



98

Britannica Book of the Year



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1998 Britannica Book of the Year

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BRITANNICA BOOK OF THE YEAR

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The staff of the *Britannica Book of the Year* is pleased to present its review of the events, developments, and trends that have shaped 1997. In many ways the year was a good one, marked by peace and prosperity throughout a large part of the world and by few major natural disasters. Conflict and violence continued in central Africa, and the high-flying economies of East and Southeast Asia suffered setbacks late in the year. Great Britain experienced a particularly eventful 12 months with the election of the first Labour Party government since 1979 and the handover to China of Hong Kong, one of the last vestiges of the British Empire. The year's notable births included the cloned sheep Dolly and the first set of septuplets to be born alive in the United States. The world mourned the loss of Diana, princess of Wales, and Mother Teresa, among many others.

Special features in the yearbook discuss many of these developments. Ian Wilmut, the lead scientist in the group that produced Dolly, writes about both the science of cloning and the ethical issues that are involved. Paris-based correspondent David Buchan describes how the changing role of the French in Africa is affecting political stability on that continent, and Steven Levine of Boulder Run Research recounts the Hong Kong handover and views its implications for the future. The increasing dominance of the English language throughout the world is discussed by Gerald Knowles of Britain's University of Lancaster. Providing an overview of the year in a personal commentary is Gro Harlem Brundtland, the first woman to become prime minister of Norway and a leading figure in the political life of Europe.

In a special report Martin Marty, a prominent theologian, places the mass suicide of the Heaven's Gate followers within the general context of doomsday cults. Other features discuss the growth of gambling as a business in the United States, the increasing popularity of such "fringe" sports as snowboarding and in-line skating, the International Year of the Reef, the ongoing conflict over water rights in the Middle East and North Africa, and the 50th anniversary of Jackie Robinson's first year in major league baseball.

Children's literature receives extended coverage in this volume, and the Beanie Baby phenomenon is noted. Three photo essays reveal the worldwide popularity of tattooing, efforts by zoos to protect the Earth's most endangered animals, and the turmoil in Albania after the collapse of the nation's widespread pyramid schemes.

In addition to these special features there are, of course, the regular articles in *Britannica Book of the Year* and the rich lode of facts and figures, photos, and graphics. For the first time, the book is illustrated predominantly in full colour. I hope you find the yearbook a valuable addition to your library. If you have suggestions on how to improve it, please let us know.

David R. Calhoun, Editor

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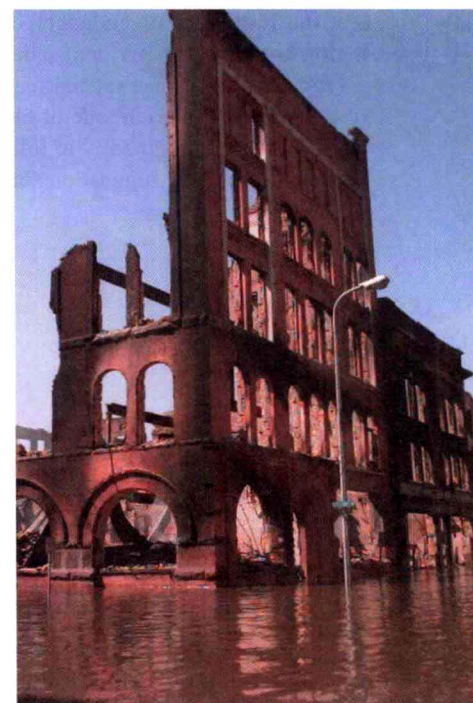
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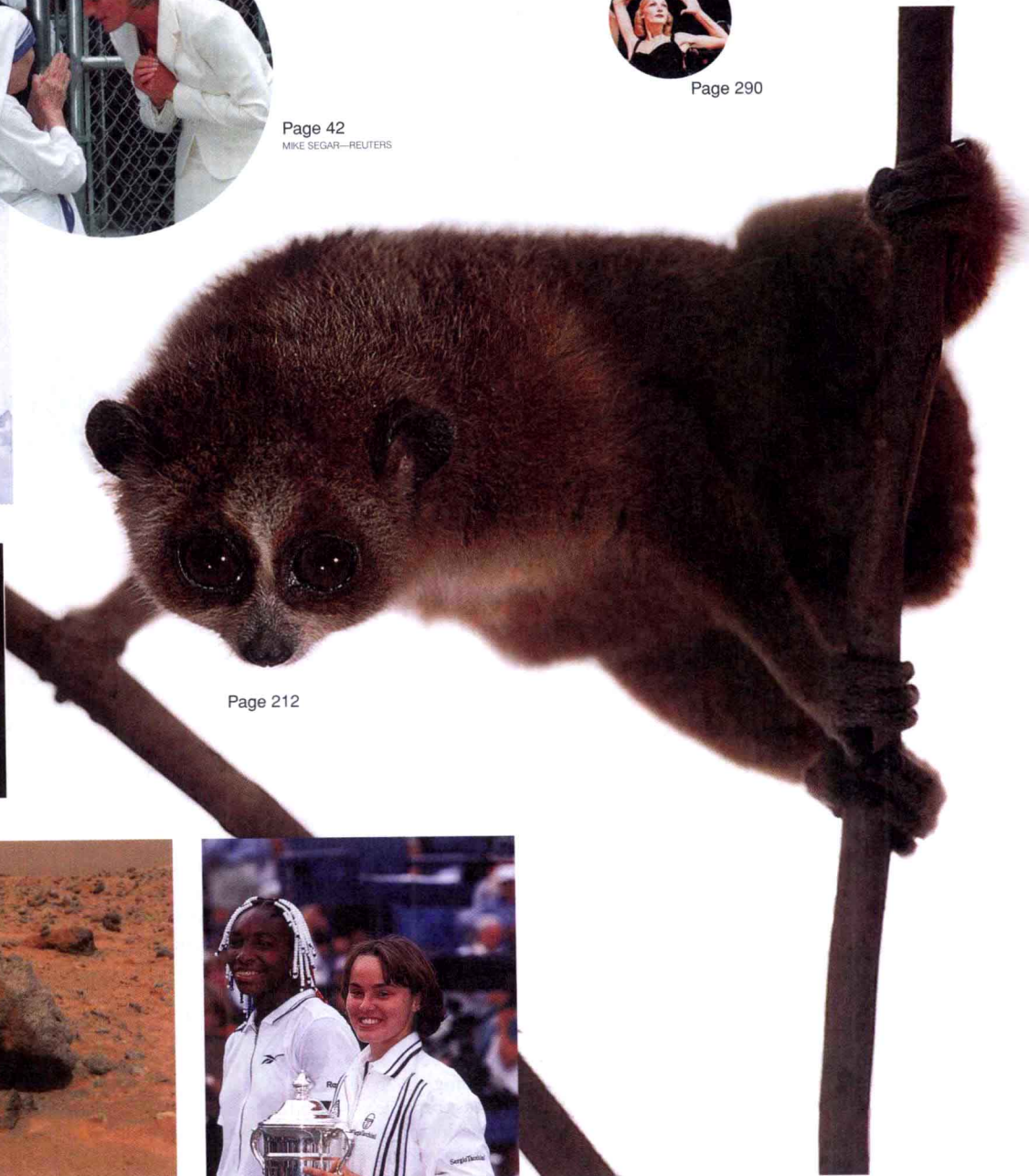
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Shifting Attitudes in a Changing World

by Gro Harlem Brundtland

Gro Harlem Brundtland is a physician who left medicine to launch a career in politics. During the time she served as prime minister of Norway (February–October 1981, 1986–89, and 1990–96), she was the dominant figure in domestic politics. She is a tireless crusader for such issues as preventive medicine, the environment, and school health. She served as chair of the 1987 UN World Commission on Environment and Development and has been the recipient of numerous awards, including the 1989 Third World Prize for Work on Environmental Issues, the 1990 Indira Gandhi Prize, and the 1992 Onassis Foundation Award. She is currently working on her memoirs.

It was once said that "almost everything in history almost never happened"—a feeling, perhaps, that many of us have had about our own lives. When we look back, we often find an awkward chain of events that escapes logic, and only by willful disregard of such complicating factors as facts will we succeed in finding anything resembling a pattern or a plan guiding us. In westernized societies, rife with information, it has become increasingly difficult to define and describe the time in which we live. We cannot possibly relate to all of the information competing for our attention, claiming to be relevant, important,

and even essential. To the question, "What happened yesterday?" there would be millions of different answers.

Having spent more than 20 years in public life, 10 of them as prime minister of Norway, I have often been called upon both to pinpoint the challenges we as a society face and to provide solutions for the best ways of tackling them. These occasions have often vied for attention with other events. There is a reason why politicians do not address the nation on the day that those in the Christian world celebrate Christmas or why American politicians do not try to compete for attention with the Super Bowl, the championship game in football. There has to be space for political messages, and there is a time and a place for everything.

During my formative years, I was accustomed to an orderly progression of events, when topics under discussion seemed much more predictable. That was several decades ago, and the discussion among family, friends, fellow students, and colleagues would be the day's most topical issues—the headline news. At that time the perception was that everyone more or less talked about the same issues. In addition, the media covered the same events, and often the news was shared worldwide. During the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, the 1967 and 1973 Middle East crises, and the frostiest years of the Cold War, eyes and ears were on alert whenever a newspaper headline was viewed or a radio heard. As the old East-West divide largely crumbled, so did the parts of the framework that defined our lives. The welcoming of formerly communist countries seeking membership in NATO and the European



São Paulo, Braz.

SEBASTIAO SALGADO—CONTACT PRESS IMAGES

Union has become less astonishing, with each step toward integration no longer necessarily a headline news item. Nowadays, international politics seems to attract less serious and sustained attention. Instead, the larger parts of populations concentrate on such events as the Olympic Games, the Super Bowl, or the World Cup in football (soccer). This phenomenon is not limited to the West, however; the British soccer team Manchester United has been virtually adopted as the home team of Singapore. In addition, more countries are establishing sports teams. Although there is nothing inherently wrong with this new focus, it has resulted in a fragmentation of the world's attention.

This was never truer than in 1997, when the rapid growth of the information industry and the number of Internet connections and E-mail subscriptions all provided us with a 24-hour-a-day avalanche of views and news, and the commercial part of that flow and overflow was growing, inspired and financed by global sales of products. As a result of this information overload, threats to the environment and public health were now perceived as common and not important enough to generate action on the national level. Threats to the environment no longer gathered the widespread attention that prompted proposals for policy changes that would enjoy sustained support over a long period of time.

Changes in our immediate physical environment were in-

creasingly driven by anonymous processes. "In my next life I want to be the stock market," quipped James Carville, the prime strategist of U.S. Pres. Bill Clinton's 1992 election campaign. We can find people to blame for the smaller accidents and even the somewhat larger accidents, but no one seems to take responsibility for the increasingly more complex forces that gradually change the configuration of our natural surroundings.

The year 1997 marked the 10th anniversary of the independent commission that I had been called upon to lead—the UN World Commission on Environment and Development, which had released the report "Our Common Future"; the fifth anniversary of the 1992 UN "Earth Summit" in Rio de Janeiro; and the summer that the UN again took stock of world developments. The latter meeting went largely unnoticed, compared with the widespread public attention devoted to the December 1997 conference of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Kyoto, Japan.

At the Kyoto conference on global warming, it became abundantly clear how complex it has become to work out international agreements relating to the environment because of the economic concerns unique to each country. It is no longer enough to try to prohibit certain activities or to reduce emissions of certain substances. The global challenges of the interlink between the environment and development increasingly bring us to the core of the economic life of states. During the late 1980s we were able, through international agreements, to make deep cuts in emissions harmful to the ozone layer.

These reductions were made possible because substitutions had been found for many of the harmful chemicals and, more important, because the harmful substances could be replaced without negative effects on employment and the economies of states.

Drawing up solutions to environmental problems has become ever more difficult because of the way that everything is connected—investment with employment and fiscal measures with wages. The globalized economy means that even measures applied to one sector in one country could affect global competition. This complexity has also posed a challenge to the way we cooperate internationally.

Although the threat of global warming has been known to the world for decades and all countries and leaders agree that we need to deal with the problem, we also know that the effects of measures, especially harsh measures taken in some countries, would be nullified if other countries pursued laissez-faire policies. That is the intrinsic nature of global warming. We find ourselves in a prisoner's dilemma. In essence, as demonstrated at Kyoto, the issue of global warming challenges how our political systems work. The foremost challenge for democracies is to gather support for policies that might require immediate sacrifices in order to avoid negative effects for future generations.

Whereas the UN panel on climate change has found that the emissions of carbon dioxide would have to be cut globally by 60% to stabilize the content of CO₂ in the atmosphere, this path is not feasible for several reasons. Such deep cuts would, in the short-term perspective, cause a breakdown of the world economy. Important and populous low- or medium-income countries are not yet willing to undertake legal commitments about their energy uses. In addition, the state of world technology would not yet permit us to make such a quantum leap.

We must, however, approach a sustainable energy use and find a solution to the threat of global warming early in the 21st century. Such a commitment would require a degree of shared vision and common responsibilities new to humanity. Success lies in the force of imaginations, among those who can forcefully reject the notion of benign neglect by envisioning what would happen if we fail to act. Although many would welcome the global-warming effect of a warmer summer, few would cheer the arrival of the resultant tropical diseases, especially where there had been none.

The positive news is that societies have managed to handle and even eliminate a series of grave threats to the human environment and human health. With that perspective, we must conclude that the 20th century has seen enormous gains in human progress, particularly when we look at the combined effect of increased educational opportunities and improved health care, hygiene, and sanitation. As we approach the millennium, we are likely to hear doomsday prophesies about how low we as a species have plunged and why the present is an uncomfortable time in which to live. Although there are hundreds of millions of poor and unfortunate people in all countries of the world, the overall global trend is one of immense human progress.

Those who have shown special interest in the environment have for a long time encountered a low level of concern among the general public. This malaise changed about 1987—the year that the Earth was voted Planet of the Year and was featured on the front page of *Time* magazine. During the late 1980s and early '90s, it seemed possible to gather high-profile attention to such long-term and complex issues as global warming, desertification, the vanishing rain forests, and the exponential growth of megacities.

The Rio "Earth Summit" was the first to be broadcast live on CNN; other networks and media also devoted widespread coverage to the event. Many perceived a growing public aware-

ness and held higher hopes that it would be possible to explain complex issues, gather political support for long-term goals, and implement internationally agreed-upon measures that would be viewed by the public at large as short-term sacrifices. Many single issues gained symbolic effect and brought many people in contact with the environmental movement. The spotted owl controversy in the U.S. was one such issue that led to heated debate between logging interests and biodiversity groups. Thereafter, public interest seemed to fade.

Unfortunately, catastrophes have frequently catapulted the environment to the centre of world attention, notably the 1978 *Amoco Cadiz* and 1989 *Exxon Valdez* oil spills and the chemical tragedies in Bhopal, India (the 1984 leakage of methyl isocyanate from a pesticide plant), and Schweizerhalle, Switz. (the 1986 explosion and fire at the Sandoz AG chemical warehouse), which had disastrous effects and led to serious legal consequences. The 1986 accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power station in the Soviet Union—the gravest of all these industrial calamities—probably contributed significantly to the collapse of the Soviet political system.

Fortunately, there were few such industrial accidents in 1997—ones that could be traced to imperfections in the development or neglect in the use of technology. A hallmark of the year was, in a sense, what did not happen, and this was a graphic illustration of the present state of development, more so than any actual and highly visible negative event. Although the great forest fires in Indonesia, where burning is an accepted practice for clearing land, attracted worldwide attention and worry, they seemed to be atypical of the problems of our time.

More important, in the future how will public issues be able to compete for attention with the private sector? Perhaps on the basis of quality. Let us hope that there is a limit to what the average person would like to know about blue jeans or a new face cream. The position of news networks to provide increased coverage of public issues offers some hope in sustaining the public interest in them.

A decade earlier the word *solidarity* was avoided by Scandinavians traveling in other industrialized countries because they feared that it might sound like a word with communist overtones and thus offend people. *Solidarity* in present-day terms means that we all stand to gain if societies are able to harness the collective resources of people regardless of economic position, family background, gender, or race. In addition, by pursuing the common interest, we often also pursue our own self-interest. Solidarity implies reciprocity; during some phases in our life, we might be in need of help and support, whereas at other times we might be in a position to offer support and help to others.

Solidarity—with the present and with future generations—is at the very core of the concept of sustainable development. We must meet the needs of our own generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. We must consider our planet to be on loan from our successors rather than being a gift from our predecessors.

When David Halberstam wrote *The Best and the Brightest* in the 1970s, the group described by the title sought to serve in the public sector or in public office attained by election or appointment. During my December 1997 visit to the United States, I was astonished to hear that by a large majority the best and brightest of today were aiming to join the private sector to make individual fortunes. Besides the possibility of wealth, why has there been such a dramatic change? Is there perhaps a sense that many of the public challenges have been resolved? If so, why is the present perceived in this way?

Never before in history have so many enjoyed such a high standard of living. In addition, general health has improved dramatically, especially in less-developed countries, where in the past 30 years life expectancy has increased by more than

one-third and the infant mortality rate has been reduced by more than one-half.

We have forgotten about the terrible living conditions of a majority of people at the dawn of the 20th century, especially in those cities and countries that today are known for their riches and splendour. Terrible diseases, hunger, and malnutrition blighted countries that are now finding overweight and high cholesterol to be their major health problems.

What then, besides environmental issues, are the main challenges we face today? On a global scale, underdevelopment, poverty, and health care capture centre stage. The vast majority of human suffering and premature death in the world is poverty-related; the cure is economic and social development.

Increased globalization has provided new opportunities for growth and progress but at the same time has posed new threats to public health. While the scourge of illegal drugs has been spreading worldwide, new infectious diseases are emerging—among them Ebola hemorrhagic fever, hantavirus, and in late December 1997 bird-to-human influenza in China—and such old diseases as cholera, anthrax, plague, and dengue, once apparently eliminated, have re-emerged. In our global society there is no health sanctuary. Solutions, like the problems, have to be global in scope.

Another primary goal is to make costly treatment available on an equitable basis. There are always people who can pay their way and people who cannot. We are in deep trouble if health is increasingly viewed as a benefit for the rich and unnecessary for the needy.

The issue of AIDS is particularly relevant. Its prevalence in some parts of Africa is astounding. While traveling through several African countries in October, I was updated on the newest data on the prognosis of that pandemic. The costs and availability of medicines, however, can make AIDS treatment affordable only to the wealthy.

We must be conscious of the dangers that threaten to widen the health gaps that already exist between the rich and the poor, males and females, and the educated and the uneducated. UN statistics reveal that in some regions of the world, boys receive more calories and vitamins than girls and fewer girls than boys live past adolescence. The education columns of these statistical compendiums reveal that fewer girls than boys enroll in secondary schools and that this gap has increased by graduation. The narrowing of gaps—within as well as between countries—must be our goal.

The 20th century has been called the century of extremes, one in which human vices reached unfathomable depths—the century of dictators and torture, the Holocaust, ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the bombings of Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima. It was, however, also a century of great progress. Many countries experienced unprecedented economic growth. In the West population growth was stabilized, which allowed social and educational systems to accommodate

demands. The situation, however, was different in the countries where population growth exceeded 3% and where it was difficult to see how a cycle of declining living standards and deteriorating environments could be averted.

Poverty, population growth, inadequate development of human resources, and insufficient public services were linked to a vicious circle in too many parts of the world. Regardless of social and economic conditions, health care for all should be available and affordable. There are no insurmountable obstacles to establishing acceptable standards throughout the world. The obstacles are located in the minds of those people who have the power to set new priorities but fail to do so and the people who can influence national budgets but shirk their duties to humankind.

During the 1990s a number of UN conferences and other international meetings addressed the environment, health, population, women, and development. These events reinforced the notion that many of our health problems are global in nature and closely linked to the economy and the environment. Such concerns, therefore, can be overcome only by intensified global cooperation and by strong, efficient, and forward-looking international institutions underpinning our common efforts.

By the turn of the century, almost one-half of humanity will live in urban areas. A failure to manage the urban infrastructure will lead to further mushrooming of settlements having insufficient access to essential facilities such as clean water, sanitation, food supplies, transportation, education, health care, and other public services. We know what that means: overcrowding and a disease pattern linked to poverty and an unhealthy environment.

The scale and scope of these health care challenges call for societal management and a change to an extremely sophisticated and forward-looking manner. Analyses across sectors are called for—and public health must be the basis for our thinking. The costs of making the wrong decisions or of not making any decisions, with the hope that the invisible hand will straighten things out, will be enormous. Presently, in all countries, successful public-health management is perhaps the most rewarding business.

Think of it. The greatest profits to society will not come from playing the stock market or downsizing the microchip. The greater good is in devising optimal solutions to problems plaguing the environment, public health, and education and in harnessing the very best of human energies.

The statement that 1997 was a year of progress might be perceived as an affront to the person who lost his or her job or who suffered for another reason, but humankind made some headway during the year—at least in education. It will never make the headlines that more millions of children went to school this morning than in 1996—but it is the most important thing that happened today.

CAROL GUZY—THE WASHINGTON POST



A nun aids an elderly woman in a facility founded by Mother Teresa. Making health care available to all is one of many public challenges.



Israelis protest the signing of the Hebron Agreement at the Western (Wailing) Wall: January 15

1

Ghanaian Kofi Annan replaces Egyptian Boutros Boutros-Ghali in the position of United Nations secretary-general.

Among those knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in the annual New Year's Day ceremony is pop musician and former Beatle Paul McCartney (see October 14).

Texaco Inc. begins paying a 10% salary increase to African-American employees in response to charges of past racial discrimination in the company.

2

Singapore's Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong leads his People's Action Party to a resounding 81-2 electoral victory over the opposition.

The *Nakhodka*, a Russian-owned tanker carrying 19 million litres (119,000 bbl) of fuel oil, breaks in two off the coast of Japan.

The Serbian Orthodox Church issues a statement supporting the opposition Zajedno group and condemning Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic; the church earlier endorsed Milosevic.

3

The Assembly of the Union, the new parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina, meets under the cochairmanship of Haris Silajdzic (a Muslim) and Boro Bosic (a Serb) and approves a Cabinet.

At the town of Sodere, representatives of 26 Somali factions meet and agree to form a National Salvation Council, a step on the road to a national government.

Two Hutu, Deogratias Bizimana and Egide Gatanazi, become the first persons in Rwanda to be found guilty

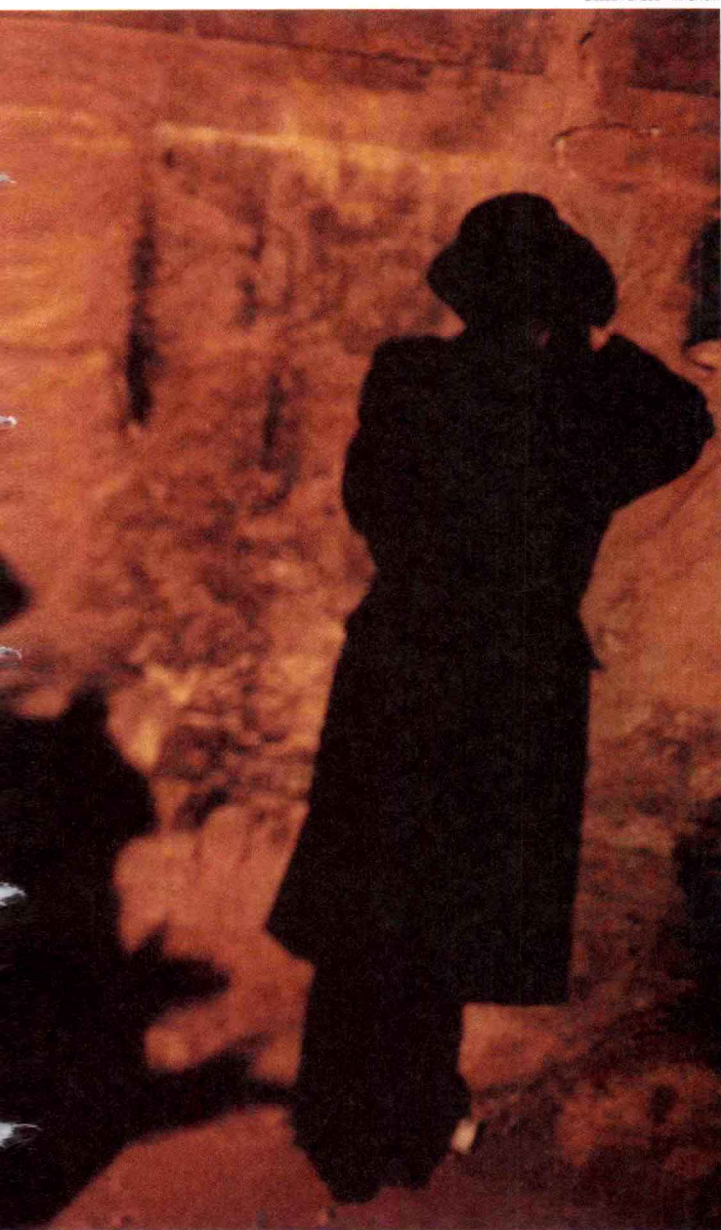
of having committed genocide during the 1994 massacres; they are sentenced to death.

Bryant Gumbel completes his last "Today" show on NBC television.

4

Der Spiegel, the German weekly news magazine, celebrates its 50th anniversary.

Storms in Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro states of Brazil on January 4-5 kill at least 65 people and leave hundreds of thousands homeless.



Henk Angenent triumphs over 16,000 other entrants in the 15th Elfstedentocht (Eleven Cities Tour), a grueling 200-km (125-mi) ice-skating race on the frozen canals in The Netherlands.

5

French soldiers kill at least 10 army mutineers and capture dozens of others as violence continues in the aftermath of the mutiny that began in Bangui, the capital of the Central African Republic, late in 1996.

It is reported that the government of Greek Cyprus has

ordered a number of Russian surface-to-air missiles; there is great concern that this could alter the delicate balance of power between the Greek and Turkish entities that divide the island.

6

The Canadian government and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police issue a formal apology to former prime minister Brian Mulroney and acknowledge that their allegations that he had received bribes were unjustified.

Widespread strikes resume in South Korea, largely in

protest against the imposition of a new labour law (see January 21).

Pakistan establishes a Council for Defence and National Security, chaired by the president; the action gives the military a formal role in Pakistani politics for the first time in recent years.

7

The U.S. Congress begins its 105th session; Newt Gingrich is reelected speaker of the House of Representatives in a close vote following allegations of ethical improprieties by Gingrich.

Apple Computer, Inc., unveils its plans for a new operating system incorporating technology from NeXT Software, Inc.

8

The ruling Grimaldi family of Monaco celebrates its 700th anniversary; the tiny principality in the western Mediterranean begins a year-long celebration.

The Intel Corp. launches its new MMX computer chip, an upgrade of the Pentium chip.

The U.S. Supreme Court begins hearing appeals from states seeking to overturn lower court rulings that would prohibit physician-assisted suicide.

9

The U.S. electoral college formally votes for the president and vice president.

Pres. Hosni Mubarak of Egypt inaugurates an \$810 million project to irrigate a large area of desert from Lake Nasser on the Nile in Upper Egypt.

A full-page letter signed by 34 cultural and entertainment personalities protesting the German government's "organized persecution" of members of the Church of Scientology is published in the *International Herald Tribune* (see January 29).

Acknowledging the "possibility of illegal activities," Volkswagen A.G. agrees to

COR MULDER—EPA/ANPI/AFP



The 15th Elfstedentocht (Eleven Cities Tour) in The Netherlands: January 4

JAN

pay \$100 million to the General Motors Corp. in partial settlement of the latter's industrial espionage suit.

10

Police in Brazil's Mato Grosso state begin a two-week program to remove 8,000–12,000 miners and loggers who are threatening the environment and the culture of the small indigenous Kathitau tribe.

Ethnic unrest continues in Burundi; in Musinga province the Tutsi-dominated army shoots dead 126 Hutu refugees returning from Tanzania.

11

Hans Werner Henze's opera *Venus and Adonis* receives its world premiere at the Bavarian State Opera, Munich.

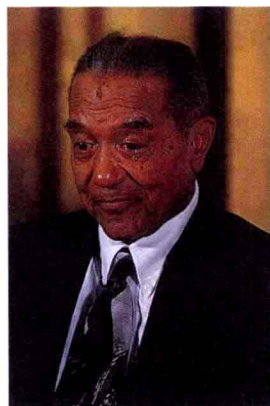
12

HAL (in full, HAL 9000, production number 3), the computer featured in Stanley Kubrick's 1968 motion picture *2001: A Space Odyssey*, is born, according to the film script, in Urbana, Ill.

Two of the four female cadets enrolled at the Citadel withdraw, saying that they have been subjected to harassment and hazing.

13

Pres. Abdala Bucaram of Ecuador visits Pres. Alberto Fujimori of Peru—the first



Medal of Honor recipient Vernon Baker: January 13

DIANA WALKER—GAMMA LIAISON

official visit by an Ecuadorian president in 150 years.

Vernon Baker becomes the first living African-American to be awarded the Medal of Honor for service in World War II.

14

Imata Kabua is elected president of the Marshall Islands by the Nitijela (legislature).

Greek archaeologists announce that they have discovered an ancient site in Athens that may have been Aristotle's Lyceum.

The U.S. space shuttle *Atlantis*, with a crew of six, docks with the Russian space station *Mir*, which has a crew of two.

15

Representatives of Israel and Palestine sign the Hebron agreement, which provides for the redeployment of Israeli troops in that West Bank city; in less than two months, however, the two sides are at odds again.

ChinaByte, an Internet service sponsored jointly by Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. and the Communist Party of China's newspaper, *People's Daily*, is launched.

16

Raytheon purchases Hughes Aircraft in a new round of consolidation of American defense companies.

The Sundance Film Festival opens in Salt Lake City, Utah; on January 26 the Grand Jury Prize for a dramatic film goes to Jonathan Nossiter's *Sunday*.

17

Friedrich St. Florian's design for a World War II memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., is selected as the winner in a nationwide contest.

The report of a formal investigation confirms allegations of sexual harassment and in-

appropriate conduct on the part of Canadian military personnel in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1993.

18

Norwegian Børge Ousland becomes the first person to ski solo across Antarctica; the 2,695-km (1,675-mi) trek, during which he pulled a 180-kg (400-lb) sled, took 64 days.

An international hot air balloon festival begins at Châteaud'Oex, Switz.

19

Petar Stoyanov of the Union of Democratic Forces is inaugurated as Bulgarian president; he takes office on January 22.

Thousands of Albanians demonstrate in Tiranë's Skanderbeg Square after a pyramid investment scheme collapses; pyramid schemes are banned by the government on January 23.

Evita is the top film in the 54th annual Golden Globe Awards ceremony in Beverly Hills, Calif., winning in three categories.

20

U.S. celebrates Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, honouring the birth (Jan. 25, 1929, Atlanta, Ga.) of the civil rights leader.

Inauguration Day: Bill Clinton is inaugurated as U.S. president for a second term in Washington, D.C.

Near Sultanpur, India, Steve Fossett abandons his effort to become the first person to fly nonstop around the world in a hot air balloon after having traveled more than 16,000 km (9,900 mi); this distance is still almost twice the previous distance record, which Fossett, a former securities broker, held.

Edith Haisman, 100, the oldest survivor of the sinking of the *Titanic* on April 14–15, 1912, dies in Southampton, Eng.; only 7 of the 705 survivors are still living (see December 19).

21

German and Czech leaders sign a joint reconciliation agreement in which both sides express regret over what happened during World War II.

South Korean Pres. Kim Young Sam meets with leaders of the main political parties and agrees to revise the controversial labour law; on January 23 the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development takes the unusual step of censuring the law (see January 6, 23).

The Swedish central Riksbank announces it will look into its wartime financial transactions with an eye to finding possible receipt of looted Nazi gold (see January 23).

22

Seven cows, the first in Germany to be discovered with "mad cow" disease, are destroyed.

Humane Society International announces a five-year, \$1 million plan for the protection of the elephant population in South Africa's Kruger National Park.

In Rio de Janeiro the Association of Coffee Producing Countries begins a two-day meeting and agrees to cut back exports for the first half of the year.

23

This is the dawning of the Age of Aquarius for many astrologers; for the first time since 1475, a number of planets, the Sun, and the Moon are aligned in a perfect six-pointed star in the first degrees of Aquarius.

Madeleine Albright is sworn in as U.S. secretary of state, the first woman to hold the job.

The Hanbo Business Group, South Korea's 14th largest conglomerate, which includes the huge Hanbo Iron and Steel Co., collapses under its debts, and bankruptcy proceedings begin (see January 21, October 22).

The government and the banking community in Switzerland agree to establish a fund to aid victims of the Holocaust and their families (see January 21).

24

Tung Chee-hwa, chief executive of the Hong Kong special administrative region, announces the membership of the Executive Council; the HKSAR assembly convenes for the first time on January 25 and elects Rita Fan as speaker.

Materials posted on the World Wide Web by researchers at Yale University prove that Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia orchestrated killings of very large numbers of people in the 1970s.

25

Hong Kong postage stamps bearing the likeness of Queen Elizabeth II are withdrawn from sale, to be replaced by a new 16-stamp set with a view of the Hong Kong waterfront.

Martina Hingis of Switzerland wins the women's com-

petition in the Australian Open in Melbourne (at 16, the youngest woman to win a grand-slam tennis tournament in 110 years); Pete Sampras wins the men's competition on January 26.

26

The Green Bay Packers defeat the New England Patriots by a score of 35-21 in Superbowl XXXI in New Orleans.

Jacob William Pasaye of Palatine, Ill., is born 92 days after his twin brother, Joshua; the span between births of twins is believed to be a record.

27

The Russian republic of Chechnya holds presidential and parliamentary elections; Aslan Maskhadov is elected president.

Physical Review Letters reports that a team of researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology led by Wolfgang Ketterle has developed an atom laser, which is similar to an optical laser but emits atoms rather than light.

Engineers begin working on a spectacular new rail tunnel under Berlin's future government quarter.

28

South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission announces that former police officers have confessed to political killings in the apartheid era and have requested amnesty from the state.

Demonstrations take place in Brussels against the Belgian government's decision to cut expenditures in order to qualify for the European single currency.

29

The Supreme Court of Pakistan rules that the dismissal of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto by the president on charges of corruption will stand.

The U.S. Department of State releases its annual survey of human rights; included in the listing of countries that have committed human rights abuses is Germany for its treatment of members of the Church of Scientology (see January 9).

30

As fighting continues between Zairean rebel forces and loyal troops, the central government accuses Uganda of having invaded its territory by sending in some 2,000 troops.

Panama and Colombia sign an agreement to establish a 600,000-sq km (230,000-sq mi) park in the Darien jungle region that will span the border of the two countries.

A tiny portrait by Rembrandt, only 11 x 6.5 cm (4.25 x 2.5 in), is sold by Sotheby's for \$2.9 million, probably the most ever paid for a painting on a per-square-centimetre basis.

31

Marc Dutroux, already charged with serious crimes in connection with the exposure of a pedophile ring in Belgium, is charged with the murder of two children.

The journal *Science* reports that researchers in the U.S. and Australia have discovered a gene linked to the most common form of glaucoma.



THE EVERETT COLLECTION

Antonio Banderas and Madonna in *Evita*: January 19

1

The new government of Gabon, headed by Prime Minister Paulin Obame-Nguéma and comprising mainly ministers from his Gabonese Democratic Party, is confirmed; the ministers had been named on January 28.

The Sixth World Winter Games open in Toronto, drawing 2,000 mentally handicapped athletes from more than 80 countries.

2

In protest over the closing of the Forges de Clabecq, the bankrupt steelworks, some 80,000 people demonstrate in Wallonia, Belg.

Jeremy Sonnenfeld, a student at the University of Nebraska, becomes the first person ever to bowl a perfect 900 (in a three-game series) sanctioned by the American Bowling Congress.

"Sculpture of Angkor and Ancient Cambodia: Millennium of Glory" opens at the Grand Palais in Paris; the exhibition will later travel to Washington, D.C., Tokyo, and Osaka, Japan.

3

Nawaz Sharif and his Pakistan Muslim League (134 seats) decisively defeat recently ousted Prime Minister

Benazir Bhutto and her Pakistan People's Party (18 seats) in legislative elections (see February 17).

The Netherlands, which has one of the most liberal drug policies in the world, signs an agreement with France

aimed at plugging drug-smuggling routes between the two countries.

4

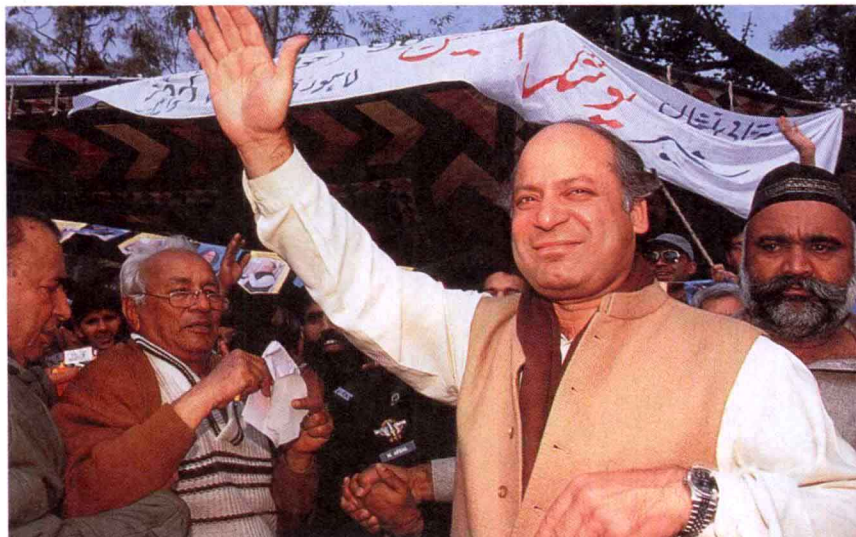
Pres. Bill Clinton delivers the annual state of the union address to the U.S. Congress; he promises more federal support for education and a balanced budget by the year 2002 (see February 6).

A jury in Santa Monica, Calif., finds O.J. Simpson liable in the wrongful death of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ron Goldman and instructs him to pay \$8.5 million in compensation (see February 10).

Two Israeli army helicopters collide over northern Israel, killing 73 military personnel; the air disaster is the country's worst ever.



Funeral for Deng Xiaoping, who died on February 19



A triumphant Nawaz Sharif: February 3



Cigar is named North America's Horse of the Year (1996) for the second straight year at the Eclipse Awards in Bal Harbour, Fla.; he is the first horse to receive the award in two successive years since Affirmed did so in 1978 and 1979.

5

The government of Switzerland approves the establishment of a fund to compensate victims of the Holocaust.

Morgan Stanley, a large U.S. investment bank, and Dean Witter, a retail broker that owns the Discover credit card, announce that they will merge to form a company valued at \$24 billion.

With a pair of T-shirts, Stephen Hawking settles a

bet he lost with fellow physicists John Preskill and Kip Thorne after it is proved to the satisfaction of all three

DANIEL STAFFE—REUTERS



One of hundreds of sea lions affected by an oil spill in Uruguay: February 8

that the laws of physics do allow for the existence of a naked singularity.

6

President Clinton submits the 1998 U.S. budget to Congress; it outlines a balanced budget by 2002.

Riots break out in the southern suburbs of Johannesburg, S.Af., mostly involving the country's Coloured (*i.e.*, mixed-race) population.

The German government announces that unemployment in the country has reached a seasonally unadjusted rate of 12.2%, the highest figure since 1933.

7

Haitian Pres. René Préval distributes some 1,000 ha (2,500 ac) of land to 1,600 peasant farmers, a rare occurrence in Haitian history.

The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service reports that the number of illegal immigrants in the U.S. had reached five million by October 1996.

8

The Panamanian-flag tanker *San Jorge* runs aground 32 km (20 mi) south of Punta del Este, Uruguay, spilling much of its cargo into the sea; by mid-March some

1,500 sea lions have died as a result of the spill.

With a victory over the Boston Bruins, Detroit Red Wings coach Scotty Bowman becomes the first National Hockey League coach to win 1,000 games.

9

Vice Pres. Rosalia Arteaga of Ecuador is sworn in as president—the first woman to hold the position—following the dismissal from office of Abdalá Bucaram Ortíz, called “El Loco” for his unorthodox behavior; she resigns two days later (*see* February 12).

For the first time, France's far-right National Front wins a municipal election with an absolute majority, and its candidate, Catherine Mégret, becomes mayor of Vitrolles, near Marseille (*see* March 29).

10

The jury in the civil trial of O.J. Simpson calls for him to pay punitive damages of \$25 million in addition to the compensatory damages of \$8.5 million (*see* February 4).

Jury selection for the retrial of Heidi Fleiss, “the Hollywood madam,” begins in Los Angeles.

At the annual Milia multimedia fair in Cannes, France

(February 8–12), Peter Gabriel's CD *Eve* is awarded the Milia d'Or grand prize.

11

The Media Research Center concludes its survey of the new American television rating system and judges it a failure in providing guidance to parents about suitability of programming for children.

Parsifal Di Casa Netzer ("Pa"), a champion standard schnauzer owned by Rita Holloway and Gabrio Del Torre, wins the best-in-show honours at the 121st annual Westminster Kennel Club Show in New York City.

Diane Wood, a nurse from Shrewsbury, Mass., wins \$1 million, the largest payout from a bingo game in history.

12

Fabián Alarcón Rivera is sworn in as interim president of Ecuador following the dismissal of President Bucaram and a week of constitutional chaos (see February 9).

A proposal for a constitutional amendment setting term limits for members of the U.S. Congress is defeated in the House of Representatives, which effectively ends a movement that had begun in the 1980s.

The reward being offered by Iran's 15th Khordad Foundation for the assassination of author Salman Rushdie is raised another \$500,000 to a total of \$2,500,000.

Japan's Institute of Space and Astronautical Science launches the MUSES-B (re-named HALCA) satellite radio telescope, described as one million times more powerful than the U.S.'s Hubble telescope and the largest astronomical "instrument" ever created.

Moroccan runner Hicham al-Guerrouj breaks the indoor record for the mile with a time of 3:48.45; the previous record of 3:49.28, set by Irishman Eamonn Coghlan, had stood for 14 years and was the sport's oldest record.

13

Sinqobili Mabhena, a 23-year-old native of Bulawayo, Zimb., is elected *nduna* (chief) of the Ndebele tribe, the first women to hold that position.

Former representative Bill Richardson from New Mexico is sworn in as U.S. ambassador to the UN.

The Dow Jones industrial average, continuing its fastest rise ever, tops 7,000 points for the first time.

The New England Journal of Medicine reports that a study by two University of Toronto researchers indicates that the risk of a traffic accident is four to five times greater for persons who use car phones—virtually the same risk as driving drunk.

14

A chain of 220,000 people extending more than 96 km (60 mi) in Germany protests planned reductions in government coal subsidies.

It is announced in Sydney that an Australian farmer accidentally discovered a 220 million-year-old fossil of what is believed to be a new type of amphibian on a rock that he was using to landscape his garden.

15

At a conference in Geneva, 67 countries agree to open their telecommunications markets to all competition.

Tara Lipinski, 14, in competition in Nashville, Tenn., becomes the youngest American figure-skating champion in history; in Lausanne, Switz., on March 22, she goes on to become the youngest woman to win a world championship.

16

Jeff Gordon, driving a Chevrolet sponsored by DuPont Refinishes, wins the 39th annual running of the Daytona 500 NASCAR auto race in Florida.

The Laurence Olivier Theatre Awards for the 1996 season are announced in London; *Tommy* (outstanding musical production) and *Stanley* (best new play) take many of the top prizes.

17

Sharif is formally elected and sworn in as Pakistan's prime minister (see February 3).

Christophe Auguin, a former high-school teacher from Normandy, wins the Vendée Globe sailing race and sets a record for a solo round-the-world sail: 105 days 20 hours 31 minutes.

The Virginia House of Delegates votes unanimously to retire the state's official song, "Carry Me Back to Old Virginny" (written by James A. Bland, a black composer and minstrel), which has been criticized for text that glorifies slavery.

Blackjack (also known as variety QA 194), the darkest tulip ever bred, is presented by its developers in Bovenkarspel, Neth.

18

Author E.L. Konigsberg wins the Newbery Medal and illustrator David Wisniewski receives the Caldecott Medal in the annual awards for children's literature from the Association for Library Service to Children.

A mud slide strikes two mountain villages southeast of Lima, Peru; at least 300 people are feared dead.

The outlawed Confederation of Trade Unions begins a series of nationwide strikes in South Korea.

19

China's paramount leader, Deng Xiaoping, who introduced market-opening economic reforms in 1978, dies in Beijing.

Gen. Jesús Gutiérrez Rebollo, the head of Mexico's National Drug Agency, is arrested on charges of being in the pay of a leading drug

trafficker; Oscar Malherbe de León, leader of the "Gulf Cartel" is arrested on February 26.

DESY, the German Electron Synchrotron in Hamburg, Ger., reports that two teams may have discovered the hybrid "leptoquark," which possesses the characteristics of both leptons and quarks and would be the heaviest known subatomic particle.

20

Frank Williams, a Formula One team chief, and five others go on trial for manslaughter in the 1994 death of Brazilian driver Ayrton Senna.

The spacecraft Galileo makes its closest pass to Jupiter's moon Europa; photos taken seem to show large blocks of ice and suggest a large subsurface ocean.

An eight-member panel convened by the U.S. National Institutes of Health reports that some seriously ill patients may derive therapeutic benefits from smoking marijuana.

21

Serbian Democratic Party leader Zoran Djindjic takes over as mayor of Belgrade; this is the highest post to be won by the opposition to Serbian Pres. Slobodan Milosevic and his Socialist Party.

Jeanne Calment of Arles, France, believed to be the world's oldest person, celebrates her 122nd birthday; she dies in August 1997, and the *Guinness Book of Records* finds that Marie-Louise Febronie Meilleur, 116, of Quebec is now the oldest person.

22

Brasil Raça ("Brazil Race"), a new magazine for that country's blacks, is launched; the 250,000 copies of the first issue sell out in two days.

The third annual Screen Actors Guild Awards ceremony takes place in Los Angeles;