



Avenida 9 de Julio

BUENOS AIRES CONFERENCE ARGENTINES AIM FOR LASTING PEACE

WHILE ARGENTINA CELEBRATED the first 100 days of democratic rule under President Raúl Alfonsín, a Moral Re-Armament conference was taking place in the heart of Buenos Aires. Over a period of five days trade union leaders, the wife of a former President with other senior women, internationally known specialists in agriculture, land-owners, farmers and people from many sections of Argentine life streamed into the Santa Casa de Ejercicios, a convent built in 1795 and today a national monument. Other participants had been invited from North America, Britain and other European countries, Africa and Brazil. A group from Uruguay brought their play *Why don't you listen to me?* Those from overseas later met diplomatic representatives and leading men in government, and in parliament from different political groups. They also met people in business and both management and labour in industry. Some were invited to visit country *estancias*, the large farms of the Argentine pampas.

Buenos Aires lies at the heart of an urban area of nine million people. The convent where the conference was held stands beside the widest avenue in the world, the Avenida 9 de Julio—four carriageways, lined with flowering trees and fine buildings.

The main plaza, which was decked with banners for the President's 100th day speech, is surrounded by the Cathedral containing the tomb of the liberator General San Martín, the Cabildo Museum, and the Casa Rosada, the pink Presidential Palace.

The Santa Casa de Ejercicios convent and the Cabildo are among the few buildings which date from Spanish colonial times. The convent, mostly on one floor, is divided into peaceful, cloistered patios with flowering trees and fragrant jasmine. This haven of peace, originally designed for spiritual exercises on the Jesuit pattern, was a perfect setting for the Moral Re-Armament meetings. *Continued on next page*

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SPECIAL ISSUE ON THE AMERICAS

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CAUX CONFERENCE

'A new start for all' will be the theme of a special Americas session, 6-13 August, at the MRA international summer conference, Caux, Switzerland. It will be an 'informal meeting' of people from North, Central and South America, the Caribbean and Europe.



Santa Casa de Ejercicios Convent

Ostero

A special feature of the conference was the participation of senior agriculturalists who play a vital role in Argentina's economy. Professor Jorge Molina, a noted agronomist, was one of the initiators of the conference. Others included the internationally-known agricultural engineer, Alberto Roth; a soil conservation specialist, Dr Jorge Restanio from the north of Argentina, concerned with the health and nutrition of children; and Nilo Romero from Brazil, with long experience of utilizing natural grazing as food for meat-producing cattle. They addressed a session of the conference, on the theme: 'Agriculture as a means towards lasting peace'. With them were Ove Jensen, a dairy and pig farmer from Sweden and his wife, who visited *estancias* and met a number of farmers and agronomists. A former President of the Argentine farmers' union had earlier written—'Perhaps we farmers have a special role in creating new understanding between our continents.'

The play *Why don't you listen to me?* aimed to give an answer to disunity in the family. Amongst the Uruguyan delegation were three couples whose marriages had been remade in the past two years.

Eulalia Saraco, an architect and one of the convenors of the conference, spoke of the enthusiasm with which she had encountered Moral Re-Armament as a girl of 20. Later she had married and moved to Patagonia in the south, 'knowing the need for Argentines to move away from the capital and develop other parts of the country'. She had been active in Christian movements, yet dissatisfied with her own 'redemptive efforts'.

'Later I asked myself why I achieved so little,' she continued. 'Why is it that we liberal-minded people, with our upbringing of high cultural and moral values, have achieved nothing all these years? I have found the answer—pride and contempt. We have been self-righteously proud, and have looked down on the other peoples of Latin America, the Indians and those of mixed race, or on those who have done wrong. We are full of bitterness against the faults of others without realising that we are impoverished in our own moral values.'

'My new encounter with Moral Re-Armament,' she continued, 'and this realisation of the need for humility, is something I want to pass on to our political parties, to schools and to families. If we don't do this, Argentina and the American continent will not change.'

Elza de Araujo from São Paulo, Brazil, later spoke of the traditional rivalry between her country and Argentina. Any remaining bitterness she personally had felt towards Argentina had been swept away by Señora Saraco's honesty, she said.

British welcomed

A delegation of six came from Britain. They were warmly received both at the conference and in many homes in Buenos Aires. In the opening session, one of them, William Jaeger, an authority on world labour said: 'We British think we know better, and we don't. We think we're right, and we're not. We postpone often till it's too late what we ought to have done earlier. We have to build a new understanding and trust, beginning with ourselves.'

'We should not fear the word, revolution,' said Lino Cortizo, President of the Uruguyan General Confederation of Labour, one of his country's main trade union organisations. 'From man's origin, the strong have dominated the weak and revolutions have followed one another to end



Farmers' dialogue: Nilo Romero, Brazil, (left) with Alberto Roth, Argentina



Photos: Ostero

Left to right: Oscar Alaniz, Deputy Director General, Uruguyan Ministry of Education; Nilo Cortizo, President of the Uruguyan Confederation of Labour; and Julio Etcheverry, former Secretary General of the Inter-American Trade Union Organisation

that domination,' he said. But all known revolutions were betrayed because they in turn gave rise to new dominations.

However, today, such revolutions 'have a unique chance of being transformed into the one revolution which has no need of triumphing over the corpses of its victims, which will give to each man his rightful place in society. As Moral Re-Armament claims, it is impossible to change this state of things without a change of attitudes,' continued Sr Cortizo. 'This change is the revolution of which the world has most need. If we want to see the world that our youth will grow up in spared from self-destruction, all our understanding will be needed, understanding that in no way will be a submission to injustice. We have to build bridges. Moral Re-Armament is a non-violent bridge between the world today with its injustices and the world of tomorrow.'

Later, standing with his wife with whom he had recently been reunited, Sr Cortizo said, 'We have decided to stay together and share the years we still have with you, fighting for the same ideal.'

At the end of the conference, the Mother Superior of the convent said, 'Having you has been like a spiritual retreat for me. You are always welcome back again.'

Latin America remains a continent with immense problems, but the conference heard evidence of many individuals taking courageous and distinctive action to create a new quality of life—a God-centred living that brings hope. ■



Left to right: Mrs Peter Howard, Britain, Mrs Ellinor Salmon and Professor Jorge Molina, Argentina



Juan Carlos and Concepcion Barrera, El Salvador, with their daughter

AN ENGLISHMAN IN ARGENTINA

by Tom Jones

EARLY THIS YEAR I was invited by a diverse group of Argentines to attend a Moral Re-Armament conference in Buenos Aires. This resulted from a conversation with an Argentine whom I met last summer. Our views diverged on the issues surrounding the recent hostilities, but we listened to each other. We both felt the pain of the deaths which our countries had suffered; and each expressed deep regret that the dispute between our nations had not been faced earlier and understood better, so that conflict and bloodshed could have been avoided. I think we began to understand each other, and each other's peoples.

The idea of visiting Argentina appealed to me. Like others, I lived through the weeks of war very intensely, and my feelings about what happened are strong and patriotic. At the same time I feel a desire to rebuild the bridges, if any opportunity presents itself. There are strong historical, and even family, ties. My father-in-law was an engineer with the Argentine Central Railway Company, for three years. Through two world wars, Argentine meat products

were indispensable in the diet of Britain's armed forces. I was myself unashamedly proud when I saw the arched steel vaults of the main rail terminus in Buenos Aires, fabricated in Liverpool and reminiscent of our own great rail termini.

Britain can take some pride in its pre-eminent part in the industrial and commercial development of Argentina. But, on the other hand, economic domination by another power is humiliating for a proud nation. More recent events between us, whatever the rights and wrongs, have only served to accentuate that humiliation.

I knew I was visiting a nation that has suffered greatly, first through years of virtual civil war. Rebel bombs and assassinations were followed by exaggerated military repression. The great city of Buenos Aires bears the marks of economic decline and material destruction. In conversations, people told me what they had lived through. The final cause of hurt pride and bitter anguish were the squandered and maimed lives of young men sent on a mission, the consequences of which none were warned of, none prepared for.

It was quickly clear to me that virtually all Argentines feel that they are totally justified, by history, in claiming what they call the Malvinas as theirs. I was equally clear that many in Britain are convinced that the Falkland Islanders should be free to exercise the right of self-determination and remain British with their home, the islands, as British territory if they so wish. The view in Argentina is that Britain was too preoccupied, over the years, to take Argentina's representations seriously. Today, in Argentina, the hostilities and the issues surrounding them remain very alive.

Immense resources

No one can pretend that the bone of contention between our two countries can be resolved quickly. Political considerations on both sides dictate caution. Each government has to take account of its own public opinion, shaped by different interpretations of history.

Meantime, the new, elected government of President Alfonsín should be given every chance and help to succeed. I was told that the atmosphere in Argentina is much more relaxed and free following the recent democratic elections.

There are other areas of co-operation and accord. If time can be allowed to heal the hurt pride, the mistrust, the fear of others' control, then and only then can the main outstanding problems be tackled in their right perspective.

Far wider issues and deeper human problems face Argentina and Britain. Our two nations have immense and contrasting resources, human and material. Historic links and a new miracle of healed relationships between two proud peoples might stimulate new ways to exploit those resources for the benefit of the wider world.

We British believe in the rule of law. But beyond that, what effort do we make to better appreciate people with a different history, culture or language, and different aspirations, people who should be partners and friends in a dangerous world? Without that effort, unresolved division and conflict will remain a powerful weapon for those wishing to destroy the democratic institutions and credibility of Britain and other free nations.

Honesty about our own shortcomings and forgiveness on both sides are possible. They lead to humble understanding, trust, tolerance and appreciation of others. Outstanding problems get into their right perspective and can eventually be solved without rancour. ■

OASIS IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Described as the 'Switzerland of Central America', since the Forties, Costa Rica has been an oasis of democratic rule and considerable social justice in a region noted for conflict, violence and repression. After the 1948 civil war it abolished its armed forces. Bordering on heavily armed Nicaragua and used as a base by dissidents of that country, Costa Rica is desperately trying to preserve its neutrality. PETER HINTZEN reports from San José:

PRESIDENT LUIS ALBERTO MONGE of Costa Rica gave the opening address at a recent MRA Round Table Conference in his capital city of San José. 'Moral Re-Armament,' he said, 'speaks to us of a clean, constructive dialogue, of mutual confidence, of shared responsibilities and common efforts; it talks of justice and equal treatment for all and control of man over himself so as to end bloodshed between brothers.'

'Peace is born from a new heart'—Pope John Paul II's saying served as a motto for the Round Table, which was attended by people from most Central American nations, including Mexico, as well as Brazil, the Caribbean, South Africa, the USA and Europe.

'Our region is going through difficult moments,' said Luis Puig, a former Marxist from Guatemala. Mr Puig was a trade union leader and is now an official of Varig Airlines in Brazil. 'This Round Table Conference will give us a chance to turn problems into opportunities for solutions,' he said. Referring to his own unhappy family background, which had driven him as a young man to political extremism, he

said, 'Often the guerrilla starts inside the family. Good Catholic fathers with extreme right wing convictions produce atheist sons who become extreme left wing rebels.' His wife, Evelyn, told how her husband had himself bridged the gulf separating him from his sons by being honest about himself. A family from El Salvador movingly told how they had overcome their own bitter divisions.

'The underlying cause of conflict in Central America is social,' asserted Aristides Mejia from Honduras, Assistant Secretary of the Central American ILO office in San José. 'The rich have been becoming richer, the poor poorer. A better distribution of wealth is required to stop this region from being the battle ground of ideologies.'

The Executive Secretary of CLAT, the San José based regional organisation of the Christian Democrat Trade Union international, José Pinzón from Guatemala, agreed with Mejia's concern for fairer distribution. 'Everybody advocates democracy, even dictators. But without the fundamental change in the human being on which MRA insists, fine words remain empty declarations.' Central America's vital significance as a trade route had made it a bone of contention in the big power struggle, he went on. Its geopolitical importance was giving the conflict a political dimension that made it hard for Central Americans to settle their problems amongst themselves. Employers and trade unions had a part to play in seeking solutions, as did the Catholic Church in a region 95 per cent Catholic.

The eight from El Salvador pinned high hopes on a democratically elected government taking over in their guerrilla ridden country. This could restore confidence, they felt. The two executive members of the Salvador Employers' Association described how violence and lack of confidence had cut off most lines of credit, driving many

The following is an extract of President Monge's address to the MRA Round Table Conference in Costa Rica:

What MRA means to my country



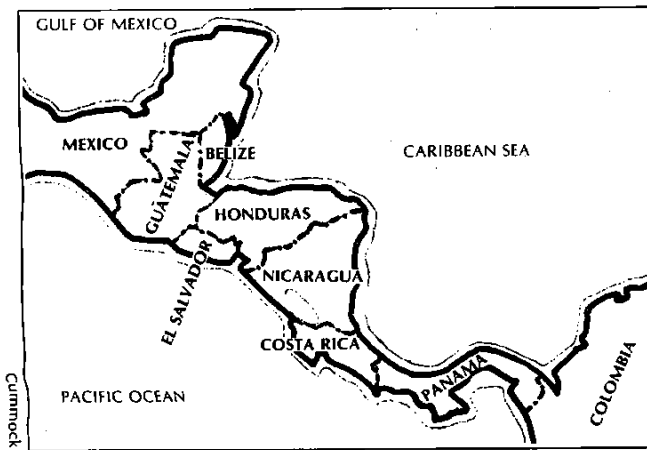
I HAVE A LONG HISTORY of links with Moral Re-Armament. I am probably the first Costa Rican ever to be in contact with this movement. In 1948, I was the workers' delegate to the ILO in San Francisco, California. We were then just coming out of the most turbulent period of our political history in this century. It was then that I made my first contact [with MRA] which I later continued in Geneva with numerous contacts and several visits to Caux [the MRA centre in Switzerland]. This is very important as it links with our own struggle for democracy in Costa Rica.

In 1950, when I had been only a few months at the ILO in Geneva where I had become an official, three prominent figures of our political life came to visit me. We discussed

the situation in Costa Rica and the need to form a new political movement which would give expression to the people of Costa Rica. The three were then invited to come to Caux, at my request. The four of us went there in September 1950, 34 years ago. It is interesting to know that these figures whom I took to Caux all became presidents of Costa Rica. They were Dom Pepe Figueres, who has been three times president of this country, Francisco J. Orlich and Daniel Oduber. Including me all four of us have been president. We received from the world movement of Caux the sense of responsibility which led us to found and create a political movement realised a year later in October 1951. This movement is still continuing, the only political force which has taken the shape of a democratic political party. We have other political forces but none of them succeeded in becoming democratic parties. Costa Rica has only two political parties: ours, and the Marxist party which is a very small one. These facts show what important links we have with Moral Re-Armament.

I had the privilege to talk on various occasions with Dr Buchman [the initiator of MRA]. I have read his literature and share the ideas of Moral Re-Armament. This is why I have accepted the invitation to take part in this *mesa-redonda* (round table).

The aims of MRA are positive and stimulating in every sense. When the concern for world peace grows—the need of justice and equality, the need to help and strengthen the family—then one appreciates the outreach and the greatness of the philosophy of MRA, and one understands that



companies to bankruptcy. Christian Democrat Eduardo Molina underlined the importance of the agrarian reform which has been successfully started in El Salvador. For industry he advocated co-partnership with workers.

Greater industrial democracy was the theme that ran through a session on industry. Human Resources expert George Sherman, Vice-President of Ameribank in the USA, pointed to the wastefulness of the 'adversarial approach' in industrial relations. His countryman Larry Hoover, a lawyer with State Department experience, gave examples of the ridiculous excesses caused by the tendency to resort to litigation. In the USA, this was leading to a groundswell of searching for alternatives. Better results were attained by listening to one another, by helping contending parties to get to a 'Yes' beneficial to both sides. Jones Santos Neves Filho, industrialist and director of the Brazil Confederation of Industry, felt that industrial democracy might strengthen

the medium and small private enterprises in his country.

Sra Arturo Jauregui from Mexico, widow of a Secretary General of ORIT, the Inter-American Trade Union Organisation, saw in MRA a road to rekindling a sense of values. Her husband had been a pioneer of free trade unionism.

Howard Cooke, executive member of Jamaica's People's Party, appealed to the superpowers to provide the region with bread rather than with bullets. 'Rather than aid we need transfer of technology from the industrialised nations,' he said. But eight and a half years of Socialist government in Jamaica—in which he had served as a cabinet minister—had taught him that institutional changes however needed were not sufficient. To become effective these changes had to be backed up with a fundamental change in people's attitudes. He illustrated what he meant with recent personal experiences—he had been able to work closely on the basis of honesty and trust with two men of completely different views and backgrounds from his: an American who had worked for the Pentagon and a Jamaican 'oligarch'. A frank talk had also bridged the gulf that had separated him from a man who had repeatedly criticised his party's policy. A common purpose and a new shouldering of responsibility had in both cases brought constructive unity, he said.

The Round Table was concluded by ex-President José Figueres. 'If we have no confidence in democracy,' he said, 'there is no hope. If it is rightly applied, it is a system that gives justice to all. It is in listening to others that we learn. In talking we can begin to understand each other.' Because of this conviction Figueres supported such democracy as would evolve in El Salvador. Because of this conviction, he said, he had kept the communication lines open with the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. He closed the conference with a ringing: 'Yes, we must and we can do it!' ■

the ideas of MRA are at the service of mankind and not of any political dogma.

MRA means the reconciliation between men; it means tolerance and understanding; it means dialogue and mutual respect; it means confidence in the creative power of man and his capacity to reform; it means total openness to hope and the firm will to make a better world.

The heart of man has to be renewed if the search for new solutions is to be fruitful. Hope lies in emphasising the need for all of us to have a true conversion of the heart, without holdback. This change of heart demands that we are honest with ourselves and that we begin to recognise our own faults instead of pointing out the errors of others, or demanding, as if we were perfect, that this change start in others first.

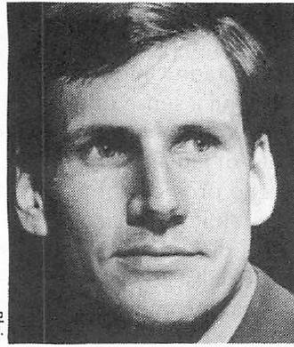
We cannot deny responsibility for the violence and injustice which extends today throughout the world. We have to accept our mistakes, correct them, and fill our hearts with love for our neighbour, with faith in a new world, open to the freedom and happiness of all. We need to work, ceaselessly, for that to happen.

Social reforms, technical advances, scientific progress, and programmes of education and culture will be in vain if the human heart does not free itself from hates and anxieties, selfishness and the obsessive pursuit of material things. If man's heart changes, moral and spiritual rebirth is permanent. The Pope, and Moral Re-Armament, are right in their call for change, for renewal and reconciliation with ourselves, our family and those around us. God created us

and gave us this earth to be a light to it and improve it, to beautify it, and convert it into a sanctuary for the common good, not to obscure it, or degrade it, not to fill it with the shadows of war, nor to make it a redoubt of fierce selfishness. Peace lives in the progress and integral freedom of all men. Peace rests on the constant love of one for another.

MRA calls on us to be unselfish in a world which is sick with selfishness. It asks for our reflection and serenity at a time in history which is dominated by imprudence and haste. MRA speaks to us of a clean and constructive dialogue, of mutual confidence, of shared responsibilities and common efforts; it talks of justice and the equal treatment for all and of the control of man over himself, not to create an infallible being, but to end bloodshed between brothers.

I would like to express my total support for the action of MRA, for its stimulating and sustained effort in changing the hearts of men. We need this world conscience, based on honesty, purity, unselfishness and love, which will make it possible to change the face of the earth and change relationships between men. With MRA, the future is not reduced to a mere matter of survival or the just distribution of the earth's riches, but it is enriched with the certainty that mankind can improve itself and of the final victory of good over bad. With MRA, we are reminded that the Creator gave us the order to progress and elevate society to its highest level in material splendour and spiritual perfection. ■



Blair

FOUR STEPS TO END CONFLICT EXPECTATIONS FOR THE NEXT 25 YEARS

This was the subject of a talk last month by RICHARD RUFFIN, from McLean, Virginia, at the Westminster Theatre in London. Mr Ruffin, a graduate of Yale and Oxford, worked at the US Defence Department before taking up full-time work with Moral Re-Armament. We print extracts from his talk:

POLITICAL STRUCTURES of long duration are becoming unglued. Whether we look at the turbulence in Central America, Asia, Africa or the Middle East; at the confrontation between East and West; at the perilous state of the world financial system; we see institutions and relationships crumbling before the onslaught of violent passions and of the senseless reactions of powerful men and nations, who do not comprehend what is happening or why.

For many decades, the world has been accumulating grievances, at a rate far greater than it has been producing answers. To be sure, the balm of time and occasional victories of the spirit of forgiveness have eased the burden. Yet, today, every act of revenge and every insensitive utterance is brought starkly, instantly before the eyes and ears of the millions.

In this situation, are we helpless victims or are there steps we can take to remove the causes of rage and frustration and channel people's passions in constructive directions?

The answers to this will determine the shape of the world in the next 25 years. If we continue to blame others for the mess the world is in while doing precious little ourselves to sort it out, we shall witness either an unimaginable holocaust or a collapse of world order with incalculable consequences. But if we learn how to heal the hurts of the past; to release people from the prisons of their individual and collective histories; to listen to, understand and learn from those from whom we differ, we may yet usher in a new world order in the lifetime of many alive today.

El Salvador

We should have no illusions. This task is more complex and difficult than any in history. It is not that the problems are more intractable in themselves, though they may be. It is rather that the motives and skills needed to solve them have not kept pace with either the determination or the highly refined tools of those who are less interested in solving the problems than in using them for their own purposes.

Take El Salvador, for example. At one extreme are men who have been oppressed for generations conducting a campaign of terror against the entire economic and political structure of the country. At the other extreme are men who are so enraged by their loss of power and property through the land reform programme that they commission criminals to kill the ablest and most responsible men and women in the political centre. Some 50,000 have been killed over the last five years. The wounds in that society cut deeply into every family. Is it any wonder that there is so little trust between the factions, and even within the factions? Small wonder that diplomatic efforts come to naught!

Assassination and terror are by no means the only obstacles put in the way of those who seek solutions. The

pervasiveness of the media has rendered secrecy almost impossible and immensely complicated the task of coalition building.

In addition, television has, in the words of former Secretary of State Alexander Haig, 'driven the natural, the heartfelt, out of national life. The rule,' he writes in his memoirs, 'used to be, "What am I saying?" Now it is, "How do I appear?"'

Also, public relations experts who package presidential candidates, single interest lobbies who lambast legislators that step out of line, rivals in the corridors of power who feed tasty, yet deadly, morsels to a hungry press, all inhibit officials from speaking their true convictions and reaching for consensus. Nor are we, the ordinary people, without fault. Does not the speed with which we so often take up and pass on opinions on every conceivable subject, no matter how little we have troubled to understand it, contribute to the erosion of consensus and to the difficulty of building trust and understanding? As Mark Twain said, 'It ain't the ignorance of people that causes so much trouble. It's them that knows so much that t'ain't so.'

We should not therefore disparage the efforts of diplomats and their political bosses. What is needed instead is a massive effort to alter the minds and the motives of the parties who are in conflict. Only when we do that on an adequate scale can the efforts of the diplomats bring cure.

There are four steps that each person can take.

First, we can decide simply to become responsible, to accept that what happens in this world is in no small measure up to us.

Secondly, we can start the needed process of change in our own lives. We can examine our relationships, our business dealings, our deeper motives, and see whether there are things that need to be put right. We can let the light of God's absolute moral standards shine on our motives and our behaviour, revealing to us where we may need to take steps to heal hurts, to build trust, to acknowledge wrongs of the past.

Thirdly, we can seek to develop those motives and skills in ourselves which, when applied to public issues and public people, will help restore qualities of heart to public life. For example:

- to help people listen first to one another and then to the stirrings of conscience and of God within themselves;
- to introduce God's forgiveness as the one way to heal the hurts of the past;
- to tear down barriers of fear and suspicion and to build trust and confidence between opposing people;
- to draw out and develop the best qualities in others rather than spotlighting their shortcomings;
- to help people discern the true motives and purpose of those with whom they deal.

Taken together, these skills represent a new approach to problem solving. It is an approach increasingly recognized as essential to the task of creating a new world order. For example, in an analysis of conflicts between ethnic groups, the authors of an article in the American quarterly, *Foreign Policy*, contend that the process of removing and reducing psychological barriers of fear, suspicion and hatred creates new possibilities for negotiations on the political level. They cite, as an example, the efforts of representatives of Moral Re-Armament in helping to make possible the political settlement in Zimbabwe.

Fourthly, we can seek to give people a new vision of what the world could be. Ordinary people the world over are tired of the soulless materialism they see lived in both communist societies and, to a lesser degree, the free world. The Marxist vision of a classless society that still animates a few desperate and embittered people around the world has no attractive power for the vast majority. Nor are they particularly captured by the vision of a free market economy, where all too often 'freedom for the pike means death for the minnows'.

I believe people are longing for a vision of a new society, where individuals are truly free—free to accept full responsibility for the future of their nations, free to act on their moral convictions, free ultimately to obey the voice of God as revealed in their own hearts. As Alexander Solzhenitsyn reminds us, 'Genuinely human freedom is inner freedom, given to us by God—freedom to decide upon our own acts—as well as moral responsibility for them.' This freedom, I believe, holds the key to the political freedom for which people hunger the world over.

Freedom under God

As an American, I am proud of our heritage of freedom and I feel we are called to live out an inspired vision of true freedom. I even dare to think that God may have raised up America for the purpose of demonstrating that 'freedom under God', rightly understood and fully lived, is indeed the path to justice, peace and the full development of human life and society.

Of course, I am painfully aware that my nation is not living out 'freedom under God' as we ought. We have often allowed the pulls of plenty to draw us towards a society where things are often more important than people, and where God is in our language but not in our lives. We have at times debased freedom to a licence for self-indulgence and self-fulfillment. And we have allowed allegiance to our version of democracy to blind us to positive developments in other nations and to other authentic expressions of the consent of the governed.

But these shortcomings should not deter us from our calling. After 300 years of nation-building the USA found itself, after World War II, carrying with others the task of world remaking. We cannot stand aside from this task. However we need to carry our responsibilities in a different spirit recognising that we can no longer define freedom for others, much less tell them how to live it. We need to listen to and consult our friends and allies before taking actions which affect them, and we need both the humility to ask for help and the courage to hold others to a maximum sense of responsibility.

In America today, there is a growing force of men and women who have dedicated themselves to creating this new spirit. We are calling ordinary Americans to accept

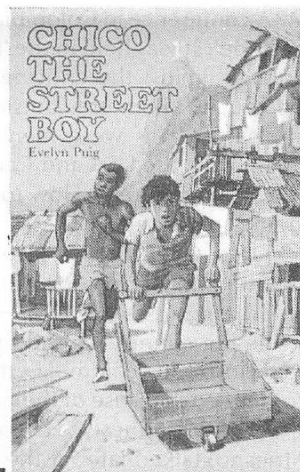
responsibility for the world of 25 years time; to start the process of change in themselves; and to equip themselves and our leaders with the vision of true 'freedom under God' and with the skills to heal the past and to lay the foundations of trust and unity for the future.

We need the rest of the world's help in this. It will not help to nip at the heels of America or to join in the chorus of criticism, some of which is, as I have said, well justified. Rather we need the world's friendship—and friendship, with the passions that are loose in today's world, means the application of the skills and motives of which I have spoken to your relationship with America and Americans. Then we can expand a network of friendships between peoples across the globe. Through this network we can seek to bring out the best qualities of leadership and bring the wisdom of God to bear on international problems.

This is the task of moral re-armament and the task to which we must set our hands. It is not too late to turn the tide. ■

BOOK REVIEW

CHICO THE STREET BOY



RIO DE JANEIRO! You think of Copacabana beach, the Sugar Loaf mountain set against an aquamarine sea and azure sky. You see the *Corcovado* (Hunchback) peak on which stands the Christ with arms outstretched over the 'marvellous city'. However, on the slopes of the hills and around the city, straggling like a grey girdle, are the *favelas*—thousands of tin and wood shacks of all shapes and sizes, the homes of Rio's poor.

Brazil is the world's fifth largest country in area, and has a population of 120 million. Nearly 7 million live in Rio de Janeiro. Over the last 20 years Evelyn Puig has come to know the city intimately and, in particular, many of the families in the *favelas*. Her book has captured the essence of today's Brazilian cities. In this dramatic, and at times intensely moving story, the characters seem to burst out of the printed page into real life. Chico, the boy with a barrow, strides across the scene. Others walk, run, jump into the mind and heart of the reader.

Chico, out on the street with no home to go to, trying to find his parents, is led through a maze of circumstances to a dénouement that has a touch of magic.

Although written for 8- to 11-year-olds *Chico the street boy* is genuinely a book the whole family can enjoy.

David Howell

'Chico the street boy' by Evelyn Puig, illustrated by W. Cameron Johnson is published by Grosvenor Books, 54 Lyford Road, London SW18 3JJ, price hb £4.25, with postage £4.75, pb £1.95, with postage £2.30.

COLOMBIAN ENCOUNTER

'YES, IT IS POSSIBLE!' With this slogan, Belisario Betancur won the Presidency of Colombia two years ago. It was an unexpected victory of a 'man of the people'. Since then he has pursued one aim in particular—peace; peace in Central America where, as initiator of new ideas in the Contadora Group, he urged a 'Latin American' compromise between governments and armed insurgents; and peace in Colombia where 60,000 soldiers have to combat, in mountains and jungles, several guerrilla armies estimated by the former Minister of Defence at 16,000 in all.

The President's chaplain, Cipriano Rodrigues, and the head of the presidential secretariat for social welfare and popular housing, Heydé Durán, were among 50 Colombians, including young couples, who took part in a recent MRA conference in Colombia under the title, 'An Encounter of Hope'. It was held in the 'Foyer de Charité' in Zipaquirá, situated amidst the enticing green mountains of the high plateau, 40 kilometres outside the capital, Bogotá. Among the participants were men and women from Brazil and Guatemala, the USA and Canada, South Africa and various European countries. How to achieve peace was one of the themes discussed.

Marco Córdoba, the President of the Metal Workers Union—affiliated to one of the country's two biggest trade union congresses, the CTC—warned of the danger to peace inside the country caused by leaving colossal social problems unsolved. Colombia's traditional parties had failed, he contended, because of their failure to practice stated ideas, and lack of honesty. His colleague in the CTC, Ramón Africano, talked later at the conference in the same vein: 'We have got to learn to pay attention to people in this nation who have not been given a voice.'

Padre Miguel Triana, president of a broad Catholic lay movement, the ACMI, admitted that priests had lacked persuasive impact, but stressed that social solutions had to come from laymen. 'God,' he said, 'is calling us to unity.' A 'new humanity' was coming to birth in which peace and justice were taking the place of injustice. That, he said, was a field where Moral Re-Armament was bearing fruit.

The Vice-Minister of Labour, Helena Paez de Tavera, visited the conference and attended a showing of the MRA feature film *Men of Brazil* about the portworkers of Rio de Janeiro. Her particular interest was to meet the Brazilian workers and the British expert on world labour affairs, William Jaeger, at the conference.

The conference was presided over by cardiologist Dr Alfonso Rueda and his wife Marta, from whose initiative the 'Encounter' had sprung. After attending last summer's MRA international conference at Caux, Switzerland, it had been their vision to organise a 'small Caux' in Colombia.

For many, the conference led to steps of change in their own lives as a prelude to change in the country. Padre



William Jaeger (second left) and Alfonso Rueda, Colombia (centre)

Fernando Umaña, director of the conference centre, said during the celebration of Mass at the end of the conference, 'We are one hundred per cent for a Catholic nation. But in this continent we have adapted our faith to our own life styles. There is a lot of dishonesty and deceit; there are a great many lies. The MRA people here have shown us the radical message of the Gospel which first shines within them and then is transmitted to others. We have to become honest, truthful and authentic. There certainly is hope.'

Sra Durán showed the conference a video tape of her work to uplift one and a half million of Colombia's eight million most needy citizens. The conference had, she said, given her new courage to tackle the problems that had come to weigh her down. She had faced the fact that her ambition had caused her to seek the spectacular. Henceforth, she had decided to do only what was required. By being honest about her own wrongs she had overcome, during the conference, a 17-year-old rift with the Catholic Church. With others, she said, she wanted to battle for the moral re-armament of the nation.

For the young people at the conference—who continuously enlivened the meetings with exciting Latin American music accompanied by two guitars—the 'Encounter' meant letting God change and lead them. 'I have never had contact with the lower classes. That we are going to seek now,' said one; and another, 'Here we have been equal though we are from very different backgrounds.' The young people accepted an invitation to take part in a youth conference at the MRA centre in Brazil.

At the end of the conference many decided to take on together the moral re-armament of their troubled country, to create, as Marta Rueda put it, 'God's Kingdom on earth', while her husband Alfonso Rueda stressed, 'Surrender to God has to be complete. A partial surrender is no surrender at all.'

Peter Hintzen



Luis Puig, Guatemala, with Dr Cediél, Colombia, outside the 'Foyer de Charité'

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