

BOOK REVIEW

THE STRUGGLE FOR HUMANITY

by

Marjorie Hope & James Young
Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1977

Very few people are probably aware of the achievements of the principle and practice of non-violence techniques in contradiction to the rule of force in the acquisition of human desires and the attainment of human goals and objectives. It is for this reason that the appearance of *The Struggle for Humanity* at this time could not have been more apposite.

The Struggle for Humanity is a study in the mechanics of conquest through non-violence techniques. It is replete with examples of these techniques not only in politics but also in the struggle for the basic needs of man, like food, as typified in the Cesar Chavez case. In effecting political changes, the book demonstrates the potency of the instrument of non-violence in bringing about quiet and bloodless coup d'etat without the backing of lethal weapons in the paradigm of the contemporary Vietnam and the Buddhists as exemplified in Thich Nhat Hanh and Cao Ngoc Phuong.

All the seven prototypes in *The Struggle for Humanity* offer between them differing styles of peaceful, disarming techniques, ranging from the persuasive life-style of the model community of Shantidas, Dom Helder Camara and Thich Nhat Hanh to the 'militant' approach of Cesar Chavez, Danilo Dolci, and the indeterminate, vacillating approach of Kaunda, necessitated by his unique, though uneasy, political leadership role. The different styles of these lodestars nevertheless share the same fundamental principle that human rights can and must be obtained with violence to none but resistance to all who deny them.

The diversity in the methods of these apostles of change through peaceful tremors argues in strongest terms the futility of the use of force, a sanitized word for violence, in effecting a change in world order. Blood will always cry for blood, but 'militant' passive resistance would muzzle guns and cause to remain idle and unused, from no threat of retaliation, those man-made instruments of destruction.

Ironically enough, Majorie and James's arch-evangelists of non-violence movement are non-Americans by origin. Whether this is by design or through inadvertence, it might not be easy

to conclude; it might be the authors' subtle way of proving that something good can come out of the Nazareth of the Third World. But one thing stands out in these portraits, that all these crusaders of non-violence approach have been at one time or another, for a long or brief period, raised on American soil, and had the fortune or misfortune of being bitten by the bug of liberty, which is America's number one passion.

Documentation lends itself to diverse methods; and so one may feel uneasy at times by occasional aberrations in the illogicality of sequence in the presentation of their materials by the authors, but no one would deny that they are witnesses of truth to what they saw and experienced, and that they made their submission with the unqualified conviction of an avowed fellow-traveler on the road to victory without violence. Majorie and James are uniquely qualified for the task they had assigned themselves. They have prepared themselves to carry out this assignment by their competence in four European languages with a smattering of another two. These, in turn, made it possible for them to execute their assignment in a participant-observation situation. This, to us, is their forte.

As an issue more than an academic exercise, one could contend if what the book illustrates is struggle for humanity or for humaneness. The passion to survive is human and, a fortiori, violent struggle to survive could be human. But the human attribute espoused in this book, in the perennial struggle for co-existence and *not* survival of the fittest is, to our mind, tenderness and benevolence, or in common parlance, respect for human dignity. The motif of non-violence as exemplified in this book argues a matter of conscience, for murders unrequited will surely produce sobering effects even in the murderers.

No time spent in reading *The Struggle for Humanity* is wasted.

J.A.F. Sokoya

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