

Dubrovnik: City of Treasures Facing Destruction by War

The United Nations body UNESCO is to dispatch observers to the besieged city of Dubrovnik in Yugoslavia. The city, declared a world heritage site in 1979, faces destruction in the civil war. The observers will take stock of the damage and try to ensure protection for what remains of the most important monuments. Gemini News Service reports on the tragedy of a beautiful city caught in the crossfire of war. By Alexander Norris

Studies at the University of London. Losing it, she said, would be akin to losing Venice or Amsterdam to the ravages of war.

Dubrovnik's old sector is enclosed by one of the most perfectly preserved medieval town walls in Europe. Magnificent architectural monuments of the Gothic, Baroque and Renaissance periods all stand within a short walk from one another.

Many of its most famous Jesuit churches, for instance, are Baroque in design. The Rector's Place, built in the 15th Century, is a fine example of Renaissance architecture. The Sponza Palace, which survived the earthquake that destroyed much of the city in 1667, is an outstanding Gothic building.

Dubrovnik's architectural diversity reflects its unique history. Since its founding in the 7th Century by Roman refugees fleeing Slavic invaders to the south, Dubrovnik has variously belonged to the

Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman and Hapsburg Empires.

It has also thrived — from the 9th to the 13th Centuries — as a small, independent trading republic, later enjoying virtual independence while nominally a Venetian, a Hungarian, then a Turkish protectorate.

After its founding, Dubrovnik became a meeting place for the great Roman and Slavic cultures. Centuries later it was to become a trading crossroads between the Ottoman Empire and the West. In its heyday — from 1400 to 1800 — the city was the undisputed cultural centre of the Southern Slavs. Merchant fleets regularly set sail to Mediterranean ports, England and the Americas.

In modern Yugoslavia, Dubrovnik's fine architecture was spared the ravages of World War II. The current historical losses compound the tragedy of Dubrovnik's trapped refugees and its countless dead and wounded.

Yugoslavia is a signatory to two international conventions on the protection of cultural sites at times of war. One was signed in the Hague in 1954, the second at a UNESCO meeting in 1972.

Moreover, in recognition of its precious cultural, architectural and historical value, UNESCO declared the entire inner city of Dubrovnik a world heritage site in 1979 — a move which should have ensured its protection under the conventions.

The two UNESCO officials heading for Dubrovnik will stay for a month. After that others will continue to take their places until the conflict ends.

Salas says UNESCO is "going

there to show that those conventions (of 1954 and 1972) mean something, that they are more than just pieces of paper."

The move to send permanent observers follows a preparatory visit to Dubrovnik by a UNESCO team. It also comes on the heels of urgings by the organisation's Director-General, Federico Mayor, that all parties to the conflict ensure the city's landmarks are protected.

In late November there was some hope. While acknowledging that some important historical sites had been shelled, Salas said she was confident that no monuments within Dubrovnik's medieval walls — the borders of the official heritage site — had yet suffered "irreparable damage."

Not everyone holds an optimistic view. Bracewell is concerned that while foreigners focus their attention on the picturesque city centre, other equally precious architectural gems in the city's outskirts are being levelled with barely a peep of protest from the outside world.

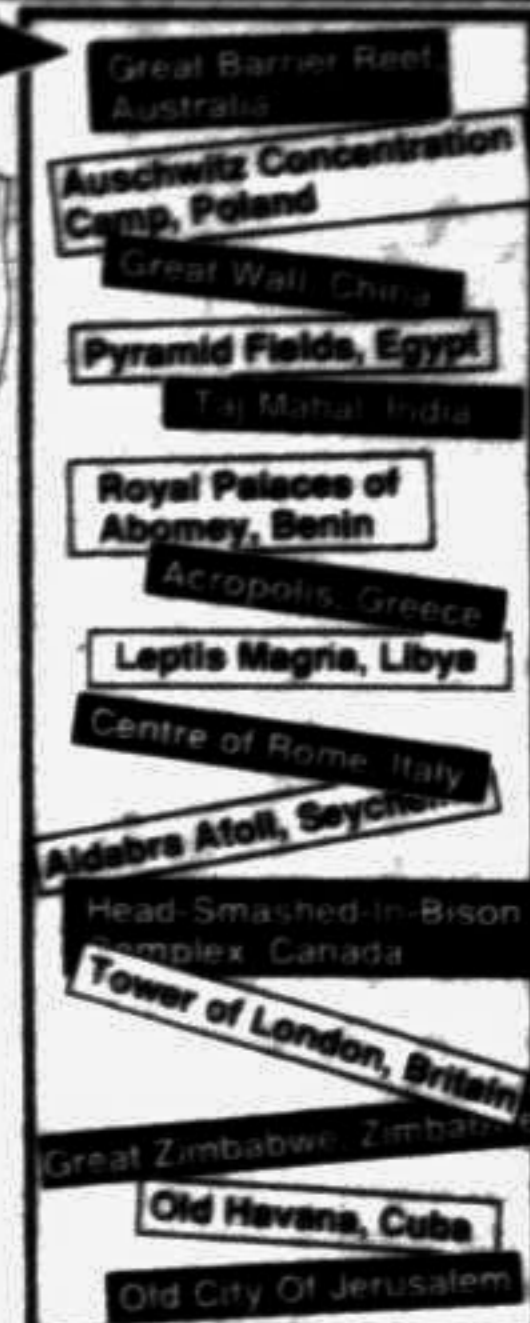
Dozens of palatial summer villas built by the city's aristocracy in the 15th and 16th Centuries in the neighbourhoods of Oruz and Lapad, she said, appear from reports to have been destroyed in fighting.

North of Dubrovnik, in the tiny village of Trsteno, Bracewell added, "a beautiful patrician village with a unique example of a Renaissance garden was hit by shelling in early October."

Within the Old City itself,

Treasure city in peril

Old City of Dubrovnik is one of 337 cultural and natural sites in World Heritage List



she said, what worries her most is that Dubrovnik's Sponza Palace, home to city archives dating back at least to the 12th Century, "could be damaged in the fighting."

The archives are replete with valuable information on Dubrovnik, the entire Baltic region and the Mediterranean — areas with which the city once traded extensively. "I think it would be easy to destroy those papers," she said. "All it would take would be one shell in the wrong place."

Recognising the importance of the archives to the history of Serbia and the entire Baltic

region, Serbian intellectuals — whose compatriots are besieging the Croat-held city — have called on the Yugoslav army to spare the Palace, and indeed the entire city.

"Buildings can be rebuilt," said Bracewell. "But documents are like lives: once they're gone, they're gone forever. Nothing can bring them back."

Critics have suggested that in the outpouring of concern for Dubrovnik's architecture, the fate of its suffering people has been all but ignored. Surprisingly, given her enthusiasm about the need to pro-

tect the city's cultural treasures, Bracewell shares this view. "It seems to be one of the few ways that we've been able to mobilise European opinion," she signed.

Indeed, Bracewell said, foreign reaction to the shelling of Dubrovnik has been much more emotive than that to the equally horrific siege of the less architecturally significant eastern city of Vukovar. "People seem more able to respond to the loss of architectural monuments than to suffering and the loss of human life."

Columbus Protestors Warm Up For the 500th

by Michele Sheaff

MORE than 300 North American Indians marched silently down the streets of Buenos Aires, a small town in southern Costa Rica, in protest over the celebration of Columbus Day. Men, women and children from Costa Rica's eight Indian peoples were reminding the world that the destruction of indigenous civilisations began 499 years ago, when Christopher Columbus landed on a Caribbean island on Oct 12, 1492.

This march was one of many and a foretaste of what is in store for the quincentenary

president of Jombrogo and executive director of the Association of Indian Peoples, said: "The history of the last 500 years can't be rewritten. We can't raise the dead. We have to live in the present. We have to determine what problems we have now, and what we can do for the future. Our problems transcend 1992, they will still exist in 93, 94, 95, indefinitely."

The Indians have a long list of grievances. Costa Rica's 30,000 Indians live on 21 reserves, which at 6.3 per cent of the national territory, represent a mere fraction of the

services, and recognition of their traditional medical practices.

They want job creation and loans to set up their own small businesses to help them rise out of their impoverished conditions. They want the Costa Rican government to ratify the 1969 Convention of the International Labour Organisation, which they call an international legal basis for aboriginal rights.

Most of all, they just want to be heard.

"No one wants to listen to us," said Fulgencia Ortiz, president of the local organisation of indigenous women in Terraba. "I just want to be treated as an equal. We want to be respected."

Villaneuva said next year the Jombrogo National Council is planning meetings and conferences with the government of Costa Rica, the Spanish embassy and various institutions. "The purpose is to listen to their point of view, and also to tell them our point of view," he said. "We want dialogue and understanding." And he said the only way they will make their voices heard is to raise them in unison.

"The feeling is that the Indian peoples are separated, divided," said Pablo Sibar, president of the Njobegoe Committee, which fought to gain natural-born status for all Costa Rican Indians. "We have to unite, the organisations must work together."

Uniting is not easy. Indian groups have split between the National Jombrogo Council and the National Commission of 500 years of Indian, Peasant and Popular resistance, loosely affiliated to the international commission of the same name.

The commission includes Indians, peasants, women, blacks, students, priests, environmentalists, union leaders and representatives from popular movements. Its purpose is to put up a united front to protest against the 500th anniversary.

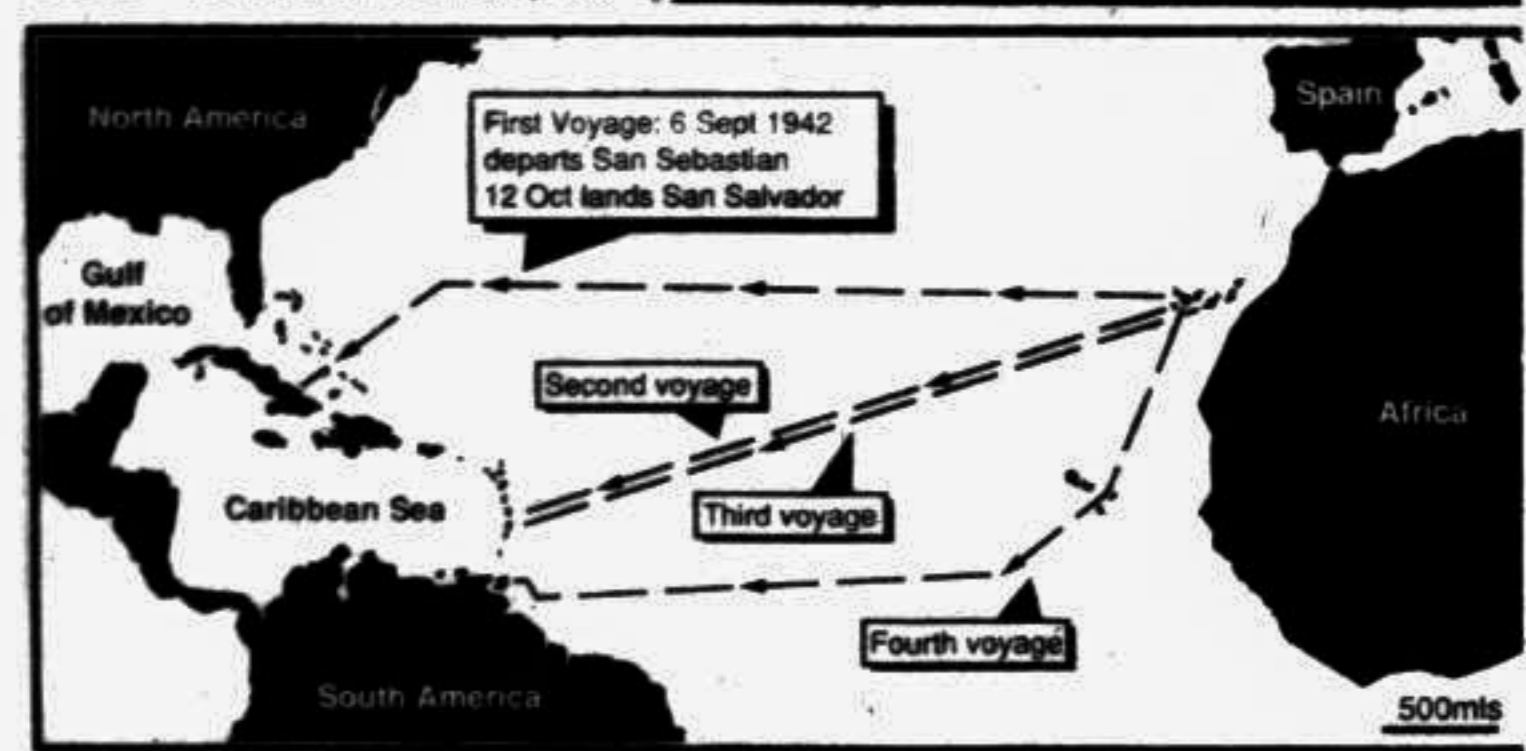
"We believe the fight and the reflection of the 500 years is not only for Indians. It's for all the sectors that have been oppressed, like peasants, blacks, women," said Esther Camac, an executive committee member of the Commission.

Jombrogo supporters said they cannot let white people speak for Indians. Said Sibar: "We can't express what a peasant feels, and by the same token, a peasant can't express what an Indian feels."

But Camac said the Commission is not trying to lead the Indians, rather to support them. She hopes Jombrogo will reconsider and participate in the commission. "Divisions debilitate fights. It's not good to be separated," she said.

500 years on...

- Columbus (c 1446-1506)**
- c 1461 Becomes sailor aged 15
- 1470 Wrecked off Cape St Vincent. Comes ashore on plank.
- 1492 Sails westwards from Canaries to find Asia
- Sept 6
- Oct 12 Island sighted, named San Salvador. Later reaches Cuba and Haiti, where Santa Maria goes aground. Returns to Europe in escort ship.
- 1493 Sails with larger fleet. Lands Dominica Is.
- 1498 Third voyage. Reaches South America.
- 1502 Fourth voyage in search of India. Explores Gulf of Mexico.
- 1506 Dies in Valladolid, Spain.



next year. The most important was in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, with an estimated 20,000 demonstrators.

Indians throughout the Americas have been organising movements to protest over plans by Spain and Latin American countries to celebrate the 500th anniversary. The Jombrogo National Council, which organised the march in Buenos Aires, was created on August 1 to unite the indigenous people of Costa Rica, and to prepare their own activities and demands for 1992.

Mariano Marquinez, a Guaynu Indian from Osa, on the southern Pacific coast, said: "Never, never will we, the Indians, agree to celebrate those 500 years. For us it means pain and suffering."

"Never could we be happy. Never could we laugh, sing, and dance to celebrate the last 500 years. They stole from us. They killed us. They took everything from us."

For many Indians, the question of next year's celebration is secondary to the ongoing fight for aboriginal rights. While the world is focussed on the 500th anniversary, they will be raising their voices and clamouring for attention to their problems.

Manuel Villaneuva, vice-

TELEPHONE tapping in Britain has reached a record level. Over 35,000 lines are believed to be tapped each year — the actual number is heavily disguised in government statistics — and new technology will shortly be able to boost the capacity further. Since 1980, the number of specialist engineers has increased by 75 per cent.

The difficulty of recognising voices has always limited the effectiveness of monitoring calls. But new voice-recognition computers will make the job increasingly easier.

The estimate of calls tapped comes from a variety of sources and from the MP for Blyden, John McWilliam who is an ex-telephone planning engineer.

In 1980, 40 engineers were employed to carry out taps authorised by the British Government. They serviced 464 warrants for the Home Secretary and the Scottish Secretary, but no figures are given for Northern Ireland, and the government has stopped revealing the number of taps authorised by the Foreign Secretary (usually about a third of the Home Secretary's total).

By 1990, the number of engineers had increased to 70 and they serviced 539 warrants.

Although the number of warrants authorised is published, the figures are meaningless since one warrant can cover a target organisation with several thousand members. It can cover member's phones at work or at home, and even friends' and relatives' homes.

Says John McWilliam: "In a democracy, people are entitled to privacy as long as they are not threatening that democracy. But there's too much complacency about the granting of warrants. Too many people have got used to getting a warrant when they want it. There's not enough scrutiny, and I think it's time there was."

Telephone tapping has become a profitable growth industry for British Telecommunications (BT). It is believed to be costing the government around \$20 million a year, and insiders estimated that by the mid-1980s around 25,000 lines were being tapped.

By the mid-90s as new high-security installation at Oswestry will make it possible for even more taps to be made by computer, without engineers having to leave the building. At present, since new technology is so unreliable, BT tappers — known as 'secret squirrels' — continue to make connections by the traditional method of entering local exchanges late at night and connecting wires. A favourite day for placing taps is Sunday when exchanges are quiet.

It is still difficult for someone to know if they are being monitored. While it is true that a tapped line is more likely to be a cleaner, more trouble-free line than an untapped one, a clumsily placed tap can warn the victim. Touching wires can cause the subscriber's phone to ring out once, but when it's answered only the dialling tone is heard.

It is believed that three out of four taps are security taps. Their effectiveness has never been revealed, but in 1990 it was stated that around 60 per cent of warrants requested by the police do not lead to arrests.

The tapping engineers work from a basement in the City. They spend most of the time away from their base,

TELEPHONE TAPPING IS NOW BIG BUSINESS IN BRITAIN

Tapping of telephones in Britain is increasing rapidly and is now a multi-million-pound business for British Telecommunications, with perhaps 25,000 lines being tapped each year. Most tapping is still carried out by so-called "secret squirrels" who enter exchanges late at night and connect wires. However, as Gemini News Service reports, plans are underway for even more taps to be made by computer. by Ken Hyder

installing taps. When working in Northern Ireland, they are given military escorts.

They also install bugs which pick up conversations in the room when the phone is not being used. They do it by purposely placing a fault on the target's line. The engineer who goes to "repair" the fault is in fact a tapper. The phone is "fixed" and the victim is none the wiser.

If the phone eventually develops a real fault, a card in the exchange tells the local engineer to refer to the coded tapper's unit for servicing.

Most calls on target lines are relayed to a secure reception centre on the 9th Floor of BT headquarters at Gresham

Street, London. Others go to a secret reception centre elsewhere in London. There are also smaller listening/taping rooms in local exchanges which serve the diplomatic community.

A team of over 100 engineers service tapped lines, connecting them to banks of tape machines, or diverting them to the offices of some of their customers, like the British secret services, customs, the diplomatic community and police where officers can listen to calls directly.

Over 100 transcribers are employed by BT to type out the taped conversations for various agencies.

This could all change when

the country's tapping network becomes digital. It will be possible to remotely intercept any individual call at the new National Network's Central Operations Unit at Oswestry and direct it to a listening centre anywhere in the country. The "secret squirrels" will no longer have to sneak into exchanges at night to install taps.

Currently telephone tapping is limited by the number of lines which can be physically tapped and the ability of the system to sift out relevant information from thousands of hours of telephone conversations.

The new digital system and

key-word computerised transcription could soon combine to allow the tapping network to become much wider.

John McWilliam believes there should be a Commons select committee with people who understand the system, who would have access to technical expertise, and have the right to check and see which taps are in place.

He pointed out that because the Foreign Secretary's warrants are no longer listed, there is less access to this information than in the past. He said: "It's as if MI6 has disappeared off the map."

He said that all international calls are acknowledged to be tapped and sampled by voice-recognition equipment looking for key words, but the full extent of domestic telephone surveillance has never been officially revealed.

Publishing the total number of lines tapped would give the whole picture he said, because sometimes it's necessary to tap say 50 lines at a business, in order to be sure of picking up the calls of one individual. But he's convinced that many innocent people are ensnared by tapping.

— GEMINI NEWS

WRITE TO MITA

Dear Mita,
Recently my husband has started drinking a lot. I really don't mind that much but he gets drunk in parties and makes a nuisance. This is very embarrassing for me and our friends. He always apologises and promises never to do it again but at the next party, behaves in the same way. Is there anyway I can stop him? Please advise.

Anonymous, Dhaka.

Dear Anonymous,
Drinking is a habit people acquire over the years. Some people can take their drinks well and some can't. Your husband has to be made aware of the pain and embarrassment he is causing his loved ones. It is also harmful to his health. So take him to a doctor, he might accept a professional advice. Try to keep him away from places or company where he might get into such situations.

Dear Mita,
I am a school teacher and therefore deal with different kinds of children everyday. Some children are so disruptive that I have to be very harsh with them which I later regret. Do you have any suggestions as to how one can deal with such children without resorting to punitive actions?

Maleka, Dhaka.

Dear Maleka,
Once in a while being strict with children is not necessarily bad. In fact, children need some sort of an authority figure. But the line between authority and punitive action is thin which we as adults often overstep. In that case, what is children in general is very important. How do you see children's behavior? Are they inherently bad and naughty, or something in their environment is forcing them to behave as they do. The best place to look for answers or solutions is the home and the family. A child is only a reflection of where he/she comes from. Sometimes parents with the best of intentions do irreparable harm to their children but many are willing to take advice if given with sincerity.

Dear Mita,
I'm 28 years of age. I have developed a writing tendency recently. I wonder if it is too late to achieve a good writing hand. It is said that to succeed in writing one needs an extraordinary imaginative power as well as a good habit of extensive reading. I follow the latter, though the habit fluctuates. Sometimes I feel an urge to read voraciously, sometimes not. Though it sounds a little absurd and over-ambitious, I desire to write in English and have a predilection for writing short stories, features and novels. I don't know how and where to begin. Could you suggest a proper way to follow and bring about my dream into fruition?

Anonymous, Middle Hailshahar, Chittagong.

Dear Anonymous,
You are on the right track. Now all you have to do is start writing. Unless you put your thoughts into words you will not know whether you can write or not. Your reading habit will also help you in improving your writing skills. There are many people who have a very vivid imagination or who can verbalize very well. But when it comes to writing they become inhibited. The difficult part is to get started, so take a pen and paper and begin right now.

Dear Mita,
My sister is more beautiful, talented and social than me. I have never been jealous of her and have always supported her whenever possible. Now she wants my help in something which is wrong and accuses me of being jealous when I refuse to cooperate. She is having an affair with a married man who is a relative. She wants to marry him and wants my help. What can I do? She is making things very difficult.

Anonymous, Chittagong.

Dear Anonymous,
Sometimes one has to take decisions which might cause pain to a loved one, but nonetheless they have to be taken. You are in such a predicament. I would advise you not to get entangled in this business because it will not come to any good. Your sister seems to be a very spoilt person who has usually got away with things because of her looks and talents. Try to discourage her if possible. If she does not listen then distance yourself. She has to be responsible for her actions.

WRITE TO MITA

Run by a trained and experienced Family and Marriage counsellor, assisted by a professional team of doctor, psychologist and lawyer, this column will answer questions relating to family, marriage, health, family laws, and social and interpersonal relationships. Please address letters to Mita, The Daily Star, GPO Box 3257 or to 28/1, Toynbee Circular Road, Motijheel, Dhaka-1000.