

NEW WORLD NEWS

FOR MORAL RE-ARMAMENT



Brian Lew, a student from Taiwan, speaks to the conference — 'Bohemian life challenged'.

Photos: Crag

CONFERENCE REPORT

Young people unite to rebuild Brazilian society

DESPITE TROPICAL DOWNPOURS and some unseasonal cold, 51 young people took part in a nine-day training session at the South American centre for Moral Re-Armament in Petropolis, Brazil, last month.

Entitled 'Young people united in rebuilding society', the conference was initiated and run by students and workers from Rio de Janeiro.

Starting with 'The challenge of faith in today's world', each day had a different theme, and through the day the participants listened to guest speakers, took part in group discussions and then presented reports on the discussions. One whole day was also set aside for practical work on the maintenance of the centre.

The battle of ideas on different continents was studied. 'I want to make an appeal to all Brazilians because so many of you have African blood,' said Meryl Christian from South Africa. 'All of southern Africa could erupt in war as Angola has done. We need your help to live our Christian faith with militancy to answer the fears and hates which I believe are the roots of our divisions.'

With violence in Angola in the news, the students considered the different approach to independence taken by many leaders — and students — in Papua New Guinea. They heard of the commitment of these men to the ideology of God-control which had given them a constructive alternative to violence.

An ex-governor of Rio de Janeiro State, Dr Geremias Fontes, spoke along with two of his young co-workers about the Christian answer to drug addiction, which is a growing problem in Brazil, especially amongst better-educated youth.

As word and interest in what was going on spread, many other people besides students came to take part in the meetings and

discussions. One lady, a noted Bible commentator, came for the final weekend. 'On the first day,' she wrote in the daily *Jornal de Petropolis*, 'I thought MRA was marvellous, a utopia of high ideals.' Then she heard 49 people in one hour expressing what they had learnt through the sessions. 'As I listened to those people telling of their experiences and decisions with such honesty and courage,' she continued, 'I realised that MRA was an effective and powerful force from God for the modern world.'

'I changed school four times in one year,' said Cesar Jose Mello, who is 15. 'I kept being flung out because of disobedience and laziness. I always cheated in school exams. Either I cheated and passed, badly, or I failed. When I met MRA I decided to stop

cheating. It was hard work, but this year I passed better than I had ever done before. I have learnt that when you are honest you can do something worthwhile and feel a real sense of achievement.'

Brian Lew, who comes from Taiwan and studies languages in Sao Paulo, told the conference, 'I have been very challenged by all of you here. In Sao Paulo I have been turning into a pessimist. The students there talk a lot about the government's mistakes. So I have been thinking what is the difference between the communist and capitalist systems and I see that they are the same in their materialism and their lack of faith in God.'

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Welsh history and individuality underlined at Cardiff conference

WALES HAS AN INDIVIDUALITY today solely because of its Christianity, declared Bishop Daniel Mullins in Cardiff last week. The Bishop, who is a Welsh scholar and oversees Catholic university chaplaincies in England and Wales, was speaking at a Moral Re-Armament conference in Cardiff, 'Wales and tomorrow's world'.

'It is my firm belief that Wales has a contribution to make to tomorrow's world,' said the Bishop. 'It is a contribution that springs from its history and its individuality.'

'The Welsh began to be conscious of an individual role after the break-up of the Roman empire when they found themselves the defenders of the tradition of Christianity. Wales was Christian before it was Welsh or anything else and through its history it has more or less remained true to that insight.'

'If Wales has a contribution now it is in being faithful to that and in working it out in practice.'

Yardstick lost

The conference, which was held in the modern council chamber of South Glamorgan County Council, was opened by Councillor Darwin Hinds, Mayor of the Vale of Glamorgan.

Councillor Hinds, also a member of the County Council, commented on the paradox that the more facilities councils seem to give, the less happy the recipients seem to be. 'Material improvements don't make people happy. Those who have more want more. We have lost the moral yardstick.'

'I am hoping to learn from this day conference of Moral Re-Armament how to achieve the change of heart that will enable us to give happiness to the people we serve.'

'I am here today because of the impression made on me by the musical play *Song of Asia* that was recently in Cardiff. I was so impressed that I persuaded the County Council to make a precedent in giving us this chamber for the conference. There is and always will be a need for Moral Re-Armament but now more than ever the world in general is in need of spiritual uplift. I hope today we can take away some alternative to the problems all around us.'

Mayor Hinds was followed by County Councillor and Mrs John Pate from the South Yorkshire County Council, and Councillor and Mrs George Richards from Norwich City Council.



'Britain 2000', a playreading by the multi-racial cast.

Photo: E Howard



Councillor Darwin Hinds, Mayor of the Vale of Glamorgan (left), with Councillors George Richards (Norwich City), John Pate (S Yorkshire) and James White (Warwickshire).

Bishop Mullins, Catholic Auxiliary Bishop of Cardiff, addresses the conference. Photos: David

'At a time when there is so much corruption and bribery in the air, my conviction is that being left or right is less important than being straight,' said Councillor Pate, who is a member of the National Police Authority.

Councillor Richards called for local authorities to give more thought to how to build moral qualities into society rather than spending all their time dealing with the consequences of their absence.

At the invitation of R Mooneeram, Community Relations Councillor for the county's education department, the play *Britain 2000* was presented as part of the conference. Thirty-six people from Asian, African, West Indian and English families travelled by coach from London to give this play-reading about Britain's multi-racial society as it is now — and as it could be.

For export

Conrad Hunte, the former West Indian test cricketer who has just returned from travelling with *Song of Asia* in Switzerland and Sweden, spoke of the part Welsh people could have in healing bitterness and division in other parts of the world. 'Wales' recent suffering gives her some insight into the business of reconciliation. You must export the spirit of healing which you have begun to discover.'

This conviction was echoed by Indian editor R M Lala, who highlighted the qualities of courage and faith that Wales could bring to the task of shaping tomorrow's world.

Reg Stockwell, branch vice-chairman of the clerical union at the Llanwern steel plant,

introduced fellow trade unionists who spoke of *Action '75* and of the initiatives by ordinary workers to back the Prime Minister's call for 'a year for Britain rather than a year for self'.

David Jones, a medical student at the University College of Wales Hospital, introduced fellow students from Oxford and Durham Universities with whom he had been on a recent officially-sponsored visit to meet Egyptian student leaders. The afternoon session, in which the students and also a young Indian doctor working at Merthyr Tydfil General Hospital spoke, was chaired by Vanessa Clark, in her first year as a teacher at Cardiff's large Cantonian Comprehensive School.

Bristol: 'Britain a catalyst'

THE HEAD OF EDUCATION at the University of Asmara, Ethiopia, Teame Mebrahtu, said last week, 'Britain has a rich culture, she is known for parliamentary democracy and pioneering in industrial and technological revolutions, and in initiating education. But a just society can be corroded by indifference and the failure to acknowledge dependence on God; a changed and committed Britain will serve as a catalyst in the creation of a hate-free, greed-free and just society.'

Mebrahtu, who is studying for a doctorate at Bristol University, was speaking at a weekend MRA conference in the city. Students, trade unionists, businessmen, teachers and leaders of the immigrant population were among those from all over the West of England who attended the conference.



'Outrageous artistry'

The 'Methodist Recorder' carried the following interview last week:

IF JOHN WESLEY WAS ALIVE today his heart's desire would be for the musical *Ride! Ride!* which opened in Nottingham this week, to reach people outside the churches and outside Methodism. Of this, Gordon Gostelow, who plays the part of John Wesley in the professional production, is sure.

Gordon Gostelow, who was brought up a Methodist in New Zealand and Australia, has entered new territory in accepting the part in the musical. His previous work has included Shakespeare plays, films, and television. He doesn't pretend to have had the same spiritual experience as Wesley, but he is sympathetic and confesses to be impressed by the calibre of the man. He didn't know a lot about him before either, so he's had the opportunity to find out more.

'I knew general things about him,' said Mr Gostelow during a break in rehearsals. 'Someone said he changed the lives of people more than anyone else since Luther and before Lenin — I couldn't believe it!

'He was an extraordinary man — a very plain and methodical man. He was a very simple man and I think a very shy man but he was so sure of himself. His conviction comes over strongly; and he is a strangely likeable man.

'One has this feeling about Wesley that if it hadn't been for him then nothing would have happened.'

Gordon Gostelow is looking forward to the reaction of audiences as the provincial tour progresses. He believes that people can make the same response to Christianity today, as thousands did in Wesley's time — it all depends on the way it's presented he claims.

'Wesley had his outrageous artistry — so did Christ,' he said. 'He knew the technique, he knew just how to do it.'

He sees the musical as pointing out to ordinary people a need in their lives, and he thinks the theatre is a good vehicle for reaching 'outsiders' as he calls them. He said: 'The basic thing of the play is for the audience to see themselves on the stage and for somebody to come on and say "Look, you're missing one thing ..."

'The whole purpose of theatre is for people to understand and be interested in something else — to come and see something that's different from their own experience.'

'What a grunt is to a pig, disaster is to materialism'

by Paul Campbell

TODAY WE BELIEVE that there is no technical problem we cannot solve.

But when it comes to solving the most vital problem of all — the greed and apathy of people — we lack conviction that there is a solution.

In our attempt to meet our hunger for inner certainty and outer freedom, we seek more money, a change of government, more production, more consumption, and less work.

Now we discover that there is not enough of this world's goodies for everyone's greed. There is not enough wealth, food, clean air and minerals to go around at projected volumes of consumption.

So leaders of nations beg their people to practise some self-restraint on their demands and to act more responsibly. Otherwise, they warn, more and more government control will be necessary. These pleas and warnings go largely unheeded except to invoke a flow of criticism at the suggestion that free men are not free to take all they can get.

Our commitment to the philosophy of materialism — that the good life and security lie in possessing more of what we desire and the devil take the hindmost — does not readily lend itself to the practice of self-restraint and consideration for the needs of society at large.

What can be done?

To find the freedom to act responsibly and to restrain our greed we shall have to jettison our philosophy of materialism.

A little reflection on the facts of today's scene tells us that the consequences of our materialism — corruption, devalued currencies, unemployment, the break-up of homes, Watergate, Angola, the threat of war — will not be mastered until we find a better idea to live by.

What a grunt is to a pig, disaster is to materialism. There is no way a pig can be made to stop grunting and to start singing, and there is no manipulation of materialism that would change its tune.

The answer to materialism is to replace it.

It was an American, Frank Buchman, who identified our materialism as democracy's greatest enemy. Said Buchman in 1946: 'To answer materialism we need a better ideology to live by.'

In January 1976, Bayliss Manning, President of the Foreign Affairs Association in the United States, wrote an article in the *Journal of Foreign Affairs* (January 1976) with the title, 'Goals, Ideology and Foreign

Policy'.

In this article he asks for more ideological content in framing policies. America's ideological target, he says, is to 'present an unwavering example of commitment to our principles at home', and to demonstrate that America 'continues to make progress in dealing with its own social inequities'.

Everyone wants to see a better world, but most of us expect someone else to create it. Buchman made the point that if you want to see change, the best place to start is with yourself and your own nation. Bayliss Manning echoes the same truth.

'The remedy may lie,' said Buchman, 'in a return to those simple home truths that some of us learned at our mother's knee, and which many of us have forgotten — honesty, purity, unselfishness and love.

'The secret lies,' he said, 'in that great forgotten truth that when man listens, God speaks; when man obeys, God acts; when men change, nations change. That power, active in a minority, can be the solvent of a whole country's problems.'

Gigantic proportions

Buchman succeeded in forging a network of people of every race and class on every continent committed to a moral and spiritual ideology. Today people who never heard of Buchman or his work are groping in this direction. Such people veto race control, class control, money control, bureaucratic control, public opinion control. They are voting with their lives for conscience control. They rivet their loyalty to the dictates of conscience — cost what it may. People firm for the truth are being set free to sacrifice their selfishness for the greater good.

Those people everywhere who are nurturing an alternative to the philosophy and practice of materialism are aiming at a world-wide change in human aims and values — a revolutionary movement of gigantic proportions. It is far more daring in concept and action, more far-reaching in political and economic consequences, than any brand of materialist ideology has dared to contemplate.

Today's turmoil, confrontations, confusion and self-absorption are not evidence, as some seem to think, that we are sliding into a Moscow or Washington dominated world — although that could happen. What we are living through is the death contortions of a philosophy which has controlled our minds and shaped our civilisation, and which has produced problems of such magnitude that they have become a visible threat to our survival. Said Frank Buchman: 'The crisis is fundamentally a moral one. The nations must re-arm morally.'

In this vast enterprise there is a job for everyone. There is no room for unemployment. Every person has a part, for guided by an illumined conscience the ordinary man produces creative and curative strategies. He becomes the generating point, the powerhouse and lighthouse for a new civilisation which even now is taking shape.

Rhodesian alternative

TWO YOUNG BLACK RHODESIANS — a supermarket cashier and a student teacher in a village school — have recently sent letters to their friends giving their response to the crisis facing the country.

The cashier wrote to all his fellow employees:

It is unfortunate that business doesn't allow us time to talk. Yet we are confronted with grave issues that need our total *attention*. *The grave issues* are in our homes, in our shop, in our country, and right inside our hearts.

How long shall we continue to be enslaved by hate, bitterness, fear and selfishness? Because of these evils, we have failed to create a just society here. Is there no way out of this mess?

There is one way, which is God's way. This way works only with changed hearts. You can try it. It works. Here we go:

Take the simple example of a doctor who operates on a patient. The first thing he does is to wash his hands before the operation. Likewise you can create a just society by first putting right the wrong things you have done.

'How?' you may say. Well, the way is simple and easy, yet miraculous. Take a piece of paper or your notebook and jot down the four moral standards: absolute honesty, absolute purity, absolute unselfishness, absolute love.

Pass it on

After you have done this, sit still with the four standards before you, and listen to the inner voice. You will hear God telling you what to do. All you have to do is to obey. That, and that alone, can give you a new hope, a new heart, and a new spirit.

This is the kind of revolution our country needs today. You can pass it on.

For further information, and some practical examples, I recommend *The Black and White Book*, which you can obtain from me quite easily, or from Moral Re-Armament. **The student teacher wrote:**

I often talk about giving up privileges to save a nation while in actual fact I am just wavering within the safety limits.

There is no doubt that God is working in our country, but the magnitude of the problem cannot be underestimated. My guidance has been to leave myself completely at God's disposal for the next few months. This would mean postponing my diploma which is already so close.

I really feel I have been far too concerned about my own security, my future, my family etc and haven't really left these things in God's hands. As far as my family is concerned, God loves and cares for them far more than I do.

I often think of Southern Africa giving an answer — but this is only possible if the few of us go ALL OUT for what is right.

BRAZILIAN YOUTH contd from p1

'I haven't done anything to improve the situation, in fact I have helped worsen it. I have lived a bohemian life, been irresponsible, and I see that I really need to change. I need to stop being selfish and start thinking more of others, rather than using them for my own ends. Now I know that there is a new spirit which will create a new society.' He and others from Sao Paulo asked for help to take MRA to the students of the city, now the largest in Latin America.

Earlier, Sidelma de Paula Costa, a law student in Rio, had told of the decisions which led her to take responsibility for the planning of the training session. 'At the time I first came to the MRA centre here last year, I was drinking too much. I was part of a group who never went to classes; we just sat outside the university in bars and drank.

'Then I decided to stop drinking, not little by little, but completely. Smoking too. It was very, very difficult. Everyone was surprised. They made jokes at my expense. But when I stopped, the group of friends I used to drink with stopped going to the bar. I was not their leader or anything like that, but they just stopped going. We started attending classes. Afterwards I realised how much these things had been harming me. They affected my capacity to learn. I used to spend hours and hours sitting over my books absorbing very little. Now I spend less time and learn more.'

Following visits by Sidelma and others to many companies in Rio and Petropolis a substantial amount of the food required for the conference was given. All the meals were served outside under a canvas cover provided by the 32nd Infantry Battalion, which is stationed in Petropolis. The Battalion also



Uruguayans join young Brazilians in an animated group discussion.

loaned a coach to carry people each day to and from accommodation which had been given in the city.

At the closing session of the conference the commandant of the Battalion, Col A de Melo Henriques, was present with his wife. He thanked the youth for their conviction. 'I have 900 young men under my command,' he said. 'What I have heard here will help me in knowing what to do for them. I believe in Moral Re-Armament. We need this spiritual reinforcing of what we already have of moral standards. This is a challenge of humility.'

The final meetings included many ideas of what could be done next to carry the ideas of MRA throughout Brazil and other countries. Some of the students are working on an 'Open letter to all generations' which they wish to send to universities and national leaders. Others are continuing with practical work and further training at the centre. Many have decided to meet again over the Carnival holiday with trade unionists and others for a further planning session.

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