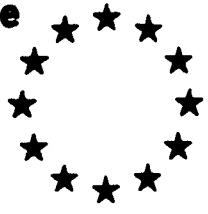


502
97/195

Council of Europe
Conseil de l'Europe



International Parliament of Writers

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe
Congrès des pouvoirs locaux et régionaux de l'Europe



Strasbourg, November 1996
s:\delai.cm\pie\actes.eng

Villes R (3) 1

FIRST CONGRESS OF CITIES OF ASYLUM

**Organised jointly by the International Parliament
of Writers (I.P.W.) and the CLRAE**

Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 21-22 March 1996

Proceedings

CONTENTS

Opening speeches

Mr Pierre Henri IMBERT,
Director of Human Rights at the Council of Europe

Mr Christian SALMON,
Secretary General of the
International Parliament of Writers (I.P.W.)

Mr Karl Christian ZAHN,
President of the Working Group of the CLRAE
"Local Democracy: a Civic Project"

Mrs Cathérine TRAUTMANN,
Mayor of Strasbourg (France)

Mr René GARREC,
President of the Regional Council of Lower Normandy

Reports

Mr Fernando MARTINEZ-LOPEZ,
Rapporteur of the CLRAE
The Charter of Cities of Asylum

Mr Jacques DERRIDA,
Vice-President of the I.P.W.
Cosmopolitans of the world, unite!

Mr Juan GONZALES POSADA
University of Valladolid (Spain)
Problems and perspectives, the experience of Valladolid

Personal accounts

Mr Mohammed MAGANI, writer in residence in Berlin

Mr Amine ZAOUI, writer in residence in Caen

Appendices

The Charter of Cities of Asylum

Conclusions and Decisions of the First Congress of Cities of Asylum

Model of agreement between Cities of Asylum and the I.P.W.

OPENING SPEECHES

1. Mr Pierre Henri **IMBERT**
2. Mr Christian **SALMON**
3. Mr Karl Christian **ZAHN**
4. Mrs Cahtérine **TRAUTMANN**
5. Mr René **GARREC**

•
•

0

•
•

1. Mr Pierre-Henri IMBERT¹

It is due to the absence of others that I have the honour and the pleasure of opening this first Congress of Cities of Asylum. It is in fact the Secretary General of the Council of Europe or the Deputy Secretary General who should be addressing you and not myself. However, their absence is in some way symbolic, for at this very moment Mr TARSchYS is in Sarajevo and Mr LEUPRECHT is busy opening the Second European Media Forum against racism and intolerance. I trust you will also agree that it is significant that it should be the Director of Human Rights who, on account of their absence, has been called upon to speak to you today.

I would like to share my personal thoughts on this subject with you. To my mind, cities have, over the centuries, provided all the necessary ingredients for the creation and establishment of what we call human rights: a community, citizens and democracy. However, that it should be necessary, at the dawn of the 21st century, to establish a network of asylum cities to protect writers whose lives are under threat is an only too cruel reminder of the extreme fragility of human rights, which, after all, are what make people human - a never-ending process.

Far from being a cause for dismay, this should encourage us to take action and give us a sense of commitment. The Council of Europe has understood this. The joint initiative of the International Parliament of Writers and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe is a perfect illustration of the principles and values underlying the Council of Europe's work: human rights, democracy, the rule of law and, above all, respect for the dignity of each human being. It was therefore only natural that in 1994 the Secretary General should accede to the request from the President of the International Parliament of Writers, Salman Rushdie, that the Council of Europe set up a Network and draft a Cities of Asylum Agreement in co-operation with the CLRAE.

This joint initiative is also a brave experiment, carried out at the very heart of our community: in cities. A growing number of partners are taking part in the experiment: 10 member cities are currently providing hospitality to 8 writers, some 20 other cities are about to join the network and a further 20 or so cities have applied for membership.

Strasbourg was the first city to launch the scheme, in 1993, conferring on Salman Rushdie the freedom of the city and offering hospitality to two writers whose lives were in danger. We are all grateful to Mrs Catherine TRAUTMANN for her foresight and courage in paving the way for others.

Implementation of the Cities of Asylum Agreement is not a compulsory procedure. It depends solely on the spontaneous commitment of the citizens and their elected representatives.

¹ Director of Human Rights at the Council of Europe.

This is the spirit underlying the genuine "network" that is gradually beginning to take shape. The effort required is not only financial, and it is largely compensated for by the satisfaction that cities derive from the operation; it is generally considered to be a privilege to participate in the scheme, for in so doing cities reveal their true nature: islands in the "archipelago" (to use a very apt expression from the Charter) of imagination and liberty.

The protection afforded to writers appears to me to be a shining example of the universality of human rights. Through their acts, cities prove that there are limits to the strictly territorial application of human rights. The true frontier of human rights is not geographical: it is marked out by indifference, exclusion and hatred of one's fellow human beings.

Providing asylum is a way of breaking through such frontiers: it is the hole in the wall that allows human rights and fundamental freedoms to circulate.

Asylum cities are the living example of the fact that totally impermeable frontiers are incompatible with the principles and values without which we consider there can be no humanity.

First and foremost they preserve the physical life of writers. The Charter stresses the new threat facing writers: it is no longer solely the object of literary creation itself which is under threat but writers in person who are persecuted and whose lives are threatened.

One might even go as far to say that this new form of censorship is aimed at the faculty of imagination as a potentially creative process.

The faculties of imagination and speech are those which distinguish human beings from animals. If they are destroyed there will be a return to the jungle. That is why the silence of writers and creative artists should always be considered a tragedy. The silence imposed by violence or terror is unacceptable; we are here today to make that quite clear. Let us not forget that such silence can take the diabolical shape of the silence that some writers have ended up imposing on themselves when confronted with the unspeakable, the unbearable vision of evil in mankind. In 1947, in his book "La folie du jour", Maurice Blanchot removed the word "récit" (narrative) from all of his works written after the holocaust. After Auschwitz he claimed he would "never again write a narrative". And we are also haunted by the memory of those who, sometimes at a very late stage, decided to break off their connection with life: Primo Lévi, Paul Celan, Jean Améry and so many others.

This may have seemed to be past history but after the events that have taken place and continue to take place in the Balkans and the Caucasus, it is to be feared that some authors will once again fall silent.

It is particularly striking that these events have been marked, like a *via dolorosa*, by the destruction of cities: Vukovar, Sarajevo, Grozny and many others. In contrast, asylum cities no longer seem to be an indication of a decline in humanity but a cry of protest and a source of hope. By a simple but courageous gesture, they challenge political regimes which believe

themselves strong because they banish a writer from his or her homeland.

During the last world war the enemy was at quite a loss when the whole population of a small European country turned out in the streets with the yellow star of David clearly displayed on their chests. In the same way I trust the Network of Asylum Cities will soon include 100, if not 500 or 1 000 European cities and that it will spread across the earth like a trail of dust. I welcome here today the representatives of towns such as Sao Paulo, Rio, Montreal and Quebec. The International Parliament of Writers should be congratulated and thanked for these first encouraging signs of its success.

Many other comments could be made and lessons learnt from this inspiring initiative. I am thinking, for example, of cities as places where there is pluralism and a diversity of experience, of friendship as the link between individuals and between peoples, of the reconciliation of writers and intellectuals with cities and politics, of the relationship between thoughts and actions, and so on. However, I do not wish to bore you, for you are far more experienced in these fields than myself. Much of the recent work carried out by the CLRAE (particularly in the wake of the Council of Europe's campaign and action plan against racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance) is based on several of these themes, eg: "at the heart of democracy: towns and cities" and "democratic towns and cities: a project for citizenship".

The Council of Europe is currently undergoing radical changes: the number of members is increasing and there are new developments in its nature and role. Methods, practices and structures will have to be reviewed, abandoned or, on the contrary, introduced. The Network of Asylum Cities could serve as a sort of signpost, indicating the new avenues to be explored by the Council of Europe. In this context, the protection given to writers from other continents is an argument against a Europe that is closed to the outside world, hiding behind barriers which are even more insurmountable than in the past.

Europe is as much a culture as a continent - the geographical limits of the latter are at all events uncertain. If it ceases to be an open land, a land of asylum, it will betray itself. The events in the Balkans and the Caucasus, to which I have already referred, have shown that fear, cowardice and hypocrisy can still dominate European politics, even when the most fundamental values, which Europe claims to safeguard and promote, are at stake. The Network of Asylum Cities proves that such feelings are neither unique nor ineluctable. Sometimes I find myself dreaming that in a not too distant future Sarajevo will become a city of asylum; dare I say a "genuine city of asylum".

Meanwhile, we must get down to work and I will not take up any more of your time.

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for your attention and your patience.

2. Mr Christian SALMON²

Ladies and gentlemen, the International Parliament of Writers, on behalf of whom I am addressing you today, must seem a rather strange institution to you who hail from genuine democratically elected parliaments, with real assembly chambers, a legislative domain, a salary for members and even immunity as legitimate protection against lawsuits and pressure. Our parliament, when you come to think of it, is rather laughable in comparison: no power, no building, no parliamentary clerk and no financial resources of any significance; the only territories we represent are those described by Salman Rushdie in *A Declaration of Independence*, a text which serves as our charter:

the finite and frontiers country of observable reality and everyday life, the boundless kingdom of imagination, the half-lost land of memory, the federations of the heart which are both hot and cold, the united states of the mind (calm and turbulent, broad and narrow, ordered and deranged), the celestial and infernal nations of desire, and - perhaps the most important of all our habitations - the unfettered republic of the tongue.

These are the countries which our parliament members might represent, and the latter have no legitimacy other than on account of the fact that they were forced to flee; their mandate, they receive not from electors who have placed their faith in them but from censors intolerant of their writings. It is indeed a strange parliament, one in which the Speaker does not enjoy even the basic rights of an ordinary citizen. A parliament of ill-fortune convened hurriedly one sombre summer in 1993 following the murder of Tahar Djaout, its sole watchword being the right to literature. Two years ago with more than 300 writers, including Toni Morrison, Wole Soyinka, Breyten Breytenbach, Bei Dao, Carlos Fuentes, Margaret Atwood, Edouard Glissant, Pierre Bourdieu, Jacques Derrida, John Coetzee, Lars Gustafsson, and a good many others, we took the initiative of calling for the creation of an International Parliament of Writers. By launching this appeal, we were acknowledging a situation unprecedented in the history of literature. During the first six months of 1993, the number of writers persecuted, imprisoned or murdered throughout the world reached record levels, totalling more than a thousand. Since then the situation has continued to get worse: artists, writers and intellectuals have become the preferred target of the fundamentalists in the same way as diplomats or police officers. Hundreds of writers today, be they Algerian, Iranian, Egyptian, Turkish, Nigerian or Chinese, are faced with the awful dilemma which Tahar Djaout had barely the time to give voice to shortly before his execution: "If you speak you die. If you remain silent you die. So speak and die." In its two years of existence, the Parliament of Writers has seen a number of its members arrested such as the Nigerian Nobel prize winner Soyinka, the Chinese poet Bei Dao, the Congolese novelist Sony Labou Tansi, and others facing legal proceedings such as Yachar Kemal, or stabbed in the middle of the street like Naguib Mahfouz, not to mention the atrocious hanging of Ken Saro Wiwa, executed by the Nigerian dictatorship. On his first visit to Strasbourg two years ago, Salman Rushdie described

² Secretary General of the International Parliament of Writers.

the murder of writers as a new version of international terrorism, adding that if this sort of terrorism was not combated it would take root and spread. That is precisely what has happened. Seven years after that fatal day on 14 February 1989, when the passing of a death sentence on a novelist seemed such a terrible anachronism, the organised execution of the Algerian intelligentsia has come to be an almost commonplace phenomenon. And seven years of *fatwas* have seen a seven-fold increase in *fatwas*!

Since the fall of the Berlin wall, censorship has no longer been the exclusive preserve of dictatorships. It has somehow taken on a personalised form, detached from the state, taking root in society and becoming a frame of mind. It not only affects books; it is targeted at authors. And this intolerance is gaining ground, not only in the parts of the world where Islamic fundamentalism holds sway but also here in Europe and in the United States where a new moral order is attempting to impose on writers and artists its reasoning, its criteria and its limits. The Islamic fundamentalist commandos, whether they are Algerian, Afghan or Iranian, are closer than is sometimes thought in ideology, methods and pathology to the noisy advocates of the moral order in the United States and the murderous lobbies of the anti-abortion campaign. Not so long ago in France, following violent attacks on the Scorsese film, we heard a bishop declare that the figure of Christ was out of bounds when it came to art. As if centuries of history of painting did not exist. (This prelate has recently been elected to the French Academy.) Adopted in the face of pressure from far-right organisations supporting the family, the new criminal code in force since 1994 legitimates intimidation and lawsuits against books and exhibitions. In the United States, works by Steinbeck or Richard Wright for instance have been banned in certain high schools also after pressure from family organisations. Every form of protection, every fence erected so cleverly since the "Enlightenment" to protect the autonomy of artistic creation is tumbling down.

Against this background of growing and more frequent violence, the international community of writers and artists can no longer be satisfied with making petitions on matter of principle and in protest. It is for writers, artists and other intellectuals alone to join together and organise the resistance - they must say loud and clear that there is no democracy without solidarity, no civilisation without hospitality, and no culture when we put up "No entry" signs at our borders. Witness the essence of modern art, conceived in exile, by refugees not unlike these Algerians whom we are sending back to their solitude and confrontation with their murderers. We now need the Algerians for the purposes of our artistic creation just as much as they need us for their survival. The world community of artists has its duties and requirements of free movement, self-help and solidarity, as a counterpoint to those famous limits on immigration, employment and security. That is why the priority for writers, artists and intellectuals must now be to hit back at the threats hanging over art. They must contest public opinion, now that more and more people are in favour of the bans and public condemnation stemming from a new international moral order, by providing new scope for freedom, exchange and solidarity. For this reason the International Parliament of Writers has since its inception undertaken to develop a network of cities of asylum capable of providing refuge to writers and artists in danger. Now that international terrorism and internationalised repression are rampant,

there is no other choice for it but to reconquer new free zones, free territories where the imagination is not only tolerated but encouraged, where writers can continue to write in spite of the murderers. A Noah's ark (or "archipelago") of the imagination. If we create more and more asylum cities, we can set free creative artists whose work has been banned, help them to feel less lonely and surround them with new forms of solidarity - we must invent new networks and defend not only individual artists but also their works - with readings and translations and by distributing their work. By doing so, we are also upholding an alternative approach to democracy and citizenship. By creating more cities of asylum, we are not merely showing our solidarity, we are making a statement as to the existence in the world of places where citizenship and democracy are inseparable from the freedom to create. Thus a movement in aid of cities of asylum is not only a movement of intellectuals; it also entails political responsibility. On 31 May 1995 at the plenary session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, more than 400 towns from 34 Council of Europe member states drafted and voted for a Charter of Cities of Asylum. The towns and cities of Berlin, Strasbourg, Caen and Valladolid have already welcomed their first writers this year; soon they will be joined by Helsinki, Gothenburg, Barcelona, Venice, Sintra, Santiago de Compostela, Frankfurt, Orleans, La Rochelle, Salzburg, Vienna, and my thanks go to the representatives of those countries with us today. But this solidarity must spread and win over other towns and cities, on other continents. Sao Paulo, Lamentin (Martinique), Los Angeles, New York, Montreal and Quebec will be joining the network.

Ladies and gentlemen, on the CLRAE's initiative and with the European Parliament's support for the first Congress of Cities of Asylum, we are gathered here today in order to consolidate this newly-created network and to launch an appeal for its enlargement. It is necessary to stress repeatedly to those in favour of a bury-one's-head-in-the-sand policy that the freedom to write and create is not just the right to tolerance accorded to writers and artists but the life-blood of democracy. The way in which a society protects its fiction, art and imagination is as important for evaluating the vitality of a democracy as the percentage turnout in elections, the pluralist party system, or mere freedom of information. In Yugoslavia before hostilities broke out, first writers were silenced, dictionaries purged, and the Serbo-Croat language, a mixed, bridging language whose hyphen is a symbol in itself, was brought to heel. The Serbs aimed to make the language more Serbian, while the Croats attempted to make it more Croat. People dissociated themselves from their language, rejecting their own words. Surprising it certainly is, yet how has it been possible to forget the words of Arthur Koestler who declared that wars were waged on account of words on a semantic battlefield. In Algeria, before free rein was given to the terrorists and murderers, the Berber and French languages were restricted and a stale Arabic language imposed, a formalised language barely adequate for party bureaucrats and army instructors. This is what Hermann Broch in 1930 termed the silence which precedes murder. Today literature is subjected to a violence without precedent in its history: appeals reach us from Algerian, Iranian, Chinese, Egyptian, Turkish and Nigerian writers. The appeal is simple, and the same in any language: by writing you address someone and addressing someone is the opposite of killing. It is our duty to understand this and to respond quickly. Otherwise, it is death and murder that will do the talking.

3. Mr. Karl Christian ZAHN³

Firstly, I should like to thank you warmly for your presence here today among us for the first Congress of the Cities of Asylum.

I represent the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE) and I am myself Mayor of Dorsten (North-Rhine Westphalia) and President of the Working Group on "Local Democracy, a Civic Project".

This is the Group which is dealing with the Network of the Cities of Asylum.

At the beginning, when the idea of involving the CLRAE in the drafting of the Charter of Cities of Asylum was expressed, in co-operation with the International Parliament of Writers, the Council of Europe was preparing a campaign on Youth against Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and Intolerance.

It seemed to us that the idea of a Charter of Cities of Asylum was a perfect example not only of tolerance, but also of humanity itself, and even of Justice but above all of Freedom. Freedom of thought, of expression, of creation. After all, these are all principles which underline the existence of the Council of Europe.

Therefore, the CLRAE was very happy to contribute to the Council of Europe's campaign via Resolution 17 which was adopted in June 1995 following the Report presented by my colleague Mr Martinez-Lopez of Almeria (Spain). I should like to express to him, here today, my gratitude for his commitment.

However, I am not now going to introduce the Charter: Mr Martinez-Lopez will do this himself later.

I will just inform you briefly about developments from the institutional point of view.

Resolution 17, adopting the Charter of Cities of Asylum, recommended European towns to endorse the Charter by participating in the Network of Cities of Asylum. Already, on 9 June 1995, the Congress, through its President, addressed the Charter to all European towns inviting them to join the Network of Cities. On 21 September 1995, the European Parliament adopted a Resolution on the Network.

Resolution 17 also instructed its Working Group on local democracy to monitor the implementation of the Charter and the Network of Cities of Asylum, in close co-operation with the International Parliament of Writers (I.P.W.)

³ President of the CLRAE Working Group on "Local Democracy: a Civic Project".

At its last meeting in Paris on 27 November 1995, in which Mr Christian Salmon, Secretary General of the IPW also participated, the Working Group decided, inter alia, to hold the present meeting of the Network of Cities of Asylum.

The Group also decided to implement Resolution 15 and to institute, thereafter, European award called "exemplary democratic town: a civic project". The Congress will now propose this competition, to begin with, to all the cities which are members of the various Networks of Cities run by the Congress, including the Cities of Asylum, as well as other Cities which have co-operated in particular with the Congress in various fields.

The Prize is governed by special Rules which are available from the Secretariat.

Today, only a few months after the adoption of the Charter, 27 European and even non-European Cities are already represented here.

I think that the I.P.W has done good work. But if it is impossible for the Congress to centralise all the data and administer the Network from the centre, it will be also very difficult for the I.P.W. to do everything. Therefore, I urge the Cities here represented and all the other participants to imagine new forms of decentralised management according to the principle of subsidiarity which is a kind of constitutive principle of our local democracy in Europe.

In particular the meeting today and tomorrow should assess, on one side, the achievements of the Charter of Asylum up until now and on the other side the functioning and structure of the Network.

I am confident that good sound and practical ideas will be forthcoming from these two days of discussion. The Network has to grow not only in members but also in quality.

Just a final word to conclude.

I want to thank particularly the Writers who represent here today all the threatened writers and poets of the World. I want to address them and give them my best regards and my deepest admiration. It is for them that the Charter was adopted and the Network set up. It is with them that our common work must be continued. They had the courage to resist threats and persecution and thus they gave us the courage to help them against violence and in-human brutality. They and the Cities that have accepted them as "citizens" are the real heroes of our meeting and a living example of political behaviour. I am anxious to hear their impressions, comments and suggestions.

I wish you pleasant and fruitful work.

5. **Cathérine TRAUTMANN⁴**

Is it mere chance or is it the reflection of a pressing contemporary need that the Strasbourg Meetings should today be discussing the desire for citizenship while, at the very same time - also here in Strasbourg - the International Parliament of Writers is, at the militant urging of Christian Salmon, organising this first conference of Cities of Asylum? The latter event marks a highly important stage in the life of the Parliament which, three years ago, on 7 November 1993, brought writers and thinkers as prestigious and different as Jacques Derrida, Pierre Bourdieu, Susan Sontag and Toni Morrison together in Strasbourg. On that occasion Salman Rushdie declared: "We must fight against something even more dangerous than terrorism - our own fear".

That fear, which is so dangerous and deadly, and which is, above all, the companion of solitude and neglect, is the dark face of the modern era, which does everything it can to isolate human beings, leaving them fragile, helpless and a prey to totalitarianism and tyranny.

Fear is not just something personal, something rooted in weakness of character or an inability to soldier on bravely. Fear is born of losing one's sense of belonging to the wider community. That sense of community is a basic human need, and there can be no achievement, solidarity or freedom without it. The fact is that no one can be free in isolation. The only free person is the one who lives with other people, talking to them and exchanging ideas with them daily. That is why fighting the fear Salman Rushdie had in mind means, above all, striving to achieve togetherness. Not just the kind of togetherness that links us in an external sense - that construct which we call "society" and which has forced itself on us, with the passing of time, as a poor substitute for "community" and the warmth that goes with it - which can, of course, have its oppressive side too, but should ensure that its members no longer feel afraid. That, the basic idea behind the Cities of Asylum, was the main priority of the International Parliament of Writers in 1995, when it set out to do something totally pragmatic - to face up to international terrorism and totalitarianism, and show that goodness and reason are not powerless visions, but can mount solid defences against the forces of exclusion and death.

This network of cities of asylum, founded and based in Strasbourg, has its own charter, duties and projects. I would like to say very emphatically that to join the network, as all of you have done on behalf of your cities, is to help the writers who face persecution in many countries - but is something more as well. It is something which teaches us to discharge our duty of being vigilant and accepting responsibility. And it also teaches us to stand up to brute force - something we must all be able to do. Stupidity, alas, is not confined to any one place or era. Vichy is still a living memory, and that should make us realise that, in battling the kind of situation we now have in Algeria or Iran, we are battling a monster which can be reborn at any time, in any place.

⁴ Mayor of Strasbourg (France)

This brings us back to the community - a community of cities in this case - which, by forging links based on solidarity, exchange and movement, endeavours to create a new kind of space, a free zone in all senses of the term. This indeed is the spirit in which we all have a duty, not simply to take writers in, housing them and feeding them, but also to make it possible for them to write, to work, to become a part of the city's cultural and emotional fabric.

And even this is not enough. We need to expand the network: every new city that joins must encourage a second to follow, and a third after that. We are 24 today, we must be 48 next year, and then 96, and so on. The more of us there are, the more meaningful, in the true sense, our enterprise will become.

Strasbourg wishes, in all modesty, to continue playing a full role in forging that chain which finds its justification in the words of Deuteronomy, when it says of the fugitive "that fleeing unto one of these cities he might live". Commentators have been quick to ask, "What does 'live' mean?", and add: "Everything must be done to let him live truly". And what exactly is true life in this context? Emmanuel Levinas, who lived in this city and died recently, once wrote in an illuminating text (actually called "Cities of Asylum") that it is, of course, life in exile, but not prison or hard labour. And he asks a question which answers itself: "Can one live without culture". Exiles give us something and matter to us, just as we give them something in return. What we have, in other words, is a process of exchange, and we value it highly.

Finally, as a theologian, may I tell you why we are meeting here in Strasbourg. As mayor of the city, or a member of the European Parliament, I could speak of Strasbourg as the home of the European institutions, as a symbol of Franco-German reconciliation, or as a centre of French culture. But I prefer to follow Emmanuel Levinas again and quote the Talmud: "These cities are not chosen from among the small villages, nor from among the large cities, but from among the towns of a medium size; they are founded only in places where there is water; and if there is no water, it is brought there; and they are founded only in places where there are squares for markets and where people are constantly coming and going: where such movement declines, it is augmented... and neither weapons nor snares are sold there". And the cities appointed by Moses were "toward the sun rising".

Quite simply, a city of asylum is a real city - a human city, where people can live together without fear. And a city which wants to be a city of asylum is, above all, a city which wants to be a city in the fullest sense. This liberates those of us who have charge of cities - but it also reminds us how great our responsibilities are. Strasbourg, like all the other cities represented here, will not shirk this historic task. Becoming a city of asylum means learning to be a human city or indeed, quite simply, a city - one which constantly reminds us that cities exist for people, not vice-versa.

5. Mr René GARREC⁵

It was with pride and pleasure that I accepted Christian Salmon's invitation to take part today in the first Congress of Cities of Asylum which over two days will provide an occasion for reviewing what has been achieved so far in safeguarding freedom of expression and for taking stock of the many tasks that still remain to be done.

Here today as the representative of the region of Lower Normandy and the town of Caen, which on 3 July 1995 were among the first to sign an agreement with the International Parliament of Writers, I would like to give a brief explanation of why we wish to continue along such lines.

In 1994 France as a whole celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the allied landing on the beaches of Normandy, which for much of Europe marked the first stage in the reconquest of freedom, and in 1995 it paid tribute to the fiftieth anniversary of peace.

Commemorating these two occasions was a particularly emotive affair for Lower Normandy, as it was the first region in France to be liberated and also the region to pay the highest price for that reconquest.

At an official level, these ceremonies brought to our shores heads of State from all over the whole world. There were also emotional reunions of veterans who had come to pay their respects.

It was our wish to make young people conscious of the fact that this was not a celebration reserved exclusively for war veterans. It was important that they should understand that thousands of soldiers had died on Omaha Beach and elsewhere so that France might regain freedom of expression and of thought, and the freedom to publish. This was addressed at a number of fascinating literary meetings centring on the theme of literature and the resistance.

It is in such circumstances that I had the pleasure of meeting Christian Salmon and of learning about the initiative, launched by the International Parliament of Writers, which seeks to provide a refuge for intellectuals who are having to contend with tyranny. For me it was impossible to recall the past and remind young people of the huge schism of half a century ago while doing nothing for those who are experiencing today the same misfortune and the same oppression.

Of course it may be argued that history does not repeat itself and that no upheaval in the world order is comparable to another. I am willing to accept that - however, I think that two

⁵ President of the Regional Council of Lower Normandy.

types of reaction are possible in such circumstances: indifference or generosity.

In commemorating the end of the second world war, it is hard to overlook the fact that our liberator, the United States, received an enormous number of immigrants after 1933, people from all walks of life fleeing the rise of Nazi power in Germany.

Of course a great many refugees were fleeing their country for racial reasons. There were also many intellectuals who chose to abandon an oppressive regime: doctors, university lecturers, lawyers and legal experts, psychologists and researchers. Most striking of all was undoubtedly the number of artists and writers who chose exile.

As a result Germany suffered a true exodus of its creative artists and the United States welcomed a vast number of people who have subsequently played a prominent role in the cultural life of America.

All the same their integration was not easy, and most of them at least initially had to endure an extremely precarious and at times impoverished existence.

The most symbolic case is undoubtedly that of Bela Bartok who, when he died in 1945 in a New York hospital, was so poor that a collection had to be taken to pay for his funeral.

The United States nevertheless took pride in opening its doors to all these people (I refer in particular to the 37 000 children who were taken in by American organisations), who have more than paid back such hospitality.

Such immigrants may or may not have initially integrated easily in their new country, but they have had an enormous impact in all fields; this is an important lesson to bear in mind at a time when European democracies are facing a real immigration problem to which many of our fellow citizens adopt positions of indifference or even rejection.

In Lower Normandy and in Caen in particular, a swift decision was taken to respond favourably to the proposal of the International Parliament of Writers. When we signed the agreement, we were unaware of the fact that we would subsequently be providing refuge to Amine Zaoui, his wife and their three children, fleeing an Algeria under threat as a result of the rise in fundamentalism.

Personally this pleased me enormously since France's relationship with Algeria provokes considerable friction but is at the same time very deep-rooted, and I believe that we must reexamine what is conventionally known as the threat from Islam.

The excesses of a religion verging on fanaticism should be denounced. Care, however, should be taken not to allow such an incredibly rich culture to perish through isolation; a culture which intellectuals under threat in their own countries are best placed to communicate to us.

It is moreover my hope that Lower Normandy will be closely involved in the preparation

of the congress of the International Parliament of Writers to take place in Berlin in December. I am pleased to see that the person responsible for preparing the congress is to be Amine Zaoui, whom I believe to be the most suitable person to act as intermediary for the intellectuals of the Arab and Muslim world.

By way of conclusion, I would briefly like to express my support for the expansion of the network of cities of asylum. Indeed it seems that by such means Europe, in which I am a believer, is priding itself on perpetuating a very old French tradition.

One year ago we witnessed unbearable scenes of children suffering in death camps. In my view there is no need to be an intellectual to understand that tears cannot be shed over such children while other children are allowed to die in Algeria because their parents refuse to remain silent.

At a time when the barbarity of another era is showing its ugly face again in many countries of the world, it is important that politics should play an active role in defending humanism, the subject of much lip service.

This has been our modest aim in collaborating with the International Parliament of Writers, and I hope that the message spreads throughout our democracies where, despite practical economic difficulties, every person nevertheless has the right to speak, write or publish, believe or disbelieve in God, and be accountable for personal choice only to his or her own conscience.

REPORTS

Mr Fernando MARTINEZ-LOPEZ
The Charter of Cities of Asylum

Mr Jacques DERRIDA
Cosmopolitans of the world, unite!

Mr Juan GONZALEZ POSADA
Problems and perspectives, the experience of Valladolid

Mr Fernando Martinez-Lopez⁶

THE CHARTER OF CITIES OF ASYLUM

According to a Spanish saying, gratitude is a sign of good breeding, and I should therefore like to begin my presentation by expressing my profound gratitude to the IPW and especially to Christian Salmon for having persuaded me to take up the defence of freedom of creation, and to the Mayor of Strasbourg for her part in bringing the IPW to this forum and for having made her city the first city of asylum. I should also like to express my gratitude to the CLRAE, and specifically to Giuseppe Tessari and Laura De Rosa, because without them I would have been unable to complete the work on the Charter, which was drawn up jointly with the IPW and adopted on 31 May 1995 by the representatives of the local and regional authorities of Europe.

It has been said that the interpretation of a work of art always goes further than its creator intended. When a new social conscience gives rise to a declaration of principles, the effect is the same. For this reason I have decided not even to summarise the contents of the Charter of Cities of Asylum, with which you are all familiar. I shall simply try and put forward some ideas concerning three aspects which strike me as being important:

The first of these aspects is the question of the need for a network of cities of asylum to counter the new threat to literary creation.

The network is taking shape in response to new forms of intolerance. The existence of this new censorship which purports to be absolute calls for an appropriate response.

The privatisation of censorship calls for a widening of the current scope of protection in order to provide new solutions. It is no longer simply a question of a state protecting a citizen from another, aggressor state. Today the aggressor are groups who proudly proclaim their intolerance. Protection can only be complete, therefore, if the writer is welcomed into a community in which democratic values prevail and will continue to do so.

The only possible response to the new phenomenon of international persecution is a system which also transcends frontiers. You have to place yourself on the same level as the threat in order to neutralise it. Only an international network of cities, decentralised but co-ordinated by the pursuit of the same objective, can meet the challenge posed by the current persecution of writers.

This network of cities of asylum is based on the closeness of local authorities to the citizen. Local authorities enjoy a direct relationship with residents and are in the best position

⁶ Rapporteur of the CLRAE.

to offer a new kind of hospitality. A writer can only be given asylum in the real and full sense of the term if he is welcomed by the local area and by his neighbours. On the other hand, only the International Parliament of Writers and writers themselves can structure the network of cities of asylum in order to respond swiftly and effectively. The intensity and immediacy of the threat call for a rapid and well judged response, which needs the backing of writers themselves.

The growing threat finds a fitting response in the formation of a network of cities in which readers and culture lovers themselves meet as residents and in which universities, institutions of patronage and culture and local, regional and national authorities come together in the pursuit of the same objective. It is for each city to combine these forces in order to invite and play host to persecuted writers. For this, it will be able to rely on the network's mutual support system and on the International Parliament of Writers.

It has been said that the network of cities of asylum symbolises an "archipelago of the imagination". Faced with absolute and arbitrary censorship of the imagination, the network promotes tolerance as an essential condition for literary creation. This is a triumph for art and the intellect.

Secondly, the Charter of Cities of Asylum embodies a new model of citizenship.

The initiative of the International Parliament of Writers in setting up a network of cities of asylum was well received from the very beginning by the working group of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities dealing with the campaign against racism, xenophobia, anti-semitism and intolerance. Furthermore, we in the group felt that it was an extremely novel idea. To our way of thinking, designating a city as a city of asylum means not only welcoming a writer but also welcoming and recognising another culture.

It is a question of defending the idea of an open city, the idea of multicultural citizenship. In fact, what it boils down to is giving our cities a global responsibility.

Citizenship is not a concept which has been defined once and for all. It is a process of permanent discovery and is influenced by developments in the field of democracy, be they positive or negative.

We are currently going through a regressive period in which attitudes of exclusion are developing openly into xenophobia. This only serves to emphasise the fact that citizenship cannot remain closed in on itself. Today we are facing a clear challenge: unless we move towards an open, multicultural kind of citizenship, we shall see the development of a citizenship of exclusion, of the kind which may currently be observed in some of our cities, which condemns minorities to silence and a marginal existence.

Fortunately, there is also a growing awareness in European countries of the role which cities and regions must play in the discovery of a new kind of democracy, and some serious thinking has begun on what has been termed the citizenship of residence.

In fact the Charter of Cities of Asylum fits in with this new concept of citizenship. A city which welcomes a writer may in so doing create the right conditions for adopting a series of measures which contribute openly to a renewal of the concept of citizenship.

The idea of equality of civil and political rights for all those who live in the same city or the granting of the right to vote to foreigners are steps which have to be taken, but they are not sufficient: it is necessary to go a little further. The role of the open city is to promote not only integration, as is often stated, but also cultural exchange. It is essential to cease regarding immigration as a source of problems and to seek out the cultural enrichment which it brings. Schools must become multicultural places reflecting the diversity around them so that our children's minds can be opened to other cultures as an essential process in the formation of a global consciousness. The presence of intercultural monitors in cities will make it possible to break with the paternalistic practice of integration which imposes its standards and customs on other cultures.

Thirdly, and lastly, the Charter is a manifesto for recognition of a new civil liberty and a new fundamental right. Let us see how this new right is coming into being and what role we must play.

At the beginning of the century Europe still had a view of fundamental rights which relegated them to the domestic level and the only formally recognised international obligations were those of humanitarian law relating to the victims of armed conflict.

With the Second World War, human rights officially entered the international arena as a result of the impact made on public opinion by the serious violations to which the conflict gave rise.

The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms was signed in Rome in 1950 on the initiative of the Council of Europe, the pioneering regional organisation in the area of political co-operation to promote human rights. This important treaty filled a vacuum in Europe and turned the pronouncements of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights into binding standards.

The process of defining the substance of fundamental rights and freedoms and extending their scope continues today at the Council of Europe as part of a permanent dialogue between the public authorities and non-governmental and citizens' organisations.

The IPW had the courage and the wisdom to call our attention to a reality which has a twofold effect. Not only do the new forms of intolerance towards literary creation affect writers who live under authoritarian regimes, but the new censorship also affects our culture and the world around us. Our society has a responsibility to combat all forms of censorship and - this is a more recent development - it now has a duty to widen the scope of fundamental rights to the greatest possible extent.

It might be thought that the interpretation of a fundamental freedom is inevitably limited by the point in history at which the standard in question was established. But this idea is dispelled when we consider how the European Court of Human Rights itself, in applying the rights enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights, has reinterpreted and enriched them. For example, it has recognised the right to live in a healthy environment without this being explicitly provided for in the Convention.

The question which must therefore be asked is whether it is not in fact perfectly acceptable to argue for the extension of freedom of expression to cover freedom of creation.

The raising of this question is precisely one of the achievements of the campaign in which we - the IPW, the CLRAE and myself - have become involved.

We know that the first thing which attracts the attention of the Network of Cities of Asylum is the extreme seriousness of the intolerance shown towards writers in countries outside our own circle of well-being. It was for this reason that I wanted to introduce some perhaps rather less obvious aspects into the debate.

What is at issue here is not only a symbol of solidarity whose effects are closely intertwined with the very fabric of society, but also the building of our own democracy. If we do not succeed in reinterpreting our freedoms in time, our children will inherit a dead democracy. Preserving the vitality of the rights and freedoms on which our co-existence depends is as important as preserving the natural environment for future generations.

Mr Jacques Derrida⁷

COSMOPOLITANS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!

What is the origin of cosmopolitanism as we understand it, and what is happening to it? Like the concept of citizen of the world, no-one can say whether it has any future. Is it still possible to make a valid distinction between the two forms of city ("*polis*") we call City and State? Should an *International* Parliament of Writers continue, as its name implies, to be inspired by what, for more than 20 centuries, has been called cosmopolitanism? Is cosmopolitanism a feature of the Cities of the world, or of its States? At the very moment when the "end of the city" rings out like a verdict, when the diagnosis and prognosis are so similar, how can we continue to dream of an original status for the City, and for the "city of asylum", in the *renewal* of international law to which we aspire? We should not expect to receive a straightforward answer to a question of this nature and we should, therefore, follow a different course of action, particularly if we believe, and such is my inclination, that the Charter of Cities of Asylum or the International Agency for Cities of Asylum which appear on our programme ought to lead to something more than just another chapter in a book on international law; it should be a bold call for truly innovative action in the history of the right of asylum and the duty to provide hospitality.

The name "cities of asylum" seems to be written in letters of gold in the constitution of the International Parliament of Writers. We all know this. From our very first meeting, we have been calling for the establishment of cities of asylum all over the world. Which is, in fact, not unlike a new policy of cosmopolitanism. We have undertaken to promote the proclamation and institution of numerous, independent "cities of asylum" all over the world, as independent of one another and of their States as possible, but nevertheless "cities of asylum" joined by links of solidarity yet to be devised. This is our task, and we cannot dissociate theoretical and critical reflection from the practical initiatives we are successfully initiating as a matter of urgency. Whether dealing with aliens in general, with immigrants, exiles, refugees, deportees, stateless persons or displaced persons (all categories which need to be distinguished meticulously from one another), we invite these new cities of asylum to bring influence to bear on government policy and to transform and remodel the city's dependence on the state in a Europe in the process of formation, for example, or in international legal structures still dominated by the rule of sovereignty of the state, which is, or is presumed to be, an intangible rule, but is also increasingly unreliable and problematic. This can no longer, indeed must not, be the ultimate horizon of cities of asylum. Is this possible?

By committing ourselves in this way, by inviting cities big and small to follow this route and giving them the name "city of asylum", we were doubtless seeking to achieve more than one single goal, as with the name "parliament". By reviving the traditional meaning of an expression

⁷ Vice-President of the International Parliament of Writer

and reawakening a memorable heritage to dignify it, we were at the same time anxious to propose, under the old word, a totally new concept of hospitality, of the duty to provide hospitality and of the right to hospitality. So what would such a concept be? How could we adapt it to meet the onslaught of terrifying emergencies which cry out to us? How could we enable it to respond to situations and constraints, to tragedies and injunctions without precedent?

I regret I am unable to be present at this solemn gathering but permit me, while greeting those taking part, at least to trace the outline of this new charter of asylum and to sketch in the guiding principles. What is the background against which we have proposed this new ethic or international policy of cities of asylum? Do we need to remind ourselves of the violence which is being perpetrated on a world scale? Is it necessary to underline yet again the fact that these crimes are committed by organisations, some of which are state-run, others not? Is it possible to list the growing number of threats, acts of censorship or of terrorism, persecution and enslavement of all kinds? The victims are countless and almost always anonymous, but they are increasingly what could be described as intellectuals, scholars, journalists and writers, men and women who are capable of speaking in a public place, and who, through the new powers of telecommunications, constitute an increasingly formidable force for the police of all countries, and for the forces of censorship and repression, be they state or non-state, religious, political, economic or social. There are too many examples to quote, and to highlight the most famous could mean consigning the anonymous cases to an obscurity from which they cannot escape, an obscurity which, in this case, is their greatest handicap. If we refer to the city, rather than to the State, it is because we have expectations of a new concept of the city, which we have almost abandoned hope of achieving from the State. And this will one day have to be determined and set out in our Statutes. When the State is not the prime mover or the prime defender of the violent acts which cause refugees or exiles to flee (both outside borders and within them), it is often powerless to guarantee the protection and freedom of its own citizens from the threat of terrorism, whether it is inspired by nationalist or religious motives. This is a phenomenon which ought to be studied as part of a long sequence throughout history, but today we still have neither the time nor the resources. For example, such a sequence even preceded the phenomenon which produced, at least after the First World War, what Hannah Arendt, in a text which we ought to examine minutely, called the "The Decline of the Nation-State and the End of the Rights of Man; The 'Nation of Minorities' and the Stateless People"⁸. In this work, Arendt proposes in particular an analysis of the recent history of minorities, "stateless" persons, "*Heimatlosen*", "*apatrides*", refugees, deportees, "displaced persons". She identifies *two great shocks*, which occurred between the two world wars: the first was the progressive abolition, with the arrival of hundreds of thousands of *apatrides*, of the right of asylum which was "the only right that had ever figured as a symbol of the Rights of Man in the sphere of international relationships". Arendt recalls that this right has a "sacred history" and is "the only modern remnant of the medieval principle that *quid est in territorio est de territorio* ... (a "medieval principle" from which, and I shall return to this theme, our concept of "cities of asylum" undoubtedly takes its inspiration). "...but" continues Arendt, "though the right of asylum continued to function in a world organised into

⁸in *The Origins of Totalitarianism: Imperialism*, Geo Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1958, p.280

nation-states and, in individual instances, even survived both World Wars, it was felt to be an anachronism and in conflict with the international rights of the state." At the time Arendt was writing this, around 1950, she was able to note the absence of this right of asylum "in the written law" of international law (for example in the Charter of the League of Nations); since then there have been at least some changes, which we will come to shortly, but further changes are essential. The second shock was said to follow the wave of refugees who arrived en masse in Europe, when the classic solutions of repatriation or naturalisation had to be abandoned. However no satisfactory replacement has yet been invented. By describing the effects of these traumas at length, Arendt has perhaps identified one of our tasks and, the perspective, at least, of our Charter and our Statutes. She does not speak of the city, but in the wake of the double shock she describes, which she situates between the two World Wars, we, today, ought to be asking new questions about the destiny of cities and about the role they could play in this new situation. How could the right of asylum be redefined and developed without repatriation or naturalisation? Could the City, or a law of the City, or a new sovereignty of the City open up here an original space where international, inter-State, law itself has failed? For we must not hesitate to declare our ultimate ambition, which gives our project its meaning: the concept in which we have placed our hopes and called the "city of asylum" is no longer merely a device consisting of new attributes or new powers added on to the classic, unaltered concept of the City. We are no longer dealing simply with new predicates to enrich the old subject called "City". No, we are dreaming of another concept, another right, another policy for the City. For a thousand and one reasons this may appear to be utopian, I know, but at the same time what we have already embarked upon, however modest, proves that something of this nature has already been set in motion - and this chaotic motion cannot be dissociated from the turbulence which affects the axioms of our international law, as part of a long process.

Is there therefore hope for City hospitality, if we agree, as I am inclined to do, to recognise with Arendt that international law is at the present moment limited by treaties between sovereign States? And that a "world government" would solve nothing? This is what Arendt wrote, and it seems to me to be equally valid today:

"... contrary to the best-intentioned humanitarian attempts to obtain new declarations of human rights from international organisations, it should be understood that this idea transcends *the present sphere of international law which still operates in terms of reciprocal agreements and treaties between sovereign states* (my underlining); and, for the time being, a sphere that is above the nations does not exist. Furthermore, this dilemma would by no means be eliminated by the establishment of a "world government".

We must be particularly attentive to what she says about groups and individuals who, during the period between the two World Wars, lost *all status*: not only their citizenship, but even their title "*apatride*". We must also now make a fresh assessment in this respect, in Europe and elsewhere, of the respective roles of States, Unions, Federations or Confederations of states on the one hand, and Cities on the other hand. Although the name and identity of something like the City still have some meaning and remain a point of reference, could the City be elevated above the Nation-State, or at least break free from it to an extent to be determined, so as to become, in a new acceptance of the term, a *free city* in matters of hospitality and asylum. Generally speaking, this

term used to describe the status of immunity or exemption which at times was attached, just like a right of asylum, to certain locations (diplomatic or religious) where one could withdraw to escape unjust pursuit.

This could be the scope of our task: a theoretical task and, inexorably linked to it, a political implementation. And an increasingly imperative task in that in a context of immediate emergency, the horizon is growing darker day by day. Statistics show this to be true, there is declining respect for the right of political asylum both in France and through-out Europe. Someone spoke recently of "a dark year for the right of asylum in France"⁹. As a consequence of an understandable despondency, the number of political asylum seekers is falling continuously. The French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (OFPRA) is narrowing its criteria and spectacularly reducing the number of successful applications for refugee status. During the nineteen-eighties and early nineties, there was a continuous rise in the number of rejected applications for asylum.

Certainly, since the Revolution, there has been a tendency for France to wish to be seen to be more open than comparable European countries to political refugees, but the motivation for such openness was never purely "ethical", in terms of ethics or the law relating to residence (*ethos*) or asylum. Since the mid-18th century, the comparative fall in the birthrate in France has resulted in a more liberal French attitude towards immigration in general, for obvious economic reasons: there is a shortage of workers and, where the economy is involved, no-one pays too close attention to whether motivation is economic or political. This was especially true in the sixties, when the natural consequence of an economic boom was an increased call for immigrant workers. It should also be pointed out that the precise definition and positive legal concept of the right of asylum which has long inspired the French Constitution is only a recent event and is quite limited. The 1946 Constitution defined and granted the right of asylum only to persons persecuted by reason of their "action in favour of freedom". It was later, in 1954, when France signed the 1951 Geneva Convention, that it was obliged to extend the definition of political refugee, to cover all those obliged to go into exile because "their lives or their freedom were endangered by reason of their race, religion or political opinions". A considerable, and very recent, extension.

Even so the Geneva Convention was very restrictive in terms of its proposed application, and we are still far from the cosmopolitanism defined by Kant's celebrated text on the right to universal hospitality, the limits and restrictions of which I will go into a little later.

The 1951 Geneva Convention, which obliged France to extend its right of asylum, itself only referred to "events in Europe prior to 1951". Much later, at the end of the sixties, at the very start of the process which is developing so dramatically today, the scope, location and dates defined by the 1951 Geneva Convention (namely events in Europe prior to 1951) were extended by a protocol added to that Convention in New York in 1967, and finally extended to cover events outside Europe, and after 1951. (These are developments which it was impossible for

⁹Le Monde, 27 February 1996. cf also Luc Legoux, *La crise de l'asile politique en France*, Centre Français sur la Population et de Développement (CEPED).

Hannah Arendt to have any knowledge of and therefore to include in her text, which she wrote around 1950).

There is always considerable disparity between the generosity of the great principles of the right of asylum inherited from the Enlightenment or from the French Revolution on the one hand, and historical reality or the effective application of these principles, which is contained, reduced and controlled by inflexible legal restrictions. It is monitored by what is referred to in the preface of the book *La crise du droit d'asile en France* as a legal tradition which is nothing less than "small-minded". In reality, if the legal tradition is still "small-minded" and restrictive, it is because it continues to be subordinated to demographic and economic interests, in other words to the interests of the Nation-State granting asylum. The refugee's status is not the status of the immigrant in general, nor even of the political immigrant. The granting of refugee status may take place long after entry into France, whether this was originally on economic or political grounds. We must therefore be constantly aware of these sometimes subtle distinctions between the different categories of status, particularly since the borderline between the economic and the political appears to cause more problems than ever. French politicians of both Left and Right often speak of "controlling immigration"; this is part of the rhetoric of electoral programmes. Well, as Luc Legoux notes, "controlling immigration" often means distinguishing between two types of exile - flight and migration - and granting asylum only to those who cannot expect even the smallest financial benefit from their immigration. This condition sets, or at least attempts to set, ridiculous limits: how could a purely political refugee expect to be taken in and granted asylum without some financial benefit being involved in this? He will have to work and cannot remain totally dependent on the host country. Obviously, this is one of the specific questions with which our conventions will have to deal: how to help the guests of cities of asylum to reconstruct, partly through work or creative activity, a sustainable basis for living in these new locations, sometimes with a strange language? This distinction between the economic and the political is therefore not only abstract and inconsistent, it becomes hypocritical and perverse; ultimately it leads to our almost never granting political asylum and never applying the law since its implementation would depend totally on opportunist and sometimes electoral and petty political considerations, which are also ultimately dependent on the police or on real or imagined security, demographic or market factors. Any talk of refuge, asylum or hospitality then becomes pure rhetoric. As Legoux notes, "This, which would tend to render the right of asylum in France inoperative for the nationals of poor countries, is the culmination of a long evolution of the concept of asylum in an increasingly restrictive sense". This trend towards erecting barriers is quite common: not in Europe in general (if it has ever been possible to speak of Europe in general) but in the countries of the European Union; this is sometimes the price to be paid for the Schengen agreements - which incidentally, as Jacques Chirac said, are not even being fully applied by France at present. At a time when frontiers within the European Union are allegedly being opened up, steps are being taken to further tighten security at external frontiers. Asylum seekers are knocking at the doors of each of the Member States of the European Union in turn and being turned back at every frontier. Under the pretext of combating economic immigration dressed up as exile or flight from political persecution, the Member States are rejecting more applications for asylum than ever. Even when this is not done in the form of an explicit and motivated legal response, they often allow their police to make the law; there was the case of

a Kurd whose right of asylum had been officially recognised by the French courts, whom the police nevertheless expelled to Turkey, without provoking protest from any quarter. Like many other cases, such as the "*délit d'hospitalité*", for instance, with which increasing numbers of people are being charged for allegedly sheltering political suspects, this revives the critical problem of the police and its status, first the frontier police but then also the police which knows no frontiers, whose limits are indeterminate, and which becomes, as Benjamin said in his *Critique of Violence* just after the first World War, all-pervasive and intangible. The police becomes omnipresent and spectral in so-called civilised States when it *makes the law*, rather than being content with applying the law and ensuring it is respected. And this truth becomes even more obvious in the age of the new technologies. Police violence, according to Benjamin, is "formless" (*gestaltlos*), and therefore no blame attaches to it; it is "nowhere tangible" (*nirgend fassbar*) and its ghostly presence is all-pervasive in the life of civilised States. Benjamin speaks of its "*allverbreitete gespenstische Erscheinung im Leben der zivilisierten Staaten*"¹⁰. Of course it is not our intention to enter into a discussion involving unjust and utopian suspicion of the functions of the police, particularly in its fight against offences which are within its competence (terrorism, for example, or the activities of all kinds of mafia, or drug trafficking). We are simply asking what are the limits of police competence and the conditions in which this is exercised, particularly with regard to aliens.

In connection with the new powers of the police (state or inter-state), this is one of the most serious questions of law which will have to be addressed in our charter of cities of asylum and which will, in the long term, become part of an interminable struggle: we must limit the most legitimate powers and competence of what must remain a simple police administration, strictly controlled by political power and the bodies responsible for monitoring the respect of human rights and an extended right of asylum. In the same vein as the comments of Benjamin to which I have just referred, Hannah Arendt was already drawing attention to the new and increasing extension of modern police powers in the case of these new refugees. She did so after a comment on anonymity and fame which we would do well to heed, particularly in the International Parliament of Writers:

"Only fame will eventually answer the repeated complaint of refugees of all social strata that 'nobody here knows who I am'; and it is true that the chances of the famous refugee are improved just as a dog with a name has a better chance to survive than a stray dog who is just a dog in general.

The nation-state, incapable of providing a law for those who had lost the protection of a national government, transferred the whole matter to the police. This was the first time the police in Western Europe had received authority to act on its own, to rule directly over people; in one sphere of public life it was no longer an instrument to carry out and enforce the law, but had become a ruling authority independent of government and ministries." (p.187).

¹⁰Walter Benjamin, *Critique of Violence* in "One-Way Street and Other Writings" translated from German by E Jephcott and K shorter, NLB, 1979. p.142.

We know only too well that this problem is more serious today than ever before and could quote many examples. There is a growing protest movement in France against what has become known as the "*délit d'hospitalité*"; some organisations have taken this up and the press has reported it widely. Taking the spirit of the so-called "Pasqua" laws even further, the latest item on the agenda is a "Toubon bill". Currently before the French National Assembly and the Senate, this bill can be summed up as proposing to treat any hospitality given to "illegal aliens" or to those who simply have "no papers" as an act of terrorism or "criminal association". In fact, this bill reinforces article 21 of the infamous Order of 2 November 1945, which already classified assistance to illegal aliens as an offence. Now such offences are in danger of being classified as "acts of terrorism". What is more, it appears that this bill is incompatible with the Schengen agreements (which France has ratified), which stipulate that assistance to "illegal aliens" or "aliens without papers" can only be condemned if it can be proved that such assistance is "*for profit*".

We doubtless decided on the term "city of asylum" because it has historic claims on our respect and, indeed, on the respect of anyone who *cultivates the ethic of hospitality*. *To cultivate the ethic of hospitality ...* is that not tautological? Despite all the tensions and contradictions it may involve, and the many perversions to which it is vulnerable, an ethic of hospitality does not need to be cultivated. Hospitality is culture itself, not just another ethic. Inasmuch as it involves *ethos*, that is to say the abode, the actual home as much as the way we live there, how we relate to ourselves and to others, whether we treat them as family or as strangers, *the ethic is hospitality*, it is part and parcel of the experience of hospitality, however generous or limited this may be. But for that very reason, and because the individual Self at home (the very essence of Self) implies a welcoming or an including of another whom one seeks to appropriate, control or command, according to different means of violence, there is a history of hospitality, a possibility of perverting *The Law* of hospitality (which may appear to be unconditional) and *laws* which limit and condition it by enshrining it in a right. And it is by delving into this history that I would like to make a few initial references with regard to what concerns us here.

What we call the city of asylum can be seen first, I believe, as a meeting place of several traditions or several phases in western, European or para-European traditions. We can recognise, in a Hebrew tradition, the cities which were to welcome and protect those who might seek refuge in them when they were being pursued by blind and vengeful justice or by what the texts call the "revenger of blood" for a crime they had not committed (or, at least, not intentionally). This right of the inhabitants of a city to immunity and hospitality was well developed in its casuistry and the basic text for such decisions was clearly *The Book of Numbers*¹¹: God commanded Moses to appoint cities which would be, according to the letter of the Bible, "cities of refuge" and first "six cities of refuge" in particular for the "stranger, and for the sojourner among them". Two fine French texts have been devoted to this Hebrew tradition of cities of asylum and I am

¹¹Numbers, XXXV 9-32. Cf also 1 Chronicles 6, 57 and 67, where the expression "cities of refuge" appears again and, in particular, Joshua 20, 1-9 ("they shall take him into the city unto them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them" (authorised King James Version)).

happy to recall here that, from one generation to another, the authors of these essays are two philosophers associated with this city of Strasbourg, this noble border city, eminently European, the capital of Europe and the first of our cities of asylum. The texts I am referring to are the works which Emmanuel Lévinas in 1982¹² and Daniel Payot in 1992¹³ entitled "Cities of asylum". We can also recognise the medieval tradition of a certain sovereignty of the city, which could determine its own laws of hospitality, specific articles of law, plural and restrictive, therefore, by which it intended to condition *The* great Law of Hospitality, that unconditional Law, singular and at the same time universal, which would give the command to open the doors to every man and woman, to everyone, to all comers, without question, without even identification, regardless of where they come from or what they are. (It would be useful to study what used to be called the "sanctuary", which was provided by churches which had become like cities, destined to assure the immunity or survival of fugitives; or the "*auctoritas*" which permitted kings or noblemen to protect their guests from pursuers; or what used to happen between warring Italian cities when one became the refuge of the exile, the refugee, the person banished from another town; and we, whose first thoughts are of writers, are reminded of a particular story about Dante, banished from Florence and taken in, I believe, at Ravenna). And finally, at this same meeting place, we can identify the cosmopolitan tradition common to Greek Stoicism and Pauline Christianity which was passed on and taken up at the time of the Enlightenment and to which Kant doubtless gave his most rigorous philosophical formulation in his celebrated "Definitive Article of Perpetual Peace. 'The rights of men, as citizens of the world, shall be limited to the conditions of universal hospitality'".¹⁴ This is not the place to analyse this remarkable Article and the vast history it encompasses without actually giving it a name.

The cosmopolitanism of the Stoics was taken up by Cicero; Pauline Christianity relaunches, radicalises and literally "politicises" the first commands of the religion of Abraham starting, for example, with "Open ye the gates" in Isaiah - who had nevertheless specified the restrictive conditions of hospitality, namely the "strong city", and its "salvation". St Paul gives these appeals or orders their modern names. They are also theological-political names, because they define in detail citizenship of the world and fellow-citizenship: .. "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (*Ephesians*, 2, 19-20). In this phrase "strangers" (*xenoi*) can also be translated as "guests" (*hospites*); and "foreigners", or even "immigrants" for "*paroikoi*", can also mean the neighbour or, from a point of view which would be very relevant for our purposes, the alien living in a city or in a country with no political rights; I am modifying and interchanging a number of translations, including Chouraqui's, but what we need to do here is to study closely the political stakes and the theological implications of these semantic issues; the translation by Grosjean-Léturmy, in the Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, for example, could literally be referring to what we are interpreting as "city of refuge" and whether it ought to last for ever, but it is the whole issue that I would like

¹²"Les villes-refuges" in *L'Au-delà du Verset*, Minuit, 1982, p.51 sq

¹³*Des villes-refuges, Témoignage et espacement*, Editions de l'aube, 1992, p.65 sq. in particular.

¹⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace*, translated by M.CampbellSmith, Swan Sonnenschein & Co., London, 1903. p.137.

to tackle here, the secularised version of this Pauline cosmopolitanism: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners (*xenoi, hospites*), but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (*sympolitai tôn agiôn kai oikeioi tou theou; cives sanctorum, et domestici Dei*).

When Kant, in that spirit of the Enlightenment from which we take our inspiration, formulated the cosmopolitan right, he did not limit it only "to the conditions of universal hospitality", he set two limits which doubtless constitute for us a cause for reflection and possibly transformation or progress. What are these limits?

Kant seems first to extend *into infinity* a cosmopolitan right to universal hospitality as a condition of perpetual peace among all men¹⁵. He determines it expressly as a *law of nature*¹⁶. This would therefore be a fundamental element of the basis of his thinking, indefeasible and inalienable. As is almost always the case with the law of nature, we can recognise the traits of a secularised theological heritage. All of mankind, all beings endowed with reason have received the "common right of possession on the surface of the earth" to share between them. In principle, therefore, no-one may legitimately take possession of that surface (in terms of *area*) in order to prevent another human being having access to it. If Kant is at pains to specify that this property, or common place, extends over "the surface of the earth", it is obviously so as not to exclude any point in the world or globe (internationalisation and globalisation); but it is above all so as to exclude anything which *rises, is constructed or erected above* ground level: habitat, culture, institution, State, etc. Everything which, while touching the earth, is not the earth, and which, even though it may be founded on the earth, does not have to be unconditionally accessible to all comers. On the basis of this strict delimitation (which is nothing more than the institution of the limit as a frontier, nation, State, public or political space), Kant can then deduce *two* consequences and note *two* more screens which we would be wise to reflect on in the very near future.

1. First, he does not qualify hospitality as *a right to be treated as a guest (Gastrecht)* but limits it to the *right of visitation (Besuchsrecht)*. The right to be treated as a guest ought only to be the subject of a specific treaty between States. Kant defines thus the conditions which we must analyse in detail and interpret closely in order to ascertain how to apply them:

¹⁵"In this way far distant territories may enter into peaceful relations with one another. These relations may at last come under the public control of law, and thus the human race may be brought nearer the realisation of a cosmopolitan constitution. [...] The intercourse, more or less close, which has been everywhere steadily increasing between the nations of the earth, has now extended so enormously that a violation of right in one part of the world is felt all over it. Hence the idea of a cosmopolitan right is no fantastical, high-flown notion of right, but a complement of the unwritten code of law - constitutional as well as international law - necessary for the public rights of mankind in general and thus for the realisation of perpetual peace. For only by endeavouring to fulfil the conditions laid down by this cosmopolitan law can we flatter ourselves that we are gradually approaching that ideal. (p.142)

¹⁶"The inhospitality of certain sea coasts [...] or the desert [...] is thus contrary to the law of nature (*dem Naturrecht zuwider*).\" (pp.138-9).

"We are speaking here ... not of philanthropy, but of *right*; and in this sphere hospitality (*Hospitalität/Wirtbarkeit*) signifies the claim of a stranger entering foreign territory to be treated by its owner without hostility. The latter may send him away again, if this can be done without causing his death; but, so long as he conducts himself peaceably, he must not be treated as an enemy. It is not a *right to be treated as a guest* to which the stranger can lay claim - a special friendly compact on his behalf would be required to make him for a given time an actual inmate (*Hausgenossen*) - but he has a *right of visitation*. This right to present themselves to society belongs to all mankind in virtue of our common right of possession on the surface of the earth on which, as it is a globe, we cannot be infinitely scattered, and must in the end reconcile ourselves to existence side by side: at the same time, originally no one individual had more right than another to live in any one particular spot."

This limitation of the right to be treated as a guest, and the fact that it is dependent on treaties between States, is possibly one of the factors which, for us, is still debatable.

2. Next, while rigorously defining hospitality as a right (which is, in many respects, a step forward), Kant stipulates conditions which make it dependent on the sovereignty of the State, in particular with regard to the *Gastrecht*. Here, hospitality means the *public nature* of the public place, as is always the case with legal issues in Kantian terms; the hospitality of the city and private hospitality are dependent on and controlled by the law and by the State police. This is of great significance, particularly in terms of the "*délits d'hospitalité*" to which we referred earlier, but also in terms of the sovereignty we are considering for these cities, the concept of which is at least as problematical today as it was in Kant's time.

We must not hide from the fact that all these questions remain obscure and difficult, nor must we delude ourselves that we can solve them immediately. We need to know how to change and modernise this right and we also need to know whether such progress is possible in the historical space which exists *between* The Law of unconditional hospitality, offered *a priori* to everyone, to all comers, *whoever they may be* and the conditional laws of a right to hospitality, without which The Law of unconditional hospitality is in danger of remaining a pious, irresponsible dream, without form or effect, or even of being corrupted from one moment to the next.

Experience and experimentation, then. Our *experience* of cities of asylum would then not be limited to what it must be if we do not wait, namely an urgent reply, a fair reply, or fairer at least than the right in its present form, an immediate response to crime, violence and persecution. I also see this experience of cities of asylum as something which makes space, (space for reflection, and again this is asylum or hospitality,) for *experimentation* with regard to a new right and a new democracy. It may be that, on the threshold of these cities, these new cities which will be more than "*new cities*", a different concept of cosmopolitanism has yet to arrive.

- But, it has already arrived ...

- ... well, perhaps we have not yet recognised it.

Mr Juan Gonzalez Posada¹⁷

PROBLEMS AND PERSPECTIVES, THE EXPERIENCE OF VALLADOLID

Since 14 January last the Algerian writer Aïcha Lemsine has been living in Valladolid, a city 200 km north of Madrid with a population of 335 000. It was the birthplace of such major poets and authors as Jorge Guillén and Rosa Chacel, who were forced into exile after the victory of the Dictator during the Spanish Civil War.

Since then, Valladolid has become Spain's first City of Asylum. This was meant as a tribute to human intelligence and an attempt to make up for the shameful acts committed by General Franco and his followers 60 years ago.

How did this come about?

The idea came from the directors and students of the postgraduate course in Cultural Management organised by the University of Valladolid, in co-operation with Valladolid City Council and the Spanish Ministry of Culture. At the end of 1994 they decided to join in the initiative which had been launched a few weeks previously by the International Parliament of Writers to set up an International Network of Cities of Asylum for writers who are persecuted, threatened or exiled.

The proposal was presented to the previous Mayor of Valladolid and the Vice-Chancellor of the University, who warmly welcomed it. As soon as the Secretary General of the International Parliament of Writers, Mr Christian Salmon, and his assistant, Ms Alexandra Frénod, discovered that these two representatives of our city were supporting the project, an Agreement was drawn up stipulating that the University of Valladolid would place an apartment at the disposal of the Cities of Asylum Committee of the International Parliament of Writers for a persecuted writer whose name would be forwarded by the said Committee. This arrangement would be valid for one year. For its part, Valladolid City Council would pay the writer a solidarity grant of 10 000 French francs per month for one year and give him or her access to the municipal public services (public transport, libraries, schools, etc). In return for the facilities provided by Valladolid City Council, the International Parliament of Writers undertook to ask its members living in the city, in Spain and in bordering countries to help facilitate the guest writer's integration and work, invite writers to hold exchanges and discussions in the city's libraries and schools and in the University of Valladolid, and promote the translation and dissemination of the writer's works in the host country.

On 25 May 1995 the Co-operation Agreement was signed in the Valladolid City Council Assembly Room. It was signed on behalf of the International Parliament of Writers by the

¹⁷ University of Valladolid (Spain).

Spanish author Mr Javier Marías, a member of the latter's World Council, and on behalf of the local institutions by the Mayor of the City, Mr Tomás Rodríguez Bolaños, and the Vice-Chancellor of the University, Mr Francisco Javier Álvarez Guíasola. The Valladolid writer Mr Miguel Delibes stood as witness to this historical signature.

A few months later the International Parliament of Writers decided to invite Aïcha Lemsine to be our guest writer. A member of the Pen Club and the **International Committee of Women Writers**, as well as Vice-Chair of **Women of the World** (the world organisation for rights, development and literature), Aïcha Lemsine was born into one of the most famous Berber tribes in Nemencha, in the Aurès mountains. For the past 20 years, as an intellectual, she has been engaged in a lonely but energetic campaign against violence and ostracism in her country. Aïcha Lemsine was elected Arab Woman of the Year 1984 by the Association for Franco-Arab Friendship. Furthermore, she was awarded the Mediterranean-African Literature Prize in 1984, the Prize of the French Academy of Sciences in 1983, and that of the Hellmann-Hammett Foundation in 1995 "for her fight for freedom of expression and human rights". She has written a number of books such as "La Chrysalide", "Ciel de Porphyre", "Ordalie des Voix" and "Au coeur du Hezbollah", none of which has been translated into Spanish, and she has also published many articles in the Algerian press. She is currently publishing in the monthly journal "Washington Report" (which covers Middle Eastern affairs).

Married with two children (her husband currently lives in Algiers), Aïcha Lemsine knows Spain and speaks Spanish fairly well, as she lived here from 1966 to 1970 as the wife of the first Algerian Ambassador to Spain. She later lived in Jordan, London and Mexico, where her husband was ambassador. In 1992, after the events in her country, she took up provisional residence in the United States of America.

Aïcha is currently living in a 50 m² university apartment in the City Centre, and is involved in a variety of ways in the social and cultural life of Valladolid. Most recently she drew up the introductory document to International Women's Day. She has since become a popular, universally known figure, and has been the subject of some 105 articles in 54 Spanish periodicals in 43 towns and cities. However, there are also problems, which are becoming plainer every day. Let us examine them one by one.

What have we been doing since October 1995 - as we were notified by Mr Christian Salmon that Aïcha Lemsine was to be our guest - until today, now invited to this Congress?

As soon as we received the notification, we telephoned Aïcha Lemsine. We introduced ourselves, and thereafter called her every week in order to get to know her before her arrival in our city. We sent her information about Valladolid - maps, photographs, books, etc - in order to give her prior information on with the city in which she was to spend one year.

Aïcha said that she knew our faces before she had even seen us. The desire for a place in which to live and write for a year (after 5 years of only writing articles and lectures, which she often did merely in order to survive) led her to think of Valladolid as a city which, to quote

Aïcha, "has a profound *raison d'être* in my life, a realisation that grew throughout the year I spent there".

The Algerian writer finally arrived in our city on 14 January last. On that cold Sunday morning she was already being interviewed by a number of media representatives. We had publicised her arrival weeks before. We wanted it to be an event, an event based on solidarity and protest shared by all. Furthermore, as the first ever Spanish City of Asylum we were obliged to inform the whole country of this news so that others could join this international network. As I said before, in one week over one hundred articles appeared in over fifty Spanish periodicals and magazines. Two days before her arrival Aïcha Lemsine took part in the only Spanish television programme devoted to books and writers, "El Lector".

Then came the stage of introducing Aïcha to the representatives of the different local institutions which had helped to bring her to Valladolid. Shortly afterwards, of course, we started receiving calls and letters from all over Spain requesting Mrs Lemsine's participation in various events. Our immediate reaction, after discussing the matter with Aïcha, was to protect her, as we could not let this act of solidarity become a "fairground attraction", one of those sideshows that are so fashionable these days. We decided to sort through the invitations and let her go and speak wherever she liked, in accordance with her own interests and the aim of the Network of Cities of Asylum launched by the International Parliament of Writers.

So these are the activities in which Aïcha Lemsine has been involved. We have remained constantly at her disposal for any support or information she might need.

However, I would now like to describe the problems we have come up against.

A) THE MODEL AGREEMENT

We feel that there are a number of important omissions from the Agreement, at least from the one signed with the city of Valladolid, and this situation will have to be remedied. We need an agreement which is legally valid at the international level and whose provisions take account of such important matters as:

- *Social security for the writer in the host country*

Aïcha Lemsine is not registered in any Spanish social security scheme. She arrived here from the United States of America, where she had not been in any such scheme either, and the City of Asylum is not required, under the Agreement, to take any action in this field. This poses problems for the writer and the host city if he or she falls ill or has an accident.

- *The writer's legal situation*

I might illustrate this problem on the basis of Aïcha Lemsine's personal experience in Valladolid.

Mrs Lemsine arrived in our country with a tourist visa. Thanks to our city's Civil Governor we secured a two-year residence permit for her so that she could move freely around the country. However, it emerged that her Algerian passport, which gave her access to most countries worldwide, expired on 21 March, which means that at present Aïcha is in an anomalous legal situation. This will become a real problem on 13 January 1997, when she is to leave our city and our country. She will be unable to leave this country, or enter any other, because her passport has expired. Aïcha does not wish to apply to her country for a passport, nor does she want a refugee's passport from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. What can we do? How can we reconcile Aïcha's wish, and right, neither to apply to her country's authorities for renewal of her passport (which might or might not be granted) nor to apply for a refugee's passport with the obligations imposed by the international authorities regarding freedom of movement worldwide?

There are various approaches to this problem. The legal situation of writers in Cities of Asylum should be settled before their arrival in the host city, or at least explained so that we know something of their circumstances.

- *Taxation*

The Agreement does not mention taxes, even though the regulations in the various countries differ immensely: for example, in Spain Aïcha Lemsine has a 17% reduction in her normal tax contributions. The wording of the Agreement and Spanish legislation is such that this reduction is legal.

- *The obligations on each party*

The Agreement signed with Valladolid states that "*The International Parliament of Writers undertakes, in return for the efforts expended by the City of Valladolid, to mobilise member writers living in the city, in Spain and neighbouring countries with a view to: facilitating the integration and work of the guest writer, organising exchanges and discussions between writers in the city's libraries and schools and in the University of Valladolid, and promoting the translation and dissemination of his/her works in the host country*". This is not happening, which I think is a pity. It is hard to say this, but I consider that the writers in the International Parliament of Writers should make greater efforts to help their partners in the Cities of Asylum. When our opposite numbers from the Parliament come for discussions with us they are often alone and have excessive, unshared responsibility. The Institutions only make material, not human or administrative, undertakings, and yet the latter are also very important for writers. If the writer did not have her new friends in the City of Asylum she would have to abandon her stay there.

In our view, such an elaborate programme as that described in the aforementioned part of the Agreement would firstly enable the signed undertakings to be fulfilled, secondly provide the wherewithal to maintain the guest writer whom the Parliament has sponsored and placed in the City of Asylum, and thirdly help disseminate the concept (which is already reality) of Cities of Asylum, a matter of great pride to us all.

- *Political role*

In addition to this international elan of solidarity, this late 20th-century phenomenon obviously also has a political purpose. All politicians like occasionally to invite a poor person to their table. It is politically useful and socially advantageous.

We must strive to ensure that the public institutions do not exploit the Cities of Asylum initiative in any way. We in Valladolid have seen attempts from virtually all quarters to make capital out of Mrs Lemsine's stay, and have resisted them as best we could, though we have often failed.

We think that the International Parliament of Writers should address this matter to ensure that its work is respected by the different institutions. Refugee writers are often confused about where their loyalties to the host city end and those vis-à-vis individual institutions in the city begin.

- *The need to publish and disseminate the guest Writer's works in the host country and the efforts required of the International Parliament of Writers in this field*

We really believe that the International Parliament of Writers should accept responsibilities in this field. It should work through its member writers and its editorials to ensure that the works created by the guest writer (who is of course endorsed by the Parliament) are known throughout the host country. Otherwise, unfortunately, all we would have left would be the bare bones of this wonderful idea of the Network of Cities of Asylum.

The requisite obligations on the part of the writer

This matter should be studied in detail. Should writers engage in paid work during their stay in the City of Asylum? We think they should. Writers are sometimes criticised for their "privileged position" over other citizens. Towns and cities facing economic difficulties are a good breeding ground for this rather reactionary attitude, with the result that an act of solidarity which should easily gain acceptance is hampered by such comments, which are even to be heard on the media. The upshot is that public authority representatives have to become more involved in supporting such action, making the situation more difficult each time it happens in a country like ours where more account is taken of public opinion in decision-making with every day that passes. If this trend continues the city will find it increasingly difficult to renew the agreement with the International Parliament of Writers.

In my view, our work consists not only in enabling cities to provide asylum for writers but also in avoiding unnecessary problems and demonstrating that the institutions' decision to invite the writer was right and that all our citizens can and should feel proud of it.

The writer should therefore also become involved in working life in the city, perhaps as an assistant professor or guest of a University faculty or an educational centre, giving the citizens

the benefit of his or her intellectual work. This matter should be addressed and settled before the writer arrives in the city.

The foregoing explanations are aimed at highlighting a possible contradiction between the idea of a sabbatical year and the writer's cultural presence in the city, a problem which we should all strive to solve.

B) THE PROBLEMS FACING THE WRITER

A further interesting point is the writer's situation in the City of Asylum.

The writers are invariably faced with disrupted family links, the situation of their families and countries, their own and their families' future, loneliness, etc. This causes obvious relational problems, difficulties with writing, lack of security in their movements, and lack of interest in literature, at least for the first few months. How can these difficulties be overcome? How can you and I help the writers in these situations? I must admit that I do not know. Kindness and solicitude are obviously never going to overcome this situation.

Lastly, I would like to mention a subject to which we attach the utmost importance: the writer's future. What happens when the writer notices that he or she only has a few weeks or days to go before returning to the situation he or she was in one year before? This is a terrible and inevitable feeling which will last the duration of the Agreement, when it starts to become obvious that the economic security is going to be replaced by the insecurity of the life led 12 months previously. What can we and the International Parliament of Writers do in this case? I can quite honestly tell you that I do not know, but this issue must be examined as closely as all the aforementioned problems, especially as the Network is growing from day to day and these situations, which we have described from our short experience, will recur in the same or a similar manner.

Having reached this point, and before concluding, I would like to answer a number of questions put to me by the International Parliament of Writers.

1. Candidates must be selected by the Parliament through the intermediary of a group of its members and a representative of the Cities of Asylum who is acquainted with the current situation.
2. I think we must set up an International Agency of the Cities of Asylum precisely to organise and develop the Network in a rational, expeditious manner.
3. I am convinced of the need to draw up a Map of the Cities of Asylum, to be publicised on the international scene by the writers in the Parliament.

Thank you all for your attention. My thanks also go to the person who read through this statement and also the translator of the Spanish text. A special thanks to my dear friend Christian Salmon thanks to whom I am now involved in the Network of Cities of Asylum and to whom I would apologise for not being with you in Strasbourg as I had promised. I would have very much liked to attend, but I was detained for unforeseen reasons of work.

PERSONAL ACCOUNTS

Mr Mohammed MAGANI

Mr Amine ZAOUI

Mr Mohamed Magani¹⁸

A writer, Ken Kesey, one day confessed he had had enough of writing because he was fed up of being a seismograph - of feeling like an instrument which measures rumblings from afar. He wanted, he added, to be a lightning conductor - where things happen immediately, in an instant, and decisively. Throughout this period of strife which has befallen Algeria, I have often wondered what instrument he would like to transform himself into if he were a writer greeted every day by the baker, greengrocer or colleague with the question "So, you're still writing, are you?" - which translates as, at best, you ought to abandon it or, at worst, your death warrant has been signed. Exile has given me part of the answer: a time machine to escape a conflict where the right to live is at its lowest level since the country's independence. Such a machine will not help the thousands who have already died. At most it will help us to understand why society has so unequivocally turned its back on intellectuals and writers.

Exile begins from the moment when the close circle of family, friends and acquaintances yields to the general mood, like echo chambers amplifying the barely veiled hostility of society. They constantly make allusions to those intellectuals, writers and journalists who are being killed, and often reproach the survivors for endangering their lives. Gradually the combined effect of the outside threat and the internal feeling of guilt lead many to abandon literature and all intellectual pursuit. Internalising these two feelings is, in my view, the terminal phase of domestic exile prior to departure.

The emptiness inside, and around you, heralds the arrival of long-term exile. Living out this period is the most agonising of experiences. I remember how, in my seclusion, it had become impossible to sit down at my desk. For months, I hovered, incapable of continuing the novel in hand. I hovered, as it were, around my work and the subject, toying several times a day with the idea of getting down to it. In vain. The effort was superhuman. Narration beyond the realms of possibility. It was as if the novel had become radioactive - it was impossible to get near it, or get away from it and pretend that it did not exist. The words "book", "novel", "poetry", a simple blank sheet of paper and a typewriter, were all symbols of this immediate terror.

I still recall the unmistakable transformation of the small room, which served as my office and personal library, into a curse-stricken corner of the apartment left to gather cobwebs, a place nobody dared enter, and guests never visited.

Equally tragic was the displacement of writing from its customary environment. The act of writing is a solitary pursuit and requires anchoring to a location. It has need of roots. When I arrived in Berlin as a long-term exile, it was hard for me to forget the utterly insane violence left behind. Like an alcoholic sent to dry out, for long weeks I persistently shunned all intellectual reminders in a town where Christo had recently finished wrapping the Reichstag,

¹⁸ Algerian writer, in residence in Berlin (Germany).

Günter Grass faced a fatwa from the media, and the orientalist Annemarie Schimmel was vilifying Salman Rushdie.

When it became only too evident that the murder of intellectuals, writers and journalists really was a planned and orchestrated policy, exile became inevitable. Whether the faceless automatons of the one-party era or the inspirers of terror of today, all participants in the struggle for power fear their questions, their critical attitude, their doubting, and the unorthodox paths they follow. Indeed the radical purge of intellectuals dates back to before the bloodshed of the first half of the 1990s. Its beginnings are to be found in the long anti-intellectual tradition of the ruling elites since independence. Today this tradition has become more entrenched and rooted in a mythical past in which fanaticism, heretical adventurism, and diabolical pragmatism are one. Currently past and present are accomplices to the murder of writers, intellectuals, journalists and teachers from primary school to university, the sole aim of which is the permanent eradication of any opposition mentality.

Because of their number, these murders serve the interests of both the fundamentalists, who seek media attention, and the the ruling groups who are supposedly protecting those citizens under threat; at the same time each side denounces the barbarity of the opposite camp. Since the start of the crisis in Algeria, the demarcation line between two generations of intellectuals has been clearly marked out, or more accurately the logic of the new anti-intellectualism has been explicitly expressed: those who are not with us are against us, and more systematically, those who came before us are like us. The objective of the armed groups is to wipe out all traces of any opposition which existed prior to political fundamentalism in order to appear as the only alternative, the sole force of any importance in Algeria. That is the message they wish to convey to domestic and international public opinion. With their lists of intellectuals, writers, journalists and teachers, the extremists belonging to "the best of the old worlds" blindly go about their task of expunging from the Algerian conscience, and from history, the reality that many of the men and women killed or on the hit list were in fact the first to take a stand against the hegemony of the one-party system or "dictocracy" as its coming to be known, which consists of a large measure of dictactorship and a small shot of democracy.

Mr Amine Zaoui¹⁹

THE FIRST NIGHT

The fourteenth of July nineteen ninety-five
I did not even realise
that it was a national holiday
A tiny airport
A deserted town
A very low sky
Another town, CAEN: four letters
like my home town, ORAN
Lina, my young daughter, says:
"Look, Daddy - the sky is lower here;
we must be a long way from ORAN."
Rabia adds:
"Here the sky is low;
God in heaven is just six feet above us.
Another night in another town.
Like nomads.
... And during that first night,
CAEN came and got into bed next to us,
and asked me to tell a story about my ancestors:
... Once upon a time...
Puzzled
Tunnel or maze
A terrified memory.
A glowing ember in the palm of my hand.
Acidic story: drop after drop of blood and blood -
and bravery.
Where is the North?
Where is the South?
YA ALLAH, the mightiest and the greatest,
from your canopy on high grant me a little more time -
Grant me another violet so that I can say:
"the Earth is no longer flat!"
YA ALLAH, the wisest, the most poetic of poets,
fount of miracles, miracle-maker,
give me a place, a tree, a town, ORAN, to liberate "imagination from its sealed bottle!"

¹⁹ Algerian writer, in residence in Caen (France).

We are orphans: ever since Ali ibn Abi taleb (fourth Muslim Caliph and cousin of the prophet Mohammed) banished from the mosques all story-tellers, dreamers and fantasists because they blended imagination and religion, mixed the profane with the sacred.

Twenty poets - perhaps a little less,
condemned to death and executed, under the prophet's authority.

The "brigand" poets (AS-SAALIK) formed a bulwark against standardisation, against the model of a single lifestyle, frozen in the Arabian Sahara, refused to sign up to regulatory, pre-regulated thought.

Authority imposes a barrack lifestyle, a community lifestyle, and condemns the "folly" and "beauty" of individuality.

A great book, murdered!

The Egyptian "Parliament", in a country with a Pharaonic past, now dictated by Al Azhar, decides to ban the "Arabian Nights" and burn all copies on the grounds that it is a "licentious" book (ibahia).

Greetings to the latter-day inquisitors; greetings to the "deputies of the people's assembly"!

We flee from one state to another but the murderers follow us, flashing wieldy imaginations, wielding flashy words.

Cairo, June 1995 - an academic, Nasr Abou Zeid is found guilty of apostasy for his heretical writings... his crime was to treat the Koran as out-of-date...

The court went on to order Nasr's separation from his wife Ibtihal, herself a teacher in the Spanish department, as apostates are not allowed to live with Muslims.

Nasr and Ibtihal leave Cairo and take up exile in Leyden, the Netherlands.

An outcry... hatred takes over feasts, weddings, poetry and the joyfulness of seductive bodies.

A nightmare.

The vampires have swooped down on an Earth swarming with stories, water and beautiful women.

They have murdered the dreams beneath little children's pillows...

They have chased away the perfume of cinnamon and carnation asleep in the folds of husbands and wives' clothing.

The guillotine is posed, well-oiled, from the sabre of Caliph "Muawiya" in the "Al-Amawiyyines" mosque, Damascus, to the clean-shaven rantings of a certain Ali Benhadj, in the Bab'el-Oued mosque, Algiers.

From the murder of Bachar.ibn.Burde, the poet of courage, insolence and resentment, to the murder of Tahar Djaout, a Berber full of light, letters and prophecy.

Courage.

From the murder of "Guilane the Damascene" to the murder of Youcef Sebti, known for his songs, his wounds and his stark lifestyle.

An AFP dispatch comes in:

"Sadok Melallah has just been condemned to death and beheaded in public for committing blasphemy and abjuration..."

Sadok is only a Saudi poet, with a passion for love and love.

Silent traps here, silent traps there...

One morning a chartered plane lands in Beirut with a commando aboard - they kidnap the Saudi writer, Nacer Said, and fly him back to the kingdom.

Nacer's body is dissolved in acid! not so very far from the "Kaaba"!...

Silence in the West...

Silence among Saudia's friends.

History is one big tomb.

From the murder of "Al Maarri" in his Syrian village of "Maarram-Annouamane", in the 12th century, a writer and philosopher, crying "My faith is science", a hedonist and humorist, with a passion for pretty women, apples, pomegranates and the grapes of paradise... to the murder of the Lebanese philosopher, Hussein Meroua, in Beirut, with a passion for Andalusian thought.

From the murder of "El Jahid" in the 10th century, the great "Mouatasilite" and pioneering stylist of pure modern Arabic, to the murder of the writer "Faradj Foda" in Cairo, capital of the land of "Oum Eddounia".

And as a tribute to Foda an edition of his complete works has just been banned and withdrawn from all bookshops on the orders of Al Azhar.

From the spectacular murder of "Abdallah ibn El Moukaffae", master of the marvellous "Kalila and Dimna" stories, a writer who stole the languages of all the animals, another prophet, another Sidna Soleimane, to the murder of the Lebanese theorist, Medhi Amel in Beirut's main thoroughfare, the "Alhamra".

From the murder of "El Halladj", master of the dervishes in Baghdad, great magician of the Arabic language and great enchanter, to the murder to Abdelkader Alloula, folk-song writer on the outskirts of Oran, an entranced playwright dreaming of social equality.

From the murder of Sahrawardi, fighting a perplexed language with a mighty pen, battling with its meanings and connotations, a sceptic convinced of nothing, to the murder of Azeddine Medjoubi, at the entrance to the national theatre, Algiers.

The hand that burned Macika, the beautiful Jewish singer, in Tunis, home to the famous "Azzaytouna" mosque, and "Kairawane", and the delicious drink "Al Bokha", a concoction of fresh figs", is the same hand that murdered Chab Hasseni, Oran's prince of Rai.

From the pursuit of Ibn-Hazm Al Wahrani, a writer renowned for his over-the-top fun-poking, to the trickery of Naguib Mahfouz, putting together fragments of a new novel in Cairo.

From one murder to another!
From one dark tunnel to another!
One bloodstained page after another...

That is our history: a motley assortment of crime, blood, trickery, betrayal, intrigue - and exile and courage.

That is our history, a rotting corpse, a holocaust of letters, a carnage of books.

Works of literature are burned and their authors are tossed on to the pyre, condemned as atheists - "Zanadika".

This history encircles us, in our memories, in this language that is said to be the lingua franca of paradise, even in the intolerant call to prayer.

How can literature be saved from these executioners, how can books be spared the arsonists?!

How can we celebrate joy in a country where schoolchildren are relentlessly taught the bloodthirsty story of Al Hadjadj ibn Youcef as an example of courage and given history

textbooks with colour photographs of Hitler... a country which sets aside television airtime so that Sheik Mohammed Al-Ghazali can insult the great Kateb Yacine and demand that this atheistic writer should not be buried in the martyrs' cemetery.

What dire straits! rabble-rousing is no longer dead!
Are we still able to resist and write personal accounts of this rack and ruin?

Shall we still manage to love a bird, plant a palm-tree near the tombstone of a friend, a poet, a journalist, murdered yesterday, last year, fourteen centuries ago.. or tomorrow!

The inquisition courts applying the Hisba, an Islamic practice enabling practising Muslims to attack anyone who offends their religion, are terrorising our writers and artists.

Hisba was applied to condemn Nasr for apostasy and make him divorce his wife...

A fundamentalist recently announced his intention to do the same to Nobel prize-winner Naguib Mahfouz.

Awkwardness.

A maze.

Give me a place, in the shade of a tree, where I can tell or read to my children the wonderful stories of Kalila and Dimna and the Arabian Nights without hearing over my shoulder the gloomy sermons of Egyptian parliamentarians or members of the Algerian National People's Assembly, or the party of Abdallah al Ahmar, in San'a, or the Rafah in Istanbul.

Ya Allah... a little longer

to be able to say:

"The Earth is not flat"

... and the town lies asleep nearby - Hazar, Ilias, Lina and Rabia

Good night: there were six of us, that first night.

Amine Zaoui

Appendices

The Charter of Cities of Asylum

Conclusion and Decisions of the First Congress of Cities of Asylum

Model of agreement between Cities of Asylum and the I.P.W.

THE CHARTER OF THE CITIES OF ASYLUM

SECTION I

The following international instruments and treaties, of a universal or regional nature, all provide for twofold protection of the writer; on the one hand, the right to freedom of expression and, on the other hand, the right to asylum:

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights signed in New York on 10 December 1948 and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights signed in New York on 16 December 1966,

the Geneva Convention on the status of Refugees signed on 28 July 1951 and the Protocol signed in New York on 31 January 1967,

the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms signed in Rome on 4 November 1950, and its eleven protocols,

the Declaration on the freedom of expression and information adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 29 April 1982.

The following international instruments and treaties, of a universal or regional nature, all provide for twofold protection of the writer; on the one hand, the right to freedom of expression and, on the other hand, the right to asylum:

Despite the extent of the rights provided for by these instruments, the threats to which writers are currently subjected call for a reappraisal of the whole situation and an appropriate response.

Local authorities, especially cities, have a fundamental role to play in this connection. The European Charter of Local Self-Government enshrines the principle of subsidiarity. Resolution 236 (1992) of the CLRAE, the European Urban Charter, Recommendation 10 (1995) and Resolution 15 (1995) on local democracy: a civic project, underline the importance of social and political inclusion and multicultural integration, both as principles of civilised cohabitation within nation-states and as factors of stability and peace in international relations. These instruments call for collaboration and solidarity between local authorities themselves, and between local authorities and other public authorities, both within the individual countries and beyond national borders.

SECTION II

A new kind of intolerance towards literature has emerged in the form of absolute and anonymous censorship, which destroys the freedom of creation and thus the faculty of thought itself.

Attacks against writers who consider the imagination to be a source of literature are growing in number, becoming more serious, and are increasingly anonymous and transnational.

This new threat to literature demands a new response, particularly the creation of new forms of hospitality and patronage which consider multiculturalism to be an essential condition for literary creation.

A. The new threat to writers

The origin of the new threat to writers is even more sinister than before; whereas censorship was previously imposed by the state, today it is of a private nature; writers are being persecuted by groups which support ideas or beliefs founded on intolerance, by people who base their acts and objectives on intolerance, and who find self-fulfilment in this.

This new kind of threat is no longer related to a particular place or territory. Its arbitrary nature means that it can emerge in any country, and in any place, whether public or private. When it becomes explicit, it results in the banishment and flight of the threatened writer. When the state can no longer guarantee the writer's safety on its territory, the writer has to leave his or her country, and seek a new life elsewhere.

Now that the threat has been transformed in this way, it is no longer the object of literary creation itself which is censored, but writers who are threatened and persecuted in their everyday lives. In the past, it was rarely the writer in person who was persecuted. Today there are no limits, and it is the very life of the writer which is in danger, especially since the punishment is served with no warning and may be carried out at any time, and in any place.

Attacks against writers are becoming so frequent they are almost commonplace and their fellow citizens become inured, benumbed and ultimately indifferent to the suffering of the victims.

In fact, it is the very object of censorship which has changed. Now, it is no longer opinions considered to be dissident by the state which are being censored, but imagination itself. This new censorship is aimed at the faculty of imagination as a potentially creative process, whether it is critical of the established order or not.

Literature is a solitary art which requires little in the way of resources and can be widely practised. Writers are consequently weak, and vulnerable to attack. The spontaneity of their

imagination is their only weapon, and this is seen as a danger by intolerant minds for the simple reason that it enables the world to be reinterpreted, created anew.

B. The Network of Cities of Asylum

Cities, particularly **cities of asylum**, provide an answer to the new kind of threat which exists today, a threat which can lead to death. Censorship of the imagination, especially when exercised by private groups, requires a new form of protection, in an appropriate setting. This can only be provided by a city, a community with an unshakeable faith in the democratic values of freedom and law.

But this is not enough. Since threats and persecution have become international, an international response needs to be found. Only a system which is both decentralised and co-ordinated can meet this challenge: in other words, a **network** of cities of asylum.

Each city of asylum undertakes to provide hospitality which is based on a close relationship between local authorities and citizens. Writers are safe when they live surrounded by neighbours, in a city which is democratic and therefore safe.

In these cities, there is a natural solidarity between readers and all those who promote culture, including universities, institutions of patronage and culture, and regional and national authorities.

The system must be co-ordinated by the writers themselves, in particular by the International Parliament of Writers. The intensity and urgency of the threat require an immediate, reliable response, which needs the backing of the writers themselves, in compliance with the principles contained in the Vienna Declaration.

All cities should rally their forces, and invite and welcome persecuted writers. They can rely on the support of the International Parliament of Writers and on the Network of Cities of Asylum.

The Network of Cities of Asylum could thus become a true "archipelago" of the imagination, by pinpointing tolerance as an essential condition for literary creation. This network will thus be a triumph for art and the intellect.

Section III

The International Parliament of Writers (IPW) will propose names of threatened writers for cities of asylum to "adopt". Acceptance implies that the city undertakes to help make the writer feel at home, mobilising the relevant public or private institutions, whilst the IPW will promote the writer's work and facilitate his or her integration in the city.

Direct, continuous monitoring will be performed by the IPW, in co-operation with the cities, for writers who have been welcomed by a particular city.

Cities of asylum are automatically members of the network. Each city of asylum shall provide accommodation for a period of one year for their protégés, and shall facilitate the writers' access to public services. In particular, each city of asylum undertakes to pay a contribution to the International Parliament of Writers which, in turn, will cover the writers' living expenses.

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE), in close collaboration with the International Parliament of Writers, shall support the Network of Cities of Asylum and its activities. In particular, it shall invite European cities to sign this Charter of the Cities of Asylum adopted by its Resolution 17 (1995) and will provide relevant follow-up.

Conclusions and decisions of the First Congress of Cities of Asylum

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE), in adopting the Charter of Cities of Asylum appended to Resolution 17 (1995):

- recommended that European cities commit themselves to the Charter by participating in the Network of Cities of Asylum;
- instructed an ad hoc group (currently the working group "Local democracy: a Civic Project") to monitor the implementation of the Charter and the Network of Cities in close co-operation with the International Parliament of Writers (IPW).

The first Congress of Cities of Asylum was held in Strasbourg on 21 and 22 March 1996 on the joint initiative of the CLRAE and the IPW. It brought together observers from some 25 European cities²⁰, ten or so of which were already members of the Network²¹, while others²² were poised to join. The Congress was also attended by observers from a number of non-European

²⁰ Almeria, Barcelona, Valladolid (Spain), Caen, Colmar, Ferney-Voltaire, La Rochelle, Orléans, Strasbourg (France), Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Hanover (Germany), Göteborg (Sweden), Dornbirn, Graz, Vienna, Salzburg (Austria), Helsinki (Finland), Padua (Italy), Rotterdam (Netherlands).

²¹ Almeria, Barcelona, Valladolid (Spain), Berlin (Germany), Caen, Strasbourg (France), Göteborg (Sweden), Helsinki (Finland), Stavanger (Norway).

²² Copenhagen (Denmark), Dornbirn, Graz, Salzburg, Vienna (Austria), Ferney-Voltaire, La Rochelle, Montpellier, Nantes, Nîmes, Orléans, Rennes (France), Frankfurt, Leipzig (Germany), Lausanne (Switzerland), Los Angeles (United States), São Paulo (Brazil), Sintra (Portugal), Venice (Italy), Santiago de Compostela (Spain).

cities²³, writers already in residence²⁴, representatives of writers' associations and artists' welfare organisations, journalists and other well-known figures.

The participants heard statements from Mr Karl Christian Zahn, Chair of the CLRAE Working Group "Local Democracy: a Civic Project", Mr Christian Salmon, Secretary General of the IPW, who read a message from Mr Jacques Derrida, Vice-President of the IPW, Mr Pierre-Henri Imbert, Director of Human Rights at the Council of Europe, Mr René Garrec, President of the Basse Normandie Regional Council and Ms Catherine Trautmann, Mayor of Strasbourg.

With the Algerian writer Rachid Boujedra presiding, Mr Fernando Martínez-López, municipal councillor, former Mayor of Almeria and CLRAE rapporteur, presented the Charter of Cities of Asylum while Mr Christian Salmon took stock of the initial experiences of the Network of Cities of Asylum, outlining the prospects for the future.

Having heard statements from writers offered asylum in Berlin, Caen and Strasbourg, the participants set up two working groups, chaired by Mr Norbert Riedel (Austria) and Mr Martínez-López (Spain), to look at issues relating to the operation of the network and the residences. They met again the following day, 22 March, to draw the **Conclusions** of the meeting, a summary of which appears below.

Implementation of the Charter

In adopting the Charter of Cities of Asylum, the CLRAE set up a partnership with the IPW. The latter retains the major responsibility for the management of the network and is the primary point of contact for the cities concerned.

When a city decides to become a City of Asylum in accordance with the terms of the Charter, it informs the CLRAE in writing. The final decision is taken by the IPW which in turn informs the CLRAE. This decision gives the city the status of City of Asylum and member of the network. In Section III, the Charter states that "Cities of Asylum are automatically members of the network."

The participants discussed whether a city could be a member of the network without being a City of Asylum, but did not reach any conclusion. This issue could be re-examined at a later date, but for the present it would be preferable to stick to the wording of the Charter.

Similarly, the idea of "Regions of Asylum" was also put forward without any objection being raised. There was therefore nothing to prevent city/region agreements as in the case of Caen (Basse Normandie).

²³ São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Montreal, Quebec, Nagasaki.

²⁴ in Barcelona, Berlin, Caen and Strasbourg.

Thirdly, although once again no final decision was taken, participants discussed extending protection to artists, translators and other creative persons. This too would be re-examined, but for the present the practice currently followed by the IPW, ie not to exclude in principle any category of creative persons, would be maintained.

Further discussion led to clarifications and additions to the reciprocal commitments by Cities of Asylum and the IPW referred to in Section III of the Charter. They can be summed up as follows:

In deciding to become a City of Asylum and member of the network, a city undertakes to:

1. provide refuge for one (or several) writers proposed by the IPW for one year. The IPW may exceptionally propose that the same writer be offered asylum for a further year;
2. make appropriate arrangements to welcome the writer by contacting him or her sufficiently in advance and providing all relevant information on his/her stay and assistance;
3. offer the writer and his/her family (spouse, children) suitable accommodation;
4. enable the writer to settle in the city preferably in July if accompanied by children;
5. pay the writer a grant, the minimum amount of which could be as follows: the equivalent of ECU 1,000 net (per month) for a single person, ECU 1,300 net per month for a couple, ECU 1,700 net if there were children. These figures should be net of tax and were given for countries where the average income per inhabitant corresponded to the Community average. For other countries, including the CEECs, they should be adjusted in line with actual purchasing power. In other words, the amount should be sufficient to guarantee the writer and his/her family an acceptable standard of living.

The annual amount of the grant should be paid at the beginning of the writer's stay to the International Parliament of Writers, which would undertake to pay the monthly amount to the writer. However, if there were serious objections, the city could, in agreement with the IPW, pay the grant directly to the writer;

6. help the writer and his/her family integrate into the city: legal integration (legal status, residence permits and authorisations, residence card, fiscal status, etc); social integration (health insurance, access to public and administrative services, council-run restaurants, urban transport networks, schools for the children, etc); cultural integration (access to public libraries, universities, etc).

Participants were very much in favour of cities offering writers temporary work of benefit

to the community and compatible with the status of writer, eg in the field of education, research, cultural events (conferences, debates, etc) or the media.

In addition, cities should encourage, as far as possible, the reading, translation and publication of the writer's work, his/her contacts with other writers and their associations and representatives of the cultural life of the city.

All these measures would be taken with the agreement of the writer;

7. pay the IPW an annual subscription of FF 15,000 (or less for cities in central and eastern Europe) as a contribution to the growing expenses incurred by the IPW Secretariat, which could not be covered by grants alone, as the latter were invariably temporary and thus uncertain.

There was some scope for confusion in Section III of the Charter between the monthly grant paid to the writer and the annual subscription to the IPW. It was therefore necessary to spell out the distinction;

8. conclude an agreement with the IPW where all these aspects would be covered in greater detail. The above conditions should be viewed as framework principles the application of which would vary from one city to another depending on the particular circumstances.

At the same time, by becoming Cities of Asylum and members of the network, the cities would also become partners of the IPW and the CLRAE, qualifying for all the political, cultural and other advantages inherent therein, including greater prominence, the framing of joint policies, holding of cultural events, etc. In short, cities would become involved in IPW and CLRAE activities as part of a joint project: implementation of the Charter of Cities of Asylum.

Guidelines for future action

The participants at the first Congress recognised the major political significance of the gesture made by the Cities of Asylum and of the setting up of an active network, ie on the one hand the fight against barbarism, oppression and murder as political options, and on the other, defence of freedom of thought, expression and artistic creation.

The IPW and the CLRAE also felt that emphasis should be placed on a qualitative approach to the development of the activities of the Cities of Asylum and the network.

It was not merely a question of protecting the physical safety of the writer and his/her family but also of defending his/her capacity for literary production and promoting his/her works. In addition, the time spent in residence should enable the writer to become financially self-supporting as quickly as possible and to become free of a sense of dependency and the need for

assistance.

At the same time, the cities should take advantage of the presence of the writers resident among them to strive to develop a new concept of citizenship, a policy of cultural openness which could be summed up as "active cosmopolitanism".

In order to achieve these aims the Cities of Asylum, the network, the IPW and the CLRAE must employ appropriate means. For this reason it was essential not to contemplate a network expansion policy whatever the cost, which might be to the detriment of quality. An ideal development would be for the network to expand in tandem with an increase in the support structures (organisation, finance, administration, etc). To sum up, yes to expansion, but gradually and carefully.

As for the dynamics of the network, priority should be given to stepping up relations between the Cities of Asylum and helping to launch interconnected cultural projects.

It could prove easier to manage the network if "regional" IPW sections could be set up, grouping together local writers and any associations they belonged to as well as the resident writers. Similarly, the setting up of "Regions of Asylum", covering at least two cities of asylum, could help the network to operate on a decentralised footing, based on interconnected centres: a constellation or, as the Charter put it, an "archipelago" of projects and initiatives.

For example, the IPW wished to frame a publishing and distribution policy for the writings of writers resident in the Cities of Asylum and more generally, a publication policy for all censored works or artistic creations. The magazine "Littératures" should be given an expanded role through the publication of national editions produced jointly with newspapers and magazines in the different European countries. Similarly, some thought could be given to setting up an IPW prize or award.

The work of the IPW and the life of the network could be made considerably easier if the Cities of Asylum were to come together within some sort of structure yet to be defined. The cities' annual contributions could then be paid directly to this structure, the status and location of which could be settled at a later stage. There needed to be clarification of the respective roles of the IPW, the network and the CLRAE, and the IPW should in particular be able to shed the growing number of administrative tasks so that it could concentrate on its true purpose, that of framing cultural policies.

The IPW was also considering setting up an "Observatory of freedom of creation" whose tasks would include monitoring violations of freedom of creation, particularly in those cases not picked up by the media, alerting public opinion to the more serious violations, gaining a better understanding of the situation of those writers likely to be candidates for asylum in one of the cities, producing and publishing focused reports on the state of freedom of creation in the world.

There was considerable discussion on the setting up of these two complementary

structures, but no final decision was taken. However, the participants noted the interest expressed by Barcelona (Spain) and Ferney-Voltaire (France) in having the Observatory in their cities.

Relations with the CLRAE

In adopting the Charter of Cities of Asylum appended to Resolution 17, the CLRAE set up a partnership agreement with the IPW.

The CLRAE decide to support, in "close collaboration" with the IPW, the Network of Cities of Asylum and its activities. It also invited European cities to sign the Charter and agreed to provide relevant follow-up (Section III).

Resolution 17 assigned these tasks to a CLRAE working group set up in 1994 to provide a contribution to the Council of Europe's youth campaign and plan of action against racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance, decided upon at the Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe in Vienna (Austria) in 1993.

The group has already forged "close links" with the IPW. Together they decided to organise the 1st Congress of Cities of Asylum in Strasbourg on 21 and 22 March. In addition, the CLRAE intends to participate as far as possible in the life of the Network of Cities of Asylum. In adopting Resolution 15 (1995) on "Local Democracy: a Civic Project", the Congress set up an award of "Exemplary democratic town: a civic project". The member cities of the various networks linked with the CLRAE, including therefore the Cities of Asylum, might be interested in participating in this amicable competition.

Clearly, however, appropriate CLRAE involvement in co-managing the Network of Cities of Asylum with the IPW would call for the setting up within the Congress of a structure designed solely for this purpose. Only in this way will it be possible to implement the Charter of Cities of Asylum, which is a tangible result of the work undertaken by the CLRAE as part of the Council of Europe's campaign and plan of action.

Other possibilities mooted by participants included co-operation by the partners of the Cities of Asylum project with other authorities, in particular the Council of Europe's European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity.

*
* *

At the end of the meeting, the participants adopted the following DECISIONS:

1. The Cities of Asylum which have joined the network and which have already provided a home for threatened or persecuted writers, or which are poised to do so, form a permanent grouping which for the moment has no legal personality - although having a high moral profile - and which foreshadows a future "International Association of Cities of Asylum".

2. The cities currently in contact with the IPW or interested in this joint IPW/CLRAE initiative participate as observers in the work of this body; the same is true of any institution or association which seeks to defend freedom of literary and artistic creation and to protect writers and artists throughout the world, resident writers, literary journalists, pressure groups and any other interested body or individual.

3. The participants consider that the above conclusions contain enough basic principles, suggestions and information to enable (a) those cities which have not already done so to reach a decision as soon as possible on whether or not to join the network and (b) the Cities of Asylum to implement them in a common strategy, where necessary supplementing them in an imaginative way. In this type of exercise, it is difficult to be exhaustive once and for all. To some extent, it is only in the light of experience and subsequent information exchange that progress can be made.

4. The Secretariats (IPW and CLRAE) are instructed to redraft the model agreement between the Cities of Asylum and the IPW on the basis of the clarifications contained in these conclusions.

5. A permanent contact group is set up comprising representatives of the IPW and the CLRAE, at least one City of Asylum and at least one resident writer, who are entrusted with the following tasks:

- * examining the practical issues referred to in the above conclusions which have not yet been considered in sufficient detail;

- * considering the ways of setting up an international structure to manage the Network of Cities of Asylum and an "Observatory of freedom of creation", and submitting proposals to the network and its partners;

- * making suggestions with a view to framing a publishing and distribution policy for the writings of resident writers, arranging for the publication of all censored works or artistic creations, and co-publishing the magazine "Littératures" with newspapers and magazines in several countries;

- * convening extraordinary meetings of the Network of Cities of Asylum when circumstances demand;

6. The participants agree to meet again in "enlarged Congress" in Strasbourg in March/April 1997.

7. They ask the CLRAE to:

* note in the light of the results of the first Congress that the Charter and Network of Cities of Asylum are a unique means of combating intolerance and that, consequently, this initiative fits perfectly into the follow-up to the Council of Europe's youth campaign and plan of action against racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance (Resolution 15: Local Democracy: a Civic Project);

* continue to monitor the implementation of the Charter of Cities of Asylum while giving continuing support to the IPW and the Network of Cities of Asylum;

* inform the cities and regions of Europe of the results of the first Congress of Cities of Asylum (Strasbourg, 21 and 22 March 1996);

**Model agreement between the Cities of Asylum
and the International Parliament of Writers (IPW)**

Article 1 - Declaration

In accordance with the Resolution adopted by the European Parliament on 21 September 1995 calling on the cities of Europe to join the Network of Cities of Asylum set up by the International Parliament of Writers, the city of proclaims itself a "City of Asylum" and agrees to be bound by the Charter of Cities of Asylum adopted on 31 May 1995 by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE) in its Resolution 17.

Article 2 - Undertakings of the City

The City of undertakes to implement the following provisions, as agreed with the IPW:

- * it shall pay to the IPW upon signature of this agreement:
 - an annual subscription of ECU 2,500 as a contribution to the management of the network of Cities of Asylum;
 - a sum equivalent to the annual amount of the grant paid to the writer, ie²⁵:
ECU 1,000 (net of tax) per month x 12 for single persons,
ECU 1,300 (net of tax) per month x 12 for a couple,
ECU 1,700 (net of tax) per month x 12 for a family;
- * it shall place one or more apartments at the disposal of the IPW for the use of writer(s) offered asylum. The apartment(s) must offer adequate comfort and space; in particular they must be appropriate for the size of the writer's family and the requirements of his/her work and private life. Shared housing shall not be considered suitable accommodation;
- * it shall facilitate the acquisition of social security coverage and legal status (visa, residence permit) to enable the writer not only to reside in the City for the duration of his/her stay but also, if conditions allow, to contemplate settling in the host country;
- * to this end, it shall endeavour to enable each writer to benefit from municipal public services (such as council restaurants, urban transport networks, libraries,

²⁵ These figures are valid for countries where the average income per inhabitant corresponds to the Community average (European Union). For other countries, including the CEECs, these figures should be adjusted in line with actual purchasing power. In other terms, the amount paid should offer the writer and his/her family an acceptable standard of living.

schools, etc) and shall facilitate the work of the guest writer and meetings between writers.

Article 3 - Undertakings of the International Parliament of Writers.

In exchange for the commitments of the host city, the International Parliament of Writers undertakes to:

- * pay the whole of the monthly residence grant to each of the writers offered asylum in the host city in accordance with the amounts stipulated in the preceding article;
- * keep regularly in touch with the writers offered asylum and with the various members of the network;
- * organise each year, in collaboration with the CLRAE, the Congress of Cities of Asylum bringing together representatives of the host cities and guest writers.

Done at on

Signatures:

The Mayor or his/her representative

The President of the IPW: Salman Rushdie
or his representative

NB: A copy of the signed text of the Agreement shall be forwarded for information to the President of the CLRAE.

Concil of Europe -
CPLRE
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex
tel 33.3.88.41.20.00
fax 33.3.88.41.27.51

Internationale Parliament of Writers
PO BOX 13
F-67068 Strasbourg Cedex
tel 33.3.88.52.00.88
fax 33.3.88.52.01.07