



Nairobi

NAIROBI CONFERENCE WORKING TOGETHER FOR AFRICA

IN NAIROBI the grey skies are heavy with the promise of rain that never comes. The surrounding plains are parched, brown and dusty. Businessmen and beggars, UN officials and diplomats mix with tourists in the bustling streets where towering offices and hotels stand next to sober colonial buildings.

In May the Presidents of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda met at Arusha, Tanzania, to sign the final agreements on dividing the assets and liabilities of the defunct East African Community. Some months earlier the border between Kenya and Tanzania had been reopened, for the first time since the Community broke up seven years earlier—years which were difficult for each of the three countries. On the day of the Arusha agreement the *East African Standard* of Nairobi expressed the hope that a new era of co-operation had dawned.

In February 1982 at a Moral Re-Armament seminar in Harare, Zimbabwe, entitled, 'Africa—challenge and hope', Kenyan and Tanzanian participants had built links of friendship through honest apology for the wounds of the past. They began to look forward to a further opportunity to strengthen and deepen the ties between their peoples.

'This opportunity is now here,' said a group of Kenyans from all parts of the country when the Arusha agreement was signed. They invited people from the neighbouring countries to the East and the South to a seminar in Nairobi where all of them 'could discuss freely and frankly the way ahead for our nations and the contribution we can make to the true development of all Africa'. The invitation went on, 'We believe that God will enable us to create trust and friendship with roots in each of our countries which will be vital for the progress we all long for.' The seminar took place on 7-8 July and the East Africans were joined by others from Zimbabwe, India, Britain and three of the Scandinavian countries.

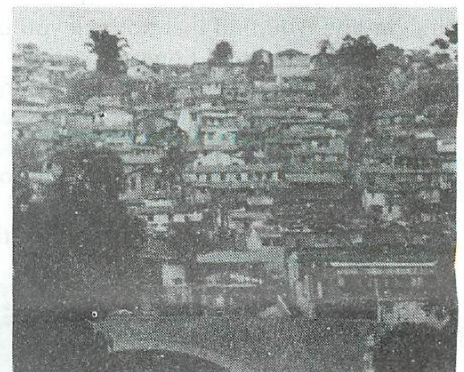
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NEW WORLD NEWS

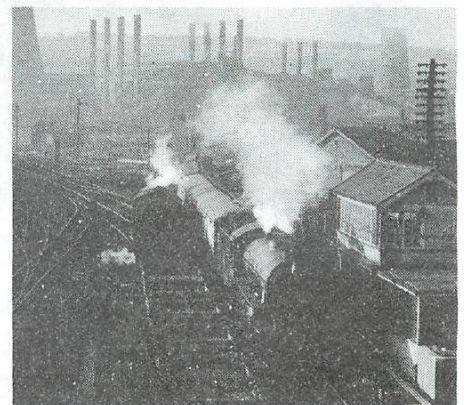
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At one session a Ugandan, a Kenyan and a Tanzanian spoke together. The Kenyan told how in 1976 he had been working in Uganda on behalf of the East African Community. One night soldiers with guns had approached his house and he knew that his life was in danger. He asked God for guidance and the thought came, 'Put on the lights at the main door and then run out through the back door.' He managed to get away. 'I hated Uganda because of this incident,' he said. 'But I want to apologise to my Ugandan friends here for my bitterness.' Now, he had again been called to do a job for his government in Uganda. 'Development cannot come if I have grudges against Uganda,' he said. 'I will go there to fight for co-operation in all areas.'

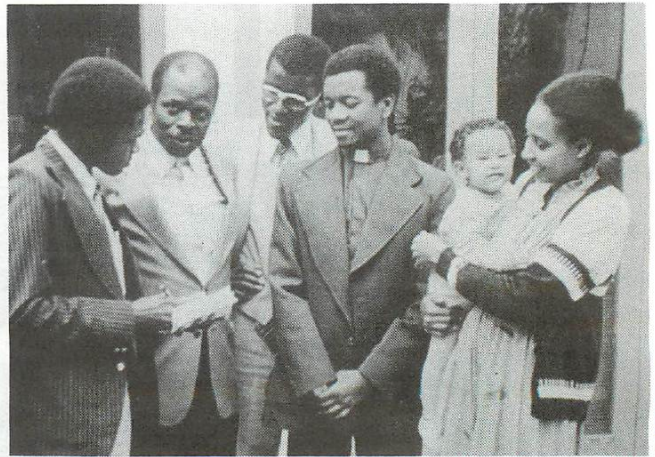
This story brought forward a sincere apology from the Ugandan 'on behalf of my colleagues and my whole nation'. He added, 'This did not happen to you alone. Many people don't want to return to my country when they remember what happened there.'

The Tanzanian said he had been in Uganda as a cook with the Tanzanian Army a few years earlier. The soldiers had looted and murdered, and although he had not been personally involved he had acquiesced in what happened. With deep emotion he asked forgiveness from all the Ugandans present. He spoke of the need to pass on the spirit they were finding at the seminar to his friends 'in government, in the Party and in the Church'.

A Kenyan with connections in the coffee trade said he was sorry for the way his country had exploited the resources of Uganda during the coffee boom some years earlier. Some people had even sold wet coffee that had later proved worthless.

A Kenyan from a town close to the border of Uganda cited personal experiences of how people in that area had ferried coffee across the border during those boom days and made big money. But later they had failed because they had become too greedy, he said. 'If you go outside the straight line, you find that nothing you build up will last.' Absolute standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love helped you 'to keep to the straight line', he concluded.

Corruption was a subject of much discussion, and several examples of how to tackle it were cited. A young scientist said that a man had recently visited his office and offered him petrol at one seventh of the regular market price. He had refused. The man was so astonished that he came back



Mr Batulaine and Mr Musundi with (l to r) Ezekiel Okemwa of the Kenya Marine and Fisheries' Institute from Mombasa; the Rev Gabriel Nzalayaimisi of the Eastern and Coastal Synod of the Lutheran Church of Tanzania; and Mrs Sebastian Sarwati from Morogoro.

in the evening to ask why. 'Others don't refuse,' he said. The scientist said, 'My own conscience and my commitment to absolute honesty forbid me to do it,' and he went on to explain the harm the black market did to the country. 'I have learned a lot from you,' said the man, adding that he would tell all his friends that this was not right.

A senior official had been offered ten per cent of a suggested deal, amounting to millions of shillings, if he would give a favour. He had said, 'I don't believe in getting ten per cent because of what I have learned through Moral Re-Armament and because it would destroy my family and the institution I am working for.'

Similarly, a town clerk said he was often approached by people asking for favours but he did not comply. He told how, when he was a young revenue collector, a blind man had once offered him 20 shillings. 'I told the man to buy himself an extra meal instead.' The man began to open up, saying he was a retired church worker and thought it had become the order of the day to thank government officials by giving them *chai*. The town clerk commented, 'If we don't stop this traffic, nobody will.'

Gideon Chieza from Harare, Zimbabwe, talked of the desperate need across the world for the art of forgiveness—and also the gift of forgetting. He said, 'Many countries have learned that the achievement of independence is not the end of the struggle. It is only the beginning. When we forgive each other and forget, we start another life. It goes from the family to the nation.' A Ugandan responded, 'Whenever somebody does something wrong to me I keep it in my heart. From now on, I have learned I must forgive and forget, because Jesus has forgiven me.'

'God does not recognise the boundaries between Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda,' said one of the participants in the final session of the seminar, which looked to the future. 'These boundaries were not drawn to further God's mission at all but only to further man's ambition. Although our governments have adopted different approaches to solve the problems, we have many things in common. We have the same weaknesses in our characters. This is where MRA comes in with its emphasis on Christ's absolute standards.'

'We have to start by examining ourselves,' agreed one participant. 'That would help us in the development of our country. This is what I will do.'

'We must find a voice as a continent and then we will be able to speak to the world,' added a Kenyan. ■



Conference delegates (l to r): Robert Silamba from Bulawayo, Zimbabwe; Cllr B Wamalwa, Kenya; Gideon Chieza, Harare, Zimbabwe; Gabriel Batulaine from Morogoro in Tanzania, the Chairman of the Christian Students' Association at the Sokoine Agricultural University; and John Musundi, General Manager of the Kenya National Federation of Cooperatives.



Centre for World Development Education

Agricultural training in Kenya

UGANDA REVISITED

MARGARET COLLARD taught in three Ugandan boarding schools for 16 years. Recently she was invited to revisit the country by former colleagues, pupils and other friends. SUE BOLTON went with her. They write:

THE LUSH GREEN COUNTRYSIDE dotted with banana plantations, cassias and flame trees contrasts sharply with the dilapidation and decay of the once beautiful capital city, Kampala. The main street is now a dirt road, pockmarked with shell craters, and lined by bombed-out shops. The clean happy homes we visited stood amidst piles of refuse where cows and scraggy chickens hunted for food. There are frequent security blocks and at night bandits raid homes and villages with guns and knives, often in search of food. Yet during our few weeks in Uganda we sensed a slight lifting of tension.

The President's TV speeches to the nation call repeatedly for reconciliation, an end to corruption and for moral standards. We met men and women at all levels of society who are determined to put this call into practice.

One of Margaret's former colleagues told us of his temptation to steal or offer bribes when his young family was without food. Millions of Ugandan shillings from an American aid project pass through his hands every week. The temptation to 'borrow' was very great, he said, but instead the family prayed for what they needed. 'Each time food has come from friends, neighbours or family in time to avert disaster.'

A university lecturer told us he had been faking his petrol claim, because he did not have the money to maintain his

car. 'I thought no one could be absolutely honest in the present situation.' He decided this was wrong, and told his friends that he would write and tell the head of his department what he had been doing and ask for an increased grant to cover his repair costs. They thought he was crazy—only senior employees get grants like that. But he sent the letter anyway and was given the grant. This strengthened his faith and his determination to be honest in the future.

We met many who showed *amazing courage and faith*. One elderly man and his wife had been looted three times, beaten up and stripped even of the clothes they were wearing. Yet they look after several orphans and pay for their schooling. A young woman who had been badly wounded in a shooting incident said, 'If this is the way God means me to witness for Him, I will praise Him for it.' A technician told of his wife's fear when they built a new home in a troubled area. He had reassured her that God had told him where to build and would look after them. After three years theirs is the only home in the village which has not been broken into.

A Bishop told us how he had been a theological student at the time when Amin was massacring his tribe, particularly the Christians. His family and he agreed that he should escape over the border. But his six-year-old daughter said, 'Doesn't it say in the Bible that you may save your life but lose your soul?' They thought again and decided to stay. When he left college he was much needed there as there were few priests and no bishops in his area.

'The greatest need for this country is for absolute moral standards beginning with absolute honesty,' a leading Christian told us. We celebrated the feast of Eid el Fitr with two Moslem families and visited several leaders of their community. The faith, courage and integrity of people of both religions gave us hope for the country's future. ■

BRAZIL—A DREAM BECOMES REALITY

JOSEPHINE BUHAGIAR gave up her work in an electronics factory in Malta some years ago in order to devote her full time to the work of Moral Re-Armament. In November 1981 she left for Brazil. She writes:

AS I LEFT IN THE BIG JET PLANE I was thinking of my father on the farm near Mosta. He would be ploughing with a wooden plough behind Bajda, the only horse on the 60 *tomna* farm we rent from the Church. Mother would be dividing her time between fattening the rabbits for market and tidying the kitchen after cooking dinner.

This journey to Brazil was the realisation of a dream for me. I had met Luiz Pereira, a leader of the Rio de Janeiro shanty-dwellers at an MRA conference in Caux, Switzerland, as part of a group of 27 Maltese. He told of the millions who lived in the poverty of those shacks, of the spirit of solidarity that people like him were bringing to those communities, and how this was leading to the building of decent homes and giving new dignity to many thousands of families. As I listened I said to myself, 'That's where I'd like to go and serve.' Now, three years later, it was happening.

I had given up my job in order to go, but 90 people helped with my fare. My father's contribution was to give me the olive crop from the centuries-old trees on our farm for me to pick and sell.

As I went into São Paulo for the first time, among the thousands of skyscrapers, I felt scared. 'I will never risk stepping out of doors or I'll be lost for ever!' I thought. But soon, as I started to meet people, the concrete jungle began to come alive.

New Houses

Roberto and Luzia were two of the first people I met. He is a national leader of the farm workers of Brazil. Like me, Luzia and Roberto came from small farms. They feel deeply about the needs of the 15 million Brazilians who work on the land—and long to change the conditions of the great mass of Brazilian peasants who have no land. Each year a million of them flock to the cities where they live in great deprivation. A significant meeting took place in the home where I was staying, when Roberto had his first face-to-face talk with a big land-owner, one of those with the power to bring about change.

A month after arriving in Brazil I was in Rio de Janeiro with some of the *favelados*, the shanty-town dwellers. Ana-Inés and her fiancé Ernane are among those who work to answer the violence, despair, poverty and unemployment and to bring a new spirit to these communities. They told me that they had become disillusioned with a struggle to change social conditions alone. Since meeting Luiz Pereira they had become convinced that this had to be accompanied by deep change in the way people live. So they are passing on their Christian faith to people like Douglas who, at the age of 15, has known no other life than crime. Ana-Inés's family run a shop in the heart of the



View of Rio de Janeiro State

favela. This not only employs them but also a young fellow they found who slept on the street at night for lack of a home and spent most of the day drunk.

Ernane, for his part, has always longed to help the underprivileged. He is concerned about the break-up of families which often leaves a mother alone in the *favelas* without the resources to feed small children. Ernane's own family was broken but since he apologised to his father for his own blame and bitterness his work with others for family unity has been strengthened. Ana-Inés and Ernane feel that this work is as important as the huge redevelopment which is giving new houses to the 250,000 who live in their area.

Exploding

A few months after arriving in Brazil I became desperate about ever being able to speak and understand Portuguese. It was Lent and I went to visit three Maltese priests who work in a poor area of São Paulo called Osasco. (To my amazement I found that 800,000 people, more than twice the population of Malta, lived there.) When I told them about my struggle with Portuguese one of them said, 'I will give you your Lenten penance—not one word of Maltese or English for 40 days.' I was furious! I thought that, with all the new reactions that were exploding in me every day, I would burst if I could not express myself. However this 'penance' meant that a Filipino colleague called Alice and I were able a few weeks later to accept an invitation to live in the home of João and Lucinete, leaders of the church community where the Maltese priests work.

João, a lift operator, was still building his simple home so we had to walk down the road to wash each day. Marcia, their daughter, moved in with her parents to let Alice sleep

in her bed while I slept on an old carpet and some blankets on the floor. The welcome was tremendous! To this day, Alice and I are considered daughters of the family. This is especially moving when you know that, out of Lucinete's ten children, only two girls have survived the harsh poverty and the lack of sanitation and medical care.

When we left, a few days later, a note was waiting for us. 'Your visit has been like a reconversion for me,' wrote Lucinete. 'I have just been to confession and will tell you all about it when we next meet.' A conviction had been born in Lucinete's heart when we had listened quietly together for God's inspiration, that change was needed in one of her deepest relationships.

The Church community in which João and Lucinete are active pray and read the Bible together and seek how, as committed Christians, they can help resolve social problems. This has led them to get the city to relocate the rubbish dumps away from their houses; buy food as a community to reduce prices; and to set up a creche for working mothers' babies. 'What we have achieved benefits our community,' says Lucinete, 'but the greatest gain is the spirit of solidarity that has been built.' ■

PEACE AND PARDON

Since Pope John Paul II visited his would-be assassin Mehmet Ali Agca in his prison cell, several newspapers have commented on the power of forgiveness in politics. 'Time' magazine described forgiveness as 'a tool for survival in a bad world'; while a recent article in the 'International Herald Tribune' reviews the role of forgiveness in modern relations between Poland and Germany, and within Western Europe. 'There are candidates for forgiveness today, as between India and Pakistan, Israel and the Palestinians, Africans and Afrikaners, the national factions of Lebanon,' concludes William Pfaff. 'Forgiveness is no light matter. When, however, it is granted, the results may be exceptionally powerful.'

Two articles in India's 'Hindustan Times' have also taken up the theme. Writing in July, Russi Lala describes the part of French resistance leader Irène Laure in healing the hatred between France and Germany after World War II. Asked why she felt the need to apologise to the Germans for her hatred, as well as to forgive them, she said, 'For the sake of our children, so that the heritage of hatred is not handed down from one generation to the next.' 'One does not have to be a great leader to give the healing touch,' comments Lala. 'It can be given by anyone who is willing to surrender the passion for vengeance.'

In an article earlier this year in the 'Hindustan Times' and the 'Sunday Mid-Day', Rajmohan Gandhi explored some of the issues raised by 'Time'. We print extracts:

WHY FORGIVE? Because, says *Time*, it is psychologically healthy to do so. 'Not to forgive is to be imprisoned by the past, by old grievances that do not permit life to proceed with new business. Not to forgive is to yield oneself to another's control.'

How true! The violence of hate, usually accompanied by shouts of freedom, is proof of slavery. When we hate we are dominated by the one we hate. He is the centre of our thoughts. At his words we jump. We may jump with a knife but it is he who makes us jump. We are his slaves, indeed his puppets.

When groups preserve old hates they find themselves, says *Time*, 'backwatered, isolated, perishing in their own fury'. Their present is 'endlessly devoured by the past'. The chain of murder and revenge—the sequence of detonations which 'punctuate our time'—continues through the decades until one side cuts it with a valiant stroke of forgiveness.

To pardon is right not primarily because we have all sinned against the light—though that too may be true. It makes sense because it is the only way to preserve peace for our children tomorrow.

Body and heart

French men and women found it exceedingly hard after 1945 to forgive Germany and Germans. Many did not. But a large number did, not because they could condone what had happened, which was impossible, but because they desired to spare their children and grandchildren a repetition of bloodletting. Their yearning has been answered. France and Germany live today in an amity that pre-war generations would have dismissed as wholly fanciful.

If many blacks in America can today live with confidence and a measure of prosperity, it is not only because they had the guts to fight for their rights. A role was also played by their wise resolve to pardon America's whites and reconcile with them. This produced the stability which has helped improve the condition of the blacks.

Forgiving has more still to be said in its favour. It is physically desirable. An obsession in the heart for revenge is bad for the body. Also, it is not easy for others, even family members, to live with the man who knows no utterance other than 'I have been wronged'. He is touchy, the rest have to be careful. The air around him is always tense. He denies his wife, children and neighbours their right to have at least some relaxed spells.

Indisputable

Moreover, though at times victory precedes pardon, the act of pardoning always gives a sense of victory to the man who has been injured. In stature he rises above the wrongdoer. When we have done wrong we feel deservedly humbled by the man who pardons, not by the man who always reminds us of our errors. The latter makes us think of his errors!

Finally, the man who pardons has more of a chance to see the wrongdoer change than the man who refuses to forgive. Mehmet Ali Agca may or may not find a new lease of life as a result of the Pope's deed. But it is I think plain that had John Paul nursed a feeling of injury and resentment at Agca, the latter would have more easily worked up a sense of justification for his 1981 attack.

The Pope's simple act holds an obvious meaning for many situations—in Lebanon, West Asia as a whole, Ireland, our subcontinent and elsewhere. Is the human heart the source of all conflicts? Does the short supply of what men and women want cause it? Let philosophers discuss these questions. What cannot be disputed is that conflicts are aggravated and perpetuated by unwillingness to pardon. ■

THE DISPUTE BETWEEN the miners and the National Coal Board is now 21 weeks old. The public arguments centre on economics and jobs. An underlying factor, so often inflaming British industrial disputes, is inherited mistrust between labour and management.

Because of her rapid and often ruthless industrialisation and later conflicts, Britain has retained many class attitudes. This is reflected in the contrasting views that people have of the current dispute. Some see it as yet another unnecessary disruption of the economy while others see it as a crucial fight to save whole working communities. A few even see the chaos and mud-slinging as a golden chance to further their own political purposes.

There will always be political extremists. They would be of little consequence if it were not for the class attitudes so many hold on to. Millions of us fuel the flames of class war through our blame and bitterness or our indifference to the suffering and fears of others.

A better future—industrially and nationally—will depend to a great extent on many people forgiving those they feel wronged by, and equally on others finding the courage to take responsibility for the wrongs of their own sector.

This was understood by the late Farrar Vickers, Managing Director of Benjn R Vickers and Sons of Leeds. He said, 'As employers we have a terrific debt to pay, to atone for the sins of our predecessors. They may not be our sins, but we have inherited that debt and it has to be paid, either by free conviction or it will be exacted under duress. This is an issue which faces the nation today—not only to put right the present wrongs, but to make restitution for the wrongs done by those whom we have succeeded.' On page eight of this issue Les Dennison, a Coventry trade unionist, is equally frank about the cost of attitudes on the shop floor.

We devote the remaining pages to this theme:

WHERE THE CLASS WAR BEGINS—AND ENDS

by Ian Maclachlan

CHARLES DICKENS'S *Hard Times*, written 130 years ago, presents a graphic picture of the origins of class war. In one striking passage a millworker tells the millowner about the sufferings of the workers. Leaving things as they are, he says, can only polarise the classes, leaving 'a black unpassable world betwixt'. Most dangerous of all is to treat workers as 'so much power...reg'latin' 'em as if they was figures in a soom, or machines wi'out loves and liken, wi'out memories and inclinations, wi'out souls to weary and souls to hope...'

Class war has almost as much to do with dignity and purpose in life as with having enough to live on. Much has changed in society since Dickens's day but many still have feelings remarkably similar to those expressed by Stephen. They resent the 'we are always right' attitudes of those who consider themselves socially or intellectually superior. They feel trapped in a purposeless existence.

Superiority and arrogance are not confined to any one class. I have had to ask myself if I feel superior to some people, and to seek change in my nature. By the same token, with others I have had to decide not to appease because I wanted their approval.



An illustration from 'Hard Times'

Today there are still those who exploit others for their own ends; and those who fiercely hold on to their privileges and power, denying others a full part in being responsible for the society in which they live. They fight the class war as much as those who seek power for their party by any means, exploiting people's genuine desire for justice.

The men and women who are run by hate, and who are prepared to use violence, bring great pressure to bear on those who seek to use democratic means to create a better way of life—those in elected trade union positions or political posts, for example. Everyone with faith knows the reassurance that comes quietly in when we are facing pressure, the certainty that a loving Father wants only the best for me in spite of my frailty and failures. Last week I met a man who said, 'I am willing to sacrifice my position'—and with it his salary—if necessary. But I will not surrender my principles to force. I know I can depend on the Man up there.'

The second essential in standing up to pressure is to aim to live by the high standards of our faith. Pressure is applied by blackmailing those who have their fingers in the till—whether directors who falsify tax returns or union officials who inflate expense accounts. Others succumb to greed and can be bribed. Sometimes unhealed bitterness and hurts can be exploited, or the desire to be popular or to have a quiet life.

The greatest temptation is to opt out of the battle, to seek peaceful coexistence at the price of your principles. I have never found it worked. As a teacher I found that neither control nor appeasement works with children. You must have a superior plan that comes out of your care and concern for them. It is the same with the nation. The only way to avoid destructive, violent change is to live for constructive change that deals effectively with the problems in this country and in the world. That means social, economic, national and international change, all based on change in the lives of people. ■

Living with your class

by Nigel Morshead, a chartered accountant

I KNOW AT FIRST HAND the callousness of many of my own class. I have often disclaimed responsibility for it, for it so happens that most of the power and possessions of people from my public-school and 'colonial service' background have passed me by. Indeed, circumstances have tended to make me feel divided from my own people, and to identify more with those who have suffered at their hands. I am still surprised when friends remark on the privileges my family have inherited.

The way society is set up, most of us have those that we tend to look up to socially. Examining how I regard such people can cast light on the way others regard me. I can be friendly to someone on the surface, but quick to blame *their class blindness and insensitivity* if they have slighted me in some way, or if they want to 'get away with' some advantage that is not available to me.

However much we work for the creation of a juster society, we need a philosophy for living in an unfair world. You cannot convincingly alter the class into which you are born. You can, however accept warnings from God and man of the way your actions hurt people; and of throw-away phrases—sometimes uttered to amuse or impress your own circle—which are remembered and resented by others.

You can repent for this. You can even repent for those manifestations of your own class from which you yourself have suffered. And your first step towards a new society may be to forgive those who inflicted them 'up to seventy times seven'. ■

A NEW APPROACH TO HEATHROW

by Frank Abbott

'WHAT DO YOU MEAN by class war?' asked the Chairman of a local political party. I told him of my experience working in a foundry in the 1930s—years of sweated labour, burns and blisters from the hot moulds and molten metal, for £1.50 a week. I sweated too with hatred towards the management and the government of those days of high unemployment and low pay. Each time I got burnt I plotted revenge.

It was not just the foundry which provoked my hatred. As a youngster I discovered another man between my mother and father. I subconsciously used this as my excuse for every wrong road I took from then on.

Criticism and self-righteousness became my way of life. Exploitation and bad conditions in the 1930s pushed me into joining the armed forces. Apathy and aimlessness led me to the same drink problem which had killed my father when he was 50. In World War II I knew who we were fighting against—but not what we were fighting for.

Following a binge one night I picked up a book about Moral Re-Armament. As I read it, I became aware of a question: 'You are bitter and critical of your parents and the country, but what are you doing to put things right?' I thought to myself, 'What would Britain be like if it was made up of 50 million Frank Abbotts?' That gave me a shock. A war raged in my heart, but in the end, on my knees, I gave God control of my life.

From that moment I knew that a miracle had taken place. I put right wrong relationships with my family and friends. My thinking changed from 'Britain has never given me a decent chance in life' to 'What can I do for my country?' After the war this led me first to work on the land for seven years and then to Heathrow Airport, where I was a shop steward for most of my 22 years' employment. I learnt that when you listen, God speaks and when you obey, God acts.

Horse's mouth

Another shop steward and I met to see how we could create unity in our airline. Within five minutes we got up against each other and in five more we were bitter enemies. I decided enough was enough and that I would leave Heathrow. Then a voice seemed to speak to me—as clearly as the airport's public address system—'You will always have points of view, but this is no basis for animosity. At the root of it is your deep desire to be right.' This was a new revelation to me—but it had a ring of truth to it and acted as a dig in the ribs to put things right with my colleague.

This made it possible for us to work together to answer what had appeared to be an irreconcilable division in our union, where one shop steward had got up against the Branch Secretary. Our new approach of 'not who's right but what's right' captivated the minds of some of our colleagues—so much so that the leading Communist called one of them 'Mr What's Right'. We used this principle to tackle one dispute after another.

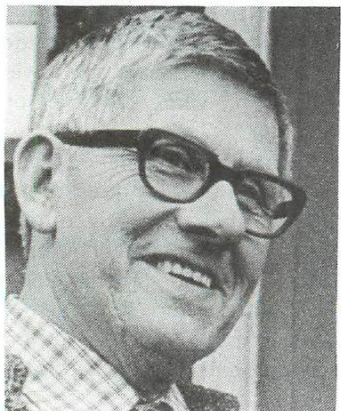
On one occasion we suggested to the Managing Director that we should have a meeting to break down the walls of bitterness and mistrust between management and shop floor. He agreed. He began to address our meetings, so that we received information straight from the horse's mouth with no danger of being misled. One of the most embittered shop stewards said, 'This is a turning point for me in my mistrust of management.'

Early return

At one mass meeting, I spoke against strike action. The rest of the shop stewards disagreed and heckled while I was speaking. When the men voted to strike I felt I should join the Strike Committee, although I did not want to. I was thus able to take part in an initiative which led to an early return to work.

Cardinal Heenan once told a group of Catholic trade unionists, 'If ever you are in conflict as to whether you should be at church or your branch meeting, I advise you to attend the latter because you are just as likely to have an experience of Christ in your branch as in your church.' If you make a stand for what is right you are bound to meet opposition. I have been accused of being a boss's man and, by management, of interfering. But no one can take away your moral right to be responsible. I believe that under God the trade union movement can go beyond suicidal class war to create unity within the nation and around the world. ■

PAY-OFF



by Les Dennison,
a trade unionist
from Coventry

I BELIEVE THERE NEEDS to be a completely fresh approach to the concepts of unemployment and work. I have found much inspiration and help from Pope John Paul II's Encyclical on work. As a 'worker' I so easily fall in the trap of thinking unemployment is solely caused by capitalist or Marxist ideas, where workers are only seen as instruments of production and profit. This completely ignores the fact that we are the very 'subject' of work—creators and true makers of work—because of the fundamental truth that God gave us dominion over the earth. We should never lose sight of this truth. We are destined to work that we may maintain our dominion over the earth. Work is made for man—not man for work.

One finds a constant concern with issues of unemployment. Yet there is a reluctance to look for the causes. Unemployment is held to be one of the greatest sicknesses of this era. Yet rarely does one hear of anyone acknowledging responsibility for this scourge of our times. When I look back over half a century as a worker, a craftsman, a political activist and militant trade unionist, and honestly appraise my motives and actions, I see how I demanded the highest payment for the least possible effort. I ignored any responsibility for meeting the needs of my nation or the world with what I was supposed to be producing; I demanded parity with workers who were much more efficient, and encouraged strikes just to advance class war ideas.

For these years of the locust I am now truly sorry. I have seen the need for changed attitudes if this sickness is to be healed; the need to fight for every worker and industrialist to begin to search out where they might be responsible for unemployment, rather than wallowing in sentimentality, or playing the blame-game—always 'them', they're to blame, never 'me' or us.

We have to face up to the prevailing acquisitiveness, selfish avarice and materialism that is rife in our Western civilisation. There can never be a cure to unemployment until there is a massive change in attitudes. We need to purge our wishful thinking and sentimental longings that some great political leader or party can legislate a cure for this sickness.

Only through a change of attitudes will we be able to recognise, with a sense of gratitude, that this phenomenon of unemployment could be the one sign from God of the need to restore man's dignity, the need to inspire and encourage a man to want to work that he might serve, care and give, rather than constantly whine for a job that would give him the maximum pay packet. So inspired, men and women could learn that work is not just a means of creating a big pay packet. Work's most satisfying pay-off is the dignity and maturity gained.

Industry is not just for making profit, important as this might be. Industry is for producing to meet the needs of the world, at the same time creating character-conscious men and women. ■

Question of comfort

by Richard Hawthorne, Director of a colour and business printing company

MANY OF OUR CLIENTS are affected by the dispute in the coal industry, and paper supplies have been seriously delayed by the recent disruption of shipping. It is all too easy to feel antagonistic towards those who threaten the life of my company and the prosperity of our nation.

The Bible specifically challenges us: 'Call down blessings on your persecutors—blessings not curses.' Paul wrote to his contacts in Rome, 'Let hope keep you joyful, in trouble stand firm, persist in prayer.' For me, this means not only praying for Arthur Scargill, Margaret Thatcher and everyone influencing the mining situation, but also seeking His wisdom on how to live into their hopes and fears, and to understand their motivation. The question I have to face is: am I committed to realising a vision of a better future, or do I react to the dispute because I am more interested in preserving a comfortable status quo? Am I willing to approach those involved in the dispute in a spirit of brotherhood, as Ananias did when directed by the Holy Spirit to be a healing instrument for Paul?

As I have faced these challenges, unexpected opportunities have arisen to meet people in the mining industry, and to start talking about possible steps they could take towards reconciliation. ■

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