

# FREEING THE FUTURE FROM THE PAST

As the British look back, we fall into two categories—those who feel that the good, by and large, outweighs the bad, and those who don't. For one group, patriotism is a virtue. To others it is suspect.

Both groups are in danger of failing the present, for neither learns from the past. Those who look back to a golden age cannot understand why other nations and groups react to them as they do. Those who write off their nation's past may fail to see that they are making the same mistakes today. And those who judiciously mix the two approaches, making the most of the parts of history they would like to be associated with and drawing a veil over those they wouldn't, are equally unrealistic.

Realism is painful because it brings us face to face with our nation's guilt and because it means accepting that we are no better than our ancestors. Yet, as with personal guilt, where repentance is genuine, forgiveness is available for the guilt which accrues to us as members of our nation. Personally and nationally, we need not be prisoners of our past. This is the theme of this issue.

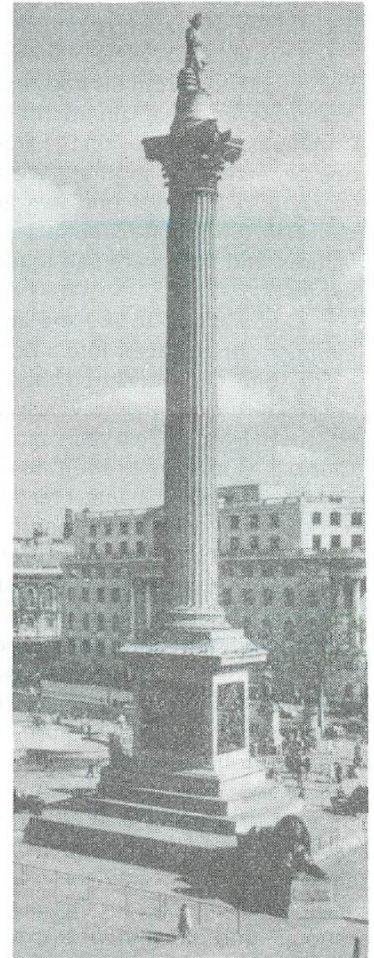
Photos: (clockwise) Henning Cristoph, Landerbildstelle Berlin, London Tourist Board, Photographers International.

# NEW WORLD NEWS

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Legacies of the past? Omens for the future? What will break the chain?

Speaking at the Moral Re-Armament conference in Caux, Switzerland last summer, Englishman LESLIE FOX called for his countrymen to face their historic responsibility for Northern Ireland's problems. As tension rose in Northern Ireland last month, the Dublin newspaper *The Irish Times* reprinted the speech in full. We print it below:

## N IRELAND — THE BRITISH FACTOR

WE BRITISH are worried about our inability to see any end to the troubles in Northern Ireland. This may be an inducement for us to consider the underlying causes of the problem, which is perhaps the most intractable in the world today.

We tend to think that our job is to go into Northern Ireland to help these feuding Irishmen to 'sort it out'. But there is another element in the deadlock—Britain. British policies and actions have led to the present situation.

We British are appallingly ignorant of Irish affairs and history. The recent BBC television series on Irish history by Robert Kee has opened the eyes of many to the tragedies and sorrows of past centuries—largely caused by England. It revealed a seamy side to the English character—ruthlessness, deceit, divisiveness, superiority, indifference to suffering and the toleration of injustice.

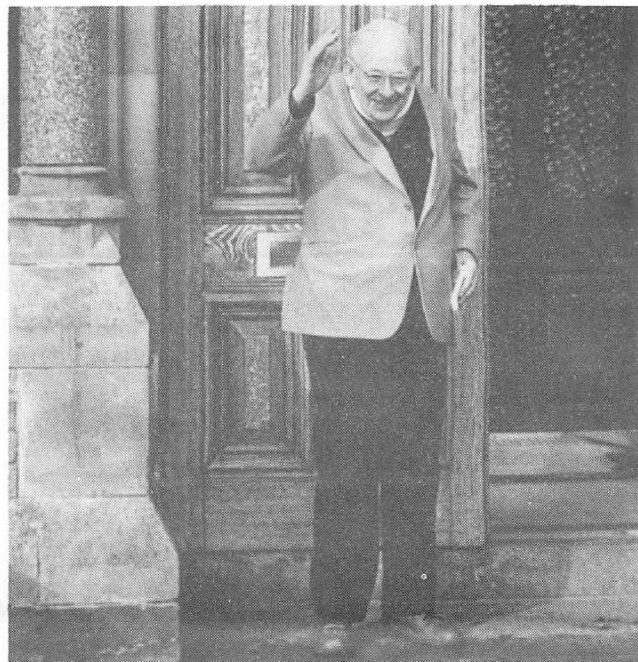
Is it possible that some of these characteristics are still alive and at work today? In his study-notes on Ireland, Canon John Austin Baker, Chaplain to the Speaker of the House of Commons, points out that character is handed down from one generation to another. 'We all need to understand the character-patterns of our own group, to guard against the revival in appropriate circumstances of past crimes, follies and failures, and to replace bad tendencies with good ones,' he wrote.

Is God wanting to use the anvil of the Irish problem to hammer our character into a new shape for His purposes?

For some time I resisted the idea that my country's past policies were in any way responsible for the trouble in Northern Ireland. Two years ago I took part in a Bible study at Clonard Monastery in the Falls area of Belfast, attended by Catholics and Protestants. I read in St Peter's second epistle, 'He does not wish any to perish, but all to betake them to repentance.' I had been studying the history of Ireland. Those words riveted the thought in my mind that I and my country needed to repent and change.

Some British people feel a sense of guilt about Ireland. But there is a difference between guilt and repentance. Guilt makes you shun the people you feel guilty about. Repentance means that you turn to God for forgiveness. He opens your heart to those you have wronged. They feel you understand, even if you cannot put everything right.

Later I apologised to a Catholic priest in Belfast for what we had done to the Irish people. He thanked me warmly. Then he said, 'It is not only the injustices of the past, but the injustices of the present that matter to us.' I discovered that although only one third of Northern Ireland's population was Catholic, over a half of the young children were Catholic. 'So



Father McCarthy outside Clonard Monastery

your people will be in the majority one day?' I asked. 'Oh no,' he replied, 'they won't be able to get jobs. They will have to emigrate.'

This has been going on since 1848 when the Catholic population in Belfast rose to over 40 per cent and the Protestants feared that they would be overwhelmed. As a result Catholics were excluded from areas of housing and employment. Discrimination over housing has now been eliminated and the government is doing its best to eliminate job discrimination. But in spite of new policies, what happens at street level is rather different. In some Catholic areas over 50 per cent are out of work and there is a feeling of hopelessness. A Catholic friend of mine said, 'While you have injustice, you will have the IRA.'

When the Pope spoke in Ireland in 1979, he had a word for the politicians, which we, as responsible for the government of Northern Ireland, need to take to heart. 'Do not cause or condone or tolerate conditions which give excuse or pretext to the men of violence,' he said. 'Those who resort to violence always claim that only violence brings about change. They claim that political action cannot achieve justice.' This is not to excuse the excesses of the IRA. In the background, conspiratorial forces plan to use the violence to advance their own dark plans for power.

And what about the wrongs we have done to the Protestant community? Dublin's *Irish Independent* quoted Canon Baker as saying, during a visit to Northern Ireland, 'We, the British, are also largely responsible for the fears and problems felt by the Protestant community in Northern Ireland. Having put them here to maintain an all-Ireland Union with Great Britain and encouraged them for generations to build their life around this, we then suddenly turned about and tried to abandon them to the very situation that they had been taught to resist at all costs.'

If we British are ever to find some light at the end of the long dark tunnel of Northern Ireland there are five things that we may have to do:

1. Face the past
2. Face what it reveals about our past character
3. In the light of our personal and national behaviour today face the fact that this may still be our character
4. If so, face God and ask forgiveness

5. Then face the present with new honesty.

Northern Ireland focuses the challenge which faces us as a nation today: to be honest with ourselves, to see what constructive changes are demanded of the British people and then meet and study, pray and work until those changes take place. We shall need the help of other people and other nations in this task.

Father McCarthy of Clonard Monastery has what he calls a 'dazzling vision' of what Britain and Ireland working together could do for the rest of the world. What hope and fresh direction these two nations could give to every hopeless situation!

That is what God is calling some of us to. I for one am ready to answer that call. ■

## Politics of repentance— explosive power

by Paul Williams

IN THE DUBLIN ELECTION of 1822 one candidate promised to lay before the voters 'five hundred grievances which they had previously known nothing about'.

The politics of grievance are practised by regimes of many colours all over the world. But the politics of repentance, where nations or individuals contritely recognise where they have been wrong, are much harder to find.

Historical instances are not unknown. The rulers and citizens of Nineveh—the capital of the Assyrian Empire, so large that it took three days to walk through it—made universal repentance their policy, much to the chagrin of Jonah.

Some of the better-known examples in European history may, of course, have had more to do with politics than repentance. Emperor Henry IV's submission to Pope Gregory VII in the snows of Canossa and Henry II's displays of contrition for the murder of his Archbishop, Thomas á Becket, were designed more for public consumption than deeply felt as restitution.

But in our century several nations have experimented with a more genuine politics of repentance.

One is Japan. In the mid-1950's Prime Minister Kishi embarked upon what he called 'the diplomacy of the humble heart', touring nine of Japan's Pacific neighbours to ask for forgiveness for what they had suffered in World War II. The *Washington Evening Post* of 18 December 1957 called it 'one of the most unusual missions ever undertaken by a statesman of his rank'.

The paper referred to the 'numerous gestures of repentance' made by the Japanese after the war. On an earlier occasion a group of Japanese politicians had apologised in the United States Senate for 'Japan's big mistake'. Reporting the event, the *Saturday Evening Post* had commented, 'the idea of a nation admitting it could be wrong has a refreshing impact...Perhaps even Americans could think of a few past occasions of which it could be said, "We certainly fouled things up that time".'

Leaders of Germany too, and many of her ordinary citizens, articulated the spirit of repentance in the years immediately after the war. Many Germans visited the Moral Re-Armament conference centre at Caux, Switzerland at that time. Baron Hans von Herwarth, Germany's first post-war Ambassador to Britain, described the experience: 'At

Caux we had the courage to see ourselves and our country as we really are. We experienced profound personal and national remorse. Many of us who were anti-Nazi had made the mistake of blaming everything on Hitler. We learnt at Caux that we too were responsible.'

Repentance, where genuine, has always led to a determination that things will be different. This is what gives the politics of repentance their explosive power to bring change. In Australia, for instance, it led Labor politician, Kim Beazley, to be a pioneer of legislation on behalf of the Aborigines. 'I regret the cruel cutting edge of indifference, the sheer lack of heart involved in our (white) absorption in our own affairs,' he commented. 'This leaves Aborigines spiritually, physically and morally injured, treating them as if they were not there or did not matter.'

There is no lack of scope for the politics of repentance today. It may take courage to experiment with them—but the results could be important. ■

## MUST THE PEOPLE PAY?

JOHN BOND worked in Zimbabwe for two years before independence and returned to settle there last year.



Zimbabwean villagers

'DO YOU THINK THE WRONGS of the past outweigh the rights?' a white doctor asked me recently, a little belligerently.

The question lies at the heart of Zimbabwe's dilemma—how to create a coherent society out of her different races. Nothing saps the spirit of a nation so much as having different sections constantly pulling in opposite directions. And while some whites are justifying the past as hard as many blacks are denouncing it, we cannot find the unity of heart on which nationhood depends.

So how do we live in this situation?

I have found some answers for myself in an essay by Alexander Solzhenitsyn, included in *From under the Rubble*, a selection of writings by Russian dissidents.

**MUST THEY PAY? contd on p4**

### MUST THEY PAY? contd from p3

He asks how we can answer the 'white-hot' tensions between nations and races that threaten the whole world. The answer he sees is 'a habit lost to our callous and chaotic age—national repentance'.

'A nation can no more live without sin than can an individual,' he writes. 'We must stop blaming everyone else and instead search out our own errors.'

That's fine, I thought. It doesn't involve me.

But my complacency was soon dashed. Solzhenitsyn goes on: 'Each of us, if he honestly reviews his life, will recall more than one occasion when he pretended not to hear a cry for help, or averted his indifferent eyes from an imploring gaze...'

I can think of occasions when I have seen evil and not knowing what to do about it—or fearing someone's displeasure—let it slip from my mind. Or not bothered to find out facts if they might challenge my wishful thinking. Or said I wanted to help a person in need and done nothing about it.

Then Solzhenitsyn brings out his central theme: 'Even when the majority of the population is powerless to obstruct its political leaders, it is fated to answer for their sins and mistakes. That old saying, "The people will pay for the sins of their fathers" is not idle, and we have only too often seen it happen. The only way out is repentance, expressed in action, which opens up the path to a new relationship between nations as between individuals.'

## Shaken

My mind went back to a camp for disabled ex-guerrillas I had visited. Two hundred men in crowded conditions, some without an arm, a leg, an eye, some in wheelchairs. I thought too of an anguished message in the newspaper's memorial column, from a mother on the anniversary of her son's death—'What did you die for?'

I realised that, having made Zimbabwe my home, I cannot escape responsibility if our national affairs degenerate into a slugging match. I bear part of the blame for the disabilities of those guerrillas, for that mother's grief.

This realisation was not depressing, but challenging. If I am part of what has gone wrong, I felt, then maybe there is something I can do to prevent this country suffering for the sins and mistakes of the past. I decided to move out of my defensive position and to take every opportunity to understand why people feel as they do.

It has been painful to open my heart and mind to the agonies that people—especially in the rural areas—have gone through. But it has rich rewards. I have realised what an incredible act of forgiveness has already taken place here.

Of course healing is still needed. After years of discrimination and war, it would be surprising if some blacks did not want to do down the whites. There are whites who are bitter about blacks. But it is a tribute to the government's policy of reconciliation, and to the right things done in the past, that revenge is not a dominant theme.

How can I help that healing? On the farm where I live we keep poultry. The disabled ex-guerrillas I met want to start farming the land they have been given. We have invited some of them to stay with us and learn all we can teach them about poultry. It is a small step.

I am British by birth. At school I learnt about the things Britain can be proud of—the evolution of democracy, the way she pioneered certain humanitarian measures, the struggle against tyranny in Europe, and much else.

It all left me with a deep-seated belief that Britain was best,

that if only everyone had reasonable attitudes like me, all would be well. This was only shaken when a black friend of mine pointed out that since we were in his country, his understanding of a particular situation might just be more correct than mine!

Only then did I try to see things from other people's point of view. It shook me to realise what many Irish think of us—and why; to discover our part in the Middle East's troubles; to realise what some Zimbabweans felt after visiting Britain and encountering discrimination. If I could open my mind to these facets of our national character, as well as the good ones, I might learn to work better with others. It worked—I now have an Australian wife to prove it!

Solzhenitsyn's vision is of a repentant society, where people are more concerned with the truth than with defending themselves and where the cycle of hate and revenge is broken. Each of us can play a part in making that real. ■

## SORRY IS NOT ENOUGH

LES DENNISON, a trade unionist in the building industry from Coventry, was a Communist for many years. Here he describes how he discovered the force of repentance.



Les and Vera Dennison

AS MARXISTS WE BURNED with hatred against what was wrong in society—and against those whom we judged guilty. But under the revolutionary fervour were hidden pains of disillusionment. 'You talk of freedom, peace and justice,' cried my wife, Vera. 'Yet you are nothing but a dictator in the home. I've had enough. I'm leaving you.' My whole family was disintegrating. But the end justified the means—I steeled myself against the pain.

Then someone challenged me, 'How do you hope to unite the working class when you cannot unite your family?' I reacted violently, yet later I accepted his 'naive' suggestion that if I shut up and quietly listened I might get a thought which could change the whole course of my life. The result was that I apologised to my eldest son whom I had refused to meet for two years. The following Christmas, the whole

family was together, reconciled.

It was one thing to recognise where I had been wrong with the consequent sense of remorse and need to say sorry. It was another to repent. Saying sorry had helped salve my conscience. It was a convenient way of avoiding the humiliation of begging forgiveness of God and man.

Some Christian friends had the courage and sensitivity to help me face the wrong motives behind the facade of my remorse-filled apology. Slowly and painfully, I became aware of the hurts that needed healing, the justifiable grievances, the barriers.

For more than 30 years, Vera went in terror of a husband who considered his temper a virtue. Then, as I began to learn to say sorry to Vera for specific incidents a new sensitivity and love grew in my heart for her. Yet the barrier of fear and distrust still seemed *insurmountable*.

A watershed came during a visit to India. I hit an all-time low in my spirit there. After three days of depression, I decided to quit and go back to England. Then a good friend came into my room, threw his Bible onto my bed and said, 'Read Psalm 51, Dennison.' I did, for the first time. It was written for a man like me, who needed a deep understanding of what God expects from a sinner. Verse 17—'The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise,'—stood out for me. A broken heart I had often experienced, but a contrite heart?—rarely.

Reading the psalm revealed evil within me that I had deliberately forgotten and that had inflicted deep wounds in Vera's heart, and kept them festering over the years. I wept with the pain of my guilt. Then a clear thought came—God's assured promise that these wounds would be healed in His time. At my friend's suggestion, I wrote to Vera, telling her of the things God had shown me. I asked her forgiveness. Thus began a new trust and love. ■

## Sun in winter

by Catherine Hutchinson

IT WAS WINTER. I was in India. The warm sun shone on the Western Ghats, contrasting strongly with the emptiness I felt inside. I was slowly realising that the facade I tried to maintain was incompatible with the person at the interior and that the disparity could not continue.

That Christmas I started going to church—not once in a while but each Sunday. Each week I would say the General Confession, meaning every word as if it were etched in my soul. 'There is no health in us,' I would repeat, only too aware of the tangle of petty dishonesties in my life and of all the relationships which had turned sour. As I prayed I would resolve that the future would not be like the past. I wouldn't allow it to be. I prayed to God for mercy, but I did not believe in a God who could show mercy for a past I could not undo.

A few weeks later some friends helped me to articulate the things I felt most ashamed of. Then we prayed.

I suddenly saw that all those weeks God had been trying to offer me forgiveness. The only condition was that I give Him my all. I remember it in almost visual terms: the open hand extended towards me trying to give the precious commodity I refused to accept.

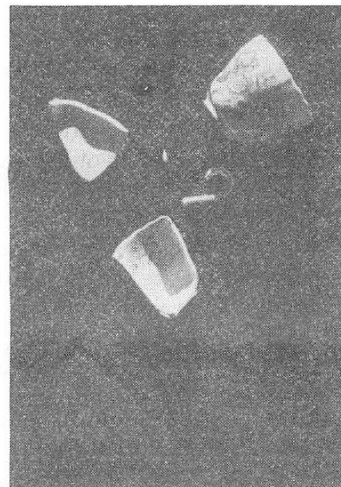
Now again He was offering forgiveness. This time I said yes. ■

**The fit of low spirits which comes to us when we find ourselves overtaken in a fault, though we flatter ourselves to reckon it a certain sign of penitence, and a set-off to the sin itself which God will surely take into account, is often nothing more than vexation and annoyance with ourselves, that, after all our good resolutions and attempts at reformation, we have broken down again.**

Henry Drummond

FRANCES McALL is a general practitioner in the South of England.

## ADAM'S FALSE PLEA



Cummock

IF SOMETHING GETS BROKEN in our home, its loss is as nothing compared with the importance of finding out who did the deed. If I am the guilty party my first reaction is to hope the pieces will vanish without trace and if caught I leap to defend myself. I put off the evil hour of owning up, which is foolish as I discovered long ago that unconfessed guilt sticks with you and makes life more and more uncomfortable.

Yet in the larger issues of life, too, we persist in trying to suppress guilt or shift the blame onto others. We excuse our personal failings on the grounds of heredity or upbringing and we blame our national ones on a history in which we had no part. 'It isn't my fault' is as common a plea today as in the days of Adam and Eve—and just as dangerous.

Some say that a sense of guilt in itself is harmful and therefore should be avoided. Doctors, for example, are warned to say nothing to make a woman feel guilty about having an abortion as this might lead to depression and suicide. But many women who actually expected to feel relieved after an abortion find themselves feeling guilty and depressed, often years later. And suppressed guilt, with its symptoms of aggressive self-excusing and blaming of others, is even more likely to have a damaging psychological effect than guilt that is faced and admitted.

People who think guilt is dangerous do so because they have not experienced the life-giving effects of guilt confessed, repented of and forgiven by a God who wants the best for each of us. I remember a young schoolmaster who was an alcoholic and a homosexual. Although by today's standards he need not have felt badly about either, he did feel profoundly guilty about both. After years he finally dragged his closely-guarded secret into the open. He had been brought up as a Catholic and he now went to confession and emerged feeling forgiven and restored. His drinking stopped abruptly, his feelings ceased to control him and his teaching career is no longer in jeopardy.

Honesty is the surest road to relief and the sooner we all crawl out of our dark little holes of guilt and openly admit where we have been wrong, the better for everyone. ■

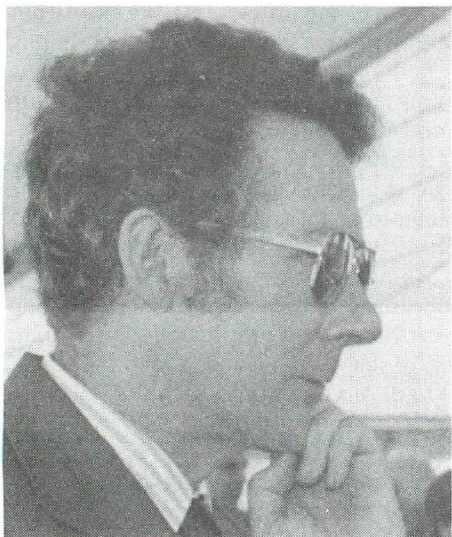
# VOICES OF REGENERATION

TRADE UNIONISTS AND MANAGERS described earlier this month how they were working to create areas of 'regeneration in the midst of recession'—the title of a public meeting organised by Moral Re-Armament at London's Westminster Theatre.

Malcolm Jack, a shop steward at BL's Drews Lane factory in Birmingham, who is on the National Committee of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers (AUEW), said that there was a wealth of goodwill on the shop floor where he was employed and amongst the National Committee. 'As far as I am concerned, BL is our company and we will do our best to keep it open. At the same time we are going to do it with dignity. We are not going to be treated as if we were just an apprentice to a machine.'

He said that the press focused on 'notorious issues', rather than 'the thousands of unsung qualities in people that I meet daily'. Everyone in his factory gave a weekly contribution to the Cheshire Homes and other charities. The National Committee had unanimously passed a resolution in support of the Brandt Report which aims to bridge the gap between the rich and poor countries. 'That gives a demonstration of the unselfishness of trade union members,' he said. He believed that society should question its daily raising of people's expectations of material wealth. 'It's not making better people and surely life is about making better people.'

'We need to have confidence that our country has given a lot to this world and it still has a lot to offer,' Mr Jack concluded.



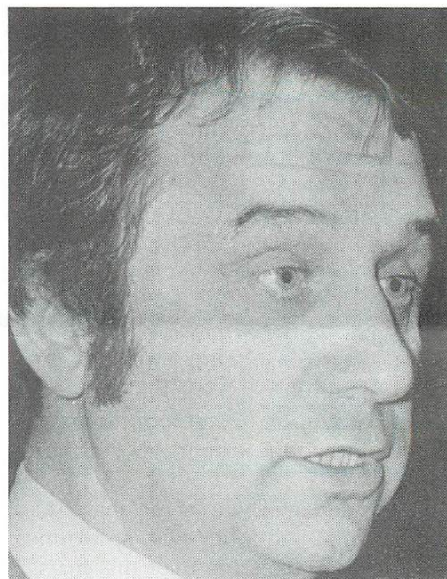
Sage

Malcolm Jack

The personnel director of an engineering factory in the Midlands, Jim Purvis, said that it had been faced with closure about a year previously. The 700-strong workforce had agreed to a 'survival plan' which meant losing over 300 jobs. 'The trickiest time in the year' was when they had just started to make a profit and people were hoping for a better deal after two years without a pay rise. The management had to tell the workforce that they still needed to lose 20 more jobs. 'We called for volunteers, we put some more money on the table, we were able to pay a little extra for last year. We told the workforce the facts, the budget for next year—and in

amazingly quick time it was accepted.' He felt this was due to 'a certain degree of trust' which had been built up. 'It was beginning to be understood that we could be believed. When we were honest, it was accepted.' Now the factory was becoming more profitable.

Mr Purvis said that when he faced difficult problems, he and his wife would pray before work. Often when he returned home that evening he would comment, 'Funny, it's been a much better day. Things have somehow solved themselves.'



Weeks

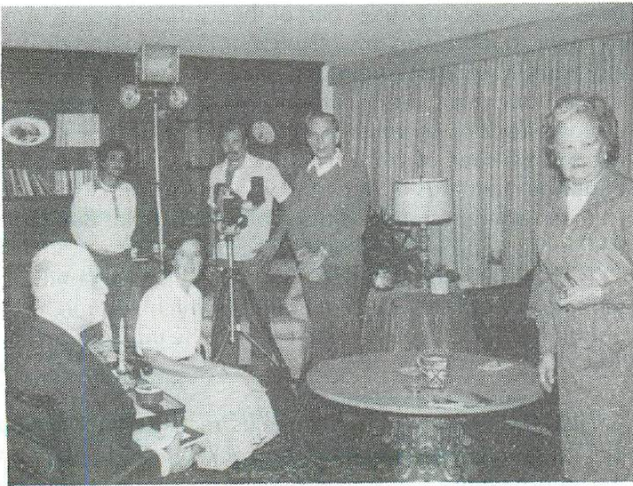
Ron Peacock

Ron Peacock, AUEW convenor at Greater Manchester Transport, said that many people had the impression that all trade unions were monsters. 'We're not—there is some good and some bad in the unions, just as in management,' he said. 'If we can sort out the good from the evil, we have a future for this country and the rest of the world.'

A visit to India at the start of the year had changed his views as a trade unionist, Mr Peacock went on. Seeing the suffering, the poverty and the undernourished children at first hand had made him want to help such countries. He had seen that England's problems were small in comparison.

Mr Peacock was currently involved in negotiations. The management asked his men to take a cut in their allowances after they had agreed to a low wage rise. 'It would have been easy for me, four or five years ago, to tell my colleagues, "That is diabolical. Let's down tools." I would have been the knight in shining armour on a white horse taking them out the door. But you have to think what it will mean in a fortnight's time. They would have nothing in their pay packets and it would be my fault.' He could easily have slipped back into his old ways during the previous week, he went on. However, he and his colleagues knew that they had to keep the buses running in Manchester. 'If we do not put out a service, someone will find another way of going to work—and that means job losses.'

John Vickers, Chairman of Vickers Oils of Leeds, said that the attitude of men in management was perhaps the crucial factor today. 'I know that at least half the nation feels with emotion the raw deal that their fathers or grandfathers had from industry in the past. Some feel they suffer in the same way today. I accept responsibility for putting right the injustices of the past and creating a sound basis for the future.' He felt that management could most directly answer the class war. 'It is never too late, even in a time of crisis, to learn new attitudes and new motives.' ■



Brazilian TV personality Jose Tavares de Miranda made five programmes in the MRA home in Sao Paulo. Also shown are Leonor Villares (right), who is one of the hosts of the home, and Annejet Campbell (sitting), author of 'Listen to the Children', recently published in Portuguese.

## BRAZILIAN ROUND-TABLE

JONES SANTOS NEVES, vice-President of the Brazilian National Confederation of Industry, said recently that the differences between 'the rich countries of the Northern hemisphere and the poor ones of the South' were also reflected within each person. 'There is a separation inside each one of us—on one side there are selfish, individualistic feelings, on the other there is a concern for the suffering of our neighbour and for the true destiny of humanity which demands unselfishness in us. If we can narrow this internal separation, we shall be eliminating the bigger external divisions in the world. This is the message and challenge that MRA brings to us all.'

Dr Santos Neves was presiding at a lunch in the Rio de Janeiro headquarters of the Confederation. He said that dialogue between the rich and poor countries to overcome the huge differences between them was 'an inescapable imperative'.

A guest of honour, Frederik Philips, former President of the Dutch electrical company, responded, 'As an industrialist I have gained great benefit in learning from MRA how to open my heart to feel what others, for example in labour, think, and from learning how to listen during times of quiet for what God thinks.'

Dr Philips joined other industrialists and trade union leaders in an informal 'round-table' in the MRA home in Sao Paulo, Latin America's biggest industrial conurbation. In the home's relaxed atmosphere, those from Sao Paulo industry spoke openly about areas of conflict between them. They suggested ways of resolving these tensions in a spirit of 'what is right, not who is right'.

Other overseas visitors were in Brazil at the invitation of the organisers of a 'six-week campaign for Moral Re-Armament'. The campaign began in Sao Paulo and also included Rio, Petropolis, Brasilia and Salvador. In Salvador, the Cardinal-Primate of Brazil, Archbishop Dom Avelar Brandao Vilela, received people from the Philippines, France and Britain. In Brasilia, some of the visitors took part in a congress of the National Committee for Moral and Civic

Education. Two MRA films were shown to the 400 delegates.

The Portuguese edition of *Listen to the Children* was launched in three of the cities. Annejet Campbell, who edited this book about homes and families, was present for the launching at the National Academy of Letters in Rio de Janeiro. Dr Austregesilo de Athayde, the Academy's President, was in the chair. The State Secretary of Culture, Congressman Cunha Bueno, launched the book in Sao Paulo. ■

## ON THE FRONTIER

DAVID ALLBROOK, of the Department of Anatomy and Human Biology, University of Western Australia, spoke recently in Melbourne, Victoria about the ethical implications of scientific advances—a topical issue there due to the forthcoming introduction in the Victorian Parliament of the Refusal of Medical Treatment Bill. This seeks to make legal the request of a dying person that no extraordinary techniques should be used to keep him or her alive. Professor Allbrook was taking part in a seminar entitled 'Frontiers of Medicine, frontiers of the Spirit' at the Melbourne MRA centre.

Introducing the professor, Will Davey, a surgeon from Portland, Victoria said, 'There have been such rapid developments in medicine that many dilemmas have arisen. If we do not think about these matters and create a healthy public opinion they will be decided for us. In fact, not to decide is to decide.'

Professor Allbrook agreed, 'Open, informed discussion is necessary for at least two reasons—to bring to public attention significant issues precipitated by new advances in medical technology, and thus forcing discussion about the beginnings, nature, meaning and purpose of human life; and secondly, so that informed and responsible public opinion may recommend wise legal decisions.'

He said that the frontiers of modern medicine might be ever-expanding, 'taking us into totally unexplored regions, but with the implication that to travel in those regions may not be as free as we first imagine'.

Medical science could no longer stay neutral on values, he said. 'We have no way of telling where the implications of our work will lead.' He cited test-tube babies—the subject of much research in Melbourne. It is now possible, by keeping the sperm frozen, for a baby to be born 50 years after the father has died.

'Research at the frontiers of knowledge does not result in disembodied data. It is housed in the minds of fallible men and women. For its right use a fresh wisdom has to be tapped—for no one has ever been this way before.'

The daily crisis for our generation was a decision either to be led by the ultimate authority of God, from whom all moral authority derived, or 'to be led by we know not who, in a direction we know not where, by forces we can no longer control'. Such authority-less decisions would lead to certain destruction of global civilisation.

'We have no printed book of rules as to how to use the power science puts into our hands. We have to use our heads, under the authority of God,' he went on. 'We have to debate our concerns and arrive at decisions in the context of absolute moral standards—an honesty and open-minded integrity; a purity of motive for people around us; a disregard for our own position, and an unconditioned caring for those we do not usually much care about.' ■

# NEWSBRIEF

**OVER 6500** saw *Un soleil en pleine nuit*, Hugh Steadman Williams' play on Francis of Assisi during its six-week Paris run. Michel Orphelin, mime artist and singer, plays Francis in what the Catholic daily, *La Croix*, described as 'a joyful and lively meditation, quite in tune with the teachings of Saint Francis'. The play's music is by Kathleen Johnson.

After each performance at the Theatre du Ranelagh, people thronged around M Orphelin and the play's musicians and technicians. 'Humour and love walk hand in hand,' commented one of the audience. A film director said, 'Even though I felt like it, I did not applaud. One does not applaud God.' Somebody wrote in the theatre's visitors' book, 'You don't leave here the same as when you came in.'

M Orphelin said that he was struck by the desire to live differently in those he met after the show. 'It is as though, during the show, they were gradually being stripped of themselves, and renewed deep down.' One young man had decided to use his inheritance for an unselfish cause.

*Un soleil en pleine nuit* will be put on in several French cities after the tour of 12 French-speaking Swiss cities in the first three months of 1982.

**A NEW AUDIO-VISUAL** programme about relations between whites and Aborigines in the North of Australia has recently appeared. Produced by Ron Lawler and Thomas Braeckle, the slides and commentary record instances of reconciliation and resulting co-operation.

'The programme is a great stimulator of thought,' comments our correspondent, Geoffrey Warrington. 'I showed it to a grazier. Afterwards he told me how, as a child in Western Queensland, he used to play with Aboriginal children on his father's property. One day his mother told him to stop, saying, "The black rubs off you know." He had quickly got to the root of his prejudice.'

'*Law, truth and eternity—racial partnership in Australia's far North*' is available from Ron Lawler, PO Box 136, Alderley, Brisbane, 4051, Australia. Price Australian \$64, postage extra.

**MANSFIELD COLLEGE, Oxford**, last month sponsored a sermon in memory of Frank Buchman's first official sermon at the University, which was given in the college chapel fifty years ago. Referring to Dr Buchman and to W B Selbie, Principal of Mansfield College in the 1920s, the preacher, Roland Wilson, commented, 'Both men shared one conviction in particular—that even a few determined men and women, aflame in their lives, and sure that God has a plan, could change the direction of history.'

'**CHANGE A "WON'T BUDGE"** attitude and any deadlock can be broken,' reads the five-column banner headline in the *Sunday Call-Chronicle* of Allentown, USA, last month. In a column called 'Speak Out', Frank Sherry, curator of the Frank Buchman House in Allentown, calls for a new approach to local issues. 'One trouble is that each opponent

in a controversy may have part of the truth,' he writes. 'Am I so eager to lobby for "my" truth that I'm rendered deaf to any truth my adversary holds?'

Frank Buchman, the initiator of MRA, outlined one way of discovering what is right in such situations—through obeying the whisper of truth in one's heart, checked against enduring standards of right and wrong, Mr Sherry goes on. He cites examples of deadlocks in many parts of the world which this approach had helped to break.

'Is there a "won't budge" situation in your family, at school, at work, in your community, which you might lift out of deadlock if you were to listen to the inner voice?' he asks.

**CABLE TELEVISION** in Los Angeles recently interviewed local residents Les and Leonore Crockett about MRA and their hospitality to international students. The 30-minute programme included extracts from three MRA films. 'I decided as a college girl that I wanted to be part of the cure, not a part of the disease in the world, and to let God run my life,' said Mrs Crockett. The programme is available to other Cable stations in the United States.

## CONFERENCE DIARY

The following conferences, initiated by MRA, have been announced for 1982:

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>27 Dec - 3 Jan</b>   | Open House at Caux, Switzerland   |
| <b>28 Dec - 2 Jan</b>   | Young people's camp, Brandbu, Norway  |
| <b>3 - 9 Jan</b>        | Dialogue on Development II, Asia Plateau, Panchgani, India                      |
| <b>14 - 19 Jan</b>      | A Dialogue of Common Sense, Melbourne, Australia                                |
| <b>28 Jan - 9 Feb</b>   | Conference at Nuwara Eliya, Sri Lanka   |
| <b>10 - 14 Feb</b>      | International seminar for Africa, in Salisbury, Zimbabwe                        |
| <b>19 - 21 Mar</b>      | 'Are we free enough to care?'—conference in Portland, Oregon, USA               |
| <b>8 - 12 Apr</b>       | Youth conference, Tirley Garth, Cheshire, England                               |
| <b>10 July - 29 Aug</b> | 'Urgent—moral and spiritual development'—summer conference at Caux, Switzerland |

## NEW WORLD NEWS VOLUME 29— Gone but worth remembering!

An Index for last year's New World News is now available from the Business Manager, New World News, 12 Palace Street, London SW1E 5JF. **Earlier years still available.** Price 35p each, plus postage.

**Owing to Christmas holidays, the next issue of New World News will appear on January 16.**

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