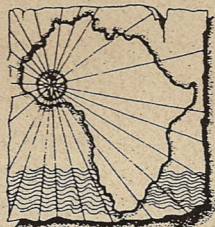
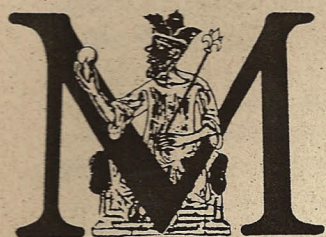


Mande Studies Association



Association des Études Mande



A N S A

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Our Man at Ground Zero

Editor's note: Peter Mark's description of his experiences at the site of the World Trade Center disaster offer a unique perspective on what happened there during the first week of rescue efforts. Peter's efforts to publish this were rebuffed by various organs of the print media, so it is being produced here. If anyone asks, "Is the September 11th disaster related to Mande studies?" The answer is, of course, "To what is it not related?" - DCC

To the Mouth of Hell; to the Promised Land: A Week in lower Manhattan (c 2001 all rights reserved, Peter Mark)

The days immediately following the attack on the World Trade Center were difficult for many native New Yorkers who were not directly affected by the dreadful losses, but who found themselves away from the City. One wanted somehow to help; one wanted simply to be there. My teaching duties kept me in New England until Friday, three days after the event.

Prologue: September 15th

Saturday, a day of viewing the aftermath of horror. Today I have been to the mouth of Hell. And I have been to the Promised Land. It is, incredibly, almost the same place. The only difference ... is in the hearts and souls of human beings.

This day began at 5, when I drove into a sleeping New York. I arrived at the Javits Convention Center at 7, but volunteers were no longer needed, so I walked down the empty West Side Highway, towards the billowing white smoke that still marks the site of the attack.

The best way to cross a police barrier is to have business on the other side. Across the first barricade on Canal Street, the Mobil gas station had become a supply drop. I ducked under the barrier, and started to work there. My duties consisted of removing garbage,

then bringing supplies of drinks and food to the curbside and, finally, rearranging the goods to be more visible. After a few hours, other volunteers arrived. So, around 12:30, I decided to fill a bucket with ice and drinks for rescue workers returning from Ground Zero, and to head as far south as I was allowed to go. To my considerable surprise, that was all the way to the pedestrian span at Stuyvesant High School, barely 500 meters from the blast site. From the bridge, one clearly sees the few remaining iron girders and the five lattice-like shards of building frame, a ghostly memory of the doomed structures. The horror of this is beyond words. Here, in place of the city's tallest (if nondescript) buildings, was a pile of steaming, smoking rubble. Behind, buildings are torn and façades are charred. On West Street, a few firefighters made their way slowly towards the ruins. I had no desire to approach closer. I had no business there. Slowly, I walked back up the avenue, to a nearby canteen. This rest stop was full of jumbled together boxes of dried goods (gas masks, hard hats, socks, medicines); drinks, and food...and, incongruously, several boxes of mouthwash. I spent the afternoon carrying boxes, and cleaning the street. Four of us brought some order to this mountain of donated materials.

Briefly, we were joined by a construction worker, Carlos Ortiz. He cursed the authorities for refusing to let him help in the rescue efforts. He and hundreds, perhaps thousands of other volunteers who have come by bus or car from around the country, are out in the cold. Carlos' brother-in-law is among the missing. He showed me photos of the man, and his new twins. Carlos was frantic. Looking for a way to help with the rescue efforts, he paced like a caged animal. I suggested he talk with the Salvation Army people, who seem to be closer to Ground Zero than anyone else. Perhaps he did this, for at some moment he was no longer there. This morning some volunteers nearly provoked a riot in response to the announcement that only contract labor

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To the Mouth of Hell (continued)

was now needed. They waved flags and sang "God Bless America." The spirit of volunteering, of giving, is everywhere.

This morning some volunteers nearly provoked a riot in response to the announcement that only contract labor was now needed. They waved flags and sang "God Bless America." The spirit of volunteering, of giving, is everywhere.

Every few minutes a contingent of firefighters would trudge slowly north. We offered them drinks and clothing. They eagerly took the drinks, for the sun was hot. Everyone wanted Gatorade. Later, they gathered in front of the equipment, choosing flashlights, socks, boots, hard hats and the gas masks. We felt useful. But we are only helping them to do the difficult and, too often, very dangerous jobs. This evening, whenever a squad of fatigued firefighters walked past like worn troops returning from the front, we broke into applause. It was 2 pm before I had time for a lunch (all the homemade food is donated, some of it prepared by fine restaurants). Then back to work. At about this time a van pulled up carrying young men wearing French tee-shirts. They are specialists in Search and Rescue and had just flown in from Paris. I helped them get equipment items, giving them the last cap -- the one on my head. It is profoundly moving, that a contingent should fly in from France.

When I finally started north again, around 5:30, the sun was low in the bright blue sky, the Woolworth Building gleamed white, and a soft breeze moved the air. Never have I experienced more beautiful weather in the City. Except for the sick yellow-white cloud that rose from the Mouth of Hell and covered the sky to our immediate south.

A phone tent allowed free calls anywhere. So I was able to call my wife in France. Back at the gas station at Canal and West Streets, there was now a large crowd, with some people waving small American flags and all applauding whenever any workers made their way north. There were barricades and policemen to keep the crowd back. When I approached, one policeman asked curtly, "Yes, may I help you?" I explained where I had been. His demeanor changed...he smiled and thanked me; no, I protested, he was the one to be thanked. And then I climbed under the barrier and rejoined the rest of the world.

Across Manhattan, small American flags are everywhere; not just on the pickup trucks of construction workers, but on the bicycles of bearded middle-aged men, and hanging from windows at nearly every house. We all wear tiny red-white-blue lapels. I

stopped at a small bistro for a glass of wine. The waiter is an immigrant from Mexico City. We talked. We are all immigrants here, now or before. They are us who died in the buildings.

There has been a sea change, at least for now, in New York City. Everyone is opening up to everyone else. Talking, making eye contact, even on the subway. Everything has changed.

And the country has taken New York to its heart, sending volunteers and offering both sympathy and active support. Never in my life have Americans been so united, in their grief, but also in their strength. While we do not know yet in which direction our political leaders will try to lead us, it is clear that there has been a rebirth of a communal and cooperative sentiment and a spirit of sacrifice. I-- old SDS member -- have never been so proud to be an American.

First Day with the Dogs: September 17th

On Monday morning I was again handing out coffee at the Mobil station when a bus pulled up. I climbed up to ask if anyone wanted coffee. Inside sat five red-uniformed men. An accented voice asked, "Do you speak French?" It was a second French rescue team. These men were members of a not-for-profit organization, GICRS (Groupement d'Intervention Cynophile de Recherche et Sauvetage). They, too, had flown in from Paris -- with 3 trained dogs and 5 cases of equipment -- paying their own expenses to help with the search, as their members have done after other catastrophes throughout the world.

They had been stuck on this bus since 5 a.m. with a suspicious MTA driver who had decided to call in the Highway Police. Together with the leader, Patrick Wackernie, and his assistant Alex, we hailed a cab and set off for the French Consulate, get them official authorization. At the consulate we were at first greeted enthusiastically, but we were soon told that there was nothing the consulate, or even the embassy, could do to obtain US government clearance for the team. For the next five frustrating hours, it appeared that these men would be sent home without being able to offer their assistance.

GICRS members have participated in rescue efforts after earthquakes in Turkey, Greece, Taiwan and elsewhere. Their dogs are trained to find not only corpses -- as with many American police dogs -- but also survivors buried under the rubble. Each hour lost to bureaucratic delay diminished their chance to locate survivors. And here, they were told they were not needed at the World Trade Center site.

Reluctantly, after nearly 7 hours, Patrick decided to change their plane tickets and fly back to Paris that

evening. We flagged another cab to return to West Street and look for the rest of the group. Our driver, hearing our destination, told us there was no charge for the ride. This was typical of the spirit we met everywhere. Patrick was finally able to raise his colleagues by walkie-talkie, just as we passed the Javits Center, staging point for all volunteers. By happy coincidence, the other crew members had been moved to the Javits Center. Our driver made a sharp left turn, and the group was reunited. And, happy surprise, several FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) personnel had decided to put the Frenchmen in a hotel, in hopes of being able to use the team the next day. We were all excited; perhaps the day's efforts had not been in vain. We had begun to load the dogs and cases into two police vans, when a police officer, Scott Killian of Charlotte, N.C., took me aside. "I want you to stall these guys; don't let them leave this site. We need their expertise and we are going to get them in to Ground Zero tonight." He told me to go next door to the commissary to be fitted for a gas mask. Then it hit me; I was to go into the ruins with them. My knees nearly buckled.

We were immediately loaded into another police van and driven fast to the National Guard checkpoint, then on to Ground Zero. I had a glimpse, while fumbling with the gas mask, of towering shards of broken building, and then we turned north, back to the Guard checkpoint. For two hours we waited, while Scott and Richard Hillenbrand, a liaison to the Governor's office, pulled strings both with the National Guard colonel in charge and with the OEM, finally getting us our red badges, permitting entry to Ground Zero, at 8:30.

I was terrified. There was no time to make a reasoned decision whether to go in or not. But even stronger was the fear of letting down my new friends, and of not measuring up to the expectations of Lt. Killian. If I were to leave, the GICRS members, without an interpreter, might not be allowed into the 'hot zone.' Once at Ground Zero, an interpreter would be of critical importance. To leave then might be worse. I asked Patrick, "If I can't do this work and I leave, would this place you guys in physical danger?" His "no" was reassuring. I decided to stay. At Ground Zero we were refitted for gas masks, provided with boots and gloves and goggles, and told to wait...until 10 p.m. One building at the site had been converted to a restaurant; there was a television, showing a Mets game. I used to wonder whether sports should continue in time of warfare or national emergency. Now I know, yes, they should. To have a

glimpse of this normalcy was enormously encouraging, and it helped me to master my fear.

Shortly, the call came for us to go in. Slowly we walked across the devastation, to the southern command post. Above us towered the blasted skeleton of Tower Two. Yellowish clouds of smoke drifted from the underground fires, and the entire scene was illuminated by ghostly emergency lighting. The smell of acrid smoke from underground fires, mixed with the rubber of the inhalators and the fainter, but indescribable odor of decomposing bodies, permeates everything. My dominant emotion was one of fascination. The scene was terrible, but there was also a surreal beauty to this hellscape. As the fascination and curiosity grew, my fear diminished. We were told to move to the western side of the rubble site.

There was a double command structure: both fire and police. While the fire chiefs welcomed us, the police lieutenant didn't want any foreigners on his command. We withdrew just out of his line of sight, and waited. Soon, a call came: "we need a dog." Patrick and Richard and I ran in with one dog, while a second German Shepherd, Jim, was held in reserve. The first dog seemed confused and excited; he turned in circles, finally stopped and, while the firemen held their breath, he took a shit right on the rubble. Patrick called for Jim, the most experienced of their dogs. We scrambled across slanting slabs of broken steel. I told myself: "don't trip; don't embarrass yourself in front of these professionals." Just then, a fireman tripped descending the slab; I caught him. Now we were into the action, concentrating on our own task: Patrick yelling out that there might be a body here and telling the firefighters to get back five meters; me repeating this in English. This did not go over well with some of the firemen. One of them shouted back at me: "You sound like my wife." Our liaison person, Richard, is a former fire fighter. From now on, he recast my English translations into terms more acceptable to the firemen.

We were called to a second site. There was broken metal everywhere, but this was rather like mountain climbing; you have to concentrate on what you are doing at the moment. If you do, you perform your task and your initial fear is transformed into concentration. The concentration clears your mind and this, in turn, can lead to a sense of euphoria.

The French rescuers had now been on the go for over 40 hours; it was 2 a.m. and time to get some sleep. Suddenly, Alex found a metal box in the rubble. It looked like the black box; we brought it to the firemen, who called in the FBI. One could feel the excitement level rise. The evening on site ended with an

interview with an FBI official, and with the hope that we had already made an important contribution. Walking out of the site at 2:30 a.m., we were euphoric; arm around John Abom's shoulders, I said, "We've made a difference." John is an engineer and a therapist from Pennsylvania. He had met the group when we were stationed with FEMA, had realized the critical role GICRS might play and had added his calming presence to the team. By now our numbers had grown to twelve, plus the dogs.

In this obscene, carnivalesque night, people came up to us offering McDonald's, pizza, and drinks. And then we were back at the National Guard perimeter. Stuyvesant High School has been converted to a dormitory for rescue workers. Two of us decided to spend the night – or what little was left of it – there. The fifth floor of the school is a shower and commissary. You can pick up towels, soap, toothbrushes, and a complete new wardrobe for the next day, to replace one's dust-covered work clothing. Then to the ground floor to make free phone calls to family (at 3:30 a.m.?), then to the mezzanine for a full body massage (I fell asleep). And finally to the second floor for a hot supper...at 4 a.m.... and off to the 3rd floor for a cot and two hours sleep. At 6:30 I was back at the restaurant for coffee and a bagel. And the second day began.

Second Day in the Ruins: September 18th

Two hours sleep on a cot in a computer lab at Stuyvesant High School. Then up at 6:30 in order to meet with the team at Ground Zero at 8. Bleary-eyed in the cafeteria, I placed my plastic bags containing boots and work clothes on a chair. In the time it took to get a cup of coffee, the bags had disappeared... thrown out with the morning garbage. Half a desperate hour and ten opened garbage bags later, I had my clothes back... better than a jolt of caffeine to get the adrenaline going. Waiting at the meeting point, hour after hour... no group. After five hours, they arrived. After dropping me off, the others – who chose to spend the night at the Plaza Hotel, courtesy of Donald Trump – had changed the meeting time. They forgot to tell me. Well, this is very much a group of irregulars; not to expect totally professional behavior at all times. By the time we got in to the Hot Zone, around 6 p.m., I was exhausted. And as luck would have it, our "host" was the same police lieutenant, who immediately tried to chase us off his turf. Two fire chiefs, escorting us on behalf of a three-star fire chief, had it out with him; as we had the night before, we retreated just out of the Lt.'s sight and waited to be called in.

One cannot predict how individuals will react under

extreme pressure. Patrick, a battle-hardened veteran of 45, and Alex, who is half his age, are unflappable under pressure. One young French medic, however, wandered off to the edge of the pit, placing himself in danger and endangering our mission at a delicate juncture. Another member tried to take a dog in without Patrick's approval; and the medic, whose English was minimal, took it upon himself to "correct" my translations. At this point I decided my services were no longer needed. Just then, however, Patrick called his team together and laid down the law: only he or Alex is to take the dogs in; the interpreters are to do the translating.

And then the firemen began to call for the dogs. In quick succession over the next 2 1/2 hours, we had four missions. Search and rescue follows a set pattern. After the heavy machinery clears away another level of steel girders, the dogs are called in to indicate the possible locations of victims or, possibly, survivors. Then the firemen move in to dig with hands or shovels, filling white plastic buckets with the chalky dust that lies inches deep everywhere. The buckets are passed out by hand, in human chains, to be emptied at the outside of the ruins. Red buckets are for body parts. I was careful not to look in any red buckets. On the first mission, both dogs stopped and barked once in the same spot. This, as Patrick explained to me and I told Richard, who conveyed the message to the firefighters, was the place to dig.

Richard, Patrick and I returned to our command post, where Patrick calmly mentioned that the dogs' behavior might well indicate the presence of a living person. Richard and I, who had not understood this detail, glanced at each other and then turned and sprinted back across the site to tell the firemen. Suddenly our quadrant was filled with people, human chains spreading in every direction, as we rushed to dig away dirt and metal scraps. Even the chaplains joined in the bucket brigade.

As a child at summer camp, I used to take part in a 4th of July competition; two teams raced to carry 10 buckets of water up a hill from the lake, to throw on the roof of our dining hall. Here, with real firemen, was a macabre variation on that bucket brigade. The aim was to get to the bottom of the rubble before the victim died. Before we did, however, it was time to return to our command station.

One live rescue would make all the efforts worthwhile. One miraculous escape, standing for hope and a city reborn from the ashes. On the bucket lines, the energy was palpable. I imagine all of us were praying as we sweated. The next morning, I eagerly bought the newspaper; no word of a live rescue.

Several more calls soon came for the dogs. The pace was so hectic that, afterwards, I could not remember how many missions we had done. I think it was four. The next one was the most memorable. We had to cross the debris field of Tower Two, as well as the paths of the huge machines crunching, lifting, and loading steel girders... walking past these behemoths was undoubtedly the most dangerous part of the evening's work. The field is illuminated by floodlights whose beams shine through the steam rising from the underground fires. Above us soared the skeletal shell of this ghastly demonic cathedral. In a distant corner of the wreckage, a trek of hundreds of yards, we climbed up on a stack of fallen steel. Here, two bucket lines led away from a small cave in the debris pile. In the cave crouched a fireman, pain creasing his face. At first I thought he was injured; then he showed us the contents of a small bag: bones. My first idiot reaction -- which happily I kept to myself -- how do you know they are human? Jim knew. The German shepherd leaped atop the pile, then crawled into the recesses of this cavern, pointing to indicate human remains. As we stood on this steel hillock, the entire structure began to vibrate. A backhoe operator 50 yards away was trying to move the girders. A fireman went racing over, waving his arms to get him to turn off his infernal machine. With so many hundreds of men working through the night, it is a wonder that there have not been more accidents.

We climbed atop the wreckage. Richard and I interpreted Patrick's message to the firefighter in charge, Lt. Sweeney. Later, he thanked me for my work. I answered: "It is an honor to have the privilege to work with you heroes." Lt. Sweeney answered, "You are the heroes." This was kind of him, but far from the truth. The firemen are out there all day, day after day. It was, nevertheless, one of the proudest moments of my life. To contribute even a little, even if only by bringing closure for one more family, is as meaningful as anything I can do.

At the next mission, Jim barked to indicate remains inside of a huge steel girder, its length descending diagonally into the earth. Disregarding the admonitions of the firemen, and attaching a clothesline to his waist, Patrick took the dog in his arms and descended into the mouth of this girder. The man does not show fear. He returned to the surface unharmed, a few minutes later. I believe we had yet one more mission. But from this point, everything becomes a sleep-deprived blur.

To the Americans, Patrick is enigmatic. He is quiet and, when he does speak, his terse comments are

expressed in a working class accent that often has the interpreters straining to comprehend. But there is a depth along with his calm demeanor. He participated in his first rescue when he was 10 years old. What drives him is the eternal hope of finding somebody alive in the rubble. The only time his demeanor has changed was on the first day, when it looked as if the team would be sent home without taking part in the rescue efforts. He has a philosophical calmness. "You must bring yourself to look at the bodies," he told me on the second day. "But you should wait for a day when you are strong." What upsets me about the body parts is the knowledge of the how these people died. Patrick does not agree. "We all must die some day," he answered. "The important thing is that most of them did not suffer." Rosh Hashonah. The New Year began while we were following Jim's barking, looking for that miracle of a survivor. I can only hope that the year brings life, more miracles of life.

It was nearly midnight when we collapsed back at the command post. Several of us took a supper break. Walking through the half-ruined financial center, we came to a dead fitness center. The darkened forms of exercise machines, covered by inches of dust, were vaguely ominous. No one will ride them again. It was like a vestige of a lost civilisation, a scene out of H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine*. Reality has finally caught up, after a century, to apocalyptic fiction. We arrived at a yacht docked at the edge of the Hudson. There, we tried to eat a minimal meal of rice and bread and Gatorade. The remainder of the night, until 2 a.m., was anti-climax. There were no more calls; I fell asleep in my chair at the command post; eventually, there was the slow walk back to the dormitory at Stuyvesant High School, and this night an early bedtime at 4 a.m.

Wesleyan, September 19th-20th

After two long days in the ruins, I had to return to Wesleyan to teach my courses. The advanced seminar, Wednesday evenings, is my favorite course, but today the last thing on my mind was African architecture. For three hours I spoke about the experience in New York. I ended with a plea: if you feel too isolated here in rural Connecticut, then go to New York. Even those who hand out drinks or who applaud the workers are helping the city to heal. One student, Aynsley, felt strongly the need to be back in New York. After class, she and I talked for 40 minutes.

Wesleyan is cut off from the world I have so recently left. No sooner arrived in Middletown, I began to feel a visceral need to rejoin our rescue team. The following day, Thursday, was a student-organized rally for peace. I was among half a dozen faculty speakers.

But at this rally, too many speakers' words had nothing to do with the reality of twisted steel and death.

Middletown, CT seems so bucolic, so utterly cut off from the other reality. I have reread Hemingway's wonderful short story, "In another Country." At last I understand the powerful opening sentence: "In the fall the war was always there, but we did not go to it any more." As soon as my classes are finished, I leave again, for Ground Zero.

Back to New York: September 21

Lunch with the entire team at the Plaza Hotel. On the house. Big heroes, all of us – offers of drinks, people thanking us for risking our lives (Does this mean I should be frightened?), offering us cars to transport the dogs to the site. Arriving at the site, we face the reality ... waiting. The frustration of the reserve troops. On the other hand, business is transacted at the Plaza. There, waiting for the police escort to the site, we were interviewed by a film crew from CNN. You don't meet CNN at Ground Zero. My view of the press grows more cynical each day.

Of the dog-handlers, only Patrick and Alex remain. Patrick has sent the others back to France, partly, I think, as a result of the heated discussion of the second night. Among the American members of the team, Richard has established his ability to maintain the necessary connections to keep us in the rescue effort. For a group of volunteers, this is no mean task. Each day, the command structure at the site becomes more complex and access more limited. Richard has a seemingly magical ability to stay one step ahead of the new restrictions. First, he obtained the famous red badges, allowing us onto the site. On the evening that the red badge was to be supplanted by a photo ID, Richard took our photographs and rushed uptown to the Javits Center with the necessary documentation. He returned with our new badges, twenty minutes before the midnight deadline.

September 22

Waiting, always waiting. Either for a ride to the site or for authority to go in. Yesterday we waited from 2 until 5 for transportation down, then from 5:30 until midnight at Ground Zero, waiting to be called in. Nothing to do except breathe the acrid smoke and heavy diesel fumes. By then I was ready to quit for good. But Patrick and Richard expressed the sense that I was needed, so I agreed to come back from 2 to 8 tomorrow. It is almost 3:30 and we are again waiting... waiting to go in.

What percentage of our time is spent on actual operations with the dogs? An infinitesimal amount. This is likely also true for most of the people on or

around the site.

4:40 p.m. – called in to the southern command post. Such mountains of devastation as this are totally unimaginable. High on these iron crags, white-helmeted men burrow through the unstable rubble using white plastic buckets; their courage is astounding as they search for their lost brothers. With their ropes and helmets they look like mountaineers on some obscene steel summit. Giant shovels and forklifts raise huge, burned skeletal beams, then lower them with extraordinary gentleness onto flatbed trucks. Smoke from the fires mingles with diesel exhaust and the yellow-tinged clouds drift above the obscene metallic mountains. Above the rubble too, one 60-foot steel beam slants its upthrusting finger, and at the summit flutters an American flag. Behind, the twisted skeleton of the lower wall, five stories and more tall, raises its triangular monumental form precisely between the silhouette of two buildings on Vesey Street. Above us soars another mortally wounded building, its façade ripped open by the collapsing Tower Two. Six stories above the ground (40 yards from me) part of the steel structure of Tower Two hangs precariously. Below, a red spray-painted sign warns: "Stay out, building ready to collapse." The roar of heavy machinery rarely abates. The first night back in Middletown last week, I, who generally hate noise at night, was unable to sleep because it was too quiet. And the stench... acrid smoke, rubber from the inside of the gas mask, and the smell of decaying flesh... Away from Ground Zero, I get olfactory flashbacks. But aside from the flashbacks, the stench is actually far less difficult to bear than I had imagined. It is 6 p.m. and we still wait to go in... We arrived at the site riding in a commandeered golf cart. The French were lying in the back, their feet up in the air, while Richard drove past the check points, smoking a long cigar. At the rubble, surrounded by this devastation, a voice calls, "Professor!" It is the student from my African art seminar, Aynsley, offering drinks and encouragement. She has somehow managed to be assigned to Ground Zero. By what fate have we stumbled on each other in this hellscape? At this moment we are old friends; we fall into each other's arms.

At 8 p.m. the fire chief meets with Richard. With all the heavy machinery in use, there will be no further need for our services tonight. Aynsley and I decide to stop for a coffee. Richard drives us in the golf cart past Trinity Churchyard... past the grave of Alexander Hamilton... to the spiritual refreshment post at St Paul's. I take a moment there to meditate. We walk slowly north along Broadway. At each intersection there

are people with cameras. The crash site has already become a tourist attraction. It is Saturday night in New York. The restaurants are full of young people, who seem oblivious to the horror just a few blocks away. Perhaps this is what we love about the City; it is so resilient.

But Aynsley and I carry the smells and the sights with us. And I have kept my hardhat and gas mask on my head. A statement, I suppose, about where we have been. Walking along Houston Street, we hear a strange rhythmic sound in the road. "That's for you," she says. And it hits me: applause. A week ago I was applauding for the rescue workers; now, I am one of them.

Reflections: September 27

For three days now, I have been back at work, trying to readjust to some semblance of my old life. But I am a different person. So much that seemed important now appears irrelevant, and academic conversations as self-indulgence. One change: I neither seek nor fear confrontation. But so much is not worth fighting over. Most helpful: a talk with a friend who served as a medic in Vietnam. He encouraged me to write. So this is my therapy.

Yom Kippur; back to New York. At mid-day I stopped by the Plaza Hotel. There was the entire crew, sitting at their accustomed staging area, on the steps facing 5th Avenue. Patrick and Alex fly home tomorrow. Their work here is done; the last remnants of "rescue" have been transformed into a salvage and recovery operation and there is no more need for rescue dogs.

Our group has been welded into a team. We will stay in contact. Richard, our liaison person, has begun to study French. And there is talk of founding an American affiliate of the French search and rescue group, to work with Patrick's crew at future emergency rescue operations. In New York, we did not find our miraculous survivor. But we did find ourselves, and one another.

Annual MANSA Meeting

The 16th annual meeting of the Mande Studies Association will be held during the ASA meeting in Houston. Please note that for the first time ever, we are scheduled for a morning session. Our meeting will be on Friday, November 16, 9-10 a.m. The room to which we are assigned will be listed in your ASA program. We have an unusual amount of important business to conduct this year, so please make every effort to attend.

Up-Date on MANSA Members' Activities

LARRY BECKER is co-chairing the annual World Affairs Conference at the University of Nebraska at Kearney, and has invited Papa Suso to perform on the kora. Larry has received support from the National Science Foundation's Geography and Regional Science Program for a collaborative project involving the Institut National Polytechnique Félix Houphouët-Boigny (INP) in Yamoussoukro, the West African Rice Development Association in Bouaké, and the University of Nebraska at Kearney. Entitled "Processes of Change in Agricultural System: Impacts of Interventions in Ivoirian Rice Cropping Systems," the research project will look at the impact of liberalization reforms in the rice sector on both production and marketing. The project will include scientists from INP, WARDA, and UNK, as well as Ivorian students and two undergraduates from UNK. Larry will be based in Bouaké from January through July 2002.

VICKI COIFMAN is continuing in Conakry with an extension of her Fulbright teaching and research award for Sept-Dec 2001. She is researching the history (especially via families/lineages) of the African-European-American borderlands in the Rio Pongo and Nunez areas, with extensions to the north and south (and across the Atlantic). With her Guinean Historian colleagues, Vicki submitted a successful proposal via the American Cultural Center (Melvia Hasman) and US Embassy in Conakry to the US State Department's program for cultural preservation. A team of historians, grad students and an archaeologist are currently at work on the project. This is a much needed shot in the arm for the department.

ROSA DE JORIO has won a Post Doc Research Grant from the Italian Institute for the Study of Africa and the Middle East (Istituto Italiano per L'Africa e L'Oriente), Rome, Italy, to carry out a follow-up field research on cultural politics and democracy in Mali in the summer of 2001. Rosa was a 2001 Summer Research Affiliate at the Center for African Studies, University of Florida, to work on her project "Territorializing democracy: the expansion of the public sphere in Mali".

EDDA FIELDS is currently Assistant Professor in the Department of History, Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh.

BARBARA FRANK's book *Mande Potters and Leatherworkers* was selected as a finalist for the Arnold Rubin Outstanding Publication Award, and award given once every three years by the Arts Council of the

African Studies Association. Smithsonian, which published the book, expects to produce a paperback volume early in 2002.

CHRISTIAN HØJBJERG has a one year fellowship at the newly created Danish Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities.

SCOTT LACY, a Ph.D. candidate in anthropology at UC Santa Barbara, will be in Mali starting 18 October to continue his dissertation field work with Bamana farmers and plant scientists. The project will likely take two years, with first-year funding from the Fulbright Foundation. Scott's project is titled "Understanding Farmer and Scientist Knowledge to Improve Collaboration Between Them".

EMILY OSBORN is now Assistant Professor in the Department of History at Notre Dame University.

BAKARI TRAORE is now Attaché de Recherche at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique et Technologique (CNRST) in Ouagadougou

VALENTIN VYDRINE defended his Habilitation Thesis in the Oriental Department of St. Petersburg State University, on September 20, on the topic "Phonological type and noun morphology of the Proto-Mande" (written in Russian). On September 21-22 in St. Petersburg he participated in a workshop with Prof. Thomas Bearth (Univ. of Zurich) and his colleagues and students from St. Petersburg State University on the lexicology of South Mande languages. Members of his team are working on dictionaries of Tura, Wan, Guro, Dan-Gwetawo, Dan-Blowo, and Gban. They are planning to travel to Cote d'Ivoire again in January-April, 2002. Within the framework of this project, Valentin is working on the dialectology of the Dan language (probably with special attention to the Kila dialect that is spoken in the North, encircled by Manding-speaking Mauka), and on a comparative dictionary of the South Mande group, and he is supervising the students' work. [Editorial correction regarding the previously unknown (to outsiders) Mande language that Valentin discovered in Futa near Timbo: the language is Kakabe, not Kabake.]

Book, Article, Journal, and Dissertation Releases

BOOKS

Barbara Hoffman. 2000. *Griots at War: Conflict, Conciliation, and Caste in Mande*. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. Pp. xvi + 298, 2 maps, 33 b&w photos, 14 color photos.

Pascal James Imperato. 2001. *Legends, Sorcerers, and Enchanted Lizards: Door Locks of the Bamana of Mali*.

New York and London: Africana Publishing Company. Pp. xxv + 93, 1 map, 120 illustrations, introduction by Patrick McNaughton. This book accompanies an exhibition of the same name that opened at the African Art Museum of the SMA Fathers in Tenafly, New Jersey on September 8, 2001.

Jan Jansen (ed.). 2001. *Trois perspectives sur la vie de Nambala Keita (Naréna, 1895- 1969)*. Maastricht, The Netherlands: Shaker Publishing.

L'oubli et la transmission incomplète menacent les sources sur la vie de Nambala Keita, ancien 'chef de canton' de Naréna (au Mali) et héros de ce livre. Ce personnage a été tellement maudit par ses adversaires et l'administration coloniale que son image resterait toujours négative sans la prise en compte de la version de ses partisans. Puisque Nambala n'a pas été un politicien d'importance nationale ou supra-régionale, les seules sources disponibles sur lui à long terme, seraient les sources écrites par l'administration coloniale et l'opinion publique mal-informée. Le présent ouvrage veut premièrement faire connaître un personnage controversé en fournissant un inventaire des sources, et deuxièmement montrer la richesse des documents des archives maliennes.

Par rapport au rôle historique de Nambala Keita, les sources nous renseignent sur les tensions sociales entre les différentes branches Keita du Mandé et également sur le rôle ambivalent de l'administration coloniale. Celle-ci était inconsistante dans l'appréciation portée sur les autorités dites 'coutumières'.

Fruit e'une collaboration entre trois historiens, ce livre a pour objectif de présenter différentes perspectives sur un événement qui a troublé le village de Naréna et la région autour de Naréna pendant plusieurs décennies, c'est-à-dire entre 1930 et 1958. Ces perspectives sont celles de Nambala Keita, de ses adversaires régionaux et de l'administration coloniale.

Cheick M. Cherif Keita. 2001. *Salif Keita*. Bamako: Le Figuier.

A blurb from *Jeune Afrique* refers to Cherif's book as "... Un texte passionnant, qui tord le cou à quelques idées reçues et se lit comme un roman d'aventures."

Victoria L. Rovine. 2001. *Bogolan: Shaping Culture through Cloth in Contemporary Mali*. Smithsonian Institution Press.

In this richly illustrated book, Victoria Rovine explores the revival of the bogolanfini, bogolan, or mudcloth tradition. Over the last decade, artists of Mali have adapted this cloth, featuring black- or brown-and-white geometric patterns, to create a variety of new wares, including intricately detailed paintings,

elaborate high-fashion clothing, and a wide range of other products aimed at both domestic and foreign consumers. By tracing these transformations, Rovine illustrates the dynamic relationship between the past and the present in contemporary Africa. She also explores how changing incarnations of cultural heritage play an important role in national identity and how, in the United States and Europe, tradition has become a defining feature of an exotic other. 24 color and 33 b&w photographs, 184 pp. Cloth: ISBN 1-56098-942-4 \$45.00. To order: 1-800-782-4612.

Patrick Royer and Mahir Saul. 2001. *West African Challenge to Empire: Culture and History in the Volta-Bani Anticolonial War*. James Currey / Ohio University Press.

West African Challenge to Empire is a study of the anticolonial war in the Volta and Bani region in 1915-16, the greatest challenge that the French ever faced in their West African colonial empire and one of the largest armed oppositions to colonialism anywhere in Africa. The current historical and ethnographic analyses of this region and of colonialism do not help us understand how such a massive movement could be organized and be initially successful in the face of European technological superiority. With its interpretive framework setting the actors against the background of nineteenth-century local organizations and the colonial conquest, the two authors probe the cultural and political origins of the movement, its internal organization, and the strategies of the anticolonial and colonialsides. On the basis of exhaustive archival research supplemented by fieldwork, they also provide a detailed political and military history of this event.

Valentin Vydrine. 2001. *Esquisse contrastif du kagoro (Manding)*. Koln: Ruediger Koeppel Verlag. Pp. v + 266.

ARTICLES

Larry Becker. 2001. "Seeing Green in Mali's Woods: Colonial Legacy, Forest Use, and Local Control." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 91 (3): 504-526.

Alice Bellagamba. 2001. "Musei, tradizioni orali e crisi della memoria nel Gambia post-coloniale" (Museums, oral traditions and the crisis of memory in post-colonial Gambia) in Alice Bellagamba and Roberta Cafuri (eds.) *Musei dell'Africa contemporanea. Patrimoni culturali, politica e memoria collettiva*, *Etnosistemi* 7, 1.

Ferdinand De Jong. 2001. "Il Museo Diola. Identità locali, oggetti sacre turismo nella Casamance" (The Diola Museum. Local identities, sacred objects and tourism in the Casamance) in Alice Bellagamba and Roberta Cafuri (eds.) *Musei dell'Africa contemporanea. Patrimoni culturali, politica e memoria collettiva*, *Etnosistemi* 7, 1.

Rosa De Jorio. 2001. 'Negoziale tradizione e modernità: il Museo della Donna "Musu Kunda" a Bamako, Mali' (Negotiating traditions and modernity: the Woman's Museum "Musu Kunda" in Bamako, Mali). *Etnosistemi* 8 (8): 79-90.

Rosa De Jorio. 2001. 'Malian National Culture'. In Melvin and Carol R. Ember (eds.), *Countries and Their Cultures*. Vol III, pp. 1384-1399. New York: Macmillan Reference USA.

Barbara Frank, 2000. "Recovering the Past: The Place of Pots and Potters in Mande Art History," in *Clay and Fire: Pottery in Africa*. Iowa Studies in African Art, Vol. IV. Edited by Christopher D. Roy. Iowa City: School of Art and Art History, University of Iowa.

Rainer Polak. 2000. "A Musical Instrument Travels Around the World: Jenbe Playing in Bamako, in West Africa, and Beyond." *The World of Music* 42/3: 7-46.

Rainer Polak. 2001. "Festmusik: Zur Ethnographie musikalischer Gattungen in Westafrika." In *Berichte aus dem ICTM-Nationalkomitee Deutschland IX/X*. Marianne Brecker (Hrsg.). Universitätsbibliothek Bamberg, Bamberg: 19-50.

JOURNALS

Etnosistemi 7, 1, 2001.

Special issue. Alice Bellagamba [with Roberta Cafuri] (eds.). "Musei dell'Africa contemporanea. Patrimoni culturali, politica e memoria collettiva" ("Museums in contemporary Africa. Cultural Heritage, politics and collective memory").

DISSERTATIONS

Edda Fields 2001. "Rice Farmers in the Rio Nunez Region: A Social History of Agricultural Technology and Identity in Coastal Guinea, ca. 2000BCE to 1880 CE." University of Pennsylvania.

New & Renewed MANSA Members & Address Changes

NEW MEMBERS

SAMOU CAMARA, Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente Clivio Rutario, 26-00152 Rome, Italy. Tel:

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Submitting Articles to MANDE STUDIES

The journal of the Mande Studies Association *Mande Studies* welcomes articles on all aspects of the Mande world and the peoples and cultures that compose it. Submissions will be peer-reviewed before acceptance. The journal will accept and publish manuscripts in English or French.

Manuscript submissions should be typewritten or computer-printed in double-spacing, and should be accompanied, if possible, with an electronic version of the text on a diskette (IBM/MS-DOS; Mac texts should be sent by e-mail). Authors must furnish any maps or illustrations in hard copy suitable for reproduction, and are responsible for obtaining any necessary permissions.

Colleagues from Africa without access to computers should send a typewritten manuscript, keeping a copy for their own use.

Submissions may be made electronically to either Ariane Deluz (Ariane.Deluz@ehess.fr) or to Stephen Belcher (spbelcher@mindspring.com); manuscript submissions should be sent to Stephen Belcher (R.D. 1 Box 1000, Petersburg PA, 16669 USA). In the case of electronic submissions, the text should be sent as an attachment and *not* in the body of the message. The preferred format, if not WordPerfect or Microsoft Word, is as a 'rich text file' (suffix: .rtf). La revue *Etudes Mandé* invite nos collègues à présenter des contributions portant sur tous les aspects du monde mandé et des peuples et des cultures qui le composent. Les articles proposés seront évalués anonymement avant d'être retenus. La revue accepte et publie des articles en anglais ou en français.

Les manuscrits soumis doivent être saisis ou imprimés sur ordinateur en double interligne, et devraient s'accompagner si possible de la version électronique du texte sur disquette (format IBM/MS-Dos). Les textes composés sur Macintosh doivent nous parvenir comme fichiers attachés à un

email. Les auteurs sont priés de fournir leurs cartes et illustrations sur papier, d'une qualité permettant la reproduction. Il est de la responsabilité des auteurs d'obtenir toute permission nécessaire pour la reproduction.

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Les articles peuvent être soumis par voie électronique à Ariane Deluz (**Ariane.Deluz@ehess.fr**) ou à Stephen Belcher (**spbelcher@mindspring.com**); les manuscrits devraient être adressés à Stephen Belcher (R.D. 1, Box 1000, Petersburg PA, 16669 -- USA). Dans le cas des articles envoyés par email, le texte ne doit pas être envoyé dans le message mais comme fichier attaché au mail. Le format préféré, autre que Microsoft Word, est le "Rich Text File" (suffixe .rtf).

Renewal Notices on Newsletter Labels

The Secretary-Treasurer, Stephen Wooten, has included the following signals on your address labels: If the date is highlighted in yellow it means "time to renew." A red check-mark beside the date means you are overdue, and this is your last newsletter until you do renew.

Joining MANSA and Renewing Membership

Regular and institutional membership \$10, students \$5, sponsoring membership \$25. Make check out to MANSA and (if you are joining) send your institutional affiliation and a brief description of your research interests to: Stephen Wooten, Department of Anthropology, University of Oregon, Eugene OR 97403-1218. Members (other than sponsored African colleagues) will find the date on which their present membership expires recorded on their address labels. The Secretary-Treasurer will forward your up-dated address and research information to the President for publication in the newsletter. European members may submit their dues to the MANSA Treasurer Europe: Jan Jansen, Winnubst laan 13, 3533 EA Utrecht, The Netherlands. E-mail: jansenj@fsw.leidenuniv.nl