

THIRD WORLD

RESURGENCE

ISSUE No. 266-267

KDN PP6738/01/2013 (031741)

www.twn.my

Decolonising Our Universities

ISSN 0128-357X



9 770128 357003

Double
issue

Editor's Note

IN our January-February 2005 issue, *Third World Resurgence* published some interesting papers from an international conference on 'Redesigning Social Science Curricula' organised by Multiversity (www.multiworldindia.org/multiversity) and Citizens International in Penang, Malaysia. That issue was widely appreciated as it brought into sharp focus the fact that universities in Asia, Africa and Latin America – which claimed to be located in sovereign states – continued to be fully dependent on Eurocentric curricula when it came to providing their students with higher education.

Multiversity and Citizens International organised yet another major international conference in June 2011, this time in association with Universiti Sains Malaysia, one of Malaysia's largest academic institutions, and supported by the Higher Education Leadership Academy of the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education. This time the theme was 'Decolonising Our Universities'. A wide-ranging group of scholars from Asia, Africa and Latin America sat over three days and discussed more practical alternatives already underway in various universities that were by now actively involved in 'decolonising' their higher education systems.

For the benefit of our readers, we now publish, again as our cover story, a major selection of the papers that were delivered at the conference. These cover a wide range of 'decolonising' issues, particularly those connected with the teaching of social sciences. *TWR* has attempted to provide not only a representative sample of papers from the conference (which should give some flavour of the spirit of the meeting) but also insights from other sources dealing with the same theme.

One of the major issues the conference took up for discussion was the *World Social Science Report (WSSR) 2010* published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). The report is an attempt to assess the extent and significance of intellectual work at universities across the globe in terms of the social sciences they generate, including research.

To say the conclusions of the report are disappointing for the Third World would be an understatement. The Third World and its entire army of social scientists barely figure anywhere in the study. *WSSR 2010* merely states the obvious: that the only social science produced worldwide with any significance or influence originates from the developed countries. At the top of the pyramid – as expected – is North America, followed by Europe. In terms of the citation index the report uses, it would appear that hardly any social science of any value was generated within the Third World.

Serious questions were raised at the conference

about the methodology adopted for formulating this disturbing report. For example, mostly publications in English were used for the research simply because the authors were ignorant of other languages and work done in them. None of the findings related to quality or relevance. The overall conclusion was determined by the mindset and by the criteria of selection: the United States and Europe had the most journals and their scholars did the most writing and also decided what should appear in their journals in terms of their priorities, therefore most social science of any significance came from there.

The participants did address a formal communication to UNESCO after the conference demanding a change in the assembling of such reports, with a better evaluation of social science in terms not just of relevance and quality but also of languages used. But the publication of such a report itself was a reminder of the huge task ahead of redressing the intellectual imbalance in a world dominated by the West.

Criticisms aside, one value of the *WSSR* was that it indirectly pointed out the present state of intellectual dependency. This was largely because of the fact that universities in the Third World unashamedly continue to simply copy Western research trends, and their intellectuals continue to remain besotted of any work, howsoever mediocre, emerging from North America. As long as Western universities set the social science agenda and Third World scholars dutifully follow, the *WSSR* will faithfully keep reporting the obvious leadership of what American Indian Ward Churchill dubbed the regime of 'white studies'.

Which is actually quite unfortunate. If social science in the Third World is to come into its own, then scholars in our part of the world cannot simply ape the latest intellectual fads from the West. To be truly creative, they have to produce original works rooted in the creative traditions of their history and reflecting the realities of their own societies.

Whichever way one looks at it, an agenda on decolonisation of academic studies (including science, math and law) is long overdue. The big challenge is fashioning genuinely alternative curricula that are truly inclusive enough to elicit the full support of the diverse communities that make up the countries of the Third World. Some of the conference papers included in our cover story explore attempts to develop such curricula. Hopefully they will stimulate a wider debate and contribute to the realisation of the decolonisation agenda.

— The Editors

Visit the Third World Network website at: www.twn.my



While most Third World countries have long attained independence, much of their university curricula still reflects colonial perspectives.

14

ECOLOGY

- 2 *World Energy Outlook 2012: The good, the bad and the really, truly ugly* – Michael T Klare

HEALTH & SAFETY

- 5 Asian countries act to get cheap drugs – Martin Khor
7 Will there finally be a cure for diseases that affect the poor? – Carlos M Correa

ECONOMICS

- 9 The damaging effects of investment agreements – Meena Raman

COVER

Decolonising Our Universities

- 14 'Our universities are the purveyors of an imperialist worldview' – SM Mohd Idris

- 16 Decolonising social sciences across the world – Darryl Macer
20 A critique of Eurocentric social science – Claude Alvares
25 A Eurocentric problem – M Shahid Alam
29 The modern university challenged: Higher education between elitism and corporatism – Yusef Progler
32 Teaching social theory as alternative discourse – Syed Farid Alatas
39 History 'outside' the 'West' – Vinay Lal
42 Decolonising the law: Do we have a choice? – Shadrack Gutto
44 Is science 'Western'? – CK Raju
49 Decolonisation insights from the Swaraj University experiment – Manish Jain
54 An Afrocentric South African university – Molefi Kete Asante

- 56 'Academic imperialism is self-perpetuating' – CK Raju

WORLD AFFAIRS

- 60 Gaza and the Palestinian hunting season – Ralph Nader

HUMAN RIGHTS

- 62 New era augurs more of the same for impoverished Maya people – Danilo Valladares

WOMEN

- 64 The persistent battle against rampant sexual harassment in Egypt – Alessandra Bajec

VIEWPOINT

- 66 Mutations of imperialism – Jeremy Seabrook

POETRY

- 68 Housewarming song

THIRD WORLD RESURGENCE is published by the Third World Network, an international network of groups and individuals involved in efforts to bring about a greater articulation of the needs and rights of peoples in the Third World; a fair distribution of world resources; and forms of development which are ecologically sustainable and fulfil human needs.

THIRD WORLD RESURGENCE is published monthly by Third World Network, 131 Jalan Macalister, 10400 Penang, Malaysia. Tel: 60-4-2266728 Fax: 60-4-2264505. Email: twnet@po.jaring.my
Printed by Jutaprint, No. 2, Solok Sungai Pinang 3, 11600 Penang, Malaysia.
Cover Design: Lim Jee Yuan
Copyright © Third World Network

Publisher and Chief Editor: S.M. Mohamed Idris; **Managing Editor:** Chee Yoke Ling; **Editors:** T Rajamoorthy, Lean Ka-Min, Evelyne Hong; **Contributing Editors:** Roberto Bissio (Uruguay), Charles Abugre (Ghana); **Staff:** Linda Ooi (Design), Lim Jee Yuan (Art Consultant), Lim Beng Tuan (Marketing), Yap Bing Nyi (Editorial)



World Energy Outlook 2012: The good, the bad and the really, truly ugly

The ecstatic response to the recent prediction by the International Energy Agency that advances in drilling technology were producing such an upsurge in North American output that it will result in the US overtaking Saudi Arabia and Russia by 2020 as the world's leading oil producer is wholly misplaced, says *Michael T Klare*. It ignores the dire ecological consequences to the planet that will follow in the wake of increased fossil fuel consumption.

RARELY does the release of a data-driven report on energy trends trigger front-page headlines around the world. That, however, is exactly what happened on 12 November when the prestigious Paris-based International Energy Agency (IEA) released this year's edition of its *World Energy Outlook*. In the process, just about everyone missed its real news, which should have set off alarm bells across the planet.

Claiming that advances in drilling technology were producing an upsurge in North American energy output, the *World Energy Outlook* predicted that the United States would overtake Saudi Arabia and Russia to become the planet's leading oil producer by 2020. 'North America is at the forefront of a sweeping transformation in oil and gas production that will affect all regions of the world,' declared IEA Executive Director Maria van der Hoeven in a widely quoted statement.

In the US, the prediction of imminent supremacy in the oil-output sweepstakes was generally greeted with unabashed jubilation. 'This is a remarkable change,' said John Larson of IHS, a corporate research firm. 'It's truly transformative. It's fundamentally changing the energy outlook for this country.' This will not only result in a diminished reliance on imported oil, he indicated, but also generate vast numbers of new jobs. 'This is about jobs. You know, it's about blue-collar jobs. These are good



Workers inspect a natural gas valve at a fracking site in Pennsylvania, USA. While advances in fracking technology are set to make the US the world's top oil producer, the overall global outlook for future energy supply is uncertain.

jobs.'

The editors of the *Wall Street Journal* were no less ecstatic. In an editorial with the eye-catching headline 'Saudi America,' they lauded US energy companies for bringing about a technological revolution, largely based on the utilisation of hydraulic fracturing ('fracking') to extract oil and gas from shale rock. That, they claimed, was what made a new mega-energy boom possible. 'This is a real energy revolution,' the *Journal* noted, 'even if it's far from the renewable energy dreamland of so many government subsidies and mandates.'

Other commentaries were similarly focused on the US outpacing

Saudi Arabia and Russia, even if some questioned whether the benefits would be as great as advertised or obtainable at an acceptable cost to the environment.

While agreeing that the expected spurt in US production is mostly 'good news', Michael A Levi of the Council on Foreign Relations warned that gas prices will not drop significantly because oil is a global commodity and those prices are largely set by international market forces. '[T]he US may be slightly more protected, but it doesn't give you the energy independence some people claim,' he told the *New York Times*.

Some observers focused on

whether increased output and job creation could possibly outweigh the harm that the exploitation of extreme energy resources like fracked oil or Canadian tar sands was sure to do to the environment. Daniel J Weiss of the Center for American Progress, for example, warned of a growing threat to America's water supply from poorly regulated fracking operations. 'In addition, oil companies want to open up areas off the northern coast of Alaska in the Arctic Ocean, where they are not prepared to address a major oil blowout or spill like we had in the Gulf of Mexico.'

Such a focus certainly offered a timely reminder of how important oil remains to the American economy (and political culture), but it stole attention away from other aspects of the *World Energy Outlook* that were, in some cases, downright scary. Its portrait of our global energy future should have dampened enthusiasm everywhere, focusing as it did on an uncertain future energy supply, excessive reliance on fossil fuels, inadequate investment in renewables, and an increasingly hot, erratic, and dangerous climate. Here are some of the most worrisome takeaways from the report.

Shrinking world oil supply

Given the hullabaloo about rising energy production in the US, you would think that the IEA report was loaded with good news about the world's future oil supply. No such luck. In fact, on a close reading, anyone who has the slightest familiarity with world oil dynamics should shudder, as its overall emphasis is on decline and uncertainty.

Take US oil production surpassing Saudi Arabia's and Russia's. Sounds great, doesn't it? Here's the catch: previous editions of the IEA report and the *International Energy Outlook*, its equivalent from the US Department of Energy (DoE), rested their claims about a growing future global oil supply on the assumption that those two countries would far surpass US output. Yet the US will pull ahead of them in the 2020s only



Many coastal cities could be inundated by rising sea levels if global warming caused by carbon emissions is not halted.

because, the IEA now asserts, their output is going to *fall*, not rise as previously assumed.

This is one hidden surprise in the report that's gone unnoticed. According to the DoE's 2011 projections, Saudi production was expected to rise to 13.9 million barrels per day in 2025, and Russian output to 12.2 million barrels, jointly providing much of the world's added petroleum supply; the United States, in this calculation, would reach the 11.7 million barrel mark.

The IEA's latest revision of those figures suggests that US production will indeed rise, as expected, to about 11 million barrels per day in 2025, but that Saudi output will unexpectedly fall to about 10.6 million barrels and Russian to 9.7 million barrels. The US will essentially become number one by default. At best, then, the global oil supply is not going to grow appreciably – despite the IEA's projection of a significant upswing in international demand.

But wait, suggests the IEA, there's still one wildcard hope out there: Iraq. Yes, Iraq. In the belief that the Iraqis will somehow overcome their sectarian differences, attain a high level of internal stability, establish a legal framework for oil production, and secure the necessary investment and technical support, the IEA predicts that its output will jump from 3.4 million barrels per day this year to 8 million barrels in 2035, adding an extra 4.6 million barrels to the

global supply. In fact, claims the IEA, this gain would represent half the total increase in world oil production over the next 25 years. Certainly, stranger things have happened, but for the obvious reasons, it remains an implausible scenario.

Add all this together – declining output from Russia and Saudi Arabia, continuing strife in Iraq, uncertain results elsewhere – and you get insufficient oil in the 2020s and 2030s to meet anticipated world demand. From a global warming perspective that may be good news, but economically, without a massive increase in investment in alternate energy sources, the outlook is grim. You don't know what bad times are until you don't have enough energy to run the machinery of civilisation. As suggested by the IEA, 'Much is riding on Iraq's success... Without this supply growth from Iraq, oil markets would be set for difficult times.'

Continuing reliance on fossil fuels

For all the talk of the need to increase reliance on renewable sources of energy, fossil fuels – coal, oil, and natural gas – will continue to provide most of the additional energy supplies needed to satisfy soaring world demand. 'Taking all new developments and policies into account,' the IEA reported, 'the world is still failing to put the global energy system onto a more sustainable path.' In fact, recent developments seem to favour greater

fossil-fuel reliance.

In the United States, for instance, the increased extraction of oil and gas from shale formations has largely silenced calls for government investment in renewable technology. In its editorial on the IEA report, for example, the *Wall Street Journal* ridiculed such investment. It had, the *Journal*'s writers suggested, now become unnecessary due to the Saudi Arabian-style oil and gas boom to come. 'Historians will one day marvel that so much political and financial capital was invested in a [failed] green-energy revolution at the very moment a fossil fuel revolution was aborning,' they declared.

One aspect of this energy 'revolution' deserves special attention. The growing availability of cheap natural gas, thanks to hydro-fracking, has already reduced the use of coal as a fuel for electrical power plants in the United States. This would seem to be an obvious environmental plus, since gas produces less climate-altering carbon dioxide than does coal. Unfortunately, coal output and its use haven't diminished: American producers have simply increased their coal exports to Asia and Europe. In fact, US coal exports are expected to reach as high as 133 million tons in 2012, overtaking an export record set in 1981.

Despite its deleterious effects on the environment, coal remains popular in countries seeking to increase their electricity output and promote economic development. Shockingly, according to the IEA, it supplied nearly half of the increase in global energy consumption over the last decade, growing faster than renewables. And the agency predicts that coal will continue its rise in the decades ahead. The world's top coal consumer, China, will burn ever more of it until 2020, when demand is finally expected to level off. India's usage will rise without cessation, with that country overtaking the US as the number two consumer around 2025.

In many regions, notes the IEA report, the continued dominance of fossil fuels is sustained by government policies. In the developing world, countries commonly subsidise

energy consumption, selling transportation, cooking, and heating fuels at below-market rates. In this way, they hope to buffer their populations from rising commodity costs, and so protect their regimes from popular unrest. Cutting back on such subsidies can prove dangerous, as in Jordan where a recent government decision to raise fuel prices led to widespread riots and calls for the monarchy's abolition. In 2011, such subsidies amounted to \$523 billion globally, says the IEA, up almost 30% from 2010 and six times greater than subsidies for renewable energy.

No hope for averting catastrophic climate change

Of all the findings in the 2012 edition of the *World Energy Outlook*, the one that merits the greatest international attention is the one that received the least. Even if governments take vigorous steps to curb greenhouse gas emissions, the report concluded, the continuing increase in fossil fuel consumption will result in 'a long-term average global temperature increase of 3.6 degrees C.'

This should stop everyone in their tracks. Most scientists believe that an increase of 2 degrees Celsius is about all the planet can accommodate without unimaginably catastrophic consequences: sea-level increases that will wipe out many coastal cities, persistent droughts that will destroy farmland on which hundreds of millions of people depend for their survival, the collapse of vital ecosystems, and far more. An increase of 3.6 degrees C essentially suggests the end of human civilisation as we know it.

To put this in context, human activity has already warmed the planet by about 0.8 degrees C – enough to produce severe droughts around the world, trigger or intensify intense storms like Hurricane Sandy, and drastically reduce the Arctic ice cap. 'Given those impacts,' writes noted environmental author and activist Bill McKibben, 'many scientists have come to think that two degrees is far too lenient a target.' Among those cited by McKibben is Kerry Emanuel

of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), a leading authority on hurricanes. 'Any number much above one degree involves a gamble,' Emanuel writes, 'and the odds become less and less favourable as the temperature goes up.' Thomas Lovejoy, once the World Bank's chief biodiversity adviser, puts it this way: 'If we're seeing what we're seeing today at 0.8 degrees Celsius, two degrees is simply too much.'

At this point, it's hard even to imagine what a planet that's 3.6 degrees C hotter would be like, though some climate-change scholars and prophets – like former US Vice President Al Gore in *An Inconvenient Truth* – have tried. In all likelihood, the Greenland and Antarctica ice sheets would melt entirely, raising sea levels by several dozen feet and completely inundating coastal cities like New York and Shanghai. Large parts of Africa, Central Asia, the Middle East, and the American Southwest would be rendered uninhabitable thanks to lack of water and desertification, while wildfires of a sort that we can't imagine today would consume the parched forests of the temperate latitudes.

In a report that leads with the 'good news' of impending US oil supremacy, to calmly suggest that the world is headed for that 3.6 degree C mark is like placing a thermonuclear bomb in a gaudily-wrapped Christmas present. In fact, the 'good news' is really the bad news: the energy industry's ability to boost production of oil, coal, and natural gas in North America is feeding a global surge in demand for these commodities, ensuring ever higher levels of carbon emissions. As long as these trends persist – and the IEA report provides no evidence that they will be reversed in the coming years – we are all in a race to see who gets to the Apocalypse first. ♦

Michael Klare is a professor of peace and world security studies at Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts, USA, and the author, most recently, of The Race for What's Left (Metropolitan Books). A documentary movie based on his book Blood and Oil can be previewed and ordered at www.bloodandoilmovie.com. This article is reproduced from TomDispatch.com.

Asian countries act to get cheap drugs

Starting with Malaysia in 2003, many Asian countries are now taking action to promote cheaper medicines through compulsory licensing, with Indonesia being the latest case.

Martin Khor

RECENT government actions by Indonesia and India to issue compulsory licences are extending the trend in Asia to increase access to cheaper medicines to treat serious ailments, especially HIV/AIDS, cancer and hepatitis B.

The supply of generic medicines, through either imports or local production, has been the major method of reducing prices and making the drugs affordable to more people.

When the required medicines are patented, which usually results in high prices, governments are allowed by World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules to issue a compulsory licence to enable themselves or private companies to import or produce generic versions, which usually cost much less.

Experiences with compulsory licensing

In 2003, Malaysia became the first developing country to issue a compulsory licence to a local firm to import drugs from India to treat HIV/AIDS. The cheaper generic drugs enabled the government to treat many more patients within the same budget.

Following this, Indonesia in 2004 issued a presidential decree enabling the production of some HIV/AIDS drugs while Thailand in 2007 issued compulsory licences for several HIV/AIDS and cancer drugs.

In March this year, India approved its first compulsory licence enabling a local company to produce a generic version of an anti-cancer drug, which could reduce the price of treating kidney and liver cancer from \$5,200 a month (the price of the



A woman in Jakarta wearing a T-shirt that reads 'I'm HIV-positive'. In September Indonesia issued a compulsory licence enabling local manufacturers to make, import and sell generic versions of seven patented drugs used for treating HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B.

branded product) to \$160 a month (the price of the generic product).

The latest measure was taken on 3 September by Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who issued a decree which has the effect of a compulsory licence. It enables local manufacturers to make, import and sell generic versions of seven patented drugs used for treating HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B.

The decree said that in line with the urgent need to control HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B in Indonesia, 'it is necessary to continue and expand the access policies to provide access to anti-viral and anti-retroviral medicines still protected by patent.'

This is the third time Indonesia has issued a set of compulsory licences. The latest decree stated that the 2004 and 2007 decrees were no longer sufficient to implement the

policies.

The compulsory licence is aimed at significantly reducing the prices of these life-saving medicines and making them accessible to thousands more Indonesian patients.

'We will ensure the availability of good-quality, safe and effective generic versions of anti-retroviral and anti-viral drugs,' said HM Subuh, infectious disease control director at the Indonesian Health Ministry, as quoted in the *Jakarta Post* of 19 October.

According to the decree, the generic companies would have to pay a royalty of 0.5% of the net sales value of the generic drugs to the companies that own the patents, such as Merck, GlaxoSmithKline, Bristol Myers Squibb, Abbott and Gilead.

The first decree in 2004 enabled cheaper generic medicines that provided HIV-infected patients with first-



The supply of generic drugs has been a major method of making medicines more affordable.

line anti-retroviral therapy. However, these have become ineffective or less effective because of increasing resistance or the lower safety of the drugs.

The latest decree enables the supply of generic anti-retroviral products for not only better first- but also second-line anti-retroviral therapy.

‘With the 2012 regulation, we obviously can improve access to quality but affordable drugs,’ Maura Linda Sitanggang, the Health Ministry's Director General for Pharmaceuticals and Medical Equipment, told the *Jakarta Post*. ‘We're using this mechanism concerning public interest on the production of quality but affordable medicines to treat HIV and HBV [hepatitis B virus].’

The seven medicines which are the subject of the compulsory licence (known in this case as for ‘government use’) are efavirenz, abacavir,

didanosin, lopinavir + ritonavir combination, tenofovir, tenofovir + emtricitabine, and tenofovir + emtricitabine + efavirenz.

All the drugs are used to treat HIV/AIDS. The drug tenofovir (brandname Viread, produced by patent holder Gilead) is also used to treat hepatitis B, which af-

fects 13 million people in Indonesia. It had been approved in the United States for treating HIV/AIDS in 2001 and for treating chronic hepatitis B in 2008.

The combination drug tenofovir + emtricitabine (brandname Truvada, produced by Abbott) is taken in a single dose once a day. It has been used to treat HIV/AIDS and in July 2012 it also became the first drug approved by the US Food and Drug Administration for use as a preventive measure to reduce the risk of HIV infection to people at high risk of infection, including those who may engage in sex with HIV-infected patients.

Indian licence

The Indonesian decree was the second compulsory licence in Asia this year.

In India, the Patent Office in March approved the country's first compulsory licence to a local firm, Natco Pharma, to make a generic version of the cancer drug sorafenib tosylate (brandname Nexavar, produced by Bayer).

It was argued that at the high price of 280,000 rupees (\$5,200) for a month's dosage of Nexavar, only 200 patients were treated in India in a year. Natco said that 8,000 people would need the drug, and it could supply a generic version at 8,800 rupees (\$160) for a month's treatment.

The drug is used to treat advanced kidney and liver cancer. According to the terms of the licence, Natco would pay Bayer royalties of 6% of its net sales.

Bayer challenged the compulsory licence and on 16 September the Intellectual Property Appellate Board rejected its petition, ruling that ‘If a stay is granted it will jeopardise the interests of the public who are in need of the drug.’

Other developing regions have also been making use of the compulsory licensing option in the WTO's intellectual property treaty known as the TRIPS Agreement. They include Brazil and Ecuador in Latin America and Kenya, Zambia and Zimbabwe in Africa.

In 2001, the WTO's Ministerial Conference in Doha adopted a Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health which asserted that the TRIPS Agreement does not and should not prevent member states from taking measures to protect public health.

It affirmed that the Agreement should be interpreted in a manner supportive of the right to health and access to medicines for all.

The Declaration clarified: ‘In this connection, we reaffirm the right of WTO Members to use, to the full, the provisions in the TRIPS Agreement, which provide flexibility for this purpose.’ ♦

Martin Khor is Executive Director of the South Centre, an intergovernmental policy think-tank of developing countries, and former Director of the Third World Network.



Local firm Natco Pharma was issued India's first compulsory licence to produce a generic version of an anti-cancer drug. Picture shows a Natco laboratory in Hyderabad.

Will there finally be a cure for diseases that affect the poor?

In order to promote the development of the medicines needed to address diseases prevalent in developing countries, it is necessary to change the current research model, says *Carlos M Correa*.

INNOVATION in the pharmaceutical industry has declined drastically in the last 10 years despite the high profitability of the so-called 'research-based' industry, and the availability of better and more powerful science and technological tools. Not only has productivity in terms of research fallen, but the vast majority of new molecules introduced to the market do not provide new therapeutic solutions since other treatments already exist, normally at a lower cost.

Funding for research is focused on areas with the greatest potential for profit. Those areas that would actually have the biggest impact on public health remain largely ignored. A clear indicator is the lack of investment in fighting diseases that are prevalent in developing countries, such as Chagas' disease, tuberculosis and malaria.

The problem is that although millions would benefit from this type of investment, the majority of them are poor people who do not create an attractive market for big companies. Neither can they benefit from treatments for non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular insufficiencies and cancer: even where treatments are available, the high prices of patented medications make them inaccessible.

As a result, in the 21st century, communicable diseases cause more than 10 million deaths per year – according to Health Action International (HAI) – of which 90% take place in developing countries; a third of the global population do not have regular access to the medicines that they need. The situation is worse in least developed countries (LDCs) in which up to half of the population do not have access to medicinal treatment.



A boy in Panama suffering from Chagas' disease. With research focused on areas with the greatest potential for profit, there has been a lack of investment in fighting diseases like Chagas' disease that are prevalent in developing countries.

From both a moral point of view as well as a human rights perspective – the right to health is recognised in international conventions and in numerous national constitutions – this situation calls for greater responsibility by governments and a new research paradigm centred on public health interests, especially to meet the needs of developing countries.

On 26 May 2012, the World Health Assembly, the highest decision-making body of the World Health Organisation (WHO), adopted a resolution that could mark the first step toward a change in the current pharmaceutical research model.

The WHO members decided to undertake an in-depth examination, at the governmental level, of a report

produced in April 2012 by an international group of experts that recommended the adoption of a binding convention on research and development (R&D).

Although millions would benefit from investment in fighting diseases prevalent in developing countries, the majority of them are poor people who do not create an attractive market for big companies.

If approved and implemented, such research could generate the medicines needed, particularly in developing countries, to address communicable and non-communicable diseases.

Some of the conclusions and recommendations of the report were the following:

- the present incentive systems, in particular intellectual property rights, fail to generate enough R&D in either the public or private sector in order to meet the health needs of developing countries;
- recent trends in the pharmaceutical industry show a decline in innovation, as reflected by the small number of approvals of new molecular entities (NMEs), the majority of which do not represent a therapeutic novelty;
- to promote better financing and coordination of research, an open ap-

proach should be promoted, with the results of R&D being treated as ‘public goods’ not subject to the exclusive rights conferred by patents;

- new forms of shared financing, direct subventions, prizes and patent pools (to increase access to health products) should also be promoted, and mechanisms to coordinate research should be established at the global level.

The report recommended that all countries should dedicate at least 0.01% of their gross domestic product to R&D relevant to meet the health needs of developing countries. As regards coordination, it advised the establishment of a global observatory on R&D, advisory services and a network of research institutions.

The main purpose of the report was, however, more ambitious: to start discussions regarding a possible binding international convention to promote R&D centred on diseases prevalent in developing countries, including non-communicable diseases.

This recommendation caused the biggest controversy between developed and developing countries at the World Health Assembly. A possible explanation is that developed countries perceive the suggestion of a new research model as a threat towards the present system based on the appropriation of profits from innovation



Innovation in the pharmaceutical industry has declined drastically in the last 10 years despite the high profitability of the so-called ‘research-based’ industry.

through the patent system.

But the convention, if adopted, would generate more resources and greater efficiency in terms of research by means of better coordination and a fixation of priorities. Although the main beneficiaries would be developing countries, developed countries could also utilise the results of the research. Some of these countries face a severe crisis in their public health systems owing to the increase in the cost of treatment and a reduction in budgets.

The magnitude of the problem that must be confronted in order to generate enough R&D for pharmaceutical products needed by developing countries is such that this objective cannot be reached without effective commitment from all countries.

Voluntary contributions from foundations or governments do not offer a sustainable, structural solution. In fact, many of the most promising initiatives for developing new pharmaceutical products to address the diseases that affect the poor are extremely vulnerable, as they depend on the continuity of charitable financing.

In order to promote development of new products and their access to populations, especially in developing countries, it is necessary to change the current research model.

The cost of research should be de-linked from the prices of the products generated. The challenge is not only about increasing investment in research or improving the rate of innovation. This will not suffice if the new products are not accessible to those who need them. – IPS

Carlos M Correa is special adviser on trade and intellectual property at the South Centre, and a member of the Consultative Expert Working Group of the World Health Organisation. For further analysis see his article in the South Bulletin (Issue 67, 4 October 2012) published by the South Centre (www.southcentre.org).



At the 2012 World Health Assembly (pic), WHO members decided to undertake an in-depth examination of a report produced by an international group of experts that recommended the adoption of a binding convention on pharmaceutical R&D.

WHO/Pierre Albovy

The damaging effects of investment agreements

The damaging effects of bilateral investment treaties (BITs) and the investment chapters of North-South free trade agreements (FTAs) were highlighted at a World Trade Organisation (WTO) Public Forum discussion in September.

THE 25 September panel session on 'Investment Provisions and Agreements: What Is the Right 21st Century Approach?' was organised by the Our World Is Not for Sale network, the International Trade Union Confederation and Public Citizen. It was held as part of the WTO Public Forum which took place in Geneva on 24-26 September.

Members of the panel were Sanya Reid Smith from the Third World Network (TWN); Melinda St Louis of Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch from the US; South Africa's Deputy Director-General from the Department of Trade and Industry, Xavier Carim; Roberto Bissio from Social Watch in Uruguay; and James Zhan, Head of the Investment Policies and Capacity Building Branch at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The session was moderated by Kinda Mohamadieh, from the Arab NGO Network on Development based in Lebanon.

Problematic provisions

Sanya Reid Smith from TWN highlighted the problematic provisions that commonly arise in BITs and the investment chapters of North-South FTAs. She said that the purpose of the BITs is to protect the rights of foreign investors and these agreements traditionally have no protection for the rights of government and do not contain obligations of the foreign investors.

Smith explained that the BITs and the investment chapters of the FTAs, especially those based on the US model, generally have a very broad definition of investment which also includes stocks, shares, futures, op-

Meena Raman



An example of a cigarette packet that complies with Australia's plain packaging rules for tobacco products. Tobacco giant Philip Morris has filed a suit against these new rules under one of Australia's bilateral investment treaties.

tions, derivatives, expected or future profits, market share of the investor, intellectual property, etc. The provisions usually define an investor loosely, where even companies from other countries (not just those countries involved in the BIT or FTA) can seek protection, merely by buying shares in a company in one of the BIT/FTA signatory countries or by opening a letter-box or setting up a subsidiary in one of the signatories.

Another provision, said Smith, relates to 'fair and equitable treatment' (FET), which sounds good but actually has been interpreted by some tribunals to mean that there is a standstill on regulations and that the government is prevented from amending or passing new laws so as to ensure a 'constant regulatory environment'. Even in cases where words were put into an agreement to limit the scope of this provision, tribunals have de-

cided otherwise.

Citing a recent study by the NGO Public Citizen of US FTAs and BITs, Smith said that in instances where investors have raised a violation of the FET provision in tribunals, 81% of the time they have won, which indicates that the provision is very powerful in striking down government actions.

As regards the clause on 'expropriation' in these treaties, she said that 'expropriation' is widely defined to cover any government action which reduces the value of the investment.

Where disputes arise between an investor and a government under a BIT, arbitral tribunals are used to enforce the BITs and some of these tribunals do not have sufficient conflict-of-interest rules for judges, said Smith. This allows judges who have an interest in the company bringing the dispute to hear the case, she added, citing an example where one of the judges in a dispute was on the board of a parent company which brought the case and the investor won.

In investor-state disputes, she said, the claims are often huge, with one of the largest being for billions of dollars (in the case of Philip Morris vs. Government of Australia).

[Tobacco company Philip Morris Asia, an enterprise registered in Hong Kong (with whom Australia has a BIT), launched a suit under the BIT against Australia's plain packaging rules for tobacco products. However, according to a post on the International Economic Law and Policy Blog, citing a *Lawyers Weekly* (Australia) article which interviewed international law experts Andrew Mitchell and Don Anton, Philip Morris Asia acquired shares in Philip Morris Australia on 23 February 2011 – 14 months after the Australian govern-

ment announced its intention to introduce plain packs. Hence, said Anton, Philip Morris Asia ‘faces hurdles’ trying to prove that investors’ legitimate expectations have been violated.]

The largest known payout was almost \$1 billion but in two-thirds of the cases, the disputes are a secret, with no information on which government was sued, for what violation and for how much and what was paid out, Smith explained further.

On the type of cases that have arisen, Smith explained that investors have successfully challenged health and environmental measures taken by governments. There have also been cases of investors challenging government measures related to government procurement, state-owned enterprises, taxation, financial regulation, industrial policy, sovereign borrowing, agriculture, etc.

She gave examples of several cases where governments have been sued by investors and lost even if the measures concerned were legitimate and taken for environmental or health reasons. Many cases involve the mining sector; where an investor breaks a law in a country it invests in and the host government revokes the company’s mining permit (as it is permitted to do under its domestic law), the investor sues under the treaty and wins, with the host government having to pay monetary compensation to the wrongdoer.

Smith gave examples of developed-country governments which have been thus sued, such as Germany, Canada and Australia. She said that in the case of Germany, Swedish energy company Vattenfall sued the German government twice when the latter took measures to address climate change in one case and the other in relation to the German government’s decision to phase out nuclear power following the Fukushima disaster. In the first case, the German government settled the case for an undisclosed sum (Vattenfall had claimed 1.4 billion euros plus interest), while the second case is pending, with a claim from the company for nearly \$1 billion.

The Australian government’s current position is to say no to investor-

state dispute settlement in trade policy in relation to the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA), Smith said.

Investor-state disputes in US pacts

Melinda St Louis from Public Citizen spoke on investor-state disputes brought under US FTAs and BITs. She said that BITs have existed since the 1950s but it has been in the last 10 years that most investor-state disputes have occurred. She said that in 1999, only 69 cases were launched in the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) but today, there are 370-plus cases – a 436% increase in the total stock of investor-state cases just in this body alone.

(ICSID, a member of the World Bank Group, is an international arbitration institution which facilitates arbitration and conciliation of legal disputes between international investors.)

In the US FTA investment chapter model on investor-state dispute resolution, individual foreign firms which are investors obtain equal status with sovereign national signatories to privately enforce a public treaty, St Louis explained. She said that there are expansive and substantive investor rights which extend beyond domestic property rights defined by US laws and courts. An ‘investment’ is defined to cover permits, government approvals, intellectual property, contracts, etc.

St Louis said that private investor-state dispute enforcement skirts the normal court system, and foreign corporations get special privileges and greater rights. Investors can demand compensation for ‘loss of expected future profits related to non-discriminatory environmental, health, safety, land-use, and zoning policies’. The concept of ‘sovereign immunity’ is waived, she elaborated further.

St Louis said that cases are decided by private tribunals (under the World Bank or United Nations) where three corporate lawyers rotate between suing governments on behalf

of corporations and being ‘judges’. Clearly, there is a conflict of interest and the pay structure incentivises lengthy proceedings and governments share the costs of the case even if the case is dismissed, she added.

The tribunal has discretion to set damages and compound interest and allocate costs and there is no outside appeal, and annulment can be sought for limited errors, she said further.

St Louis said that under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) – whose signatory countries are Canada, Mexico and the US – \$365 million has already been paid out to corporations, with \$13 billion in pending claims under US NAFTA-style deals alone relating to land use, timber, water rights, public health, environment, mining, energy and transportation.

She highlighted several cases of investor-state disputes under US FTAs or US BITs. In the case of Exxon Mobil/Murphy Oil vs. Canada, a non-discriminatory requirement for a fee to be paid for research and development in two of Canada’s provinces, which applied to all firms, both domestic and foreign, was the subject of dispute, where the investor claimed that this was a performance requirement and therefore not allowed under NAFTA. Exxon claimed \$60 million.

In *Metalclad vs. Mexico*, the California-based company successfully challenged the denial of a construction permit by a Mexican municipality for the building of a toxic waste facility. The government move was viewed as an ‘indirect expropriation’ and Mexico was asked to pay \$15.6 million.

St Louis also gave examples of cases where the investor-state dispute resolution is used as a threat and coercion against governments to obtain a result.

One example was an investor-state case brought against Peru under the US-Peru FTA by Renco Group, ‘a company owned by one of the richest men in the US. The dispute relates to Renco’s investment in a metal smelter in Peru which has been designated as in the top 10 most polluted

sites in the world. Peru's Health Ministry found that about 99% of the children at this site had lead poisoning and 20% of these needed urgent medical attention. Renco's Peruvian affiliate promised to install sulphur plants to help remediate the environment by 2007 as part of an environmental remediation programme. Although it is out of compliance with this contractual obligation, the company sought (and Peru granted) two extensions to complete the project. In 2010, Renco sent Peru a Notice of Intent that it was launching investor-state proceedings, alleging (among other claims) that Peru's failure to grant a third extension of the environmental remediation obligations constitutes a violation of the firm's FTA rights as a foreign investor. The company is demanding \$800 million in compensation from Peruvian taxpayers for alleged FTA breaches.'

In the case of *Chevron vs. Ecuador*, after having lost on the merits in Ecuador and US courts, Chevron has turned to an arbitration tribunal for investor-state dispute resolution under a BIT to help the company avoid paying to clean up horrific contamination in the Amazonian rainforest, said St Louis. Chevron is trying to get the tribunal to suspend enforcement of or alter an \$18 billion judgment against Chevron rendered by a sovereign country's court system, she added.

The South African experience

Xavier Carim, Deputy Director-General of the South African Department of Trade and Industry, said that his government's experience demonstrated that there was no clear relationship between signing BITs and increased inflows of foreign direct investment (FDI), which had been a motivating factor in signing BITs in the 1990s.

'We do not receive significant inflows of FDI from many partners with whom we have BITs, and at the same time, we continue to receive investment from jurisdictions with which we have no BITs. In short, BITs are not decisive in attracting invest-

ment,' Carim said.

'In addition, over the last decade, South Africa had to confront several challenges, and threats of challenge, brought under various BITs. This focused our minds! Most of the threats of challenge can only be described as spurious or frivolous but they all underscored the fact that BITs do not adequately take into account the particular conditions found in South Africa, the complexities of our socio-economic challenges and the broad objectives of government policy,' he added.

The South African Cabinet concluded that South Africa should 'refrain from entering into BITs in future, except in cases of compelling economic and political circumstances'.

Referring to South Africa's post-apartheid Constitution, which embedded 'a transformation agenda that seeks to overcome deeply rooted inequities inherited from apartheid's exclusionary policies', Carim said that the Constitution 'also provides for non-discrimination between foreign and domestic investors and all investors need to undertake their activities in this context of the transformation agenda set out in the Constitution.'

'However, as we assessed the bilateral investment treaties that we had entered into, we began to identify a range of inconsistencies with the Constitution', and this 'prompted South Africa to review the BITs in 2008.'

After the reviews, Carim said, the South African Cabinet concluded that South Africa should 'refrain from entering into BITs in future, except in cases of compelling economic and political circumstances'.

Giving a short background of South Africa's experience, Carim said: 'In the immediate post-apartheid era (1994-98), South Africa con-

cluded around 15 BITs mainly with European countries. At the time, this was a good faith attempt to assure investors that their investments would be secure under the new democratically elected government. Signing these BITs was also seen as an important diplomatic signal confirming South Africa's re-entry to the international community after the years of isolation under apartheid.

'However, we soon became aware of challenges posed by international investment treaties. We observed the fractious debate in the OECD when its members were seeking to negotiate a multilateral investment agreement in the late 1990s. We were participants in the discussions in the WTO that sought to include – as one of the Singapore issues – trade and investment in the Doha Round negotiations, where many developmental concerns emerged in the engagements.'

'Perhaps most seriously, the spike in international investment arbitrations that followed the financial crisis in 2008 laid bare that bilateral investment agreements can pose profound and serious risks to government policy,' he said.

Carim referred to the intervention by South Africa's Minister of Trade and Industry Rob Davies on 26 September at the UNCTAD Trade and Development Board discussion on Investment Policy Framework for Sustainable Development, saying his own presentation at the WTO forum complemented Davies' statement.

BIT review

The South African government, Carim said, had held 'extensive and intensive consultations in South Africa over a three-year period. We invited international experts to contribute to the discussion. The review identified a range of concerns associated with expansive interpretations of the provisions usually found in BITs: definitions of investment, investor, national treatment, fair and equitable treatment, most favoured nation clause, expropriation, compensation, transfer of funds, etc.'

‘The review also identified difficulties with respect to international arbitration. It observed fragmentation in the system; the lack of common standards of protection; inconsistent interpretations by arbitration panels even on similar matters; as well as the growing complexity of the international system through an evolving jurisprudence. All this exacerbates uncertainty and risk,’ he added further.

‘In particular, we were concerned with investor-state dispute provisions in our BITs. This, in our view, opens the door to narrow commercial interests on subject matters of vital national interest and to unpredictable international arbitration outcomes, and is a direct challenge to constitutional and democratic policymaking,’ said Carim.

‘Against this background, in April 2010 the South African Cabinet concluded that South Africa should: First, refrain from entering into BITs in future, except in cases of compelling economic and political circumstances. Second, the Cabinet instructed that all “first generation” BITs which South Africa signed shortly after the democratic transition in 1994, many of which have now reached their termination date, should be reviewed with a view to termination, and possible renegotiation on the basis of a new Model BIT to be developed.

‘Third, the Cabinet decided that South Africa should strengthen its domestic legislation in respect of the protection offered to foreign investors. In this regard, key considerations would be to codify BIT-type protection into South African law and clarify their meaning in line with the South African Constitution. We would also seek to incorporate legitimate exceptions to investor protection where warranted by public policy considerations such as, for example, for national security, health, environmental reasons or for measures to address historical injustice and/or promote development.

‘Fourth, the Cabinet elevated all decision-making in respect of BITs to an Inter-Ministerial Committee tasked with oversight of investment, interna-

tional relations and economic development matters.’

Carim added: ‘This is the work we are undertaking now. The process of interdepartmental consultations is underway; there will be an extensive set of intergovernmental consultations as well as consultations with stakeholders and with Parliament – a social and economic dialogue.

‘We are working to terminate existing BITs; develop a new Model; and develop an Investment Act. This is complex technical and legal work and is unfinished. Nevertheless, our broad policy approach is clear. We aim to update and strengthen South Africa’s investment regime to ensure that South Africa remains open to foreign investment, provides adequate security and protection to all investors, while preserving the sovereign right of the South African Government to pursue its developmental public policy objectives. We also aim to reduce exposure to the unpredictable risks we see and have had to confront in our bilateral investment treaties.

‘The new approach does not introduce any new obstacles to investment but will establish a framework for more equitable relationships between investors and government based on respect for human rights, the rule of law and due process, sustainable development, and security of tenure and property rights within the framework created by the South African Constitution.

‘As we do this nationally, we are acutely aware of the unfolding debate at the international level. In broad terms, a broad distinction can be discerned between a Freedom of Investment model, on the one hand, and an Investment for Sustainable Development model, on the other.

‘The Freedom of Investment model tends to assume that all investment is good, and that all investment promotes development. The derived policy implications are that governments should continue to liberalise their investment regimes, reduce or limit regulations and conditions on investors and, in so doing, realise the benefits of FDI. “First generation” BITs tend to reflect this approach.

‘The Investment for Sustainable Development model approach recognises that while FDI can make a positive contribution to sustainable development, the benefits to host countries are not automatic. It posits that regulations are needed to balance the economic requirements of investors with the need to ensure that investments make a positive contribution to sustainable development in the host state.

‘The associated benefits of investment as they relate to technology transfer, skills development, research, establishing local economic linkages, etc. need to be purposefully built into the investment regime, and not taken for granted. New thinking and practice in international economic policymaking, notably with respect to the role of state in economic development, finance and industry, are also finding expression in international investment policymaking.

‘The debate on international investment treaty and policy is yet to be settled, and there are numerous efforts underway to fashion a common understanding to international investment policy. UNCTAD plays a vital role in this process given its longstanding work and expertise on investment policy from a development perspective. Indeed, the Investment Policy Framework for Sustainable Development developed by UNCTAD gives us a strong point of departure for such dialogue and co-operation. South Africa will participate in this dialogue, and we will also participate in other forums, as we search for a common understanding on what could constitute an appropriate model and framework for investment protection and promotion at the international level.’

Roberto Bissio from Social Watch in Uruguay highlighted the case of Philip Morris, the transnational tobacco company which has brought an investor-state claim against the Uruguayan government for imposing restrictions on cigarette packaging. The government wanted 80% of the cigarette package to have anti-tobacco messages and that there can only be the use of one brand with no variations. According to Bissio, the

company considers this a violation of its intellectual property.

Policy challenges

James Zhan of UNCTAD said that the investment treaties had not been functioning for sustainable development and no government was happy with this. The issue was how to ensure the move away from agreements for freedom for investors to enabling investment for development, and there was a need for policymakers to have policy toolkits and know-how.

Zhan said the challenge was how to ensure investment rules serve economic growth and jobs and also mainstream environmental, social and governance issues.

He said there were systemic challenges with the proliferation of investment treaties in the era of liberalisation, while now was the era of regulation and sustainable development. Zhan said there was incoherence at three levels: between treaties signed with countries at different times and at different levels of development; national and international incoherence; and investment policies vis-à-vis other policies including trade, competition and industrial policy.

He underlined the need for new policy frameworks with a new generation of investment policies with guiding principles; national investment guidelines; and international policy guidance. On investment treaties, the option for governments was whether to have them or not, he said.

Zhan said that there was no 'one size fits all' option but a range of options for countries to pick and choose from. There was a need to analyse the development implications and a set of indicators for assessing effectiveness.

On what is the right approach, he pointed to the need for a balanced approach with investment for sustainable development with policy coherence, the right to regulate and to balance the rights and obligations of corporate governance. ♦

Meena Raman is a legal adviser and senior researcher with the Third World Network. The above first appeared over two separate articles in the South-North Development Monitor (SUNS, Nos. 7446 and 7449, 27 September and 2 October 2012) published by TWN.

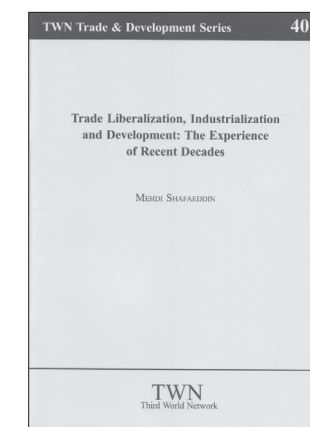
Trade Liberalization, Industrialization and Development: The Experience of Recent Decades

By Mehdi Shafaeddin

In this paper, the author analyzes the experience of countries in trade liberalization in the light of the debate between neoliberals and neo-developmentalists. The latter regard selective and gradual trade liberalization as necessary at a certain level of development and industrialization. The former group advocates universal, across-the-board and rapid liberalization by developing countries, irrespective of the level of development and industrialization of the country concerned.

The historical evidence from the early industrialization period, the author finds, does not support the claims of the advocates of universal and across-the-board free trade. More recent experience from the last quarter-century also bears this out, with developing countries which had undertaken full-blown trade liberalization facing de-industrialization or becoming locked in low-value-added manufacturing based on natural resources and assembly operations.

The paper also specifically compares the recent performance of China and Mexico, two economies which share similarities but which have followed different approaches to trade liberalization and industrialization. Mexico has been following policies recommended by the neoliberals, while the Chinese government has pursued an experimental and developmentalist approach, implementing policies for building the capabilities of domestic firms while also gradually liberalizing



Trade & Development series no. 40
ISBN: 978-967-5412-49-3 48pp

international trade. Their contrasting experiences, it is argued, point to developing countries' need for a dynamic and flexible trade policy that not only eschews premature liberalization but also operates in tandem with a development-oriented industrial policy.

	Price	Postage
Malaysia	RM7.00	RM1.00
Third World countries	US\$4.00	US\$2.00 (air); US\$1.00 (sea)
Other foreign countries	US\$6.00	US\$2.00 (air); US\$1.00 (sea)

Orders from Malaysia – please pay by credit card/crossed cheque or postal order.
Orders from Australia, Brunei, Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, UK, USA – please pay by credit card/cheque/bank draft/international money order in own currency, US\$ or Euro. If paying in own currency or Euro, please calculate equivalent of US\$ rate. If paying in US\$, please ensure that the agent bank is located in the USA.

Rest of the world – please pay by credit card/cheque/bank draft/international money order in US\$ or Euro. If paying in Euro, please calculate equivalent of US\$ rate. If paying in US\$, please ensure that the agent bank is located in the USA.

All payments should be made in favour of: **THIRD WORLD NETWORK BHD.**, 131 Jalan Macalister, 10400 Penang, Malaysia. Tel: 60-4-2266728/2266159; Fax: 60-4-2264505; Email: twnet@po.jaring.my; Website: www.twn.my

I would like to order copy/copies of **Trade Liberalization, Industrialization and Development: The Experience of Recent Decades**.

I enclose the amount of by cheque/bank draft/IMO.

Please charge the amount of US\$/Euro/RM to my credit card:

☐ American Express ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard

A/c No.: Expiry date:

Signature:

Name:

Address:

‘Our universities are the purveyors of an imperialist worldview’

In June last year an international conference on ‘Decolonising Our Universities’ was held in Penang, Malaysia. In his introductory speech to the conference, *SM Mohamed Idris* set out in stark terms the fundamental challenge facing scholars and academics in the Third World: ‘Let us be honest with ourselves. Either we have the courage and determination to create our own socially useful sciences, or we should cease doing mimic or copycat social science.’ We reproduce below the full text of his speech.

I AM neither a scholar nor an academic but an activist who grew up at a time when the victims of colonialism in Asia, Africa and Latin America were waging valiant struggles for justice, freedom, independence and liberation.

As with many anti-imperialists among my generation, the seeds of resistance to imperialism were sown at a very young age. Let me share here a personal experience which is still fresh in my memory.

As a young boy at the Anglo Chinese School in Penang – a Methodist missionary school – I defied my English teacher Miss Morton and refused to wear shorts to school. I was not going to allow any such alien imposition on me. I carried on wearing long trousers, to comply with the Muslim dress code, much to the annoyance of Miss Morton. That spirit of resistance still continues with me and with those anti-imperialists of my generation who are still alive.

When the Union Jack was lowered, we cheered believing that we had freed ourselves from the centuries-old shackles of colonialism, to stand tall among other nations, proud of our language, culture, traditions and knowledge systems.

That our belief was naïve and misplaced was impressed upon me by an incident in 1987 during my visit to Kolkata with Claude Alvares and other colleagues from the Third World Network. We went to a restaurant for a meal but I was denied entry only

because I was wearing a sarong. To my dismay I realised Miss Morton was still around, even in the land of Mahatma Gandhi.

We failed to understand that colonialism had struck deep roots in our societies. Not only did it control our politics and economy, but more serious and damaging to the colonised, it was an insidious force that permeated all aspects of our lives to take total control of us.

My friends, look at us who are here today, people who are keenly aware of this malady that afflicts us. But whatever is said and done, how many of us would as a norm dress in our own native attire? We would be too embarrassed to do so, we fear that it would not be acceptable and that we would be looked down upon.

This is a milder degree of this affliction. In more serious cases there are those of us who resort to skin whiteners and surgery for double eyelids and bleach our hair blonde in the pursuit of transmuting ourselves from Asians to becoming fake Caucasians.

Web of lies

The colonialists, overcome by their rapacity, abandoned any sense of morality in their colonial exploits around the world. They built a web of lies – that the colonised were infantile, uncultured and grotesque beings who needed to be cultivated and saved. In the worst cases, with indigent peoples, they even denied them

their humanity and committed genocide against them.

Lord Macaulay, who designed the Indian educational system, arrogantly declared ‘that all the historical information which has been collected from all the books written in the Sanscrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgments used at preparatory schools in England...’. This is a blatant lie as Europe borrowed heavily, without acknowledging, from the vast storehouse of knowledge of the Arabs, Indians, Chinese and the American Indians.

The colonial education system was the vehicle for propagating these lies. It was meant to produce an army of administrators, clerks, professionals and intellectual elite who would uphold and defend the colonial system. Their education cut them off from their historical and cultural roots and connected them to the worldview, values and norms of the West, which were internalised by them.

The result of this radical social engineering was that it produced a local elite with colonised minds, crippled imagination and lacking in creativity and originality. It made a caricature of them, undermining their confidence, self-esteem and dignity. Their lifestyle, tastes and values were far removed from those of the ordinary masses and closer to their colonial masters. They were, as Macaulay would have put it, a class of persons Indian, Malay, Chinese, African in

blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect.

When the colonialists folded their flags and left, power passed into the hands of the members of this class. They took charge of the institutions – the civil service, judiciary, police, universities etc. – created by colonialism to serve its interests, and continued to operate them without dismantling their philosophical and ideological underpinnings.

Our universities are the purveyors of the imperialist worldview and ideology. They play the role of perpetuating Western hegemony through their education models that are so destructive to our culture, language, way of life, knowledge systems and dignity.

To achieve true liberation and recover our authentic selves, we need to purge the West that is within us. As Ashis Nandy and others write in their book *The Blinded Eye: 500 Years of Christopher Columbus*:

‘... the Columbus within may be an even greater obstruction than the Columbus without. His science, his economics, his attitudes towards nature, his perceptions of gender and health, his outlook on the Other and their languages have struck deep roots within us. Pulling out these institutions by the roots must cause great pain, but there is no compelling reason why these fundamental tasks must remain undone.’

Towards the task of purging the Columbus within us, Citizens International and Other India Press launched the Multiversity Project. We have had three international conferences on the subject of continuing Eurocentric dominance of the teaching and research at our universities. We have discussed redesigning of curriculum and issues of hegemony. In spirit and in practice, we do not want to be part of an intellectual world in which we have only the role of peddlers and parrots.

At this conference – which is the first on decolonising universities, on making coursework independent of European influence either in theory or method – we thought we would sig-

nal the decolonisation process by asking brilliant academics to share their views of non-Eurocentric courses: how would these courses look like, would they be credible, and would they indeed be able to form the scaffolding of independent social science perspectives, not cloned any longer from European conceptions.

**‘In spirit and in practice,
we do not want to be
part of an intellectual
world in which we have
only the role of peddlers
and parrots.’**

Can we go further and appropriate the freedom to include or reject those social sciences useless for us or incompatible with our religious compulsions and create our own new ones?

Let us be honest with ourselves. Either we have the courage and determination to create our own socially useful sciences, or we should cease doing mimic or copycat social science. Taking some elements from one and some from the other will produce a hybrid which will appeal to none or which may in fact be meaningless.

We want to regain our heritage that is endangered. We cannot be totally free and independent without removing the shackles that tie us down in subservience.

Mahatma Gandhi wrote in *Hind Swaraj*:

‘If British rule were replaced tomorrow by Indian rule based on modern methods, India would be no better, except that she would be able to retain some of the money that is drained away to England; but then India would only become a second or fifth nation of Europe or America.’

And that is precisely what we have done to ourselves. We have cloned ourselves to become English or American. Our independence did not free us but, unknown to us, has enslaved us further.

If Macaulay established interpret-

ers to maintain their hegemony, then it is the duty of all of you who have awareness and knowledge to lead the way to reverse this control, and the place to start this is within our universities.

Even at our universities, to bring about such a change would be seen as a radical exercise. So steeped in our psyche is the Western hold that to think in any other way is unimaginable for fear that we end up in poverty and backwardness – as if there were no other civilisation before the coming of the colonialists.

Change can happen. If you look at the media, for several decades everyone complained that the world media was controlled by a few Western agencies. Al Jazeera broke that hold and introduced a wholly different, more attractive and more truthful way of looking at social events.

Look also to the buds of the Arab Spring. For too long we thought that dictatorship and tyranny would be the permanent condition of the Arab world. The courage to throw off the yoke of tyranny will bring Arabs change, just as the Turkish have forged ahead to be rid of military control.

International bodies like the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) have a sacred duty to perform which will not be performed by anyone else. This is to conserve the cultures, the vast diversity of humankind, its languages, its traditional knowledge and skills. UNESCO cannot join the race to submerge and suppress these under a homogeneous, monolithic, flattened world culture that respects none. UNESCO should ensure that the social sciences remain as diverse as humankind and that the integrity of cultures and their knowledge are firmly protected and sustained. ◆

SM Mohamed Idris is Chairperson of Citizens International, which jointly organised the International Conference on ‘Decolonising Our Universities’, held in Penang, Malaysia, in June 2011, with the Universiti Sains Malaysia in cooperation with the Higher Education Leadership Academy of the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education. He is also Chairperson of the Third World Network.

Decolonising social sciences across the world

Addressing the same conference, UNESCO Regional Adviser on Social and Human Sciences in Asia and the Pacific *Darryl Macer* called for 'greater and real democracy of social science knowledge in the global intellectual community', a process 'which will enrich every one of us'. Below is the text of his speech.

IN the latest UNESCO *World Social Science Report* (UNESCO, 2010), there is a call for global scholarship and action. Is this mere platitude, or is this view a good-intentioned but ill-informed one?

Even though UNESCO has 192 member countries and the title of the report is *Knowledge Divides*, the underlying paradigm of the *World Social Science Report* is centred on an understanding of social sciences closest to that in the West. For example, in the preface to the report, Gudmund Hernes, President of the International Social Science Council (ISSC), writes, 'To a great extent, the social sciences grew out of the seventeenth-century European Enlightenment, when new ideas about religion, reason, humanity and society were merged into a fairly coherent worldview that stressed human rights, individualism and constitutionalism' (p. vii). He continues, 'Studies of alien societies were used as a contrast when analysing a country's institutions and customs.'

As someone who carries an 'alien registration card', being a resident of Japan since 1990, it is interesting that in the 21st century we still can refer to our fellow *Homo sapiens* as 'aliens'. However, as Hernes continues, 'Equally basic to the birth of Modernity was the recognition that a plurality of opinions and an open, critical debate were necessary to gain new insights and for citizens to forge their own history.' It would thus be wrong to take these remarks out of context, and against the intention of many good-intentioned scholars. However, better information and more open minds to the search for wisdom will be useful. Some have commented



The underlying paradigm of UNESCO's *World Social Science Report 2010* (pic) is centred on an understanding of social sciences closest to that in the West.

on the deficiencies of the type of knowledge quoted in the *WSSR* (Singh, 2011).

'New global agenda'

The *WSSR* includes over 80 individual papers compiled into one volume, with 14 authors from the Asia-Pacific region. Because the contributors write on their own behalf, the usual disclaimers apply: 'Each author is responsible for the facts contained in his/her article and the opinions expressed therein, which are not necessarily those of UNESCO or ISSC and do not commit either organisation.'

In the foreword, the Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, writes, 'The report reaffirms UNESCO's commitment to the social sciences, and our desire to set a new global agenda to promote them as an invaluable tool for the advancement

of the internationally agreed development goals.' So, we can ask: What is this new global agenda?

She also notes, 'Yet, social scientific knowledge is at risk in the parts of the world where it is most needed. The huge disparities in research capacities across countries and the fragmentation of knowledge hamper the capacity of social sciences to respond to the challenges of today and tomorrow. While we may be building a "knowledge society", it is one that looks very different depending on one's regional perspective. Social scientists produce work of outstanding quality and tremendous practical value, but, as this Report illustrates, social scientific knowledge is often the least developed in those parts of the world where it is most keenly needed – hence this publication's title, "Knowledge Divides".'

UNESCO thus is challenged to continue to work for the development of social sciences, but we can ask: What type of social science? Further description of this is given by the former Assistant Director-General of UNESCO, Professor Pierre Sané, who says of the *WSSR* in his foreword, 'Its findings are profoundly challenging.' The gaps in knowledge relate also to wealth and the rise of poverty.

Fundamental to all scholarship is the definition of 'knowledge'. The *WSSR* takes the predominant Western construction of what is knowledge. We need to value all forms of knowledge, and systems to understand that knowledge. UNESCO is concerned about diversity of knowledge forms and ideas. For example, I even found, in a UNESCO workshop I co-organised last year to describe indigenous approaches to community engage-

ment for nanotechnology in foods in Japan and New Zealand, that the social scientists were trying to conform the feedback from the research into traditional Western social science rather than to be innovative and use different presentation styles. Yet these persons included some indigenous social scientists, researching indigenous forms of knowledge. We have a major task to promote multiple formats and methods of knowledge-sharing.

In the philosophy programmes of UNESCO a major effort has been made for interregional philosophical dialogues. Dialogue is essential for developing a better understanding of not only others, but even ourselves. Dialogue is an exchange between different peoples, communities, and entities. These dialogues have been held over the past six years in Seoul, Rabat, Hiroshima, Paris, Bangkok, and Malacca. They occurred with the coordination of the Regional Unit for Social and Human Sciences in Asia and the Pacific (RUSHSAP) at UNESCO Bangkok, UNESCO Rabat, and UNESCO Paris, and the efforts of academics throughout the world.

The Interregional Philosophical Dialogue project was born from a resurgence of interest in and a strengthening of philosophy within UNESCO, supported by member countries. As people in many countries of the world express dismay at the directions that their society is pursuing, some are reminded of the former important roles of philosophers as navigators of the courses that societies should take. The publications of the dialogues (Macer and Saad-Zoy, 2010a and b; Macer, 2011) also aim to broaden inter-cultural communication, to strengthen the role of philosophy in public policy, and to promote the teaching of non-Western philosophies around the world. We would hope that in discussions of diverse ideologies, the materials produced by UNESCO projects such as these with non-Eurocentric views are used.

In addition, the Asia-Pacific regional programme in social and human sciences from RUSHSAP at UNESCO Bangkok published a critique of ethical principalism in 2010,

Universalism and Ethical Values for the Environment (Rai et al., 2010). Actually this publication describes different worldviews, and is being followed with the construction of a repository of ethical worldviews of nature, that will be a resource for those looking for views of nature and the world different from the predominant ones.¹

The *WSSR* may not offer too much directly for social science teaching and curriculum design, but we can examine the conclusions. Among these is a call to reinforce teaching of social sciences. In section 8.1 on 'Social sciences, education and society' we find three pages of the 421-page report on 'Social science studies in secondary and higher education', and 'Social science textbooks in higher education'. It is clearly not a review of social science education, which would be expected to be of equal volume itself.

Here are a few quotes from the *WSSR*, and some comments:

'The first relevant role for social science in the public sphere is educating students to develop the knowledge and skills required to become public researchers, experts, officers, managers, professionals, but above all, responsible citizens of open democratic societies, aware of their rights and obligations.' Here we can ask what form of knowledge should be promoted and taught. We need to promote diversity of knowledge, and appreciation of all forms of knowledge.

'At the higher education level, social sciences are taught separately by disciplines. The definition of the disciplines and the boundaries of social sciences vary from one country to another.' Although some trends in higher education are to create new interdisciplinary disciplines, the disciplines taught in some countries follow very traditional divisions. In addition in some countries universities like reform, and seem to go through repeated reforms every few years.

'Most of the scientific literature on textbooks is concerned with a critique of their implicit or hidden ideology. Some scholars have looked at the way in which national histories are

constructed in history textbooks; others have concerned themselves with the description of sexual behaviours and family relations in psychology and sociology handbooks; yet others have scrutinised representations of poverty, and of minorities in history, sociology and psychology handbooks.' The Web offers one way to increase the diversity of free resources to present alternative views. We need to promote this diversity as university faculty to find alternative sources to introduce to students, and to reward students who find themselves different sources of materials.

We can reflect on some of these observations in our own curricula, university, and nation. Is there an accurate compilation of the different curricula that we can actually refer to? That should be one of the tasks of our endeavour. Then we would have a reference to assess the diversity of approaches to the teaching of issues in each nation, which would of course be a very useful source for a comparative course to offer the different accounts of the same event. We can also provide these resources in different languages.

Having said that, there is still a need to establish social science disciplines in many countries. It was only in 2006 that the first undergraduate sociology degree programme was established in Lao People's Democratic Republic. There was support from a number of sources, including UNESCO and universities in Thailand (for linguistic and geographical reasons). So there are knowledge divides across national borders, and we need to promote cooperation.

The geography and political economy of the international circulation of social science handbooks, textbooks and other publications should also be considered carefully. Circulation along former colonial lines or within linguistically homogeneous areas probably reinforces knowledge dependency.

The conclusion of the *WSSR* identifies eight divides in global capacity in social sciences, including:

- 'a geographical divide
- a capacity divide

- the unequal degree of internationalisation of knowledge production
- the divide between disciplines
- the divide between mainstream research and alternative approaches
- the competition resulting from new managerial practices
- the sometimes tense relations between academics and society and between academics and policy-makers'.

One clearly would have to add several other divides that may also have contributed to the perceived knowledge gap. These would include:

- lack of recognition for academic research not conducted in European languages
- low recognition of non-European authors and institutions
- differences in fundamental paradigms of thought and concepts of what is social science
- need for greater South-South collaboration and exchange programmes.

Developing social sciences

The *WSSR* made a number of suggestions for future action addressed to 'international bodies such as the International Social Science Council (ISSC) and UNESCO, to funding agencies at national and international levels, to governments, and to major academic institutions that are concerned with overcoming knowledge divides'. UNESCO should be spending more time in the coming years on further development of social sciences in different countries; however, it is unclear, as programmes are reformed, whether this will actually lead to increased diversity and continued development of new sources of material.

As mentioned, UNESCO has been developing interregional philosophical dialogues. However, there are fears that this programme will be stopped, and the funds placed back into promotion of democracy. There is also a need to implement the action plans for teaching of philosophy, and RUSHSAP has made draft summaries and concept maps of the philosophy-related curriculum for 47 member countries in Asia and the Pacific.²

UNESCO is not a funding agency but a networking and facilitation agency, but is still very open to partnering with institutions that wish to rediscover indigenous traditions and apply these to contemporary challenges of every society, not only global society.

The *WSSR* recommends: 'The development of research capacity requires that governments, international organisations and aid agencies provide funding to support research institutions as well as individual training. The three levels of capacity – individual, organisational and systemic – all need sustained attention. Funding has to be made available for a sufficient period to produce results. Long-term rather than immediate impact is the objective. To combat the negative aspects of brain drain, programmes enhancing the circulation of ideas and social scientists should be promoted, and they should include support for diasporic networks.'

In the Asia-Pacific region we have two major networks to promote original research linked to policy, the UNESCO Asia-Pacific School of Ethics,³ and the Women's/Gender Studies Network in Asia and the Pacific.⁴ Several decades back RUSHSAP also founded the Asian Association of Social Science Research Councils (AASSREC),⁵ which is continuing to function as an independent network of social science research councils.

Major challenges

We still face major challenges in promoting scholarship and creativity. Still in many countries many social scientists spend their time translating European works into local languages, rather than writing their own works and papers. In my own professional area, bioethics, we established the Asian Bioethics Association⁶ in 1995 to promote original research rather than to import Western ideas.

Let us consider Japan as one example of an Asian-style democracy. Public opinion is seldom influential in determining public policy and there are few effective means used by the public to change policy. In Japan, there has been concern about

bioethical issues such as environmental pollution since the 1960s, suspicion of the medical profession and its paternalism since the 1970s, and intense discussions on the question of brain death since the 1970s. Public discussion of bioethics opened up in the 1990s (Macer, 1992; Suda et al., 2009). The first open national forums on policy and successful attempts at open government were related to bioethical questions such as brain death, the labelling of genetically modified food, and human genetics research.

The delay in establishing such forums for debate was more related to the structure of Japanese society than to any difference between individual persons' attitudes in Japan and Western countries. When individuals are asked to give their reasoning for their opinions on bioethical issues such as genetic manipulation of humans or animals, there is as much variety in opinions expressed by members of the general public in Japan as in Australia or New Zealand (Macer, 1994a). Many people perceive simultaneously both benefits and risks from science and technology. The diversity of reasoning exposed in the survey was independent of education or age, and similar diversity was found among members of the public, high school biology teachers, and scientists. The overall statistical results of many of the questions in surveys conducted in 1991 and 1993 in Japan are similar to results of surveys in Australasia, Europe, India, Russia, Thailand and the USA (Macer, 1994a). Later research continues to reveal diversity of reasoning, and this is also something to be valued. However, in many educational systems and institutions the examinations do not promote divergent but rather convergent thinking.

Thus even though there are different models of social relationships, and different levels of public participation, people's decision-making preferences at the individual level were similarly diverse. The structured paternalism of many Asian and Arab societies is built on the idea that only

the views of so-called experts should be heard. It also means that their views should not be questioned, in accordance with the traditional paternalistic Confucian, or neo-Confucian, ethos. We can consider what would be different in a more international curriculum of social science that would not be apparent in one based in a European-centred worldview. Firstly they might not consider the same 'Enlightenment' for social sciences in their culture as a European or Western view.

There is variation in the view of individual, family and society; the interpretation of human rights; the concepts of privacy and personal space; the taboo subjects; individual freedom; what is democracy and how to express this politically; independence of religion and philosophy, state, laws; inherited privileges and social class divisions; systems of economic trade; worldview; use of principalism in morality and to define relationships, for example. However, all of these also vary between individuals within any community, no matter how we would like to define it.

There are still many elements that we would expect to be taught in a curriculum at university level in social sciences, such as the importance of critical thinking and education as a means for empowerment of learners. There are also some commonly agreed goals of social science education, such as freedom of thought and critical analysis, that we would expect in any culture in some form. In fact this is used in this conference as a basis to question colonial influences in education.

Global trends

How do we define colonialism? Is it only European colonisation? There may be similarly challenging trends in the influence of Chinese and Japanese values that have particularly strong global influence now. There is certainly no shortage of materials and innovative methods⁷ to develop into new teaching programmes to create critical thinkers. UNESCO has

worked with curriculum bodies in every willing country to consider plans for teaching of philosophy, with goals that are very broad. In Asia-Pacific we also have mapped primary and secondary curricula, but not yet university curricula, which will require the cooperation of many scholars as universities vary much more than at earlier levels of education.

In the process of mundialisation we should see the adoption of different elements from each culture into others. There are some global trends. The adoption of bioethics and bioethical reasoning has transformed some cultures into modern democratic cultures, and arguably this is seen in greater ways in many Asian and Arab countries than in North America or Europe. The stimulus provided by debates over new technologies, such as genetically modified food, assisted reproduction, and life-sustaining treatment, has opened up the doors of government decision-making to the broader community. The results of cross-cultural studies in bioethics (Macer, 1994b) provide empirical research that some forms of democracy are possible under diverse and different cultural situations (UNESCO, 2003). There are many forms of democracy, and we call for greater and real democracy of social science knowledge in the global intellectual community, which will enrich every one of us. ♦

Darryl RJ Macer is Regional Adviser on Social and Human Sciences in Asia and the Pacific at UNESCO in Bangkok. The above is the text of his presentation at the International Conference on 'Decolonising Our Universities' held in Penang, Malaysia, in June 2011.

Endnotes

1. <http://www.unescobkk.org/rushsap/ethics-and-climate-change/energyethics/>
2. <http://www.unescobkk.org/rushsap/philosophical-reflection-and-the/philosophy/teaching/>
3. <http://www.unescobkk.org/rushsap/asia-pacific-region/networks/apse/>
4. <http://www.unescobkk.org/rushsap/asia-pacific-region/>

5. <http://www.aassrec.org/>
6. <http://eubios.info/ABA.htm>
7. <http://www.unescobkk.org/rushsap/resources/shs-resources/ethics-resources/multilingual-material/>

References

- Macer, D. 1992. The 'far east' of biological ethics. *Nature*, Vol. 359, p. 770.
- Macer, D. 1994a. *Bioethics for the People by the People*. Christchurch, Eubios Ethics Institute.
- Macer, D. 1994b. Bioethics may transform public policy in Japan. *Politics and Life Sciences*, Vol. 13, pp. 89-90.
- Macer, DRJ. and Saad-Zoy, S. (Editors). 2010a. *Asian-Arab Philosophical Dialogues on War and Peace*. Bangkok, UNESCO.
- Macer, DRJ. and Saad-Zoy, S. (Editors). 2010b. *Asian-Arab Philosophical Dialogues on Globalization, Democracy and Human Rights*. Bangkok, UNESCO.
- Macer, DRJ. (Editor). 2011. *Asian-Arab Philosophical Dialogues on Culture of Peace and Human Dignity*. Bangkok, UNESCO.
- Nudeshima, J. 1991. Obstacles to brain death and organ transplantation in Japan. *Lancet*, Vol. 338, pp. 1063-64.
- Rai, J.S. et al. 2010. *Universalism and Ethical Values for the Environment*. Bangkok, UNESCO.
- Singh, S. 2011. World Social Science Report: Whither India and South Asia? *Economic and Political Weekly* XLVI (1 January 2011), pp. 10-12.
- Suda, E., Macer, D. and Matsuda, I. 2009. Challenges to public engagement in science and technology in Japan: experiences in the HapMap Project. *Genomics, Society and Policy*, Vol. 5, pp. 40-59.
- UNESCO, 2003. *Democracy: UNESCO and the promotion of democratic values and principles (SHS Strategy)*. Paris, UNESCO. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001401/140180e.pdf>
- UNESCO, 2010. *World Social Science Report: Knowledge Divides*. Paris, UNESCO.

A critique of Eurocentric social science

In calling for a change, *Claude Alvares* contends that 'much of present-day social science in non-European universities is nothing more than the mindless study and re-study of the dead corpus of sociological knowledge generated in response to ethnocentric or peculiarly European perceptions of situations often decades or centuries old.'

The social sciences and the real world

IN January 2010, the Department of Sociology (DoS) of Delhi University formally inaugurated a brand new European Study Centre at its premises funded by the European Union. The Centre would help in the 're-design of the existing sociology syllabi of the M.A. and M. Phil programme at DoS' in consultation with European scholars. The Europeans were willing to pay 300,000 euros for the two-year programme of the Centre.¹

The question we may rather impolitely ask is: Where was the need for such a programme when we consider that the DoS, like every other university department elsewhere on the planet, has been teaching European sociology since the days it was first set up?

Earlier, intellectual dependence and servility came as a natural corollary of colonial rule. Today it is being welcomed because it comes buttered with hard cash. For cash-strapped universities mired in the now-almost-permanent age of structural adjustment, this appears to be the only option left for carrying on academic activity even if it means that one is forced to canvassing the products of other peoples' brains. There is not even a hint in the European Study Centre proposal that it desires a partnership between equals or that Indians will help Europeans deal with Europe's own social problems of which there is an abundance: for example, the integration of minorities, relationships between ethnic communities, alienation, problems of



A political science lecture in progress. 'The social sciences as we know them today are little more than unquestioned European perspectives for European social problems...'

care of retired employees, domestic violence and alcoholism, etc. We are still very much moving along a one-way street – with all the movement from the 'superior' or 'advanced' culture at the core to the 'inferior' or 'deficient' culture at the periphery – because that is how knowledge continues to flow in the global university knowledge system.

No wonder the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)'s *World Social Science Report 2010* concludes that for all practical purposes social science research outside the non-European world is so insignificant in quality it is rarely cited. The *Report*, for example, points out that North America cited zero research from both Asia and Africa.²

Political imperialism may find fierce resistance today (Iran, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Egypt), but academic imperialism has not, probably because it is almost invisible. On the contrary, it appears to have increased in intensity and outreach.

Departments and faculties in almost all universities of the globe have – voluntarily or involuntarily – continued to pay obeisance to the objectives and methodologies of social science generation prevailing in Western academic circles (Farid Alatas refers to the latter appropriately as 'social science powers'). Their output even today continues to reflect principally the concerns of Western scholars. Much of present-day social science in non-European universities is nothing more than the mindless study

and re-study of the dead corpus of sociological knowledge generated in response to ethnocentric or peculiarly European perceptions of situations often decades or centuries old.

Even where academic work in Asia or Africa may nowadays sometimes reflect local issues due to the efforts of individual researchers who wish to do meaningful, independent work, the methodologies applied and theoretical frameworks still remain firmly Euro-American in character. Independence from colonial rule has had little or no significant consequences except for providing opportunities to jockey and fight to occupy chairs left by earlier intellectual overlords. Naturally, there is very little evidence of creative thinking or work, considering all move and have their being in an intellectually sterile wasteland.

Since the social sciences as we know them today are little more than unquestioned European perspectives for European social problems using the peculiar research tools and methods associated with Europe's intellectual history, can they ever be useful tools for the study of other societies with a vastly different range of problems as well as human experience? And what is the 'emotional' or 'spiritual' connection between this body of knowledge and the lives of people living in societies outside Europe?

One of the major consequences of this state of affairs is its effect on students who register at universities in various countries. They come to perceive the standard diets prescribed in courses as foreign, with little or no meaning or relevance to the world around them, especially to their inherited knowledge systems or to the meanings attached to important elements of their culture. They therefore see themselves compelled mostly to parrot the language of the discipline, to ingratiate themselves into its set phrases, vocabularies, slogans, categories and concepts (which change, like fashion, every few years) so that they can regurgitate it confidently when their time comes to address students as lecturers or professors. Competence and confidence are acquired



In his influential 1835 'Minute', Lord Babington Macaulay (pic) summarily knocked down the entire intellectual output of India and Arabia.

only after years of subordination, uncritical and unquestioning acceptance and indoctrination.

Moreover, in form, the university everywhere has also lost its original character and purpose and become an upgraded version of the factory school in which knowledge is simply disseminated as a given and the student has little scope to create or contribute anything of her own. The European Study Centre at Delhi will ensure that young students can go for an all-expenses-paid six weeks' stay in Europe during which they will be given an opportunity to sniff the latest terminology in fashion during seminars and become *au courant* with the latest researches and concerns of the European academic community which still assumes that it is at the very top of the hierarchy of the social science imagination worldwide.

The historical evolution of social science studies

The question few people ask is: Why do Indians or Iranians or Chinese for that matter allow themselves to continue to be fed a diet of what Europeans or Americans decide is social science? Is it possible that they could survive for thousands of years without intensive know-how about social, political, scientific or military organisation? Why are we unable to

resist the notion that European sociology or anthropology or American political science or psychology is some kind of absolute which cannot be questioned? Or are we simply too lazy to surrender this colonial inheritance and rethink anew?

It may be useful here to inquire (briefly) into how this situation arose in the first place.

The intellectual history of societies falling as colonies under the political domination of Europe and, later, the US shows two major phases. In the first phase, there is a determined assault on their intellectual and spiritual traditions which is often internalised and often uncritically accepted by the leading and influential sections of the subjugated population. In any event, they really do not have any choice.

Thereafter, in the second phase, there is an overt attempt to completely replace the indigenous systems with ideas associated with the experience of the coloniser – a routine feature of the exercise of power.

The methodology adopted for such cultural assaults was elaborated very powerfully in 1612 by Sir John Davies, British Attorney for Ireland, in his book titled *A Discovery of the True Causes Why Ireland Was Never Entirely Subdued and Brought Under Obedience of the Crown of England Until the Beginning of His Majesty's Happy Reign*. Though he was writing in respect of Ireland, Davies could have been writing about any other country that came under the political subjugation of colonial powers:

'The defects which hindered the perfection of the conquest of Ireland were of two kinds and consisted: first, in the faint prosecution of the war and next in the looseness of the civil government. For the husbandman must first break the land before it be made capable of good seed; and when it is thoroughly broken and manured if he do not forthwith cast good seed into it, it will grow wild again and bear nothing but weeds. So a barbarous country must first be broken by a war before it will be capable of good government; and when it is fully subdued and conquered, if it be not well

planted and governed after the conquest it will soon return to the former barbarism.⁷⁴

The simple truth is that there has never been a change in this principal approach of imperialism and its ways thereafter.

The assault on India's traditions, for instance, was first officially announced by William Wilberforce in his 1813 speech to the English Parliament in which he argued that the English must ensure the conversion of the country to Christianity as the most effective way of bringing it to 'civilisation'. The effort to Christianise the Hindu population fell flat on its face and proved to be one of the most abject failures of imperial governance.

In 1835, however, a profoundly new approach was crystallised in the form of a 'Minute' by Governor General Lord Babington Macaulay which became the foundation of the modern academic enterprise and proved to be successful beyond the expectations of both colonial and post-colonial rulers. In that influential Minute, Macaulay summarily knocked down the entire intellectual output of India and Arabia in well-known words:

'I have no knowledge of either Sanscrit or Arabic. But I have done what I could to form a correct estimate of their value. I have read translations of the most celebrated Arabic and Sanscrit works. I have conversed, both here and at home, with men distinguished by their proficiency in the Eastern tongues. I am quite ready to take the oriental learning at the valuation of the orientalist themselves. I have never found one among them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia. The intrinsic superiority of the Western literature is indeed fully admitted by those members of the committee who support the oriental plan of education.

'It will hardly be disputed, I suppose, that the department of literature in which the Eastern writers stand highest is poetry. And I certainly never met with any orientalist who ventured to maintain that the Arabic and

Sanscrit poetry could be compared to that of the great European nations. But when we pass from works of imagination to works in which facts are recorded and general principles investigated, the superiority of the Europeans becomes absolutely immeasurable. It is, I believe, no exaggeration to say that all the historical information which has been collected from all the books written in the Sanscrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgments used at preparatory schools in England. In every branch of physical or moral philosophy, the relative position of the two nations is nearly the same.⁷⁵

Macaulay insisted on installing a new system of education with a very specific set of goals:

'I feel with them that it is impossible for us, with our limited means, to attempt to educate the body of the people. We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern – a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect.'⁷⁶

This well-known formulation of the objectives of the colonial education project coupled simultaneously with the display of civilisational arrogance was repeated *ad nauseam* in countries as diverse as Turkey, Indonesia, the Philippines, Aotearoa (New Zealand), etc. These became overnight 'victim' societies or 'defeated' civilisations and their leading lights readily applied this collective feeling of inferiority to the products of their minds as well. In the context of Africa, Ngugi wa Thiong'o wrote:

'The biggest weapon wielded and actually daily unleashed by imperialism against that collective defiance [was] the cultural bomb. The effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately themselves. It makes them see their past as one wasteland of non-achievement and it makes them want to distance themselves from that

wasteland. It makes them want to identify with that which is furthest removed from themselves; for instance, with other peoples' languages rather than their own. It makes them identify with that which is decadent and reactionary, all those forces which would stop their own springs of life.'⁷⁷

It is truly amazing to discover that so many educated segments in practically every colonised society could be so convinced eventually of their own – and their civilisation's – worthlessness, that they would allow themselves to be robbed of everything that their civilisations had to offer and then meekly submit to remould themselves in the manners and thinking of those who came from far outside their borders.

The scale of this civilisational failure of nerve was ultimately restricted in its reach for a rare reason: the difficulty the imperial power faced – as Macaulay himself admitted – in 'educating' the entire population! In other words, we survived with our identity simply because most of us did not speak English, we continued to speak in our own mother-tongues, and the majority of our populations had little interest in certifying themselves in Western knowledge systems. They simply remained aloof, disinterested, unincorporated.

Two different societies

The result everywhere has been the generation of two wholly different societies owing allegiance to separate systems of knowledge and belief, even when they occupy the same single geographical space. In his remarkable work of anthropology *Mexico Profundo*, Mexican anthropologist Guillermo Bonfil Batalla made a critical reference to the 'imaginary Mexico' imposed on that society by Western scholars and academics.⁷⁸ He called it 'imaginary' not because it did not exist, but because it denied the cultural reality lived daily by most Mexicans.

According to Bonfil, the lives of the 'de-Indianised' rural mestizo communities and also of the vast number of migrants living in the cities com-

prised what he called the *Mexico profundo*. This life was rooted in Mesoamerican civilisation based on its own food supply. Work in this society even today is understood primarily as a way of maintaining a harmonious relationship with the natural world. Health is related to human conduct and community service is often part of each individual's life obligation. Time is cyclical and humans fulfil their own cycle in relation to other cycles of the universe. You could say that for the *Mexico profundo*, Europe as a system of ideas to live by or as an ideal simply does not exist. Though Bonfil's perception appears to be radical, his description of a society that functions distinct from the perceptions of overseas scholars and their local coloured cohorts could be applicable in every society of the non-Western world. In our country, we call it the 'other India' – larger than India and in the deepest sense, concerned solely with itself and wholly unconcerned about Europe.

Eventually only two classes of people came to the conclusion that European science was the only successful foundation for the advancement of knowledge (and human welfare) in future: first, the Europeans (naturally); thereafter, the educated among the colonised, especially the academic community. Both for the wrong reasons.

Absence of objectivity

It is an elementary principle of assessments and evaluations that they must always be carried out – in the interests of objectivity and credibility – by persons unconnected with them. A person cannot be a judge in her own cause. But what do we find here? The assessments and evaluations of the West, of Western science, of the alleged dynamism and achievements associated with Western history are made by intellectuals, historians and writers from the West. They unabashedly glory in their own achievements, they become their own historians, they propose their own greatness, they themselves certify and celebrate the unique quality of their own

way of life. The final act of hubris was a claim made fairly recently that American society symbolised 'the end of history', the end of evolution; that there was no further stage of human progress necessary or conceivable except endless refinements in technology.

The absence of objectivity has been taken to such absurd lengths that often entire histories of various human activities (ethics, science and technology, the arts, etc.) are compiled by Western writers which do not take into consideration even the existence of people from other parts of the globe. This ignorance of the role and intellectual contributions of people living outside the boundaries of Europe is on occasion admittedly due to a narrow or parochial education. But more often than not it is also because admitting the intellectual contributions of others would downplay the West's own claim to self-directed development up the ladder of human progress due to its innate cultural superiority over the rest of humankind.

Western academic social science is not irrevocable, divine, infallible or bestowed with greater epistemological significance than other intellectual traditions or ethno-sciences. It only appears so.

The success of Orientalist discourse has been in precisely this: the peoples of India, Arabia and other lands are today convinced that the best interpreters of their history, their societies, their traditions are scholars and commentators from the West rather than people in their own midst.

Distressed by this wholesale mental capitulation and surrender of an entire generation of intellectuals, Syed Hussein Alatas wrote – several decades ago – a stinging evaluation of what he called 'the captive mind' in which he pilloried Third World intellectuals for their continuing obsession with imported and handed-down theories of knowledge which had little to do with their societies, their experience and their own intellectual traditions.⁹

'It is the final triumph of a system of domination,' writes Ngugi wa Thiong'o in *Decolonising the Mind*,

'when the dominated start singing its virtues.'¹⁰

Significant resistance to intellectual colonisation eventually came not from this captive and enslaved class of university-based academics but from the most marginalised groups, including the American Indians, the Maoris in Aotearoa (New Zealand), the Aboriginals in Australia and Canada and a significant group of scholars from the African countries.

It also came from Islam, though in mixed ways, as most Islamic societies were eventually unable to resolve the issue of the compatibility of their religious traditions and Western (secular, positivist, materialistically oriented) knowledge. Muslims in fact got themselves certified in Western knowledge systems in droves. Even today Muslim countries remain profoundly schizophrenic about their approaches to Western knowledge, including philosophy, unable to restore the productive harmony between science and Islam that flourished during the West's Dark Ages. Materialist Western knowledge – which denies the very existence of Allah – is taught side-by-side with Islamic theology, often within the same university.

In India, Western science including Western social science is accepted without question by its academic czars, signalling the complete intellectual defeat of its so-called thinking or academic classes. The country's (so-called) 'finest' minds – those who qualify for the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) – are harvested in a handful of imported institutions that serve as unabashed recruiting grounds for production systems and economies abroad.

After the US became the dominant force in the world economy, educational curriculum dominance shifted to American universities and their academic formulae became the new testament for the rest of the world, including now England. As the US naturally assumed control over what would constitute higher education, this implied that university content would now be sourced to patterns of thinking from a country which encapsulated little more than the

worldview and concerns of a predominantly white male population which had established its dominance there through sheer uninhibited violence and which would tolerate the growth of only those other sections that were in grand sympathy with its views.

Uniform educational diet

The problem faced by the white American education system in the 19th century was the lack of uniformity of what was being taught at different schools and colleges within the country. The diversity was finally settled by the report of the 'Committee of Ten' set up in 1892 under the chairmanship of Charles W Eliot, President of Harvard University. The subjects seen as necessary for a proper university education for people growing up in the United States were decided by this committee and they would thereafter rule the world of academia everywhere even up to our own times with minor modifications. The subjects and also the duration of time to be allotted for the teaching of these subjects were determined by the committee. [The nine subjects were: 1. Latin; 2. Greek; 3. English; 4. Other Modern (European) Languages; 5. Mathematics; 6. Physics, Astronomy, Chemistry; 7. Natural History; 8. History, Civil Government and Political Economy; 9. Physical Geography, Geology and Meteorology.]¹¹

What is important to note is that this attempt to create and enforce a uniform diet for all students of education in all countries – with diverse environments, intellectual histories and cultural traditions – was never questioned. The new curriculum was adopted everywhere because the modern university culture has retained a profoundly imitative or mimic character. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, for example, relegated most academic scholarship in Africa to exercises in 'apemanship and parrotry'. (Rabindranath Tagore, India's distinguished man of letters, in fact, wrote a telling story about a parrot more than a hundred years ago in which he thoroughly parodied the educational sys-

tem.)

In the new culture, the printed textbook as an essential tool for learning naturally reigned supreme because these academicians were more comfortable with books than with the real world from which the text could safely isolate them. This facilitated further 'universalisation' claims since local experience was not considered necessary for theory and the theory in any case came always from Western academia.

At no stage was there any critical questioning in our own societies of the directions in which the acquisition of knowledge had begun to proceed. Only the very prescient saw the terrible consequences for their own kind. A generally peaceful individual, Mahatma Gandhi was so outraged by the idea of turning his people into second-class Westerners that he declared in *Hind Swaraj* that 'deportation for life to the [penal colony of the] Andamans is not enough expiation for the sin of encouraging European civilisation.'¹² As Vinay Lal notes, it is not at all surprising that the misery of human beings has increased in almost direct proportion to the spread of Western social sciences – from anthropology to geography and economics – in the rest of the world.¹³

Imperialism has thus remained an intrinsic feature of the world knowledge system. As Ward Churchill maintains in *White Studies*: 'The system of Eurosupremacist domination depends for its continued maintenance and expansion, even its survival, upon the reproduction of its own intellectual paradigm – its approved way of thinking, seeing, understanding, and being – to the ultimate exclusion of all others.'¹⁴

Even today the power to maintain this dominance continues to be exercised in the form of controls over the textbook trade, the authentication of social science literature, the selective use or promotion of scholars, the suppression and discrediting of ideas from other intellectual traditions, unscrupulous misappropriation of such ideas when possible, and control of circulation of ideas through the peer group system

which links both the publishing and journal industries.

This is the reason why Mahatma Gandhi, Tolstoy, Aurobindo, Mao Zedong and other eminent persons all worked on revamping the educational systems they inherited as an important element of their political work. Gandhi introduced the system of Nai Talim, in which students would work with their hands and learn and earn while doing so. ♦

Claude Alvares is the coordinator of the Multiversity Project. He is the author of Decolonizing History, which severely knocked down Western interpretations of societies like India and China. The above is extracted from his presentation at the International Conference on 'Decolonising Our Universities' held in Penang, Malaysia, in June 2011.

Endnotes

1. See: <http://www.iescp.org/index.php/events>.
2. The complete text of the UNESCO *World Social Science Report* can be downloaded from: www.unesco.org/shs/wssr
3. Farid Alatas, *Alternative Discourses in Asian Social Science*, 2006, p.13.
4. Sir John Davies, *A Discovery of the True Causes Why Ireland Was Never Entirely Subdued Nor Brought Under Obedience of the Crown of England Until the Beginning of His Majesty's Happy Reign* (1612), in Henry Morley, ed., *Ireland Under Elizabeth and James the First* (London: George Routledge and Sons, Limited, 1890), p. 291.
5. See: <http://www.vvv03.com/Minutes.pdf>
6. See: <http://www.vvv03.com/Minutes.pdf>
7. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind*, 1981, p.3.
8. Guillermo Bonfil Batalla, *Mexico Profundo: Reclaiming a Civilization*, 1996.
9. Syed Hussein Alatas, *The Captive Mind*, 1969; *The Captive Mind Revisited*, Multiversity, 2006.
10. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, work cited, 1981, p.20.
11. See: www.mathcurriculumcenter.org/PDFS/.../comm_of_10_summary.pdf
12. MK Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, 2008 edition, p.89.
13. Vinay Lal, 'The Disciplines in Ruins: History, the Social Sciences, and Their Categories in the "New Millennium"', *Emergences*, Vol.12, No.1, 2002, p.143.
14. Ward Churchill, *White Studies: The Intellectual Imperialism of Higher Education*, Citizens International, 2002, p.25.

A Eurocentric problem

Although 'Eurocentrism' – an ideological project shaped by Europe's intellectual elites in the service of rising European expansionism starting in the 16th century – has come under challenge in recent years, it still dominates the international intellectual landscape, says *M Shahid Alam*.

*He who knows himself and others
Here will also see,
That the East and West, like brothers,
Parted ne'er shall be.*

– Goethe¹

IN no other major civilisation do self-regard, self-congratulation and denigration of the 'Other' run as deep, nor have these tendencies infected as many aspects of their thinking, laws, and policy, as they have in Western Europe and its overseas extensions.² These tendencies reached their apogee during the 19th century, retreated briefly after World War II, but have been staging a comeback since the end of the Cold War.

For several decades now, critics have studied these Western tendencies under the rubric of Eurocentrism, a complex of ideas, attitudes, and policies which treat Europe – when it is convenient – as a geographical, racial and cultural unity, but place Western Europe and its overseas extensions at the centre of world history since 1000 CE.³

Unlike the garden variety of ethnocentrism, Eurocentrism emerged as an ideological project – shaped by Europe's intellectual elites – in the service of Europe's rising expansionist states, starting in the 16th century. It makes sweeping claims of European superiority in all spheres of civilisation. In this worldview, only Europeans have created history over the past 3,000 years, beginning with the ancient Greeks. In various accounts, this centrality is ascribed to race, culture, religion and geography.

The central organising principle of Eurocentrism is the division of the world into unequal moieties: us and them, self and the Other. All those qualities that Western thinkers believe are emblems or sources of superiority are securely placed in the 'us' cat-



The conventional Mercator maps greatly exaggerate the size of Europe, making it as large as, or larger than, Africa. Picture shows a map using the alternative Peters projection, which shows all areas according to their actual size.

egory, and their opposites are pinned on 'them'. The arrogance of this dichotomy is breathtaking.

Once these dichotomies are in place, it becomes quite easy to 'explain' Europe's putative centrality in history. One set of superior characteristics – innate, unchanging, unique – accounts for the Western lead in all avenues of human endeavour, whether economic, technological, military, scientific or cultural. It is a tautological narrative of history par excellence.

Manufacturing history

In order to 'explain' the history of European superiority, the Eurocentrics first had to manufacture the history of this superiority. They endowed 'Europe' with historical depth by appropriating Greece and Rome; this was accomplished by defining Europe as a geographical, racial and cultural unity. In addition, they denied the eastern origins of Greek civilisation, and, for the same reason, they passed over the connec-

tions of early Christianity to Syria and North Africa. In order to obscure Western Europe's extensive debt to the Islamicate, they devalued the birth of new cultural formations in Western Europe in the 11th and 12th centuries flowing from contacts with the Arabs in Spain, Sicily and the Levant.⁴ Instead, this history was moved forward several centuries to place it in northern Italy, whose cultural flowering – defined as a rebirth – was connected to the 'direct' recovery of Greek philosophy, sciences and literature.

The Eurocentrics construct a European history that begins in Greece, migrates westward to Rome, and again to points in Western Europe. In tracing the origins of the Renaissance to Greece, the Eurocentrics show little embarrassment about the 15 centuries during which the Greek sciences and philosophy – mostly forgotten in 'Europe' – were being cultivated in the Middle East.

While they were fabricating a history of the rise of the West, the Eurocentrics were also engaged in

denying that the rest of the world had any history. Yes, civilisation began in the East but, after these early beginnings, the Asiatics have been immovably stuck in the past, forcing history to move westward in order to make progress. Europe's most radical thinker of the 19th century, Karl Marx, too bought into this myth about static Asiatic societies whose despotism deprived them of the engine of 'dialectical' change.

Over the last few decades, this Eurocentric history has increasingly come under challenge from the 'peoples without history', dissenting scholars in the West, and, most importantly, from new facts on the ground – the rise of national liberation movements, the dismantling of Western colonial empires, the socialist revolutions in China and Vietnam, the Iranian revolution, and, increasingly, the rise of several leading centres of economic dynamism in East and South Asia. Despite this challenge, Eurocentrism still controls the commanding heights in the think-tanks, media, political discourse and popular prejudices of nearly all Western societies. The weight and momentum of Eurocentric tendencies, powered by the best Western minds over centuries, cannot be overthrown within a few decades.

Cartographic violence

Eurocentric distortions have not spared cartography, the 'science' of map-making.

Europe is relatively small in relation to the great landmasses to the east and south, Asia and Africa. The Eurocentrics might have chosen to argue that Europe has maintained its centrality despite its smaller size, proof of its qualitative lead over the much larger landmasses of Asia and Africa. They chose otherwise. They could not pass up the opportunities that maps presented for appropriating the symbols of superiority in the realm of cartography.

The powerful belong at the top. Eurocentrism demanded that cartography place Europe at the top of the world. This was easily accomplished

by orienting the globe so that the North appeared at the top of the globe, or, in the case of maps, at the top of the page. It is always a source of some confusion for my students when I hang the map of the world upside down so that the North goes at the bottom. It is a bit unsettling to learn that there is no logic – nothing natural – about the North-at-the-top globes and maps.

World maps were not everywhere drawn with the North-at-the-top orientation. The Muslims in their heyday – when their empires stretched from Spain to Khurasan and India – were making world maps which placed the South at the top, even though this placed Africa above the central Islamic lands stretching from the Nile to the Oxus. In their case, perhaps, orientation of the maps did not matter as much, since they always came out at the centre.

In addition, Europeans gave currency to world maps that used Mercator's cylindrical projection. Was this choice accidental? Admittedly, the Mercator map was useful for mariners, since a line connecting two points on this map showed the true direction. But are we to believe that sea captains had an interest in imposing – and the power as well to impose – maps useful to them on the rest of society? More credibly, the Mercator maps were chosen because they greatly exaggerated the size of Europe, making it as large as, or larger than, Africa.

Incredibly, some Mercator maps published in the United States engage in cartographic violence. In order to centre the United States on their maps, the publishers are quite happy to tear Asia right down the middle, pushing its two halves to the left and right edges of the map. It matters little that this sundering of Asia greatly diminishes the cartographic value of this truncated map of the world. This quite nicely illustrates the first casualty of Eurocentrism – its disregard for reality, and its willingness to engage in epistemological violence in order to place Europe at the centre of the world.

Inverting the paradigm

Growing up, I knew that ignorance was the chief support behind prejudice. Prejudices, whether religious or ethnic, diminished with education and scholarship. And that is how it should be, I thought. Prejudice is sustained by ignorance. Superior intellects, combined with wide learning, should have little difficulty in clearing the web of lies spun by the powerful. At the time, I little comprehended that superior intellects could also be bought and seduced by temptations of power, money and various forms of tribalism, especially if their culture had not prepared them to resist these blandishments.

It took a few years of familiarity with the Western world to overcome my naïveté about the relationship between tolerance and intellect. My encounters with Western classics and the Western media slowly confirmed me in my worry that groupthink in Western societies ran deeper than in Islamic societies.

My growing familiarity with the writings of Western Orientalists and, later, the greatest European thinkers of the West – Montesquieu, Kant, Hegel, the Mills, Marx, Weber – inverted the paradigm I had acquired in youth. The prejudices of Western societies had their source at the top – in the best Western intellects – not in popular prejudice. They were supported by reasoning, by learned historical narratives, by monumental efforts at myth-making. Indeed, the leading thinkers fed and supported the prejudice of the populace.

I can still recall my disappointment when I bought Will and Ariel Durant's compendious 11-volume set, *The Story of Civilization*, to discover that they had devoted only one of their 11 volumes to non-European civilisations. Tellingly, this volume carried the title *Our Oriental Heritage*. In the Durants' *Story*, the Orientals make a brief early appearance on the stage of history, in the infancy of human civilisation, but having launched the West on its brilliant civilisational trajectory, they graciously make an exit from the stage of world history. This was not

an oddity, I later learned. It was nearly the norm, even with modern writers.

Another book I read a few years later, Kenneth Clark's *Civilization*, notwithstanding its title, is exclusively about the art, architecture, philosophy and sciences in Western Europe. Clark succeeds in talking about such things without scarcely a mention of how they might be connected to India, China, the Islamicate, Africa, and the Americas.

Despite my familiarity with Eurocentric biases in Western thought, I still cannot suppress my disappointment at new instances of racism in Western Europe's best and brightest thinkers. Immanuel Kant divides humans into four 'races', set apart from each other by differences in 'natural disposition'. 'The negroes of Africa,' he writes, 'have by nature no feeling above the trifling.' In support, he recalls David Hume's challenge to show him a single 'Negro' with talents. On hearing of a 'Negro' carpenter who berated whites for complaining when their wives abused their liberties, Kant remarked that there might be some truth in that observation. Then, spitefully, he added, '...in short, this fellow was quite black from head to foot, a clear proof that what he said was stupid.' To Kant the hierarchy of races is clear. 'Humanity,' he asserts, 'is at its greatest perfection in the race of the whites. The yellow Indians are far below them and at the lowest point are a part of the American peoples.'⁵

Few of Europe's most eminent thinkers, especially during the 18th and 19th centuries, could escape the siren songs of Eurocentrism. Some Western thinkers even today cannot confront this ugliness. French philosopher and psychoanalyst Octave Mannoni boldly claims, 'European civilisation and its best representatives are not...responsible for colonial racialism; that is the work of petty officials, small traders, and colonials who have toiled much without great success.'⁶ Spare the elites: blame the lumpenproletariat!

A leading light of 19th century Britain, James Mill, philosopher and historian, wrote a massive five-volume

history of India, it appears, with the sole object of demonstrating how deficient the Indians are in governance, the sciences, philosophy, technology and the arts. In short, the Indians were barbaric and quite incapable of managing their own affairs except under enlightened British tutelage. His son, John Stuart Mill, remarked, 'The greater part of the world has, properly speaking, no history, because the despotism of custom is complete. This is the case over the whole East [emphasis added].'⁷

How different was the approach of another scientist and historian, Al-Biruni, an Afghan from the 11th century, who – unlike James Mill – travelled through India for 13 years, learned Sanskrit, translated Sanskrit works on mathematics, studied Indian society first hand, and invited Indian scholars to Ghazni, in preparation for his two-volume treatise on Indian civilisation. His stated intention in his researches on India was to provide his Muslim audience with authentic accounts of its geography, religions, sciences, culture, arts and manners – and, thereby, elevate the quality of their discourse about the Indian peoples. He concluded his treatise with these remarks: 'We think now that what we have related in this book will be sufficient for anyone who wants to converse with the Hindus, and to discuss with them questions of religion, science, or literature, *on the very basis of their own civilisation* [emphasis added].'⁸

Modernity: How Western?

In the 18th century, when a small number of European thinkers were vigorously making the case for the supremacy of reason in human affairs, they knew – and were often happy to acknowledge – that they were following in the footsteps of Confucius who had preceded them by two millennia.

By the end of the century, however, a stronger and more confident Europe had forgotten its debt to the Chinese or any source outside of Europe. Insistently, they began to claim that reason, science and democracy were exclusive to Europeans. It was

a strange claim from thinkers who claimed that knowledge should be based on observation and reason – it should be objective.

In truth, it is hard to imagine how any society, including the most primitive, could have adapted to their ecology without following – at least intuitively – the scientific method. In practical matters, knowledge unsupported by experience would have proved fatal for societies that were exposed more frequently than ours to life-threatening conditions. Moreover, the Arab scientists were not only practising the scientific method in their studies on optics, chemistry and astronomy, but in the early 11th century, Ibn al-Haytham, known to the West as Alhazen, had offered a clear theoretical formulation of the scientific method. Roger Bacon, the putative founder of the scientific method, had read parts of al-Haytham's major work, *Kitab al-Manazir*, in a Latin translation, and summarised it in his own book, *Perspectiva*.

If democracy is equated with the counting of heads, even the United States – the self-declared bastion of democracy – was counting considerably fewer than half the heads until 1920, when women gained the right to vote. Blacks would not be counted until 1965. On the whole, the counting of heads has come to Europe *after* centuries of economic progress; it was not the foundation of their progress. Monarchic absolutism was stronger in nearly all of early modern Europe than it was in the Islamicate, whose rulers had only limited control over legislation and, in addition, faced institutionalised opposition from the class of legal scholars.⁹ The nomadic tribes in Africa and Asia had their council of elders, were led by a meritocracy, and, while their egalitarianism often excluded women, it generally went farther than in the stratified societies of Europe. The Indians had local self-government in their *panchayats*. The Pashtoons had their parliament in the *loya jirga*. The early Arabs could withhold *baya* – an oath of loyalty – from an unacceptable new ruler.

If democracy is defined by its

substance, by tolerance – respect for differences of religion, colour, ethnicity and physiognomy – most Enlightenment thinkers limited its application only to members of the white race. Tolerance has not been a particularly visible European virtue. In modern times, but especially since the Age of Enlightenment, Christian intolerance was replaced by a racial intolerance that translated quickly into schemes of genocide or support for slavery in the Americas, Africa and Oceania.

The Ottomans, with their system of *millet*s – which granted a great deal of autonomy to their non-Muslim religious communities – afforded far greater protections to all segments of their subjects. In imposing one set of laws pertaining to the affairs of the family – often of Christian inspiration – modern Western states cannot equal the tolerance of the Islamicate which allowed its non-Muslim communities to order their family affairs according to their own religious laws. Universally condemned by Western writers, the tax imposed by Muslim states on their non-Muslim populations was often considered a privilege by the latter since it exempted them from military service. When Western powers forced the Ottomans to grant ‘equality’ to its Christian population, they rioted against this measure in several Ottoman cities.

The rejection of priestly intermediation, starting in the 15th century, is commonly regarded as the first blow for modernity: allegedly, it freed the European to read the Bible in the vernacular and deal directly with his God. Islam had accomplished this, in a more radical fashion, in the early seventh century; and who is to say that Europeans were unaware of this Islamic precedent, or that there was no Islamic inspiration behind the Protestant movement?¹⁰

Oddly, however, the rupture with Rome also freed Christianity to be nationalised, to be appropriated by the newly emerging states in Western Europe, who proceeded to establish a national church and doctrine, which then sanctioned religious wars, persecution and, no less, colonisation and slavery of non-Europeans. In other

words, the freedom of conscience in the early modern West was generally more circumscribed than in the Islamicate, where no Church existed to enforce religious dogma, and Muslims were free to live their lives according to the legal traditions of their choice.

The inspiration for the central idea of orthodox economics – its vigorous opposition to state interventions – came primarily from the Chinese. In his time, Francois Quesnay, the leading light of the French pioneers of this policy – the Physiocrats – was known as the ‘European Confucius’. The watchword that summed up Physiocratic political economy, *laissez faire*, was a direct translation from the Chinese phrase *wu wei*.¹¹ Adam Smith, the putative Anglo-Saxon founder of classical economics, was a disciple of Quesnay. Few orthodox economists know that the language they speak – though not its intent – was invented by the ancient Chinese.

Since machines defined modernity – for a growing number of Europeans starting in the 18th century – it may be worth recalling that many of the machines that led the Europeans into modernity – water mills, windmills, the compass, lateen sail, astrolabe, the armillary sphere, the inner mechanisms of the clock, seed drills, mechanised mowers and threshers, iron mouldboard plough, printing press, pumps, the rudder, cannons and guns, and many others – had their origins outside Western Europe, in China or the Islamicate.¹² If they originated in Greece, they were refined and improved for many centuries in the Islamicate before they were passed on to Western Europe.

One of the arch proponents of Western imperialism, Rudyard Kipling, entrenched in his deeply parochial thinking, could not imagine that the East and West would ever meet. Pity, the news had not reached him that they had been meeting – with the West receiving most of the benefits of these encounters – since ancient times. ♦

M Shahid Alam is professor of economics at

Northeastern University in Boston, USA. His latest book is *Israeli Exceptionalism: The Destabilizing Logic of Zionism* (Palgrave Macmillan, November 2009). This article is reproduced from the *Dissident Voice* website (dissidentvoice.org).

Endnotes

1. Edgar A Bowring, *Poems of Goethe* (John W Parker & Son, 1853): 272.
2. EC Eze, *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader* (Blackwell, 1997); M Shahid Alam, ‘Articulating Group Differences: A Variety of Autocentrism,’ *Science and Society* (Summer 2003): 206-18.
3. For a review of this literature, see Andre Gunder Frank, ‘East and West,’ in: Arno Tausch and Peter Herrmann, eds., *The West, Europe and the Muslim World* (Novinka, 2006).
4. As a noun, ‘Islamicate’ seeks to avoid the confusion that arises from using ‘Islam’ when speaking of the world of Muslims, as in ‘Europe and Islam’. As an adjective, ‘Islamicate’ replaces ‘Islamic’; the former refers to activities or actions connected to Muslims, differentiating this from the latter, which should be used only when referring to activities which flow from the normative principles of Islam.
5. Eze, *Race and the Enlightenment*: 47, 55, 63.
6. Octave Mannoni, *Prospero and Caliban: Psychology of Colonization* (University of Michigan Press, 1990): 24.
7. John Stuart Mill, *Liberty* (NuVision, 1859): 60.
8. Alberuni, *Alberuni's India*, translated by Edward C Sachau, and abridged and edited by Ainslie T Embree (The Norton Library, 1971): 246.
9. Noah Feldman, *The Fall and Rise of the Islamic State* (Princeton University Press, 2008): 27-35.
10. Charles Lindholm, *The Islamic Middle East: An Historical Anthropology* (Blackwell, 1996): 13.
11. John M Hobson, *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilisation* (Cambridge University Press, 2004): 195-96.
12. Hobson, *The Eastern Origins*: Ch. 9.

The modern university challenged: Higher education between elitism and corporatism

Universities are colonised not only by the Eurocentric ideologies which inform their curricula. With the rise of neoliberalism, the university is now becoming subservient to the market, says *Yusef Progler*.

IF we want to talk about ‘decolonising our universities’, perhaps we have to first identify what has colonised our universities. In some sense, the university itself is a colonised space in terms of curriculum being oriented toward what has been called ‘white studies’ (Churchill 1981) at the expense of other knowledges. While this is well known and efforts are afoot to redress this curricular imbalance, there is another way that universities are colonised that is not as often discussed.

Nearly 40 years ago, Martin Carnoy (1974) mentioned the idea of ‘colonised knowledge’, by which he meant not the specific details of curriculum or Eurocentric theories or textbooks and such, but that the overall knowledge system developed in modern universities perpetuates a hierarchical social structure and that the purpose of education within this structure was to provide a channel for upward mobility within this hierarchy without questioning or changing it. In other words, on a more fundamental level than on the level of curriculum, textbooks, methods and theories, we need to focus on the university as a colonised space in terms of the mission and the purpose of the university.

Of course, this sense of colonised knowledge has connections to the more direct and clearly recognisable forms of colonisation. One of these connections is the sense of elitism bolstered by notions of supremacy, in which the university becomes a space for the elite classes to get educated and reproduce themselves, and there is a belief that the knowledge acquired



Sharp budget cuts for higher education have pushed many universities to be run more like corporations. Picture shows Chilean students protesting cuts in education spending.

in this way is inherently better than the knowledge outside the university, that managers and researchers are somehow smarter or more worthy of praise than other peoples. So it's not only the notion that the white man's knowledge is better or worse than others that needs to be resisted; we also need to resist this elite university-based knowledge system and the notion that it is better than the knowledge found in communities, such as among agricultural and industrial workers or among the crafts or a host of other fields and areas of expertise and experience outside the academy.

Despite their connections to pre-modern institutions of learning, most modern universities were established and developed according to the needs of the former colonial system and the modern nation-state system that emerged upon the demise of the old system of direct colonialism. The main purpose carried over from one system to the other has been the creation, training and maintenance of an elite class tasked with managing mod-

ern societies and thinking on behalf of the public. The elitist ideology behind this system involves expenditures of public funds on higher education in order to produce each new generation of thinkers, engineers, doctors and politicians in the belief that subsidising this elite would provide benefits for the entire society. Despite its origins in colonialism, this system has more or less thrived for the past century in the Global South. However, it has been in steady decline with the rise of neoliberalism, which has led some to lament the ‘university in ruins’ (Readings 1997).

The corporate university

While the odour of direct forms of colonisation remains in the form of elitism and supremacy, they have been reconfigured in some cases from the national to the transnational in that the university is now becoming subservient to the demands of the market (Miyoshi 1998). This is because we're in a situation now where the

demand for a university education is higher than it has ever been. In fact, whatever we might say are the failures of the university, in this sense it has been incredibly successful in convincing ever-increasing portions of humanity that a university education is desirable and valuable. But with this increased demand governments are retracting funding or, where there is still state-subsidised education, tightening up access by way of ever-more difficult exams and other sorting mechanisms.

During the decades that universities have been run with an elitist ideology, increasing numbers of people have been convinced that higher education is the key to success, usually defined as access to well-paid jobs and the accompanying social status. This is fused with a general belief that a university education brings upward mobility for heretofore marginalised social classes. While this might be true in some limited sense, the upward mobility of the few has resulted in the increased marginalisation of the many who have gone through the same lengthy and very costly process only to realise that the rewards at the end are few and far between.

Nevertheless, the hope for success and mobility continues to increase demand for a university education, although the hope is blind to the fact that there is no similar rise in demand for the impending increase of graduates. Therefore, higher education has in many cases simply perpetuated the problem of primary through secondary national schooling, leaving in its wake ever more of the 'walking wounded' who are graduated into a society that has no need or place for them. At the same time, communities and families acting on the hope of upward mobility and access to wealth and power through a university degree are coming under a greater burden in paying for the education of their children, even while the prospect is often bleak of getting a job that leads to a satisfying position and which provides enough income capable of paying back such a great investment.

One tangible outcome of this increase in demand for higher education has been felt in the financial poli-



Celebrating graduation from university. Higher education has left in its wake ever more of the 'walking wounded' who are graduated into a society that has no need or place for them.

cies impacting universities, which have been emboldened by the neoliberal ideology coupled with the belief that higher education is no longer in need of public funds that can now be spent elsewhere. This has led to sharp budget cuts for higher education, which has in turn pushed many universities to be run more like corporations in that financial concerns and business slogans are beginning to replace traditional mission statements. What matters now, in a crude economic sense, is survival of the fittest, meaning those that can raise their own funds.

In other words, in many places the corporate university is now replacing the national university. Readings (1997) had identified this as a shift away from the traditional research university to the 'university of excellence', with 'excellence' taken here to be a vapid concept devoid of referential value but indicative of the mindset of the corporation. For Readings, the university of excellence has lost track of 'modernity's encounter with culture'. Others have described this shift in terms of universities increasingly embracing an ethos of entrepreneurialism, with the term 'corporate university', as employed by Aronowitz (2001), referring to a university which has adopted the 'framework and ideology of the large corporation' and which has prioritised the 'application of accounting principles to academic employment and planning'. Distinct from a university run by a corporation, the corporate university is one that is run *as* a corporation.

In light of this brief outline of the

shift from the national to the corporate university, what remains is a consideration of what it now means to be a university student or to work in higher education as a teacher, researcher or administrator. What are we doing in the roles we are playing? What are our expectations and those of students, families and other concerned parties? Considering our personal limitations as well as the unfolding situation, what options are there to effect an active and constructive role in this situation? Shall we envision a utopian system of higher education and work towards that? Or do we want to preserve things the way they were in the past, or perhaps protect the structure while changing the content and curricula?

In his discussion of 'education in spite of postmodernity', Zygmunt Bauman (2001) has noted that while in the modernising countries universities 'may still play the traditional role of factories supplying a heretofore missing educated elite', universities in the West will need to 'rethink their role in a world that has no use for their traditional services, sets new rules for the game of prestige and influence, and views with growing suspicion the values they stood for'. Bauman also observed that universities have become slow to respond to the unpredictable and hyper-changing worlds of 'liquid modernity'. For instance, by the time graduates finish a degree the knowledge they absorb may already be obsolete. Meanwhile, he laments, after the 'scientifically assisted horrors' of the 20th century our faith in the humanising potential of the modern Western sciences

'seems laughably, perhaps even criminally, naïve'. While many 19th and 20th century traditions used to be coveted assets for creating meaning in modern research universities, they are quickly becoming liabilities in a more fluid and tentative world. Bauman suggests that universities can develop responses to this emerging global disorder and perhaps maintain their sense of meaning and purpose by developing a diversity of opinions, methodologies and curricula as necessary survival features. However, he does not address what kind of institutional structures might be required to bring this about.

Teaching responses

Recent economic trends in higher education, in which governments have retracted and reduced funding for higher education, have posed challenges for academics. In particular, as corporate universities adopt a 'student as customer' approach to solving financial problems, class sizes and teaching loads are expanding. This has given rise to various strategies employed by university professors tasked with teaching these courses. We can illustrate these strategies through a brief tale of two teachers.

Teacher One creates artificial scarcity by intimidating students to reduce class size and then guiding the remaining small and elite body toward graduate programmes in the Global North, revelling in the ability to gain access for a limited number of students in these elite institutions while at the same time artificially maintaining small class sizes at the expense of his colleagues who end up taking up the slack. This teacher justifies this strategy through recourse to the quality argument. Unlike this elitist colleague, our second teacher accepts the duty to teach hundreds of students in a single lecture, bowing to the quantity demands of the corporate university, but gives them an easy ride by using exams that everybody, regardless of the course content, can easily pass, providing questions in advance, practising social promotion, and creating a new social contract based on mutual agreement to not make waves or require or achieve much.

Despite teaching being one of the

main tasks of a university professor today, owing to the increased demand noted above, each position provides relief from teaching one way or another; perhaps we can say that the latter is a populist response and the former an elitist response. As a result, both teachers gain more time for pursuing research interests and chasing grants, with the latter often more highly valued even if the money is often gratuitous and wasteful, especially in the elitist universities. On the point regarding grants, they also have the more insidious feature of inculcating researchers into the money-grubbing culture of the neoliberal corporation.

More importantly, both positions are responses to an emerging trend in higher education that gives pause for reflection on our roles in the academy. Our first teacher laments the 'low-quality' students and seeks to entrench the elitism of the colonised academy, but this position ignores or undermines hard-won gains by women, people of colour and ethnic or religious minorities, or the struggles of the poor and marginalised that have opened the academy doors to a broader cross-section of humanity than ever before in history. This could even be seen as a gain or a victory against the exclusivity and elitism of the colonised university, unless the curricular issues noted above mean entrenching the elitist impulse through demands for inculcating one or another national canon.

Of course, there is one possible way to solve much of this problem, which is to close 50, 60, or 70% of the universities to rebalance the scarcity issue and bolster the elitism. But that would just feed back into the old forms of classical colonisation. Rather than that, some may suggest going in the other direction by opening up the academy completely to everybody, which would solve the quantity problem at the expense of the quality issue. Or, perhaps rather than dichotomising, there needs to be ongoing dialogue between civil society, NGOs, the world of work, families and other institutions and the university, so that the university could become more aligned with those sectors of society.

Actually, this is what Clark Kerr

(2001) proposed in his idea of the Multiversity in the 1960s, a proposal that was roundly despised by university academics of the day and which remains severely criticised even 40 years later. Why? I think it's because a lot of university academics are still operating in the elitist model. But the valid criticism of Kerr's proposal for a Multiversity is that what he really meant were corporations, as a sort of advocacy of a proto- or cryptic-corporate university before we recently named it as such.

But if we broaden that vision of the university being accountable not just to monied corporations but to civil society, to NGOs, to volunteerism and normal employers, then perhaps we can redeem that initial idea of the Multiversity as responsible to society and overlay that with our idea of Multiversity, which is really about reintroducing marginalised voices into the academy, thus redressing both the institutional as well as curricular imbalances in higher education today. ♦

Yusef J Progler teaches Comparative Cultures and Societies at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University in Japan, where he is also Associate Dean of the College of Asia Pacific Studies and has previously served as academic field leader for a new programme in Media, Culture and Society. The above is extracted from his presentation at the International Conference on 'Decolonising Our Universities' held in Penang, Malaysia, in June 2011.

References

- Aronowitz, S. *The Knowledge Factory: Dismantling the Corporate University and Creating True Higher Learning*. Beacon Press, 2001.
- Bauman, Z. *The Individualized Society*. Polity Press, 2001.
- Carnoy, M. *Education as Cultural Imperialism*. David McKay Company, 1974.
- Churchill, W. 'White Studies: The Intellectual Imperialism of Contemporary US Education', *Equity and Excellence in Education*, Vol. 19, Nos. 1 & 2, January 1981, pp. 51-57.
- Kerr, C. *The Uses of the University*. Harvard University Press, 2001.
- Miyoshi, M. 'Globalization, Culture and the University', in Jameson and Miyoshi (eds.) *The Cultures of Globalization*. Duke University Press, 1998.
- Readings, B. *The University in Ruins*. Harvard University Press, 1997.

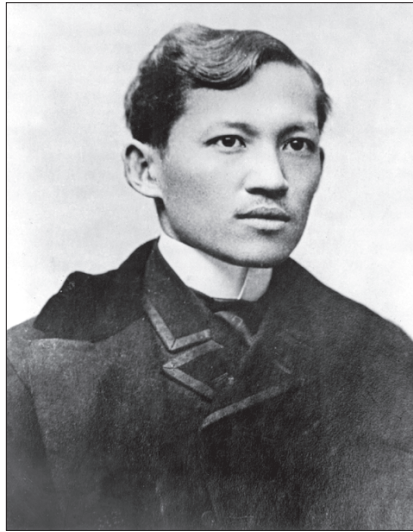
Teaching social theory as alternative discourse

While the critique of Orientalism in the social sciences is well-known, this has yet to be reflected in the teaching of basic and mainstream social science courses in most universities around the world, says *Syed Farid Alatas*.

ORIENTALISM defines the content of education in such a way that the origins of the social sciences and the question of alternative points of view are not thematised. It is this lack of thematisation which makes it highly unlikely that the works of non-European thinkers would be given the same attention as European and American social theorists such as Marx, Weber, Durkheim and others. Orientalism is a thought-style that is not restricted to Europeans. The social sciences are taught in the Third World in a Eurocentric manner. This has contributed to the alienation of social scientists from local and regional scholarly traditions. Furthermore, courses in sociology and the other social sciences generally do not attempt to correct the Orientalist bias by introducing non-Western thinkers. If we take the 19th century as an example, the impression is given that during the period that Europeans such as Marx, Weber, Durkheim and others were thinking about the nature of society and its development, there were no thinkers in Asia and Africa doing the same.

The absence of non-European thinkers in these accounts is particularly glaring in cases where non-Europeans had actually influenced the development of social thought. Typically, a history of social thought or a course on social thought and theory would cover theorists such as Montesquieu, Vico, Comte, Spencer, Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Simmel, Toennies, Sombart, Mannheim, Pareto, Sumner, Ward, Small, and others. Generally, non-Western thinkers are excluded.

Here it is necessary to make a distinction between Orientalism as the blatantly stereotypical portrayal of the



The Filipino thinker and activist José Rizal (pic) lived during the formative period of sociology but theorised about the nature of society in ways not done by Western sociologists.

‘Orient’ that was so typical of 19th century scholarship, and the new Orientalism of today which is characterised by the neglect and silencing of non-Western voices. If at all non-Europeans appear in the texts and courses, they are objects of study of the European scholars and not knowing subjects, that is, sources of sociological theories and ideas. This is what is meant by the silencing or marginalisation of non-Western thinkers.

Teaching social theory: Universalising the canon

It seems fitting, therefore, to provide examples of social theorists of non-European backgrounds who wrote on topics and theorised problems that would be of interest to those studying the broad-ranging macro processes that have become the hall-

mark of classical sociological thought and theory. In my own teaching I have been concentrating on Ibn Khaldun and José Rizal (Alatas, S.F., 2009). I would like to say a few words about the latter, as I believe that his work is of particular interest to us in South-East Asia.

The Filipino thinker and activist José Rizal (1861-1896) was probably the first systematic social thinker in South-East Asia. He raised original problems and treated them in a creative way. He lived during the formative period of sociology but theorised about the nature of society in ways not done by Western sociologists. He provides us with a different perspective on the colonial dimension of the emerging modernity of the 19th century.

Rizal was born into a wealthy family. His father ran a sugar plantation on land leased from the Dominican Order. As a result, Rizal was able to attend the best schools in Manila. He continued his higher studies at the Ateneo de Manila University and then the University of Santo Tomas. In 1882 Rizal departed for Spain where he studied medicine and the humanities at the Universidad Central in Madrid.

Rizal returned to the Philippines in 1887. This was also the year that his first novel, *Noli Me Tangere* (Touch Me Not), was published. The novel was a reflection of exploitative conditions under Spanish colonial rule and enraged the Spanish friars. It was a diagnosis of the problems of Filipino society and a reflection of the problems of exploitation in Filipino colonial society. His second novel, *El Filibusterismo* (The Revolution), published in 1891, examined the possibilities and consequences of revo-

lution.

If we were to construct a sociological theory from Rizal's works, three broad aspects can be discerned in his writings. First, we have his theory of colonial society, a theory that explains the nature and conditions of colonial society. Second, there is Rizal's critique of colonial knowledge of the Philippines. Finally, there is his discourse on the meaning and requirements for emancipation.

In Rizal's thought, the corrupt Spanish colonial government and its officials oppress and exploit the Filipinos, while blaming the backwardness of the Filipinos on their alleged laziness. But Rizal's project was to show that in fact the Filipinos were a relatively advanced society in pre-colonial times, and that their backwardness was a product of colonialism. This required a reinterpretation of Filipino history.

During Rizal's time, there was little critique of the state of knowledge about the Philippines among Spanish colonial and Filipino scholars. Rizal, being well-acquainted with Orientalist scholarship in Europe, was aware of what would today be referred to as Orientalist constructions. This can be seen from his annotation and republication of Antonio de Morga's *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* (Historical Events of the Philippine Islands) which first appeared in 1609. De Morga, a Spaniard, served eight years in the Philippines as Lieutenant Governor General and Captain General and was also a justice of the Supreme Court of Manila (Audiencia Real de Manila) (de Morga, 1890/1991: xxxv).

Rizal republished this work with his own annotation in order to correct what he saw as false reports and slanderous statements to be found in most Spanish works on the Philippines, as well as to bring to light the pre-colonial past that was wiped out from the memory of Filipinos by colonisation (de Morga, 1890/1962: vii). This includes the destruction of pre-Spanish records such as artefacts that would have thrown light on the nature of pre-colonial society. Rizal found de Morga's work an apt choice as it was,

according to Ocampo, the only civil history of the Philippines written during the Spanish colonial period, other works being mainly ecclesiastical histories. The problem with ecclesiastical histories, apart from the falsifications and slander, was that they 'abound in stories of devils, miracles, apparitions, etc., these forming the bulk of the voluminous histories of the Philippines' (de Morga, 1890/1962: 291 n. 4). For Rizal, therefore, existing histories of the Philippines were false and biased as well as unscientific and irrational. What Rizal's annotations accomplished were the following:

1. They provide examples of Filipino advances in agriculture and industry in pre-colonial times.
2. They provide the colonised's point of view of various issues.
3. They point out the cruelties perpetrated by the colonisers.
4. They furnish instances of hypocrisy of the colonisers, particularly the Catholic Church.
5. They expose the irrationalities of the Church's discourse on colonial topics.

Rizal noted that the 'miseries of a people without freedom should not be imputed to the people but to their rulers' (Rizal, 1963b: 31). Rizal's novels, political writings and letters provide examples such as the confiscations of lands, appropriation of labour of farmers, high taxes, forced labour without payment, and so on. Colonial policy was exploitative despite the claims or intentions of the colonial government and the Catholic Church. In fact, Rizal was extremely critical of the 'boasted ministers of God [the friars] and propagators of light(!) [who] have not sowed nor do they sow Christian moral, they have not taught religion, but rituals and superstitions' (Rizal, 1963b: 38).

This position required Rizal to critique colonial knowledge of the Filipinos. He went into history to address the colonial allegation regarding the supposed indolence of the Filipinos. This led to his understanding of the conditions for emancipation and the possibilities of revolution.

The myth of the indolent Filipino

Bearing in mind the reinterpreted account of Filipino history, Rizal undertakes a critique of the discourse on the lazy Filipino native that was perpetuated by the Spaniards. The theme of indolence is an important one that formed a vital part of the ideology of colonial capitalism. Rizal was probably the first to deal with it systematically. This concern was later taken up by Syed Hussein Alatas in his seminal work *The Myth of the Lazy Native* (1977), which contains a chapter entitled 'The Indolence of the Filipinos', in honour of Rizal's essay of the same title (Rizal, 1963a).

The basis of Rizal's sociology is his critique of the myth of the indolent Filipino. It is this critique, and the insight that the backwardness of Filipino society was due not to the Filipinos themselves but rather to the nature of colonial rule, that provides the proper background for understanding Rizal's criticisms against the clerical establishment and colonial administration.

In his famous essay 'The Indolence of the Filipinos', he defines indolence as 'little love for work, lack of activity' (Rizal, 1963a: 111). He then refers to indolence in two senses. First, there is indolence in the sense of the lack of activity that is caused by the warm tropical climate of the Philippines that 'requires quit and rest for the individual, just as cold incites him to work and to action' (Rizal, 1963a: 113). Rizal's argument is as follows:

'The fact is that in the tropical countries severe work is not a good thing as in cold countries, for there it is annihilation, it is death, it is destruction. Nature, as a just mother knowing this, has therefore made the land more fertile, more productive, as a compensation. An hour's work under that burning sun and in the midst of pernicious influences coming out of an active nature is equivalent to a day's work in a temperate climate; it is proper then that the land yield a hundredfold! Moreover, don't we see the active European who has gained

strength during winter, who feels the fresh blood of spring boil in his veins, don't we see him abandon his work during the few days of his changeable summer, close his office, where the work after all is not hard – for many, consisting of talking and gesticulating in the shade beside a desk – run to watering-places, sit down at the cafes, stroll about, etc.? What wonder then that the inhabitant of tropical countries, worn out and with his blood thinned by the prolonged and excessive heat, is reduced to inaction?' (Rizal, 1963a: 113).

What Rizal is referring to here is the physiological reaction to the heat of a tropical climate, which, strictly speaking, as Syed Hussein Alatas noted, is not consistent with Rizal's own definition of indolence, that is 'little love for work'. The adjustment of working habits to the tropical climate should not be understood as a result of laziness or little love for work.

There is a second aspect of Rizal's concept of indolence that is more significant, sociologically speaking. This is indolence in the real sense of the term, that is, little love for work or the lack of motivation to work:

'The evil is not that a more or less latent indolence [in the first sense, that is, the lack of activity] exists, but that it is fostered and magnified. Among men, as well as among nations, there exist not only aptitudes but also tendencies toward good and evil. To foster the good ones and aid them, as well as correct the bad ones and repress them would be the duty of society or of governments, if less noble thoughts did not absorb their attention. The evil is that indolence in the Philippines is a magnified indolence, a snow-ball indolence, if we may be permitted the expression, an evil which increases in direct proportion to the square of the periods of time, an effect of misgovernment and backwardness, as we said and not a cause of them' (Rizal, 1963a: 114).

A similar point was made by Gilberto Freyre in the context of Brazil:

'And when all this practically useless population of *caboclos* and light-

skinned mulattoes, worth more as clinical material than they are as an economic force, is discovered in the state of economic wretchedness and non-productive inertia in which Miguel Pereira and Belisário Penna found them living – in such a case those who lament our lack of racial purity and the fact that Brazil is not a temperate climate at once see in this wretchedness and inertia the result of intercourse, forever damned, between white men and black women, between Portuguese males and Indian women. In other words, the inertia and indolence are a matter of race...

'All of which means little to this particular school of sociology. Which is more alarmed by the stigmata of miscegenation than it is by those of syphilis, which is more concerned with the effects of climate than it is with social causes that are susceptible to control or rectification; nor does it take into account the influence exerted upon mestizo populations – above all, the free ones – by the scarcity of foodstuffs resulting from monoculture and a system of slave labor, it disregards likewise the chemical poverty of the traditional foods that these peoples, or rather all Brazilians, with a regional exception here and there, have for more than three centuries consumed; it overlooks the irregularity of food supply and the prevailing lack of hygiene in the conservation and distribution of such products' (Freyre, 1956: 48).

Rizal's important sociological contribution is his raising of the problem of indolence to begin with, as well as his treatment of the subject-matter, particularly his view that indolence is not a cause of the backwardness of Filipino society. Rather, it was the backwardness and disorder of Filipino colonial society that caused indolence. For Rizal, indolence was a result of the social and historical experience of the Filipinos under Spanish rule. We may again take issue with Rizal as to whether this actually constitutes indolence as opposed to the reluctance to work under exploitative conditions. What is important, however, is Rizal's attempt to deal with

the theme systematically. Rizal examined historical accounts by Europeans from centuries earlier which showed Filipinos to be industrious. This includes the writing of de Morga. Therefore, indolence must have social causes and these were to be found in the nature of colonial rule. Rizal would have agreed with Freyre that:

'It was not the "inferior race" that was the source of corruption, but the abuse of one race by another, an abuse that demanded a servile conformity on the part of the Negro to the appetites of the all-powerful lords of the land. Those appetites were stimulated by idleness, by a "wealth acquired without labor..." (Freyre, 1956: 329).

Freyre suggested that it was the masters rather than the slaves who were idle and lazy. He referred to the slave being 'at the service of his idle master's economic interests and voluptuous pleasure' (Freyre, 1956: 329).

Teaching social theory: Correcting the biases

A course on social theory that corrects the Eurocentric bias should not only focus on non-Western thinkers. It should critically deal with Western thinkers that make up the canon. This is what a colleague, Vineeta Sinha, and I have done in our course on Social Thought and Social Theory at the National University of Singapore, a discussion of which was carried out in the journal *Teaching Sociology* (Alatas & Sinha, 2001). The discussion in the rest of this section is drawn from that paper.

Bearing in mind the 'Western' origins of writings that are seen to constitute the corpus of sociological theory, we felt that the theme of Eurocentrism would provide a crucial additional point of orientation and could also provide for a meaningful and empowering discourse. A cautionary word on our usage of the term 'Eurocentrism' is necessary. As we understand the term, it signifies far more than its literal and commonplace meaning 'Europe-centredness'. We hold that Eurocentrism connotes a particular position, a perspective, a

way of seeing and not-seeing that is rooted in a number of problematic claims and assumptions. We also did not want to ourselves essentialise by assigning to the three theorists examined – Marx, Weber and Durkheim – the same, generalised usage of the label ‘Eurocentrism’. In fact we quite consciously strived to establish the specific and different ways in which aspects of the theories under consideration might be Eurocentric or not. We are further aware that the recognition of Eurocentrism in the writings of Marx, Weber and Durkheim is neither a surprise nor a recent discovery. Yet despite the datedness of this theme in the social sciences, the critique of Eurocentrism has not meaningfully reshaped or restructured the ways in which we theorise the emergence of the classical sociological canon. So despite ‘knowing’ that some aspects of Marx’s, Weber’s and Durkheim’s writings are ‘Eurocentric’ and expectedly so, the issue of how this impacts our contemporary reading of their works remains largely unaddressed and untheorised. We also made it clear to our students that to characterise the works of Marx, Weber and Durkheim as being Eurocentric or Orientalist was not to suggest that it was possible for European theorists to be otherwise. They were, after all, products of their time. However, from the vantage point of our own time other readings of their works are possible.

In an effort to deal with these issues, we assigned an essay by Wallerstein on Eurocentrism (1996). Wallerstein discusses a number of ways in which social science is Eurocentric.

Eurocentric historiography yielded accounts according to which whatever Europe was dominant in (bureaucratisation, capitalism, democracy, etc.) was good and superior and such dominance was explained in terms of characteristics peculiar to Europeans. Thus, Europe considered itself to be a unique civilisation in the sense that it was the site of the origin of modernity, the autonomy of the individual (vis-a-vis family, community, state, religion, etc.), and non-brutal behaviour in eve-

ryday life. The idea that European society was progressive (industrialisation, democracy, literacy, education) and that this progress would spread elsewhere, became entrenched in the social sciences. Furthermore, social science theories assumed that the development of modern capitalist society in Europe was not only good, but would be replicated elsewhere and that, therefore, scientific theories are valid across time and space.

Our aim in this project was not only to look for ‘other’ founding fathers of sociology, such as Rizal, but to ask how we should read Marx, Weber or Durkheim given the Eurocentrism of the ‘Western’ social sciences. Thus, the rethinking entailed emphasising those aspects of, say, Marx’s works that demonstrate his Eurocentrism, or selecting Weber’s writings that either prove or invalidate similar charges levelled at him. For example, in addition to reading Marx’s *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* and the *Grundrisse*, we also chose to focus on Marx’s discussion of the Asiatic mode of production and his discussions on colonialism in India (Marx & Engels, 1968), themes that are routinely excluded in sociological theory courses. More importantly, through our treatment of these substantive issues we further hoped to generate discussions about the effects of identifying Eurocentric biases in these works.

The need to reorient the course in this way is held to be all the more important because we note that Eurocentrism is not only found in European scholarship, but has affected the development of the social sciences in non-Western societies in a number of ways:

(i) The lack of knowledge of our own histories as evidenced in textbooks. In textbooks used in Asia and Africa, there tends to be less information on these parts of the world because the textbooks are invariably written in the United States or the United Kingdom. For example, we know more about the daily life of the European premodern family than that of our own. This is because sociology arose in the context of the transi-

tion from feudalism to capitalism and, therefore, the European historical context is the defining one. Normal development is defined as a move from feudalism to capitalism; therefore, that is the normal thing to study. The object of study is defined by this bias of normal development. In our own societies, while the priority is to study modern capitalist societies as well, the problem is that we begin with European precapitalist societies and draw attention to our own precapitalist societies in order to show that they constituted obstacles to modernisation.

(ii) Through Eurocentrism, images of our society are constructed which we come to regard as real until Eurocentric scholarship yields alternative images which may be equally Eurocentric. It was widely believed that values, attitudes and cultural patterns as a whole change in the process of modernisation and that such changes were inevitable (Rudolph & Rudolph, 1967; Kahn, 1979). However, after the experience of high growth in East Asia in the 1980s and early 1990s, traditional cultural patterns such as those derived from Confucianism were offered as a factor explaining growth. With the onset of the Asian financial crisis in 1997, however, once again Confucianism and Asian values had become suspect for having a hand in the economic decline.

(iii) The lack of original theorising. Because of the deluge of works on theory, methodology and empirical research arising mainly from North America and Europe, there has been much consumption of imported theories, techniques and research agendas.

Bearing in mind the above three problems, it was stressed to our students that they should (i) bear in mind the context in which sociological theory developed; (ii) gauge its usefulness for the study of our own context (non-Western); and (iii) be aware of the Eurocentric aspects of sociological theory, which detract from its scientific value.

In dealing with the theme of Eurocentrism in the course we presented to our students the following

assessment with regard to specific aspects of the works of Marx, Weber and Durkheim. Here I discuss the example of Marx.

While the section on Marx did deal with traditional topics such as the transition from feudalism to capitalism, circulation and production, alienation, class consciousness, the state, and ideology, there was an attempt to work into the materials the three interrelated objectives referred to above. For example, we put it to the class that the relevance of Marx's discussion on the transition from feudalism to capitalism is that it suggests that the presence of an emerging bourgeoisie in feudal society and a weak decentralised state in feudal societies were preconditions for the rise of capitalism. This in turn implies that these preconditions were non-existent in non-European societies. We pushed our students further with these queries: To what extent is this true and to what extent is this a Eurocentric view?

In line with Eurocentric assumptions that Europe was unique, it was assumed that such prerequisites were not to be found outside of Europe and that precapitalist modes of production outside of Europe were obstacles to capitalist development. An example was the Asiatic mode of production on which students were assigned readings.

Highlighted in the lectures were the features of the Asiatic mode of production, that Marx was often factually wrong in his characterisation of 'Asiatic' economies and societies, and that undergirding his political economy were Orientalist assumptions which viewed non-European societies as being the polar opposite of Europe. To put things in perspective, bearing in mind the problematic nature of Marx's characterisation of Indian society and his discussion of the Asiatic mode of production, we also pointed out that despite this limitation Marx's concept of the 'mode of production' is extremely central to sociological analysis. Yet, we emphasised that it is important to recognise the limitations in Marx's discussion of the Asiatic mode of production because it continues to inform con-

temporary interpretations of his works and perpetuates certain images of Asiatic and/or Indian society.

The discussions on the Eurocentric elements in Marx then made it possible to provide a more critical reading of Singapore's or South-East Asia's past while retaining the universalistic aspects of Marxist theory. For example, an article on colonial ideology in British Malaya was assigned (Hirschman, 1986). Here it was possible to demonstrate the utility of the Marxist concept of ideology for the critique of the Eurocentric aspects of colonial capitalism, of which Marx himself partook.

In addressing such topics as class consciousness, the state, and ideology, we made it a point to include readings on contemporary Third World societies and on the region of South-East Asia in order that students might see the relevance of the ideas of Marx to regions and areas other than his own. There was a concerted attempt, therefore, to expose the Eurocentrism in Marx while preserving the universal elements of his work as well as his theoretical contributions.

The captive mind, academic dependency and teaching

My interest in this topic is due in large part to the lifelong concerns of my late father, Syed Hussein Alatas (1928-2007), with the role of intellectuals in developing societies. On this topic he wrote a number of works that developed themes such as the captive mind (Alatas, S.H., 1969a, 1972, 1974) and intellectual imperialism (1969b, 2000).

The idea of intellectual imperialism is an important starting point for the understanding of academic dependency. According to Alatas, intellectual imperialism is analogous to political and economic imperialism in that it refers to the 'domination of one people by another in their world of thinking' (Alatas, S.H., 2000: 24). Intellectual imperialism was more direct in the colonial period, whereas today it has more to do with the control and influence the West exerts over the

flow of social scientific knowledge rather than its ownership and control of academic institutions. Indeed, this form of hegemony was 'not imposed by the West through colonial domination, but accepted willingly with confident enthusiasm, by scholars and planners of the former colonial territories and even in the few countries that remained independent during that period' (Alatas, S.H., 2006: 7-8).

Intellectual imperialism is the context within which academic dependency exists. Academic dependency theory theorises the global state of the social sciences. Academic dependency is defined as a condition in which knowledge production of certain social science communities is conditioned by the development and growth of knowledge of other scholarly communities to which the former is subjected. The relation of interdependence between two or more scientific communities, and between these and global transactions in knowledge, assumes the form of dependency when some scientific communities (those located in the knowledge powers) can expand according to certain criteria of development and progress, while other scientific communities (such as those in the developing societies) can only do this as a reflection of that expansion, which generally has negative effects on their development according to the same criteria.

This definition of academic dependency parallels that of economic dependency in the classic form in which it was stated by Teotonio dos Santos:

'By dependence we mean a situation in which the economy of certain countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy, to which the former is subjected. The relation of interdependence between two or more economies, and between these and world trade, assumes the form of dependence when some countries (the dominant ones) can expand and be self-sustaining, while other countries (the dependent ones) can do this only as a reflection of this expansion, which can have either a positive or a

negative effect on their immediate development' (dos Santos, 1970: 231).

The psychological dimension to this dependency, conceptualised by Syed Hussein Alatas as the captive mind (Alatas, S.H., 1969a, 1972, 1974), is such that the academically dependent scholar is more a passive recipient of research agenda, theories and methods from the knowledge powers (Alatas, S.F., 2003: 603). According to Garreau and Chekki it is no coincidence that the great economic powers are also the great social science powers (Garreau, 1985: 64, 81, 89; see also Chekki, 1987), although this is only partially true as some economic powers are actually marginal as social science knowledge producers, Japan being an interesting example.

In previous work I had listed six dimensions of academic dependency. These are (a) dependence on ideas; (b) dependence on the media of ideas; (c) dependence on the technology of education; (d) dependence on aid for research and teaching; (e) dependence on investment in education; and (f) dependence of scholars in developing societies on demand in the knowledge powers for their skills (Alatas, S.F., 2003: 604). I would like to add a seventh dimension, that is, dependence on recognition.

Dependency on recognition of our works manifests itself in terms of the effort to enter our journals and universities into international ranking protocols. Our universities and journals strive to attain higher and higher places in the rankings. Institutional development as well as individual assessment are undertaken in order to achieve higher status in the ranking system, with a system of rewards and punishments in place to provide the necessary incentives that centre around promotion, tenure and bonuses. The consequences of this form of dependency include:

1. The de-emphasis on publications in local journals to the extent that local journals are not listed on the international rankings. The result of this is

2. The devaluation of local journals and the underdevelopment of

social scientific discourse in local languages.

The problem is not to come up with alternative ways of teaching the social sciences. Nor has it to do with any difficulty of developing adequate or relevant textbooks and readings. These can easily be done. Rather, the problem has to do with the psychological problem of mental captivity and the structural constraints within which this takes place, that is, academic dependency.

Conclusion

The idea behind promoting scholars like José Rizal and Ibn Khaldun and a host of other well-known and lesser-known thinkers in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe as well as in Europe and North America, is to contribute to the universalisation of sociology. Sociology may be a global discipline but it is not a universal one as long as the various civilisational voices that have something to say about society are not rendered audible by the institutions and practices of our discipline.

While the critique of Orientalism in the social sciences is well-known, this has yet to be reflected in basic and mainstream social science courses in most universities around the world. Basic introductory courses in the social sciences are generally biased in favour of American or British theoretical perspectives, illustrations and reading materials. On the other hand, the logical consequence of the critique of Orientalism in the social sciences is the development of alternative concepts and theories that are not restricted to Western civilisation as source. But, in order for this to be done, the critique of Orientalism must become a widespread theme in the teaching of the social sciences. ♦

Syed Farid Alatas is Head of the Department of Malay Studies and Associate Professor of Sociology at the National University of Singapore. The above is extracted from his presentation at the International Conference on 'Decolonising Our Universities' held in Penang, Malaysia, in June 2011.

References

Alatas, Syed Farid. 2003. 'Academic

Dependency and the Global Division of Labour in the Social Sciences', *Current Sociology* 51(6): 599-613.

Alatas, Syed Farid. 2006. *Alternative Discourses in Asian Social Science: Responses to Eurocentrism*, New Delhi: Sage.

Alatas, Syed Farid. 2009. 'Religion and Reform: Two Exemplars for Autonomous Sociology in the Non-Western Context', in Sujata Patel, ed., *The ISA Handbook of Diverse Sociological Traditions*, London: Sage.

Alatas, Syed Farid & Vineeta Sinha. 2001. 'Teaching Classical Sociological Theory in Singapore: The Context of Eurocentrism', *Teaching Sociology* 29(3): 316-331.

Alatas, Syed Hussein. 1969a. 'The Captive Mind and Creative Development', in KB Madhava, ed., *International Development*, New York: Oceania Publications.

Alatas, Syed Hussein. 1969b. 'Academic Imperialism'. Lecture delivered to the History Society, University of Singapore, 26 September.

Alatas, Syed Hussein. 1972. 'The Captive Mind in Development Studies', *International Social Science Journal* 34(1): 9-25.

Alatas, Syed Hussein. 1974. 'The Captive Mind and Creative Development', *International Social Science Journal* 36(4): 691-699.

Alatas, Syed Hussein. 2000. 'Intellectual Imperialism: Definition, Traits, and Problems', *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science* 28(1): 23-45.

Alatas, Syed Hussein. 2006. 'The Autonomous, the Universal and the Future of Sociology', *Current Sociology* 54(1): 7-23.

Chekki, DA. 1987. *American Sociological Hegemony: Transnational Explorations*, Lanham: University Press of America.

Dos Santos, Teotonio. 1970. 'The Structure of Dependence', *The American Economic Review*, LX.

Freyre, Gilberto. 1956. *The masters and the slaves (Casa-grande & Senzala): a study in the development of Brazilian civilization*, New York: Knopf.

Garreau, Frederick H. 1985. 'The Multinational Version of Social

Science with Emphasis Upon the Discipline of Sociology', *Current Sociology* 33(3): 1-169.

Hirschman, Charles. 1986. 'The Making of Race in Colonial Malaya: Political Economy and Racial Ideology', *Sociological Forum* 1(2): 330-361.

Kahn, Herman. 1979. *World Economic Development: 1979 and Beyond*, London: Croom Helm.

Marx, Karl & Frederick Engels. 1968. *On Colonialism*, Moscow: Progress Publishers, pp. 35-41; 81-87.

de Morga, Antonio. 1890/1991. *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas por el Doctor Antonio de Morga, obra publicada en Méjico el año de 1609, nuevamente sacada a luz y anotada por José Rizal y precedida de un prólogo del Prof. Fernando Blumentritt*, Edición del Centenario, impresion al offset de la Edición Anotada por Rizal, Paris 1890, Escritos de José Rizal Tomo VI, Manila: Comision Nacional del Centenario de José Rizal, Instituto Histórico Nacional. For the English translation, see de Morga (1890/1962).

de Morga, Antonio. 1890/1962. *Historical Events of the Philippine Islands by Dr Antonio de Morga, Published in Mexico in 1609, recently brought to light and annotated by Jose Rizal, preceded by a prologue by Dr Ferdinand Blumentritt*, Writings of Jose Rizal Volume VI, Manila: National Historical Institute.

Rizal, José. 1963a. 'The Indolence of the Filipinos', *Political and Historical Writings*, Manila: National Historical Institute, pp. 111-139.

Rizal, José. 1963b. 'The Truth for All', *Political and Historical Writings*, Manila: National Historical Institute, pp. 31-38.

Rudolph, Lloyd & Susanne Rudolph. 1967. 'The Place of Tradition in Modernization', *Development Digest*, Washington, DC: National Planning Association, pp. 62-66.

Wallerstein, Immanuel. 1996. 'Eurocentrism and Its Avatars: The Dilemmas of Social Science'. Paper presented to Korean Sociological Association-International Sociological Association East Asian Regional Colloquium on 'The Future of Sociology in East Asia', Seoul, 22-23 November.

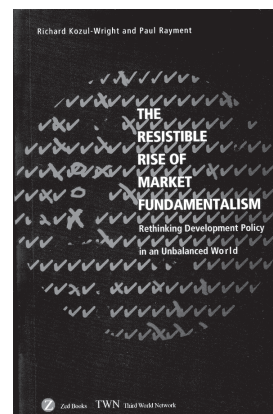
The Resistible Rise of Market Fundamentalism

Rethinking Development Policy in an Unbalanced World

By Richard Kozul-Wright & Paul Rayment

"Stablise, liberalise and privatise" has, since the debt crisis of the early 1980s, been the mantra chanted at developing countries with quasi-religious conviction by international financial institutions, donor countries and newspaper columnists. Policy debate has increasingly polarised into the rhetoric of extremes: trade liberalisers versus protectionists, cosmopolitan versus nationalist, the right-thinking versus the wrong-headed, and so on. In *The Resistible Rise of Market Fundamentalism* Richard Kozul-Wright and Paul Rayment expose the mix of selective evidence, mythical economic history, simplistic assumptions and opportunistic bias which comprise this prescription for economic development.

They argue that attempts to apply a universal model of development have not only met with little or no success but are also dangerously at odds with democratic principles. Insisting on a ready-made, "one size fits all" model increases the risk of policy reactions that are likely to undermine the peace, prosperity and global integration that the big economic powers and the international organisations are seeking to promote and in which the developing countries seek to share. Instead, developing countries must be given the freedom to experiment, to develop their own policies and discover what works in their own national circumstances. On this basis, Kozul-Wright and Rayment set out a pragmatic, constructive and more hopeful approach to development than the simplicities of market fundamentalists.



ISBN: 978-1-84277-637-7 392 pp

	Price	Postage
Malaysia	RM35.00	RM5.00
Third World countries	US\$13.00	US\$7.00 (air); US\$3.00 (sea)
Other foreign countries	US\$18.00	US\$9.00 (air); US\$4.00 (sea)

Orders from Malaysia – please pay by credit card/crossed cheque or postal order.

Orders from Australia, Brunei, Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, UK, USA – please pay by credit card/cheque/bank draft/international money order in own currency, US\$ or Euro. If paying in own currency or Euro, please calculate equivalent of US\$ rate. If paying in US\$, please ensure that the agent bank is located in the USA.

Rest of the world – please pay by credit card/cheque/bank draft/international money order in US\$ or Euro. If paying in Euro, please calculate equivalent of US\$ rate. If paying in US\$, please ensure that the agent bank is located in the USA.

All payments should be made in favour of: **THIRD WORLD NETWORK BHD.**, 131 Jalan Macalister, 10400 Penang, Malaysia. Tel: 60-4-2266728/2266159; Fax: 60-4-2264505; Email: twnet@po.jaring.my; Website: www.twn.my

I would like to order copy/copies of ***The Resistible Rise of Market Fundamentalism***.

I enclose the amount of by cheque/bank draft/IMO.

Please charge the amount of US\$/Euro/RM to my credit card:

☐ American Express ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard

A/c No.: Expiry date:

Signature:

Name:

Address:

History 'outside' the 'West'

Scholars from the Third World may have taken charge of their history, but 'world history', which is generally represented as the playing field of more ecumenical minds, remains firmly within the provenance of the Western scholar, says *Vinay Lal*.

IN his early 19th century *History of British India*, a voluminous work that not only remained until the end of the century the standard narrative of the Indian past but also exercised an incalculable influence on the 'heavenly born' British civil servants for whom James Mill's history was required reading, the father of John Stuart Mill set out to periodise Indian history. By his time the distinction between ancient, medieval, and modern was commonplace, not even tempered by such phrases as 'early modern', and to an innocent reader Mill may not have appeared as effecting any kind of departure from the established template. He characterised ancient India as 'Hindu' and rendered medieval India as 'Muhammadan'.

In English, of course, the word 'medieval' had long had overwhelmingly pejorative overtones: the medieval represents not merely a chronological stage of history, but even more so a state of mind – a state characterised by the lack of reason, disregard for progress, and primitivism in thought, belief, and conduct. Mill would not at all have hesitated in associating the medieval period, apparently corresponding to Europe's 'dark ages', predominantly with Islam. Mill knew that north India had, in the second millennium CE, come firmly under Muslim rule, commencing at least with the Delhi Sultanate; and he may even have had some awareness of Muslim sultanates in the Deccan, though like most colonial historians and commentators of India, he had fallen into the habit of supposing that the history of north India could effortlessly be passed off as the history of the entirety of India.

There are, as would be obvious to any student of Indian history, numerous grounds on which Mill's characterisation of ancient India as 'Hindu' and especially medieval In-



A mausoleum in Delhi, India, built during the time of the Delhi Sultanate. Though north India had, in the second millennium CE, come firmly under Muslim rule commencing at least with the Delhi Sultanate, historian James Mill's characterisation of medieval India as 'Muhammadan' could be contested on numerous grounds.

dia as 'Muhammadan' might have been cogently contested. Though Islam gained many converts, Saivism, Vaishnavism, Shaktoism, and other strands absorbed into what later became known as Hinduism continued to maintain a formidable presence. Medieval India was far from being congruent with Islamic India. Groups in certain strata of Indian society embraced Islam much more readily than other social groups. Though some contemporaries, and later historians, were inclined to think that north India had fallen under the iron grip of Muslim rule, many contemporary Islamic theologians doubted that India could be characterised as a land governed under the Sharia. Mill's periodisation cannot account for the unique Indo-Islamic synthesis forged in the supposedly dark period of Indian history. With that characteristic, seamless arrogance that marks and mars colonial (and some neo-colonial) narratives of Indian history, Mill and hundreds of his contemporaries assumed that 'the dark ages' of Europe were 'dark' everywhere.

Mill was thus among those who contributed to the communalisation of Indian history. His prejudices were

by no means exclusive: if he displayed an unrelenting hostility to Islam, common to his ancestors and successors, he was even more vituperative in his condemnation of Hinduism as a barbarous religion of monkey gods and goddesses adorned with necklaces of human skulls.

Though, as I have suggested, there are many justifiable grounds for critiquing him, there is yet a more profound reason for viewing his writings with deep suspicion. One can reasonably expect that Mill, having designated the ancient and medieval periods of Indian history as Hindu and Muhammadan, respectively, should have designated the modern period as Christian. By the time that the first edition of Mill's history was published in 1818, substantial portions of India had fallen under British rule. The charter of the East India Company had initially put a brake on Christian missionary activities in India, but there is no doubt that the Englishmen ruling India thought of themselves as representatives of a Christian power.

When Charles Grant presented his tract, 'Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain', to the Company's

directors in 1797, it was a signal that the evangelicals had decided to join battle in turning British India into a fertile ground for Christian proselytisation. Grant was candid in the declaration of his faith that nothing was more calculated to lift the superstitious and ignorant Hindu from his adherence to hideous customs than persistent exposure to Christianity. It was 'repugnant to the past experience of Europeans', Grant wrote, to believe that the 'obstinate attachment' of Hindus to their faith would prevent 'their conversion to Christianity'.¹

If Britain was a Christian power, and Englishmen in India saw themselves upholding the ideals of Christianity, Mill should have in all honesty characterised the modern period in India as 'Christian', much as he rendered the ancient period as 'Hindu' and the medieval period as 'Muhammadan'. He, however, termed the modern phase of Indian history as 'British'. There is cunning of reason here that speaks volumes, even today, about the exercise of power in the Christian West. For Mill, as for the greater bulk of his intellectual contemporaries, Protestant Christianity furnished the template for a proper, rational faith. Quite predictably, all other religions, and even Catholicism, were judged against Protestantism and found terribly wanting. Yet the pretence that inspires Mill, and permits him the sleight of hand, is one where modern Britain is seen as having transcended religion.

Mill was guided by several assumptions, beginning with the consideration that religion was the predominant and inextricable element in the constitution of Indian society; whatever else might be said about India, religion and the battles over it had shaped its history. Secondly, the European Enlightenment had succeeded in establishing a division between church and state, and to be modern one had to embrace secularism. Thirdly, cognizant of the fact that in Britain itself the evangelicals had come to occupy a significant space in the public sphere, Mill implicitly advocated a realist position that transformed religion into 'the invisible

hand'. In principle, it was all well and good to argue that religion, a private affair, was to be banished from the public sphere; but fidelity to realpolitik demanded that religion would function somewhat as the uncrowned king.

With this one example, I have sought to establish a number of fundamental principles. First, Europe's history invariably serves as the template for all history, even when we are least aware of it or writing history in opposition to Eurocentric history. What is true of Indian history is true of nearly every national history: the categories – ancient, medieval, and modern, to take only one example – that have informed the study of the European past are assumed to be the 'natural' categories through which one might interpret any history.

Secondly, an order of temporal linearity is explicitly or tacitly the informing principle of all contemporary history: as we move from the ancient age to the modern age, it is assumed that we also gravitate from slavery to liberty, from the religious life to secularism, and from a life embedded in community to individualism. In this narrative, the most bitter contemporary conflicts readily become relics of the medieval age: thus the 'fanaticism' of the Serbian nationalist, the Hindu fundamentalist, or the Islamic terrorist is something that the perpetrator of atrocities has been unable to leave behind in his halting and existentially troubled journey towards modern freedom.

Thirdly, the enterprise of history perforce condemns the people outside Europe to live someone else's history, with consequences that have been seen across all domains of life. Europe's past is the present of those living in India or Africa; when, at long last, the native arrives at the destination, it is only to discover that the European has moved on to another station, leaving only his baggage to be collected by natives.

Fourthly, as a corollary of the above points, it becomes imperative to understand that all history is in fact European history: the histories of Latin America, Africa, or India are

thus not merely ancillary histories, the limbs to the body of European history, they are illustrative of certain strands of European culture, thought, and sensibility that are invisible or only partially visible to Europe itself.

Fifthly, the problem of Eurocentrism afflicts not only the study of non-European cultures, but also the understanding of the contours of the history of Europe and the entire West. It is a remarkable fact that most British histories of Britain still remain largely oblivious to the history of colonialism: it is recognised, of course, that Britain had an empire, but the bulk of British historians labour under the impression that Britain's overseas history had little bearing on British history, culture, and politics. To take another example: American exceptionalism, whatever its precise features, is not merely a problem for those seeking to unravel the nature of American history and destiny; it is at least as pressing a problem for everyone else in the world. I had once put forth a public proposal that every adult around the world ought to be permitted to vote in the elections for the American presidency: since the fate of much of the world, and certainly of its most vulnerable, smaller, or (in the language of the Americans and their camp followers) 'rogue' nations, rests so much on who is elected to the most powerful office of the world, surely the victims of the American war machine must be permitted to choose the agent of their destruction? In a similar vein, we ought perhaps to insist that national histories, insofar as such histories are at all attempted, should never be left entirely in the hands of the citizens of the nation-state in question. In the matter of national histories, nearly everyone is a nationalist.

The Eurocentric wolf in sheep's clothing: The new malaise of world history

The perils of what is termed 'Eurocentric history', and some prospects for our emancipation from such problems, are curiously best gleaned by a rather more exhaustive account

of the latest malaise in historiographic writing, namely the recent renaissance, particularly in the United States, of world history. The conference circuit in world history has witnessed rapid growth since the mid-1990s, job openings in this area have multiplied, and ambitious works in world history, such as Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (1997), David Landes's *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations: Why Some Are So Rich and Some So Poor* (1998), and Niall Ferguson's *Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power* (2004), have garnered numerous accolades as well as an unusually wide readership.

At the University of California, a multi-campus initiative in world history was launched nearly a decade ago, and among its first products is a series, published by the university's press, called 'The California World History Library'. The second volume in this series, *Maps of Time* (2004), is described as a work in 'big history'; and its author, David Christian, characterises his enterprise as having originated from his feeling that scholarship has been enervated by the fragmented accounts of reality which have been in fashion over the last two decades, and that historians can learn from scientists (p. 3). If scientists no longer find the idea of a 'grand unified theory' absurd or preposterously vain, why should historians shun grand narratives? Christian argues that 'large stories' can provide a 'sense of meaning', and that intellectuals who disavow 'grand narratives' do so at the risk of rendering themselves insignificant (pp. 9-10). He does not reflect on the most obvious rejoinder, namely that the emulation of scientists has long been one of the principal problems in the social science; nor is there any degree of self-reflexivity on his part, or else he might have had to think about just how precisely an American trait it is to think big, all so that one might not be rendered 'insignificant'.

California is a 'big' state in an equally big nation-state, and it is per-

fectly apposite that 'big history' should be grounded in a place that often imagines itself as the centre of the world. One of the numerous, unthinking clichés that proliferate about Los Angeles, that very big 'metropolis' of California, is that a hundred or more languages can be heard in its schools, though what is never mentioned in the same breath is that speakers of English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Hindi, Gujarati, Korean, Japanese, and Swahili alike shop at Wal-Mart and consume the burgers at McDonald's. Multiculturalism has a ravenous appetite; it is America's way, from the late 20th century onwards, of eating up the world.

But to return to the schools: if the world has come to Los Angeles, why bother at all with the world? That California cannot much be bothered with the world is nowhere better indicated than in the fact that it is self-obsessed by its own earthquakes, fires, mudslides – and highway chases. Indeed, one suspects that for all the difficulties that occasionally intrude upon the lives of Californians, these are also welcomed as signs of the Biblical scale of life in God's own land. Lest one should forget just how 'big' California is, it is useful to recall that it is often spoken of as the world's seventh or eighth largest economy. Doubtless, purchasing power parity has not been factored into such calculations about the size of the economy, but one can nonetheless understand why California is accustomed to thinking of itself in lofty terms, both drawing the world to itself and having the world radiate outward from the 'Golden State'.

Big history and world history thus have, in myriad ways, their own political economy. In big places one's pretensions are likely to be big as well, and it is inconceivable that world history would emanate from Khartoum, Tripoli, Dhaka, Kuala Lumpur, or Lima. From Spengler onwards, world history has been a conversation in which colonised and now underdeveloped subjects have had no place, except, of course, as the objects of the wise discourse of knowing subjects. Indians may have taken charge of

their history, as have (to howsoever lesser an extent) Africans of African history, but 'world history', which is generally represented as the playing field of more ecumenical minds, remains firmly within the provenance of the Western scholar. The paraphernalia of almost any kind of modern scholarship is vast, but much vaster still are the array of texts, in diverse languages, that a world historian might require and that seldom are available to those outside the Western academy; besides, historians in those capitals to which I have referred are almost certainly preoccupied enough in the endeavour of decolonising the received histories.

Though Dipesh Chakrabarty argued, not so long ago, that the subject of history is always Europe, even when the histories in question are transparently those of Latin America, Africa, or India,² we might say that world history has not merely restored Europe as the hegemon of history – a restoration occurring in the midst of much anxiety about the loss of faith in grand narratives, the nefarious influence of those French diseases of the mind that go under the name of poststructuralism and Lacanian psychoanalysis, the demotion of scientific history, and the infusion of interpretive frameworks that steadfastly probe the nexus of knowledge and power – but rather returned history to its 'proper' home. ♦

Vinay Lal is Professor of History at the University of Delhi and the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). The above is extracted from his presentation at the International Conference on 'Decolonising Our Universities' held in Penang, Malaysia, in June 2011.

Endnotes

- 1 Charles Grant, *Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain, particularly with respect to Morals ... Written chiefly in the year 1792* (Ordered, to be Printed, by the House of Commons, 1813), p. 88.
- 2 Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 27-46.

Decolonising the law: Do we have a choice?

Unless we decolonise our minds, it is going to be very difficult to decolonise our law, legal system and justice system, contends *Shadrack Gutto*.

I WILL divide what I am going to say into two parts: first, a diagnosis of the illness that we have in our legal education; and then in the second part, I will discuss possible suggestions on what is to be done.

I would like to indicate that, as legal scholars in Africa and indeed the South that was colonised, we need to go beyond critical analysis. Critical analysis is very important but we need to go beyond that to actually put in place the changes that we think would make a difference to us in the world which we share with our former colonisers.

Secondly, I would like to make the comments within the context of not only decolonising the law but also looking at law, legal systems and legal practitioners, and by legal practitioners I also include legal academics.

As teachers of law, we occupy a very special space in society which we usually don't realise, because we do research, we analyse, we critique what is being done in law, we look at what is being done in the legislative sphere, we look at the whole question around justice and therefore we influence all the time what other institutions do, like the courts, like what areas of the law need legislative interventions and so on. We therefore are privileged but we do not do enough. Instead we are very conservative and we are part of the problem rather than the solution.

When we talk about Eurocentrism, it is one disease which really runs through not just the law but also the legal systems that we inherited and legal systems which were

cc Vincent van Zeijst



The International Criminal Court building in The Hague, the Netherlands. Among others, crimes committed during the US invasion and occupation of Iraq have not been referred to the ICC.

meant to control and oppress us. We took over these systems and we are continuing to preserve them zealously without decolonising them, and that is part of the problem.

The Anglo-Saxon legal system that we have in the former British colonies in Africa and Asia and the so-called continental legal systems based on civil law, the Code Napoleon and so on which we get in Francophone African countries have a whole lot of problems.

If you just take the question of whether you will follow an adversarial or an inquisitorial legal system and you ask yourself what level of justice people get within that system, is it sufficient and does it reflect our traditional value systems of justice and so on? Neither of them does and yet we cling to them and we follow them very religiously.

Inherited inequities

We find in post-independence African countries a situation where we simply inherited the legal systems. Let me use South Africa as an example. In the constitution of South Africa, it

is recognised that we have an extensive chapter on human rights, the bill of rights, but when we go to the content part of the law, then we say we do have the common law, customary law and of course others like the international law.

When you then go on to ask what this common law is, the common law is Roman Dutch law! The law was imported by the Romans to South Africa, and also applies in Namibia, in Swaziland, to an extent in Zimbabwe and so on. What

is 'common' about these were the indigenous laws of the colonisers which they came with and transplanted. Yet now we say we are independent and liberating ourselves and we make this part of our law, separating it from African law, which we call 'customary law' but which was distorted during the colonial period. So we are not even engaged in damage control or in trying to look at what was the basis of that justice. We do not and yet we say that we are professors of law and so on. We are actually pathetic to the societies in which we live. That is an example that one can give and it applies to virtually all former colonies in Africa.

We will still find many of our legal practitioners going to court in robes, in gowns with lapels, and they say that the court is a place of justice. To our countrymen who used to see the colonialist wear things like that, they do not believe there is justice. But we are not sensitive to that because we think this is what it is, we are doing it like they are doing it in London and New York and therefore we are civilised and they recognise us

and we are invited to go and give lectures as visiting professors at Harvard, and so on and so forth. What I am saying is that we are part of the problem.

In addition to our failure to change what we inherited, there are new areas of law evolving globally today where we are still effectively colonised.

I will give two examples. One is the challenge of piracy in the Indian Ocean near eastern Africa. The people involved say they are defending their territory against foreign fishing and so on, but they are in a way both pirates and liberators of their resources. But what is important there is that there is no law now, no legal regime where the Somali people who are arrested can be tried. So what has happened is that Kenya and the Seychelles have signed a pact with the US and the EU to prosecute the people who are arrested by the Americans and NATO in those waters on their behalf so that Kenya and the Seychelles can get some aid from the US.

What a ridiculous thing! How can you allow yourself to be a centre of prosecution of people within a legal system which does not exist because they did not commit a crime in your territory? In other words, you engage in illegalities even as we talk about the rule of law internationally. The very same people will tell you how they want to create an international legal regime and so forth.

Another example is the International Criminal Court. With any little conflict in Africa, the matter is referred to the ICC and then prosecution is suggested. But while the ICC was created before the US invaded and destroyed Iraq, none of the crimes committed in Iraq has been referred to it. Neither has the ICC looked into the atrocities that Israel has committed in the occupied Palestinian territories. So an International Criminal Court which we are told is building a regime of justice in the world is selectively being used to depict Africa as the region of criminals while those who do it a hundred times more get off scot-free. Are we teaching these things in our own law schools, are our curricula being transformed? No.

Areas of action

What, then, should be done?

I suggest that, first, we decolonise our minds. Until we decolonise our minds, it is going to be very difficult to decolonise the law, legal system and the justice system so that our people can begin to feel that they are living in a system of constitutionalism and the rule of law. We now have laws but no rule of law, we have constitutions but no constitutionalism.

Secondly, let us look at the legal curriculum and ask: Do we want to go with the disciplinary boundaries that have been created to such an extent that a person doing law has no idea of simple areas and issues of agriculture, science, even elementary math and so on?

When you go to court and you are dealing with legal disputes, some involve scientific and technological issues, some involve environmental issues, some involve financial issues, but the lawyer we produce is half-educated even though he or she may have graduated with honours. We must therefore increase the level of interdisciplinarity in the way in which we approach education in our universities.

Thirdly, we need to enhance the core values of people around issues of justice – and indeed I have a book here which I recently edited called *Shared Values, Constitutionalism and Democracy in Africa*. It tries to look at why – because we have not distilled shared values in Africa's historiography before, during and after colonialism – we are not able to build a coherent African vision of justice.

Fourthly, we need also to really begin to look at what are the new areas of development of law. For example, we have the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights adopted in 1981 by the Organisation of African Unity, the forerunner of the African Union. It introduced for the first time in the history of the world the right to development as a right. Do we teach it in our universities? No, we don't. Have we developed schol-

arship around it? No, we have not. Instead we cite the European Court of Human Rights, we cite the American this and that... We are lazy, we do not do enough scholarship, we do not research and publish in those areas so that we have something better, but we continue saying our curriculum has not changed. Who is going to change it if we do not?

We have from the 2001 World Conference against Racism held in Durban, South Africa, recommendations in the action plan calling for reparation for slavery, for colonialism, and so on. Has any African or Asian legal scholar incorporated these in the curriculum? No. So in other words, we are lazy bums and we are part of the problem.

When the leaders of countries like Libya, Egypt and Tunisia are toppled by their own people's uprisings, then all of a sudden you hear that their assets in the US, in Britain, in Switzerland are frozen, which means that these latter countries had been keeping stolen wealth all along.

We need a legal system in our universities and practice which is going to effectively say, 'Declare all stolen wealth that you have in your banks in the North – do not wait for a crisis so that when the people whose money you were keeping and building your economies with are in trouble you say all of a sudden you discovered this money – you would be lying.' In most of our legal systems, anybody who keeps stolen property is one of the criminals. So we are dealing with criminals here and our schools are not teaching us sufficiently to be able to really pursue justice.

I will therefore conclude by saying that decolonisation of our law and legal systems in Africa and Asia is something we have no choice but to undertake. If we do not, then we are conceding we want to remain colonised and slaves. ♦

Shadrack Gutto is Director of the Institute for African Renaissance Studies at the University of South Africa in Pretoria. The above is an edited version of his presentation at the International Conference on 'Decolonising Our Universities' held in Penang, Malaysia, in June 2011.

Is science 'Western'?

CK Raju challenges the received wisdom that science is Hellenic in origin and explains why this dubious claim still enjoys so much credence in the universities of the Third World.

SCIENCE is a creation of the West – or so the story goes. On this creation story, science began in Hellenic (Greek) culture, and developed in post-renaissance Europe. The rest of the world had no clue.

A typical account is in the 'classic' history of mathematics by Rouse Ball:

'The history of mathematics cannot with certainty be traced back to any school or period before ... the ... Greeks ... though all early *races* ... knew something of numeration ... and ... the elements of land-surveying, yet the rules which they possessed were ... founded only on ... observation and experiment, and were neither deduced from nor did they form part of any science.'¹

He presupposes that (a) deduction is more important to science than observation or experiment (which leads to mere 'rules'), and (b) only the Greek 'race' had deduction. Needham avoids the racist part of the explanation but lapses into an otherwise similar view about Chinese 'land-surveying' versus Euclidean geometry.²

Unlike political history, it is hard to counter or even explain the biases in the history of science. 'Information poverty' is a consequence of industrial capitalism – even otherwise-educated people are often scientifically illiterate. Like other illiterates, they uncritically accept and repeat stories from socially 'authoritative' sources. Scientists, too, may not be knowledgeable enough, for in practice they rely heavily on authority (again because industrial capitalism breeds excessive specialisation). Moreover, scientists focus on technique, and carelessly propagate any given history. Consequently, very few can put science together with its history and philosophy and build a counter-story. India is a particularly pathetic case: it has no university department of his-

tory and philosophy of science, even 60 years after independence. No wonder the same old story is perpetuated by current Indian school texts,³ which mention many Greek names as the originators of mathematics and science. These Greek names are accompanied by images of Caucasian stereotypes. Children get the underlying racist message!

The Crusades and the story of the 'Greek' origin of science

The story of the Greek origin of science postdates the Crusades.

Before the Crusades, Christendom was in its 'Dark Age'. In the 4th century, state and church came together in the Roman empire. The subsequent book-burning edicts of Christian Roman emperors,⁴ the burning down of the Great Library of Alexandria by a Christian mob,⁵ and the closure of all philosophical schools by Justinian in 529 CE created a vacuum of secular knowledge in Christendom. Such secular knowledge as existed, prior to the Crusades, was pitiful. The outstanding mathematician of the time was Gerbert of Aurillac (Pope Sylvester II), who wrote a learned tome on the abacus (the kindergarten toy of today). So, it would be fair to say that the abacus represented the acme of mathematical knowledge in pre-Crusade Christendom.

Ironically, this Christian Dark Age coincided with the Islamic Golden Age. In sharp contrast to the book-burning traditions of Christendom, the Abbasid Caliphate had set up the Baghdad House of Wisdom by the early 9th century CE. This led to such an explosion in the demand for books that, along the lines of the hadith to seek knowledge even from China, paper-making techniques were imported from China to set up a pa-

per factory in Baghdad, which had a flourishing book bazaar. Libraries proliferated across the Islamic world, and the 10th century Umayyad Caliphate in Cordoba had a library, catalogued in 44 volumes, of over 600,000 tomes.⁶

Quite naturally, prior to the Crusades, Europeans regarded the Arabs as knowledgeable. To learn mathematics, Gerbert turned to the Islamic Arabs in Cordoba, not to Greek Christian sources in Byzantium. (Hence, the numerals he imported are today known as 'Arabic numerals'.) So, the story of the Greek origins of all science did not exist in Europe prior to the Crusades.

The Crusades as 'barbarian incursions'

How did this story emerge during the Crusades?

Apart from the contrast in knowledge, there was also the striking contrast in wealth between Christendom and Islamic Arabs. Charlemagne's emissaries were dazzled by the splendour of Haroun al Rashid's court, and the gifts they brought back were avidly imitated, and became models of Carolingian art. The magnificence of Cordoba can still be guessed from the remains. The only new point here is this. Describing the Crusades as religiously motivated is like describing the Iraq war as morally motivated: it does not allow us to make sense of the events that took place.

The Crusades were undoubtedly a time of great religious hysteria, which no doubt motivated many people to participate. But did the church leaders who stoked this religious hysteria have more material motives? If so, the contrast between Arab wealth and European poverty must be regarded as a key cause of the Crusades.

An increase in church wealth and

power was the direct consequence of the Crusades, which also helped to expand church influence into wealthier Islamic areas. This, then, was the real motive of the Crusades, for political acts are best judged by the consequences – and not by professed intentions. In fact, to judge from the consequences, some diabolical planning went into the Crusades, for, with each Crusade, won or lost, church wealth and power increased. Also, the church kept trying to expand its influence in Islamic areas even after the military failure of the later Crusades.

From Toynbee's historical perspective, then, the Crusades are best described as 'barbarian incursions'. The Arabs were the centre, and Europe was the periphery, trying to break in. The conditions for these barbarian incursions were established with the disintegration of the Caliphate of Cordoba into small *taifa*-s (petty kingdoms) after a disastrous battle for succession around 1010. The weakness of these *taifa*-s made them easy targets. Toledo was one such *taifa* which now boasted the best library in Europe. During the proto-Crusades – probes which preceded the 'official' Crusades – Toledo and its magnificent library came under Christian control in 1085.

The Toledo translations and their justification

This library, instead of being burnt, was preserved. By now, the usefulness of non-Bible knowledge had been accepted at the highest levels of the church – we saw how Gerbert imported Arabic numerals. The state agreed: King Otto sent emissaries to Cordoba to gather knowledge. During the Crusades, secular knowledge was gathered with great difficulty by spies like Adelard of Bath (who travelled disguised as a Muslim student and who was perhaps the first to translate the *Elements* from Arabic to Latin). If the dark age of Christendom began with the burning down of the Great Library of Alexan-

dria, it ended with the mass translation of the Toledo library, from Arabic to Latin, starting in 1125.⁷

The church now needed knowledge for another reason. Pagan Europe was converted to Christianity mainly by force. But force would not work with the Islamic Arabs who were stronger. For the novel strategy of conversion without force, the church needed knowledge. But how could the church square this sudden thirst for knowledge with its earlier calls for book-burning? At the peak of religious fanaticism how could the church publicly justify acquiring knowledge from the hated Islamic enemy?

Ever since state and church first came together, at the time of Constantine, Eusebius, a church historian, had initiated the programme of distorting history to promote church interests. His successor Orosius, in his *History Against the Pagans*, made it amply clear that history was just another tool of soft power in the church's armoury. This technology of falsehood was now applied to 'manage' common perceptions. The storyline was simple: it was the Greeks who did it. On this story, during the 600 years of the Christian Dark Age, all that the Arabs did was to preserve Greek works, the rightful inheritors of which were the chosen people, the Christians of Europe.

It was this fantastic justification – characterising Arabs as mere carriers of knowledge, and Greeks as the creative fount – which made the ('Greek') knowledge in Arabic books theologically acceptable in Europe, and enabled the translated Arabic books to be used as university texts for centuries in Europe.

Arabs did not quite accept this story. In the 9th century, when the Arabs built the Bayt al Hikma (House of Wisdom) in Baghdad, they gathered knowledge from all over the world, including India, Persia and China. They certainly did not restrict themselves to Greek sources. The actions speak for themselves: the Arabs did not then think that science was primarily a Greek invention.

Greek and Roman difficulties with elementary arithmetic

The non-textual evidence provides a good reason for this. More than deduction, science is based on quantitative calculation. But the Greeks lacked basic arithmetic skills needed for calculation. The early Greek (Attic) system of representing numbers was worse even than Roman numerals. (We will use Roman numerals in the following examples, since they are better known.) Greek/Roman numerals are inefficient for two reasons. First they are clumsy: the small number 1,788 requires 12 symbols, and is written as MDCCLXXXVIII.

This system is hopeless for large numbers, such as 10^{53} , which the Buddha was asked to name (by an opponent who sought to test his knowledge). The world might come to an end before one finishes writing down this number in Roman numerals!

The unavoidable inference is this: the Greeks and Romans used this primitive system of numeration because they never encountered large numbers, and never did the complex calculations required for astronomy and science. Conversely, when the need for such complex calculations arose in Europe, first among the Florentine merchants, and then among European navigators, Roman numerals were abandoned in favour of 'Arabic numerals'.

Can one get around this inefficiency by inventing names for larger numbers? No. Roman numerals are structurally inefficient: even the simplest sum needs an abacus. Try XIV + XVIII! To add two numbers, say 1,788 + 1,832, one would first represent these numbers on the Roman abacus, using counters. For 1,788, one would need three counters for I, one counter for V, one for the L, and so on, making a total of 12 counters. Similarly, for 1,832 (MDCCCXXXII) we need 10 counters. Pooling together these 22 counters, one now simplifies as follows. The five counters for I are replaced by one counter for V; the two counters for V are replaced by one counter for X; of the seven counters

for X that we now have, five are replaced by an L and two stay as they are. The two Ls are now replaced by a C; five Cs are replaced by a D; and two of the three Ds are replaced by an M. We now arrange the counters, starting with the M, to get MMMDCXX, which is the same thing as 3,620. So this simple arithmetic problem which any child could do mentally today in a jiffy becomes a tedious task with Greek and Roman numerals.

Multiplication is even more difficult. Shakespeare's clown knows that 11 sheep give 28 pounds of wool which sells for a guinea. How much would he get for the wool from 1,500 sheep? He 'cannot do't without counters'.⁸ (We leave out subtraction and division as too difficult to explain!) The Greeks obviously could not have done science without properly knowing how to add and multiply.

The Baghdad House of Wisdom and transmission to Greek texts

Therefore, while the Arabs valued the 'theology of Aristotle',⁹ for arithmetic, they turned to India, not to Greece. Arabs imported various Indian arithmetic texts, notably those of Aryabhata, Brahmagupta and Mahavira. These were digested and transcreated in the Bayt al Hikma by al Khwarizmi, and became famous as Algorismus after his Latinised name. These 'Arabic numerals' use the place-value system. That makes it easy to represent large numbers. It also makes arithmetic very easy through 'algorithms' – the elementary techniques of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division that everyone today learns in school.

Although the Baghdad House of Wisdom was a landmark, it only accelerated a well-established tradition. From the very beginning of the Abbasid Caliphate, the legendary Barmakids (from *barmak* = *pramukh*) of Persian-Buddhist origin, who were *vazir*-s to the Abbasid Khalifa-s, had already instituted this system of im-

porting knowledge from Persia and India.

The Barmakids, in turn, were only continuing the earlier Persian tradition of gathering knowledge and translating it into Persian (Pahlavi). This continuity is manifest through texts, such as the Indian *Pancatantra*, which were translated into Arabic not from Sanskrit but from Pahlavi, along with other Persian books, such as the *Arabian Nights* and the astronomy text called the *Almagest*. Noticeably, the *Almagest* came to Baghdad from Persia, not Byzantium. Had this text then existed in Byzantium, it could easily have been sourced from there, for Byzantium was then an abject tributary of Baghdad.

In contrast to the extreme literal translations at Toledo, the Baghdad scholars despised blind copying (*naql*). Indeed, the House of Wisdom aimed to promote the exact opposite (*aql*, intelligent theology). So, they digested the substance and rewrote the text. The focus was on practical benefits, and not on maintaining historical sanctity; so, such texts accretively incorporated *all* knowledge then available to the 'translator'. For example, the *Arabian Nights* acquired characters like Haroun al Rashid, and the Barmakids.

Further, whether or not any information flowed from Byzantium to Baghdad, we have solid evidence that information flowed *from* Baghdad to Byzantium. Thus, the *Pancatantra* was further translated from Arabic into Greek.¹⁰ This is an important example, because, unlike the origin of a scientific theory, which can be obfuscated, the Indian origin of the *Pancatantra* is unquestionable. Therefore, the fact of this Arabic-to-Greek translation firmly establishes that knowledge flowed *from* Arabic to Greek texts. That was the natural direction of information flow, given the huge investment in knowledge that was made in Baghdad.¹¹

Recognising that 9th century or later Greek texts are derived, not 'original', unhinges the entire strategy of glorifying the Greeks.

The earlier story of scientific knowledge

Let us go a step further into the past. Initially, many texts in Baghdad came from Persia where the same practice of collecting world-knowledge was followed. But, even in Persia, knowledge of astronomy (translated as *Zij-i-Shahryar*) was imported from India.

This is another striking fact. The Persian king Khusrau I attached great significance to the enterprise of knowledge-gathering. However, his Vizier went to India, not to Athens or Alexandria or Constantinople. This despite the fact that the very best Hellenic sources were directly available to Khusrau: the leading philosopher of the Roman empire, the people best acquainted with Hellenic knowledge, were physically present in his court, having sought refuge in Persia to escape the edicts of Justinian.

Had any secular knowledge remained in the Roman empire, Khusrau could have easily got it, for the Roman king Justinian was paying him a hefty tribute for non-aggression. If Christian historians of the time are to be believed, Khusrau even included a clause regarding the treatment of philosophers¹² as part of the treaty with Justinian! If Khusrau nevertheless imported mathematics and astronomy from India, the available Greek tradition of mathematics and astronomy must have been inadequate and unsatisfactory. A later source, the 7th century Syrian Christian, Severus Sebokht,¹³ although naturally partial to Greeks, nevertheless confirms this relative assessment of Indian and Greek astronomy, and attributes the superiority of Indian astronomy to the superior Indian methods of calculation.

To recapitulate, from the beginning of the Christian Dark Age to the beginning of the Crusades, the story of the Greek origins of science was nowhere to be found. The Greeks could not have developed any science with their primitive system of numeration. They lacked the requisite quantitative skills – until Indian arithmetic through Arabic texts diffused

among the Byzantine Greeks, from the 9th century.

The story of a Greek origin of Arabic books thus appropriated to Europe all pre-Crusade knowledge which the Arabs and Persians had gathered from all over the world, and developed further.

The Great Library of Alexandria and its origin

Clearly, this story of the Hellenic origin of all worthwhile secular knowledge is contrary to common sense: why should all knowledge have originated in one place? Myth proceeds by linking story to story, and the Hellenic story is linked to the Great Library of Alexandria – most Greek names associated with science are today traced to Alexandria (in Africa).

But what was the source of the Alexandrian library? Over the centuries, no one seems to have asked this question, thereby promoting the belief – as an implicit postulate – that this library was of Greek origin. This is the other big lie on which the story of a Hellenistic origin of science was concocted. For what is the evidence for such a belief?

In fact, all the available evidence points in the opposite direction. The number of volumes in the Alexandrian library reportedly exceeded half a million. The tiny Greek city-states, with small populations of a few thousand citizens, could hardly have produced books on this scale. The book technology then involved papyrus: a material made in Egypt, expensive to import, and even more expensive to maintain. Just the cost of the papyrus would have been staggering. Besides, how did they support the vast leisured class needed to produce and maintain books in such numbers? The Greek city-states were constantly engaged in petty warfare, so that every able-bodied person was conscripted, and very little leisure was available.

Texts corroborate these straightforward non-textual considerations. Strabo states¹⁴ that Aristotle was the first ‘man’ to have a library. Setting aside Strabo’s peculiar notion of

‘personhood’, the remark does tell us that prior to Alexander, there was no culture of books in Greece.

Plato points out that prior to the Great Library there was no culture of science in Greece. At his trial, Socrates was charged with a great crime – the crime of declaring the moon to be a clod of earth.¹⁵ A death penalty was demanded just on that ground – that he did not worship the moon as a divinity! Socrates denied he was Anaxagoras. Clearly, the Greeks customarily put to death anyone who dared to do anything remotely scientific in astronomy. This situation persisted until after the time of Alexander, for Aristotle too ran away from Athens for the same reason, viz., that he feared being put to death for dabbling in scientific books! How could such an intolerant and superstitious culture have produced any science?

Herodotus, like other Greeks, travelled to Egypt for higher learning. He confirms that the Greeks aped the Egyptians, and that Greek gods were mostly imitations of Egyptian gods.¹⁶ (The Ionian Greeks, being a Persian colony, preferred to mimic Persian customs.) Alexander too paid obeisance to the Egyptian gods at Memphis. Alexandria itself was better known as the city of Serapis, a dual-purpose god originating from the Egyptian gods Osiris and Apis.

So, the Greeks lacked science until the time of Alexander. On the other hand, the first catalogue of books in the Great Library was prepared by Callimachus at the beginning of Ptolemy II’s reign. This means that the main corpus of the library was already in place by then. Such a vast library could hardly have been produced, *in situ*, during Ptolemy I’s reign. Thus, the unavoidable conclusion is that the Alexandrian library did not have a Greek origin.

Only one serious explanation fits the facts: the books in the Alexandrian library were produced by someone else, and Alexander obtained them as part of his war booty. This is recognisably similar to the way the Toledo library was obtained – as war booty – by the proto-Crusaders. The older civilisations, such as Egypt, Persia,

and Babylon, had been around for long enough, and had ample economic surplus to have produced books on the scale required for the Alexandrian library.

The Zoroastrian Book of Nativities records that Alexander got books from Darius’ treasury translated, and burnt the originals. This part of Alexander’s booty being bulky, it is natural to suppose that only a small part of it would have been transported back to Greece, to his mentor, Aristotle. The bulk of the books were left behind in Alexandria. There they lay neglected by Ptolemy I who was preoccupied with his petty wars. It was only at the beginning of Ptolemy II’s reign that someone remembered this neglected treasure, and had it catalogued. Over time, vigorous attempts were made to expand the library by banning the export of papyrus, by forcibly acquiring all books entering the kingdom etc. Numerous books from Egypt and elsewhere were naturally added to this library. Some were presumably translated into Greek.

This explanation fits into the general theory¹⁷ that information preferentially flows *towards* the military conqueror. The idea that military conquerors at the head of vast hordes, like Alexander or Hulegu, spread culture and science is a sorry attempt at glorification aimed at uncritical and gullible people. In both cases, these military conquerors spread destruction, but acquired culture, exactly as happened during the first Crusade. (The Greeks, too, were then on the periphery of the Persian empire, so Alexander’s conquests were just another case of such ‘barbarian incursions’.)

The textual sources of the post-Crusade story

How did people hang on for so many centuries to the absurd theory of the Hellenic origins of science? Of course, the theory suited the priests who so dominated Western society for centuries. But, historiographically speaking, a key methodology was used to establish this implanted myth as theory. The methodology was to rely *entirely* on textual evidence. This

was seen as culturally correct in a scriptural culture: 'If it is written it must be true'!

The textual sources for this history are very late: at least a thousand years after the purported fact. The Latin texts are obviously all post-Crusade texts derived from the Arabic. The Byzantine Greek texts (from Istanbul) are often from even later (as in the case of Copernicus). Even the earlier texts postdate the Baghdad library. By no stretch of imagination can these texts be construed as the 'original' Greek sources that they are often passed off as. Only a process of wild speculation connects these late texts to purported 'originals' in Alexandria from a thousand years earlier. Non-textual evidence is contrary to these speculations. There is no continuous tradition of intervening texts connecting the actual texts to the conjectured 'originals'. Most likely, the supposed 'original' texts never existed, but even if they did, they cannot be reconstructed from the later-day texts which are accretive: a scientific text had to be practically useful to survive, therefore it would be constantly updated.

For example, a navigator would record the *current* pole star, which is the matter of practical concern. (Due to a phenomenon known as the precession of the equinoxes, the axis of the earth precesses, like a spinning top. Therefore, the axis points to different points in the sky at different times, so the pole star changes with the epoch.) And, indeed, the current pole star heads the list found in the 'original' *Almagest* text. However, the text is attributed to a Claudius Ptolemy of the 2nd century, when this star pointed 12° away from the north pole! From the 2nd through the 9th century its companion star [Ursa Minor β], an equally bright star, better indicated north!¹⁸

Obviously, this sort of textual evidence from late and accretive sources is evidence of very poor quality. On the other hand, the priests, who wrote history based on such texts, were masters in the art of manipulating poor-quality textual evidence, and

using such manipulation to promote the most absurd beliefs contrary to elementary common sense. ♦

CK Raju holds an honours degree in physics, a masters in mathematics, and a PhD from the Indian Statistical Institute. His latest book is Euclid and Jesus (Multiversity and Citizens International, 2012), the story of how the church changed mathematics across two religious wars. He is also the author of Cultural Foundations of Mathematics (Pearson Longman, 2007), The Eleven Pictures of Time (Sage, 2003), Time: Towards a Consistent Theory (Kluwer Academic, 1994) and Is Science Western in Origin? (Multiversity and Citizens International, 2009), from which the above is extracted.

Endnotes

1. WW Rouse Ball, *A Short Account of the History of Mathematics*, Dover, New York, 1960, pp. 1-2. Emphasis added.
2. Joseph Needham, *The Shorter Science & Civilisation in China* (abridgment by Colin A Ronan), Cambridge University Press, 1981, Vol. 2, p. 43.
3. E.g., *Mathematics: Textbook for Class IX* (JV Narlikar, P Sinclair, et al.), NCERT, New Delhi, 2005.
4. Clarence A Forbes, 'Books for the burning', *Transactions of the American Philological Society* 67 (1936), pp. 114-25.
5. Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Great Books of the Western World, Vols. 37-38, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Chicago, 1996, Vol. 1, Ch. 28, p. 462. Later (Vol. 2, Ch. 51, p. 274) Gibbon discusses and dismisses the canard that burning down the Great Library might have been the work of Caliph Omar, or that it might have happened during a fire started at the time of Julius Caesar's attack. Furthermore, in view of the above evidence for the book-burning edicts of Christian emperors, one does not need a separate hypothesis for the Great Library.
6. Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, Vol. 2, Ch. 52, p. 298, and footnote 54, p. 692.
7. Anthony Pym, *Negotiating the Frontier: Translators and Intercultures in Hispanic History*, Jerome Publishing, Manchester, 2000. Also: <http://www.fut.es/~apym/on-line/studies/toledo.html>.
8. Shakespeare, *A Winter's Tale*, iv, 2, 'Let me see. Every 'leven wether tods; every tod yields pound and odd shilling; fifteen hundred shorn, what comes the wool to? . . . I cannot do't without counters.' [11 wether (sheep) give one tod (28 lbs) of wool, which sells for a guinea (21 shillings). How much is the wool from 1,500 sheep?]
9. This theology is today attributed to Proclus, Plotinus etc. Richard C Taylor, 'A Critical Analysis of the Kalam fi'l mahd al-khair', in: *Neoplatonism and Islamic Thought*, ed. Parvez Morewedge, New York, 1992, pp. 11-40.
10. E.g., Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, Vol. 2, note 55 to Ch. 52, p. 608. Others have assigned the date of 1080 to Simon Seth's Greek translation. The Arabic translation *Kalilah va Dimnah* by Ibn al Muqaffa (d. 750) was long before the formation of the House of Wisdom, and the movement called the Brethren of Purity (Ikhwan al-Safa) derives inspiration from this text. The Pahlavi translation was by Burzoe himself, according to the *Shahnama* of Firdausi.
11. Similarly, the subsequent translation of the *Pancatantra* from Greek to Latin, in 1250, shows that there was an active information exchange between Byzantium and Rome from long before the fall of Byzantium in 1452, which only accelerated this process.
12. The clause supposedly exempted these philosophers from Justinian's edicts. Gibbon says this 'reflects the purest lustre on the character of Chosroes', and credits this 'curious story' to Agathias. Gibbon, Vol. 1, Ch. 40, p. 671, and note 155, p. 899.
13. MS Syriac, Paris, No. 346 of 662 CE.
14. Strabo, *Geography*, 13.1.54.
15. Plato, *Apology*, 26, trans. B Jowett, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Chicago, 1996, p. 204. 'Friend Meletus, you think you are accusing Anaxagoras....'
16. Herodotus, *The History* (Euterpe) Bk II.50, trans. G Rawlinson, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Chicago, 1996, p. 60.
17. CK Raju, 'Models of Information Transmission', Ch. 5 in *Cultural Foundations of Mathematics*, Pearson, 2007.
18. AT Fomenko, VV Kalashnikov, and GV Nosovsky, *Geometrical and statistical methods of analysis of star configurations: Dating Ptolemy's Almagest*, CRC Press, 1993, p. 268.

Decolonisation insights from the Swaraj University experiment

Swaraj University was launched in 2010 as India's first university dedicated to strengthening local cultures, local economies and local ecologies. *Manish Jain*, one of its co-founders, reflects on some of its innovations designed to move away from the conventional colonial curriculum.

A space to know oneself. A space to grow. A space to experiment. A space to do what YOU are really passionate about. A space to stumble and fall, make mistakes. A space to make friends. A space to understand diversity, community and democracy. A space to question, and be questioned. A space to DO SOMETHING, for the environment, for society, for one's community, for oneself!

— Sakhi Nitin-Anita, *khoji*, age 19

SWARAJ University is designed as a peoples' university for the 21st century. It is not an attempt to reconstruct yet another ivory tower educational institution. Instead, our commitment is to create an environment in which learners can seriously and openly engage with their own talents, visions and values, as well as their local realities, real-world issues and new possibilities. Their learning proposals are linked to long-term choices based on an ecologically and culturally sustainable livelihood, and to strengthening the resilience of their local communities. Perhaps most importantly, the entire learning process relies on self-discovery, unlearning, co-learning and intrinsic motivation. Touching the inner universe of students is essential for creating choices that have long-term impact and vitality.

Background

Swaraj University was launched in April 2010 with three key considerations, relevant to the discourse on decolonisation, in mind:

1) The industrial-military paradigm of development has unleashed unprecedented ecological damage to the planet while creating a great ma-

terial and intellectual dependency on fossil fuels. Climate change and loss of biodiversity are major conditions affecting our world today, causing countless catastrophic consequences. In addition, there are deep concerns about peak oil, toxic industrial pollution, more waste in the streets and around our homes, the rapid destruction of forested areas for mining and other industries, genetically modified and toxic food systems, and a general public insensitivity to our natural environments. Unfortunately, solutions rooted in community contexts and grassroots wisdom are few and far between across India. There is a need to re-link understanding of the ecological crisis and emerging solutions with a deeper cultural and spiritual crisis.

2) The global economy is creating many economic disruptions and uncertainties in the lives of youth and local communities. There is a tremendous amount of pressure to earn fast money as both real costs of living as well as consumer desires/products escalate. Many young people are disconnected from their traditional occupations and often migrate to the cities, where they are under- or unemployed. Educated youth are fed as slaves into the corporations and factories. There exists a great number of youth without opportunities to pursue right livelihood. The current higher education system does not equip youth with the vision, values and skills to start their own ventures that specifically address needs and realities in their local communities. Most forms of entrepreneurship that are being initiated today in India do not take the impact on people and planet into account. There is a need to re-situate

economics and entrepreneurship within the larger framework of the gift culture and localisation.

3) There is also a major crisis within the current schooling and university system, which is centred on competition, certificate-itis, fragmented knowledge, commodification and consumer culture. The higher education system focuses on rote memorisation (of pass-books and test papers) and stifles creativity, self-reflection, collaboration, self-initiative and lifelong learning. It does not recognise diverse learning styles or epistemologies. It remains an ivory tower institution which is disconnected from the needs, knowledge, languages and imagination of local communities. Oftentimes, students in the modern urban universities learn to despise their own communities and look down upon them. There is a need to give students an opportunity to be involved in researching and designing their own learning programmes, based on their curiosity, community needs and passion. There is also a need to validate a wide range of 'teachers' in local communities who may not have PhDs but are connected to various kinds of diverse living knowledge systems. Experiential learning and traditional wisdom need to be re-valued in relation to textual forms of knowledge.

Reva Dandage, co-founder of this university, states, 'Swaraj University is India's first university dedicated to strengthening our local cultures, local economies and local ecologies. Ecological sustainability, social justice and holistic, healthy lifestyles are the core principles of our vision. Within this larger context, we are keen to support young people in putting

their dreams into action and developing eco-friendly enterprises that make a difference for their communities.’

Swaraj University grew out of the efforts of Shikshantar (The Peoples’ Institute for Rethinking Education and Development) and many of its partners. Shikshantar, a non-profit peoples’ movement, was founded years ago to challenge the monopoly of the culture of schooling and its institutions of thought control. Shikshantar started with the question of the relevance of Gandhi’s call for *swaraj* (rule over the self) in our lives today. Shikshantar is based in Udaipur and is committed to creating spaces for individuals and organisations to engage in dialogue to find alternatives to industrial, institutionalised models of education, development and progress. Shikshantar also hosts the Swapathgami network, a trans-local network of people who have walked out of schools, universities and jobs to create new possibilities in their own lives and communities. Several of these people are part of Swaraj University as mentors and advisers.

Unique features of the programme

Taking inspiration from India’s rich *guru-shishya* tradition, Mahatma Gandhi’s *nai taleem*, Rabindranath Tagore’s Shantiniketan and Rancho’s *3 idiots*, Swaraj University started in April 2010 as a radical nurturing space for young people (ages 16-30) to self-design their own learning process to become community leaders and green entrepreneurs. In Swaraj University, the learners are called *khojis* (seekers or explorers). Re-integration of the hands, heart, head and home is at the centre of the pedagogical process. There are several unique features of Swaraj University worth mentioning:

- Each learner gets the opportunity to develop his or her own personalised learning programme based on his or her own dreams and social visions. It seeks to restore freedom and responsibility to each student to decide what they want to learn, how they want to learn and from whom they want to learn. Many experiments of

unlearning are designed to shake up some of the schooled assumptions that many of the learners come burdened with.

- Learners learn to live in a dynamic learning community, in which they are continuously experimenting with processes of deep democracy, governance and decision-making. They are invited to take an active role in community life and engage in everyday questions related to their personal and collective choices of food, waste, housing, energy, communication, healing/medicine, hygiene, transport, etc. This has created a lot of spontaneous opportunities for ‘here-and-now’ learning, particularly around group dynamics.

- Different kinds of ‘faculty’ (including those without formal education or PhDs) who come from diverse knowledge traditions and cosmologies are recognised and sought after. The principle of mutuality is encouraged in the learning process where the learners select their gurus and vice versa. The mantra of ‘the entire world is our classroom’ is at the centre. The learners are also encouraged to consciously co-learn with each other. In addition to informal exchanges, they organise and offer seminars and workshops for each other.

- Various mechanisms including a Feedback Council, Mitra Network, Phone-a-Friend Group, Listserv and workshops have been created to cater to the emotional space of the learner. Youth face a lot of challenges from family, peer group, girlfriends/boyfriends as well as ups and downs in their learning process. They also have lots of issues with anger, low self-esteem, broken family relationships, etc. Strong efforts have been made to create a safe space where the learners can open up and emotionally heal themselves.

- The entire university is designed to function in the spirit of the gift culture. There is a strong commitment to decommodify knowledge and learning. Students are invited to contribute whatever they can to the costs of running the programme. Faculty and resource persons also volunteer

their time with the learners. Several experiments and practices such as CopyLeft have been initiated to understand the gift culture.

- It is important to note that Swaraj University does not give out any examinations, degrees or certificates. It is not accredited by the University Grants Committee or any foreign body. It is a peoples’ university, accredited by different leading thinker-doers, by community and local organisations and by the practical accomplishments of the students.

According to co-founder Reva Dandage, ‘We want students to have real skills and knowledge to take up real projects in their communities – not just hollow pieces of paper. Over the course of two years, each *khoji* develops their own portfolio of practical experiences, self-reflection and references. At the end of two years, we believe that they will each have the full confidence and vision to start their own green enterprise.’

In collaboration with Shikshantar’s ‘Healing Ourselves from the Diploma Disease’ campaign, more than 100 organisations have been identified which are willing to hire and promote students without any formal degree on the basis of their experiences, portfolios and interviews. Swaraj University is also connected with other innovative universities around the world including Gaia University, Peer-to-Peer University and IGNOU which provide access to materials, online courses and students. Several *khojis* have participated in short seminars and workshops held at Deer Park Institute for the Study of Indian Classical Wisdom Traditions.

Learner profiles

There are currently 18 *khojis* enrolled in the first cohort. Within the first batch, there is a strong diversity – of age, language, religion, economic background, even ideologies and beliefs. The *khojis* have come from Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and Karnataka, from urban and rural settings. There is no prior degree or diploma required to join Swaraj Univer-

sity. The main criteria for selection are an openness to self-initiative and a deeper commitment to do something good for society and the environment. The youngest of the group is 17 years old and the oldest 30 years old. Two-thirds have received partial or full scholarships. Says co-founder Nitin Paranjape, 'We believe that everyone can learn and do something special in the world, despite their academic background. They just need a chance to identify their talents, find their inner passions and be in a community of support. The mainstream education system creates a lot of failures. We believe that everyone can be a winner and find success and deeper meaning in life.'

Some khojis and their backgrounds

Anant Singh, an 18-year-old boy from Mysore who has finished 12th grade, plans on creating a dent in the environmental damage done in cities by designing and changing urban homes to eco-homes that do rooftop farming, use low-water toilets and are run on solar energy. His big dream is to lead an ecologically positive lifestyle in a rural-based self-sustaining community. He keeps exploring how he can live a 'sensible' life, one that is in tune with nature, not consumerist and waste-generating. He says, 'The networks and connections that I have received from the like-minded community at Swaraj University are invaluable and have opened many doors.'

Harshita Wadhya, a young woman from the historic city of Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh state, graduated from Delhi University but decided not to pursue further education within the formal system and is now exploring her interest in alternative healing. Her focus is on energy work/pranic healing, love and forgiveness and its role in healing, and past-life regression. She is also keen to live sustainably, causing least damage to life and the environment around her. Dancing is also one of her passions. She is trying to live a life with freedom and courage and believes in making her own mistakes and learning

from them. She says, 'After joining Swaraj University, I have started believing in my dreams and values again and have regained my faith in humanity. I really have enjoyed spending time with my mentor.'

Gyan Shahane, a 20-year-old from Nashik in Maharashtra state, is interested in filmmaking, particularly in the drama/fiction category. He wants to use this powerful medium to bring about positive change in people and the society at large. He decided to leave school after 8th grade as he was fed up with the poor education he was receiving in government schools. His other interests are writing, reading, theatre and photography. He says, 'The love and acceptance I got after joining Swaraj University gives me the strength and courage to do what I want to do and walk on the path I have chosen for myself.'

Sakhi Nitin-Anita is a 19-year-old girl from Nashik. This young lady took a bold step to walk out of the school system from classes 7-10 to explore the world around her rather than go to school and rote learn for exams. In those three years she did various things like writing, web-designing, filmmaking, travelling the world and volunteering with people taking innovative steps to change society. She went on to become the Nashik topper in the class 12 board exams. She has joined Swaraj University and is exploring her passions for art, sustainable design, photography, child psychology and writing. She has done a mentorship working with women and teenagers on domestic violence issues. She says, 'Swaraj University has encouraged me to take the initiative and be more responsible for my own learning. It has given me the opportunity to interact with and live in a community with people from different socio-economic backgrounds. This has greatly enriched my perspective on life.'

According to Reva Dandage, 'The diversity of the first cohort has made for intense discussions and challenging situations at times. But, over the year, we have also witnessed the formation of strong bonds of friendship and trust amongst the group that

transcend the barriers of age, class, caste and language.'

The structure and process

The course is conducted in Hindi, while keeping in mind each individual's need for expression in his/her native language. The programme believes in learning by doing and learning by making mistakes. The programme is divided into four *Khoji Meets* (one month every quarter during the first year) at the university's campus, three Learning Journeys and three Mentorship Periods of two months anywhere in the country. The *khojis* spend time in the *Khoji Meets* learning about and practising self-designed learning, self-reflection, teamwork, planning and deepening their perspective. Through exercises and sessions organised by the facilitators, *khojis* identify their individual learning goals, design plans to achieve them, identify skills that need to be built, redefine their dreams and bigger goals and chart out their mentorship periods. During the *Khoji Meets*, *khojis* also hone their documentation, presentation and media skills, design their portfolios and give and take feedback for their learning and growth.

As part of the efforts of perspective-building and gaining a deeper understanding of concepts related to the idea of *swaraj*, the *khojis* watch movies; research topics and organise seminars for each other; visit and learn from nearby villages; share articles, books and other resources; do hands-on projects such as building compost toilets and cooking solar food; interact with international students from other countries; and invite resource persons to share their perspectives.

In keeping with the vision of *swaraj*, the campus has been set up at an ideal location in the lap of nature at Tapovan Ashram, an organic farm and nursery 30 km. away from Udaipur city, located amidst the Aravali hills. Reclaiming our physical spaces and taking responsibility for their maintenance and growth is an essential part of the programme. There are no servants or peons at

Swaraj University. According to Reva Dandage, 'The mainstream education institutions focus exclusively on their curriculum to the exclusion of the learners' relationship with their environment – they do not have any responsibility and relationship with the food they eat, the energy they consume or the waste they generate.' Hence, all the *khojis* and faculty on campus take part in the design and development of community spaces like the kitchen, library, dorms, outdoor classrooms and organic farm, and shoulder community responsibilities like cooking, cleaning and thinking of what we purchase/consume and how it impacts our environment. 'Life on the campus has been exciting, challenging the comfort zones of some and confronting the deep personal issues of others, while exploring ways of living harmoniously with each other and with nature,' says Sakhi, one of the *khojis* from Nashik.

The 'faculty'

During the mentorship period, the *khojis* learn skills and practical wisdom from faculty-mentors in fields of their choice. Swaraj University has developed a wide pool of mentors all over India, with experience and expertise in fields varying from organic farming to naturopathy and healing, community radio to filmmaking, women's rights to working with street children, zero-waste crafts to healthy cooking, sustainable design to appropriate renewable technologies. *Khojis* also do short internships with several local artisans in Udaipur such as potters, puppeteers, bamboo craftsmen, herbal healers and farmers. Swaraj University has enlisted over 50 *ustaad*-mentors as part of our faculty and the list is growing. In addition to this, *khojis* are encouraged to also look for additional mentors in their local regions.

Some of our mentors include:

Dhirendra and Smita are rightly known as the Two Thoreaus of Sakwa, Gujarat. They live a simple and self-sustainable life on two acres of land on the banks of the Narmada River in Gujarat. They were both lecturers in

Some highlights of the Swaraj University experience, in the *khojis'* own words

'It has been an exciting journey of discovery and experimentation for all of us. We have learnt through various experiences such as visiting a prison, organising a fair in the neighbouring village, setting up a food stall made from local grains in a *mela*, silent trekking in the mountains, working with local farmers and artisans like potters, puppeteers, etc., interviewing tribal nomads who walk miles with their goats, interacting with youth from foreign countries, tracing the pugmarks of a leopard, visiting the dump site and attending international conferences amongst many others.'

'One of the highlights of the year was when we participated in an amazing week-long, hands-on, service learning, community-building exercise called the Oasis Game in Shivaji Nagar basti in Udaipur that was conducted by our friend Edgar from Brazil. It pushed our thinking and learning in various dimensions such as learning the skills of working within a community, knowing how to work for our dreams by making it fun and implementing tools for social dialogue. For the first time we learned to see the beauty, assets and power within so-called poor or backward communities. For many of us, it ignited a new vision and spirit of *sewa*.'

'Travelling is a great way to learn.'

We lay a lot of stress on Learning Journeys in the first year. It creates the magic of bonding us all together, energising us with fresh new ideas, inspiring us with new people, social entrepreneurship experiments and activist movement, widening our worldviews, giving us the opportunity to interact with other alternative communities and a chance to try our hand at doing things that we always dreamt of. Last year, we went to Pune and Ahmedabad.'

'We did a very unique and inspiring Cycle Yatra, an unlearning journey into villages without money, cell phones, food or any other amenities. During the Cycle Yatra, we pushed our own physical and comfort limits, we were questioned on our relationship with money and the broader question of dependency, thus challenging our mindsets on issues of "progress", "security" and "development".'

'It has been very exciting and inspiring to see the various personal experiments undertaken by fellow *khojis* – personal experiments on silence, free cycling, self-healing, physical labour, the effects of limiting Internet or mobile phone use etc. are all beautiful attempts to keep oneself alive and aware in this age of apathy and high-speed living.'

Ahmedabad but decided to opt for a simple life 20 years ago. Both their children, now around 20-25 years old, have never been to school and are working with renewable energy technology. They have developed several organic and herbal products which they grow, process and sell.

Bharat Shah, from Baroda, is an allopathic doctor who left his thriving career when he realised the ills of modern pharmaceutical medicine to run a naturopathy hospital in Baroda. He is in charge of the Vinoba Naturopathy centre in Baroda started in the name/by the disciple of Gandhiji Vinoba based on his ideas on health and health care.

Praveen Pagare, a self-taught

documentary filmmaker, has worked with different social movements throughout his 10-year career, from the Narmada Bachav Andolan to Ekta Parishad. He has worked passionately with Abhivyakti Media for Development, an NGO in Nashik, for many years, making documentaries on various social issues.

Nandita Dinesh is a theatre artist and director who has been working intensely on developing new forms of community media. She travels the world, from Mexico to Afghanistan to Northeast India, trying to bring people in places of conflict and unrest together. Her expertise is in participatory and experiential theatre with local communities. Currently,

she has developed a platform for young artists in Pune called 'Mezza'.

Deepak Suchde is not your typical farmer. The first thing that strikes you when you meet him is the passion for his work and for his life. When he starts talking about natueco-farming you know instantly that here is a person whose knowledge is insurmountable as you are drawn into the world of soil, plants, and the ecosystem. He will tell you how to make ends meet farming in a piece of land as small as 10 gunthas (quarter of an acre) and live healthily and in harmony with nature. He is busy spreading the call to enrich the degraded soil made worse by use of unlimited chemicals and greed so that we can claim our right to organic living. He lives on his farm near Harda in the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh.

Manoj Prajapat, a self-taught chef and community entrepreneur from Udaipur who left school after class 10, runs a health food business 'Jasso Ann Vasso Mann' – you are what you eat. He does various experiments in cooking with zero oil, solar technology and local grains. He runs a slow food café in Udaipur.

Some challenges and key lessons

So far the first year of Swaraj University has initiated many exciting innovations in the realm of higher education. Several *khojis* have already received job offers after their first year. Many are in the process of setting up their own community enterprises. Most importantly, we have seen deep growth and transformative changes in the *khojis* themselves.

There are several interesting challenges and key lessons from the first year worth noting which are relevant to the discourse on decolonisation:

It is important to have more conscious spaces for intercultural dialogue between youth from metros, urban/semi-urban areas and rural areas. Their radically different value systems, experiences, epistemologies, etc. can either provide rich fodder for deep dialogue or be very divisive if

not attended to. Within the context of decolonisation, it is important that all three groups realise that they have much to learn from each other to understand the challenges of our times. We are exploring ways to create more vibrant spaces for intercultural dialogue.

The domain of emotional support, motivation and well-being for youth is even more critical than we had imagined. Many have suffered much humiliation, alienation and psychological damage from the formal education system. The breakdown of family structures and community spaces has created additional emotional distress. Furthermore, the decolonising/unlearning process is a very emotionally charged one as many belief systems are called into question. Negotiating an alternative path, in the sense of putting one's values into practice in the current state of the world, is quite difficult. We have seen powerful changes taking place in the *khojis* once they feel accepted, healed and heard. We are exploring how to create more mechanisms for continuous emotional well-being, risk-taking and care.

We have seen a tremendous influence of the popular media metro culture on youth. Discussions on film stars, cricketers, fashion, technology products, etc. dominate informal peer group spaces. Formal academic spaces, in fact, have very little influence on the daily conversations between youth. Youth who try to raise and discuss other subjects are often ostracised from their peer group. We are exploring how to engage with this Bollywood media culture in more critical and creative ways.

In the pedagogy of self-designed learning, we are continually playing with the inherited category of 'academic rigour' as we deal with diverse knowledge systems, learning styles, learning paces and levels of comfort with textual expression – of both faculty and students. We have been open to multiple ways, languages and media of expressing one's learning and understanding. Along the way, we have also had to unlearn some of our academic biases about the centrality

of text. In addition, we have tried to develop different tools for self, peer and faculty assessment in order to ensure that *khojis* get different kinds of feedback in their learning journeys. We continue to explore the right balance of how much of the programme should be structured by us and how much should be self-designed by the *khojis*, and how to ensure that intellectual depth and rigour are achieved.

There has been quite a positive response to the idea of Swaraj University and a call for tailoring it to meet many different environments, contexts and needs. For example, there has been an invitation to set up a Swaraj University campus in the central jail. There has also been interest in having an evening programme for those who are working and unable to attend the programme full-time. There is interest in the creation of a summer leadership programme for youth during their vacations. There is an interest in a village Swaraj University. We are exploring the essence that must remain in any Swaraj University programme and what must be contextualised in different settings in order to ensure relevance and ownership.

There are many crises facing the modern university structure in the 21st century. Swaraj University is a small and humble attempt to take conversations about decolonisation beyond curriculum reform into the domain of re-inventing and re-imagining the very structure, roles, values, and economics that underlie the university. It seeks to restore the power and responsibility of the learner, teacher and local communities as the starting point for educational transformation. Much hard work and many more such efforts are required to realise the larger vision of intellectual *swaraj* but at least a step has been taken and people can again dare to dream beyond the conventional university model. ♦

Manish Jain is co-founder of Swaraj University (www.swarajuniversity.org) and has served as Coordinator-Co-Founder of Shikshantar: The Peoples' Institute for Rethinking Education and Development based in Udaipur, India. The above is the text of his presentation at the International Conference on 'Decolonising Our Universities' held in Penang, Malaysia, in June 2011.

An Afrocentric South African university

Molefi Kete Asante makes the case for an Afrocentric university where human knowledge is presented from the standpoint of the African people.

THERE is a unique situation that now confronts South Africa in the educational arena, one that should never return to confront any society. Institutions that were based on white supremacy, not simply the separation of races, are being challenged to find relevance within a free, democratic South Africa.

It is particularly important that educational officials in South Africa raise the fundamental questions of culture, perspective, worldview, and interpretation in the discussion of facts. While all of these ideas are difficult to track in a multifaceted world and in a pluralistic society, one thing must be clear, and that is the demand for relevance in education is not so much a demand for fitting people to jobs as it is for fitting them to life. Given the latter opportunity, people will create their own jobs and find their way in the larger world based on their solid foundation in their own culture, perspective, or worldview.

I am interested in this because at the level of the university one does not only find training going on but also the production of knowledge, the creation of concepts, the promotion of ideas, and the institutionalisation of worldviews. The implications for an educational system that has depended upon the white supremacist political structure for its sustenance intellectually and economically are great. In the first place there will be resistance to change particularly if it is change that will create a more open university and bring ideas and information from other parts of the world. Obviously the South African whites were confident that they could create an educational system that isolated them from the rest of the world in terms of human knowledge while at the same time further isolating the



University students in South Africa. What is needed in South Africa are Afrocentric universities which find their inspiration in the cultural and intellectual traditions of Africa.

black majority from interactions with other African cultures, the African diaspora, the African past, and the revolutionary movements of the world. The university, normally an institution of intellectual and artistic contact, became a bastion of the same white privilege that cloaked the rest of the nation.

A university is expressive of the best ideas and ideals of a society and represents in many ways the traditions of a people, and as such it serves as a fundamental centre for the transmission of skills and values, ways of thinking, and optimism for the future. The fact of the matter is that the vast majority of black South Africans have been educated in the Eurocentric mode whether or not the education took place in a white or a black institution. The locus of the education has little to do with the results. Since a university bears the mantle of authority and is adorned with the semblance of fact, the education that is dispensed is often accepted without question.

Those Africans who have argued and questioned the denial of ourselves and our stories in the context of the

university have frequently been failed, suspended, or white-balled. The idea is to mould Africans who have Eurocentric ideas, attitudes, opinions, tastes, and desires, and who therefore are ready to defend those things that are European even if they are antagonistic toward Africans. Every subject in the curriculum of the Eurocentric university is permeated with white supremacy; a student completes the curriculum to his or her psychological peril.

After examining the catalogues and brochures of several major South African universities, it appeared to me that very few of the African literary masters appear in the curriculum on world literature. Writers such as Nicolas Guillen of Cuba, Abdias do Nascimento of Brazil, Richard Wright, Langston Hughes, John O Killens, Charles Fuller, August Wilson, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, and James Baldwin of the United States, Manuel Zapata Olivella of Colombia, Estupinan Nelson of Ecuador, Leopold Senghor and Cheikh Anta Diop of Senegal, Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, and Molara

Ogundipe-Leslie of Nigeria, and Derek Walcott and Wilfred Cartey of the Caribbean should be an active part of the literature curriculum and be studied alongside the very many eloquent Southern African writers such as Wally Serote, Herbert Vilikazi, Alex La Guma, Lawrence Vambe, Bessie Head, Masizi Kunene, Mphahlele, Stanlake Samkange and many others.

Every aspect of Eurocentric training mastered by African youth contributes to Eurocentric social, economic, and cultural domination if it is not counterbalanced by an Afrocentric, that is, African agency, perspective. While a Eurocentric education has validity for the transmission of European culture, it negates most African cultures and values because of its insistence on cultural domination. The fact of the matter is that this notion of cultural domination is based on the belief in African inferiority. I contend that this belief, however deeply rooted in South African society, must be challenged and confronted at every instance. African culture in the 21st century will be, if anything, a critique of domination of the sort imposed by Europe during the 19th and 20th centuries.

The Afrocentric university

What is needed in South Africa are Afrocentric universities where human knowledge is presented from the standpoint of African people. The attainment of knowledge is a universal quest which is always achieved through one's own eyes or through the eyes of another. Why should it be that Africans are required to master the thoughts and opinions of Europeans before they know the thoughts and opinions of their own people? Why should not there be dynamic centres of education for the thorough exploration of issues of society, psychology, history, mathematics, and legal philosophy as well as every other art or science from the standpoint of Af-



File picture of African American scholar WEB DuBois (left) meeting with Kwame Nkrumah, President of Ghana. The two had discussed the possibility of an African university devoted to the cultures and practices of African people.

rica?

These centres of learning, which may be built on the sites of the old apartheid universities, black and white, should be opened to universal knowledge and should not be factories for the glorification of Africa, as they have been and often are for the glorification of Europe, but rather institutions which find their inspiration in the cultural and intellectual traditions of Africa. As such they will critique even the use of Western names for the social sciences and arts and raise more first-order questions about the role of terms such as civilisation, education, democracy, and universalism. This is the real business of the intellectual of the new South Africa.

At the present time most South African universities remain inserted into a structure designed to maintain the Eurocentric system of world domination. This is the truth despite the fact that Africans are in charge of some of these institutions. It is rather like many of the black colleges in the United States where the mastery of European culture has received a premium over the mastery of African culture. One of the greatest educational thinkers in America's history was the scholar Carter G Woodson, who argued in his 1933 book *The Miseducation of the Negro* that most black colleges taught about white mu-

sic, white art, white philosophies but not about African art, music, and philosophies.

While the South African universities may not be as slow to change as the black colleges were when Woodson made his charge about their use of the white model of education to teach black students, it is useful to remain cautious and wary of any education that does not begin at home. All mature societies educate their children about their own cultures first. Extracting the South African institutions from such a system will be a major task since many people have vested interests in the institutions as they have been developed.

WEB DuBois, the greatest scholar of African descent and perhaps the most significant American intellectual of the 20th century, wanted to see a university where the total learning and cultures of the African people were expressed. Prior to his death in 1963 Kwame Nkrumah, President of Ghana, discussed with DuBois the possibility of an African university devoted to the cultures and practices of African people. Such a university if constructed in South Africa would have to begin with the African rather than the European model. It would have to have Egypt and Nubia as the classical fountains for education rather than Greece and Rome. It would have to be dedicated to the transformation of the theoretical concepts that emerge out of the African context into real, active, ordinary ways of improving the lives of people. There is the possibility in this of a totally different orientation to human studies.

Such a course is possible now in South Africa but it will take a bold leader or leadership to capture the day and erect the kind of structures that are necessary for advancing the idea in the country. ♦

Molefi Kete Asante is Professor at the Department of African American Studies at Temple University in Philadelphia, USA. This article is reproduced from his website www.asante.net.

‘Academic imperialism is self-perpetuating’

CK Raju argues that the belief that Western education is needed for science and that Western endorsement is the best test of scientific truth and expertise is a recipe to ensure perpetual inferiority of the non-Western world and make the technology gap permanent.



A journal rack in a university library. Many people find stifling the existing power structure used to control publications in academic journals.

THE point about academic imperialism is not just to talk about it, but to end it.

Talking about it is useful only in so far as it helps to understand the key causes and remedies. Here is a summary of both, and a proposal for the critical first step.

Western education has been promoted on the grounds that it would help to ‘catch up with the West’ in science and technology and thus obtain parity with the West in hard power. This belief makes the non-West imitate the West.

On the other hand, today, a scientific innovation is not treated as credible until it has been endorsed by the West [e.g., published in a ‘prestigious’ (meaning Western) journal]; this practice ensures that the non-West can *never* out-innovate or catch up with the West in science, for the West is always the first to know about any major innovations, well before they become public.

The two beliefs combined (that Western education is needed for science, and that Western endorsement is the best test of scientific truth and

expertise) are thus actually a recipe to ensure perpetual inferiority of the non-West, and to make the technology gap permanent, with the non-West always following in the footsteps of the West, but trailing behind, and never able to catch up.

For example, Western education has been encouraged in India for nearly two centuries, but India could not achieve technological parity with the West in all these years – even its much-vaunted space programme, for instance, is still more than 40 years behind the West. (India just sent an unmanned mission to the moon. But the fact is that the US landed a man on the moon over 40 years ago, around which time China, too, had acquired ICBM technology.) The cryogenic rocket technology used in India poses no military threat to the West. The West is happy to have a billion people following it at such a safe technological distance.

Unlike ordinary imperialism, in Iraq or Afghanistan, say, which is resisted and drains the imperialist, academic imperialism is self-perpetuating. Common people, too, seek Western education for the economic benefits it might entail at the individual level, through proximity to the rulers. Thus, they acquire the attitudes and values the West wants them to have. This soft power of the West is a stronger basis for imperialism than its hard power which is otherwise vul-

nerable.

Thus, the technology gap between West and non-West is often very slender. Atomic bombs, for example, are easy to build. A country like Iran could easily do that, within a short time, if it were allowed to do so, without external interference. And if political pressure is the real means by which the technology gap is maintained, then how can that gap ever be overcome by imitating the West? On the other hand, Russia still has a whole lot of nuclear bombs and delivery missiles. But they are no longer seen as a major threat, after the Soviet Union succumbed to Western soft power and disintegrated without a blow.

Thus, the real strength of imperialism is soft power, not hard power. The West needs soft power to cement the vulnerabilities in its hard power. Imitating the West only enhances its soft power, without diminishing its hard power (which is based on the technology gap).

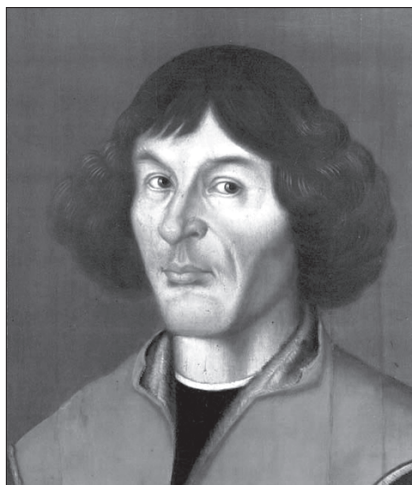
The present-day soft power of the West originated during colonialism. Unlike ordinary military conquests, colonialism involved a cultural conquest, through a conquest of the mind. In India, the Britishers themselves wondered how a handful of people from a small nation coming from so far overseas could control so vast a population. Indoctrination through the colonial education system played a key role in this cultural imperialism. The aim of colonial education was to create a Western-educated elite class of Indians who would be loyal to the British and help them to rule the masses. This loyalty was ensured by the education system which implanted the desired attitudes and values, and

also instilled an unshakeable belief in Western superiority (and Indian inferiority). This is not exactly the way dogs and other animals are trained to obey their masters without a stick, but there is a similarity.

This colonial system of education could be initiated because the gullible Indian elite (and the colonised, generally) had already swallowed the claim of Western superiority. In the early 19th century, there was no visible technology gap between West and non-West: the Battle of Plassey was not won by any technological superiority. Nevertheless it was argued that the West must be imitated since it was superior. That claim of superiority rested on the bad history that science is of Western origin and is thus practically owned by the West, which is hence intrinsically superior. This bad history was further reinforced by bad philosophy which claimed that Western ways of doing mathematics and science are universal, and other ways of doing them are worthless or inferior. As the owner-originator of universal knowledge, the West claimed the right to rule the world. The sole virtue of others lay in how well they could imitate the West.

This understanding of the origin of Western soft power suggests a step-by-step process to dismantle it. The process must start by correcting history, modifying philosophy, and revitalising education. Eventually, this process must be extended to change the present-day methods of validating science.

The first step is to undo the falsehoods of Western history of science. Far too many people incorrectly think this can be done just by highlighting some scientific contributions of the non-West. Certainly, it is important to highlight the contribution of the non-West, but that, by itself, is not enough, and past attempts to do so have repeatedly failed to change 'mainstream' history of science. For example, it has been known for at least the last 60 years that Copernicus, a mere priest, only translated the works of Ibn Shatir and Nasiruddin Tusi (of Maragha) from their (Byzantine) Greek versions to Latin. Yet the mass



There is a need to undo the falsehoods of Western history of science. For example, Copernicus (pic) only translated the works of Ibn Shatir and Nasiruddin Tusi to Latin, yet most people still believe he was a revolutionary scientist.

of people still believe Copernicus was a revolutionary scientist. Most Western historians of science go on talking about the 'Copernican revolution', pretending as if nothing happened. People have been indoctrinated to believe that any attempt to correct Western history is necessarily chauvinistic. This latter belief has been greatly helped along by the more extreme elements in the non-West who have often made wild claims. In any case, such information is often just ignored by the West.

Thus, the right thing to do is, first, to expose the falsehoods of Western history. Present-day academic imperialism is based on the formula 'trust the West'. This formula is the key to the Western indoctrination and propaganda so critical to ordinary imperialism. Western propaganda would fail without such trust. To negate that propaganda, it is important to demonstrate that this trust in the West is misplaced.

Hence, also, it is important to demonstrate that the deliberate falsehoods of Western history of science are not limited to isolated instances in the past; those falsehoods are widespread and systemic, and extend into the present. This can be demonstrated by exposing also contemporary Western icons at the highest level, such as Einstein. Hence, I have started the

series of books 'False Gods of Science?', a summary account of which is in my book *Is Science Western in Origin?*

While exposure of Western falsehoods is necessary, it is not sufficient. The West has lived off the most absurd lies for so long that it has developed a defence mechanism against such exposures, and tries to maintain those lies by inventing further lies, for example about the persona of those who expose its lies. A number of Western historians see it as their job to promote and maintain falsehoods in history. So, the exposure of Western falsehoods needs to be propagated as vigorously as possible. While individuals may uncover the falsehoods of history, the propagation of such exposure has to be a collective effort. Otherwise it is easy to isolate and paint the individual as a deviant or a chauvinist.

The second step is to understand and undo the way bad philosophy has been used to support false history. For example, it has been claimed that the Western way of doing mathematics is the only right way, and must be imitated. This 'philosophical' demand to imitate the West has a retrospective effect on the history of ideas, for it allows an easy way to dismiss non-Western contributions as insignificant, since non-imitative. (For example, the pre-Newtonian Indian calculus is today dismissed as 'pre-calculus', just because it does not imitate the present Western way of 'limits'.) Moreover, this demand for imitativeness allows 'science' itself to be used as a key weapon to run down beliefs in other cultures. A pet argument of Christian missionaries was that Hindus and Muslims and all non-Christians, in general, were superstitious, unlike Christians who were rational.¹

More to the point is the way Western-educated people, even those with the best intentions, have swallowed this belief. The Pakistani physicist Pervez Hoodbhoy, for example, is today arguing that scientific development was arrested in Islam due to al Ghazali. As I have commented,² a curious aspect of Hoodbhoy's claim is that what Hoodbhoy calls 'the key

premises underlying science' are actually the key premises underlying post-Crusade Christian theology, which the church found it politically convenient to adopt during the Crusades. Those theological beliefs got mixed up with mathematics, science, and its philosophy in the West. In fact, all those premises can be safely denied, and this de-theologisation leads to a *better* mathematics and science, and a better philosophy of science, as I have shown. In any case, the subterranean message underlying the missionary position is to adopt Western (indeed post-Crusade) values suited to the imperialist. The whole issue is a bit complex, and as I have discussed it extensively elsewhere,³ I will not enter into this issue (of science as a source of imperial values) here, and will only indicate why it is better to teach de-theologised mathematics.

The third step, and a key step, against academic imperialism is to dismantle the colonial education system which indoctrinates people. The need to decolonise education has so far been understood only in the context of political history and social sciences. In 'hard' sciences, imitation of the West remains the norm. So it is here that it is most important to decolonise education, and demonstrate alternatives.

Since mathematics is at the root of science, it is a good idea to begin by decolonising math education. Because imitation of the West has been painted as 'progressive' since colonial times, it is important to demonstrate that decolonising mathematics education is not a 'regressive' step, but leads instead to gain of practical value, with the only loss being that of Western indoctrination.

A key aspect of that indoctrination is to implant the belief in the conflicting claims that (a) 'mathematics is universal', but that (b) 'mathematics began with the Greeks' and other cultures had no real clue as to the right way to do math. Now, it is elementary common sense that if (a) is true, and mathematics is indeed universal, then (b) must be false, for mathematics should have sprung up the same in all places! So, it is remarkable how

many people who know neither mathematics nor its history or philosophy adhere to *both* these claims, contrary to common sense. Such contradictory convictions based on ignorance are the hallmark of superstition and indoctrination. In fact, both the beliefs (a) and (b) began during the Crusades as beliefs politically convenient to the church.

A key step against academic imperialism is to dismantle the colonial education system which indoctrinates people.

The solution, thus, is to break such Western superstitions by means of practical pedagogical demonstrations. I believe all these elements (a new history, a new philosophy, and a new pedagogy, with a resulting gain of practical value) are captured in my five-day course on calculus without limits. The basic point is that math teaching is difficult today because theology got mixed up with this math in the West. Therefore, de-theologising math also makes it very easy to teach.

Such demonstrations need to be replicated widely, advertised, and absorbed into the 'mainstream' educational system, to destroy the superstition implanted and encouraged by the colonial education system, that there is no alternative to imitating the West. In fact, such demonstrations will create a major dilemma for the West. Either it must lag behind in the area of math education, which it today recognises (as in the latest Obama budget) as a key area of concern in pedagogy, or it must abandon its cherished theological beliefs – beliefs on which much post-Crusade Western philosophy is based. This latter course will not be easy, so the non-West also has a comparative advantage here.

The course on calculus without limits is only a first step to decolonising education in hard science. (That first step is often the most difficult.) Once the first step is taken

it will be readily seen that other similar changes are possible, for example, in the case of geometry and algebra. Other sciences such as physics and biology are also coloured by Western doctrinal content which is of negative practical value, and it is important to demonstrate the entry of theology into these hard sciences, at least in the obvious cases, such as the work of Newton or Stephen Hawking, and to separate the practical value of these sciences from their doctrinal content.

The fourth and the last step is to dismantle the Western academic power structure at the level of higher education and research, for this exerts continuous pressure on school and undergraduate pedagogy. The politics of information here is more complex, and, unlike the first three steps, it might be better to do this more gradually.

Certain steps can be taken in this direction right away. Many people, even in the West, find stifling the existing power structure used to control journal publications. Although blind peer review is portrayed as a system of quality control, it is open to much misuse, like Roman Catholic confessionals, and has been rightly described as pre-censorship. Systems like the arXiv which provide an alternative way to disseminate knowledge have long been in place. Even these alternative systems have been challenged as too restrictive, leading to the formation of more recent alternatives such as viXra.

Quality control, especially in a digital age (where there is little cost associated with publication), should ideally take the form of post-publication public debate. Such debates can be encouraged, for example, by inviting comments by referees (and rejoinders by authors), within a system like viXra. The referees would not be spending any more time (than in the old system, if they were serious) but the quality of debate would improve. Moreover, the fact is that with novel ideas, referees tend to err quite often, and in this system, there would be room to correct such errors. Setting up such a system is a simple matter which sovereign states (and even uni-

versities and smaller institutions) can easily implement. Governments must actively encourage this change.

Side by side, the hold of commercial journal publishers in science, such as Macmillan, Springer, Elsevier etc., needs to be broken. Why should scientific information produced by public-funded research be turned into the private property of these publishers through copyright? If those publishers are charging only to meet operational costs, why should they hide the extent of profits they make in the process? Why should government agencies encourage the superstition that the prestige of a scientist is best decided by publications in such commercial journals? Why should public-funded scientists be allowed to work for free for these commercial journals as referees? All these sops and subsidies need to be withdrawn.

Commercial publishers of science journals are free to exist. But let them do so on their own, or perish. These journal publishers are no longer needed to disseminate information, which can be quickly and efficiently distributed digitally. In particular, copyright laws should be amended to enforce free public access for all public-funded research articles which are published even in commercial journals. At worst, such journals may be allowed a time lag of not more than one to three months before allowing full public access.

As with history of science, such alternative measures must be accompanied by exposure of the falsehoods underlying the present system of Western endorsement. One such system of endorsement is fellowship of a Western society. This often depends upon proximity to some prominent member of that society, but is indiscriminately interpreted as an index of scientific achievement. Since such endorsements give people power in their own country, they can also be cynically exploited to manipulate scientific decision-making in these countries. Let someone first examine cases of some scientists who have been endorsed by the West, and see of what practical value their scientific work was to their societies across their life-

time. We also need to examine who benefited from their recommendations when these scientists acted on government committees. Mashelkar and Narlikar, for example, would be good cases for such investigation in India.

The ultimate Western endorsement is the Nobel Prize, and the politics of that endorsement is widely recognised in the case of the peace, literature and economics prizes. Those endorsements are believed to be weightier in the hard sciences, although very similar processes operate also in those cases. However, as far as I know, there has never been any non-Western attempt to study those processes. Such a study might at least lead to the realisation that Western endorsement ought not to be the key to scientific achievement, and alternative prizes instituted elsewhere may then look for more transparent means of decision-making.

Another common system of endorsement is the so-called 'impact parameter', related to the 'ranking' of a journal. This is just another seemingly objective way to say that mere peer review is inadequate, unless the peers are Westerners who count (or their affiliates). A detailed discussion of this would be out of place here, but two points are in order. For a commercial journal such an index (journal ranking) makes sense, for the publishers are concerned only with its consumers, who are scientists. This also makes journals themselves the focus of scientific research – which obviously suits those commercial publishers. However, the citation index is at best a biased measure of social popularity in the West – measuring this simple number is what all the big talk about the 'scientific method' has been ultimately reduced to in practice! Publication in these 'high-impact' journals depends upon endorsements by referees and editorial boards predominantly from the West, so social networking is critically important in that as well. These journals will avoid non-Western knowledge, for example. In this way, Western endorsement is passed off as the sole

index of scientific virtue. In fact, if the concern is with practical value, the validity of a scientific theory must be decided differently, irrespective of its social popularity. Also the theory has to be judged by its impact on the society at large (and not just consumers of journals) over a longish time period. New ideas often involve complexities which the scientific community takes a long time to grasp.

Many further steps are possible. For example, it is desirable that international journals and conferences and societies should have internationally representative selection committees. This rarely happens today. However, I do not think sovereign states should try to enforce this, at least not right away. Rather, discussions about this, in the context of the ethics of science, need to be encouraged.

The timing and sequence of the steps is important. If Western history and philosophy of science are not first (and continuously) challenged, there will be resistance to changes in the educational system. And until the education system is changed, and Western indoctrination in elementary science education is eliminated, those who grow up with it will resist any changes at the level of higher education and research. ♦

The above is extracted from CK Raju's book Ending Academic Imperialism: A Beginning (Multiversity and Citizens International, 2011).

Endnotes

1. I will not here go into the interesting history of this missionary position, which dates back to the Crusades; see, however, my response to a recent use of this argument by the Pope against Muslims, in CK Raju, 'Benedict's Maledicts', ZNet: <http://www.zcommunications.org/benedicts-maledicts-by-c-k-raj>. (Accessed on 19 March 2011.) Reprinted in *Indian Journal of Secularism*, 10(3) (2006), 79-90.
2. The comment is reproduced in 'Islam and Science: a response to Pervez Hoodbhoy', December 2009, <http://ckraju.net/blog/?p=40>.
3. CK Raju, *The Eleven Pictures of Time*, Sage, 2003.

Gaza and the Palestinian hunting season

Israel's latest bloody assault on Gaza has followed a familiar pattern, says *Ralph Nader*.

ISRAELI elections are coming up in January so it is Palestinian hunting season again. Israeli cynics call it a time 'for mowing the grass'.

Out comes the well-worn playbook by Israel's militaristic government that has worked to silence Israeli politicians and citizens who want a two-state solution. This is an opportunity to use and test advanced weaponry from the US, compliments of US taxpayers, and squelch ongoing peace efforts, small and large, by Palestinians, Israelis and international peace advocates.

Expert provocateurs

The playbook's first chapter is provocation to upset a tense but workable truce with Hamas, the elected government of Gaza. Hamas was encouraged at its creation years ago by both Israeli and US backers to counter the secular Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). Bit of a blowback there.

Israeli government leaders are expert provocateurs when they wish to seize land, water or prisoners and upset any movement toward a peace that would create a viable Palestinian state back to the 1967 borders, which includes East Jerusalem. When Israel came into being in 1948, it soon broke a UN truce and doubled its territory by taking the large area known as the Negev desert, whose refugees ended up in the Gaza Strip. Now 1.6 million encircled and impoverished humans, blockaded and under siege by Israel, try to survive in an open-air prison little more than twice the size of the District of Columbia.

Israel's strategy of breaking ceasefires and truces over the years has been documented by Princeton University history professor emeritus



The recent hostilities in Gaza intensified after Israel blew up a car carrying Hamas military chief Ahmad al-Jabari. Picture shows people gathering around the wreckage of the car in which Jabari was killed.

Arno J Mayer in his scholarly book *Plowshares into Swords: From Zionism to Israel* (Verso, 2008).

In late 2008, Israel broke a months-long truce with Hamas with an attack that took half a dozen lives. Modern Israeli missiles and crude Hamas rockets started flying to and fro. Then Israel invaded the Gaza Strip with soldiers to add to its previous incursions – 24/7 electronic and satellite surveillance, omnipresent spies, flyovers, and data mining (down to specific details on each extended family and neighbourhood). With their avowed pinpoint bombing, the Israelis destroyed homes, schools, clinics, police stations, clusters of people at bus stops, farms, UN facilities and even hit the American International School – all with the blessing of President-elect Barack Obama.

Observers marvel at the precise knowledge by Israel of who was in what car travelling where in Gaza, before being vaporised. Yet somehow, the second-most modern military in

the world could not detect and stop those garages assembling the rockets or the sites firing the crude missiles, which were the rationale for the Israeli invasion.

When the Gaza invasion-massacre ended, there were more than 1,400 Palestinian fatalities, including around 300 children, and many thousands of injuries, a population surrounded by destruction and deprived by this illegal blockade-siege of medicines, food, water, electricity and the other necessities of life.

One large extended family in several adjoining homes was ordered by Israeli soldiers to congregate in the largest of the homes. Then the Israelis blew it up. This Samouni family lost about 30 of its members, or more than double the entire fatality toll in Israel, including those soldiers lost from friendly fire.

The current hostilities started in two stages. The first was a back-and-forth that saw an emerging truce broken decisively on 14 November when

Israel pridefully blew up a car containing Hamas military chief Ahmad al-Jabari, who actually was leading the negotiations via Egypt with Israel for a longer-range truce.

Puppet show

Back to Israel's playbook, chapter two can be called the instant, mandatory resolutions by the puppet show in the US Congress and the automatic one-sided mantra by the White House. 'Israel has a right to defend itself,' said President Obama, from the occupied, besieged, defenceless Palestinians, whose lands, water, homes, businesses and freedom of movement are being taken relentlessly by the raiding Israeli government that is not content with possessing 78% of traditional Palestine.

More than 1,500 Israeli reserve combat officers and soldiers signed a declaration refusing, in their words, 'to fight beyond the 1967 borders in order to dominate, expel, starve and humiliate an entire people'. The founder of Israel, David Ben Gurion, candidly declared it 'their [Palestine's] land and we took it'.

So Palestinians do not have a right to try to defend themselves against their cruel, powerful occupiers. Israel is violating several UN resolutions along with international law, according to many experts including Richard Falk, the United Nations special rapporteur on human rights in the Palestinian territories. But the US gives Israel its unwavering UN veto cover.

Finally, chapter three of the playbook is to make sure that the Israeli government advocates dominate the US media – the talk shows, the news slants, and the opinion columnists. This is becoming less easy in an Internet age. Which might explain why, along with homes, water wells, rescue teams, an ambulance, and other civilian installations, the Israeli air force already has bombed the office building housing Palestinian television studios and hosting media from the Western world, including Fox TV. That is one indelicate way to tell these Western journalists to get out of Gaza



Palestinian children watch as an Israeli bulldozer demolishes a Palestinian home in East Jerusalem. The Palestinians find their homes and lands being taken relentlessly by the raiding Israeli government.

so that the truth about the immense civilian suffering and war crimes can no longer be told by them.

Still, the heroic Israeli progressives and peace advocates would not be silenced, in spite of some Hamas rockets nearing Tel Aviv. A few hundred of them demonstrated in this city, charging the Netanyahu government with provoking the fighting in Gaza to divert attention from conditions of social and economic injustice and civil liberty suppression in their country.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be resolved peacefully, without violence. During quieter times, more than half the Israelis supported a two-state solution. A few years ago, 61% of Israelis, polled by a prominent university there, favoured negotiations with Hamas. A majority of Jewish-Americans, though unorganised, favour a two-state solution.

In 2002, the Arab League unanimously (22 countries) presented with great fanfare an across-the-board peace treaty with the stipulation that Israel would adhere to UN resolutions and allow a viable Palestinian state. Again and again, sometimes in full-page ads in US newspapers, this offer was repeated only to receive scoffing and abrupt dismissal by the Israeli government. So, predictably, Wash-

ington did nothing.

So what is the alternative? A one-state solution with both Palestinians and Israelis having equal rights? Noura Erakat, who teaches at Georgetown University, framed the dilemma back in August when she quoted former Prime Minister and current Defence Minister Ehud Barak as saying, after leaving his former post, 'If, and as long as between the Jordan [River] and the [Mediterranean] Sea there is only one political entity, named Israel, it will end up being either non-Jewish or non-democratic.... If the Palestinians vote in elections it is a binational state, and if they don't vote it is an apartheid state.' His rival, former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, said the same thing.

Awareness of this pathway is leading some extremist Israeli politicians who call Palestinians 'vermin' and 'rats' to think about the day when they can, with suitable provocations, drive the Palestinians into the desert. ♦

Ralph Nader is a US-based consumer advocate, lawyer, and author. His latest book is The Seventeen Solutions: Bold Ideas for Our American Future. Other recent books include The Seventeen Traditions: Lessons from an American Childhood, Getting Steamed to Overcome Corporatism: Build It Together to Win, and Only the Super-Rich Can Save Us (a novel). This article is reproduced from the CommonDreams.org website.

New era augurs more of the same for impoverished Maya people

According to their calendar, 21 December 2012 marks the end of the current era for the Maya Indians of Mexico and Central America. But for a marginalised people wallowing in poverty, there is little cause for celebration.

Danilo Valladares

THE Maya Indians of Central America and Mexico will have little to celebrate when the current era comes to an end on 21 December. The extreme poverty and marginalisation they face contrast sharply with the plans for lavish celebrations to lure tourists.

According to the ancient Maya calendar, 21 December 2012 will mark the end of a grand cycle of 13 144,000-day *baktuns*, lasting 5,126 years.

'It's offensive, it's an insult, and it is contradictory for indigenous people to continue to be steeped in poverty while public funds are squandered on celebrating,' activist Ricardo Cajas, of the non-governmental Guatemalan Council of Maya Organisations (COMG), told Inter Press Service (IPS).

'There is nothing to celebrate,' he said. 'This is an event involving traditional wisdom, which allows us to make an analysis of the "internal colonialism" we see in Guatemala, where a dominant class keeps indigenous people in a state of subsistence and extreme poverty.'

In Guatemala, indigenous people make up close to 40% of the population of 15 million, according to official statistics, although native organisations put the figure at over 60%.

But Guatemala has never had an indigenous president, and only 19 of the 158 members of the single-chamber Congress are Indians. And the only member of the cabinet who identifies himself as native is the minister of culture and sports, Carlos Batzín.

Governments in 'Mesoamerica' – a cultural area extending from central

Mexico to Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua, where advanced civilisations like the Maya flourished before Spain's colonisation of the Americas – are planning major celebrations of the end of the Maya long-count calendar.



Elderly Kiché Maya people of Guatemala. 'In Central America, indigenous people have historically been among the poorest segments of the population.'

This vast impoverished area is highly vulnerable to earthquakes, like the 7.4-magnitude quake that struck Guatemala's Pacific coast on 7 November, leaving at least 52 people dead and 22 missing.

The hype and promotion surrounding the end of the current era has led to a surge in global interest in the ancient Maya civilisation and to an explosion of tourism to Maya historical and cultural sites in Mesoamerica.

According to historians, the 13th *baktun* began on 11 August 3114 BC and ends 21 December 2012, and a new era begins the following day.

The end of the current *baktun* has

also given rise to predictions of catastrophes and even prophecies about the end of the world, which have been debunked by indigenous leaders.

Doomsday tourism

In Guatemala, for example, tourism industry authorities report that 15 official ceremonies will be held, including a major multimedia presentation on the legacy of the ancient Maya on 20 December at Tikal, Guatemala's most famous Maya archaeological site, in the northern province of Petén.

The preparations for the ceremonies have cost the Ministry of Culture and the Guatemalan Tourism Institute some \$8.5 million, according to the non-governmental Indigenous Observatory.

Thanks to government promotional campaigns, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Belize are expecting some five million visitors, and Mexico around 10 million in its southern states alone – an average of 10% more than last year, according to the Maya World Organisation, which groups the region's tourism institutes.

But while state coffers will swell with the increased revenues, the authorities will continue to ignore the needs of indigenous people in their budgets, native leaders complain.

Cajas laid the blame on the free-market-based '20th century neoliberal socioeconomic system' which 'does not have ethics and morals, and tramples the rights of indigenous people', including the right to land.

Around 80% of Guatemala's farmland is in the hands of just 5% of

farmers. But 61% of the population is rural and 80% of the mainly indigenous rural population is poor, according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

'In Central America, indigenous people have historically been among the poorest segments of the population,' Néstor Pérez, an activist with the Central American Indigenous Council (CICA), based in the capital of El Salvador, told IPS.

Paradoxically, 'indigenous territories have great natural and mineral wealth, but in many cases economic interests are put above the collective rights of native people, in violation of the national and international laws that protect their rights,' he added.

Pérez lamented that the end of the 13th *baktun* was being used to draw in tourists, with a focus that displays indigenous people and their traditional practices 'merely as folkloric shows'.

He said that what was needed were public policies aimed at improving the economic and social conditions of native people.

From splendour to dire poverty

Highly complex, advanced societies with enormous cultural, scientific and biological wealth, such as the Maya, Olmec and Aztec, flourished in Mesoamerica until the arrival of the Spanish *conquistadors*.

Latin America is home to an estimated 400 native groups, representing around 50 million people. Ninety percent of Latin America's native people live in the Andes highland regions of Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia and in Mesoamerica.

Indigenous people continue to face severe marginalisation in the region, said Dalí Ángel, an activist with the Mexico City-based Alliance of Indigenous Women of Central America and Mexico.

The native people of Honduras are one illustration, said Timoteo López with the private Chortí Maya



Tourists visiting Maya civilisation ruins in Chichen Itza, Mexico. The excitement surrounding the end of an era in the ancient Maya calendar has led to an explosion of tourism to Maya historical sites, but the present-day Maya continue to face extreme poverty and marginalisation.

National Indigenous Council. 'Our development is limited in part because power has only served to protect the interests of those who are governing,' he told IPS.

The Chortí Maya people of Honduras, where Indians represent 7% of the population of 7.7 million, have made progress in the area of education, he said, but 'at the cost of political activism that has even led to death threats and murders of leaders'.

Ángel, meanwhile, was especially concerned about the concessions that the Mexican government has granted to transnational corporations in indigenous territories without carrying out proper consultations with local communities affected by mining, the oil industry, logging projects or hydropower dams, as required by the International Labour Organisation Convention 169 on indigenous and tribal peoples.

'The Mexican state has always granted concessions to industries, but lately foreign companies have been given greater facilities to operate here, by means of constitutional reforms,' the Zapoteca activist told IPS.

Mexico is the Latin American country with the largest indigenous population in absolute numbers, which is variously estimated to make up between 10 and 30% of the coun-

try's 112 million people (the smaller, official estimate is based on the number of people who speak an indigenous language).

The country's native inhabitants are largely concentrated in the southern states of Oaxaca and Chiapas, according to the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples. In these two states and in the neighbouring state of Guerrero, one of every three people lives in absolute poverty, the Observatory of Social Policy and Human Rights (OPSDH) reports.

'They're selling everything, even the air,' Ángel said. She complained that the country's outgoing president, the conservative Felipe Calderón, recently inaugurated a wind power project in the Tehuantepec isthmus in southeast Mexico 'where he used deceit to force local communities to sign contracts to yield part of their territory to Spanish companies'.

The activist also mentioned the case of Wirikuta, a 140,000-hectare territory in the Chihuahua desert in the central state of San Luis Potosí that is considered sacred by the Wixarika or Huichol people. According to the National Human Rights Commission, mining projects threaten the environment there. — IPS

The persistent battle against rampant sexual harassment in Egypt

There may have been a regime change in Egypt, but the scourge of sexual harassment is as rampant as ever.

Alessandra Bajec

SEVEN hundred and thirty-five police complaints of sexual harassment were recorded over the four-day Eid al-Adha holiday that ended 29 October, according to a statement released by the Egyptian government.

Sexual harassment continues to hit Egypt, with increasing reports of incidents taking place across the country. Yet, Egyptians today acknowledge this longstanding problem exists, and growing social mobilisation has brought together men and women in the fight against harassment.

Sexual harassment remains a widespread plague in Egypt facing girls and women on the streets, in public places, at police stations.

In past years, there have been major incidents of male mobs attacking women over holiday celebrations. In 2006, a group of girls were sexually assaulted during Eid el-Fitr, raising alarm on the epidemic for the first time.

During the Egyptian revolution, sexual violence became more prominent amid several instances of crowds aggressively attacking women in Tahrir Square.

Since 2011, numerous cases of violence and torture against female protesters by the Supreme Council of Armed Forces and Ministry of Interior have been reported, involving beatings, clothes stripping and virginity tests.

Tarek Mustafa, Programme Officer at Nazra Feminist Studies, highlights the politicisation of sexual harassment at a time when police forces are using women's sexuality as a tool to oppress the masses.

The 2011 revolution has brought

with it a wave of realisation of rights. Today, Egyptians no longer stay silent in the face of injustice; women are out on the streets and push their battle on the political agenda.

After being a 'taboo' for years, harassment has become the subject of an open debate. The anti-harassment movement in Egypt developed around 2005, when the Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights (ECWR) started a campaign against sexual harassment.

Nihal Saad Zaghloul is one of the founders of Haraket Basma ('Imprint Movement'). She points to HarassMap as the first concrete effort to act for women's safety. Launched in 2010, the site is a social initiative enabling women to instantly report sexual assaults in Egypt via SMS messaging. By mapping those reports, the system helps women through advice on how to file a police report, and find psychological help and self-defence classes.

Dina Hussein, lawyer and coordinator of Nefsi ('I wish'), mentions human chains, marches, online campaigns, and social media platforms among the mediums used to promote the battle on sexual violence. Furthermore, she refers to campaigns to raise awareness inside metro stations, at schools and universities, and in poor neighbourhoods.

More and more initiatives have been launched by women's groups, feminist organisations and youth groups.

During the Eid holiday last August, Basma organised volunteer patrols at metro stations, in coordination

with metro authorities. Volunteers were instructed to stop harassers and report them to the appropriate authorities. The patrolling was very successful in preventing many incidents, and helped the police arrest several harassers.

Growing social mobilisation has brought together men and women in the fight against sexual harassment.

Nazra's Programme Officer talks about a tweet forum, co-organised by Nazra in December 2011, explaining how the patriarchal protection model fails to solve the problem, and needs to be replaced by a feminist discourse arguing for women's empowerment.

Over the past year, several art campaigns have been organised in Cairo to shed light on the topic, including 'Female Graffiti' last March. Mustafa recalls 'Enough', a group exhibition organised last June-August by Darb 1718 art space and HarassMap, which featured artists who tried to break social taboos around the issue through visual art.

A strong supporter of women's rights, Mustafa denounces harassment carried out by men of any socio-economic class, including violence in workplaces and nightclubs which is hardly ever talked about.

Hussein recognises there are more cases reported by women now, although this is still certainly less than

the number of actual incidents. Nevertheless, she thinks official complaints will help in the push for an anti-sexual harassment law.

Besides the current lack of appropriate legislation, there is no supportive network in place. One main issue is that the general public does not do anything when a woman is subjected to harassment; most people refuse to come forward as eyewitnesses. Similarly, the police often do not intervene to stop or take legal action against harassers.

Basma's director stresses the need to work collectively to make harassment socially unacceptable and to step in, instead of leaving women to fend for themselves.

Nefsi's coordinator points out that harassment, directed at both Egyptian and foreign women, not only has a direct psycho-social impact; it also affects the country's economy and tourism sector, affecting production amid rising unemployment.

Sexual harassment is only a manifestation of decades of bad governance, corruption, and political and social oppression. Under Mubarak, the topic was rarely addressed; the widespread mentality was to blame the victim and exempt the perpetrator, and the woman was relegated to the bottom of society. As a result, the entire upbringing of Egyptian people has been damaged, and harassment has become socially and culturally rooted.

While Egypt's grassroots movement is using every possible means to put an end to sexual harassment, the new government is called to tackle this social, cultural and political issue on more than just one level.

From introducing a law to criminalise harassment to increased enforcement, from raising awareness in cooperation with civil society and concerned government agencies to promoting efficient upbringing in families, educational institutions and in the social environment, President Mohamed Morsi and his government are left with the big task of ensuring the problem is seriously addressed once and for all. – *Bikya Masr* (www.bikyamasr.com) ♦

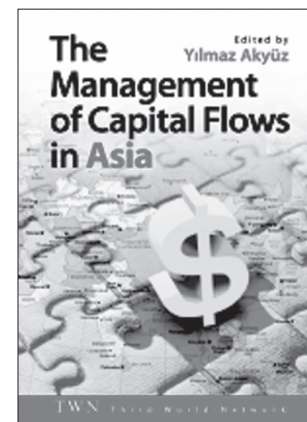
The Management of Capital Flows in Asia

Edited by *Yilmaz Akyüz*

THE 1997 Asian financial crisis brought home to the region's economies the importance of managing capital flows in order to avert financial shocks. This book looks into whether and how this lesson was taken on board by policy makers in Asia, and, accordingly, how capital account regimes in the region evolved in the post-crisis period.

The early years of the new millennium saw a strong surge of capital flows into Asian emerging markets amid conditions of ample global liquidity. In response to the influx of funds, these countries generally chose to keep their capital accounts open to inflows, dealing with the attendant impacts by liberalizing resident outflows and accumulating foreign exchange reserves. While this approach enabled them to avoid unsustainable currency appreciations and external deficits, it did not prevent the emergence of asset, credit and investment bubbles and domestic market vulnerability to external financial shocks – as the events following the 2007 subprime crisis would prove.

This book – a compilation of papers written in 2008 for the first phase of a Third World



ISBN: 978-967-5412-50-9 240pp
16.5 cm x 24 cm Year: 2011

Network research project on financial policies in Asia – examines the above developments in relation to the region in general and to four major Asian developing economies: China, India, Malaysia and Thailand.

	Price	Postage
Malaysia	RM30.00	RM2.00
Third World countries	US\$14.00	US\$6.00 (air); US\$3.00 (sea)
Other foreign countries	US\$20.00	US\$8.00 (air); US\$3.00 (sea)

Orders from Malaysia – please pay by credit card/crossed cheque or postal order.
Orders from Australia, Brunei, Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, UK, USA – please pay by credit card/cheque/bank draft/international money order in own currency, US\$ or Euro. If paying in own currency or Euro, please calculate equivalent of US\$ rate. If paying in US\$, please ensure that the agent bank is located in the USA.

Rest of the world – please pay by credit card/cheque/bank draft/international money order in US\$ or Euro. If paying in Euro, please calculate equivalent of US\$ rate. If paying in US\$, please ensure that the agent bank is located in the USA.

All payments should be made in favour of: **THIRD WORLD NETWORK BHD.**, 131 Jalan Macalister, 10400 Penang, Malaysia. Tel: 60-4-2266728/2266159; Fax: 60-4-2264505; Email: twonet@po.jaring.my; Website: www.twm.my

I would like to order copy/copies of ***The Management of Capital Flows in Asia***.

I enclose the amount of by cheque/bank draft/IMO.

Please charge the amount of US\$/Euro/RM to my credit card:

☐

American Express

☐

Visa

☐

Mastercard

A/c No.: _____ Expiry date: _____

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Mutations of imperialism

In October, Colombia's president apologised to indigenous communities in the Amazon for deaths and destruction caused by the Peruvian Amazon Company around 100 years ago. However, *Jeremy Seabrook* reveals, an apology is also due from Britain as the company in question was a British-based one.

IN October, British Prime Minister David Cameron refused to ratify the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 169, which is the only international law protecting tribal and indigenous peoples, recognising their right to self-determination and protecting their human rights by involving them in developmental projects that affect them and their way of life. Cameron's reasoning was that 'Britain has no indigenous people', even though this has not prevented Spain or the Netherlands from supporting the Convention.

Perhaps Cameron is anxious to protect British-based companies against harassment from those whose ancestral lands they wish to ravage, and whose sacred territories they intend to trample for the treasures that lie beneath. Perhaps he is thinking of the plight of Vedanta, whose aluminium works in Odisha in North-East India has had to suspend production due to objections to its tearing up land which has been immemorially a site of worship for the Dongria-Kondh tribal people of the Niyamgiri Hills.

Chains of exploitation

It is unlikely that Cameron is aware of the long, disreputable tradition of British-based companies which have despoiled the lands and ways of life of indigenous peoples. Exactly 100 years ago Roger Casement's investigation was published into conditions of the employees of the Peruvian Amazon Company, then a major producer of the new wonder material in the world, rubber.

Although Casement went with the support of the British government ostensibly to determine the fate of 200 Barbadian workers employed by the Company – since these were British citizens – it was the plight of the for-

est people that captured his attention and became the object of his rage. The Indians had been reduced to debt peonage, a form of slavery; compelled to bring fixed amounts of rubber from the wild trees which were scattered throughout the forest. If they failed to yield their quota, they were beaten, raped, placed in the *cepa*, the stocks, or simply shot for sport, either by their Barbadian overseers or by the heads of station of the Company in the depots in the Putumayo region. The photographs of the mistreatment still horrify – figures reduced by hunger to skin and bone, long scars across the back inflicted by the whips of overseers, rubber-gatherers chained to each other by the neck; an iconography eerily prescient of the forced labour of later 20th century labour and concentration camps.

The Company flourished in the early 20th century, particularly after the invention of the pneumatic tyre: by 1910, 70% of the world production of rubber was absorbed by the automotive industry – cars, buses, trucks. Before competition from the colonial plantations of Malaya, Indonesia and Indochina, the latex of the rubber trees from the Amazon commanded rising prices in the USA and Europe. Rubber from the disputed Colombian/Peruvian border was taken by British ships to Liverpool.

In this unpoliced frontier region, the Company, headed by the bandit-entrepreneur Julio Cesar Arana, had the immense advantage of labour that cost nothing. All he and his employees had to do was to round up the people of the forest and force them to collect latex from the trees, for which they received no money – they were 'paid' in cloth, beads, fish-hooks and other trifling commodities, since there was no cash economy in the places where they had lived for millennia.

They were compelled to carry loads of the raw material – sometimes equal to their own body-weight – to the stations, from where it was shipped to the growing town of Iquitos and along the Amazon to Manaus, following the river into the Atlantic. Men, women and children were drawn into this forced labour; and such was the death-rate that the population of the Huitoto, Bora and Andoke tribes – which had never encountered outsiders until the end of the 19th century – dwindled from about 40,000 to less than 10,000 in a mere 20 years.

The Company, which Arana had registered in London, had several British board members, including its chairman, none of whom knew anything about the Amazon, the rubber trade or the conditions in which the substance was procured from the jungle. But they lent the undertaking an aura of respectability, which effectively dissimulated the chains of exploitation, and concealed the way in which the exciting new commodity was brought to market.

Roger Casement had documented the abuses of Africans in the Congo Free State, a vast territory ceded to King Leopold II of Belgium at the Berlin Conference of 1885, a period characterised by forced labour, depopulation and displacement of the indigenous peoples. When news of the atrocities in Peru reached London (which came originally from a young American traveller, Walter Hardenberg, who came by chance upon scenes of slaughter in the Amazon perpetrated by employees of the Company), it was published by *Truth*, a London-based magazine, and taken up by the Anti-Slavery Society. As ever, disbelief and denial were the initial response of Authority, but through the labyrinthine channels in Britain through which governments

acknowledge that Something Must Be Done, Casement was eager to go to the area to find out for himself the true nature of the 'empire' constructed by the buccaneering Arana. It might be observed that even now, while imperial adventures have long been deprecated, the only realm in which empires are still applauded is in the more abstract topography of 'business'.

Although limited by the absence of jurisdiction of any British official over non-British subjects, Casement found a number of Barbadians who willingly testified to their own forced role in the Company's punitive subjugation of the Indians – their own lives were in danger if they failed to carry out the instructions of those who had employed them, often under false pretences and with promises of rewards that had failed to materialise. Casement was outraged by the impunity with which the Peruvian heads of station were able to work their savagery, often through Barbadians, against those Hardenberg described as a docile and inoffensive people.

The story of Casement's pursuit of the monarch of the rubber empire is told in the meticulously reconstructed world of lawless enterprise by Jordan Goodman's book, *The Devil and Mr Casement* (Verso, London, 2009). When Arana's empire was threatened, he disposed of the company's assets, and was appointed by the board liquidator of his own company. This gave him the opportunity to continue trading, with the help of extensive relatives and associates. Eventually a Select Committee of the House of Commons heard evidence from all the principals in the drama. Arana was stripped of his position overseeing the dissolution of the Company, and the British directors, who claimed complete ignorance of labour conditions and the mode of extraction of the commodity of the company over which they presided, were shamed for their 'innocent' complicity and their failure to exhibit any curiosity as to the stories in which their company was implicated. The disgrace of these directors was a de-

risory forfeit, compared to the 30,000 lives which had paid for a mere 4,000 tons of rubber transported by the Company to Liverpool between 1900 and 1911.

Under publicity and pressure, the personnel of the company, including Arana, protested that theirs had been a 'civilising mission' in the Amazon. Hardenberg, in his account, records the frequency with which he had been told '*Son animales, Senor, no son gentes*' (they are animals, not people). Arana appealed to Peruvian nationalism and blamed the reports of ill-usage in the Putumayo on Colombia, which 'sought to smirch the good name of Peru and to wound the honour of her sons'. Interest in the affair was eclipsed by the outbreak of War, and the vagrant attention of the public was readily deflected towards issues closer to home.

Casement, although he had been knighted for his work on behalf of the people of the Amazon, had been radicalised by his experience in the Congo and the Amazon, in which he saw an analogy with Ireland, and the inadmissibility of the overlordship of one race by another. He resigned his consular post, and went to Ireland where, appalled by an outbreak of cholera in Tralee, he sided with Germany, from where he planned to support an uprising in Ireland. The plan was disrupted by British intelligence. Casement was arrested, taken to London, tried and hanged as a traitor less than four years after receiving the acclaim of the British ruling classes for his humanitarianism.

Arana did not disguise his triumph over the fall of his old enemy. He continued to take rubber from the Amazon until prices fell in the Depression; impoverished, he moved to Lima, and died only in 1952.

Continued injustice

The story has a contemporary vibrancy. The elimination of indigenous peoples through alcohol, firearms or smallpox was no isolated event. And despite the growing political organisation and strength of indigenous peo-

ples, anyone who follows the work of Survival International can learn of daily injustices, discrimination and violence against indigenous peoples.

In recent weeks – October and November alone – there have been reports that the main water source of the Guarani people had been contaminated by a rancher in Brazil's Mato Grosso do Sul state; the US company Bunge was accused of sourcing sugarcane from farmers who illegally occupied the ancestral lands of the Guarani; the leader of the Arhuaco tribe in the Sierra Nevada in north Colombia narrowly survived an assassination attempt in the frontier town of Pueblo Bello, an area in which no one has ever been punished for the murders of Arhuaco leaders in 1990; members of the Awa, the Earth's most threatened tribe, travelled to Brasilia to protest at the destruction of their land by illegal loggers, who have surrounded their dwindling territory and left them too little to survive; thousands of Guarani, evicted from their land, are living in overcrowded reserves. The Guarani have one of the highest suicide rates on earth – one a week for the past 10 years.

Nor is developmental aggression confined to South America. Tribes from the Omo Valley in Ethiopia are still being forcibly 'resettled' in a 'villagisation' programme. Their cattle have been confiscated, their food stores destroyed.

In spite of everything, how little changes, in a world where the rights of threatened peoples are cancelled by the superior rights of the powerful to pursue their extractive violence. For half a millennium, all attacks on indigenous peoples have been in the name of 'progress', and its more recent offspring, 'development'. All the advantages of the modern world have been forcibly brought to indigenous peoples, that is, the freedom that will enable them to grieve and die for their lost ways of life, and the consumption of alcohol, tobacco, drugs and guns, to console them for the lost liberty of their extinguished identity. ♦

Jeremy Seabrook is a freelance journalist based in the UK.

Although the Spanish conquest of the Philippines in 1565 destroyed much of the country's great oral indigenous literature, the following song which has survived gives some idea of the rich folk tradition which was lost.

Housewarming Song

Old comb, old comb
tease out the tangled thoughts
of those who will live here
as you have combed my hair
when it was dirty, caked
with mud and grass.

May those who cross
this threshold think no ill
their faces wear no frown
may they always agree
smooth as a deep river
calm as a night in May.

Water in the pitcher
be cool as forest springs
be still as old mountains
be soft as the east wind
that those under this roof
may be considerate
ready to hear reason.

Wash the foul tongue
cleanse the mind of all stain
that speech from dawn till dusk
may bring quiet content
today and for ever.

Burn brightly, lamp
bless this house with your flame
keep the shadows at bay
that dark thoughts may not plague
those seeking shelter here.

Light the faces, the minds
of those who will live here
that they and their children's
children may live in peace.

Translated by AZ de la Cruz and Keith Bosley