

Fifth Plenary Assembly: Position Paper

ASIA ON THE THRESHOLD OF THE 1990s
Emerging Trends and Socio-Cultural Processes
at the Turn of the Century

by
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Winds of change with far-reaching consequences have taken the world by surprise in recent times. In the span of the last five years, the global political scenario has changed with breathtaking speed. The ominous specter of a nuclear holocaust, which not long ago seemed to hang over the human family as Damocle's sword, has now vanished as a bad dream. Phenomenal developments in the relationship between superpowers, the *glasnost*, *perestroika*, the *detente*, the Sino-Soviet rapprochement, fresh initiatives to resolve regional tangles and conflicts, unprecedented democratic resurgence all over the world, dramatic changes that swept through Eastern Europe in 1989, a general yearning for peace, co-existence and co-operation — these have created a new climate, and have brought reassuring signs of hope on the horizon of humankind as it steps into a new decade.

In a world that is becoming progressively *interdependent with interlocking interests and concerns*, the destiny of Asia is inextricably bound up with global developments, just as the evolutions in Asia, where more than the half of humanity lives, will have their repercussions on the rest of the world. Asia, in fact, is a continent in great ferment, in gestation, manifesting remarkable vitality and dynamism. The evolution which Asia is undergoing today is convoluted with many and diverse forces in complex interaction with one another. It is only from out of the depths of this evolution we can identify the direction Asia is likely to take in this decade and at the turn of the century. This paper is a modest attempt *to study and reflect on the dominant trends and socio-cultural processes in the Asian continent, against the backdrop of global developments*. It does not claim, by any means, to be exhaustive.

This position paper has been prepared for the Fifth Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), convening in Bandung, Indonesia, July 17-27, 1990. The theme of the Plenary Assembly is: "The Emerging Challenges to the Church in Asia in the 1990s: A Call to Respond."

As Christians we believe that the *magnalia Dei* — the wonderful deeds of God — continue in history in which he is present, and which he directs in his inscrutable knowledge and wisdom. It is, therefore, our duty to listen attentively to the voice of God speaking to us *today* through the historical developments, trends and socio-cultural processes taking place in this continent. It would be preposterous to read into the present Asian processes our preconceived ideas and plans, no matter how lofty and well-intentioned they may be. For us to be able to respond as a community of believers in Jesus Christ — the Church — to the present Asian situation and the challenges it throws up for the new decade, it is indispensable to follow the inner dynamics of the Asian development with unbiased mind and open spirit.

The paper tries to bring under five main headings the various emerging trends and processes:

- I. The Conflict between the Macro and the Micro
- II. From Fragmentation to Integration
- III. The Process of Modernization
- IV. The Progressive Centrality of Culture
- V. The Crisis of Survival

I. THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE MACRO AND THE MICRO

One of the things which we observe all over the world today is the conflict between the macro and the micro — the big trying to domineer the small and the latter refusing to be dominated. This can be seen in almost all areas of societal life. As a result, the relationship between the macro and the micro is undergoing radical changes.

Nation-State and Ethnicity

On the Asian political scene, the polarity of macro and micro can be observed in the conflict between the ideal of nation-state and the reality of ethnic diversity. In fact, the political form of nation-state introduced from the West into Asia in the wake of colonialism sets aside the factualities at the micro level, consisting of diverse ethnic, linguistic, regional groups. In most cases, the overarching structure of nation-state does not acknowledge the experiences and self-perceptions of the various groups subsumed, nor respect their legitimate autonomy and distinct identities. Resistance, therefore, to the macro political reality on the part of the micros is becoming widespread. As a result, in some parts of Asia, especially in South Asia, the institution of nation-state has entered into a *deep crisis*; it appears no longer capable of holding together in cohesion and harmony the various groups and peoples at war with one another.

Some parts of Asia experience regular communal violence, while other parts are ethnically very vulnerable; the least provocation could escalate large scale brutal conflicts at any moment. Contrary to the predictions that with the consolidation of nation-state the ethnic consciousness will fade away, we are experiencing a dreadful growth of communal conflicts and ethnic riots.¹

Let me give a few instances of ethnicity in Asia which threatens to disrupt and unsettle the macro nation-state. In Thailand we have a small (3%) but articulate group of Muslims in the southern part of the country concentrated in the provinces of Navathiwas, Pattani, Satul and Yala. These Muslims are linked racially, religiously, culturally and linguistically more to the bordering Malays than to the rest of Thailand.² As has been observed in Asia and in other parts of the world, where the minority ethnic group has a territorial base, generally there is also the manifestation of secessionist tendencies and emergence of political movements of independence. Thai Muslims too are politically organized and they demand an independent Pattani state. In the north and northeast of the same country there are other ethnic groups of the hills, like Lao, Khmer, Meo and Hmong, which all try to assert their distinct ethnic identities.

From the time of the Spanish colonial expansion, through the American period to the present, the Moros, the Muslim minority of the Philippines living in the southern islands, have fought bitterly against what they perceive as alienation of their lands through the encroachment of Christian population into their territories.³ China, among its other ethnic problems, faces the powerful challenge of the people of Tibet. From time to time, the seething ethnic and nationalistic sentiments of the Tibetans break out in the open, which is then ruthlessly put down by the state and its army. Behind the current political turmoil in Burma, there is also the insurgency of ethnic minorities such as Shan, Lahu, Arahness, Kachin, and above all, Karens; they all claim autonomy.

There are also other forms of the ethnic question, like the discrimination against the Koreans in Japan, the antagonism between the mainlanders and the indigenous Taiwanese in Taiwan, the tensions among the three racially distinct groups — Malays, Chinese and Indians — in Malaysia,⁴ and the animosities between the local people and the ethnic Chinese spread all over the ASEAN region.

Ethnicity seems to be the most *crucial question* in South Asian societies today. It was the ethnic question which was at the root of the partition of India to create Pakistan and subsequently Bangladesh. Daily life in South Asian countries is today characterized by routine communal tensions, violence, destruction of properties and the death of many innocent

women, men and children. In India, caste, tribal and religious rivalries and clashes are on the increase, even as the separatist trends in Punjab, Kashmir and in the northeastern regions of the country are getting strengthened. For the past few years, the Tamil-Sinhala conflict in Sri Lanka has cost thousands of precious human lives; it has reduced many to the state of refugees.⁵ The ethnic question in the subcontinent was not resolved with the partition of Pakistan on the basis of religious identity. Regional and racial differences have become a new source of tensions and violence in Pakistan.⁶ In Bangladesh, the 250,000 Urdu-speaking Biharis seek to maintain their distinct linguistic and cultural identity; they refuse to be integrated with the Bengalis.⁷

Roots of Ethnic Conflicts

The scenario of Asian political life clearly shows ethnicity as the predominant trend. Search for solution to this vexing problem is a challenge before us as we move into a new decade and century.

Many reasons can be adduced to explain the present ethnic tempers and communal convulsions. At the root of it all, it seems to me, are a twofold crisis: the *crisis of the macro-state power* leading to the erosion of its credibility, and an *ideological vacuum*. These are interlinked. One of the striking phenomena in recent years has been the challenge to state power in various parts of the world and across economic systems — in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Haiti and, more recently, in East European countries.⁸ What happened in these countries is an expression of a widespread *democratic resurgence*; statism was challenged by the people in the name of democracy. This may be true also of China — to judge by the events of Tiananmen Square in mid-1989 — and of few other Asian countries.⁹ But the crisis of state power in most Asian countries has a different root.

Ethnicity has pushed itself to the fore on the Asian political arena as a response to *homogenization, centralization* and the *ethnopolitics* pursued by the Asian states. Let me explain what I mean by this. The model of development and modernization followed by the Asian countries is as imported as the ideology of the nation-state. In the pursuit of the goals of the present model of development, the states have attempted to level down and steamroll the centuries-old ethnic diversities. For the present development paradigm has an in-built tendency to homogenization. It was forgotten that in Asia we are in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious situation. It was forgotten that each of the micro-ethnic and religious communities has a *compact world of its own* which needs to be understood from within, attentively listened and responded to.

The Asian states invoke democracy and secularity in support of their

adopted model of development, and against the manifestations of ethnicity. But in practice, "democracy" and "secular" have become slogans, while in the name of development a large number of people is left out of effective political participation, and others are discriminated against by the state.¹⁰ They carry little conviction with the various ethnic, regional and linguistic groups.

Centralization is but concomitant with the program of homogenization. It holds under control possible dangers to homogenization from the pluralistic society. Unwarranted state interference in the private lives of citizens, gross violation of human rights, unleashing of state terrorism on individuals and groups — these tendencies can be observed in varying degrees in the Newly Industrialized Countries (NIC) of Asia.¹¹ In their drive to achieve economic success and "catch up" with the West, the so-called four little dragons of Asia — Singapore, Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan — gloss over serious domestic questions relating to the rights of various groups and sections of the population. Particularly alarming are the developments in Singapore in relation to religious groups.¹²

Ethnopolitics is the statecraft of playing the various indigenous groups one against the other to the advantage of state-power. Such a politics pursued especially in South Asia has resulted in a particular ethnic or religious group *turning the state into an instrument for its own advantage*, and in castigating other groups represented in the same polity. The complex ethnopolitics of the Asian states have injected a fear psychosis and anxiety into the minority groups, and strangely, also among the powerful majority groups. A case in point is India where we have a Hindu majority which feels threatened by the other religious minorities.¹³

Due to all these circumstances, today the state-power stands discredited in the eyes of many ethnic groups. A deep disaffection over state-power has set in among them. As confidence in the state-power is eroded, especially about its role as dispenser of justice and fairness to all the groups in civil society, the ethnic and religious groups are gripped by a feeling of insecurity. In such a situation, each group tries to assert itself aggressively and violently. In this process, all moral and ethical principles are jettisoned, and might becomes right.

Now that the nation-state which is supposed to hold together the diverse linguistic, regional and religious groups is no more counted seriously as a unifying force, these various identities as disconnected entities float, as it were, in the air and clash with each other violently. This is the situation of an ideological vacuum, the absence of a common and unitary framework for multi-ethnic societies in dynamic evolution. *It is to fill this vacuum that fundamentalist trends have surfaced in Asian societies.*

We must immediately distinguish two types of fundamentalism — one characteristic of religious sects which assert certain partial truths on the basis of which they also function as closed groups. They are, in a certain sense, harmless. The fundamentalism we mean here is a religious-political fundamentalism; it affects seriously the society. This fundamentalism is a case in which *one micro tries to outwit other ethnic and religious groups to assert itself as the macro*. Though only one constituent of the society, the particular religious or ethnic group imposes itself as *the* total explanation and point of reference for all other identities in society. The aggressive assertion of religious and ethnic identity brings in its trail the whole question of the secular and its prospects in Asia.

Secular in Multi-Religious Societies

It is understandable why the question about the secular has become very important in Asia at the present political juncture. A lot of ambiguity surrounds this concept. We must distinguish two types of the secular. For want of appropriate expressions, let me call them as *Western* and *Eastern* understandings of the secular. Every concept is rooted in a particular culture and history; so too the Western idea of the secular. The Western understanding is associated with the birth of the modern world, with the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, French Revolution, etc.¹⁴ Even in the Western understanding, a wide range of nuances are possible. At its best, secular means the autonomy of the temporal realities and their development according to their own inner logic, independent of the traditional hold of religions over them. At its worst, it means indifference, and even positive opposition, to religion and religious agents. At the root of it all is a clear-cut distinction the West made — at least in principle, if not always in practice, as we know too well from history and experience — between the religious realm and the secular realm. The principle of non-interference of the one in the domain of the other followed this distinction.

There is nothing similar in the Asian societies, which have had a history of their own.¹⁵ In societies with a millennial history of multi-religious co-existence, it was not possible, nor was it historically ever required, to draw a clear distinction between religion and the secular. Instead, the real question in Asia has been this: *How can people of various ethnic origins and religious paths live together in love, fellowship and co-operation?* The traditional understanding has been that a believer, while following his own *marga*-religious path, be equally well-disposed to other religious paths. We have in history the examples of such an ideal followed and spread by Emperor Ashoka (B.C. ? – 232), a Buddhist, Emperor Akbar (1542-1605), a Muslim, and Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), a Hindu. It is on the basis of these Asian historical and cultural roots that

we can speak of an Eastern understanding of the secular. Along this line, the secular character of a state would consist in the fact that it does not favor any one particular religion but is well-disposed to all religions equally.¹⁶ This is what is meant by the expression *sarva-dharma-samabhava* — treating all religions equally.

As D.L. Sheth rightly observes, in many Asian societies the civilizational order was prior to the state, which was only one institution of the civil society. The state was not meant to create order, since order existed prior to it. The function of state was *to serve pre-existent order*.¹⁷ The secular in Asia cannot be simply a liberal secularity or secularism but a secular which guarantees that no one of the micros — religious, ethnic, regional or linguistic group — dominates over the others, but all of them have their the place in the life of the society.

Now, the present-day turmoils of the Asian societies, in my view, derive from the fact that, instead of moving ahead with the Eastern understanding of the secular with its roots in tradition, one has tried to transport into Asian societies the Western understanding of the secular. Such a transposition is explainable. Being born out of the modern European history, this concept of the secular chimes with the model of development, economy, etc., deriving from this same milieu. This understanding and practice of the secular simply eludes the realistic situation of life in a complex, multi-religious society; it glosses over the intricate and labyrinthine particularities. It is this Western conception of the secular which is invoked by most Asian states.

In this context, we understand also certain ordinances passed by Asian states prohibiting religions to have any part in the political life of the country. Here we could think of the ordinances issued by the Singapore government in recent times, or the bill passed by the Union Government of India on May 26, 1988. This is certainly a very dangerous trend. By invoking separation of state and religion, such decrees not only do not respect the multi-religious character of our societies but also preclude the possibility of religions playing a creative and critical role in public life, and challenging, on the basis of the principles of ethnic and morality, the abuse of state-power. This is sad at a time when the contribution of religions for the transformation of society is required in Asia more than ever before.

The Challenge of Alternative Models

What emerges from the experience of many Asian countries is that the frame of nation-state, the institution of democracy, the model of development, the conception of the secular, which were all adopted from

the West, are not able to meet the question of ethnicity, which breaks such macro frameworks and paradigms. Here is then the challenge, to look for culturally viable alternative forms of governance.

Looking for alternatives is not a chase for a chimera; it is not simply a utopia or dream, but an imperative and an urgent necessity flowing from the unsustainable nature of the present conceptions and models of ordering and governing society. The new decade of the 1990s can be for Asia a decade of search for such alternatives for the new century.

It is difficult to foresee the shape of the alternatives. But a few things have to be certain. The new model, framework or paradigm should bring into a fresh and creative relationship the macro and the micro. It should be a framework in which it will not be possible for one micro to impose itself as *the* macro. It will be a model in which the ethnic and religious diversity will not be something to be lamented about but welcomed, fostered as it enriches life and society. It will be a framework in which the various groups — linguistic, ethnic, religious, etc. — will be interdependent and exist in fellowship and harmony. In a pluralistic society such as Asia, the only way to sustain human togetherness is *dialogue*. Politically, ethnically and religiously, dialogue is going to be most important for the Asia of tomorrow. It is also in dialogue that we should search for alternatives.

Macro and Micro in Culture, Science and Religion

What is happening at the Asian political level in terms of conflict between the macro and the micro can be observed in the areas of culture, science and religion. In these areas, in varying degrees, the "*great tradition*" and the "*little tradition*" come into clash.¹⁸

At the level of culture, we note a dangerous trend to transform the whole world into a mono-cultural zone. The politically and economically powerful First World tries to import subtly into the rest of the world a culture, or rather a sub-cultural way of life, based on standardized forms of production, distribution and consumption of goods. It passes for macro culture, and indeed *the* culture. The struggle against this cultural homogenization is visible in many Asian societies. A typical case is Iran. The Shah regime which promoted westernization was repudiated and overthrown by the people to bring an Ayatollah Khomeini to power.

Also in the field of sciences — social, anthropological, etc., — the same trend is discernible. At the macro level, impressive social and anthropological theories are construed in relation to which the situations and experiences at the micro level are but cases. To these experiences the

grand theories are applied for verification and confirmation. This approach and orientation are today being challenged. For, many concrete experiences at the micro level simply break the preconceived schemes and theories. The reality at this level presents such differences and variations that they defy to be classified into a general frame; they call for totally new explanations and interpretations. In the historical sciences too today there is an effort to study and interpret history not simply in terms of the macro — rulers and dominant institutions of the past — but to reassess it by bringing to light the micros, *subaltern groups*, neglected peoples and forgotten events.¹⁹ Only in this way is a correct and balanced understanding of history possible.

The conflict between the macro and the micro is also evident in the field of natural sciences and technology. One of the principle reasons for the gross disparity in growth in the world is the dissociation of science and technology from the social and economic base of the people at the bottom. Gripped by a megalomaniac vision, science and technology proceed with giant strides to accomplish the political and economic designs of those who control them.

It is this mega or macro science which is unfortunately imported into Asia.²⁰ Therefore, there is a cleavage between the type of society, its needs at the micro level, and the grand design of imported science and technology. While this gap may continue with serious consequences for the poor and the marginalized, at the same time there will develop a strong trend towards taming the macro and mega science. The demand for a science and technology with a human face and social concern will get strengthened further in the years to come. This trend will share the objectives of the ecological movement which is putting pressure on the macro science to develop itself in line with environmental concerns. The conflict between the macro and the micro is likely to continue at the turn of the century and even beyond, leading finally to a clear choice in favor of the latter in science and technology.

At the religious level, the second part of the twentieth century has brought fresh awareness about the great religious traditions of humanity, in spite of — perhaps, because of — the powerful trend towards secularization. These religions are in fact macro institutions, systems or great traditions. But at the turn of the century we are witnessing the trend of not letting oneself be impressed by the macro religiosity identified with huge institutions, power and wealth. There is a search for salvation in the small, in the neglected and the despised. It is a trend in which the mustard seed assumes importance, a trend in which what happens to people at the micro level in terms of religious experience becomes more significant and crucial than the exterior religious institutions, their interests and concerns.

This orientation reflects the attitude of Jesus in his time. He was not impressed by the grandiose temple to which the disciple drew his attention (Mk 13:1; Mt 24:1). On his part, he pointed rather to an insignificant widow in the same temple, highlighting the worth of her small mite (Mt 12:41-44; Lk 21:1-4). The place *popular religiousness* is acquiring indicates the future direction.²¹ So too, the small, micro, basic communities are clear expressions of the religious orientation and praxis of the years to come. The rapid multiplication of *sects* in the past few years, which is likely to continue, represents a protest against sterile macro religious institutions and traditions. The turn of the century may witness in the religious field, as in others, an intensification of the conflict between the macro and the micro religiousness. We are challenged to reconceptualize and rearrange the interrelationship between the macro and the micro, between the universal and the particular, also at the religious level.

II. FROM FRAGMENTATION TO INTEGRATION

In today's world we note, on the one hand, forces of division operative in various areas of societal life. In spite of many fragmentations characterizing today's world, we also note, on the other hand, signs of hope. The human family is moving today towards a unity which was, perhaps, never before achieved in history. There is a deep aspiration to get out of situations of division and to reach integration. If fragmentation is self-destruction of humanity, the movement towards unity is the sign of its redemption.

Multipolarity and New Corelation of Forces

At the global political level we have come a long way from the times when the entire world was polarized between the two big superpowers around which other countries revolved as satellites. The political *locus standi* of these states was determined by the degree of their allegiance to one or the other of the two superpowers. But the superpowers are today no longer in a position to impose their will on other nations, nor set the world agenda. While the relationship between the US and the USSR has changed from confrontation to negotiation in many areas, especially disarmament, new political configurations have come into existence. We are in a situation of *multipolarity* in which a new balance, a new corelation of forces is sought.²² This is the result of the emergence of new political and economic power centers. The balance of power is no longer a question to be settled among the superpowers over the head of other nations. All the countries constituting the comity of nations — even the smallest one — are an important factor in the emerging unity and stability in the international political order. In the past, the policies and programs of the superpowers undermined very much the United Nations and impaired its functioning.

Each one of them tried to bend it to its own advantage. Today, in the new international political climate once again this important body is coming to the foreground with wider scope and new initiatives in areas like population control and ecological questions.²³

Economic Imbalance Breeding Fragmentation

The auspicious prospects of unity and globalization we note at the political level are, however, not matched by what is taking place at the economic front. It threatens, unfortunately, to undo what has been gained in terms of unity at the political level. In the economic sphere the cleavage between the North and the South is getting widened. Increasing *economic protectionism* of the North has reduced the countries of the South to economic marginality. The countries of the South, including most nations of Asia, are drawn into the world economic order as suppliers of raw materials and cheap labor force, and as markets controlled by the North.²⁴ The balance in trade today weighs heavily in favor of the North, while the South languishes under increasing debts and the resulting constraints on its economy and development.²⁵ Added to all this are the pressures exercised on the nations of the South by the international monetary bodies like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Some countries are made to crawl on their hands and feet before these bodies, and bend their knees according to their dictates. This harsh economic order undercuts the *independence and self-determination* of the developing countries. The present international economic order is not geared to unity; it can only breed further fragmentation of the world.

It is being realized, as a result of the awareness of the growing interdependence in the world, that the North needs the South for its own growth as much as the South needs the North for its development; it is being realized, further, that a weak South would tell upon the progress of the North. Such realizations, however, remain at the level of pious wishes, while the concrete reality is far from them.

Emerging Regional Co-operation

Today, the unity of the human family must be built up at the local and regional levels. In this respect, the North-South co-operation must increase further. What is heartening is that in Asia such regional unity and co-operation are emerging. In the first place, we must record the removal of many hurdles and the easing of tensions in the Asian region. There have been mending of fences between China and Vietnam, efforts at negotiated settlement of the border dispute between India and China, withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia, the return of Indian Peace Keeping Forces from Sri Lanka. Besides, greater rapprochement

— at least at the level of trade — between China and Taiwan is taking place. It is heartening to note that after many years of bitterness and isolation on both sides, Indonesia and China are going to have diplomatic links.²⁶ The desire for reunification of both Koreas is getting intensified and, despite controversies, fresh moves in this direction are being made.²⁷ The initiative of Indonesia to bring together the warring factions of Cambodia is laudable as it is a significant contribution to the easing of tensions in the Asian region.

The structural expression of growing regional co-operation and collective self-reliance are the ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) and the SAARC (South Asia Association of Regional Cooperation). The economic ties are getting stronger among the members of the ASEAN — Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Brunei and the Philippines. The SAARC came into existence as the result of the idea mooted in 1980 by the President of Bangladesh, Ziaru Rahman. It became a reality in December 1985 at the Dhaka summit.²⁸ It has as its objective the fostering of economic, cultural and technical co-operation among the seven member states — Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Through this regional link, one aims at keeping the South Asian region as a zone of peace, free from the interference of outside powers into the region. In its various summits matters of common interest have been taken up, leaving out any controversial bilateral political issues. It has been proposed to go beyond the meeting at the level of the states and to involve the people of the member countries themselves in a wide range of contacts in order to strengthen this regional co-operation. Unlike the ASEAN, given the political and cultural complexity of the South Asian region, the SAARC has been handicapped in its functioning. The key factor is simply the *asymetrical* character of the countries of the region. India, with its sheer size, its economic resources, influence, etc., has been the object of suspicion among its neighbors about its intentions and strategies.²⁹ Despite many hurdles in its way, this body of regional co-operation has made significant progress, and the very fact of its continued existence is an eloquent witness to the emerging regional co-operation in Asia.

The Challenge of Pluralism

Pluralism is going to assume increasing importance in Asia. It is not something new to this continent; it expresses the actual Asian experience of plurality — ethnic, cultural, religious, linguistic, etc., and calls for the recognition of it in various spheres of day-to-day life. Pluralism is also an attitude and a way of life through which we acknowledge *the otherness of*

the other. Ultimately what is at issue in pluralism is *how we meet the other, the non-self, individual or collective*. This has become a critical question as a result of development in Asia during the past few decades. The future of Asia depends on the practice of genuine pluralism.

Various responses are possible *vis-à-vis* the other. The otherness of the other could be rejected; it could be assimilated to what we are; it could be homogenized. Yet another way is that we raise to universal truth, norm and paradigm what are our culture and time-bound particular experiences and force the other to conform to them. All these responses, evidently, cannot grapple with the situation of pluralism, but can only cause conflicts and turmoils.

First and foremost, we must acknowledge and accept the other — ethnic, cultural, religious, linguistic, etc. — in all its unexchangeable uniqueness and specificity. But this alone is not enough. What is crucial is that this recognition become effective in political and economic terms. For it is here the interests of various groups in a society intersect and clash. Without a political and economic framework attuned to the Asian situation, pluralism will be simply a matter of folklore.

On the other hand, at a time when we experience growing globalization, no ethnic or religious identity could withdraw itself into a splendid isolation. Assertion of ethnic and religious identities with no regard to the process of globalization could be as dangerous as negation of pluralism. Therefore, a challenge which faces many Asian societies at the turn of the century is to steer through between the Scylla of ethnic chaos or unrelated plurality and the Charybdis of homogenization or a uniformity which does not accommodate in the frame the specificity of the other.

Plurality or diversity is to be welcomed and fostered for what it really is — a gift of God to the human family for its enrichment. Therefore, exchange among peoples, cultures as well as cross-cultural perspectives, must develop in resolving common human issues. Thus pluralism should be based on the conviction that peoples, races, religio-cultural identities, etc., complement one another, so that the other does not become something dispensable or redundant but a need for one's own self-understanding and growth. Genuine pluralism would call also for *decentralization* of power, wealth, ideology, etc. With ever greater recognition and practice of pluralism, progressive decentralization is bound to come. But unfortunately, one of the reasons why pluralism is not recognized and practiced is precisely the fear of decentralization. In an age of democratization and participation, any centralization is opposed to true unity. The developments in Asia and all over the world indicate that we are moving irreversibly towards an age of decentralization, which has become essential for

true unity.

Globalization and International Solidarity

One of the very hopeful signs of unity is the building up of international solidarity. We note how people from different continents, races, professions, etc., today come together to take up common issues affecting humanity, such as apartheid, violation of human rights, nuclear proliferation. Transnational movements on these and similar issues have been on the increase in the last few years. The many streams of initiatives flowing from the four corners of the world can be said to constitute today its conscience. We should single out here the role Amnesty International is playing in bringing to the attention of humanity across the borders the plight of the prisoners of conscience and the state of observance of human rights in various countries.

The growing international solidarity is rendered possible thanks to the powerful media of communication. In a world that is becoming a *global village* it is no more possible to insulate what is happening at the local level or to one group of people in terms of human rights. It becomes an international concern. Despite strong control of media and propaganda by the governments, there exist alternative networks of communication and the possibility of reliable informations on various events and on the state of the practice of human rights.

In this whole context the claim of absolute *sovereignty* by the states, which has its roots in the medieval and modern political history of the West, requires to be rethought and reformulated today.³⁰ The common *humanum* which is transnational must be the fulcrum of any conception or doctrine of governance; and the rights of the states must be subordinated to it. All that we have said is significant for Asia inasmuch as the situation of human rights in the various countries is far from being satisfactory. Illegal detention, torture, denial of legitimate religious freedom and various other crimes are perpetrated in several Asian countries in the name of national security and sovereignty.

Yet another trend we note at the global level and in Asia is a sharper awareness of the so-called *Nürnberger Obligation*.³¹ By this is meant the *accountability* of those in power, as well as officials, doctors, judges, lawyers, etc., in regard to ethics and human rights. They are responsible for their behavior even if they act under orders from above, and rightly from a bureaucratic point of view. Expressions of this awareness in Asia were the widespread demand in the Philippines to hold Marcos responsible for the crimes during his regime and in South Korea to prosecute the previous President Chun Doo Hwan.

Human Rights in a Cross-Cultural Perspective

All these movements and trends contribute to the dialogue concerning the unity of the humankind. One of the areas of theoretical discussion relates to human rights.³² As is well-known, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations in 1948. It was obviously a very important landmark in the common pilgrimage of humanity. This declaration drew from two Western sources — the Enlightenment and liberal tradition — in which the individual has been the focus, as well as from the less-known tradition in which what pertains to common good has been underlined.³³ However, the Declaration is heavily centered in the individual and therefore in the liberal tradition.

In Asia, we have begun to realize today that, with such a framework of human rights, certain vital questions like ethnicity cannot be responded to. In fact, in the present form and practice of human rights, there is no provision for collective rights of indigenous peoples, groups, etc. Besides, the socio-economic rights do not receive the attention they deserve. Human rights, to be truly universal and comprehensive, need today to be worked out in dialogue and in a cross-cultural perspective.³⁴ In the coming years, Asia can contribute very significantly in elaborating a broader conceptual basis and practical applications, drawing from its rich humanistic and religious traditions.

Underlying Holistic Vision

At a more basic level, the trend to view the whole reality in a holistic and integral perspective — despite the still dominant tendency of atomizing and dichotomizing — is slowly gaining momentum. This orientation is supported by modern empirical sciences like physics, biology, psychology, etc. In fact, the modern science has passed from the mechanistic paradigm of Newton to a new paradigm of quantum physics where the whole universe is seen as interconnected within one and the same movement and dynamism.³⁵ In the face of the unity of the entire reality, sciences like sociology, anthropology, psychology too are becoming more and more aware of their limitations insofar as each one of them deals only with a fragment of reality which cannot be explained without its linking up with the other dimensions. Hence, we note how interdisciplinary approaches are becoming today common and even indispensable. That alone is not enough. We must strike at the root of the fragmentation of today's world; it is the *fragmentation of knowledge*. The myth that reality can be known by atomizing must give way to a holistic and integral approach that can unfold the web of relations connecting all parts of reality. Knowledge, then, becomes wisdom which has the quality of wholeness.

Parts of this overall orientation towards unity and integration are the following two movements: the ecological movement and the feminist movement. They are powerful affirmations of unity and at the same time a protest against fragmentation. The ecological movement challenges the one-sided emphasis of the relationship of the human person to nature in terms of domination and control; it underscores the necessity of harmony between humanity and nature. The feminist movement, on its part, calls for the complementarity of woman and man, taking exception to a male-dominated society — a society marked by aggression, violence and war. The concerns voiced by these two movements will set the agenda for the century that is to dawn. They will help to bring about a much-needed balance in the growth of the human family.

III. THE PROCESS OF MODERNIZATION

Asia today finds itself in a rapid process of modernization. Modernization is a global phenomenology which affects every society. Whether East or West, North or South, in every society we find at work, in varying degrees, elements of tradition along with forces of modernization. But in Asia and in many Third World societies, the impact of modernization is much more evident than elsewhere. Science, technology, industrialization, fast means of communication, urbanization, new educational, political and economic systems — these are some of the components of modernity.³⁶ They have profoundly influenced traditional cultures, and even more deeply, they have brought about transformation in attitudes, values and consciousness of individuals and groups. For modernization implies a new relationship to time, to nature and to society. The changes are most conspicuous in the cities of Asia which are growing at an alarmingly fast pace through mass mobilization consequent upon modernization.

Understanding the Process

I do not want to enter here into the various theories regarding how the process of modernization is to be interpreted,³⁷ as it may take us too far afield from the main line of reflection. Let me, however, make three observations which, I think, are important for understanding this process. First, modernization is not to be equated with *westernization*, which is the process by which a non-Western individual or group adopts forms of life, ways of thinking, values, behavioral patterns, etc., of the West.³⁸ Second, the expression “modernization” is value-laden. It presupposes that the characteristics of the developed world also should be one day the traits of the underdeveloped societies of today. (And that is perhaps why there is the temptation to identify modernization with westernization). Underlying this conception is an evolutionary view of culture (*cultural Darwinism*) and a linear view of human development. Third, the development and

modernization which have taken place in the West are not, as is often assumed, independent of the underdevelopment of the Third World. Modernization cannot be understood without the colonial and neo-colonial history of exploitation.³⁹

Encounter of Tradition and Modernity

From a theoretical perspective, it is important in the coming years to pose the question of the relationship of tradition to modernity differently than has been done in the past few decades, especially in the 1960s. Most of the theories advanced in that period rested on two premises. It was assumed that there was a dichotomy between tradition and modernity. No distinction was made between tradition and tradition.⁴⁰ Tradition as such was viewed as a force restraining the process of modernization. One did not realize that there are some traditions which can block the process of modernization, while others can be a valuable resource for it.

Another assumption is associated with the so-called "*theory of convergence of industrialized societies*," according to which the traditional societies of different kinds become more and more similar as they become industrialized and urbanized. This is a somewhat simplistic approach. It does not reflect the complexity of the social change in traditional societies, with certain underlying core-perceptions reflected in *the way people of a particular culture perceive, approach and handle differently the same issues and problems*.⁴¹ Therefore, the responses to modernization will be different in different societies. A variety of responses in the same society is also possible. Evidently, core-perceptions do change, but their pace and mode of change are different from the structural and institutional changes which may result from modernization.

In practice, however, the meeting of traditional societies with modernity has produced a wide variety of situations. Modernization has produced dual systems in economic, political and cultural spheres. In Asian societies, for example, we find tradition juxtaposed to modernity. Asians, accustomed as they are to live with contradictions, live with one foot in modernity and another in tradition. Another response has been to try to discard the traditional culture, lock, stock and barrel, and replace it with modernity. Yet in other cases, we have a staunch opposition to modernity and its values, coupled with a chauvinistic defence of traditional cultures, institutions, ways of life, etc. In some other situations we have a transference of traditional attitudes and values to modern systems, tools, etc., or reversely, a superimposition of the modern on the traditional.⁴²

A Trojan Horse in Asia — The Western Model of Modernization

Modernization is an ambiguous process. On the one hand, modernization, especially in its scientific and technological dimensions, represents the realm of human creativity. Human persons transform themselves by their creative relationships to nature and society. Through science and technology they break out of the fetters of the realm of necessity to create history in freedom. Science and technology — the important components of modernity — have immense potential to transform our planet and to enhance human life and happiness. They open up horizons of infinite possibilities.

On the other hand, the type of modernization that is in vogue and the role science and technology are made to play have not only fallen short of the ideals but also have caused a serious crisis in Asia and in other parts of the world.⁴³ What is most deplorable is that science and technology which enshrine immense resources to liberate human beings are today turned into an *ideology for domination*.⁴⁴ They have become powerful instruments to subjugate people, to manipulate and exploit them. This is true at the global as well as at the national level. In many traditionally unequal societies of Asia science and technology have given to the already dominant groups and castes leverage to control and manipulate society. At the international level, the power of technological know-how is not shared by the First World in any appreciable measure with the developing countries of Asia and other parts of the Third World. Therefore, the technologies which could benefit large number of the disprivileged people of the earth are kept secret. Further, modernity and the development attendant on it promised a planetary cornucopia; but the reality of abject poverty, misery and struggle for existence has belied such a vision. The dominant Western model of modernity is infected by *economism*. Further, the Western model of modernity has thrown the cultures of Asia off their balance. More about this under section IV.

Given this ambiguous character of modernity, the question is not one of “catching up” with the West or leapfrogging into a new century which the First World will create. Nor is it, on the other hand, a matter of Luddite opposition to modernity. The real issue is how Asia can cut out *its own path* to modernization. It is in a critical attitude towards the Western model of modernity in vogue and its values that Asia should find on the basis of its own culture and history its distinct path to modernization.

Laying the Foundations for Asian Modernization

i) Rationality in Relation to the Totality of Human Existence

The present paradigm of modernity is based on an empirical and reductionist rationality oriented towards economic values. It rests on a very limited understanding of rationality. Speaking about Confucianism and modernity, Prof. Vincent Tsing-song Shen of the National Chengchi University of Taipei, distinguishes between the *rational* and the *reasonable*.⁴⁵ Confucianism — and for that matter any other great Asian religio-cultural way of life — implies certain principles of being reasonable. To be rational, in the sense of Western modernity, “we have to control the gathering of empirical data through technical process, to formulate theories and projects in a logico-mathematical manner, and to establish their correspondence through an interactive process. This concept of rationality assures a progressive vision of human history.”⁴⁶ This rationality of modernization contrasts with the Confucian “system of reasonable ideas which refers ultimately to the totality of human existence and its meaningful realization.”⁴⁷ The difference between the two could be illustrated by a simple example. No Asian religio-cultural tradition — whether Chinese, Indian, Japanese or Korean — would consider it reasonable that millions of dollars be spent in creating lethal weapons while millions of human beings are stricken by hunger, disease, lack of potable water, etc. And yet, these weapons can be planned, produced, sold and employed with great precision and according to the strict canons of empirical rationality of modernization. In Asia the “reasonable” is a principle that relates to human life in its totality and ultimacy. Therefore, in the Asian “reasonable,” the ethical and human are constitutive and inalienable parts, whereas the empirical, technocratic and bureaucratic rationality of modernizations does not include the human and the ethical; on that account this rationality could become unreasonable. The Asian “reasonable” includes rationality and this rationality should be contained by this reasonable so that it does not turn out to be anti-human.

ii) Science in Relation to Truth

In Asia we need to go beyond a pragmatic and instrumental view of knowledge and science. In the context of modernity science has come to be valued in terms of practical utility, of technology and industrialization, and these again in terms of economic utility. Such a straight jacket has come to constrict its true potentiality in relation to humanization. Worse still, the *practical and utilitarian view of science* has come to mean, in practice, domination — domination not only over nature but over the *society* as well.

Asian modernization must rest on the foundational relationship of

science to truth; it should base itself on the integral, sacred and liberative nature of knowledge. In fact, in the Asian tradition knowledge and science are seen from an integral perspective; knowledge is considered sacred because it relates to truth which is sacred. Only such a view of science and knowledge will foster the primacy of ends (human goals) over the means (utility). Asian modernization which is built on these foundations and premises will be also truly humanizing.

iii) Modernization and the Spiritual Quest

The Asian approach to modernization will not contradict religiousness and faith. For there is no incompatibility between the two; both can co-exist and even co-operate well.

In the context of modernity often the preoccupation is voiced among some Christian leaders that Asia is getting secularized, by which is meant that Asia, known for its religiousness and spirituality, is progressively losing this character, as the tide of modernity overtakes it.⁴⁸ From this perspective, ways and means are thought out to stem the secular trend. Such an approach to the phenomena of modernity and secularization is a clear example of how we internalize and make our own the Western pre-occupations stemming from the particular course of developments in their society and history, and extrapolate them to our cultures and peoples. This colonial mind-set is the most "intimate enemy" which prevents us from looking at the Asian reality in relation to its own inner dynamics and in the social, cultural and historical context of our continent. As a result, we will be furnishing ready-made answers to questions which Asia does not ask, and find ourselves incapable of answering the real questions it is asking.

Just as with the "theory of the convergence of industrial societies," about which I spoke earlier, there is also an assumption that modernization automatically means secularization, indifference, if not denial of religiosity. Such a conception derives from the European history of secularization which cannot be understood without referring to the philosophical background of rationalism and the social background of conflicts with the Church and its clergy.⁴⁹ Asia presents quite a different picture. The process of modernization has engendered a *different kind of response in Asian societies*. The response to the process of modernization has been not so much secularization as *religious fundamentalism*⁵⁰ — a reassertion of a certain tradition as absolute in the face of the relativizing dangers perceived in modernization. In fact, technological and other means offered by modernity have been made use of to strengthen one's religious identity and narrow one's boundaries. Therefore, our efforts in Asia should be directed primarily to study the interaction between mod-

ernization and religious fundamentalism in all its implications. That will give us the signals to avoid the pitfalls of a wrongly conceived and practiced modernization, and the clues to lay the foundations for a genuine modernization in Asia which can go hand in hand with true religiosity.

iv) Social Implications of Science and Technology

Another important factor which we should take into account in the creation of a modern Asia is the imperative of linking science and technology to social justice. It is a truism to say that today science and technology have come to acquire a political and social dimension. To what purposes the marvellous achievements of human ingenuity should be directed does not any more rest with scientists and technological experts. Much of the scientific research and technological innovation today is pursued for goals of industrialization and militarization and for the expanding military-industrial complex. Given the situation of hunger, disease, illiteracy, etc., it is imperative that the political powers in our societies and in the international order take up the question of science and technology in relation to resolving these basic questions.⁵¹ In this line, it is a hopeful sign that movements are springing up in Asian countries which have the benefitting of those at the margins of society from science and technology as their focus.⁵²

v) A Question of Social Change

What is implied in the process of modernization is ultimately a question about the process of social change and the dynamics of this change. Change cannot and should not be thrust upon a society, which will be counterproductive.⁵³ Asian societies have to interact with the forces of modernity, and out of this encounter something new is bound to emerge. Therefore, Asian societies are not to be considered as passive recipients of a modernity coming upon them, but as active subjects. In other words, the change implied in the process of modernization must be *endogenous and not exogenous*. Exogenous changes — changes imposed from without — causes disruption of the society, throw it into disarray, whereas endogenous change — change from within — will be able to absorb and assimilate the new and grow harmoniously. Like language, society is a comprehensive system. Language does change with new experiences and new times, but this change has reference to the whole. Under the influence of the new, the system readjusts itself according to an inner dynamic.

Our reflections concerning the process of modernization will be clearer if we relate them to the centrality culture is assuming in Asia and indeed all over the world.

IV. THE PROGRESSIVE CENTRALITY OF CULTURE

One of the consequences of the process of modernization is the relegation of the cultural dimension of life to the background. The economy has been the all-embracing and dominant factor in human and social life. We can observe this in the model of development set forth by the First World for the countries of the Third World. In the so-called development decades of 1950s and 60s the progress of Asian countries, as well as of other underdeveloped parts of the world, was thought of and planned in terms of *economic growth*. But slowly the realization dawned that the goal of development of the poor was far from being achieved, because the economic question was tied up with the *political question*. The 1970s and early 80s tried to come to terms with the political question — the question of power.⁵⁴ Today, with poverty and misery still weighing heavily on the poor of our villages and slums of our cities, the attention is being increasingly turned to *culture*. Today, one begins to realize the key role of culture for the economic development and acquisition of political power by the people, and more basically for their selfhood as peoples, as active subjects and agents of history.

The Deep Roots of Culture

The culture of a people expresses its spirit, its collective unconscious. Like the trees of the forest which preserve the soil from erosion, the cultural roots of a people give them strength and selfhood to withstand the oppression and exploitation of the powerful. It is this cultural perspective which made Mahatma Gandhi state:

I want the culture of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any. I refuse to live in other people's house as an interloper, a beggar or a slave.⁵⁵

Culture is the living embodiment of the experiences of a people transmitted from generation to generation. It is the uniquely specific way of a people's knowing, feeling and perceiving reality and interacting with it. That an ancient culture cannot simply be got rid of is exemplified by the short-lived Cultural Revolution in China. Culture does change, but cannot forcibly be cast off. How deep are the roots of ancient culture in the unconscious of the people, in spite of all modernity, can be seen from the widespread response — from cities and village alike — which the television serials of the ancient epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* received in India. The philosophy, ethics, ideals and symbols of these epics permeate the day-to-day life of the people in India, Indonesia, Thailand, and so on.

Even for economic development in the years to come, one will have to take into serious account the culture of the people from which stem values, motivations and attitudes. For example, Japan may present exteriorly the same traits of other industrially advanced countries of the West. And yet, Japanese capitalism seems to have a *cultural matrix different from that of the West*. The thesis of Max Weber concerning the relationship between capitalism and Protestantism is well-known. The Japanese capitalist growth is based — so it is opined — on the traditional cultural institution of *furusato* — of the old home village where people were collectively engaged in rice cultivation with close bonds of relationships with one another and with nature.⁵⁶ The Chinese entrepreneurship and business traits derive much from the Confucian philosophy and ethic.⁵⁷ In this connection it is to be noted that “as opposed to the earlier Protestant ethics, the modern Confucian ethic is superbly designed to create and foster loyalty, dedication, responsibility and commitment and to intensify identification with the organization and one’s role in the organization. All this makes the economy and society operate much more smoothly than one whose principles of identification and association tend to lead to egalitarianism, to disunity, to confrontation, and excessive compensation or repression.”⁵⁸

Culture Overtaking Economy and Ideology

The centrality of culture comes to manifest itself differently in the West and in the East. In the West it has begun to express itself as a quest for meaning and a search for new symbols. It expresses itself also as a virulent critique of the empirical rationality characterizing the present model of development, which is in many respects anti-human and devoid of humanizing culture.⁵⁹ In Asia and in the rest of the developing world, which were dominated by colonial powers, the centrality of culture can be seen in the affirmation of the identity of a people as a group, a nation, and in the search for cultural roots to undergird the present-day economic, social and political life. The cultural comes to the fore in our Asian societies also in the aspiration of the people to determine for themselves, on the basis of their history, tradition and values, their own patterns of development and forms of self-government. People will not allow any more the political and the economic to supplant their culture. They are becoming increasing aware that the political system and the economic growth must bear the imprint of their culture.

During this century, in the context of the political independence of the Third World nations from colonial rule, it was thought that *political unity* will automatically bring about unity among the various ethnic, cultural and linguistic groups. This has been belied by the experience of ethnic conflicts, unrest, civil war, etc., within the various nation-states.

Subsequently, it was opined that the creation of a *common economic system* will unify peoples of different races and countries. This too is today being contradicted by experience. It is enough to think of the West European unity primarily founded on economy and a common market. This centrality of economy is today being eroded by the prospect of the reunification of both Germanies, which has caused serious concern among the neighbors. We note how once again the ethnic and the cultural element or the “primordial sentiments” are coming to the fore, breaking open economic frames.

The unresolved and still persistent economic crisis of Eastern Europe and Soviet Union — which was one of the critical factors for the sudden crumbling of totalitarian socialism in 1989 — and the political vacuum resulting from the demise of authoritarian states are likely to develop in the direction of ethnicity, exacerbating rivalry and struggles among the various groups for economic advantages and for political power. The conflicts between the Armenians and Azerbaijanians, the nationalist waves in the Baltic states of Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia, the issues rising from the presence of Albanians in Serbia, and Serbians in Yugoslavia, the Bohemians in Czechoslovakia, etc. — all these are indications of the primacy the cultural identity is going to occupy in the years to come in the Second World.

These trends also show how unrealistic and false is the assumption that the First World has resolved the ethnic question through a common economic system, and the Second World has resolved the same problem through a common ideology. The re-emergence of the ethnic identities in the First and Second Worlds should lead to the realization of the limitations of the economic and ideological dimensions in human life. The First and Second Worlds, which thought that the ethnic conflicts and cultural conflicts were simply a Third World question, could now learn from their own experience the complex situation Asia and other Third World societies are facing, and the difficulties of finding solutions in terms of mere economy and ideology.

Cultural Change and Socio-Economic Transformation

The momentum culture is acquiring today must be understood in relation to socio-political developments. Culture as a realm of meaning, values, motivations and world-views relate to the subjective pole of human existence which is indispensable for changes in the objective processes, structures and institutions. But culture does not remain static and immune to change. The change and evolution which take place in culture are bound up with the change at the social and economic level. Thus, there is a dialectic relationship between cultural changes and socio-

economic processes.

Now, the role culture plays and the changes it undergoes in our Asian societies has to be understood in its interrelationship to the socio-economic transformation taking place today. There are various aspects and dimensions to this interrelationship. One of the things which is striking is the gross neglect of culture in politics, economy, etc. These go ahead on their own without the support of the cultural. That explains also the malaise of the conventional model of development. A political practice which is not humanized by culture becomes a matter of struggle for naked power, and an economic pursuit without cultural horizons becomes a matter of money and acquisitiveness. In most Asian countries, *politics and economy have got themselves disjoined from the cultural and they have fallen into a moral void, bereft of all idealism.* This is in marked contrast with the times of struggle for political independence from the colonial powers. That period of Asian history was also a time of great cultural renaissance. As a matter of fact, the political leaders of the time were also the ones who brought about a fresh cultural awakening.⁶⁰ But the developments since then have taken a different course, turning a blind eye to the dimensions of culture.

A second aspect concerns the dual system of economy and its repercussions in terms of cultural change. In almost every Asian country there are two worlds — those who appropriate for themselves the scientific and technological developments and the benefits from them, advancing rapidly in their economic status and social position; there are others whom these developments have not touched, but are its victims. This divide corresponds, by and large, to the situation in urban and rural areas.

The Phenomenon of a Rising Middle Class and Hybrid Culture

Particularly to be noted is the fact that the present development process has given rise to a very competitive and fast-expanding middle class, based mostly in the large cities of Asia.⁶¹ In India, for example, this new middle class accounts for 12%-24% of the population,⁶² in contrast to the 40% of the people who have been scarcely affected by the development process. This middle class is very money conscious: it tries to make quick money and in this process corruption, bribery and adulteration thrive. Considerations in arranged marriage — as is the custom in many parts of Asia — revolve around money.

This middle class is highly consumeristic, with a passion for luxury goods and extravagant comforts, entertainments, tourism, etc. Ostentatious and competitive, this emerging Asian middle class is in general insensitive and indifferent to the overwhelming majority of the poor and marginalized people. This is so very strange in a continent that has been

for over twenty centuries under the influence of Buddha and many sages and saints, who all preached *karuna* (compassion), *maitri* (friendship, fellowship) and *daya* (sympathy). That shows the degree of cultural, moral and religious erosion the present paradigm of development has caused.

The way of life, values and views of this emerging middle class are akin to those of the post-industrial Western society. There is little of that exacting austerity which characterized the Puritans at the dawn of industrial revolution in the West,⁶³ not to speak of the traditional values of renunciation characteristic of the Asian religio-cultural heritage. The fleeting pseudo-culture the present development process has thrown up, of which the middle class is the symbol, is a hybrid culture — a clumsy imitation of the post-industrial Western elements with indigenous cultural elements. But deep down there is a cultural rootlessness among this section of people. They have psychologically uprooted themselves from their cultural world; but they are not integrated into the Western culture. It is this middle class which is also a key factor in ethnic convulsions and riots inasmuch as the ethnic and cultural identity is exploited by them to assert themselves politically and economically over other competing or potentially dangerous groups. Further, the traditional culture is often prostituted and made to serve as exotic elements in the post-industrial culture which the middle class seek to mimic.

Fresh Moral and Spiritual Resources

There are formidable challenges in the area of culture; given whose central importance, it is urgent that in the coming decades efforts be directed to grapple with the situation. A twofold initiative seems to be necessary for the cultural reconstruction of Asian societies.

Out of the multifaceted and complex Asian socio-political and religious situation something new is being born. The traditional cultural heritage should rearrange itself and dynamically assist at the birth of a new Asia. Instead of lamenting the disintegration and decline of the past cultural heritage — which would presuppose a very static view of it — we should draw moral and spiritual resources from it and inject them into the stream of present socio-cultural life and process. This can happen only through a conscious and sustained cultural intervention — education, communication, etc.⁶⁴ Without this necessary humanizing role of culture, socio-economic process will turn mindless and churn from out of its own vomit an abhorring breed of an anti-human subculture. In the cultural reconstruction of Asian societies, religions as an animating force of culture have an important role to play. This role can be played effectively in the complex situation of today when the various religious traditions are in

dialogue with each other. To be able to make its own contribution, each religious tradition needs to reinterpret itself anew against the background of today's Asian situation.

Secondly, and more basically, efforts must be taken to overcome the situation of contradictions and structural dualisms which the existence of two worlds in any country creates. There is a need for, so to say, a *sanatio in radice* — healing at the root — of the growing social and economic disparity giving rise to a hedonistic culture of luxury, on the one side, a culture of want and destitution, on the other. A human and equitable socio-economic development can only be the foundation for the emergence of a holistic cultural framework. It is hoped that in the years to come movements for cultural regeneration will emerge and spread all over Asia.

V. THE CRISIS OF SURVIVAL

The teeming millions of Asia are today caught up in a deep crisis of survival. The natural resources like land, sea, forests, which were for them life-supporting for centuries, have been grabbed from their hands now, and these resources are today being controlled by internal and external oppressive forces. The capital and resource-intensive industrialization taking place in our societies has marginalized the masses and rendered life unbearable in rural areas. Impoverished and dispossessed, they flee in large numbers to cities and towns to eke out their existence around slums and shanties in abject poverty and misery. They are deprived of the necessary power — economic and political — to decide their own destinies. The dependent capitalistic policies adopted by many Asian governments have been suppressive of the rights of workers,⁶⁵ peasants and the marginalized sections of society as are the tribals, women, dalits, oppressed youth. The gross imbalance in relation to production, distribution and consumption has created a contradiction between the affluence of a few and the misery of the dispossessed masses.

Ecology and Impoverishment

The ecological question as a global issue concerns the environment of our planet and its future. The so-called greenhouse effect and the rise of temperature linked to it have their repercussions in low lying Asian countries like Bangladesh, where the sea-level is rising and threatens to submerge a lot of land.⁶⁶ There are then environmental dangers posed by acid rains, nuclear energy waste, etc. We do not want to enter into these questions here.

What concerns us is the more immediate question of the *daily threat*

to survival posed to the lives of the marginal peoples in Asian countries. This threat to survival derives from the pattern of (ab)use of natural resources. The overwhelming majority of Asians depend for their livelihood on the products of forests, land and sea. Now these resources of nature are being today more and more diverted to fulfil the needs of a market-oriented economy and industry.⁶⁷ This type of economy has severely ruptured the life-supporting base. Therefore, the marginal groups in Asian societies, such as tribals, fishermen, poor peasants, not only do not benefit from the present model of development, but they are also the one who pay the *cost* of it insofar as the resources meant for their life-support go to feed the type of development from which they do not benefit.

Denudation of forests take place in countries like India and Indonesia to cater to industrial needs; and large areas of land are brought under monoculture (cultivation of the same crop, like sugar, palm oil, etc.) as in the Philippines, Malaysia, etc., to suit the demands of the multinationals.⁶⁸ The same happens with the resources of the sea. Most Asian countries have large coastal areas, and in a country like the Philippines about 60% of the protein needs is supplied by sea food.⁶⁹ Here again a market-oriented economy is draining the marine resources severely, leaving the local population high and dry. Further, the exploitation of un-renewable resources of energy and overexploitation of renewable energy, with no attention being paid to the regenerative rhythm of nature, are threatening the lives of millions of Asians. The situation is linked with international trade relationships. Asian countries continue to supply like in the days of erstwhile colonialisms large quantities of raw material to the developed countries, depriving in the process their citizens of their basic needs and risking the eco-system of their lands.

Asian Approach to Ecology

In the years ahead, a distinctly Asian approach to the environmental question needs to be developed. Already the difference of orientation between the West and the East is becoming clear. In the First World, the ecological question has the conservation of nature, its wild life, flora and fauna as its focus; it is concerned about preserving the resources of nature for a long time to come and not to deplete them irresponsibly.⁷⁰ Environmental sensitivity would manifest itself in the care taken to prevent the extinction of elephants, tigers, flamingoes and so on. In Asia, the immediate concern with ecology derives from *economic and physical survival* — the *imperative* of marginal peoples. Here ecology and economy are intimately interlinked. It has been the conviction of the Asian peoples — expressed in so many ways in their culture, tradition, ways of life, values, etc. — that the harmony in nature (*rta* in Sanskrit from which derives the Greek word *rhythmos* — rhythm) is intimately bound up with right and

harmonious order — *dharma* — in society and the overall well-being of the human. One must listen attentively to nature, its cycles, rhythms and moods, unravel its mysteries, be in communion with it and act in harmony with it. Harmonious relationship with nature touches the deep spiritual cords of Asian peoples.⁷¹ The response to ecological destruction and nature should derive from the Asian spiritual roots which have the potential to save nature from destruction and human society from maldevelopment and injustice.

Signs of an ecologically conscious decade and century in Asia are already visible. We could cite the example of the *Chipko movement*⁷² in India, which is very Asian in responding to environmental questions. Chipko is the hugging of trees. It started when women of the Himalayas began protecting the trees by hugging them when faced by the vested interests which wanted to fell them. It has become today a widespread movement in the country and has won significant victories over anti-ecological policies and practices. The movement has adopted the traditional Asian form of resistance — passive, nonviolent resistance, the *Satyagraha*, practiced very much by Mahatma Gandhi. Long nonviolent marches or *padayatras* in connection with ecological issues bring home to the people what has been deep down in them — a harmonious relationship with nature — which unfortunately stand threatened by imported misconceptions about human progress and growth. The spiritual character of the ecological consciousness can be seen in the fact that *padayatra* is also the traditional religious pilgrimage to sanctuaries. In their own ways environmental movements are gaining momentum also in Taiwan, in the Philippines and in many countries of Asia. These movements and initiatives are signs of hope and hold out a lot of promise for the future.

Militarization

Many Asian countries struggle under the heavy burden of debts, and some are on the way to being trapped into a debt-crisis. This situation notwithstanding, huge amounts of money are being spent to buy armaments,⁷³ due to internal and external compulsions. What is so badly needed for survival, for meeting the basic necessities of life, is doled out on arms. It is like snatching the bread from the mouth of the children to buy guns to kill their fathers. The “merchants of death” in the First World are only too eager to get rid of the stockpile of outmoded weapons, even as large amounts of money are being spent on research and production of new weapons, which they retain for themselves.

Militarization is due not only to reasons of defence from external forces, but to domestic reasons as well. In countries like Sri Lanka and India the role of the army has become very crucial in quelling secessionist

forces and ethnic riots. Not long ago we witnessed the crackdown by the Chinese army on the unarmed students and civilians of the Tiananmen Square,⁷⁴ and earlier, on the Tibetans. Similarly in Burma the armed forces of the state suppressed the democratic upsurge in that country. A further new development in the Asian countries is the *politicization* of the military.⁷⁵ In Pakistan, from the time of Zia, the army has played a pivotal role in the politics of the country, and it has been influenced by the religious ideology of Jamaat-i-Islami. In the Philippines, the series of coup attempts to overthrow the Aquino government is the result of the politicization of the army that began in the time of Marcos. That the Chinese army is also politicized is clear from the fact that several senior officers opposed the use of force against the protesting students and civilians during the events of mid-1989.⁷⁶ A further development is the growth and intensification of militant groups and the parallel arms trade that is going on in Asia. Lethal weapons are bought by the militant groups and this arms traffic is connected with the international heroin and opium markets.

The inter-states' situation of security presents different pictures. Though the buying of arms by the ASEAN states continues, nevertheless, the situation of interrelationship among the countries of the regions is less tense. Common economic concerns have contributed to this situation. There is an attempt to turn Southeast Asia into a zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN). It is difficult to predict how long this situation of ease may continue. With eventual economic rivalry among the countries, it is not unlikely that confrontational and bellicose attitudes and strategies will develop among them. The security situation in the North Pacific area of Asia will depend very much on the way relationships will develop among China, Korea and Japan.⁷⁷

The South Asian front, in contrast, presents a picture of serious concern, with spasmodic tensions mounting on the Indo-Pakistan borders, with the not yet fully resolved border disputes between India and China, and the straining of relationships between India and Sri Lanka. Militarization in the region is getting intensified. As the time of writing this paper dark war clouds are hovering over the Indo-Pakistan border, with imminent threats of a breakout of hostilities.

The survival question has become so serious in Asian societies that in the years ahead alternative models of security have to be found that will lead to progressive demilitarization. The alternative model of security will have to go beyond a mere balance of power, and concentrate on ever closer regional ties of co-operation and friendship, which alone can lay the foundations for a lasting peace and security. Such a reorientation will arise when security ceases to be a matter of the army and the state; the people of these nations must participate in their security arrangements.

Total demilitarization and the achievement of “*democratic security*,”⁷⁸ to be realistic, will have to proceed by steps and stages.

Asian Woman — An Endangered Species

Never before in history has the dignity of the women of Asia been so threatened as today. Ironically, the fundamentalist forces and the forces of modernity have concurred to create the present situation of women’s degradation and the violent assault on their rights. While the modern industrial form of development and the international division of labor are drawing women into the work force in garment production, food-processing, electronics, etc., and more and more women are stepping into public life, there is an attempt on the part of fundamentalist forces to reassert the traditional patriarchal control in a much more vehement way than before.⁷⁹ Thus, women are subjected to exploitation in their place of work as a docile and cheap work force and castigated by the desperate patriarchal structures and controls which are breaking up. Unfortunately, ceding to the pressures of the fundamentalist forces for reasons of political expediency, some of the Asian states have even passed legislations undermining the legitimate rights of women. Here we could think of the laws passed by Zia’s regime under his program of Islamization and the bill passed by the Indian government in 1986, known as “Muslim Women’s Protection of the Right of Divorce Bill.”⁸⁰ Even the physical survival of women is jeopardized, if we note the decline in the ratio of men to women in many Asian countries. The amniocentesis tests eliminate female fetuses, denying women even physical birth, while greed of money and the consumerist-drive cause the death of many young brides in cities (dowry deaths).

The traditional village and agricultural setup in which the labor of women was confined has been disrupted by the introduction of technology and industrialization. This has led to the displacement of large numbers of women in Asian societies. They move from villages to cities, from one country to another, in search of labor. Think, for example, of the number of Filipinas in the Middle East, Singapore, Hong Kong, mothers from children, wives from husbands, with serious repercussions to family life and familial relationships, which have been so sacrosanct among the Asian peoples.

Consumerism and hedonism, connected with the conventional model of development, are sucking into its vortex a large number of Asian women for sex-related labors — as prostitutes, entertainers in bars, hospitality girls and workers in massage parlors. This trend is very pronounced in countries like Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, etc., where there is a new economic boom.⁸¹ Human trafficking, the kidnapping of girls and the selling of them to brothels are on the increase. The whole situation is

aggravated by *mass*-tourism which reflects the modern economic culture of *mass*-production.⁸² Organized sex tours bring in from the First World, including Japan, thousands of visitors for whose enjoyment sexual havens like Pattaya in Thailand and Pot Pong in Bangkok have been created. Some of the descriptions of how First World men go about with Asian women in such havens are absolutely shocking and revolting, as it is totally unnatural. Free of the social controls of their own societies and countries, these tourists of the First World go on a sexual rampage, and it is a serious insult to the dignity of Asian women who, because they are poor, become also expendable.

Thailand, with a population of about fifty-five million people, has, according to Dr. Koson Srisang, Executive Secretary of the Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism (ECTWT), two million prostitutes connected with the tourism industry. There are 800,000 child prostitutes as well in the same country.⁸³ In the city of Manila, Philippines alone, according to 1987 estimate, there are 100,000 women and 20,000 boys and girls involved in prostitution connected with tourism.⁸⁴ Things are not very different in other parts of Asia.

We are deeply challenged by the whole situation of women. Is this the price to be paid for economic development of a small portion of the population? What about the future? Are we not slowly being drawn into a death trap by the conventional model of development? Are we to surrender on the altar of modernity the dignity of women, their rights, everything human and noble that we prize so dearly?

A Necessary Refocusing

The crisis of survival affecting the marginal people of Asia, nature, women, and the survival-threat posed by militarization call for immediate and urgent response. If the colonialism of the first half of the century and the economic policies of development of the second half concurred to strengthen the already powerful and push even further to the sidelines the weak and the powerless, this contradictory process may reach a breaking point in the years to come. Unless we come to grips with the present crisis of survival, in the years ahead there could be an escalation of violence and terrorism in Asian societies. It will be the result of economic conditions rather than due to political motives. Recourse to violence and dacoitary to force the wealthy to part with their riches will become increasingly common. The most underprivileged groups and regions could become the hotbed of unrest, revolt and violence.

The line of development followed in the past few decades has heavily favored the cities to the detriment of the villages where the bulk of Asians

live. As a result of global economic policies and other national factors, this trend is likely to intensify, aggravating the crisis of survival for the marginalized and powerless groups. A refocusing on the marginal peoples of our societies — the *dalits*, the peasants and so on — is imperative to overcome the present crisis, and lay the foundations for a humane form of development that will enable human togetherness and co-operation in justice and fellowship.

Trends of Response

There are stirrings of hope. The foundations for overcoming the crisis lie in the upsurge of consciousness about the present situation and the growing conviction that this situation is not to be taken by the marginalized as their inevitable fate but as something to be overcome. From the general ocean of misery voices of protest are being raised against the situation. There is a persistent demand from various quarters to transform the present oppressive order of things into a humane and harmonious one in which people can grow, flourish and blossom as human persons.

The responses given to the crisis show three important trends. First, this new awareness is the sign of a *fresh process of democratization* taking place among the people. This democracy is an effective one insofar as there is a participation of the people. In the democratic resurgence in the Philippines, Korea, Burma and most recently in Nepal, students, workers, religionists have had an active and critical role to play. Democracy can hardly be identified in Asian societies with parliamentary democracy, which, in most cases, has become a sham, not really representing the people and their will. The conventional democratic institutions have been exploited by those groups already powerful — the higher castes and classes. The real democratic process is today being built up by the response to the crisis of survival which affects the people. Thus the movements that have emerged in response to the ecological crisis, to the oppression of women, to the plight of the tribals, *dalits*, minorities — all these concretely go to constitute the process of democratization of Asian societies, freeing them both from the forces of fundamentalism and the forces of modern (mal)development. Through such a process of democratization, there has come about a sharper awareness of the dignity of the human person and his or her inalienable rights for basic necessities of life and all that is needed for human existence. This widespread awareness has crystalized into human rights' or civil liberties' movements.

A second trend which we note in the emerging responses to the crisis of survival is that *effective solutions to problems have to be found at the local level, at the micro level*. It is in responding to the issues at hand at the

local level that credible global perspectives can emerge. In the past years, the tackling of a particular local issue of ecology or instance of violation of women's rights has had national and international repercussions and has helped to form realistic global perspectives on these questions. This is a different kind of approach from the one which tries to give a solution at the global level to be applied at the local level. Experience is demonstrating the serious limitations of this latter approach.

The experience of recent times also show that *the crisis of survival cannot be overcome by pinning one's hope on one single approach*. No single ideology, no single political system or economic arrangement can claim to be the panacea for the woes of those languishing at the bottom of our societies. A plurality of approaches is called for, depending on each specific situation of oppression, with its unique characteristics, historical and cultural roots.

What role will the ideologies play in overcoming the crisis? All ideologies promise to get the poor and the marginalized out of their crisis of survival. But it is being realized more and more that the type of ideology necessary for socio-political transformation cannot be dictated from above, but has to be shaped and formed from out of the experiences of specific situations and contexts. People cannot simply surrender to any ideology that promises to liberate them. For ideology can be turned by vested interests, party chiefs and bureaucrats into a myth, into a totem which the people have only to prostrate before and adore.

What has happened in quick succession in the countries of Eastern Europe amply illustrates the consequence of any ideology converted into an idol. On the other hand, concentration of wealth in the hands of a few with consequent impoverishment of the many, racism, new forms of poverty in the so-called developed countries, production and sales of armaments — these are the handiwork of an industrial capitalism which cannot claim either to help overcome the crisis of survival in which a large part of Asia and the world is enveloped. Rather, it may be the chief cause for the global crisis of survival.

If the greater part of the twentieth century has been under the sign of two mega-ideologies, the emphasis in the future is going to shift again from ideologies to the people as the center. The time of peremptory dogmatism and isolationism which characterized ideologies, and the time when people had to be sacrificed on the altar of economic and political tenets, are being consigned to the dunghill of history. In this sense we are moving towards a *post-ideological age*, with people as the permanent resource for transformation of society. Codified and institutionalized responses in the form of ideologies are inadequate to meet the challenges of

poverty, misery and survival. We require today in Asia fresh and creative responses. We need new values rooted in our traditions and new bases, a new framework for human togetherness and co-operation in the task of overcoming the crises that face us.

CONCLUSION

The various trends and processes we have identified and the analyses and reflections we have made reveal also formidable challenges facing Asia at the present juncture of its history. The future of the Church in Asia will depend on how it reacts and responds to this situation with all its challenges. It lies beyond the scope of this paper to deal with this question. Certain conclusions, nevertheless, seem to follow from our study and reflections, which we indicate here. These need to be taken into account in any effort of the Church in responding to the Asian situation.

1. The various trends and processes interpenetrate and are very closely interlinked. They are parts of one single historical movement. There is a certain undercurrent uniting the various dimensions of the Asian complex situation. The response of the Church needs to respect this interconnected nature of the situation. It means that the Church will not be able to grapple with the Asian realities if it takes a compartmentalized and fragmentary approach to problems. Any issue it addresses must be studied in all its ramifications and interconnections.

2. The dynamics of the Asian developments are such that they can be understood only from within. They will simply elude the eyes of external observers. It is essential for the Church, therefore, to *participate* in and to be in dialogue with the Asian situation. Only from such a position will it be able to identify and discern the type of response it could give, the contribution it could make and the orientations it should take. Without such immersion, participation and dialogue there is the danger that the Church will set up a parallel agenda for the new decade and the new century, which may not meet the contextual exigencies. Solutions tried elsewhere and transported from without may not answer the questions and problems assailing Asia. *In any case, we should not make the past of someone else the future of Asia.*

There are fresh and creative responses given right from the midst of the Asian experiences and life-realities. The response of the Church should insert itself into this context and should stem from its dialogue with the situation.

3. Dialogue with the situation will mean for the Church especially dialogue with other religious traditions. This is particularly important

since the trends and socio-cultural processes show how religious forces are very much active in shaping the course of events. Apart from this, religious tradition has been for many centuries an inalienable part of cultural and social experience of daily life in Asia. Nothing significant, nothing noble can be achieved in Asia without reference to our religious, spiritual and cultural traditions. This is particularly true of South Asia.

4. Our study and reflection also show the intimate connection between the local and the global. Global problems are experienced and lived in very particular and local contexts and circumstances. The emergence of global Asian perspectives depends very much on what happens at the local level. There is a danger of remaining at the level of abstractions and generalities, glossing over concrete issues confronting us at the micro-level. Hence, it is very crucial that the Church in Asia act at the local level, meet the challenges and exigencies emerging from the particular context of its existence. Only thus will the Church be able to make an effective contribution to the life and growth of an Asia in dynamic evolution.

The 1990s will be very momentous. This decade will set the spirit and orientation for the new century and determine the shape of the things to come. In spite of many turmoils and convulsions characterizing Asia, there are very auspicious signs of hope. The new century is going to be a *century of hope* for Asia. The Church is challenged to make alive in these crucial years at the turn of the century the hope which has dawned upon us in Jesus Christ. The fundamental challenge to the Church at this historical moment is to proclaim and bear witness to the Gospel at the very center and source where a New Asia is being shaped, so that it may experience life and this in abundance (cf. Jn 10:10).

Footnotes

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4. Cf. Mil Roekaerts, *The Malay Dilemma*, Pro Mundi Vita: Dossiers, Brussels, 1984.
5. Cf. Karthigesu Sivathamby, "Tamil Militants," Ponna Wignaraja and Akmal Hussain (eds.), *The Challenge in South Asia*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1989, pp. 249-255; Id., "Annex: Ethnic Relations and Nation Building in Sri Lanka: An Agenda for a Nonviolent Solution," *ibid.*, pp. 255-262.
6. Cf. Hamza Alavi, "Nationhood and the Nationalities in Pakistan," in *Economic and Political Weekly*, July 8, 1989, pp. 1527-1534; Id., "Pakistan and Islam: Ethnicity and Ideology," in Fred Halliday and Hamza Alavi (eds.), *State and Ideology in the Middle East and Pakistan*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1987; Id., "Class and State in Pakistan," in Hassan Gardezi and Jamil Rashid (eds.), *Pakistan: The Roots of Dictatorship*, Zed, London 1983.
7. Cf. S. Kamaluddin, "Prisoners in Peace. Bihari hopes of a return to Pakistan rekindled," in *Far Eastern Economic Review*, January 26, 1989, pp. 28-29; Id., "Left in Limbo, Bhutto appears to backtrack on the Biharis Issue," *ibid.*, October 19, 1989, p. 23.
8. Andre Gunder Frank, "East European Revolution of 1989. Lessons for Democratic Social Movements (and Socialists)," in *Economic and Political Weekly*, February 3, 1990, pp. 251-258; Pranab Bardhan, "Some Reflections on Premature Obituaries of Socialism," *ibid.*, pp. 259-262; Bruce W. Nelan, "The Year of the People," in *Time*, January 1, 1990, pp. 14-21. Cf. Raul Alfonsin, "The transition to democracy in the Third World," in *Third World Quarterly*, January 1986, pp. 39-50; Sanjib Baruah, "Considerations on Democratic Resurgence," in *Economic and Political Weekly*,

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 11. Cf. Bharat Wariavwalla, "Interdependence and Domestic Political Regimes: The case of the Newly Industrializing Countries," in *Alternatives*, 13 (1988), pp. 253-270.
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 13. Cf. Rajni Kothari, *Rethinking Development. In Search of Humane Alternatives*, Ajanta Publications, Delhi 1990, pp. 191-224.
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23. Cf. Marc Nerfin, in *Development Dialogue*, 1985, 1, pp. 5-25. (This paper was written on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of United Nations).
24. Cf. Walden Bello, "Confronting the Brave New World Economic Order: Toward a Southern Agenda for the 1990s," in *Alternatives 14* (1989) 135-167; Mary Kaldor, "The Global Political Economy," *ibid.*, 11 (1986) 431-460; Prabhat Patnaik, "Aspects of the World Capitalist Economy in the 1980s," in *Economic and Political Weekly*, September 2-9, 1989, pp. 2011-2014.
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28. Cf. Pran Chopra, "SAARC and the Asymmetry Issue," in Poona Wignaraja and Akmal Hussain (eds.), *The Challenge in South Asia*, op. cit., pp. 326-343.
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33. Cf. Gregory Baum, "Avoiding a 'liberal' caricature," in *Interculture* 17 (1984) pp. 49-52.
 34. R. Panikkar, "A Dialogue on Human Rights," in *Interculture* 17 (1984), pp. 78-82; Howard Berman, "Are human rights universal," *ibid.*, pp. 53-60; Masaji Chiba, "Some Questions," *ibid.*, pp. 61-62; Denis Goulet, "Some complementary remarks," *ibid.*, pp. 63-66; John Mohawk, "The Pre-existence of human rights. Its subversion by the Western State," *ibid.*, pp. 74-77.
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 36. Cf. James Davison Hunter and Stephen C. Ainlay (eds.), *Making Sense of Modern Times. Peter L. Berger and the Vision of Interpretative Sociology*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London — New York, 1986; Claude Alvarez, *Homo Faber: Technology and Culture in India, China and the West, 1500 to the Present Day*, Delhi 1979; P. Lerner and W. Schramm (eds.), *Modernization. Ten Years Later*, New York, 1974.
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 38. Cf. M.N. Srinivas, *Social Change in Modern India*, Orient Longman, Bombay 1972, pp. 42 ff.
 39. Cf. Anthony Giddens, *Sociology. A Brief but Critical Introduction*, Macmillan Education Ltd., London 1988, pp. 136 ff; Francesco F. Claver, "Science, Technology and Social Justice," in *FABC Papers* No. 51, pp. 44-54.
 40. S.N. Eisenstadt, "Modernization and Dynamics of Civilization," in *Solidarity* No. 102/103, (1985) pp.13-11.
 41. *Ibid.*
 42. M.N. Srinivas, *Social Change in Modern India*, op. cit. Cf. also Yogendra Singh, *Social Stratification and Change in India*, Manohar, Delhi 1989, pp. 91 ff; *Id.*, "Facing up to Modernity: The Web of Mystifications and Contradictions," in Iqbal Narain (ed.), *Development, Politics and Social Theory*, op. cit., pp. 36-43.
 43. Cf. Ashis Nandy, *Science, Hegemony and Violence, A Requiem for Modernity*, United Nations University, Tokyo and Oxford University Press, London 1988; Manuel Castells, "High Technology, World Development, and Structural Transformation: The Trends and the Debate," in *Alternatives*, 11 (1986) 297-343.
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45. Vincent Tsing-Song Shen, *The Chinese Cultural Space*, in *Pro Mundi Vita. Studies*, No.111, (September 1989), pp. 17-19.
 46. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
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84. These are figures of 1987 UNICEF study estimate cited in "Towards a Preliminary Viewing of Child Prostitution and Tourism in the Philippines," by the Philippines Steering Committee comprised of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines — Division of Family Ministries, GABRIELA, Commission on Violence against Women, Institute for the Protection of Children, and the Women's Resource and Research Center.

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