

### I

We refuse the inevitability of violence which seems to weigh upon History. But beyond the rejection of such violence, we wish to develop a culture of non-violence, respectful of all human beings and of their environment. This ambition commits us to the pursuit and the practice of non-violence.

### II

Violence takes many different forms: non satisfaction of fundamental needs; increasing precariousness of day-to-day living; violence within families, in schools, within communities, in the workplace; wars, economic violence, violence towards the environment...

Violence cannot always be attributed to harmful intentions or to impulses. It is often used to fulfil necessary functions within society, whether these concern the defence of freedom or the struggle for justice. In consequence, our purpose is not so much to condemn those who resort to violence as to seek an alternative to violence. Non-violence cannot be reduced simply to the refusal of violent means: it implies the search for and the implementation of methods leading to tangible results.

### III

The commitment to non-violence requires us to lay bare the mechanisms which engender misery, oppression, revolt and violence. We do not put all forms of violence on the same plane, irrespective of their nature and of their origin: violence used to sustain a state of domination and inequality on the one hand, and the violence of the oppressed striving to conquer or to restore their dignity and their freedom on the other. We respect those who have chosen to follow the latter path, taking upon themselves great risk as they do so. Without condoning their choice, we understand why some groups of people respond to injustice with violence, but we believe that in the long run, non-violence is always more effective than violence.

### IV

Non-violent struggle requires us to pay special attention to the political dimension of events. It demands permanent information, rigorous political and economic analysis, a political project, the elaboration and implementation of specific methods of action. Non-violence should not fall into the trap of systematic contestation. The fulfilment of constructive programs contributes to building a new society.

## V

**N**on-violent action aims to appeal to and to convince public opinion and protagonists in conflicts. For this purpose, it aims to be tireless in its use of different means of persuasion. If necessary and without hesitation, it resorts to means of exerting pressure and exercising constraints which, while being fully respectful of individuals, aim to change power relations between opposed parties. In this case, non-violent action becomes the practical expression of the strategy most favourable to justice and fraternal relations. Non-violent action requires a fundamental harmony between the means used and the end aimed for, it requires a vision based on reconciliation not revenge, and in consequence it requires the refusal of any words or any actions which would lock the opponent in his or her own violence and which might be used as a pretext to justify violence.

## VI

**N**on-violent resistance starts with non-cooperation or non-collaboration with the individuals, the institutions or the system which are at the root of situations denounced in the name of justice. This principle is based on the following analysis: injustices within any given society draw their strength from the fact that they enjoy the complicity or cooperation of the majority of the members of that society. By organising collective actions, we aim to achieve, not the seizure of power for the people, but the exercise of power by the people. This principle leads us to break with “established order” through actions which may encompass civil disobedience, when the possibilities offered by action within the law have been exhausted in vain.

## VII

**W**ars never constitute solutions. They generate additional problems with their own consignments of suffering, of extortion and of thirsting for revenge. Non-violence seeks to find means of implementing non-violent civilian defence in a way which will allow populations to organize a real resistance in the event of aggression and to ensure their own security. The MAN condemns the strategy of nuclear deterrence and the proliferation it leads to. It calls for nuclear disarmament by France, not conditional upon the prior obtaining of multilateral agreement. Civilian Intervention for Peace (Intervention Civile de Paix or ICP) consists in non-armed intervention in conflict zones, aiming at the very least to reduce violence and if possible to make it cease, in order to create the conditions for a political solution to conflicts between communities. ICP helps to create the conditions of a just and lasting peace.

## VIII

**W**e condemn the incapacity of the capitalist system to organise society according to the dictates of justice, just as we have condemned the incapacity of socialist state systems to organise society according to the requirements of freedom. We denounce the alienating and polluting aspects of the « production-consumption » cycle which characterises so-called advanced industrial societies. Non-violence leads us to promote social and political forms of organisation with a

human face, based on a more truly participatory democracy, on the rediscovery of community feeling and on relative economic autonomy, self-management of collective spaces, ecological responsibility and international solidarity. This implies the search for a better quality of life for all the world's citizens, current and future, in a way which takes into account the scarcity of resources. The MAN denounces more particularly the ecological absurdity of use of nuclear energy, whether for civilian or military purposes.

## IX

**N**on-violence calls on us to refuse factors of exclusion and to resist the rise of extremism. Liberty, equality and fraternity, if they are really to be lived out in society, require both a change in collective structures and organizational principles, and the transformation of mentalities and of behaviour. With this in mind, it is important to develop the non-violent regulation of conflicts: the taking into account of emotions, empathetic sensitivity to conflicting points of view, rational argumentation, giving contractual force to agreements, the clear definition of each person's functions, the observance of certain rules and of one's sense of responsibility.

## X

**T**he MAN organisation strives to react to events by promoting the insights of non-violence. We cannot speak in others' place about the difficult realities they face. But we do make a personal commitment by approaching problems on the basis of aspects in which our own responsibility is directly involved. That is the level at which we can and should act.

Those who have chosen non-violence should not remain isolated in their search for justice and peace. They should join the various movements and groups already working in these areas, and should promote within such groups, the value of non-violent action methods. However, it is also incumbent on them to unite in order to explore further the demands and possibilities of non-violence, and in order to initiate non-violent actions to which the greatest number of people possible can participate.

Reflection on non-violence and the non-violent action which it calls for brings together all people who hope for true justice, whatever their philosophical or religious background.

## XI

**N**on-violence can be learned. We make a commitment to promote non-violence by means of:

- non-violent education based simultaneously on empathy and on the learning of responsibilities towards oneself, towards others, and towards the common sphere. Such forms of education promote critical obedience to legitimate authorities, not submission to arbitrary order. They train one to resist manipulation and to develop psychosocial skills contributing to a culture of non-violence;
- active and cooperative educational principles according to which facilitators and participants pool together knowledge they have already acquired and jointly

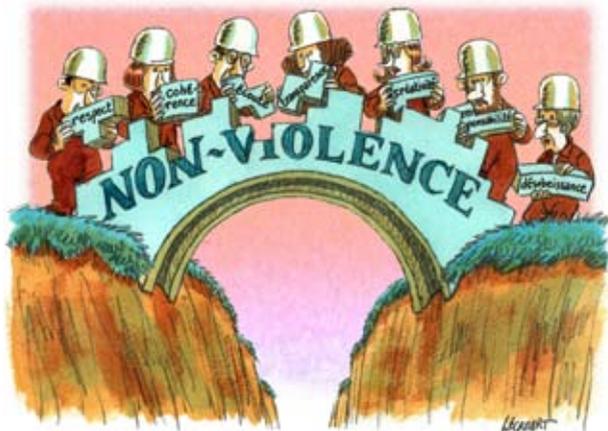
bring their creativity to bear in order to confront new problems, in such a way as to enable each person to reinvest the teachings of non-violence back into his or her family environment, into their neighbourhood, and into their social or professional commitments;

- training in the non-violent regulation of conflicts, centred on rehabilitating conflict as an opportunity for progress, enabling democratic procedures and quality relations to contribute to the improvement of “living together”»;
- training courses in the different forms of non-violent action, including civil disobedience, with an insistence on the importance of having a constructive program;
- training courses in civilian intervention for peace giving a major role to the analysis of geopolitical situations, to mediation and to the regulation of emotions.

## XII

Out of a concern for coherence with its precepts, the MAN has set up, as its own organisational basis, a federal structure to sustain the dynamism of local groups while respecting their autonomy, within the context of overall directions decided at its congress. Using new means of communication, members seek to improve the flow of information, to experiment with new forms of cooperative work, to organise participatory democracy while guarding against bureaucracy. Within our different governing bodies, we are careful to foresee different mechanisms for regulating conflicts which inevitably will arise.

The MAN organisation has a particular concern to live out the values of non-violence within the movement itself.



**Non-violence can be learnt,  
Actions should be prepared,  
A movement needs to be organised...**

**[www.nonviolence.fr](http://www.nonviolence.fr)**

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