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L to r: Cardinal Dom Avelar Brandao Vilela, Primate of Brazil, Daniel Mottu, Switzerland and General Hermes Guimarães at the opening of the assembly in Brazil.

BRAZIL ASSEMBLY CO-OPERATIVES POINT THE WAY TO DEVELOPMENT

'AS CARDINAL PRIMATE of Brazil and Archbishop of Salvador I welcome with deep inner joy having this conference in this historic city.' With these words His Eminence Dom Avelar Brandao Vilela began his address at the dinner with which he opened the international MRA conference in Salvador—which was Brazil's first capital city—this month. He had just returned from the Latin American Bishops' Conference in Mexico.

'Moral Re-Armament,' the Cardinal continued, 'is not a static idea aimed at defending the status quo. It is a dynamic idea with a capacity for critical analysis which wants to build the foundations of a new civilisation, illuminated by faith and firmly based on moral standards.'



Jones Santos Neves Filho, Executive Secretary of the Brazilian Confederation of Industry. Dr Neves spoke of the 'profound change' which a visit to an MRA Assembly at Caux, Switzerland, had brought in his life.

The conference was held at a time of strenuous debate within Brazil. The new President, Joao Baptista Figueredo, took office on March 15 pledging to take the country on the road to full democracy and to look after the interests of the low-paid. Increasingly, however, it is realised throughout Latin America that emphasis must be laid on human development before the new structures and programmes can be effective. For this reason themes at the conference such as 'Education for service' and 'the solving of social problems through employers and workers who go beyond class interests' aroused comment in the press and in the city.

The co-operative movement is one way the poor can help themselves. In Latin America, however, many co-operatives collapse because corrupt opportunists see them

as a way of getting government grants. Five taxi drivers' leaders from Rio de Janeiro told the conference how they had started a co-operative because they felt exploited by the big taxi-fleet owners. Inspired by MRA-trained trade-unionists in Rio, they had broken with corrupt elements in the co-operative at considerable financial sacrifice. But now their organisation is thriving, operating 120 cars.

Victorino Gonzalez is a crane-driver from Montevideo, Uruguay, who with fellow-dockers founded a housing co-operative in 1971. Last year they completed 44 new houses, largely built by themselves with money loaned from the State Co-operative Bank. Victorino attributes their success in keeping out corruption and political manipulation to all that he had learned from MRA of living by moral standards and with a purpose beyond self-interest.

"'Obsolete cranes!' used to be my comment when managers criticised me for damaging cargo," said Atilio De Bon, President of the Crane Drivers' Association in Montevideo. "The truth was that I handled cargo properly only if I had been sufficiently bribed beforehand." Now he has cut out this corruption and is in action with Victorino to unite the workers of the port on the basis of fair wages, with a fair day's work in return.

Bank clerk

Men and women who had lived through years of struggle to answer inadequate housing and gang violence in the shantytowns and ports of Brazil told the conference of the personal decisions that had been necessary for effective social action.

'The hardest decision I had to make was to stand out against violence in my own crowd,' recounted Luiz Pereira, who for nearly 20 years lived in one of Rio's favelas. 'Leadership went to the tough guy and I was afraid of being called a coward.' A result of his new attitude was that he began to look on the favelados as individuals rather than units to be mobilised for his politics. 'We sought out those who had any skill and set them to work

training others,' he said. Very soon a whole series of courses was being held within the favela which began to give the people self-respect. The new spirit meant that the authorities too changed their attitude, and began to respect the favelados and their right to better conditions. Pereira too gained respect and was later elected leader of an association of favelas representing 30,000 people.



Pedro Briceno, steelworkers' leader from Chile

A creative alternative to violent confrontation was also presented to the conference by two British couples. John and Norma Richards, originally from Jamaica, and Don and Marie Embleton told how over 500 people of all races had made their visit to Brazil financially possible. This had followed their campaign over five years with a play, *Britain 2000*, which had helped to build bridges between native British and some of the immigrant communities—an area of stress in British life which has sometimes erupted in violence. The idea of the play, Mrs Embleton said, had come when she had found the courage, helped by a black friend, to be honest about something that had gone deeply wrong in her life.

Even within Brazil's multi-racial society, social tensions exist. Carlos Renato de Almeida, a bank clerk in Rio, told how he had hated his father, and people who were white and better-off. When his father had left his family, he had had to provide for his mother and sister and three brothers. This had embittered him. On a visit to the MRA centre in Petropolis he found himself in a gathering with an army colonel, a business-

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What about violence?

A black nationalist in a detention camp in Rhodesia read JENS WILHELMSSEN'S book, *Man and Structures*. He passed it round his fellow detainees. 'It is the best book I have ever read,' he told the friend who sent it to him. 'We want to photocopy passages, so we can form discussion groups.'

Here we print extracts from Wilhelmsen's chapter on violence, which he has expanded for NWN:

'TO SHOOT DOWN a European is to hit two birds with one stone ... there remain a dead man and a free man,' writes French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre in his foreword to Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*.

But there also remains a legacy of revenge. One of the fatal questions facing mankind is whether rich and poor countries can cooperate to overcome the wretchedness of millions. To accept a violent show-down as the answer is to choose a blood-drenched detour which will prolong suffering on all continents. It is also the final capitulation to evil, to man's inability to rise to a challenge and pursue a sane course.

Gandhi

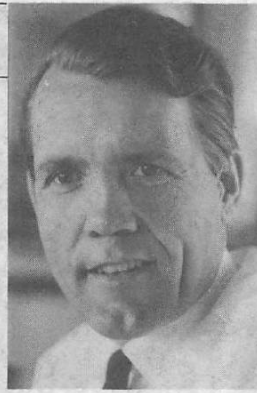
Marx's criticism of the methods adopted by the anarchist Bakunin shows that he was wrestling with the question of whether violent change can lead to a stable society. Shlomo Avineri writes, 'Marx's theory of practice easily suggested to him that a revolutionary movement based on terror, intimidation and blackmail will ultimately produce a society based on these methods as well.' Roger Garaudy, until 1970 chief ideologist of the French Communist Party, deals with the same point in *The Alternative Future*: 'One cannot first conquer power and change structures by any and all means, and then, from the height of conquered power, bestow liberty. How can we find the means which correspond to the

aim we pursue?'

Of course violence cannot be written off under all circumstances as a vehicle of change. If an oppressive regime keeps a population under its thumb and refuses to take steps to set the people free, violence may be the only way. A regime which controls a population against the will of the majority is already practising violence, although everything may look peaceful from the outside. Some who are quite tolerant of this oppression are quick to condemn rebels who take to arms to rectify the situation. Misunderstanding the Christian commandment of love, Christians throughout history have too often considered militancy on the part of the oppressed as illegitimate, and thereby directly or indirectly supported the oppressor.

But there is a better way. Our prospects would be dismal if the alternatives were violence or the status quo. We tend to underrate one factor: the power of an idea to move people. We underrated it when Mahatma Gandhi launched his amazing and inspired campaign to liberate India. 'My life is my message,' he said, and millions followed him.

We have become cynical in the West. We have bet our lives on so many causes and seen our hopes fail so often. Cynicism takes its toll, even among those who believe in God. Our sense of expectancy shrinks, we do not believe that the God we serve can be an effective force for change.



D Chamber

The churches have been discussing if and to what extent they should support a liberation movement using violence. There are no easy answers. But it is a betrayal if such support, or resistance against it, is allowed to replace the churches' real task, which is to deal with selfishness, fear and hate in men and thereby open new possibilities for non-violent solutions.

Recent experience shows that such solutions can be found. In Italy the conflict between the German-speaking minority in South Tyrol and the Italian-speaking majority had been simmering since the first world war, now and then erupting in bombings and other forms of violence. A dramatic reconciliation between two political figures contributed to a solution. Within weeks of the signing of a package agreement in 1969 granting new rights to the German-speaking South Tyrolians, these two political leaders were in Northern Ireland telling how they had found a non-violent road to justice in a seemingly deadlocked situation.

Meghalaya

A similar development took place in the North-Eastern state of Assam. Two of the hill peoples, the Khasis and the Garos, were fighting for the right to establish their own state within Assam. The Indian Government did not accede to their demands, and the conflict grew increasingly bitter. Radical groups were preparing violent action. At this point one of the leaders of the Khasi people visited an MRA conference in India. There he decided to live out the Christian principles he had been talking about. The result was a new relationship with the leader of the Hindu majority in Assam. Together they and other leaders on both sides of the conflict agreed on a formula for a solution, and jointly recommended it to the central Government in Delhi. The formula was accepted and in 1968 the Garos and Khasis were given their own state, Meghalaya.

One area where violence should be used is in tackling the aggression and destructiveness in oneself. 'No society, however much care it takes of people, can

Liberation struggle

by Genis Ibot

FOR SIX YEARS I saw violence taking place almost every day. Sometimes my family were victims, but at other times we caused violence in retaliation. Our home and most of our property were burned. The war cost 50,000 lives. Many of my schoolmates were killed fighting for the liberation front.

We were convinced that violence was the only way to get a fair chance. We believed that revenge and bitterness were justified because we had been cruelly treated. We used to pray that God would give us the strength to kill our enemies.

When I was 16, I witnessed a funeral of a whole family. The only person to survive was the one-year-old baby who had been pro-

tected by the mother's body. One of the sons was my schoolmate. Tears, anger and confusion burned inside me. What would happen to this child in 10 or 20 years time? Would he seek revenge for what had been done to his family? I began to realise that violence breeds violence.

A mother in my village told my parents, 'Five years of running away from bombs and machine guns have planted bitterness in our hearts. How long will this continue? Will our children suffer the same for the next 30 years?' In a desperate situation like this we were ready to try another way.

I have learned that whether you use violence or not is not the main point. Most important is how you find an answer to bitterness. How do we break the chain of revenge and hatred which is passed on from generation to generation?

Moral Re-Armament has helped my family to find answers to these questions. We learned that if we become sensitive to the injustices we have done to others and not just to the injustices that others have done to us, we can begin to find the way to prevent violence. We learned that if hate can engender hate, love can engender love—a love that is sensitive to what the other person feels. The way we treat each other goes deep inside, almost like a bullet penetrating the body.

I had stolen some bullets from my father and sold them. I realised that these same bullets could be fired at him. When I apologised to him reconciliation began in our family.

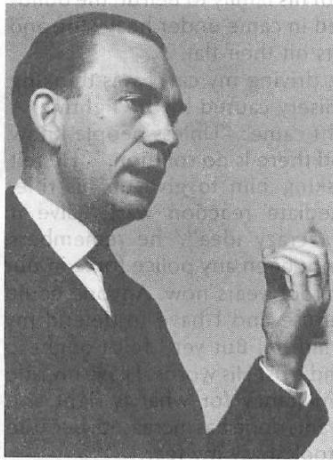
This spirit of reconciliation affected our village when my parents decided to meet the members of the liberation front in our

free individuals from the task of mastering their own aggression,' writes psycho-analyst Alexander Mitscherlich of Germany.

The refusal to do violence to one's lower nature invariably produces the social coercion we do not want. Moral anarchy provokes an excess of law and order. Most of us cannot take the insecurity of living in a society with no clearly defined rules, and finally choose a prison life where we know what our duties are.

War and violence appear to be vast impersonal forces which most of us cannot do much about. Fresh hope is born when we see where we ourselves are part of the problem and begin to take action about that.

'Man and Structures' by Jens J Wilhelmsen available from Grosvenor Books, 54 Lyford Road, London SW18 3JJ. Price £1.25 pp.



by Paul Campbell

VIOLENCE REMOVED the Shah from Iran; in America it played midwife to independence and to the emancipation of the slaves. Violence halted Hitler, thwarted Japan's bid for domination of the Pacific, brought independence to Algeria.

Many believe that violence is the only road to progress, however great the cost in human terms. We who live in comfort and security in the rich world may blame those who turn to violence for the suffering they cause. But those who tolerate injustice are as responsible for violence as those who fire the guns.

Take World War II, for instance. The peace of 1919 left the Germans humiliated, without bread and with inflation so massive that fear of it has been a factor in policy ever since. Hitler said he could deliver the people from their misery. But the Allies could have done that. The application of their Christian ideology by the victors could have enabled the German people to find their destiny in comradeship with the democracies. It is not unreasonable to suggest that it was the failure of the conscience of the West that forced Hitler on Europe.

Twenty-five years ago the Shah asked Frank Buchman's advice on his policy for Iran. Buchman told him that only an ideology of change—a resolute battle for absolute honesty and unselfishness in his country—could protect Iran from violence from within

Power above the law

and from without. The Shah did make some moves over land distribution. But more was required. Perhaps he did not know how to enlist the people around him to do what needed to be done.

There seems to be a law at work through history. We find it expressed in the saying, 'The mills of God grind slowly but they grind exceeding small.' Lincoln reckoned that the Civil War might continue 'till every drop of blood drawn by the lash is required by one drawn by the sword'. A time of injustice and violation of human dignity is often followed by a time of judgement.

The white man's history in Africa and Asia is marked by domination and exploitation. We chose to disregard the law of retribution. That was our privilege. But it is not our privilege to disregard the increase in the price of oil. We begin to feel the grinding of the mill of justice. And we will, more and more, as the control of resources passes ever more surely into African and Asian hands.

The threat of nuclear annihilation hangs over the cities of Europe, Russia and America. What has brought this situation to pass? Could it be a result of the blindness to human misery of a class out for profit and power? Today's nuclear confrontation had its beginnings in attitudes in palaces and stately homes, in mines, mills and factories long before the atom was split and the nuclear missile engineered.

Choice

Christian compromise allowed slavery to develop. In America it was brought to an end through the violence of the Civil War. But the trade in human lives which supplied it was ended by different means—by the battle of Wilberforce and his colleagues for Britain's conscience, which culminated in the abolition of the slave trade by Act of Parliament.

There is power enough released through the awakened and obeyed conscience to replace violence as an instrument of change. Morocco and Tunisia, in contrast to Algeria, gained their independence without violence, and without liquidating the leaders who fought for independence after it was won. Certain Moroccans and Tunisians shed their bitterness, and produced an inspired statesmanship to which the French responded. A handful of men in both instances revealed that it is never too late to reverse the course of history. Repentance and forgiveness transform policies and heal the bitterness which violent change ordinarily leaves untouched. They create the possibility of a united society where violence inevitably leads to division.

The failures of the past have led to the violence of the present. Will our moral failures today lead to violence in the future? The choice is quite clear for our nations—change by violence or by a resolute battle for the moral and spiritual re-arming of our countries.

*After dinner may be seen
Horrors on the little screen.
Face of pain and scene of dearth,
Harvest of an anguished earth.
See the starving infant stand,
Reaching out its little hand;
See men sleeping in the street—
Almost feel the flies and heat.
Watch the bombs go raining down
Onto some defenceless town;
Then inspect the latest blast
In Zimbabwe or Belfast.
But what's it to do with me,
All the evil that we see?
Friend, the more I watch and think,
All the more I see the link.
Hate which makes men bomb a pub
Might have started with a snub—
Maybe mine; if so, at last
I have caused the murder blast.
No, I've never fired a gun;
I'm the law-abiding one:
But I've passed injustice by
With a shrug and easy lie.
So I'm in it to the hilt,
I too share all human guilt,
And can only be absolved
As I count myself involved.*

DERMOT MCKAY

area and the government forces. Later on an agreement was worked out between the two groups. The government promised to protect the rights of those who had been fighting in the liberation front and help rebuild and develop their community.

Refugees and former liberation front members returned to our burnt out village and a new spirit is evident there—people are thinking more of the future than of revenge.

Some outsiders encourage violence for sincere reasons—they see no other way to end injustice. But some encourage it for the sake of popularity, or to further their power or ideology. Do they ever stop to think of the suffering of the ordinary people? Where millions of innocent people are killed in the process of violence, people are not treated as children of God, but as robots or animals. We have got to awaken the conscience of

people on all sides to this injustice.

After liberation, what type of a society will we build to replace the one we have pulled down? Will it be the same? One evening I was talking to a representative of a North African liberation front. He said that he wasn't concerned about the type of society he would build later on. 'It will be up to my children to decide. Our only concern is how to liberate them', he said.

Having found healing to my bitterness, I began to see the people on the other side as people who have the same fears, hopes and aspirations as me. People's lives become just as important as the cause.

I long to see that we put as much passion and concern into liberating our people from the bitterness and selfishness of the past as we put into liberating them from unjust treatment.

A better weapon

LEBANON, once known as the Switzerland of the East, with its free press, flourishing enterprise and fine balance between different communities has in the last three years become a vortex of division and destruction. At least 70,000 of its inhabitants have been killed in a conflict fuelled by arms and ideas from outside. Desolated Beirut is divided between the Christian and Muslim communities. The ancient Phoenicians who founded Lebanon were named after the Phoenix which rises from the ashes. Their descendants could rebuild the country if they could find an idea that united them. One who wants to do this is a young professional man who recently visited London.

He is a Christian, and the father of two young children. He can tell of many friends who have been killed in the war.

At one stage the family had to leave Beirut and stay in the mountains where it was safer. The war has stopped much of his professional work and he had to sell land to cover his family's expenses. When recently he

returned with his family to Beirut, the building they lived in came under heavy fire and three rockets hit their flat.

'One day, driving my car, I was thinking about the misery caused by the fighting. A clear thought came: "Unless people know and fear God there is no solution."' He felt God was asking him to give up his rifle.

'My immediate reaction was, "Give it away? It's a crazy idea"; he remembers. 'There has not been any police force in our country for four years now. Anyone could enter my house and I have to defend my wife and children. But yet I felt I ought to trust God and trust His words. I gave my rifle away. My militancy for what is right and what God wants done has increased, because this action took away my fear.'

Christians and Muslims

What had led him to take this independent line? He traces it back to the visit of a group of British trade unionists to Beirut in 1968. These people spoke of how they had decided to look at where they had been wrong and had had the courage to put these things right. They told how sincere apologies had brought a spirit of reconciliation to their

own situations. At that time he had no faith or ideals. 'I was driven by my own ambition. That very evening, God touched me. Faith began to grow in my heart.'

He made certain decisions. In his work as a student leader he felt he had betrayed two friends. He apologised to them. He wrote to his father about dishonesties of the past. And he apologised to his younger brother for his jealousy against him. 'Those little things were hard to do but gave me a great inner freedom.'

He believes that God will lead him day by day to do what needs to be done. 'The first step is to get in touch with a few Muslims I know, who have tried to build a bridge with the Christian community in Lebanon. So far they have met with little response.'

'We Christians in Lebanon have given a very bad idea of Christ to the Muslims living with us. I understand why the Muslims do not trust us on the political level. Unless we Christians in the Middle East change I don't see that we will have a good future.'

'But we have lived together for centuries. Though we are Christians or Muslims we are the same people, and of the same race and language. We can build a better future for us all.'

GENIS IBOT

At the heart of violence

The writer has asked us to withhold her name.

WHEN I WAS ATTACKED as I was walking to the station early one morning, my immediate reaction was disbelief. It couldn't happen to me. This must be a nightmare, and in a few moments I'd wake up safe and sound at home.

Later came questions and self-recrimination. Why me? What had I done (or not done) to provoke such an attack? Why had I refused the lift a friend had offered me? Had I been totally deaf to God's warnings?

Not all the questions were answered. But I began to realise that no-one is immune from the effects of a society that encourages self-gratification at any cost.

In the weeks that followed I also began to learn something about fear—fear that restricts and even paralyses. Travelling alone, walking down an empty street, became hurdles to face, not routine occurrences. In my imagination, fear ran riot, and invented more and more situations where violence could erupt and engulf me. My logical mind might discount such follies but that did not always dispel my panic.

Telling others about my fears, something a proud person like myself finds difficult, proved a great help. A fear shared seems to be considerably lessened. And I learnt in doing so that friends suffered equally from

private terrors—some just as irrational as mine.

I discovered too how limited my trust in God, and love for Him, had been. I was willing to let Him have control over my life, but only on certain conditions; among them a guarantee of freedom from the threat of further violence. This bargaining was put to the test some months after the attack when I was in a shop when it was looted by football fans. We shoppers were in the middle of it all—we could not simply claim immunity from their aggression. In fact, although they damaged property, no-one was seriously hurt.

This second encounter with violence forced me to face my panic and fears head on once more. I had to admit that I found my vulnerability to fear humiliating; that I longed to be able to feel I had control over it. But, slowly, I have begun to grope towards an understanding of the statement, 'Perfect love casts out fear.' Only an unconditional love of God allows you to be freed from the desire to control any part of the future.

I used to think no harm could come to me, unless God had abandoned me. Now I know that God can be found at the heart of any situation, however violent. I have discovered too that any experience can yield riches even if one does not immediately appreciate them. Now when panic overwhelms me, when I have to travel alone, one prayer comes to the rescue: 'Lord have mercy, Thee I adore, into Thy hands.'

BRAZIL contd from p1

man, and workers. They were meeting as friends and equals. It gave him a new concept of life. He decided to get reconciled with his father and to put his heart into his job. Since then he had found a new friendship with people of different colours.

At that gathering he met a young black, Reinaldo Evangelista, Brazilian champion in Tae-kwon-do (Korean karate). There was a moving moment at the conference when Reinaldo told how he had traced his father in Salvador, a man he had never seen as he had walked out on his mother when Reinaldo was only a baby. As a result of his change of heart, he had been able to meet his father and half-brothers without bitterness.

Among the 14 nationalities at the conference were 16 trade unionists and management from Chile's copper and steel industries.

As a climax to the conference, nearly one thousand citizens of Salvador gathered in the Teatro Castro Alves for an ecumenical service led by Cardinal Brandao and a Presbyterian minister, Enoch Sena. In a fiery speech, the Cardinal stressed the themes of the conference, the importance in today's world of moral and spiritual values and of inner change, which result in a change of structures and reconciliation.

'I salute the people of MRA fervently, with every fibre of my heart,' he said. 'If man does not find the way and the instruments for reconciliation, the world will not find a way out of the present crisis.'

AJDC and PH