tradition.

Facilitators and participants come to the aid of each other in applying these strategies. Local knowledge and local customs are an important part of problem solving. Once the participants are assured that the IEP program belongs to them, they do not hesitate to implicate their whole cultural being in the process. In Mali records show that the government is willing to work with civil society through the NGO communities. Neither the government nor the NGOs can afford to waste this opportunity. Reinforcing the connection between these two actors is a necessary task that needs to be undertaken immediately.

Convincing the NGOs to Remain Partners in the National Program

PDHRE-Mali enjoys a privileged position because of its partnership with the Ministry of Basic Education in launching the National Program of Human Rights Education and as a standing member on the Steering Committee. The organization is now poised to serve as an effective bridge between the government and NGOs such as IEP. The challenge facing PDHRE is to convince the NGOs not to abandon the National Program. Because they have access to outside funding from international agencies, albeit limited, it is tempting for local NGOs to ignore the government and carry on their own programs. The danger in this policy is that it isolates the NGOs and creates a patchwork of projects that often replicate services and never allow the various organizations to benefit from critical discussion among various constituencies and the government. In this case PDHRE can play an important role in federating the NGOs and supporting their position on the Steering Committee.

Recent history illustrates that Mali has consistently refused to fall into the category of failed illusions that the dominant powers are all too willing to ascribe to developing countries. The work of visionaries must take precedence over the habits of bureaucracies if the historic moment for making human rights the political philosophy in Mali is not to be lost. At this time Mali is fortunate to have visionaries in government and in civil society but one cannot predict how long this will last.

**THE REPUBLIC OF MALI HAS A CHANCE
TO ASSUME A CRITICAL ROLE
IN THE HISTORY OF AFRICA**

Epilogue

Considerable progress has been made in many areas since this article was written. Members of the original initiative to make Mali a human rights nation have shifted their efforts from creating a movement within the government to working with the community at large and including various ministries, such as education, justice and culture, as stakeholders in meetings and major activities. PDHRE-Mali is firmly established in the country and in the West Africa. Members of IEP and other organizations serve on the governing board and are actively involved with the organization as full members rather than representatives of a particular constituency.

Mali has become a leader in the Human Rights Cities Movement. In 2000 Kati became the third Human Rights City in the world. In addition to Kati, two other cities in Mali, Timbuktu and Kayes, have become Human Rights Cities. In 2001 the African Learning Institute for Human Rights Education (ALIHRE) was established in Bamako. This regional institute for human rights learning trains and develops human rights educators using Freirian methods and a holistic approach to human rights education. One of the principle tasks of ALIHRE is to strengthen the Human Rights Cities by fostering human rights learning in the region through intensive seminars and follow-up. People from more than sixteen African countries have participated in these training seminars. Human rights learning in Mali is further supported by its close links with other Human Rights Cities throughout the world. Dynamic leadership within PDHRE-Mali and a conscious effort to collaborate with grassroots and government has led to the notable success of popular human rights education in Mali.

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d) RACE, RIGHTS AND RESISTANCE: AFRICAN-AMERICANS AND INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS

By Ajamu Baraka

Introduction

One of the greatest ironies of world history is that Europe's rapacious trade in black-skinned bodies spawned not only an international capitalist economic system, but also the first 'African' whose palpable resistance has continuously undermined that oppressive order. Torn away from their diverse cultural and geographic moorings, their ethnicities reduced to a wretched identity as others, the far-flung Africans of the new worlds gradually recognized the commonness of their bonds. Increasingly, this incipient consciousness animated the varied forms of rebellion which erupted throughout the African Diaspora. Across the Americas and the Caribbean, Africans formed alliances with indigenous communities to combat slavery, they fought as lieutenants in independence wars and they were at the forefront of peasant and workers' movements fighting for justice and equality. From Birmingham, Alabama in the United States, to Salvador, Bahia in Brazil, African-Americans of all nationalities engaged in a horrific struggle for freedom, which because of its rights-based and international character was a precursor for the modern human rights movement.

However, until recently, the history and impact on human rights discourse that resulted from African-American activism *was a key element that was missing from the human rights narrative*. Mainstream and even radical scholars generally ignored or marginalized the reality of African-American agency in the international arena.

EDUCATION AND ORGANIZATION

are the twin approaches that characterize
the African-American approach to
Human Rights

Throughout the early twentieth century, the mass-based and internationalist character of the Garvey movement, the series of Pan African conferences, the United States invasion and occupation of Haiti in 1915, the League of Nations failure to act in response to Mussolini's attack on Ethiopia in 1935 and intensification of racial strife within the United States contributed to the development of internationalized racial consciousness among African-American activists.

During World War II, Europeans and Americans were shocked by the millions of lives lost and repulsed by the atrocities of the Nazis and other fascist regimes. The scope and ferocity of the war created a heightened popular consciousness of human rights among people of the world. This period marked a high point of African-American radicalism. Therefore, with the proposed development of the United Nations organization, Africans and African-Americans concluded that the principles, structures and processes of the new postwar international organization would be an arena of struggle in which African-Americans had to be prepared to enter in order to assert their perspective and interests.

A number of African-American intellectuals and activists had concluded that the battle against white supremacy in the United States could not be won without a larger international struggle against Western dominance in all its various forms.

STEP ONE

In his State of the Union address to Congress in 1941 - well before the United States entered the war - Franklin Roosevelt spelled out his **Four Freedoms**, a concept of the fundamental rights that should be guaranteed to all human beings:

Freedom of Speech and Expression

Freedom of Worship

Freedom from Want

Freedom from Fear

STEP TWO

In August 1941, the rhetorical force of this new human rights concern subsequently found expression in the **Atlantic Charter** agreed to by Roosevelt and Winston Churchill, which stated, among other tenets:

**ALL PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE
THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT UNDER WHICH THEY WILL LIVE**

For those people who had been denied this fundamental right, Roosevelt and Churchill declared that they wished *to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcefully deprived of them.*

STEP THREE

The Atlantic Charter served as the basis for the **DECLARATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS**, signed in January 1942 by twenty-six nations then at war and subsequently by twenty-one other nations. The Declaration endorsed the Atlantic Charter and expressed the conviction *that complete victory over their enemies is essential to defend life, liberty, independence and religious freedom, and to preserve human rights and justice in their own lands as well as in other lands.*

African-Americans were well aware of the irony of allied propaganda that condemned the racial doctrines of Nazism while African-Americans were still subjected to some of the most brutal forms of racial oppression outside of South Africa and the German occupied territories. Racial oppression in the form of slavery, peonage, lynching, police brutality, the denial of civil and political rights and racial discrimination in the use of public and private facilities not only structured the objective conditions of African-Americans, but also African-American consciousness.

Roosevelt, the champion of American liberalism throughout his tenure as president, failed to back anti-lynching legislation, and segregation continued unabated in the United States Armed Forces.

Churchill made it clear that the principles in the Atlantic Charter did not apply to British colonial territories but only to those nations in Europe under the "Nazi yoke".

United Nations and Human Rights:

The Impact of African-American Internationalism

At a mass rally held in Harlem in February, 1945, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was joined by the Council on African Affairs, the West Indian National Council and the Ethiopian World Federation. All the speakers emphasized that the international community *could not be assured of world peace and security as long as racism and colonial oppression were allowed to exist* and that *the question of race and color was one of the most serious problems of the twentieth century*. The unity of interest between the colonized and African-Americans in the destruction of white supremacy was emphasized. Just two months earlier, W. E. B. Dubois, the grandfather of the Pan African and modern African-American human rights movement, helped to organize a conference at the Schomburg Library in New York on the colonial issue. A veritable all-star lineup of anti-colonial advocates participated, including speakers from Puerto Rico, Jamaica, India, Burma and Ghana. This was followed by a major conference on the issue held in San Francisco.

The African-American Presence at the San Francisco Conference

The State Department determined that representatives from forty-two nongovernmental organizations would act as consultants to the United States delegation and the NAACP moved aggressively to ensure that it be included. Other African-American organizations emphasized the necessity for African-American representation at the San Francisco meeting. The NAACP believed that it would be representing *the whole body of American Africans* and wired 151 African-American and interracial groups for whatever ideas and resolutions they wanted to communicate to the United States delegation.

THE PROBLEM OF DEPENDENT NATIONS AND MINORITY GROUPS IS A WORLD PROBLEM AND MUST BE TREATED AS ONE

The Delta Sigma Theta Sorority

THE PRINCIPLES OF THE ATLANTIC CHARTER MUST BE EXTENDED TO ALL PEOPLES IN ALL COUNTRIES, IRRESPECTIVE OF RACE, CREED OR COLOR

The African Orthodox Church

The NAACP delegation made two major demands in San Francisco.

Firstly: it called for an end to the colonial system

Secondly: it requested a world Bill of Rights that affirmed the equality of all peoples and races.

The United Nations Charter: The Language of Rights and US Concerns

There were clear voices within the Truman administration and the public that insisted that the US take a leadership role in codifying within the Charter a commitment to upholding and protecting human rights. Yet other voices in the administration were not so adamant. While the United States wanted an international organization, it had not imagined one with the power to commit the country to policies and programs which it considered counter to its interests, or to interfere with the American government's handling of its internal affairs.

US policy makers resolved this dilemma by limiting the Charter's references to human rights to vague generalities and postponing questions relating to colonies for "some time in the future." The position of African-Americans, however - who had held meetings with a number of delegations from France, Haiti, Liberia, the Philippines and various nations from Latin America - was unequivocal. They wanted clear and specific language that would place the United Nations on the side of anti-colonialism and anti-racism. Dubois proposed that the United States support language that would declare that no nation or group of people be denied an effective voice in their government. Delegations from India, Panama, Uruguay, Brazil, Mexico, the Dominican Republic and Cuba, among others, wanted clear statements inserted in the Charter's statement of purpose that would reflect the United Nations commitment to human rights. The NAACP delegation concluded that both internal and external pressure had to be applied on the US delegation.

✓ *Internal pressure took the form of intensive work to persuade the other members of the consultative delegation to take unambiguous positions on the issues of human rights and the question of colonies.*

✓ *External pressure was generated by providing briefs to the press, in particular, the Black press, which attended in large numbers. Additionally, the NAACP urged individuals and organizations to telegraph Secretary of State Stettinius encouraging adoption of a strong racial equality plank in the Charter and the abolition of the colonial system. The NAACP also distributed DuBois's recently published book, *Color and Democracy*, to each American delegation.*

A highly vocal public opinion began to make itself felt. The American delegation began to edge warily toward a stronger and more definitive position on human rights, proposals for trusteeships to replace the mandates and protectorates of the Versailles Treaty and the League of Nations, and other procedures needed to make the flowery phrases in praise of freedom more nearly a reality.

The gradual shift in the position of the US delegation was also influenced by the shrinking credibility that US spokespersons suffered in San Francisco as a result of the work done by African-Americans to expose US hypocrisy.

US policy makers understood that the manner in which they addressed the concerns of these delegates, many of whom represented nations that had been colonized by European powers, would have an impact on their continued political and moral leadership in the post-war order.

African-Americans understood that the United States delegation intended to oppose any direct references to racial oppression within the Charter.

At last, Edward R. Stettinius, Jr. announced that the American delegation would support amendments to the proposals that guaranteed freedom from discrimination on account of *race, language, religion, or sex*. The inclusion of this language in Article 55 of the Charter was a significant victory for African-Americans and other colonized peoples in the world. However, it was tempered by the knowledge that the Charter would include a domestic jurisdiction clause and that the US and the colonial powers intended to continue with a trusteeship system that would maintain the status of the 750 million people still attached to the yoke of European colonialism.

The full impact of African-American intervention at the United Nations would occur in the debates and controversies that emerged within the newly formed Human Rights Committee. This committee was tasked with the responsibility of developing the documents that would form the foundation for the UN's human rights program for the next few decades. It was to this committee that African-Americans turned their attention.

AN APPEAL TO THE WORLD

As anti-communist rhetoric increased and the contours of the Cold War developed, a number of African and African-American activists clearly recognized the material and ideological links that connected United States interests with those of the Western European powers. In 1946, Dubois proposed that the NAACP submit a petition that sought to bring attention to the situation facing the African-American population in the United States. Entitled **An Appeal to the World**, the subject matter ranged from a description of the legal rights of American Africans to an analysis of the human rights obligations that the United Nations Charter presented for the rights of minorities.

This plan created tremendous excitement and won endorsement from most of the leading African-American organizations of the time. International support included several organizations from the colonial world, in particular the Trades Union Congress of Jamaica and Jomo Kenyatta of the Kikuyu Central Association of Kenya, the Caribbean Labor Congress, the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon and Kwame Nkrumah and the West African National Secretariat that he headed.

Impact of the Petition on US Policy

Reporters from all over the world requested advance copies of the NAACP petition. When it was formally delivered to the UN on 23 October 1947, the impact was immediate and dramatic. Domestically, there was a firestorm of protest over the petition. On the international level, it created a public relations disaster for the US administration. It could not be dismissed as some leftist triad against the US government. Even the United States' Western European allies found it difficult to explain or defend US racial practices. The Soviets intensified their ideological onslaught and some non-European nations openly questioned the United States' commitment to democracy. The submission of the petition coincided with the United Nations Human Rights Commission's debate on the contents of an International Bill of Rights. Not only was there significant political and philosophical disagreement concerning the scope of rights to be included, but the legal details had not been settled.

African-Americans and Human Rights in the Global Post-Cold War Era

The ideological component of the Cold War provided African-Americans with an essential space to raise the contradictions inherent in US human rights policies. A central component of the domestic ideological realignment that took place during the early stages of the Cold War posited *freedom*, represented by the United States, versus the *forces of darkness*, represented by the Soviets and its allies. This became the framework for the formulation and evaluation of both domestic and foreign policy and the US was presented with serious problems as the struggle over the very nature of human rights emerged as an issue for the United Nations Human Rights Commission. While white supremacist ideology always possessed a material component that both connected white workers to their ruling class and differentiated the white West from the rest of humanity, the racist excesses of the Nazi regime called into question the entire racist project and its ideological underpinnings. Thus the denial of democratic and human rights for African-Americans undermined the moral authority of the United States and complicated the nation's ability to effectively engage the Soviets in the battle over ideas.

The Impact of these Interventions on US Policymakers

US policymakers recognized that the political implications and ideological ramifications of this struggle were being played out in an international environment that was becoming increasingly volatile. In the years immediately following the war, the strategic focus for both the United States and the Soviet Union centered upon Europe. The United States had its Grand Area and the Soviets were concerned with consolidating their influence in Eastern Europe. Neither power was prepared to risk a direct confrontation with the other, but both readily discerned that influence in Europe was connected to access to, and control of, the regions that became identified as the so-called **THIRD WORLD**, putting the US at a disadvantage because of its *continued racial policies*.

The efforts of African-Americans to access and raise issues of importance that concerned them demonstrated the potential power that organized movements could exert in the international arena. The lexicon of human rights became a permanent feature of African-American political discourse. Even though *civil rights* and *equal rights* in the US emerged as the preferred language for US authorities and some elements of the African-American movement for social justice in the 1950s, the *human rights* language and framework never lost its currency. W. E. B. Dubois, Paul Robertson, Malcolm X and Ella Baker were just some of the activists who continued to define the struggle for democracy in the United States as an integral part of the worldwide struggle for human rights. Even Dr Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) began to embrace the language of human rights.

African-American activism today is taking place within a context that recognizes the magnitude of world problems and the continued need to link the struggles of the African-American human rights movement to its international partners. The proliferation of NGOs and social movements that have embraced, transformed and utilized the discourse and framework of international human rights is truly impressive. Yet it is clear that without the courage and commitment on the part of African-American activists in the 1940s, the role of human rights in the United States and, perhaps, the world would have been very different.

