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*fragments from personal experiences - Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo*

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**"THE RIGHT TO EAT IS ALSO A FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHT"** - Yes, it is necessary to state the obvious! Mainly when what is at stake is the mounting fear in Western Europe of millions of migrants not only from Africa and Asia but also from Eastern Europe. This is why the distinction between "political refugees" and "economic migrants" has become the only way authorities have found to start moving towards some kind of limitations to more immigration. Therefore it is necessary to say, as the representative of the High Commissioner for Refugees did recently, that unless Europe changes drastically its economic cooperation with the other countries thus contributing to the improvement of their standard of living, the reasoning excluding the migrants who search for survival doesn't stand. It is a new form of regional egotism and exclusion.

**"WHAT IS LEFT FROM OUR AMBITIOUS HORIZON?"** - Do we have to admit that hope was nothing but a dream? Did the moment come for us to abandon our convictions? What is there in our heritage to be disposed of? Are there values that still hold?"... The list of questions could go on and on. It was a gathering of several people for whom the 60's has coincided with the prime of their lives or with their enthusiastic youth. For all the commitment to social transformation, to international solidarity, to the search for alternatives to liberal capitalist system, had been a pivotal element of their otherwise very different life projects. And there they were, in a beautiful house at the shore of the Lemán lake, pondering about the collapse of all that had been at the heart of their endeavours... Some commented about the past: how so often the people from the rich countries, unable to change anything in their own situation, lived vicariously the sagas of other people - the liberation movements of the Third World, the base communities in Latin America, the struggle of Solidarnosc, all that seemed somehow capable to shake the statu quo... Some others made strong statements about the present: "Without a horizon I cannot go on with the concrete work, local and institutional, I am doing." - "We cannot cope with the hyper-complexity of reality, with the pace of history." - Nevertheless hopes and wishes about the future: "Where to find collectives of intellectuals wishing to think?" - "What type of social energy are we looking for?" - And throughout the whole discussion, the conviction that whatever action we may feel called to accomplish, it has to be based on strong charism, on the courage to carry it through, on the acceptance that it is a basic ingredient for the democracy to be built, for the new form of social involvement that our times require.

**"IS INFORMATION A WEAPON?"** - As the media are doing their own catharsis about the war in the Gulf, the foundation of their own role is shaking. We know now that, in spite of the endless news and of the big and small CNN transmissions "live from the front", we know now that there were no facts to report. We know that there were endless lies about facts that filled the newspapers and the TV screen and which were commented upon by the great "experts" in each country. We know now that there were more rumors than information - and that rumors became the information. Some seem to accept it under the "security of the State" label. But is it decent, moral, to go that far? What about the respect



for people who were receiving the information and taking it at face-value? What about the freedom of information and of expression? - Others are saying that this war was anyway a guerrilla war, that we were living a period of "mediatic terrorism" and that information was but another weapon. If that is so, are reporters soldiers? Were they entrusted with that kind of role? Can democracy encompass what is now considered "to drug public opinion with forged information?"

Life (thousands of lives!) is too serious, too sacred a matter to be treated as a movie-script!

**POLITENESS, HONOUR, FAITHFULNESS, FORGIVENESS, TOLERANCE, COURAGE...** are the titles of the new alternative magazine "*Autrement*" who for several years has been providing basic thought for those who don't follow well known paths. Their choice of a collection on "MORALS" is based on the awareness that at this stage of human civilization the concern for the *ethical* dimension of public life is necessarily coupled with the questions that all of us experience in our personal lives. They take as a guiding thought Vladimir Jankelevitch's words in "Le paradoxe de la morale":

MORE THAN ONCE WE ASK OURSELVES WHERE IT IS GONE OUR MORAL LIFE, IN WHAT IT CONSISTS, OR EVEN IF IT CONSISTS OF SOMETHING! IT IS PRECISELY AT SUCH MOMENTS, WHERE MORAL SEEMS TO GO AWAY FROM OUR HORIZON, WHEN WE EVEN DESPAIR OF SEIZING IT AT ALL, IT IS AT SUCH MOMENTS THAT OUR MORAL LIFE IS THE MOST AUTHENTIC: WE MUST THEN GRASP QUICKLY THE INSTANT IN ITS LIVELY FRAGRANCE!

## Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

**FROM COMPROMISE STRATEGY TO FULFILMENT STRATEGY** is the best way to define the change that should take place in women's relation to work. Until now the overwhelming majority of women (or all women?) have had to adjust to the norms prevailing in the world of work. All the time they have been trying to cope with many diversified and even opposite demands. In order to survive they elaborated, even without knowing that they were doing so, the "compromise strategy". But such a time may come to an end. Women have become too important for the economy. Their conditions of life and work cannot be ignored anymore. Their potential for the economy has to be "used" to the full. "Flexibility in employment" brings with it new possibilities. Of course, the enterprise/institution will have its own strategy guided by utter competition. But this is also the time for individual strategies. Two demands can be made. One is the *adaptation of work to the different stages of a person's life-cycle*, giving to women the possibility to conduct in the best way the different tasks of their lives. The other is the *inter-occupation mobility*, that is, the shift from a type of work to another one, without any loss of benefits and as a stimulation for further professional involvement. It can be looked at as a means of promotion that does not necessarily follow the pattern of "going up the ladder". Rather it may allow for a refreshing outlook on society and on the interdependence and basic similarity of different occupations. Gradually by putting into motion the mechanisms that will make possible these new features of the labour market we may enter a new phase. In the definition of their choices at the right time, women may (will) enter the stage of a "fulfilment strategy".

As a Japanese member of the working-group of OECD said: "Lives must be meaningful and enjoyable for all - women, men, children, young, middle-aged, and elderly."

**A NEW STATUS FOR THE RELIGIOUS FACTOR** within each society seems to be asked by the growing interdependence of all aspects of reality. The "secular" society we have built in the wake of the century of the Enlightenment may not represent any more the only possible view of reality. All dimensions of human life must enter into a fruitful dialogue and "circularity" in a healthy society. Of course, the religious factor gains sociological expression and legitimacy only when it is a result of a critical mass of believers undertaking, at their heart, the personal process through which "the Spirit judges the world". This is particularly true in Europe where *"modernization, which in its full development has a unique power to disintegrate and dissolve ancient belief-systems, has disintegrated and dissolved the belief system from which it originally sprang"*. (Leslie Newbigin, in Ecumenical Review, Jan. 1991).

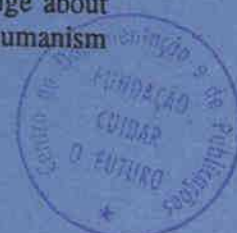
The audience of Moslems, Jews and Christians from the French section of the World Conference on Religion and Peace with whom I discussed these issues were particularly in agreement with the basic assumption: the religious factor can give a contribution to the building of Europe if Faith is contextualized, made relevant and dialogical with the main challenges of European society today.

### **REGIONAL ZONES OF SECURITY AND COOPERATION AMONG NATIONS**

**AND PEOPLES** may become the only positive outcome of the tragedy of the Gulf war. In November, concerned with the "new architecture of Europe", the signers of the Helsinki Act (all European countries plus USA and Canada) made a joint declaration called the "Paris Charter" and established a few landmarks for the global process of that part of the world. The interesting feature is the new geography that emerges from its institutional aspects: an administrative secretariate in Prague, a center for prevention of conflicts in Vienna, an office for monitoring free elections in Warsaw, the study of ethnic minorities in Geneva, the elaboration of measures for reinforcement of democratic institutions in Oslo, the first meeting of ministers of Foreign Affairs in Berlin... Meanwhile, other regions are attempting to establish their own Conference on Security and Cooperation - such is obviously the case for the Middle East (by far the most complex one), for the Mediterranean countries (a dream launched for several years by some European MPs) and last but not least Africa. It is in this region that the process seems far more advanced - after the meeting that took place in Addis Ababa (see the new excellent magazine "Africa Forum" for full report) African leaders meet at Cologne in March to move towards the definition of basic contents of their new agreement. The consequences will be very important, as the reduction in arms trade will liberate resources for the process of development.

### **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ARE SHAPING THE NEW PARADIGM**

by which our civilization is living. The Gulf war has been a very clear demonstration of science and technology as the basis of all societal processes. It has shown how S&T are at the root of massive destruction of human beings and of the fascination (instead of repulsion!) that it evokes on people ("the surgical war"...). At the same time, the last decade has made the case of the decisive role of S&T in the destruction of the environment. During the meeting of the UN Advisory Committee on S&T for Development in New York, it became clear that a twofold action is needed. First, to bring to the attention of the political leadership everywhere in the world the key role played by S&T and to propose public policies that will put S&T into a social context. Second, to spread the knowledge about S&T as much as possible at all levels and forms of educational training. A new humanism



(already in the making since Einstein and Teilhard de Chardin) has to include concrete awareness of the scientific processes in society. At the core of such humanism, ethics has to determine the limits of S&T which must be geared, like everything else, to the supreme value of life.

"THE THOUGHT", "DAWN", "FAREWELL" were a few of the names under which her true name was hidden. In those Rodin's sculptures, the face of Camille Claudel was hiding a secret: the fact that she had been a great sculptor herself. Her work is bewildering. There she is with very small pieces full of an inner silence like "profound thought", a woman kneeling by the fireplace, her hands resting on the mantelpiece. Elsewhere she expresses herself with a full movement, so intense, that we are almost hearing Strauss when we look at the man and woman in "The valse". Human love (both in ecstasy and betrayal) is carved in such a poignant way that we go around the human groups trying to understand, to talk to them. And her two masterpieces: "The wave" (where we find the same movement of the well known Japanese painting "The great wave of Kanagawa", by Hokusai Katsushika) with the three women jumping inside; and then "The chatting women", these four women all enthralled by what one of them is saying, against a screen (again the Japanese influence), in attitudes and movement of body in which we seem to recognize the setting of our own conversations... Women taken by movement, women secluded by a huge wall - was Camille Claudel using a metaphor of her own life, for a few years a daring woman, moving away from all conventions, full of dynamism and passion, and then for 30 years a woman imprisoned in a mental institution, having ceased all her work...?

## Fundação Guiar o Futuro

THE ROLE OF UN IN WHICH HAS BEEN CALLED THE "NEW WORLD ORDER" is now stressed by almost all political leaders. It is true that the UN was conceived as a mechanism to foster peace, "to change swords into plowshares". How can this be done? A radical change has to take place in the UN itself. I had the opportunity to see what was going on among the members of the Security Council during the last days (and the last hours) before the expiration of the ultimatum. The atmosphere was feverish, of course, but the Organization lacked the experience in dealing positively with such crisis situation. New instruments have to be created. Two of them: to give to the Security Council the responsibility to be the guardian of the equilibrium of armement at the lowest possible level, to monitor the arm's trade, to establish every year a full report on the countries who violate the human right to peace; to establish an Economic and Social Council that would prevent conflicts emerging from the unbalance of wealth in the world, who would put into action all emergency measures needed to come to grips with the most basic rights of mankind in the social and economical domains, who would be given as much power in the management of economy as the Security Council is given in the management of peace. A world that is able to display the sophisticated weaponry seen in the Gulf war must be able to meet, through new and sophisticated means, the basic needs of the overwhelming majority of mankind. Then and only then can we start speaking (humbly!) of a "New World Order".

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*"Un type de société et un équilibre culturel se traduisent dans la problématique de l'expérience spirituelle. Dans chaque spiritualité, l'essentiel n'est pas un 'ailleurs', extérieur au langage du temps. C'est ce langage même que le spirituel prend au sérieux; c'est là, dans cette situation culturelle, que 'prennent corps' son désir et son risque. Une spiritualité répond aux questions d'un temps et n'y répond jamais que dans les termes même de ces questions, parce que ce sont celles dont vivent et que se parlent les hommes d'une société - les chrétiens comme les autres.*

- in "La faiblesse de croire"  
Michel de Certeau