

24-05-010



**Agenda for
Reconciliation**

**Conference report
"Witnessing to Hope"
13-20th August 2000
Caux, Switzerland**



Healing the wounds of history

How do we heal the wounds of history?

How can we restore the dignity of victims and victimisers?

Some choose to put a lid on the sufferings of the past. Others use them to inflame hatred for a political or religious cause. Both approaches compromise the future.

As one participant expressed it: "The past will stand there in our memories with all its scars and wounds. Reconciliation, however, can take away the contaminating power of the past, its haunting presence, the devastating restlessness of people that have not found peace."

For many individuals and nations, however, injustice and oppression are not matters of the past. They continue to degrade their dignity today.

How can justice be achieved? Is a process of forgiveness possible? It requires a willingness to enter areas of great pain in our own and other people's lives.

This conference which gathered more than 500 people from 68 different nations made this evident. Participants came from countries such as Rwanda, Lebanon, Cambodia, Papua New Guinea and Bosnia, which have recently emerged from traumatic civil wars. Others came from countries and regions still locked in conflict, like the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Israel and Palestine.

This report looks at some examples given at the conference of trust being built between adversaries, and the meaning of forgiveness and its relationship to justice. It discusses the role of religion, and witnesses to hope without denying the brutal reality in which far too many people and countries continue to live.

Editor

"Even if different cultures express pain differently, suffering is universal and is caused everywhere by the same ills. The struggle for respect of human rights is also universal and cultural differences should not be a decisive factor in that struggle."

Dr Cornelio Sommaruga, President of the Swiss Foundation of Moral Re-Armament and former President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, at the opening plenary.

"Pain has no creed or citizenship. No matter how deep the wound is, there is always a remedy, if we hear with our hearts."

Samer Abu Ghazaleh, Gaza, Palestine

"Forgiving is not forgetting. It is not excusing or diminishing a wrong that has been committed. It does not absolve people from the consequences of their actions. It is not surrendering the right to justice."

Journalist Michael Henderson, UK, author of the book *Forgiveness, Breaking the Chain of Hate*

"Forgiveness is the power to break the chains that bind us to past actions."

Author and sociologist Hannah Arendt

Lebanese renounce violence

Assaad Chaftari, an engineer, held senior rank in one of the Christian militias during the civil war in Lebanon. "I was brought up in a Christian belief and environment. What I knew about politics was enough for me: the Christians made Lebanon. They had to protect their prerogatives. The Muslims were a danger. When in 1975



Assaad Chaftari

the first bullets were fired, it was natural for me to enrol in the Christian militias. I was motivated by prejudice, then by fear. Hatred came later during the war. It came with the destruction around me and death of fellow fighters and friends."

Through becoming involved in a dialogue between Christians and Muslims eleven years ago, his views gradually changed. "I discovered the other Lebanese, our partners, the way they really are. I learnt that we are all equals: Christians, Muslims, Arabs, black and white. I know now the importance of a human life. Nothing political is important enough to kill a human being or cause him harm."

In February this year he concluded that the time had come to make a public apology through the press for what he had done in the name of 'country' or 'Christianity'. "I asked the Lebanese to forgive me. Confessing to God or a priest is good. But confessing my own faults to the harmed persons may help them. Today I am ashamed of my past. I

"I know that feeling sorry will not be enough! I should show to others where I went wrong and be part of the campaign to build the post-war, new Lebanon."

cannot change it. But I can be responsible for my future and the future of my country. I know that feeling sorry will not be enough! I should show to others where I went wrong and be part of the campaign to build the post-war, new Lebanon, where all may be reconciled and live as one."

Hisham Shihab, a Lebanese journalist, spontaneously responded to these words of a former militiaman from the other side: "When Assaad Chaftari presented his moving apology, I had to salute him, hug him, ask for forgiveness. I come from a Muslim background. As a teenager I joined a

militant group and participated in shelling Christian neighbourhoods with mortars. Later I was given a long range rifle with a powerful telescope, and was ordered to snipe at people belonging to the other side. It was a moment of

"The old woman reminded me of my grandmother. My conscience told me that they are people like us. No political causes were worth the bloodshed."

truth when, through my telescope, I once saw three people running for cover: an old woman and two boys. One of them looked like a cousin of mine. The old woman reminded me of my grandmother. My conscience told me that they are people like us. No political causes were worth the bloodshed. I refused to follow orders and decided to quit. I pledge to walk hand in hand with Assaad Chaftari, and with all the people who denounce violence and seek a better future for our children."



Apology of Lebanese figure breaks silence on civil war

By Charles M. Sennott
GLOBE STAFF

BEIRUT—In the decade since Lebanon's civil war ended, this country has tried to rebuild from the ruins by for he

In a letter addressed to his victims "both living and dead" he became the first high-level militia leader to apologise for the thousands that he and his Christian

Press cuttings from the Lebanese paper *An-Nahar*, and the *Boston Globe*

Politicians' Round Table

A "Politicians' Round Table" took place 14th-16th August within the Agenda for Reconciliation conference. Participating were present and past parliamentarians and public officials from 22 countries.

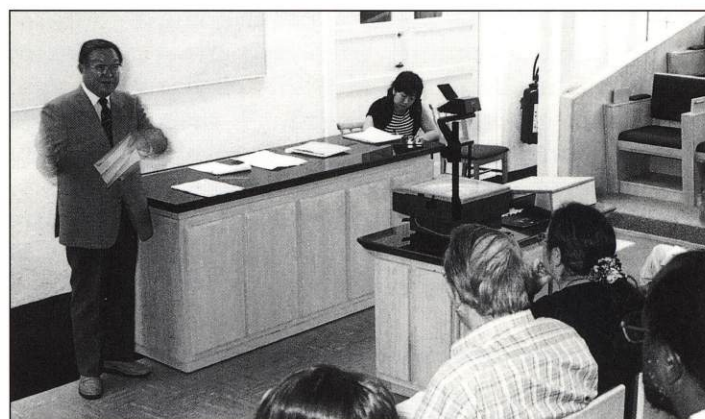
Their discussions focused on three main issues: the situation in North-East Asia, particularly the possibility and implications of Korean reunification; justice in international economic relations; and the prospects of reconciliation work in the Balkans.

Among the participants were three members of the Japanese Diet (Parliament), including the General-Secretary of the Democratic Party; a former Korean ambassador to Japan; a council member of the Chinese Association for International Understanding (CAFIU); a director of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington DC; the Assistant Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO) for Europe and Central Asia; the Governor-General of Jamaica; the Emir of Kano, Nigeria, and delegates coming directly from the Somali peace talks in Djibouti.

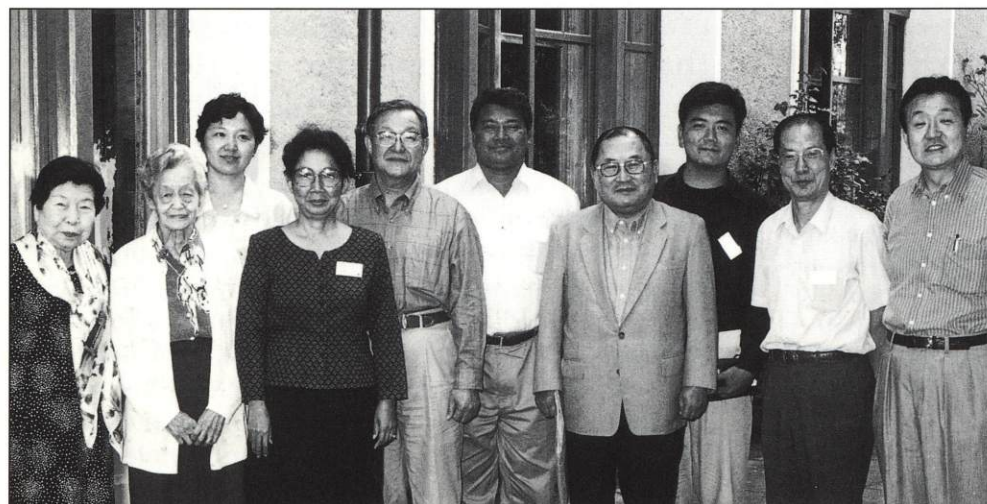
Although representing a wide variety of political views and differing concerns, they were united in their conviction that political measures need a moral and spiritual basis. Trust between the nations of North-East Asia or the Balkans cannot be built without repentance and restitution. Justice in economic relations cannot be realised unless globalisation is subjected to moral correctives and concern for the weak.



Hiroshima:



Kazuo Tanikawa, MP, veteran parliamentarian from Hiroshima who has held two cabinet posts, the ministries of Justice and Defence, gave seminar commemorating the 55th anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bomb on his city. He quoted the inscription on the cenotaph erected on the bomb-site in Hiroshima: "Rest in peace. We will not repeat the same mistake." This text was written after the Mayor of Hiroshima had visited Caux in 1950.



Asian participants in Politicians' Round Table, right to left: Yukihisa Fujita, Policy Assistant to leader of Democratic Party, Japan; Junfa Zhu, Chinese Association For International Understanding (CAFIU), China; Horiyuki Moriyama, Sakai City Councillor, Japan; Kim Tae-Zhee, Korea, former Ambassador to Japan and Germany; Dr Shalkhan Murmoo, MP, India; Kazuo Tanikawa, MP, Japan; Chea Vannath, President, Centre for Social Development, Cambodia; Zhu Lingling, Deputy Director, CAFIU Research centre, China; Yukika Sohma, Chairperson, Japan-Korea Women's Friendship Association, Japan; and Takako Sakaki, Chief Director, Saitama International Friendship and Information Cooperative, Japan.

Korea and Japan

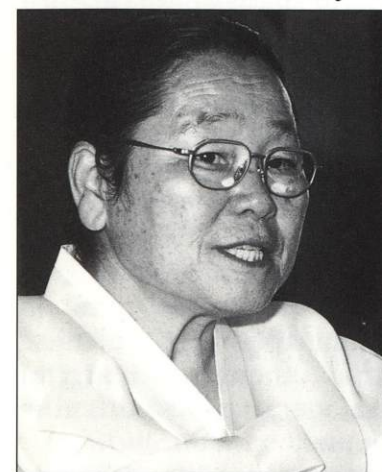
The scars of war in North-East Asia are slow to heal. Japan and Russia have not yet been able to agree on a peace treaty. The Iron Curtain between North and South Korea is still there. Controversy over wartime atrocities still strain relations between China and Japan.

The June 13-15 meeting of President Kim Dae-Jung of South Korea and Chairman Kim Jong-Il of North Korea lit a hope that reunification of the peninsula might come about.

In Caux, the Secretary General of Japan's Democratic Party, Tsutomu Hata, MP and former Prime Minister, addressed the bitterness and mistrust left by Japan's 40 years occupation of Korea: "It is my sincere hope that the two Koreas will succeed in peaceful reunification. I accept that the main reason why the unfortunate situation exists on the Korean peninsula is due to Japan's action prior to and during the Second World War. I apologise for this from my heart to the people of both countries. As a politician I promise that Japan will assist in peaceful re-unification and reconciliation."

"I accept that the main reason why the unfortunate situation exists on the Korean peninsula is due to Japan's action prior to and during the Second World War... As a politician I promise that Japan will assist in peaceful re-unification and reconciliation."

Among the Koreans listening to him were the former Korean Ambassador to Japan, Kim Tae-Zhee, and a leader of Korea's Buddhists, the Venerable Mother Park Chung-Soo, Director of the Won Buddhist Temple at Kangnam in Seoul and also of the Won Buddhist Parish of Pyongyang in the North. Her story helped the conference



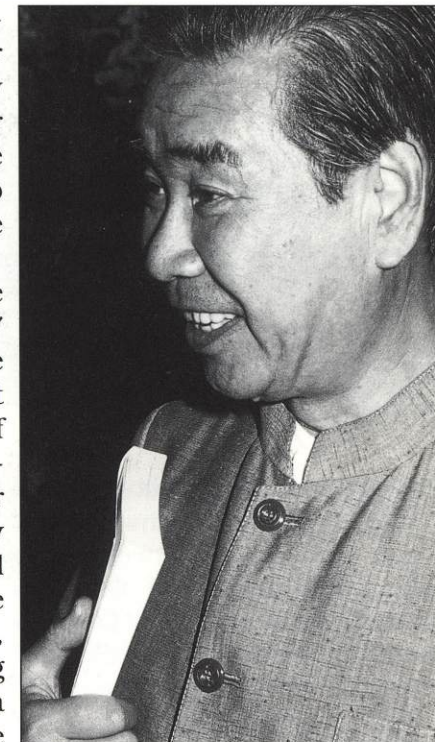
Mother Park Chung-Soo, Korea

participants understand the depth of feeling characterising many Koreans' attitude to Japan: "Korea was oppressed by Japan for 36 years. I experienced the agony of it in my childhood. Koreans worked hard in the fields and harvested the products. Yet our people were not able

to eat rice. Sometimes we got over our hunger by eating the inner smooth part of the pine tree. I came to hate the Japanese unconditionally.

"When she came to Caux in 1987 she met Japanese who were different to the kind of people she experienced in her childhood. "They were humble and would regret the past. One day, when I was going on a picnic, a young Japanese woman made the packed lunch for me. Changes began to take place in my heart and gradually I was able to give up my hatred completely. Mountain House, Caux, was a smelting furnace to melt away my hatred, anger and resentment. I greatly appreciated Mr Hata's sincere apology at the opening of this session."

Mother Park Chung-Soo has initiated and supported humanitarian aid projects in 44 countries, raising some 20 million US dollars in South Korea. Her latest venture is to help the orphans and malnourished people in North Korea. "I believe that my efforts to help my brothers and sisters in North Korea will contribute to the peaceful unification of a divided Korea."



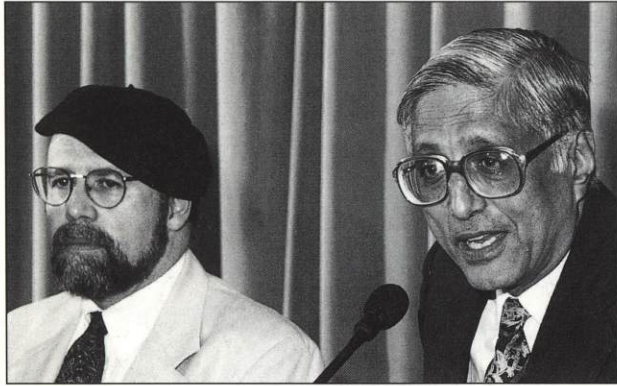
Tsutomu Hata, MP, former Prime Minister of Japan

Sri Lanka

A workshop on Sri Lanka portrayed life and work for reconciliation amidst war and conflict. Rohini De Mel and engineer Roshan Dodanwela, who is now working with AfR, gave the historical background and outlined the current situation in the country.

Constance Chabrière from France, who has worked for UNICEF in Sri Lanka during the last two years, described projects to support children affected by the war. Amidst the booming guns, parents hope and strive for a safer tomorrow.

Religion – source of conflict or compassion?



Rabbi Gopin (left) and Rajmohan Gandhi

“Healing History and Reconciling Adversaries: A Multi-Faith Conversation” was the theme of a panel discussion between Rabbi Dr Marc Gopin, Adjunct Professor of Diplomacy at the Fletcher School for Law and Diplomacy, Boston, USA, Professor Mustafa Abu Sway, Professor of Islamic Thought, Al-Quds University, Jerusalem and Dr Geiko Müller-Fahrenholz, Professor of Theology, Bremen, Germany. Journalist and author Professor Rajmohan Gandhi, India, a grandson of the Mahatma, introduced the panellists as “scholar-activists who belong to the faiths of the family of Abraham; faiths originating in the spiritually charged air, soil and waters of the Middle East.” The following are extracts of what they said:

Rabbi Marc Gopin:

“In Jewish tradition forgiveness is part of repentance, recognition of one’s guilt, the detailed mentioning of what one has done, the asking for forgiveness, restitution, addressing injustice.”

“I have tried to do certain things towards reconciling the Jewish and the Palestinian people. The most senior person amongst the Palestinians present here is Mr Tawfiq Abu Ghazaleh. I want to say to you that I am sorry that it has taken me so long to say what had to be said, write what had to

Collective sense of guilt?

In response to a question from the floor by a young German, Rabbi Gopin answered, “I am not happy that the younger generation of German people feel a collective sense of guilt. I would much rather have a civilisation that in a very healthy way had confronted the past and was determined to give their children a set of ethics so clear and unambiguous and so courageous that Nazism could never rise again in Germany.

I cannot ask forgiveness for what someone else has done. But I do believe that I can be responsible for the small things I did or did not do.”

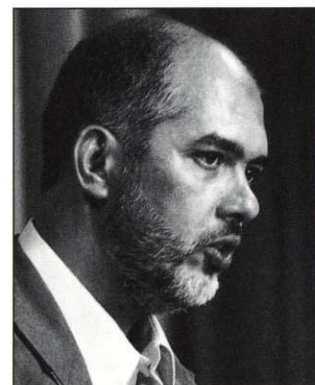


Members of the panel discuss the meaning of forgiveness

be written, to do what had to be done. I hope it is not too late. I swear to you that I will leave no stone unturned to find the path towards the apologies that need to be expressed between our peoples. I have a vision before my mind, that before long our peoples will have the wisdom to find the way to apologise to each other, to live in two homes side by side in dignity and even in companionship.”

Professor Mustafa Abu Sway:

“The notion of forgiveness is mentioned more than 140 times in the Qur’an. In the overwhelming majority of these, forgiveness is mentioned in relationship to God; it is He who forgives and it is He who deprives people of forgiveness if they choose to reject His messages to them. God will forgive the human being not once, but as many



Professor Abu Sway

times as he or she repents and seeks forgiveness. Repentance is a pre-requisite for forgiveness. Conditions for forgiveness to be valid include: to stop doing the sins one is committing and, if these sins include material damage, then restitution is a must.

Prof. Abu Sway recounted some of the

many injustices which Palestinians suffer today, such as land confiscation, house demolition, restrictions in freedom of movement and minimal access to water resources. “When I thought about ‘healing the past’, I wish it were past for me, for us. However, it is not past. It is something that still continues practically every day.”

“God will forgive the human being not once, but as many times as he or she repents and seeks forgiveness. Repentance is a pre-requisite for forgiveness.”

Dr Geiko Müller-Fahrenholz:

Dr Müller-Fahrenholz told a story of a group of elderly German war veterans, who were visiting Belarus to build a home for children who were suffering from the nuclear fallout after the Chernobyl-disaster. They had all been there 50 years before with Hitler’s army. During a dinner with their Belarus hosts one of them stood up and said how deeply sorry he was for what he himself and the German people had done. He broke down in tears. An old Belarus woman got to her feet and hugged and kissed the old man. Professor Müller-Fahrenholz drew some lessons from this story:

• “Guilt must be named. This one man struggles to find the right words. It is a disarming confession, a giving up of the attempt to deny the evil deeds of



Dr Müller-Fahrenholz

the past. It does not require the entire community, group or nation, to speak up, but it does need a few to face the horrors.

• The Belarus woman comes and kisses him. Remember that the German army did atrocious things to the people of Belarus. Yet when she sees the man struggling, breaking down and weeping, he is no longer the enemy, he becomes a fellow human being in need of forgiveness.

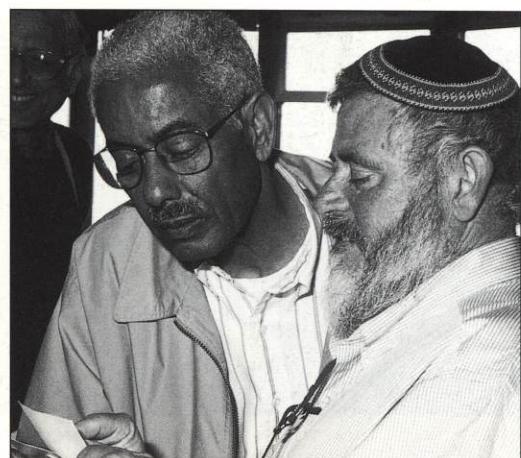
• There is the lasting impact of guilt on the perpetrator’s side and there is the lasting impact of hurt on the victim’s side. The German man and the Belarus woman liberate each other from these bondages of guilt and hurt.

• The emphasis cannot be on repairing the past, it needs to be on preparing a more just and equitable future. It involves questions of burden sharing and compensation.

• The grinding mills of retaliation consume new generations. How can young people respond to the challenges of their time if they continue to react and are made to react to their parents’ and grandparents’ wounds? Forgiveness has to do with setting the coming generations free. Forgiveness is a gift of grace entrusted by God to all human beings irrespective of race, gender, class, creed or religion.”

“Auschwitz prohibits the reduction of guilt and shame to the individual level. Human beings act and fail to act also as members of families, associations, ethnic groups and nations. Forgiveness can never replace justice... At the same time, it must be emphasized that forgiveness goes beyond justice.”

Dr Geiko Müller-Fahrenholz in his book *The Art of Forgiveness*, 1997, WWC Publications.



Mammo Wudneh (left), President of the Writers' Association of Ethiopia, in conversation with Yehuda Wachsmann, Israel

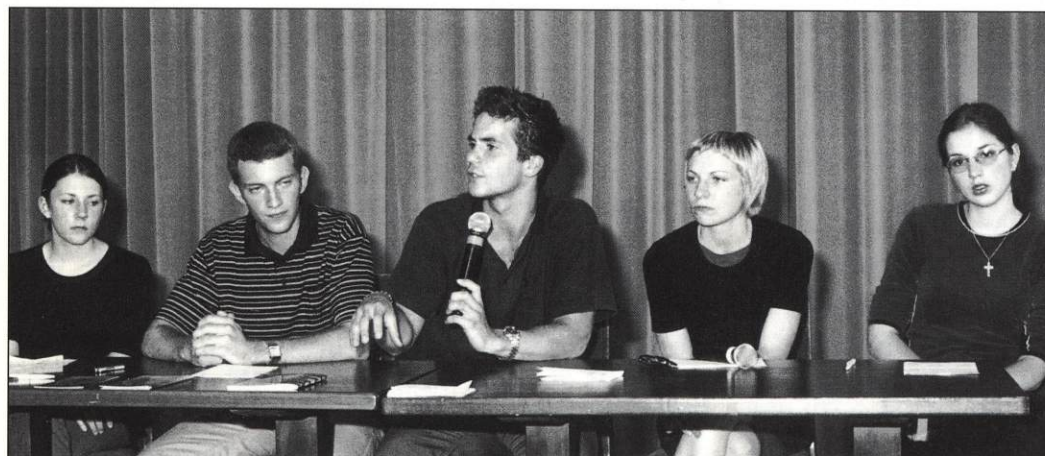
Israel and Palestine

Yehuda Wachsmann, Israel: Activist in 'Bereaved Parents', an organisation uniting those on the Israeli and Palestinian side who have lost their sons or daughters in the conflict. In 1994 his soldier son was kidnapped and held hostage for six days by people of the Hamas movement. He and three of the kidnappers died in the course of a rescue attempt by the Israeli Army. He decided to turn his pain into a mourning for peace and reconciliation and has since met with relatives of his son's kidnappers.



Lawyer Tawfiq Abu-Ghazaleh interviewed by Radio France Internationale

Lawyer Tawfiq Abu-Ghazaleh, Gaza, Palestine: "I have seen here in the past few days the courage of individuals and leaders to apologise for injustice. Leaders all over the world must have the courage to stop injustice. Remember what Martin Luther King jr. said: "Violation of justice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." I hope for a real, just, long-lasting peace in the Middle East."



Young participants from Croatia and Serbia: "We have discovered that our concerns are the same. We have a desperate task of freeing our countries from hatred."



Paul van Tongeren, Executive Director of the European Centre for Conflict Prevention, the Netherlands, gave a workshop on international networking for the prevention of conflicts.



Three law students from the Ametistov Foundation, Moscow



Delegation from Oregon, USA

Africa



Emma Kamara, lecturer in Home Economics at the University of Sierra Leone: "My aim is to set up a centre where children can receive training in the skills of reconciliation, and I have started working with 100 or more war-affected children in my local church."



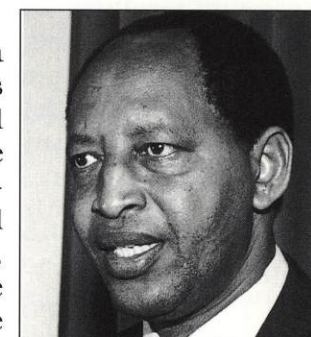
African participants meeting together

The Democratic Republic of Congo

Since August 1998 a civil war has been raging in the Democratic Republic of Congo (former Zaire) also involving armies from six neighbouring countries. Twenty participants from Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda and the Congo met during the conference for a day of discussions to build trust amongst themselves and search how to contribute towards peace. The Congolese participants included intellectuals and lecturers, some of them living in the country, others in exile in Europe. One of them explained: "We created the space for real listening to one another. The Congolese have always spoken as if they were the victims. Now we could understand the Rwandans."

Rwanda

Prof Dr Rwigamba Balinda (right), served as President of the National Commission for the Rehabilitation and Renovation of the National University of Rwanda, in Butare, after the genocide. In 1996 he founded Kigali Independent University, of which he is the Rector. In order to create a mentality that can help prevent confrontations and atrocities in the future he has designed a course in ethics which is a standard part of every student's curriculum.

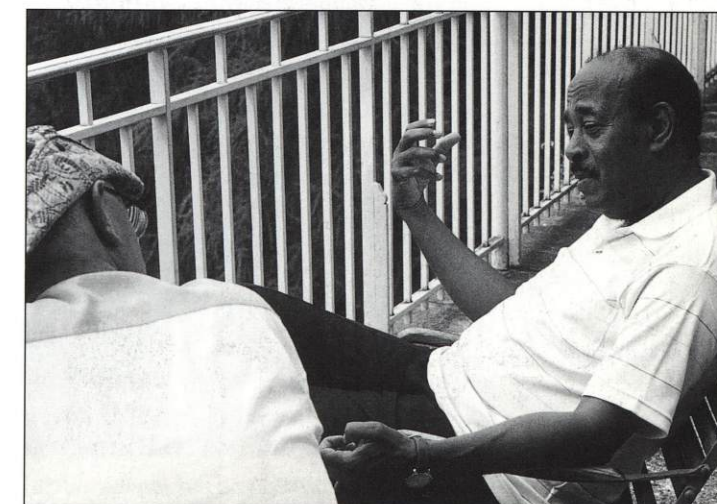


Ethiopia and Eritrea

Somali, Ethiopian and Eritrean participants who engaged in initiatives for peace in the Horn of Africa, met for discussions and built what they described as "a solid bridge of trust and friendship for the future." Two of them, author Mammo Wudneh, Ethiopia, (photo on opposite page) and former Ambassador Dr Yusuf Al-Azhari, Somalia, together with two colleagues from Eritrea and Kenya, earlier in the year visited a number of European capitals to inform and consult politicians and diplomats about their work. They also met with refugee communities from their countries and made radio and TV broadcasts which were widely heard in their own countries. Although satisfied that the resolution of the UN-Security Council has been accepted by both sides and that the war is over, they stressed that "stopping all actions of hostility" must include the propaganda war of words.

Mammo Wudneh has been deeply involved in the search for a solution to the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict for 30 years and has written numerous articles and books on the subject. His commitment

to a peaceful and just solution has not been diminished by the many set-backs over the years. He explained: "There is a spiritual dimension to my struggle. God has inspired me for this purpose. That gives me hope till the end of my life."



Dr Yusuf Al-Azhari, Somalia

Australia



Carol Kendall

This year Australia hosts the Olympic Games in Sydney. World attention is drawn to the plight of Australia's Aboriginal people. In 1997 an official inquiry exposed the suffering of 'the stolen generations' of Aboriginal children. The following year, hundreds of thousands of Australians from all backgrounds participated in a National Sorry Day. People of the stolen generations responded by launching a 'Journey of Healing', which is enlisting thousands in practical action to overcome the consequences of the forced removal policies. So far the national government, although regretting past practices, has refused to make an official apology.

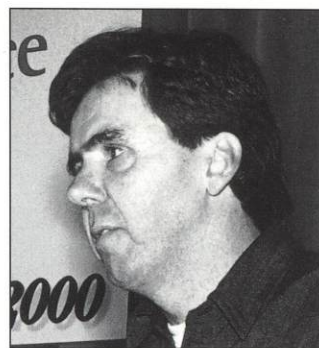
Carol Kendall, an Aborigine of the Worumi Nation in New South Wales and an Advisory Committee member for the National Inquiry into the Removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their families spoke at Caux: "We need international support to encourage our government to accept responsibility for actions of the past to ensure that Aboriginal people receive justice and basic human rights. We are dealing with the effects of the past governments' policies of assimilation and the removal of Aboriginal children from their families. Many children were conditioned to think that their people and culture were dirty and evil, that we should never go back to

"I could be a victim and be consumed by anger, resentment and blame. Or I could be a survivor, to work through my pain and continue my journey. I chose to be a survivor."

our own people and culture. And many of us did not." She was taken from her own family and was the only child in her adopted family. At age 35 she found her mother and has since found out who her father was and who her many sisters and brothers are. Slowly the pieces of her life are coming together. "I came to a fork in the road of my journey. I could be a victim and be consumed by anger, resentment and blame. Or I could be a survivor, to work through my pain and continue my journey. I chose to be a survivor."

Tim Muirhead works on behalf of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, to support the

process of reconciliation in the state of Western Australia. "My country is built on the dispossession of Aboriginal people. I and my people overwhelmingly enjoy the benefit of that dispossession. Carol, and her people, overwhelmingly bear the cost. In a nation whose standard of living is amongst the best in the world, that of Aboriginal people is amongst the worst. This is the simple impact of dispossession. Yet, the Aboriginal people do not ask us to leave. They do not use violence against us. They simply say - 'listen, learn, acknowledge, and work with us to heal the wounds of the nation.'"

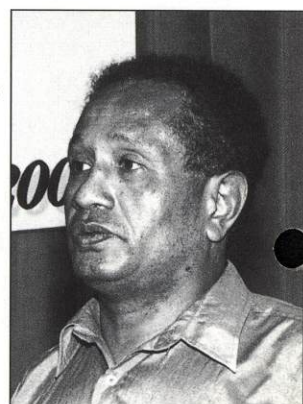


Tim Muirhead

"In a nation whose standard of living is amongst the best in the world, that of Aboriginal people is amongst the worst."

Fiji

"After George Speight's military-inspired coup of May 19 this year, the indigenous people of Fiji, of which I am one, have an image as intolerant racists," said Jone Dakuvula, former adviser to the Prime Minister and now spokesman for the Citizens Constitution Forum, an NGO working to restore democracy.



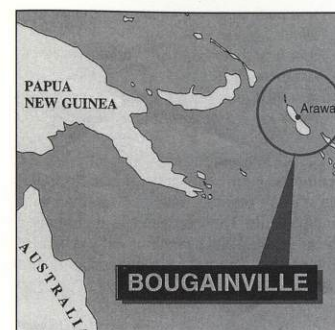
Jone Dakuvula

Two days after the coup I went to visit Mrs Chaudhry, the wife of the deposed Prime Minister, to express my sympathy and wish that the illegal seizure of her husband's government would soon be resolved. Later I took the opportunity to apologise publicly for what had been done to her husband in the name of us indigenous Fijians. My article was widely read and Mrs Chaudhry received hundreds of letters from Fijians all over the world.

The morning after the release of the hostages I went to see Mr Chaudhry who embraced and thanked me for my article.

We have realised that the Constitutional democracy which we want to restore in Fiji must be underpinned by a culture of tolerance and respect."

Papua New Guinea

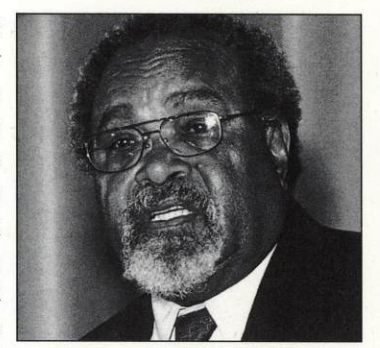


Map of Papua New Guinea

This year Papua New Guinea (PNG) celebrates its 25th anniversary of independence. The copper-rich island of Bougainville is part of PNG. An armed conflict and a secessionist struggle cost 15-20,000 lives - 10% of the island's population - between 1989 and 1997. The conflict was both between Bougainvilleans themselves and between the island and the central government. Sir Michael Somare was Papua New Guinea's first Prime Minister and is now Minister for Bougainville Affairs. He attended with two colleagues who represent Bougainville in the national parliament. Sir Michael spoke about his country's recent struggle to overcome this conflict: "Political reconciliation has been an important feature - and facilitator - of the peace process in Bougainville. Today, after a number of false starts and minor set-backs, a Bougainville interim provincial government has been set up and operates under the Papua New Guinea constitution."

Sam Akoitai, MP for Central Bougainville, expressed his satisfaction at the signal from the central government that the island may be granted

autonomy within the nation of Papua New Guinea. From 1991 he led the resistance forces which supported the national government's efforts to restore order in Bougainville. He discovered to his dismay that his own resistance forces had committed unlawful killings and victimised innocent people, as the other parties to the conflict had done. "I decided to think deeply about the conflict. As a leader I had to make a move towards peace. In 1994 my uncle was killed. I asked myself: If my uncle is dead, must I add more bodies on top



Sir Michael Somare

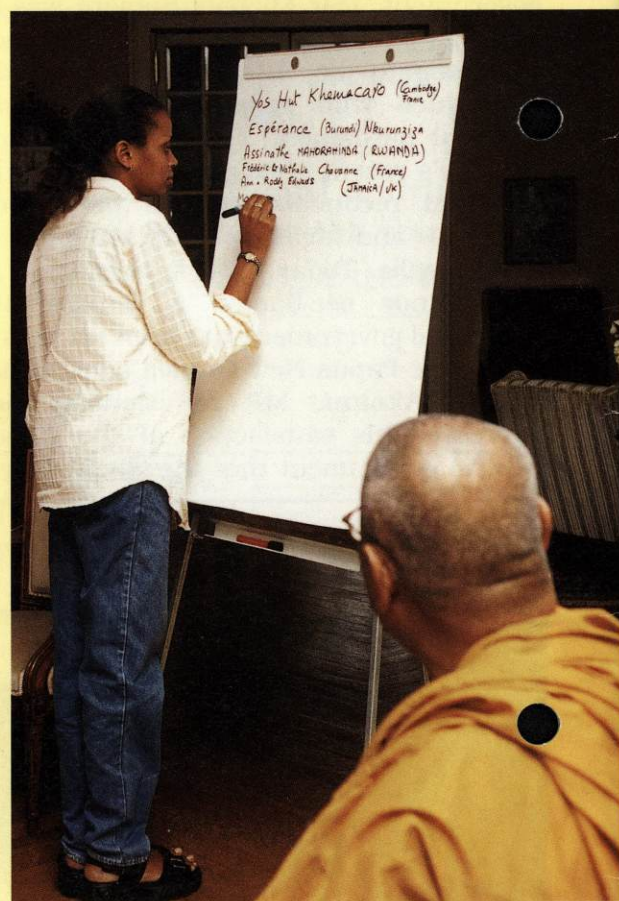
"I do not make peace by talking with my friends, but by talking with my enemies."

of that of my uncle?" Sam Akoitai began talks with the rebels and entered their territory unarmed. Thanks to a nephew in the rebel forces he was saved from being killed. Soldiers in the security forces also wanted to get rid of him. However, his conviction was: "I do not make peace by talking with my friends, but by talking with my enemies."

Jamaica



For a number of years the Governor General of Jamaica, Sir Howard Cooke (seated centre), has brought delegations from his country to the Agenda for Reconciliation conferences at Caux. This year the delegation included distinguished jurists, the director of prisons, a member of Parliament, a leader of the nurses' organisation, people in business, teachers and others.



Agenda for Reconciliation, a programme of Moral Re-Armament

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Front page photo (right): Dr Cornelio Sommaruga, President of the Swiss Foundation of Moral Re-Armament together with Imam of Brighton, UK, Dr Abduljalil Sajid, Vice-Chair of the World Conference of Religions for Peace, and Mrs Jamila Sajid

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Desember 2000

Kjære leser!

Som en julehilsen sender vi i år et blad på engelsk. Det handler om forsoning og gir et bilde av en av sommerens konferanser i Caux. Delvis er det faktisk et norsk produkt: To av Ny Verdens medarbeidere står for innhold og redigering. Rapporten er også en liten takk til de mange som er med på å bære Ny Verden økonomisk.

Årstiden som ligger bak oss har vært våt og mørk. Med julen går vi lysere tider i møte. "Vitnesbyrd om håp" er en kortfattet beretning om mennesker som midt i tilsynelatende uovervinnelige vanskeligheter oppdaget en vei fremover. Problemene i deres hjemland er vondere enn våre: Trusler på liv og død i Midt-Østen, i flere afrikanske land og på Balkan.

Men hos dem som hos oss er veien til håp den samme: Å innlede de forvandlingsprosessene som vi selv sitter med en nøkkel til.

Vi beklager at de som har vanskeligheter med engelsk må nøye seg med bildenes språk. Istedenfor å "si det med blomster" får vi "si det med bilder".

På gjenhør i 2001, og da på norsk! Vi ønsker våre lesere en gledelig jul og et godt nytt år!

Vennlig hilsen,

NY VERDENS REDAKSJON