

Meditation at the United Nations

United Nations:



the Heart-Home
of the World-Body

Monthly Bulletin of
Sri Chinmoy Meditation at the United Nations

Vol. IX, Nos. 11-12
November/December 1981

**MEDITATION
AT THE
UNITED NATIONS**

**MONTHLY BULLETIN OF
SRI CHINMOY MEDITATION
AT THE UNITED NATIONS**

Since January, 1973, Sri Chinmoy Meditation at the United Nations has published the monthly bulletin, *Meditation at the United Nations*. This publication offers a basic introduction to meditation techniques and spirituality through questions and answers and lectures, and also reviews the Group's activities. Profits from the sale of this bulletin are donated to UNICEF.

Editor: Gail Silver

Assistant: Merri Weisbrot

For information please write:

Sri Chinmoy Meditation at the United Nations
GPO 20 — Room 1931
United Nations, New York 10017

Copyright © 1982 by Sri Chinmoy

Sri Chinmoy Meditation at the United Nations is an association of U.N. delegates, staff, NGO representatives and accredited press correspondents.

This information is presented as a service and does not necessarily represent the official views of the United Nations or its Agencies.

SRI CHINMOY MEDITATION
AT THE UNITED NATIONS

United Nations:



the Heart-Home
of the World-Body

WE BELIEVE and we hold that each man has the potentiality of reaching the Ultimate Truth. We also believe that man cannot and will not remain imperfect forever. Each man is an instrument of God. When the hour strikes, each individual soul listens to the inner dictates of God. When man listens to God, his imperfections are turned into perfections, his ignorance into knowledge, his searching mind into revealing light and his uncertain reality into all-fulfilling Divinity.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Sri Chinmoy Meditation at the United Nations is an association of U.N. delegates, staff, NGO representatives and accredited press correspondents, who believe that inner reflection and meditation can bring us in touch with the founding spirit of the United Nations and inspire renewed dedication to its ideals.

The main focus of our activities, both in New York and in Geneva, is our twice-weekly meditations, which provide an opportunity for quiet, spiritual renewal in an atmosphere reflective of the highest purposes of the world organisation. In addition, through an ongoing series of conferences and symposia, we provide forums where ambassadors, Secretariat officials and staff, religious leaders and other world-minded individuals can share and reinforce their spiritual vision for the United Nations.

The Meditation Group was founded in 1970, when interested staff members invited the distinguished spiritual leader Sri Chinmoy to conduct non-denominational meditations at New York Headquarters. Since then, the Group's membership has grown considerably and its expanded activities have been warmly received by the U.N. community.

November/December 1981

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Meeting with the President of Mexico	7
Spirituality at the United Nations	11
<i>A talk by Mr. Donald Keys</i>	
Thirty-fifth Anniversary of UNESCO	
Observed.....	26
International Thanksgiving Day	30
Classical Concert	37
International Observance of U.N. Day	38

MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT OF MEXICO

At the end of December many members of the meditation group joined Sri Chinmoy and about one hundred and fifty students from his international meditation centres around the world, in a visit to Mexico for a spiritual holiday. The trip was highlighted by a meeting with President Lopez Portillo at the presidential residence, Los Pinos, on 22 December. Sri Chinmoy presented the Mexican leader with a plaque, and the meditation group singers performed a song about Mexico which Sri Chinmoy had composed in the President's honour. The piece was arranged by French composer Olivier Grief for the occasion.

The trip also included three public races and concerts in Mazatlan and Acapulco, where Sri Chinmoy received special plaques or certificates from the Mayors.

Following are excerpts from the meeting with the President in Mexico City as well as a transcript of the song.

Sri Chinmoy: I am extremely grateful to you for having granted us the golden opportunity to come here and offer our most soulful respects. We have been here for five days and during our stay I was inspired to compose a song which expresses my most sincere appreciation and admiration for Mexico. I wish to dedicate this song to you.

The meditation group singers perform the song.

President Portillo: Bravo.

Sri Chinmoy (presenting the President with a plaque): We the members of the meditation group at the United Nations are offering this as a symbol of our oneness and gratitude.

President Portillo (as translated by the press secretary from Spanish): *Gracias*. My friends, I thank you very much for your visit, for the great gift that you have given me and for the beautiful song that is due to the inspiration of your leader. I want to state my admiration for the great inspiration in this masterpiece. It is very exciting for me to see how the name of my country turns into rhythm and melody. And though I can't truly understand all the words, I can feel that there is a very deep message stemming from the song. Perhaps for me it is an advantage not to understand the words, and I'll tell you why. When you don't understand the words, the human voice turns directly into a musical instrument. Over and above concept, over and above reason, it delivers a deep emotion which I have also felt very deeply. I believe it is a more direct, more profound, more authentic communication.

I express my admiration for the person that composed this beautiful song and for you who have interpreted it. You are really admirable. In this way you have done a work which I admire enormously and which I thank you for. I would hope that the entire world would follow your example.



Sri Chinmoy presents President Lopez Portillo with a plaque expressing his admiration for Mexico.

MEXICO

Words and Music
by Sri Chinmoy

(♩ : 126) Fast

Me - xi - co, Me - xi - co, Me - xi - co. fine

Me - - - xi - - - co!

Soft-ness, bold-ness, your beau - - - ty's

core.

Me - xi - co, Me - xi - co, Me - xi - co.

Me - - - xi - - - co!

Wis-dom-free-dom, your one-ness-lore.

Your past, pre-sent, fu - ture: all an - gel-glow!

Your vi - sion-eye a sleep - - - less

ri - ver-flow. (Sing once with repeats, once without repeats then D.C. al fine with repeat)

Mexico, Mexico, Mexico, Mexico!
Softness, boldness, your beauty's core.
Mexico, Mexico, Mexico, Mexico!
Wisdom-freedom your oneness-lore.
Your past, present, future: all angel-glow!
Your vision-eye a sleepless river-flow.

SPIRITUALITY AT THE UNITED NATIONS

At a meeting of the meditation group on 13 November 1981, Mr. Donald Keys, President of Planetary Citizens, read out a talk he delivered recently to the Dallas United Nations Association. Below are excerpts from the talk, entitled "Spirituality at the United Nations."

It is a challenge to discuss spirituality at the United Nations. It is a challenge because most people will think that the U.N. is the antithesis of spirituality. I must report, however, that I regard the United Nations as the most spiritual place in the world today. The U.N. is the first planetary focus at the human level. It is the first place that the nerve endings of all humanity join. It is the first place where all the qualities, characteristics, attributes and essences of all human groups merge and blend. It is, truly, the first temple of humanity.

Of all the contention, of all the disputes, of all the struggles, I am fully aware—much more so than bystanders, since I am in the middle of them on a nearly daily basis. That is, of course, one level of reality—but it is not the most important one. We are on the verge of the *meta*-organisation of the world—by that I mean the reorganisation of the world on a level higher than that of the participating nation-states. We have been stumbling toward this development for half a century, and of

course it is only commencing; it is not complete. We have also been moving toward it since the first day a human was born on earth, or perhaps since the earth itself was formed, four billion years ago.

A single species, the human, has indeed gained dominion over the earth, and having collapsed time and space, in communication and travel, to the speeds of sound and light, the humans have become a continuous and globe-uniting species. In this setting the nation-state is dysfunctional, and states are facing incorporation into a world being, of which they will be subsidiary organs. When such a meta-organisation occurs, there must be an organising *centre*, there must be an organising *energy*, a synthesising energy never before registered by the parts, and evoked by the coming emergence of the whole. This is true of the alignment of atoms into crystals, of cells into tissues, or of organs into a human form, and it is true of the subordinate elements of a society. Now we face the next evolutionary imperative. We are forming the world society.

The synthesising energy for the world society is focussed through the United Nations. It courses through the halls, through the meeting rooms, through the offices of the United Nations. Blessed are those who are fortunate enough to work there for they are in touch with a new reality in the process of descent and manifestation. Hundreds of thousands of applicants are turned away each year among those who want to work there—why? Basically because they have heard the sound of humanity becoming whole. Because they have sensed the new reality and have touched something of the energy of human convergence.

It is wearying, it is disappointing, it is tiring, but it is also thrilling, rewarding and meaningful. The

U.N. has its freeloaders, its empire-builders, its easy riders, and its C.I.A. and K.G.B. representatives, but it also has dedicated and inspired builders of the new world, spinning the future out of their own spirit, out of their own souls.

We have an informal network at the U.N., a humanity underground. It consists of those who are committed, aware and striving to bring the new world to birth. It consists of people in high places and in low—of the patient secretary who has been 30 years with the U.N., but lives with the vision and the spirit; of the professionals and under-secretaries and heads of departments who are acting out the imperatives that their own inner vision gives them. Some few are conscious of the sources of their inspiration; most are not. They are the Karma Yogis of our time—those whose path of spirituality is to achieve through doing, to grow through serving. They are found not only in the secretariat but also in the delegations to the U.N., among the diplomats and their staffs, and also among folks like us, representatives of non-governmental organisations around the U.N.

I want, however, in my remarks today to focus on the three major spiritual figures related to the U.N., and an artifact. Two of the figures were Secretaries-General. The third is a non-governmental person.

The best known of the three persons is, of course, Dag Hammarskjöld. The degree of the intensity of his inner life became apparent publicly after publication of his spiritual diary, *Markings*, following his death when his plane crashed in the Congo. In his briefcase, at the site of the crash, incidentally, were found an English edition of the New Testament and Psalms which was always with him when he traveled, and a copy of Martin

Buber's *I and Thou*, which he was translating into Swedish. Buber was a person with whom he felt a deep relationship.

With Hammarskjöld's temporal achievements we will not deal, except to say that he stabilised the United Nations, solidified the notion of an international civil service and independent Secretary-General free of political pressures, and originated the modern concept of U.N. peacekeeping. His personal credo was stated on Edward R. Morrow's programme, "This I Believe":

"The explanation of how man should live a life of active social service in full harmony with himself as a member of the community of the spirit, I found in the writings of those great medieval mystics for whom 'self-surrender' had been the way to self-realisation, and who, in 'singleness of mind' and 'inwardness' had found strength to say 'yes' to every demand, which the needs of their neighbours made them face, and to say 'yes' also, to every fate that life had in store for them, when they followed the call of duty, as they understood it. 'Love', that much misused and misinterpreted word, for them, meant simply an overflowing of strength with which they felt themselves filled when living in true self-oblivion. And this love found natural expressions in an unhesitant fulfilment of duty and in an unreserved acceptance of life, whatever it brought them personally of toil and suffering — or happiness.

"I know their discoveries about the laws of inner life and of action have not lost their significance."

The diary, *Markings*, was translated into English by Leif Sjöberg and W. H. Auden. Of it, Hammarskjöld had written: "These entries provide the only true profile that can be drawn If

On the path of the others
Are resting places,
Places in the sun
Where they can meet.
But this
Is your path,
And it is now,
Now that you must not fail.

Weep
If you can,
Weep,
But do not complain.
The way chose you --
And you must be thankful."

"I don't know Who or what -- put the question, I don't know when it was put. I don't even remember answering. But at some moment I did answer YES to Someone or Something -- and from that hour I was certain that existence is meaningful and that, therefore, my life, in self-surrender, had a goal.

From that moment I have known what it means not to look back', and 'to take no thought for the morrow'."

Let us now turn to the artifact -- for it was Dag Hammarskjöld's artifact. I am referring to the U.N. Meditation Room. The existence of the room was a hard-won battle -- not by Hammarskjöld, who came later, but by the "Laymen's Movement for a Christian World." The same group had worked successfully to assure that there would be a moment of prayer at the beginning and closing of each General Assembly, a tradition which is now well established.

The room was opened 14 October 1952. In 1956 a cosmic north wind, named Hammarskjold, swept in, and, gaining the stunned and somewhat uneasy cooperation of the Laymen's Movement, undertook the complete redesign of the Meditation Room. Let us turn now to Hammarskjold's own remarks about this room.

"We had, as I said, a very small space within which we sought to achieve a room of stillness. This house must have one room, one place which is dedicated to silence, dedicated to silence in the outward sense and stillness in the inner sense. We must do everything possible in creating such a room to create an atmosphere where people could really withdraw into themselves and feel the void."

I want to say just a few more words about the Meditation Room. It both gains and suffers from its position. It is one of the holiest of holies of the planet, yet it is easily accessible by the public, being located in the Visitor's Lobby. It is, thus, a great open secret. Anyone can go there at any time. It *suffers* in that delegates do not use it much precisely because of its location.

But I have to say that in some way, its talismanic quality performs quite irrespective of who uses or does not use it. When I say it is a holy of holies, I mean that it is a focus for the energies of a unitary planet, for a unified humanity, and for right relations between all the kingdoms of life. Those energies use the room and the stone like a lens, and through that spot they course through the meeting rooms, through the Secretariat, through the delegations and, by that route, throughout the world.

U Thant was the third U.N. Secretary-General. This gentle Burmese Buddhist was regarded as unremarkable, which was exactly what most major powers, particularly the U.S.S.R., wanted after the lightning bolt of Dag Hammarskjöld. It is extremely difficult and increasingly difficult to be elected Secretary-General. States would generally prefer a good housekeeper who does not initiate or innovate or otherwise threaten their equilibrium or the status quo. But U Thant's self-effacing nature belied his moral courage and inner strength. Those who voted for him were later to find themselves very surprised. He was never really understood by the West, and probably not by the communist states either. He was, however, universally trusted—with confidences, in his word, in his fairness.

I knew the man personally, and loved him. I had the pleasure of sitting with him in his home, working on statements and articles which would become history. I sensed the reverential atmosphere filled with Buddhist qualities, and knew that this Son of the East was dearly beloved of the guides and mentors of the human race. U Thant was an earnest Buddhist, and meditated at home every morning before driving to the U.N.

The two fullest statements of U Thant's beliefs and practices are contained in his talk on "The Role of Religious Convictions" at the Third International Teach-In in Toronto in 1967, and his personal statement in his memoirs, *View from the UN* (Doubleday, 1978, pp. 20-25, 453-454). Having died of cancer just after its completion, he was unable to continue to his second volume, which was to have been much more introspective and anecdotal than the memoirs devoted to his role at the U.N.

He states: "As a Buddhist, I was trained to be tolerant of everything except intolerance. I was brought up not only to develop the spirit of tolerance but also to cherish moral and spiritual qualities, especially modesty, humility, compassion and most important, to attain a certain degree of emotional equilibrium. I was taught to control my emotions through a process of concentration and meditation. Of course, being human, and not yet having reached the stage of *arhat* (enlightened being), I cannot completely 'control' my emotions."

U Thant also writes that he was greatly influenced by the writings of Albert Schweitzer and his concept of "reverence for life," and by those of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. In stating his own concept of human society, he states:

"I am always conscious of the fact that I am a member of the human race This consciousness prompts me to work for a great human synthesis which is the implicit goal of the world organisation I had the privilege of serving Long before I was appointed Secretary-General, I used to dwell at some length on the oneness of the human community."

The third figure I wish to discuss in the context of spirituality at the U.N. is not a Secretary-General, nor an official of any kind. He has, however, led meditations twice a week at the U.N. for ten years, nearly one third of the life of the Organisation. Sri Chinmoy comes from the lineage of the saints and sages of the East, in the line of and in the tradition of Ramakrishna and Aurobindo. Like them, he is a post-graduate human. In his case he awoke to that

fact when in his early teens, and spent the next twenty years perfecting his inner tools for this life at the ashram of Aurobindo in Pondicherry, India.

It is not surprising to me that such an exalted being would choose, or be asked from within, to assume responsibility for spirituality at the U.N. as part of his mission. Rather it would seem inevitable, because of what he is, and of what the U.N. represents and strives to become. If there is any place on earth which is appropriate to an Avataric being, and where he is needed, surely it is the fledgling world organisation, struggling to unify humanity and carry it to the next level of awareness. Thus we find Sri Chinmoy acting as invoker and intermediary for the vastest and most significant energies the world has yet received, with our meditation group of seventy or eighty people striving to serve as a lens and distributing agent for the light, love and purpose he brings down into our midst.

We are attempting to bring together and assist in the publication of the statements he has made at these meditations about the U.N. and its task, and about the world community, and I would like to share with you some excerpts from this increasingly significant material. Of course, he recognises the soul of the U.N. as well as its present outer manifestation. He recognises the future of the world organisation as well as its present state. He offers solace and comfort, he brings inspiration and insight, and he generates enthusiasm and expectancy for an unfolding reality.

“A spiritual Goal for the United Nations: is it practical? Without the least possible hesitation I venture to say that it is highly practical. It is not

only practical, but also practicable. Something more: it is inevitable. We have to know what the spiritual Goal for the United Nations is. Its Goal is to become ultimately the saviour of the world's imperfection, the liberator of the world's destruction and the fulfiller of the world's aspiration.

"My heart tells me that the United Nations has a divine Ideal. My soul tells me that this Ideal is going to be transformed into the supreme Reality. Soulful concern is the essence of the United Nations Ideal. Fruitful patience is the substance of the United Nations Ideal. Supernal fulfilment will be the essence of the United Nations Reality. Sempiternal perfection will be the substance of the United Nations Reality.

"Today's United Nations offers hopeful and soulful advice to mankind. Tomorrow's United Nations will offer fruitful and fulfilling peace to mankind.

"Today's United Nations feels Truth, Light and Delight in its loving heart. Tomorrow's United Nations will manifest Truth, Light and Delight with its all-embracing soul.

"My aspiring heart has a soulful message to offer to all the nations that have formed, that have made the Garland of the United Nations. The message is:

"There are two stumbling blocks: doubt and insecurity. Doubt in the mind, insecurity in the heart.

"There are two stepping stones: faith and surrender. Faith in oneself, and surrender to God's Will, conscious surrender to God's constant Will.

“The message that the soul of the United Nations offers to the world at large is for Eternity. Its message is:

“Today’s imperfect and unfulfilled man is tomorrow’s absolutely fulfilled and supremely manifested God.”

(The Garland of Nation-Souls, pp. 27-29)

“When we go deep within, we see that a seed was sown here in the earth-consciousness and that seed had boundless potentiality. God’s Light is *here* for humanity to receive on a practical level, in an earthly manner. God’s Light is *here* to illumine us. Consciously and unconsciously the world is receiving this Light from the United Nations; but the United Nations is not being recognised, and this fact is deplorable. The human beings who have become instruments to offer the Light that the soul of the United Nations has, may not be fully aware of what they are doing. When they see imperfections in others, when they see their limited capacity, at times they feel frustrated. But the Divine in each individual, in each delegate, in each representative from each individual nation, is all-wise. It *has* chosen the right place, the right instrument: the United Nations.

“. . . The United Nations is the chosen instrument of God. To be a chosen instrument of God means to be a divine messenger carrying the banner of God's Inner Vision and Outer Manifestation. One day the world will not only treasure and cherish the soul of the United Nations but also claim the soul of the United Nations as its very own with enormous pride, for this soul is all-loving, all-nourishing and all-fulfilling.”

On another occasion Sri Chinmoy stated: “Needless to say, the world is still not perfect. Since the world is not perfect, the world opinion cannot be perfect. . . . There are many on earth who find fault with the activities and the dedicated services of the United Nations. But from the spiritual point of view I wish to say that each action and each dedicated service is not a mere experiment, but an experience of God in and through the United Nations. . . . In the United Nations unity can be fulfilled through manifested multiplicity. . . . This is what we see and feel in the heart of the United Nations.

“From the spiritual point of view, the United Nations is struggling and striving for something meaningful and fruitful. What it needs, it has: the Divine Compassion. The Compassion of God has been unceasingly descending upon the United Nations.

“It is not in vain or without any purpose that the United Nations has come into existence. God's Vision has to be manifested here on earth. The suffering nations need a place for consolation; the sacrificing nations need a place for appreciation. Here in the United Nations we see the message of fulfilment. Now it is up to the world. The world,

the sleeping, unaspiring, unawakened world is not yet receiving the Light of the United Nations. There are many things that the world could get from the dedication of the United Nations; but if the world is not receptive, it is not the fault of the United Nations. God is all Compassion, He is all-giving; but if we don't want to receive His Light the way He wants to offer it, that is not His fault. The heart of this place is dedication, the soul of this place is concern, the body of this place is for the illumining expansion of human consciousness.

Sri Chinmoy had a particularly poignant and deep relationship with U Thant. I attended a performance of a play on the life of the Buddha by Sri Chinmoy that was dedicated to U Thant and performed for him. Of U Thant at his passing, Sri Chinmoy said:

“U Thant was a chosen instrument of God. U Thant was a chosen instrument of man. God gave him His Compassion-Sky to offer to man. Man gave him his suffering-sea to offer to God. Earth gave him the responsibility. Heaven knew it and saw it. Heaven gave him the authority, but unfortunately earth did not know it or did not care to know it. His heart of brotherhood was misunderstood. His life of sacrifice was not fully valued. But his vision of oneness-goal will eternally be pursued by aspiring humanity.”

Is Sri Chinmoy properly appreciated by the United Nations? Not entirely. Both Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim and Secretary-General U Thant appreciated his work and that of the meditation group. Selected delegates and many

Secretariat staff as well as some NGO representatives do. However, such overt spirituality is still a big step for many.

Spirituality at the United Nations? The U.N. is a place of contrasts and contests. Of the contrast between selfishness and sharing. Of contests between the narrow self-interest and the world community good. It is the major battle line for the future of humanity's soul and collective well-being. It is the locus for the emergence of higher values concerning humanity as a whole, and the rebirth of the race as a Planetary Entity, a Planetary Human Being. Therefore, from the inner side the wiring has been put in place, the energies of emergence are focused, the power for planetary transformation is available. It is even represented there by a conscious post-human intermediary of great power. It is too early yet to tell whether that promise will be recognised, accepted by humanity and acted upon, or scorned. But rest assured that those of us who work there with the vision before us will continue to worship and work at the altar of humanity-become-whole.

THIRTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY
OF UNESCO OBSERVED

The thirty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization was observed by the meditation group on 10 November 1981 with a programme in the Dag Hammarskjold Auditorium at U.N. Headquarters in New York. Guest speakers were Mr. Joseph A. Mehan, Chief of UNESCO's Public Information Programme in New York, and Mr. Robert Muller, Secretary of the Economic and Social Council. Excerpts from their remarks follow.



Mr. Joseph Mehan, Public Information Officer, UNESCO Liaison Office: I think that the baby pictures of UNESCO would probably show a son or

daughter of Uncle Sam look. When UNESCO was founded, there were only twenty nations in its membership, and after its first year there were forty-eight member states. It was very much a creation of Western powers. Up to its teenage years, as so many children are wont to look like their parents, I think UNESCO maintained this look. A great deal of its programme was carried out in the developed world, which was slightly underdeveloped because of the war. In the early years UNESCO's efforts were directed to restoring educational systems, the scientific community and the cultural aspects of war-ravaged countries. As happened with the whole United Nations system in the 1960s, when UNESCO was a teenager, its looks began to change. The thirty-fifth-birthday picture will show an organisation which reflects a far more global and far more diversified programme. There are now 155 member states and, needless to say, the representation of certain nations—which did not exist decades ago—is getting stronger within UNESCO. Now the fields of activity are centred in the Third World. So, it takes a birthday to make us look back and think for a moment about the process of change that has taken place within UNESCO.



Dr. Robert Muller, Secretary, ECOSOC: The reason why I was very eager to come and speak with you today is that I would like you to listen and perhaps give me answers that you have as a spiritual Master and spiritual seekers to something which I am observing on an increasing scale. I will put it under the title, "The Reading of Spiritual Signs."

I am more and more convinced that we are really surrounded by and we are part of a spiritual world that goes beyond what we can see and hear. We have entered a phase of the evolution of human life on this planet where this is becoming more and more obvious.

I once told you, and I have also written, about

how I woke up one morning and began unexpectedly, but quite naturally, to write about U Thant. I had no reason for doing it, but it came naturally and I did it. I continued to write about him—my thoughts about the basic kind of human relationships I had with him. When I arrived at the office an hour later, a colleague of mine came to me to say that I had lost a good friend—U Thant had died. Now how did that happen?

I very often have the impression that I am surrounded by the souls and spirits and thoughts and dreams of people who continue almost to guide me. I do not know what I will do tomorrow or two years from now. It will come from the outside; it will be shown to me. These messages that come from the outside have been much better for me than whatever I could dream of myself. I believe that we have to learn to read signs. It is happening here in the United Nations, where again we are becoming a spiritual ground.

INTERNATIONAL THANKSGIVING DAY

The sixth observance of International Thanksgiving Day at United Nations Headquarters was held by the meditation group on 20 November 1981. Mr. Philemon B. Dlamini, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Swaziland; Mr. Milan Kovarik, Attache, Permanent Mission of Czechoslovakia; and Mr. Kwadwo Ofosu-Benefo, U.N. Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, each spoke about the traditions of harvest and thanksgiving in their respective countries. Excerpts from their remarks follow.



Mr. Philemon B. Dlamini, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Swaziland to the United Nations: Ladies and gentlemen, it is a pleasure for me to be here today. It has been suggested that I say something about Swaziland or something about the tradition of the Reed Dance.

First and foremost, I would like to give you a little background about the way in which our country operates. Swaziland is a kingdom. We have a King, and the King rules with the Queen Mother—that is, the mother of the King. I think it will be interesting to the ladies here that ours is the only country where the right of veto belongs to the Queen Mother. The King cannot do anything if the Queen Mother says “no.”

The Reed Dance is a ceremony for the young maidens, which is held once a year in late August or early September. All the young maidens go to the nearest river and cut some reeds, which is symbolic of the fact that the young maidens are the mothers of tomorrow. As the river is the place where the reeds grow, even so these young maidens

are going to bear the children of tomorrow. They take these reeds and go to the Queen Mother's court, where there are small beehive houses with a windbreaker in front of them. The maidens repair this windbreaker with the reeds. The importance of the ceremony is that these young maidens come together to see the Queen Mother, to sit with her and learn from her. Each one of them, whether she be a princess or a commoner, joins with all the rest, and they dance together, eat together and stay together during the week-long ceremony. This is very important because it unites each and every one in the country, especially the young maidens. There is also a corresponding ceremony for the boys. I think this is why Swaziland is one of the few countries where there are no different tribes. We all speak one language; we are one tribe and one order. So this ceremony is one of the things that really brings the nation together, especially the young people.

We also have another ceremony which I would have spoken about at length if I had the time. This is the ceremony of the first fruits, which is our real thanksgiving ceremony, when the whole nation comes together at the royal court. There is dancing, feasting and so forth. This happens in December, which is summer in our country. That is when the first fruits come. We all eat together and offer thanks to God for peace and prosperity.



Mr. Milan Kovarik, Attache, Permanent Mission of Czechoslovakia to the United Nations: The concept of thanksgiving is a very traditional one in my country, and it is related particularly to the harvest. It is not a celebration late in the year, as it is here in the United States, but it takes place at the end of August. Looking back into history, we find mention of this ceremony of thanksgiving further back than written history actually reaches—back during the time which reaches us only through legends. When the Slavonic tribes occupied the present territory of Central Europe during the fourth and fifth centuries, moving from the East, they were more agriculturally oriented than the tribes that previously occupied this territory. I believe that probably the reason why the Slavic tribes prevailed over time in that particular territory was because they were farmers, whereas the previous tribes were not.

Thanksgiving is something which is closely connected in our country with the folk culture. It is a happy circumstance that even after all the

upheavals in modern history, in this century in particular, the folk customs in my country are still being preserved. There was a time, say in the early fifties, when there was a period of social change and the young people were turning toward more modern things. But it was just a transitory period, and I would say that in the recent years there has been a return to folk customs and folk art, and more awareness of traditions, of the roots of our culture.

As far as the harvest tradition or thanksgiving is concerned, it used to be celebrated in the villages towards the end of August, when the harvest was brought in. So there is no specific date. It depends on the weather and on the actual time when the harvest is collected. This tradition exists up to the present time, although there is now a tendency to institutionalise it a little more. Now it is not only a celebration which takes place in the villages, but it is also celebrated on a social and political level. In the villages it takes the form of a feast, music and dancing. Then we have celebrations on the level of the districts and the two Republics—the Czech and the Slovak Republics—and there is one central harvest celebration on the national level. This is a new development, but it is important that it is something which grew out of the traditions of the people and that even in today's world it still exists.



Mr. Kwadwo Ofosu-Benefo, Department of International Economic and Social Affairs: Thanksgiving among the Ghanians is both a personal affair with one's Maker, one's Creator, and also an affair for the whole society with political implications. At the personal level, members of a clan will meet and there will be discussions about the welfare of the people and how they have enjoyed the whole year. People will speak about how well they did with their farming or their fishing or any activity in which they engaged which brought in money.

At the communal level, in the town, the people will come together and give thanks to Mother Earth, to the rivers and streams, to the hills and mountains, and to everything that contributed to sustaining them during the year. They do this by sacrificing animals acceptable to the rivers and so on.

Then, for the whole area under a certain King or Chief, there will be a huge celebration on a certain day. All the people will gather with the Chief or King to offer thanksgiving to their gods and

goddesses. The priests and priestesses will dance and divine as to what will happen during the coming year with regard to rain, drought, the fertility of the people and so on.

This is a description of some of the celebrations observed before the advent of Christianity in Africa that still continue today. Ghanians haven't yet lost these traditions, and they are still enjoyed by all the people, especially the children, because it is an opportunity for them to eat huge, delicious meals, to dance and shout in the street and to do all sorts of things to show that they are grateful to the gods and goddesses, the priests and priestesses, their elders, their parents and so on.

So among the people of Ghana, thanksgiving is both a personal experience for each and every individual and also an experience for the whole community and the whole political organisation in the area.

CLASSICAL CONCERT

On 16 December 1981 the meditation group hosted a classical concert for members of the United Nations community, in cooperation with the Music Appreciation Society. Selections from Bach and Mozart were performed on the piano, violin and flute by Mr. Bill Paradis of Field Service Operations and his friends, professional musicians Mr. Lewis Kahn and Mr. Russell Tubbs.

INTERNATIONAL OBSERVANCE OF U.N. DAY

In conjunction with the meditation group's United Nations Day programme at U.N. Headquarters in New York, members of the Sri Chinmoy Centres again organised various activities around the world to highlight U.N. Day in 1981. Below are brief accounts of a few of these special performances, ceremonies and athletic events, which are one way the Centres bring to the public attention the importance of the United Nations principles and work.

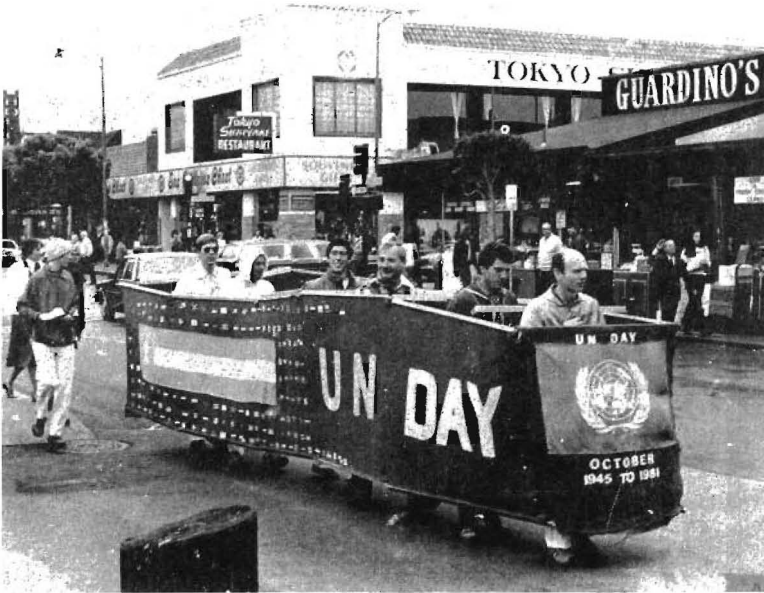
UNITED STATES AND CANADA

Boston, Massachusetts

A 36-mile relay run was held in the Boston Commons on 24 October in cooperation with the United Nations Association, which set up a booth in the Commons for the day. The relay runners carried a United Nations flag as they ran. Among those who received literature from the runners—just by chance—was Mayor White of Boston.

San Francisco, California

A large display, showing the flags of the 154 Member States of the United Nations along with two large banners which were first hung in San Francisco during the founding meetings of the United Nations, was carried on foot from Ghirardelli Square to City Hall to call attention to U.N. Day. Literature about U.N. Day was distributed over the distance of about four miles.



U.N. Day supporters carry a display of flags of the 154 Member States, bringing attention to U.N. Day in San Francisco.

Washington, D.C.

Congressman Benjamin Gilman of New York, a United States Representative to the U.N. General Assembly, met with members of the Washington, D.C. Sri Chinmoy Centre as part of a U.N. Day observance on 24 October 1981.



Congressman Benjamin Gilman receiving a U.N. Day presentation.

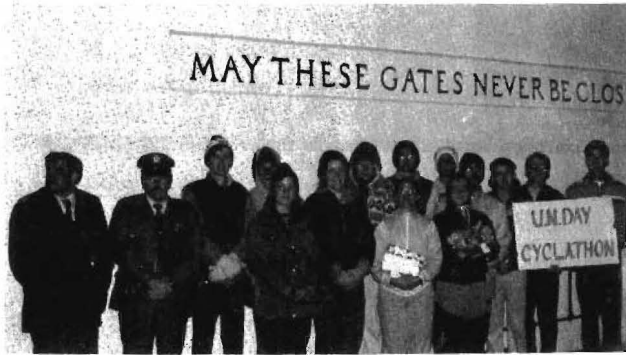
Seattle, Washington
Victoria and Vancouver, B.C. (Canada)

A group of Canadian and American cyclists from three different cities shared a joint observance of U.N. Day, beginning at 4:30 a.m. on 22 October under the International Peace Arch which sits astride the Canadian-American border at Blaine, Washington. There the cyclists exchanged letters of greeting in commemoration of U.N. Day from Mayor Charles Royer of Seattle, Mayor William D. Tindall of Victoria and Mayor Michael Harcourt of Vancouver, as well as letters from Governor John Spellman of the State of Washington and Premier William Bennett of the Province of British Columbia.

The cyclists then rode back to their respective cities, carrying the letters of greeting, as well as copies of several proclamations which they received from cities along the route.

The following day in Seattle, the letters of greeting and proclamations were presented to Roseanne Royer, wife of Mayor Charles Royer, at the city's annual U.N. Day luncheon.

The arrival of the cyclists in Victoria, B.C. on 24 October was coordinated with a 36-mile relay run through the local municipalities and a parade of local ethnic groups in their national costumes. Each of these three activities ended at 9 a.m. on U.N. Day at a flag-raising ceremony in downtown Victoria, where the letters of greeting from the American government officials were presented to Mr. Charles Barber, M.L.A., representing the Legislature of British Columbia. U.N. Day messages from the Mayors of Victoria and several other local municipalities were read out.



U.N. Day cyclists meet at the International Peace Arch at the Canadian-American border at the start of their U.N. Day cyclathon.



Members of local ethnic groups in national costumes in Victoria's U.N. Day parade.



Notables at the U.N. Day flag-raising ceremonies, from left to right: Charles Barber, M.L.A., representing the Legislature; William Tindall, Mayor of Victoria; J.D. Watts, Mayor of Oak Bay; Geoff Vantreight, Alderman from Saanich; Colin Blair, Alderman from Esquimalt; and Arnold Rannering, past President of UNA.

Mayor And Running Club At U.N. Day Celebration

Oak Bay Mayor Doug Watts and the Sri Chinmoy Running Club of Oak Bay will be participating in the celebration of United Nations Day and the commencement of the World Disarmament Week Saturday October 24 at the Inner Harbour.

The flag-raising ceremony and proclamations by Victoria Mayor Bill Tindall, along with greetings from Saanich Mayor Mel Couvelier, Oak Bay Mayor Watts and Esquimalt Mayor Hill, will take place at the flag pole at the corner of Government and Belleville streets at 9

a.m. In addition greetings will be sent by Washington Governor John Spellman and Seattle Mayor Charles Royer, and delivered by members of the International Sri Chinmoy Bicycle Relay Team.

Premier Bill Bennett and Mayor Tindall will reciprocate by sending similar greetings to Governor Spellman and

Mayor Royer, says Marjorie Macbean of the Oak Bay Sri Chinmoy Centre, coordinator of the celebration.

"To introduce more of an international flavour this year representatives of different ethnic groups will parade in national costume along the causeway, carrying their national flags to meet at the flag pole at 9 a.m.,"

she explains.

"The Sri Chinmoy Running Club, carrying a baton containing a copy of the Preamble to the United Nations Charter, will run a 36 kilometre relay which will pass through the local municipalities," Macbean adds, "thus the ideals of the United Nations will symbolically be carried to all residents in the area."

22 OCTOBER, 1981

TIMES-COLONIST

Ethnic clothes dot United Nations Day

Representatives of ethnic groups in Victoria will don national costumes Saturday for a parade along the Causeway to mark United Nations Day.

The parade is expected to arrive at the corner of Government and Belleville for the flag-raising ceremony at 9 a.m.

The international Sri Chinmoy bicycle relay team of Seattle will deliver greetings from Washington Governor John Spellman and Seattle Mayor Charles Royer.

After proclaiming the beginning of *World Disarmament Week*, Premier Bennett — or his representative — and Mayor Bill Tindall will reciprocate by sending greetings to Spellman and Royer.

The Sri Chinmoy running club will run a 36-kilometre relay through the core municipalities, carrying a baton containing a copy of the preamble to the United Nations.

The Vancouver Island Coalition for Disarmament will be among 32 international development agencies providing table displays and slide-speaker presentations in the *World Development Day* program on Saturday, at the Vic-

toria West YM-YWCA, 521 Craigflower Road.

Dr. John Conway of the University of B.C. will be the moderator for a panel discussion at 3:15 p.m. Guest speakers will be Romeo Maoni of the Canadian International Development Agency, Wes Mautsaid, B.C. director of CUSO (Canadian University Students Overseas), and Raymond Terrellon, United Nations high commissioner for refugees.

At 8 p.m. Saturday Bháichand Petal of Fiji, an officer with the UN Centre for Disarmament, will speak at Metropolitan United Church. His topic will be *Toward a Peaceful Pacific*.

Next Wednesday, Dorothy Livesay and David Sereda will be at Open Space, 510 Fort Street, at 7:30 p.m. for a benefit poetry reading and concert.

A film slide show, *Making a Killing, Canada's Arms Industry*, will be shown at 12:30 p.m. on Thursday in the Student Union Building at the University of Victoria.

The week will culminate with a disarmament display at the Hillside shopping centre on Oct. 31.



Staff photo by Rich Frahm

They pedaled to peddle a message

Four members of the Seattle team of the Sri Chinmoy Cycling Teams, a national riding organization, pedal along Everett's busy Everett Mall Way during Thursday's afternoon rush hour. They were on their way from the Peace Arch in Blaine at the Canadian border to the Seattle Center flag plaza to publicize United Nations Day, which is Saturday. Thirteen riders took turns on the approximately 125-mile journey over back roads (freeway bicycle riding is not permitted) to

Seattle. They carried messages from mayors of the towns along their route as well as from Victoria and Vancouver, British Columbia, which were presented to Mayor Charles Royer in Seattle. Riders are (front to rear) Niklas Andersson, Lesa Young, Joellen Glass and Fran Camber. Glass is from Issaquah and the others are Seattle residents. Sri Chinmoy riding teams of British Columbia met the Americans at the border to exchange U.N. day greetings.

Victoria, British Columbia, Monday, October 26, 1981

TIMES-COLONIS.



Photo by Ian McKain

United Nations flag hoisted after Saturday parade along The Causeway



State of Washington

JOHN SPELLMAN, Governor

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, United Nations Day is designated each year by the United Nations General Assembly to commemorate the founding of the organization on October 24, 1945; and

WHEREAS, on this occasion, we join with the world in reaffirming our commitment to the principles upon which the U.N. was founded; and

WHEREAS, since the founding of the United Nations 36 years ago, over 100 nations have been added to its membership; and

WHEREAS, it is clear that the power to solve the world's problems no longer lies solely in the hands of a few nations -- all nations must work together to relieve the suffering of millions; and

WHEREAS, Americans have made a great contribution to the creation and continuing work of the United Nations, and continued support for the United Nations can advance constructive goals benefiting both the United States and the world;

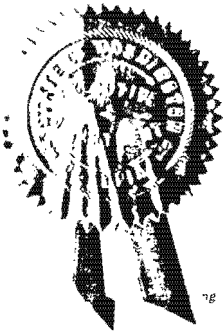
NOW, THEREFORE, I, John Spellman, Governor of the state of Washington, do hereby proclaim October 24, 1981, as

UNITED NATIONS DAY

in Washington State and urge all citizens to participate in programs and activities designed to increase understanding of the problems and potential of the United Nations.

Signed, this 13th day of October, 1981.

John Spellman
Governor



ing • Olympia, Washington 98504 • (206) 753-6780 • (Scan) 234-6780





State of Washington

JOHN SPELLMAN, Governor

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Message From the Governor

On behalf of the citizens of the state of Washington, I am pleased to extend greetings to the Honorable William Bennett, Premier, and to the people of British Columbia on the occasion of the United Nations Friendship Cyclathon.

The goal of the United Nations for peace and understanding among all peoples of the world is an ideal which we all must cherish and strive toward. This ideal is well-represented by the Sri Chinmoy Cycling Teams from British Columbia and Washington State in their exchange of tokens of international friendship during their Friendship Cyclathon. The Teams' efforts toward world peace are to be commended.

Please accept my best wishes for a successful and memorable United Nations Day.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Spellman".

John Spellman
Governor

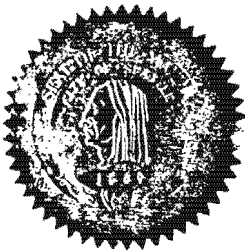
Proclamation

WHEREAS, on October 24, 1981, the world will mark the 36th anniversary of the United Nations, dedicated to the ideals of peace and human rights, to the promotion of economic and social progress, and to ensuring a greater measure of justice and freedom for all; and

WHEREAS, the City of Seattle joins in the hope and promise of a more peaceful world and the opportunity for new strides in international cooperation; and

WHEREAS, it is most proper that we set aside a time of special recognition of the need for everyone, groups and individuals alike, to participate in programs and activities designed to develop a better understanding of the problems and potentials of the United Nations and to stimulate discussion of ways to make the United Nations into a more effective organization;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, CHARLES ROYER, Mayor of the City of Seattle, do hereby proclaim October 24, 1981, as UNITED NATIONS DAY in Seattle, and urge all citizens to join in this observance with a spirit of rededication to the high truths which we in the United States hold to be self-evident, as expressed for us in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, and for all the world in the Charter of the United Nations.



Charles Royer
Charles Royer
Mayor



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

MICHAEL F. HARCOURT
MAYOR

CITY OF VANCOUVER
BRITISH COLUMBIA
V5Y 1V4

October 14th, 1981.

Mayor Charles Royer,
Office of the Mayor,
City Hall,
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON,
U. S. A.

Charles
Dear Mayor Royer:

On behalf of the people of the City of Vancouver, please accept my warm, personal greetings to you and the people of Seattle. The occasion of the United Nations 36th Anniversary on October 24th, 1981, provides a most fitting time to appreciate our countries' mutual friendship. Let us hope that the example of peace between the United States and Canada may spread to all nations.

This letter is being carried to you by cyclists from the Sri Chinmoy Cycling Team. Sri Chinmoy is the leader of meditation at the United Nations and a fitness enthusiast. Meeting at the Peace Arch, Canadian and U.S. cyclists first observed a moment of silence offering their prayers for world peace. After exchanging tokens of mutual friendship, they have cycled back to their respective communities in Vancouver, Victoria and Seattle.

May this ride inspire others in our cities to salute the work of the United Nations and to develop peace and harmony in their own arenas.

Yours truly,

Michael Harcourt,
MAYOR.



CITY OF VICTORIA
NO 1 CENTENNIAL SQUARE
BRITISH COLUMBIA
V8W 1P6

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

WILLIAM D TINDALL
MAYOR

P R O C L A M A T I O N

"UNITED NATIONS DAY"

- WHEREAS the Sri Chinmoy Running Club will commemorate "United Nations Day with a 36km relay run on October 24th, 1981; and
- WHEREAS the Sri Chinmoy Cycling Team will bring greetings and pledges of friendship from the Mayor and people of Seattle to the Mayor and people of Victoria; and
- WHEREAS this gesture of friendship provides a model for international cooperation; and
- WHEREAS the relays will terminate at a U.N. Flag-raising Ceremony at 9:00 a.m. at the Inner Harbour Flag pole; and
- WHEREAS this event will provide the residents of Greater Victoria with an opportunity to salute the work of the United Nations in its capacity as a peace-keeping agency, and as an agency concerned with the betterment of world health and the expansion of human rights:

NOW, THEREFORE, I do hereby proclaim Saturday, October 24th, 1981, as "UNITED NATIONS DAY" and the commencement of disarmament week in VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA, and urge all citizens to take cognizance of the special events arranged.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I hereunto set my hand this 19th day of October, Nineteen hundred and eighty-one.



William D. Tindall
MAYOR
CITY OF VICTORIA
BRITISH COLUMBIA

UNITED KINGDOM AND EUROPE

London, U.K.

A 7-mile race in honour of U.N. Day was held in Battersea Park, in which 110 runners participated. The awards were presented by the immediate past Director of UNA-UK.

Students of Sri Chinmoy also met with members of the United Nations Parliamentary Group at the Houses of Parliament for a U.N. Day presentation. In addition, a special U.N. Day meditation was held in the St. Faith's Chapel of Westminster Abbey. The hour session included silent meditation, musical performances and readings about the spiritual role of the United Nations.

Glasgow and Edinburgh, Scotland

Four women cyclists pedalled 50 miles from Glasgow to Edinburgh on 25 October to mark United Nations Day. In Edinburgh they distributed United Nations Day greetings to embassies and consulates in the capital.



U.N. Day cyclists in Scotland.



Scottish cyclists at the Consulate of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Switzerland, France, Federal Republic of Germany

Runners from Switzerland, France and the Federal Republic of Germany participated in a relay run between the "twin" cities of Freiburg, Germany and Besancon, France. The 230-kilometre relay started on 24 October at the Freiburg Town Hall at 2 p.m. and ended at the Besancon Town Hall at 10 a.m. the next day. Ceremonies with representatives of the Mayors of both cities were conducted at the beginning and end of the run. Each runner covered from five to fifteen miles, with over twenty runners participating. The theme of the relay was "a friendship run to symbolise unity between nations on U.N. Day."

Fribourg (Bade) - Besançon

**230 kilomètres
en courant
pour symboliser
la fraternité
entre les peuples**

Une équipe d'une vingtaine de jeunes, entre 18 et 30 ans, quitte aujourd'hui à 14 h la mairie de Fribourg (RFA) au pas de course. Demain dimanche, quelque 18 heures plus tard, ils arrivent, toujours au pas de course, devant la mairie de Besançon.

230 kilomètres de course non-stop en relais pour symboliser, à l'occasion de l'anniversaire des Nations-Unies, la fraternité entre les peuples. Qui sont ces jeunes venus d'Allemagne, de France et même de Suisse? Des garçons et des filles unis par une même recherche spirituelle, qui croient en la possibilité d'atteindre à une parfaite harmonie de l'être par un équilibre entre la vie intérieure et le dynamisme extérieur. Ils suivent en cela l'enseignement de Sri Chinmoy, philosophe, poète, artiste et musicien qui depuis 10 ans dirige un groupe de méditation au siège des Nations-Unies à New York, offrant par là la paix intérieure à tous ceux qui œuvrent pour la paix extérieure. En ce jour anniversaire des Nations-Unies, d'autres événements semblables ont lieu dans d'autres pays. Pour rappeler aux hommes qu'ils sont frères de cœur.

LE PAYS
de Fribourg, Besançon

FREIBURG-BESANCON: A 230 KILOMETRE RUN
TO SYMBOLIZE BROTHERHOOD AMONG NATIONS

Today, at 2PM, a team of about twenty young people, aged between 18 and 30, runs out of the Freiburg Townhall. Tomorrow, Sunday, they will arrive, still running, in front of the Besançon Townhall.

A 230 kilometre non-stop relay-run to symbolise brotherhood among peoples, on the day of the anniversary of the United Nations.

Who are these young people coming from Germany, France and even Switzerland ? Boys and girls who are united by the same spiritual seeking, who believe in the possibility to reach a perfect harmony of the being through a balance between the inner life and the outer dynamism.

They follow the teachings of Sri Chinmoy, a philosopher, poet, artist and musician who, for ten years, has been conducting a meditation group at the United Nations in New York, thus offering inner peace to those who are striving for outer peace.

On this anniversary day of the United Nations, other similar events are taking place in other countries. To remind men that they are brothers in heart.

(Le Pays De Franche-Comté, 24-25 October, 1981)

ABARITA DANZER
FRIEDENSGASSE 3
8002 ZURICH, SWITZERLAND